

# Engagement Planning Options for Managers Without Q<sup>12</sup>® Results

Creating a culture of engagement requires focus from employees at all levels. In some cases, managers do not receive team-level Q<sup>12</sup> results because their teams are too small to qualify for a standalone report. Even without direct results, these teams can still participate in meaningful action planning by drawing on everyday work experiences, structured discussion and Gallup-aligned exercises connected to the Q<sup>12</sup>.

The activities below outline ways managers can lead action planning sessions when they do not have team results.

## Identify a Rollup Report

When a team needs data to encourage conversation, Gallup recommends using a **rollup report**. A rollup report includes the team's responses alongside those from a broader group in the organizational hierarchy such as the next level, department, role or location.

A rollup report allows team members to see results that include their input while protecting confidentiality. While the data are not exclusive to the team, they provide a credible starting point for discussing engagement behaviors connected to the Q<sup>12</sup>.

## Use Everyday Work Experiences as the Input

When teams do not have direct Q<sup>12</sup> results, daily work experiences become the best source of insight. These experiences show how work actually happens: where expectations feel clear or unclear, where support is strong or missing, and where people feel recognized, heard, or disconnected.

The exercises in this document help teams reflect on those experiences and link them to specific Q<sup>12</sup> behaviors such as expectations, recognition, development, voice and connection to purpose.

## Engagement Planning Exercises

After completing any exercises, document the actions the team agrees to take in an action plan. Use the **SMART** framework to keep actions clear and achievable:



### Specific

Clearly define what each person will do.



### Measurable

Identify how the team will track progress.



### Actionable

Assign ownership to someone who can carry out the action.



### Realistic

Keep the scope achievable within current constraints.



### Timely

Set a clear time frame for review.

*For guidance on documenting next steps, see the "Close With Action Planning" section at the end of this document.*

### OPTION 1

#### Stoplight Exercise (Q<sup>12</sup>-Based)

- 1) Share all 12 Q<sup>12</sup> items with the team, either in person or virtually.
- 2) Give each team member three indicators:
  - Green: This item is a strength for our team.
  - Yellow: This item feels inconsistent or unclear.
  - Red: This item is a challenge for our team.
- 3) Ask team members to review each Q<sup>12</sup> item and assign their indicators.
- 4) Review the results as a group and identify:
  - the item with the most green indicators
  - the item with the most red indicators
- 5) If multiple items tie, discuss which item most affects:
  - doing great work
  - achieving team goals
  - energy and motivation
- 6) Select one Q<sup>12</sup> item to focus on for action planning.

### OPTION 2

#### S or W? (Strength or Weakness)

- 1) Give each team member a list of the Q<sup>12</sup> items.
- 2) Ask them to label each item as a strength (S) or weakness (W).
- 3) Have team members circle:
  - one item they see as the team's greatest strength
  - one item they see as the team's greatest opportunity
- 4) Tally results and select one top strength and one top opportunity to focus on.

### OPTION 3

#### Team Sociograph

This activity works best with teams of six or more.

- 1) Create a center line in an open space, either in person or virtually.
- 2) Explain that the center line represents neutral.
  - Movement to the right signals a strength.
  - Movement to the left signals an opportunity.
- 3) Read each Q<sup>12</sup> item aloud.
- 4) Ask team members to move along the line to show how they feel the team is performing on each item.
- 5) Pause after each item to note visible patterns.
- 6) Identify the item that shows the strongest alignment and the item that shows the greatest opportunity. Focus on them for action planning.

### OPTION 4

#### Team Discussion (No Data Required)

Use this option when trust is still developing or when the team tends to be quieter.

##### Ask the team:

- What would make this team a great place to do your best work?
- What is one thing our team could do that would help you succeed more?
- What would you tell a new team member to expect from us?

As themes emerge, connect them back to Q<sup>12</sup> behaviors such as expectations, recognition, development, collaboration and purpose.

### OPTION 5

#### Builders and Breakers of Engagement

Use everyday work experiences as the starting point for discussion.

##### Ask the team:

- What helps you stay engaged at work?
- What makes it harder for you to stay engaged?
- What does our team do that strengthens engagement?
- What does our team do that unintentionally weakens engagement?

Group responses into two categories: engagement builders and engagement breakers. Then connect each theme to relevant Q<sup>12</sup> items.

### OPTION 6

#### Key Team Experiences (Color-Coded)

Start by identifying common team experiences such as:

- onboarding and role clarity
- team meetings
- collaboration with other departments
- deadlines
- feedback
- recognition

Ask the team to assign a color to each experience:

- Green: Works well and supports engagement
- Yellow: Inconsistent or unclear
- Red: Creates frustration or disengagement

Guide the discussion with these questions:

- What contributes to experiences rated green?
- What would improve yellow experiences?
- What specific changes would improve red experiences?

