

Keep your team engaged for the long haul

Employee engagement for small businesses

Discover how HR software can help
you engage employees now and
into the future



1. Strong leadership is more than just a “nice to have”



2. The do’s and don’ts of engagement



3. How to create a culture of engagement

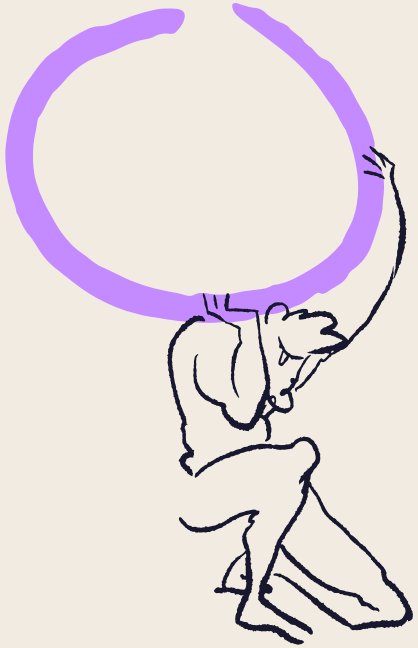


4. No HR person? No problem!



5. So, is engaging your team worth it?

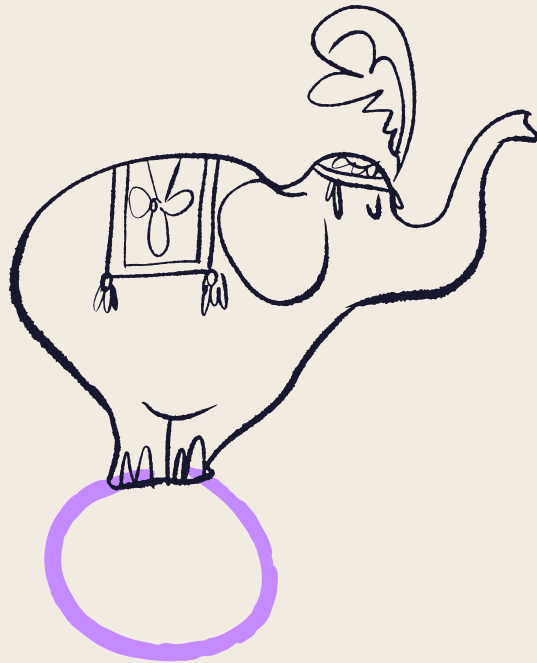




1.

**Strong leadership
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Strong leadership is more than just a “nice to have”



In a small business, leadership matters. If you want to see success, your employees need to believe in your mission and values — and that direction comes straight from the top.

Strong leadership allows you to build trust and motivate everyone to work at their best, so you can achieve your goals. **But the best leaders don't just talk, they also listen.**

That's where employee engagement comes in. With engagement initiatives, you can understand how your employees feel, what motivates them, and how you can support their growth. You unlock valuable insights that improve productivity, employee happiness, and employee retention.

Employee engagement enables you to:

- Identify and understand issues
- Get useful context
- Understand which policies and benefits your team members actually want
- Learn how satisfied your team members are
- Have open and honest conversations with employees
- Develop a sense of trust, cohesion, and community spirit
- Collect feedback and ideas

It's not always easy to keep them engaged — especially in a small business.

You might face challenges such as:

- **Establishing trust** — it takes time
- **Having a limited budget** for engagement activities
- **Not being able to dedicate enough time** to it, as it's not your full-time role
- **Not knowing where to start**

We believe that building a team of happy, engaged employees isn't reserved for big businesses with HR teams and an endless budget. There's a lot you can achieve as a small business, and we're here to help you make it happen.

At Charlie, we've built HR software with small businesses in mind — and that includes features designed to make engagement easier. Celebrate success with shoutouts, gather feedback with polls, and get useful insights from your leaver interviews.

With the right software and a few simple concepts, you can start using employee-led data to build more effective people strategies. **We'll take you through the steps in this guide, so you can start building a more connected and engaged team in no time.**





2.

The do's and don'ts of engagement

The do's and don'ts of engagement

Employee engagement isn't weekly drinks after work or your next team hackathon. It's the strategies you use over the long-term to gain trust, encourage feedback, and build a community. But what does effective engagement look like in a real small business?

