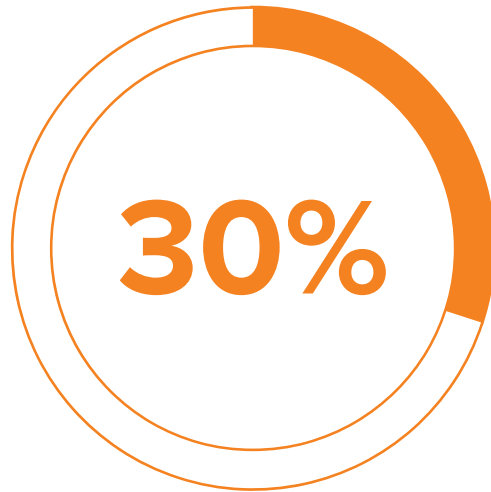**workfront**

USE INSIGHTS TO BETTER

MANAGE
YOUR
PEOPLE

4 TIPS TO GET STARTED WITH
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Everyone can define a bad day at work, but how good are you at defining how many fruitless days are happening for your team?

Maybe nothing catastrophic happened, except the day started with an all-hands meeting about a very specific task that three people are working on. That was followed by a smaller email reply-all flurry to clarify a client request that snowballed into retooling a whole arm of a project, only to realize at the end of the day that key players weren't copied on emails and they spent their afternoon completing tasks which are now irrelevant. Your team went home mumbling about being stuck on an ever-quickening treadmill of pointless busywork.

If that sounds familiar, you're not alone: a mere 30 percent of employees are fully engaged at work[1], and studies have repeatedly shown that most employees spend less than 40 percent of their time on their main job.[2]

30%

30% percent of employees are fully engaged at work.[1]

Together, these numbers spell out devastating implications for productivity and employee retention as managers and team members alike face:

- Unclear expectations regarding which team member is responsible for which tasks

- Growing pop-up tasks and quick work requests that gobble huge chunks of productive time

- Multiple project extension requests or completely missed deadlines

- Reduced trust and credibility

- Heightened tension and a sense of slipping control

Re-engaging that bored, burnt-out, and overwhelmed 70 percent of the workforce requires a serious look at your leadership toolbox. There are four leadership qualities which determine 89 percent of leadership effectiveness:

1. Being supportive

2. Operating with strong results orientation

3. Seeking different perspectives

4. Solving problems effectively[3]

But how can you translate those qualities into true management insight, using resources to engage your team and produce real results? This guide will take you through five steps for using insights to lead your team to success.

1. Protect your team's time

The problem

Research shows that most of today's workers spend only 40 percent of their day doing the job they were hired to do.[4] The rest of the time is wasted answering emails, dealing with mini-crises that pop up, completing administrative work like manual data entry, and attending unnecessary meetings.

The solution

Get organized and get clear on where time and talent are being used in real-time. Ideally, this would be a holistic system where you can see all projects and team members, but it can be as simple as a shared spreadsheet or daily email where everyone can find the latest information on each task and whether it's completed, new, in progress, or in the planning stage. Once everything is recorded, start looking for trends and eliminating wasted time. You'll be able to easily gauge incoming requests against current workload and your team's availability and know when and how to say yes to new work.

66%
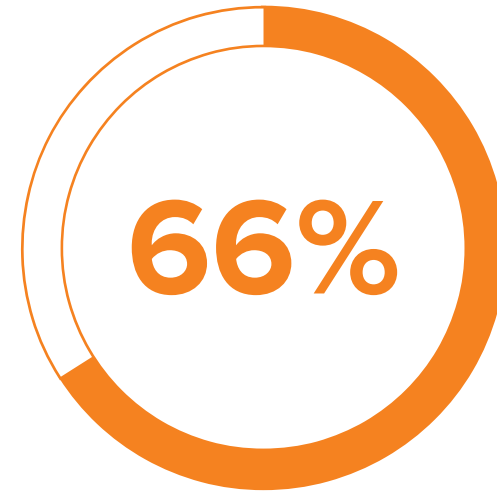
66% of workers say they don't have enough time to get their work done.[5]

Start by measuring and looking for results, then centralizing contact points, and finally by streamlining how communication occurs.

- **Measure.** Tracking time produces actionable results. Email checking is measurable. Data entry time is measurable. Meeting time is measurable. All are objective and quantifiable. You can take this insight into tracked time and remove bloat and excess to usher your teams into leaner and more effective days.

