

# Successful M&As

## Preparing Leaders and Teams to Thrive



### Building the business case for frequent strengths-based conversations and real-time, reliable measurement — especially in times of change.

A sharp decline in employee engagement is one of the largest risks leaders must manage during mergers and acquisitions (M&As). Feeling anxious and uncertain about their future, most employees question their job security and their perceived value to the new organization. Employees can turn inward, focusing on self-preservation rather than on how their unique contribution can contribute to their team and organization.

This turbulent, emotional time makes it more important than ever for a leader to communicate effectively and understand how his or her team is feeling. For the organization, ensuring that leaders are equipped to do this can be the difference between success and failure in the short and long term.

#### How to spot a potential problem — and fix it

In the midst of being acquired, leaders of a successful healthcare organization expected to see signs of added pressure, uncertainty, and overwhelm. Even though they had built a highly engaged culture, the organization still experienced a 14% decrease in engagement. In order to minimize the impact of this disruption, the organization needed a way to frequently see into team members' overall engagement level and to identify more localized hot spots and areas of high resilience. Most importantly, the organization needed to ensure that team leaders were equipped to make each team member feel heard and keep their teams focused on the right priorities.

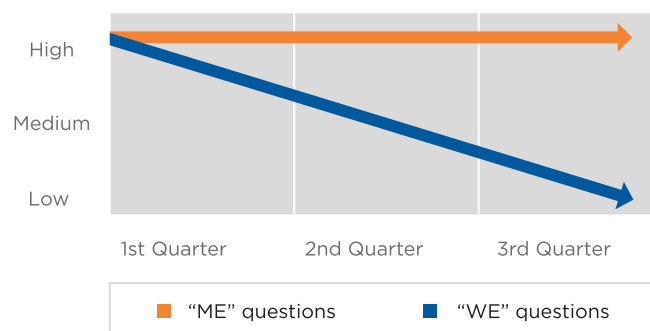
#### Immediate line of sight into future periods of intense change — plus prescriptive actions

Already using StandOut's Engagement Pulse, the organization had been measuring and increasing engagement each quarter. Shortly after the acquisition announcement, the organization had leaders launch an Engagement Pulse. Not unexpectedly, engagement dipped to 31%, a 6% decrease

from a six-quarter running average of 37% of the workforce being "Fully Engaged."

However, diving deeper into the StandOut Engagement Pulse results told a different — and exciting — story. Since the Engagement Pulse measures several dimensions of engagement, the organization was able to segment employees' experience with the overall organization ("We" questions) and their individual experience with work ("Me" questions). Not unexpectedly, the "We" questions saw a consistent and significant decline over the 3 quarters of the acquisition process. The "Me" questions, however, remained steady over the 3 quarters. How did the organization keep engagement high on these survey items through turbulent change? An established culture of frequent conversation and connection powered by StandOut's Check-In functionality.

#### Engagement Levels



Having the ability to measure engagement in real time, team by team, has been key to understanding precise areas of engagement decline — and insights on what to do. Engagement Pulse data has given organizational leaders the ability to know the true impact external changes are having on their employees, and identify any patterns in their newly merged employee population.