Do's	Don'ts
 Ask for feedback, ideas, and suggestions through surveys and polls	 Make decisions based on your own personal gut feeling
 Introduce and update HR policies based on what your team members need or request	 Add or change a HR policy to follow a trend
 Introduce unique benefits and perks based on feedback, like book clubs or interest groups	 Assume your office needs a ping pong table and free beer
 Gather feedback to understand what all your team members think, feel, and need	 Ask a few people for informal feedback, then assume this applies to a wider group
 Make it easy to engage with quick polls and simple surveys	 Send out long, complicated employee engagement surveys
 Allow employees to influence policies, like remote working or nomad working	 Apply a new approach to working without consulting with employees



3.

How to create a culture of engagement

Keep your finger on the pulse today with Charlie

Book a demo

The screenshot shows a video call with a woman wearing headphones and a headset microphone, smiling while looking at a laptop. The interface includes several overlays:

- Top Left:** A small icon of a person with a speech bubble.
- Top Center:** A text box stating "Sarah has a pending holiday request."
- Top Right:** A small circular profile picture of a woman.
- Bottom Left:** A small circular profile picture of a man.
- Bottom Center:** A text box stating "Chris submitted his review feedback."
- Bottom Right:** A text box stating "Alex starts tomorrow" with a small icon of a person.
- Bottom Right (Donut Chart):** A donut chart titled "DEPT. HOLL. MEET-UPS" with a legend showing the following data:

Category	Percentage
100%	100%
20%	20%
10%	10%
1%	1%
0%	0%

At Charlie, we send a simple monthly survey to team members that asks them to rate their response to two statements:

The survey responses allow us to understand how employees feel at that moment, but we can also track changes over time – giving us a chance to identify trends and make adjustments. You can also monitor survey engagement and take action to improve it, like changing the question types, survey length, or frequency.



IQ
ENDOSCOPES

Gemma Banks
HR Manager @ IQ Endoscopes

Encourage human connection

Employee engagement is so much more than sending surveys or asking for feedback. It also includes the actions you take to create a sense of community spirit and bring people together.

Gathering people in one place at the same time can be tough — especially if you're remote-first or hybrid. But whether you all work from the same office space or you're on opposite sides of the world, there are ways you can connect with each other.

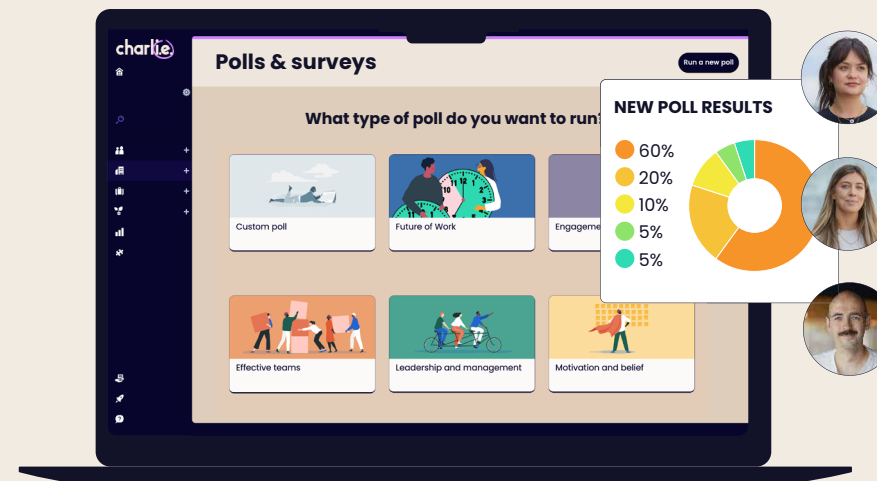
Here at Charlie, we're hybrid. We gather for four meetups per year — two which are company-wide, and two are based on functions or teams.

When we're not together in person, **we still stay in touch through activities like:**

When we're not together in person, **we still stay in touch through activities like:**

- Book club
- Film club
- AI club
- Coworking spaces in Manchester and London
- Hub days where we rent out a coworking in a UK city

Taking part in fun activities makes people happier overall, so they're more likely to engage at work when you ask for feedback, introduce a new initiative, or start work on a big project.



Ask leavers for honest feedback



People change jobs all the time. Sometimes it's because the pay is higher, the job is closer to home, or they've been unhappy — but you won't know the reason until you ask.

