

The art and science of organisational *success*



Inside Insync's Alignment and Engagement framework

Every organisation has two invisible engines: purpose and people. When purpose gives direction and people bring energy, work becomes meaningful and performance follows naturally.

The Alignment and Engagement Survey ("AES") was designed to help leaders see that intersection clearly. It measures not just engagement, but the alignment that enables engagement to last. Because when people understand 'why' the organisation exists and see how their work contributes to that purpose, they pull together with clarity and conviction.

The duality of Alignment and Engagement

Alignment and Engagement are not separate concepts; they are two sides of the same coin. Alignment provides direction - ensuring everyone rows in the same direction. Engagement provides drive - the passion and persistence to keep rowing, even when conditions change.

Our research and the broader literature show that alignment drives engagement, and engagement reinforces alignment, forming a virtuous cycle of sustained performance.

Meta-analytic research confirms this

Organisations scoring in the top quartile for engagement show 23% higher profitability and 18% higher productivity (Harter et al., 2024). Engagement correlates strongly with lower turnover, higher customer satisfaction, and better wellbeing.

Alignment magnifies that effect: when strategy, systems, and leadership are coherent, engagement doesn't just rise - it endures.

The science behind the AES

The AES measures two necessary conditions for high performance:

- Alignment – clarity, coherence, and adaptability across six organisational dimensions.
- Engagement – the emotional and behavioural energy that fuels performance.

The seven AES factors

- 1. Strategy and direction** – do people understand why the organisation exists, what it is trying to achieve, and how it stands out from competitors? Do they see diversity and inclusion as part of the strategy?
- 2. Senior leadership** – do senior leaders inspire confidence by listening, communicating openly, and encouraging new ideas?
- 3. Team leadership** – do managers support their people, provide useful feedback, and care about both performance and wellbeing?
- 4. Team effectiveness** – do teams work well together, set ambitious goals, hold each other accountable, and adapt positively to change?
- 5. Investment in people** – are employees supported to learn and grow? Do they feel recognised, valued, and looked after in terms of career and wellbeing?
- 6. Tools and support** – do processes, technology, and collaboration across departments make it easier, not harder, for people to do their best work?
- 7. Engagement** – do employees speak positively about their organisation? Do they intend to stay? Do they feel proud and emotionally invested?

Each factor includes multiple survey items validated across industries. AES's reliability and validity are statistically robust:

- Cronbach's Alpha = 0.83 – 0.93 across domains (excellent internal consistency).
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis: CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05 - indicating a good model fit.
- These values meet or exceed accepted psychometric standards (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

This means AES is not just diagnostic - it's predictive. It reliably distinguishes factors that shape engagement and performance.

Insights from systematic reviews

Independent research supports the AES model. Harter et al. (2024) integrated results from 456 research studies and found consistent, causal relationships between engagement and performance outcomes -profitability, productivity, quality, safety, and retention. Bailey et al. (2017) synthesised 214 studies and concluded that meaningful work, leadership support, and organisational justice underpin sustained engagement. Do & Mai (2021) and de Waal (2012) examined high-performing organisations worldwide and found shared antecedents that mirror AES's structure:

- clear purpose and differentiation (Strategy and direction)
- leadership quality and trust (Senior leadership)
- learning, adaptability, and people development (Investment in people and Team effectiveness)
- systems coherence and process integration (Tools and support)

Together, these reviews validate that the same elements AES measures - clarity, leadership, collaboration, capability, and enablement are the common DNA of high performance.

Recent enhancements: relevant and efficient

The 2025 revalidation of AES had two goals: relevance and efficiency.

1. Relevance in a BANI world

We live in an era that is Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible ("BANI").

The AES was refreshed to capture emerging drivers of resilience and agility:

- diversity and inclusion – inclusive cultures fuel innovation and belonging (Gartner, 2022).
- change agility – adaptability and open communication predict successful transformation (Prosci, 2023; Keller & Schaninger, 2020).
- wellbeing and psychological safety – cultures of care and trust link directly to engagement (Edmondson, 2018).
- hybrid work and AI integration – evolving work models demand clearer alignment and better digital enablement (Harter et al., 2024).

2. Efficiency for client needs

AES was streamlined to reduce survey fatigue while retaining predictive power. Through pilot testing and confirmatory analysis, the revised question set maintained alpha levels within 0.83-0.93. The outcome: a survey concise enough for modern attention spans yet rigorous enough for statistical reliability.

From insight to action

The AES helps leaders move from awareness to action by:

1. identifying misalignments before they become risks.
2. pinpointing leverage points-for example, strengthening team leadership or cross-team collaboration.
3. tracking progress year over year to show how leadership investments translate into culture change.

Unlike engagement surveys that only measure sentiment, AES connects the dots between strategy, systems, and human experience - showing exactly where clarity turns into momentum.

Why this matters now

Organisations that ignore alignment and engagement pay invisible taxes: wasted effort, lost talent, and declining trust. Those that invest gain measurable returns - stronger customer loyalty, higher innovation, lower turnover, and sustained profitability.

When people understand 'why' their work matters, feel trusted to do it well, and have the support to deliver, the result isn't just engagement - it's pride, ownership, and performance that endures.

The AES is not merely a survey - it's a mirror. It helps leaders see whether purpose and people are moving together. In a world defined by change, the question that defines enduring organisations is simple: *Are our people pulling in the same direction - and do they know why?*

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