



UST Quarterly Nonprofit Digest

2021 Q1 Edition: Employee Engagement Strategies

A Collection of Helpful Tips, Webinars, Flyers, Toolkits and More

1. Engagement, The Key to Remote Retention

Your nonprofit must continue to pursue employee retention through the shifting sands of engagement. UST's report on 2020 Nonprofit Workforce Trends revealed that nearly 70% of turnover was due to the draw of outside job opportunities. While organizations struggled with abrupt and massive adjustments, your workforce struggled with a loss of engagement.

The Pandemic Predicament

First came the challenges of rapid, evolving transitions, such as telecommuting, new legislation on Sick and Family Medical Leave, furloughs, work recalls, and workplace safety. Then, most nonprofits faced a critical loss of funding. With Budget Management surpassing 40% of top workforce issues reported, you might have found yourself in the impossible situation of trying to support employee retention despite a budget crisis. Some workers may have lost faith in your sustainability, and it affected their engagement. You can recapture their confidence by maintaining efficiency and steady legal compliance.

Get What You Need

With most employers either returning to the office or transitioning to hybrid work schedules, keeping [workplace safety](#) and telecommunications policies is of the utmost importance. UST's [telecommuting checklist](#) can help you level up your transition to work-from-home. Don't rely solely on board members or volunteers to update you on compliance changes, especially if you have fewer than 500 employees. UST provides the information and resources you need to continuously stay in compliance with state and federal laws.

Keep samples of a Furlough letter and a Recall from Furlough letter to help you move swiftly when your staffing needs change. UST's templates will help you properly document reasons for furloughs to ensure that there is no discrimination in staff selection—to access the full library of downloadable HR templates, sign up for a [free 60-day trial](#) of UST HR Workplace.

Steer the Course

When thinking about employee engagement, you must consider the role you play in every [employee's journey](#). UST's recent [Employee Engagement Toolkit](#) provides helpful templates and other tools that can be used to help refine your existing engagement strategies. This toolkit can help nonprofit leaders strengthen their employee onboarding process—making new hires feel welcome, while also setting them up for future success and engagement. Organizations can utilize the onboarding checklists, survey template, and 30-60-90 day plan to craft an employee experience that reflects and supports your company culture.

2. Post-COVID Tactics for Talent Acquisition

More than ever, employee engagement begins with finding the best-fit employees. Your nonprofit can benefit from a [2021 perspective](#) on talent acquisition. Among several advantages, the now-proven viability of a remote workforce is helping to lower overhead costs as organizations rethink their need for office space.

Your Recruiting Process

The way you handle today's candidates—especially those you don't hire—can impact your ability to fill roles tomorrow. And so, it's important to treat all applicants like customers, especially when done remotely. For starters, offer a simple and straightforward online application process to keep job-seekers engaged.

Help employees feel more comfortable, valued, and productive by centering your virtual recruiting around [inclusivity](#). Be sure to identify the characteristics of all posted jobs clearly and applaud individuality within your workforce. Set protocols for meetings that allow everyone to feel comfortable sharing ideas. Also, train your leaders to support inclusivity, so they can act as role models. Then, follow up with surveys to track where inclusion issues might still affect engagement in your organization.



Creative Talent Acquisition

In the post-COVID world, you'll need to get creative with emotional marketing to attract employees. You can share stories from current staff on why they support your mission—personal pleas from those you serve can also make strong job postings.

In the Future

Remote work dissolves geographical barriers. If you're a nonprofit with employees in more than one state, there are options in fulfilling new-hire reporting requirements. UST answered some vital questions regarding [hiring out of state](#), especially in regard to tax and employment law.



Virtual recruitment expertise will likely be the new standard for talent acquisition in a post-COVID world. In fact, significant portions of your workforce might never meet you in person. A technology-based recruitment system will be a worthwhile investment but will require new practices that include training managers and interviewing candidates by video. Don't miss UST's [four strategies](#) for the future of remote talent acquisition.

3. Drive Thriving Engagement with Virtual Onboarding

When the majority of organizations were forced to transition rapidly to virtual onboarding, few were ready. Nevertheless, it's still true that you only get one shot at a first impression—whether in person or remote. A strong onboarding process helps new hires feel welcome while also setting them up for future success and engagement.