### OPTION 7

#### Bright Spots and Friction Points

Ask the team:

- When do we do our best work together?
- What gets in the way of doing our best work?
- What behaviors or processes should we protect?
- What behaviors or processes need to change?

As the team responds, sort examples into two groups: bright spots and friction points. Then link each theme back to relevant Q<sup>12</sup> behaviors.

### OPTION 8

#### Manager Observation and Team Validation

The manager begins by sharing two to three observed patterns related to engagement and based on day-to-day work. Focus on specific, observable behaviors such as communication flow, workload distribution, recognition practices or follow-through.

Example:

"I've noticed that when deadlines shift, we don't always reset expectations clearly, which often leads to rework and stress."

Invite the team to respond by:

- confirming whether the observation resonates
- adding examples or nuance
- offering additional context if needed

Then guide the discussion with these questions:

- Which patterns increase energy or momentum?
- Which patterns reduce energy or create frustration?
- What should we change specifically?

**OPTION 9**

**Values-Based Discussion**

Share the company or team values and select two or three to focus on.

**For each value, ask:**

- Which Q<sup>12</sup> behaviors does this value support?
- What does this value look like in action on our team?
- What should we do more of to live this value?
- What should we continue doing?

As themes emerge, connect them to specific Q<sup>12</sup> behaviors and identify one value-aligned action the team can strengthen.

**OPTION 10**

**Strengths and Talents Discussion**

**Ask the team:**

- What does each person do that helps this team succeed?
- When we are at our best as a team, what are we doing?
- When we are struggling as a team, what behaviors show up instead?
- How can we better use our talents to do our best work more often?

Connect responses to Q<sup>12</sup> behaviors related to recognition, collaboration, and development, and identify one area where the team can apply its strengths more consistently.

**OPTION 11**

**Engagement Hierarchy Discussion  
(Q<sup>12</sup> System View)**

Frame the Session (5-10 minutes)

**Set context for the discussion:**

- The Q<sup>12</sup> is a system, not 12 independent items.
- Teams need strong foundations before higher levels can last.
- The goal is to identify one or two realistic actions at each level that the team can implement.

**Use the employee engagement hierarchy as a visual:**

- Growth
- Teamwork
- Individual Contribution
- Basic Needs

### **LEVEL 1 | BASIC NEEDS (Q01, Q02)**

*Focus: Expectations and tools*

**Discussion prompts:**

- Where are expectations unclear or changing too often?
- What tools, processes or approvals slow down work?
- Where are people compensating for broken systems with extra effort?

**Diagnostic question:**

- If we fixed only one frustration here, what would bring the most immediate relief?

**Action focus:**

- Clarify priorities and decision rights
- Remove friction from tools or processes
- Standardize expectations across roles

### **LEVEL 2 | INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION (Q03-Q06)**

*Focus: Feeling valued and supported*

**Discussion prompts:**

- Whose strengths are underused?
- Where does effort go unnoticed?
- Are people receiving meaningful feedback?

**Diagnostic question:**

- Who might feel invisible if nothing changed?

**Action focus:**

- Strengths-based role alignment
- More frequent and personal recognition
- Manager habits of noticing and reinforcing contributions

### **LEVEL 3 | TEAMWORK (Q07-Q10)**

*Focus: Belonging and collaboration*

**Discussion prompts:**

- Where does trust break down?
- Do people feel safe speaking up?
- Are we aligned on what success looks like as a team?

**Diagnostic question:**

- Where do handoffs fail or collaboration feel costly?

**Action focus:**

- Clear team norms and working agreements
- Defined interdependencies
- Regular check-ins on progress and barriers

### **LEVEL 4 | GROWTH (Q11, Q12)**

*Focus: Development and future*

**Discussion prompts:**

- Do people see a future for themselves here?
- Where do development conversations feel rushed or avoided?
- Are we developing people with clear intent?

**Diagnostic question:**

- Who may be stagnating quietly?

**Action focus:**

- Career conversations beyond promotions
- Stretch assignments aligned with strengths
- Ongoing coaching and developmental check-ins

## Close With Action Planning

End every exercise by answering three questions:

- 1 What are we going to do?**  
Identify one or two specific actions the team will take.
- 2 Who owns it?**  
Assign a clear owner for each action.
- 3 How will we track progress?**  
Set a review date and agree on how the team will assess progress.

Regular follow-through builds trust and reinforces that engagement conversations lead to meaningful change.