

A woman with voluminous curly brown hair is smiling and looking towards the right. She is wearing a white sleeveless top with a ruffled front and is holding a silver pen in her right hand. The background is a blurred office setting with other people.

Make Learning Stick:

Driving Engagement in Leadership Programs

2026 Actionable Insights



Letter from Chris

New to this series? Last year's edition laid the groundwork for where this one begins. Read the [2025 Engagement report here](#). If you were with us last year, consider this the next step in the same argument.

Within Your Control

I've spent 18 years chasing a single question: why does so little of what happens in a training room actually stick?

Lately, the industry seems to be settling on an answer: It's "the environment".

The reasoning goes like this: we know a clear path is required to make change stick, but that path isn't ours to control. It takes a systemic shift. A cultural shift. A change to the whole environment. And (the common refrain seems to go) that broader system is beyond what any one program or facilitator can influence.

There's truth in it (of course there is). The "big-E Environment" (the structures, the incentives, the operational culture a participant goes back to) is real, and most of it sits outside our reach. That's a daunting story.

But it's not the *whole* story. And treating it as the whole story victimizes us when – I believe – this is a critical juncture for the learning profession to step up. (Not slink into the shadows of impotence)

Here's what the data in this report shows, across 45,133 behavior-change commitments and 3,959 leadership sessions:

There's a smaller environment, (*the "small-e one", if you will*) that has a disproportionate impact on a participant's willingness and ability to make lasting change happen.



This small-e environment is the one shaped by the people in most immediate contact with the participant.

It carries disproportionate influence on the behaviors of participants and is very much within your control. It's shaped like this:

- **The cadence (and normalization) of reflection.**
- **Standardizing accountability partners.**
- **A facilitator who shows up in the weeks after the room empties.**
- **Peers who can see each other's commitments and encourage each other.**

That environment is yours to shape. And when you shape it well, the change sticks. Measurably.

Even when the broader organization offers no support at all.

I invite you to sit with that. You don't have to wait for the culture to change. You don't need permission from the C-suite. Levers already proven to drive demonstrable change are already in your hands.

Post-workshop behavior change is where good intentions either become results or quietly disappear. It's also the part most directly shaped by how you design and deploy your programs.

In the pages ahead you'll find declarative findings and a few open questions. Clear trends and the odd anomaly. Take what's relevant for you, right now, and put it to work.

The environment that makes change stick is closer than the industry would have you believe. It's yours.

Your work matters. *(Now, more than ever)*

Keep going.

Chris Taylor
Founder | Actionable.co



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Engagement: How We Measure It & Why it Matters

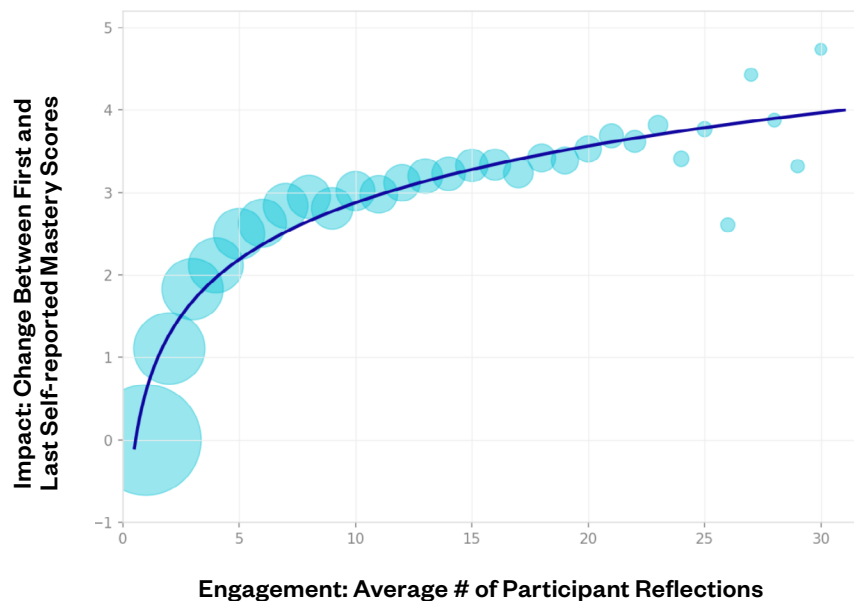
Actionable.co's *Habit Builder* technology supports and measures participant behavior change following facilitated learning sessions.

Via the Habit Builder, participants reflect regularly (usually for a three-to-four-week period¹), supported by nudges to maintain engagement. Actionable tracks three key metrics:

- **Adoption:** Percentage of workshop participants who commit to behavior change.
- **Engagement:** Participants' frequency of reflecting/checking-in on their commitment.
- **Impact:** Measurable progress toward the intended behavior change.

This report focuses on how to increase **Engagement**; how to keep participants reflecting on their behavior change commitments longer, and drive the desired behavior change as a result.

We're focused on Engagement here because (a) it's something facilitators and program designers can influence, and (b) Engagement directly correlates with measurable impact.



Higher Engagement → Greater Behavior Change

This report examines the levers that drive higher Engagement.