Onboarding in 2021

UST's [2021 Virtual Employee Onboarding Toolkit](#) compiles our top materials and best advice for successful virtual onboarding. UST's 30-60-90 Day Onboarding Plan is the customizable organizer that works well with the Onboarding Checklist to help you put everything together for success. Of course, the toolkit offers much more in templates and information to help you integrate new hires into your organization. Use it with the blog post on [10 steps](#) to successful virtual onboarding.

Build a Sense of Community

Whether virtual or in-person, that first day remains critically important. Be sure to review UST's [five ways](#) to welcome new hires. The savvy HR leader will proactively coordinate a new hire's set-up of proper work equipment and provide updated onboarding packets that really work at home. New hires might feel isolated working remotely, which you can address with a simple buddy system. Don't miss our [on-demand Webinar](#), which provides strategies for streamlining your onboarding processes, engaging new employees, and crafting an employee experience that reflects and supports your company culture.



4. Creative Solutions to Sustain Remote Engagement

When the pandemic shutdowns began, employees at mission-driven organizations overcompensated by working much longer hours at home. Many burned out. Utilize UST's [Employee Engagement Toolkit](#) to help prevent workers from leaving.

Jump Right In

First, stop using your mission as a crutch. Nonprofits must still provide a positive work experience. The challenge is, employee engagement strategies have evolved. UST's Employee Engagement Checklist is customizable to help you meet your employees' developing needs. The toolkit allows you to track and review department strategies, as you work to be more communicative, flexible, and adaptable. More engagement ideas are presented in UST's recent UST Live on [Employee Engagement Strategies for 2021 and Beyond](#).

Support Mental Wellness

Build your staff's emotional resilience and engagement with UST's free resources, including the critically important [Wellness Guide](#) that offers seven thoughtful tips you can implement virtually. You can also, help everyone stay connected with an internal media page where they can share recipes, favorite movies, and wellness tips. It's important to maintain a routine schedule of some normal work practices, such as Performance Reviews — even remotely. Accountability, even when some expectations are relaxed, will help your employees maintain an equilibrium. Try to balance any negative feedback with positives. UST's blog provides [15 valuable tips](#) to help your performance reviews go smoothly in a virtual environment.



Work-Life Balance

No single engagement challenge has been more of a struggle for your employees than maintaining their work-life balance. Help them avoid burnout by conducting UST's [Work-Life Balance Program Self-Audit](#) of your nonprofit. Learn where you need to set clear expectations and guidelines. Has your Time Off program evolved to meet current trends? How about your Dependent Care program? It's time to review these programs plus those in five other critical categories. This audit will help you determine your strengths and weaknesses, so you can build updated robust programs to keep your workforce strong. If work-from-home has brought increased absenteeism or retention problems, this offers practical solutions you need.



Training: From Tried and True to Inspired and New

Many organizations were already providing virtual training when the pandemic began. With a few modifications, it can now be a powerful work-from-home engagement strategy. Ask workers and their managers to identify which skills to improve. Have them also train a level above their current status, so you won't have to pause a job due to attrition. Consider a transparent master development program with topics listed and available company-wide. Structure helps workers from home see clearly how training impacts their careers. Award certificates of completion. Be sure to ask your employees what else they'd like to learn. Keep the options open, and their answers may surprise you. You can learn more in this presentation on [employee development](#).

Authentic Connections

Workers can tell the difference between superficial checklist activities and genuine gratitude from leaders. Ask the team to nominate their weekly hero, so you can pair awards with validation. It's critical to express appreciation and gratitude in an authentic and timely manner. All-staff assemblies should happen more often, especially when virtual, and meetings at every level should begin with recognition of team and individual accomplishments.

Every leader across your organization must elevate the employee experience. Take any opportunity to deep-dive into your employees' experiences and provide genuine, personalized care. Discover more engagement strategies in this important webinar.

SAVE THIS GUIDE

In 2021's first quarter, UST provided innovative strategies and tools that can transform your struggling organization into a powerhouse change agent. Make use of these resources that include [blog posts](#), [webinars](#), [flyers](#), [toolkits](#), and [infographics](#), so your organization can thrive through challenging times.



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