



HOW TO RE-ENGAGE TEAMS AFTER A SLOW OR STRESSFUL YEAR

*What leaders need to do differently to
rebuild momentum that lasts*

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A TEAM THAT SURVIVED A HARD YEAR IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY READY TO PERFORM AT FULL CAPACITY IN THE NEXT ONE.

Restructuring, stalled growth, and sustained pressure leave marks that do not reset when the calendar turns. People carry the weight of what they went through even when they do not say it out loud.

Leaders who skip straight to execution without acknowledging the human side of recovery find that their team looks present but feels somewhere else. Re-engagement is not a morale program. It is a leadership responsibility.

➡ In the next slides, we explore 7 insights to help leaders rebuild trust, restore energy, and create the conditions for real momentum after a difficult stretch.





INSIGHT 1

ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS THE FIRST STEP MOST LEADERS SKIP.

When teams go through a difficult period, silence from leadership sends a message. It suggests the challenge either was not noticed or was not considered important.

People do not expect leaders to have all the answers. They want to know their effort, stress, and perseverance were seen.

A genuine acknowledgment builds trust in ways performance pressure never will.

Name what the team experienced honestly. Not to dwell on the past, but to show you were paying attention and that their effort mattered.



INSIGHT 2

CLARITY ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE GOING IS MORE MOTIVATING THAN OPTIMISM ALONE

After a period of uncertainty, vague encouragement rarely restores confidence. People have heard promises before. What they need is a clear picture of where the organization is headed.

When employees understand what success looks like and how their work contributes to it, energy becomes focused rather than fragmented.

Revisit priorities with fresh eyes and communicate direction explicitly. People can handle hard work. They struggle when the work no longer feels connected to a meaningful outcome.



INSIGHT 3

RE-ENGAGEMENT STARTS IN ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS, NOT ALL-HANDS MEETINGS

Team meetings can create alignment, but they rarely rebuild trust. People re-engage through individual conversations where they feel heard and can ask questions they would never raise in a group setting.

When leaders make time for one-on-one conversations, they send a powerful message: you matter. That message carries more weight than any presentation or company update.

Rebuild your one-on-one rhythm with intention. Listen more than you speak. The conversations that seem least efficient often have the greatest impact on long-term engagement.



INSIGHT 4

SMALL WINS REBUILD MOMENTUM FASTER THAN AMBITIOUS NEW TARGETS.

Large stretch goals can backfire when a team's confidence has not yet recovered. What feels motivating to leadership can feel overwhelming to employees who are still rebuilding energy and momentum.

Small, visible wins help restore confidence, reinforce capability, and create forward movement. Progress remains one of the strongest drivers of engagement.

Design early wins into your re-engagement strategy intentionally. Then recognize those wins in proportion to the effort it took the team to achieve them.





INSIGHT 5

TRUST IN LEADERSHIP IS THE VARIABLE THAT DETERMINES WHETHER EVERYTHING ELSE WORKS.

Recognition programs and engagement initiatives only work when people trust the leaders behind them. When trust has been weakened, even well-intentioned efforts can feel hollow.

Trust is rebuilt through consistency. It comes from following through on commitments, communicating honestly, and showing up with the same standards expected of the team.

If commitments were missed or communication broke down during a difficult period, address it directly. Acknowledgment is often the first step toward rebuilding credibility.



INSIGHT 6

CONSISTENT FEEDBACK IS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL THAT DISAPPEARS FASTER THAN MOST PEOPLE EXPECT.

After a period where change felt imposed rather than shared, involvement becomes powerful. Being invited to help shape what comes next gives people a renewed sense of ownership.

The goal is not simply to collect feedback. It is to create real opportunities for contribution, act on what is heard, and be transparent about how input influences decisions.

Even small decisions made collaboratively generate more buy-in than larger decisions made without participation.





INSIGHT 7

RE-ENGAGEMENT IS A SUSTAINED PRACTICE, NOT A ONE-TIME RESET.

After a difficult year, the instinct is often to launch a visible initiative and move on. But a single action rarely changes the underlying dynamics that built up over time.

Teams notice the difference between leaders who show up once and leaders who continue showing up consistently.

Re-engagement is built through ongoing communication, regular check-ins, meaningful recognition, and a willingness to adjust based on what the team is experiencing.