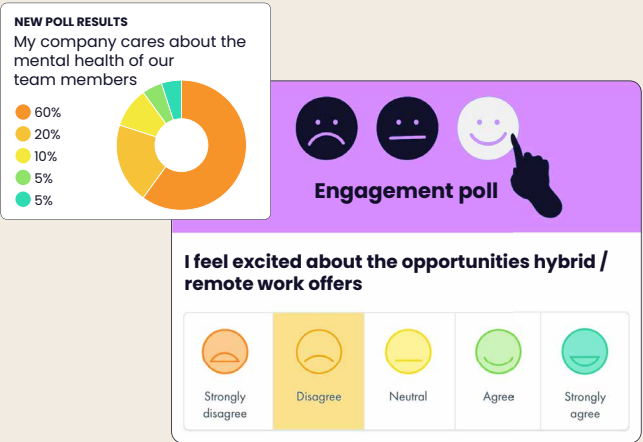
Use your exit interviews as an opportunity to understand why they chose to leave. You won't be able to change their mind, but their feedback helps you improve the employee experience for current and future team members.

Ask questions like:

- How long have you been considering leaving?
- How would you describe our company culture?
- What's one thing we could do to make working here better?
- What led you to your final decision?

It can be hard to remember what to ask in the moment, especially if you're sad to see the employee go. **Using software like Charlie allows you to prepare set questions and automate the feedback process, so you never miss a chance to gather feedback.**

As well as exit interview templates and a streamlined review process, Charlie also makes it easy to automatically calculate leftover allowances, archive employee profiles, and automate steps in the process — making your offboarding experience just as smooth as your onboarding.



Become a cheerleader



You're used to celebrating your business achievements and project wins, but do you do the same for your team members? One of the easiest ways to make someone feel happy, secure, and supported at work is to show recognition for their hard work.

We know you already wear a lot of hats, but consider adding one more – “team cheerleader”. This is one role that won't require a lot of your time, but can have an outsized impact on the people around you.

Here's how you can make recognition and support part of your culture:

- Post company-wide shoutouts to celebrate achievements
- Host regular 1:1s with employees
- Add space for celebrations to your team and company-wide meeting agendas
- Give useful, personalised feedback in performance reviews
- Publicly give thanks to your team members
- Encourage others to follow your lead and give congratulations generously
- Tailor the way you give feedback and shoutouts to each employee's preferences

Shifting your approach from silent manager to supportive cheerleader shows your employees you notice their impact. Every message of thanks or moment of celebration builds loyalty, community, and engagement.

Charlie makes it easy for everyone to get involved, with a shoutouts feature for celebrating great work and performance management tools that bring more meaning and structure to your 1:1s.

BornSocial.

“Charlie is central to creating an amazing culture – enabling us to hire the best people.”

Charlotte Hamill
COO @ BornSocial

Be creative with the resources you have



Big businesses can afford to host lavish parties, offer generous in-office perks, and hire consultants to run employee focus groups. While you don't have their budget or people power, you do have other ways to make an impact — like creativity and flexibility.

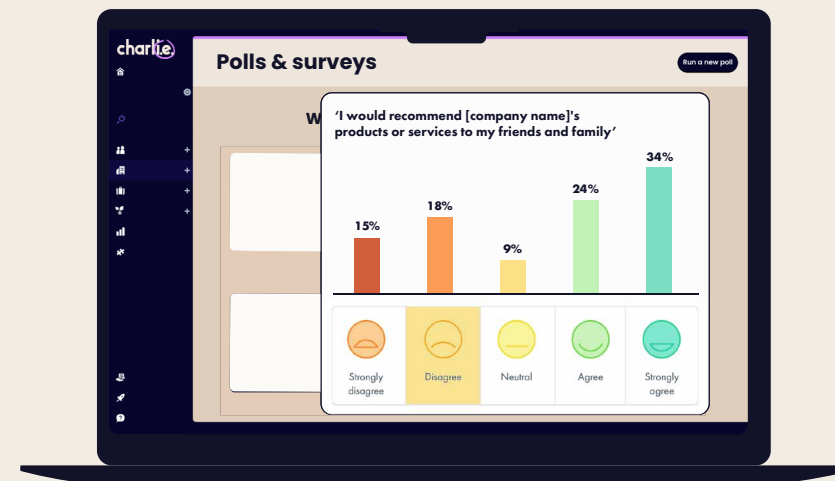
A major bonus of being small is that you can tailor your policies, perks, and culture to the individuals on your team. You can introduce policies quickly, experiment with work styles, and build a benefits package that feels unique and personal.