- **Centralize.** Who is in charge of getting requests? Going back to that at-a-glance resource manager, there should be a point person to whom communication requests are directed. All people should not be contacted for all questions or concerns and every moment your team spends checking emails not meant for them is a moment unengaged. Your team members are fielding **over 300 emails a week** on average, and can spend more than 15 minutes refocusing after taking time to deal with an email.[6] That math is not in your team's favor. Creating a central communication point cuts down on other team members spending their day on tasks, messages, and meetings that are not truly relevant to their role in the project.

- **Streamline.** Use email aliases for things like approvals. It cuts down on individual users spending their time on tasks. Automation is a gift; use it. Wasted time equals squandered team potential, and it wastes a lot of your company's money. Say "no" to requests that don't fit the project goals and figure out how to say "yes" as efficiently as possible.

The result

A one-stop shop for managing your team resources lets leaders and team members alike get a one-look insight into who, what, when, and where work is being completed. When you invest your communication and results insights back into your team's time, you will really begin to see the system return gains in productivity. By shielding their time from bloat and waste, you are creating an uninterrupted flow wherein they can realize their best potential. You will get back lost morale and lost money.

2. Communicate priorities

The problem

Without effective communication about which projects are most urgent, teams fall into the chaos of the hamster wheel, spinning quickly to complete incoming tasks but making no progress on the work that really matters. Poor communication regarding priorities leads to delays and mistakes, damaging the quality of your deliverables and sinking morale on your team.

The solution

Priorities can shift in an instant, which can be frustrating for both managers and team members. You need a way to be proactive in matching people to projects and be able to provide simple and clear priorities, all while tracking your team's progress, strengths, and weaknesses. If you have a single, updated record of current work, you should be able to include a rating guide that expresses levels of urgency for new and upcoming projects.

30%

30% of workers say poor work prioritization methods are a major barrier to getting work done.[7]

This keeps the workload balanced because you're able to weigh the impact that new work will have on current projects and make better completion predictions. Team members also feel like they're part of the process, instead of being blindsided by sudden changes in direction and can easily see how what they do fits into the shared goal.

"Until we can manage time, we can manage nothing else."

– Peter F. Drucker

The result

Team time that is **invested, not spent.** Insightful communication of expectations flows in all directions. Each team member will feel heard, trusted, valued, and supported, resulting in a shift in mindset and engagement. Your team will evolve from tallying hours spent merely puttering along to seeing returns on the value they put into those hours, heightening engagement and productivity.

3. Focus on measurable results

The problem

Many managers find it difficult to accurately measure performance, ensure accountability, and drive productivity. You may have tasks that are so different in terms of time, deliverable, and effort that you don't have objective metrics that can be compared, so it's difficult to tell whether your team is really making the most of their time.

The solution

As you get going using a simplified, consolidated method for tracking work, patterns and objective metrics will emerge that will help you to measure and predict performance and resource capacity. Here are some ways to set metrics, even if your tasks are constantly changing:

- **Measure planned hours against actual hours.** When assigning new work, make sure you include an estimate of hours to complete the task. Ask your team to keep track of the time they spend and use those actual hours

83%
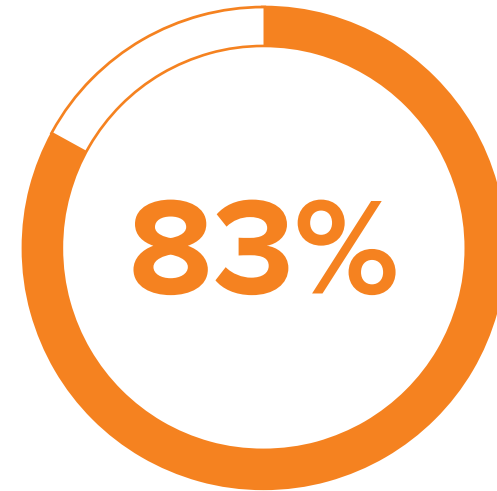
83% of organizations are unsure of how to align projects to the outcomes they want to achieve.[9]

to make adjustments to the planned hours for future similar tasks. This will help to keep expectations in line and give team members an idea of when they need to ask for help or make adjustments.

- **Check your team's workload.** Without realizing it, you may have assigned ten 5-hour tasks to your top workers each week, requiring them to put in extra hours. Because you know you can count on them to complete their work, they often end up overburdened, which puts them at risk of disengagement and burn out. Instead of rewarding your top workers with more tasks, try to even out the workload across the team. Depending on the team, it might be helpful to raise the expectation of productivity based on high-performing team members, or it may be an opportunity to engage those high-performers in more strategic work. Either way, using metrics to promote a healthy work-life balance will improve morale, engagement, and longevity.

