



High/Low Employee Engagement Indicators

The high/low employee engagement indicators show which engagement items represent team strengths or areas of opportunity for improvement. These indicators are a great way to start engagement conversations, but if you or the team feel that other items are more important to team performance, then include those items in your team discussions and action planning.

Creating engagement is not about raising the numbers — it is about what the numbers reveal during meaningful conversations.

Methodology

In Gallup Access, you can find the high/low indicators in the **Results Summary** section of the Q¹² scorecard. The **Results Summary** shows the mean (average) score of each of the 12 engagement items (Q01-Q12), where each item falls within the Gallup database, and the comparison of that score to previous results if applicable (as indicated by an up or down arrow).

Results Summary

High/Low indicators are derived for teams based on an item's position in the engagement hierarchy and percentile in a Gallup database. Use these as starting points for conversations with your team. Note: High/Low indicators are not available when filtering by Reporting Groups. [Learn More](#)

Database: Gallup Overall



Gallup generates the high/low indicators using the following information:

- **Low Items (appear as “LOW” on the Results Summary):** You first see low items based on the item score’s mean percentile rank in Gallup’s overall workgroup database and the placement of that item in the engagement hierarchy.
 - The two LOWEST mean percentile ranked items in the first half of the engagement hierarchy (Q01-Q06) appear unless items Q01-Q06 are all greater than or equal to the 75th percentile.

High/Low Employee Engagement Recommendations

- Once items Q01-Q06 all reach the 75th percentile, then the lowest mean percentile ranked items from the entire hierarchy (Q01-Q12) identify the “LOW” items.
- If a tie exists, the lowest item in the engagement hierarchy appears.
- **High Items (appear as “HIGH” on the Results Summary):** After low items, high items appear based on the mean percentile rank for the entire remaining item set (Q01-Q12, excluding those previously appearing as “LOW” recommendations).
 - The two HIGHEST mean percentile ranked items appear as “HIGH” items.
 - If a tie exists, the lowest item in the engagement hierarchy appears.

Remember, high/low indicators are an excellent way to start a conversation about engagement and take action. But you also may find it helpful to focus on other items. To explore advice for items not appearing as high/low indicators, click the **Item Next Steps** link next to any Q¹² item on your Q¹² report.

Additionally, explore the FAQ section below for more information on how to approach unique situations.

Engagement Hierarchy

You know that focusing on engagement increases your team’s success, but you might not know where to start.

The 12 elements of employee engagement predict high team performance in critical business outcomes. While they don’t necessarily measure everything about a workplace, the 12 items capture valuable information needed to engage and retain the most talented employees. Among Gallup’s engagement discoveries is that the order of the 12 elements is crucial. The engagement hierarchy represents four components of complete engagement, beginning with basic needs and moving through growth.

Start at the Base of the Engagement Hierarchy

The bottom two levels of the engagement hierarchy are not only the foundation of a great place to work, but they also give a team access to greater efficiency and performance. Without a solid base, it is challenging to build and sustain an engaging work environment.

- **Basic Needs:** Employees need to have a clear understanding of what success in their role looks like. They need to have all the right resources to succeed.
- **Individual Needs:** Employees need to understand how they can optimize their contributions. They need to know that others value their best efforts, feel cared about and know someone is there to support them in their role.

The engagement hierarchy is a significant part of calculating the high/low indicators because it focuses on employees’ foundational needs and performance.

Database Comparisons

How do your results compare to the best?

Gallup’s overall workgroup database shows how individual Q¹² item results compare with Gallup’s database of teams (by “teams” Gallup means the employees reporting directly to a manager) that have used the Q¹² items in their employee engagement survey. These benchmark comparisons help determine engagement priorities because they show what high engagement looks like and where there is room for improvement. The best managers refer to these rankings when setting goals for improving engagement.

The color differentiation on the Results Summary is based on Gallup’s overall workgroup database comparisons.

High/Low Employee Engagement Recommendations

- **Dark Teal:** The mean is at or above the 90th percentile.
- **Medium Teal:** The mean is between the 75th and 89th percentiles.
- **Medium Green:** The mean is between the 50th and 74th percentiles.
- **Light Green:** The mean is between the 25th and 49th percentiles.
- **Lightest Green:** The mean is below the 25th percentile.

FAQs

If I don't have enough data to generate scores for all the Q¹² items, will I still get high/low indicators?

High/low indicators populate for any team with data for at least one Q¹² item. Gallup identifies two "LOW" items first and two "HIGH" items next. For example, if you only have data for two items, both of those items appear as "LOW," and no items appear as "HIGH."

As mentioned previously, Gallup highly recommends having a conversation with your team to determine what areas you should focus on, especially when you have no or limited data. Download the [Engagement Planning Options for Managers Without Q¹² Reports](#) guide for more information.

What if all my Q¹² items have the same mean percentile rank?

While this type of outcome is rare for larger teams, it is possible for smaller teams. Gallup still displays high/low indicators in this situation, but those items are based on the hierarchy starting at the bottom (Q01). For example, if all mean percentile ranks are the same, then Q01 and Q02 appear as "LOW" and Q03 and Q04 appear as "HIGH."

Are there minimum or maximum mean percentile rankings for high/low indicators?

No, Gallup does not use any thresholds for determining high/low indicators because we believe that engagement is not about the numbers but what the numbers reveal during meaningful conversations. Every team should always discuss what they are doing well and where they have opportunities for improvement.

One item has a mean percentile rank that is lower than those identified as "LOW." Why doesn't Gallup consider this "LOW"?

Gallup's high/low algorithm focuses on the lower half the engagement hierarchy (Q01-Q06). It is possible (and common) for Q01-Q06 to have a higher mean percentile rank than items higher in the engagement hierarchy. In these instances, Gallup still recommends prioritizing items Q01-Q06 if their mean percentile ranks are below the 75th percentile. Gallup's philosophy is that managers should focus on employees' basic and individual needs first. When focusing on these needs, you are also most likely positively influencing engagement needs that are higher up on the hierarchy.

Which Gallup database do you use to generate my rankings and recommendations?

The database at the top of your report below the Results Summary is what Gallup uses to generate your rankings and recommendations. Often, this is the Gallup overall workgroup database, representing all of the global workgroups using Gallup's Q¹², but you can configure this for your organization (e.g., using industry or geographic databases).