bioss Southern Africa

CASE STUDY · ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Beyond the engagement score

Understanding what holds committed employees back

PHASE 1
Engagement survey

PHASE 2
Employee and manager focus groups

PHASE 3
Integrated organisational diagnosis

> An organisation can have committed employees and still have an environment that makes it difficult for them to thrive.

CLIENT
A large, established organisation with a committed workforce

MANDATE
Explain the conditions shaping engagement, beyond the score

METHOD
Quantitative survey combined with qualitative diagnosis

OUTCOME
Strategic priorities and a phased implementation roadmap

01 — THE CHALLENGE

Committed people, inconsistent experience

A large, established organisation wanted a clearer view of its employee experience and of where it could strengthen engagement, leadership effectiveness and culture. Its people were committed and its purpose was clear, yet there were signs that day-to-day experience was not living up to the organisation's aspirations.

THE REAL QUESTION

A survey would show what employees were experiencing. It would not explain why, or what needed to change. The brief was to understand the organisational conditions driving engagement.

02 — THE BIOSS SA APPROACH

Three lenses, one integrated diagnosis

Quantitative engagement research was combined with qualitative organisational diagnosis, so that each method could test and explain the other.

1

Employee engagement survey

A structured survey mapped the engagement landscape, surfaced strengths and flagged the themes that needed deeper exploration.

ANSWERS
What are people experiencing?

2

Employee and manager focus groups

Separate sessions explored the drivers of engagement, differing perceptions across levels and the practical barriers to performance.

ANSWERS
Why do they experience it?

3

Integrated organisational diagnosis

Both data sets were analysed together to show how leadership, communication, systems and culture interact, rather than treating each score in isolation.

ANSWERS
What must change, and in what order?

03 — WHAT THE DIAGNOSTIC REVEALED

Commitment and experience were out of step

The organisation had genuine strengths to build on. Six interconnected barriers, however, were limiting how far that commitment translated into everyday experience and effectiveness.

STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON | Strong connection to purpose | Willingness to contribute

BARRIERS HOLDING COMMITTED PEOPLE BACK

01 Leadership and accountability

Employees placed high value on visible leaders, consistent decisions and follow-through on commitments.

02 Communication and transparency

Inconsistent messages and limited clarity on decisions were eroding confidence and alignment.

03 Psychological safety

People needed more confidence to raise concerns, challenge decisions and speak openly without repercussions.

04 Organisational trust

Trust hinged as much on whether feedback led to visible action as on what leaders said.

05 Organisational agility

Complex processes, unclear decision rights and slow decisions were causing frustration and limiting effectiveness.

06 Career development

Growth opportunities, career pathways and recognition all needed greater clarity.

WHY IT MATTERS: THE BARRIERS COMPOUND

These are interconnected features of one environment, with the potential to reinforce each other.

Slow, unclear decisions → Inconsistent communication → Feedback without visible action → Trust weakens → **People stop speaking up**

Illustrative pathway. Fewer issues surface, so decisions stay slow and the cycle repeats. Fixing one barrier in isolation is unlikely to break it.

04 — FROM FINDINGS TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Six barriers, five priorities, one roadmap

The findings were consolidated into a focused set of priorities, giving leadership a structured route from diagnosis to action instead of a series of disconnected initiatives.

BARRIER IDENTIFIED	STRATEGIC PRIORITY
Leadership and accountability	**Strengthen leadership accountability**
Communication and transparency	**Improve communication**
Organisational trust Psychological safety	**Build trust and psychological safety** COMBINED
Organisational agility	**Simplify decision-making**
Career development	**Make development opportunities visible**

PHASED ROADMAP

Prioritisation › **Clear ownership** › **Sustained improvement**

05 — THE VALUE DELIVERED

- ✓ Separated organisational strengths from the barriers limiting experience
- ✓ Identified themes common to every organisational level
- ✓ Turned complex findings into actionable strategic priorities
- ✓ Explained the drivers of engagement, beyond the survey results
- ✓ Linked leadership behaviour, systems and workplace culture
- ✓ Gave leadership a practical roadmap for improvement

THE BROADER INSIGHT

Engagement reflects how well leadership, culture, systems and structures enable people to contribute. The real value lies in understanding the dynamics behind the score.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOARD

Do we know why our engagement scores are what they are?

Where are our own systems holding committed people back?

When employees give feedback, do they see what we did with it?

Confidentiality note: this illustrative case study is informed by a client engagement. Identifying characteristics and certain findings have been generalised to protect client confidentiality. It does not report verified post-implementation outcomes.