- **Set goals with your team.** When you're tackling something new and don't have past tasks to compare it to, ask your team to help you determine a reasonable timeline for completion, and hold them accountable to the dates and hours they commit. Being a great manager doesn't just involve doing things for your team, it's also about teaching them how they can learn higher skills, which they'll appreciate in the long-run.

The result

Showing, rather than telling, your team that you see where high-value work is being done emphasizes your message of efficiency and productivity. Your insight and command of your resources proves to them that you are committed to rooting out and proactively solving problems. You're building accountable teams rich in value, insight, and transparent processes.

4. Listen to your team

The problem

It's not just your team members who are too busy to stop and smell the roses—you've got a lot on your plate, too. You're probably spending most of your day tied up with meetings or trying to get a handle on upcoming work. It might be tempting to use email as much as possible, and eliminate personalized interactions like one-on-one meetings, relying solely on metrics to judge progress.

The solution

A quick, face-to-face check-in can get positive results on tasks that are stuck, communicate appreciation for efforts already undertaken, or lead to reallocation of talent to a new arm of the project. Use objective metrics and patterns stemming from your resource tracking to inform one-on-one meetings and make the most of that time.

37%
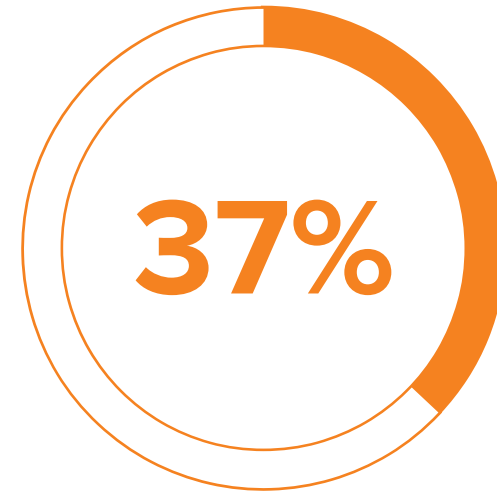
37% of workers believe their skills are underutilized or wish their job presented a greater challenge.[10]

When you begin to explore where the system is beginning to break down and where it's working well, you will ensure that people are doing fulfilling work in their strongest skill areas. They'll also be more engaged when they get regular feedback and know that you care about how they're doing. Here are some ideas to use face-to-face meetings—in conjunction with metrics and resource insights—to improve engagement:

- **Find out what they like.** What are your team members good at? What do they like doing the most? Because those two aren't always the same thing, where do they overlap?

- **Trust their intellect and capability.** Insightful leaders are always looking for new perspectives. Fresh eyes on a problem may make it cease to be a problem because they see something their manager can't.

- **Make them part of the strategy.** Taking time for a back-and-forth to involve team members invests their time and energy. They will put their hearts as well as their minds into projects where they feel valued and supported.

- **Remember that feedback is a two-way system.** A recent study found that while 65 percent of workers said they'd like more feedback, only 58 percent of managers said they have time to deliver feedback consistently.[11] Truly insightful leaders are prepared to receive feedback from their teams on their own performance and apply what they learn to their management styles. Make giving *and* taking feedback a priority.

The result

Nobody wants to show up at a job just to shuffle papers, but remember: 70 percent of people feel like they are doing just that. Insightful listening engages teams and stimulates a passion for work that uncaring leaders simply cannot replicate. Your team will work with loyalty and engaged passion when they know that you have a personal investment not just in their value to the project, but in their value as a person.

Lead with insight to engage your team's potential

You and your team are busier than ever, which is why it's important to reconfigure and streamline processes to be both easy to use and effective.

Your role as an insightful leader is to turn large, unwieldy projects into a well-balanced machine that engages all of its members based on time management and talent. Seventy percent of workers are out there waiting to be engaged. The best way to engage them is to gain team insight that comes from clarity, clear thinking, and outstanding use of resources.

Managing your resources well is the first step to improving morale and unleashing your team's true potential. You'll be able to easily see who is capable of taking on greater leadership roles within your business and have the time to cultivate these team members.

Automate resource management with Workfront

Workfront brings together all aspects of work—from collaboration to tasks to content—so your team can complete their work faster than ever. Smart resource management planning, scheduling, and capacity tools use AI-enabled algorithms to make sure your people are working on the right tasks. With Workfront, you'll be able to:

- Eliminate duplicate data entry and other busy work
- Easily re-prioritize tasks and projects with real-time data
- Assess workload and make adjustments based on resource capacity
- Make smart commitments and know when your team is ready to take on new assignments

LEARN MORE

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