At Charlie, we've designed our HR policies to keep our team members engaged. This includes offering:

This includes offering:

- Flexible and hybrid working
- Flexible hours
- Nomad working
- Nine day fortnight
- Generous holiday policy

With thoughtful policies, you can shape your company culture and build loyalty in a way that's meaningful and long-lasting. Support this with benefits from Charlie's built-in Perks feature and you have a strong foundation for engagement, without spending a fortune.





4.

No HR person?
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Fiit

“CharlieHR has got that kind of startup way of thinking. And we would much rather partner with people that have a similar mindset and values, than going with partners that don’t understand what it is like to be in that energetic startup world. We like to have deep partnerships with people who see the world the same way that we do.”

Ben Wharfe
Chief People Officer @ Fiit

[Read case study](#)

You don’t need an HR person, team, or consultant to improve employee engagement. All you need is the right advice and software that’ll streamline the process for you, like Charlie.

Our software is designed for small businesses, and you won’t need any expert training to get started. Everything is **simple, easy to use, and straightforward** — perfect for when you’re managing multiple priorities.

Introduce a smoother performance review process, send a quick poll, prepare a monthly survey, or give a team member a shoutout on the platform. Keep your team members engaged in a way that feels meaningful, without distracting tactics and complicated reward systems.

And Charlie isn’t just for employee engagement, either. It can handle every aspect of HR for small businesses, including:

- Onboarding
- Time off management
- Performance management
- Perks and benefits
- Employee data
- Integrations

Charlie has everything you need to manage your HR in one place, with affordable pricing for even the smallest of teams. With simple processes, easy-to-use features, and built-in templates, you can get started now with no HR experience required.

Headcount	Price
1-4	£20
5-9	£40
10-14	£40
15-29	£100
30-49	£170
50-99	£300
100-149	£400
150-199	£500
200-249	£600
250+	£700





5.

So, is engaging
your team
worth it?

You're never too small to start

There's no minimum size requirement for being a strong, confident leader and building an engaged team. Simple and effective employee engagement techniques pay off — especially in a small business.

To make an impact you need team members that are engaged and excited about the work they do. They need to be motivated by your values, inspired by your leadership, and encouraged to work at their best.

It's tough to inspire action and engagement — especially with no dedicated HR person or specialist experience. That's where HR software comes in.

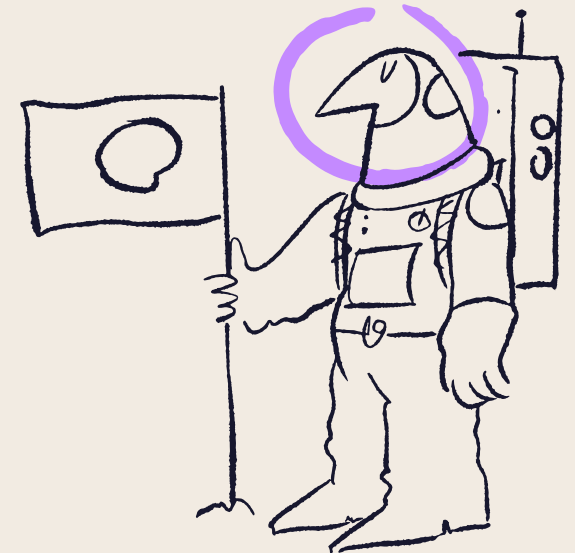
With Charlie, you can simplify and automate HR tasks, allowing you more time to focus on becoming a better leader to your team.

Charlie can help you:

- **Streamline** your onboarding process
- Organise **effective performance reviews** and 1:1s
- **Run polls and feedback surveys**
- **Empower team members** to openly celebrate each other
- **Create a culture of gratitude** and feedback
- And much more

It's easy to write employee engagement off as a “nice to have” or something you can invest in later, but the truth is that starting now is always better.

Develop your leadership skills, create opportunities for team members to connect, and start building the foundations for a highly engaged team.



charlie.

Ready to
get started?



CharlieHR

✓ No HR experience needed

✓ Easy to use

✓ Designed for small businesses



Book a free call today

[Book a demo](#)

Chat with Josh, our HR software expert

- ✓ 30 minutes tops
- ✓ Full platform tour