They broadly organize into 2 categories: “Daily Practice” and “Social Support”

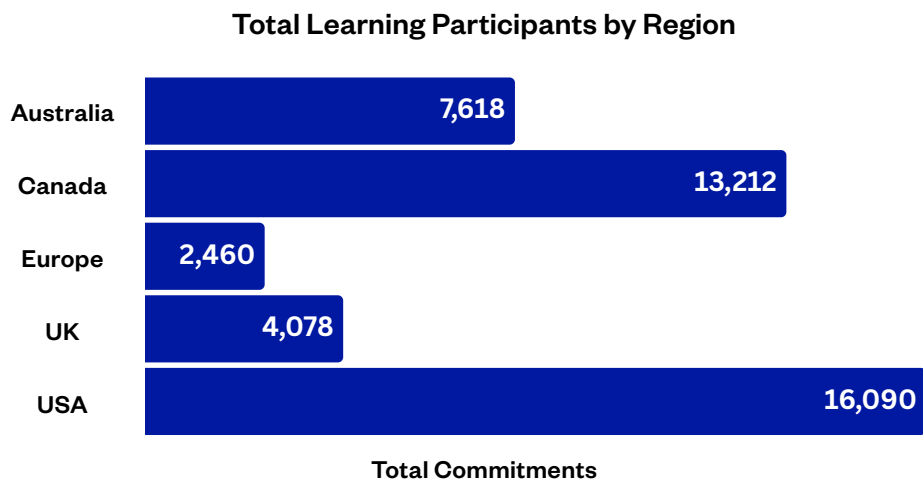
¹ For the purposes of this report, all behavior change cycles have been normalized to 30 days. So where you see “7.2 engagement”, that represents the average participant reflecting on their progress (and logging it via Actionable's Habit Builder platform), 7.2 times over a 30 day period.



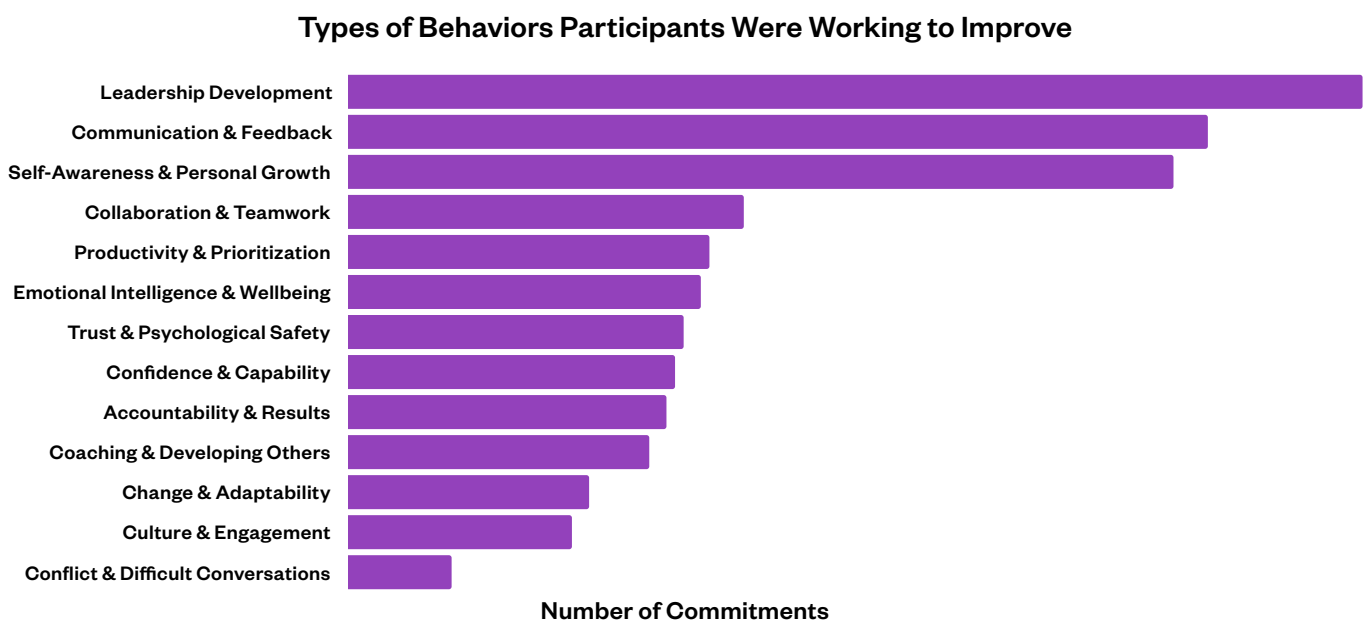
Where the Data Comes From

This report analyzes data from 45,133 behavior-change commitments across 3,959 facilitated professional development sessions globally, January 1, 2023 – March 31, 2026.

901 organizations were included in this analysis, including organizations from the Financial Sector, Health Care, Professional Services, Consumer Packaged Goods, Communication and Entertainment sectors as well as Government entities.



These programs covered a range of soft skill topics (13 topic areas we've mapped – see below), skewing mostly towards Leadership Development, Communication Skills & Collaboration.



All programs were professionally facilitated by external consulting firms.





Daily Practice

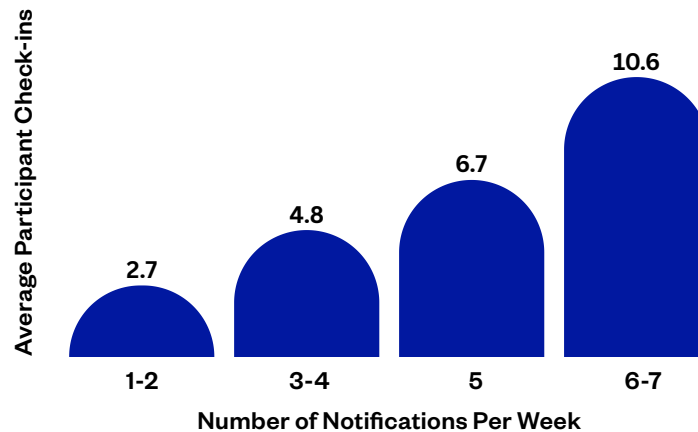
We need to help participants commit to change that they can practice regularly, not just in high stakes moments.



Daily Practice

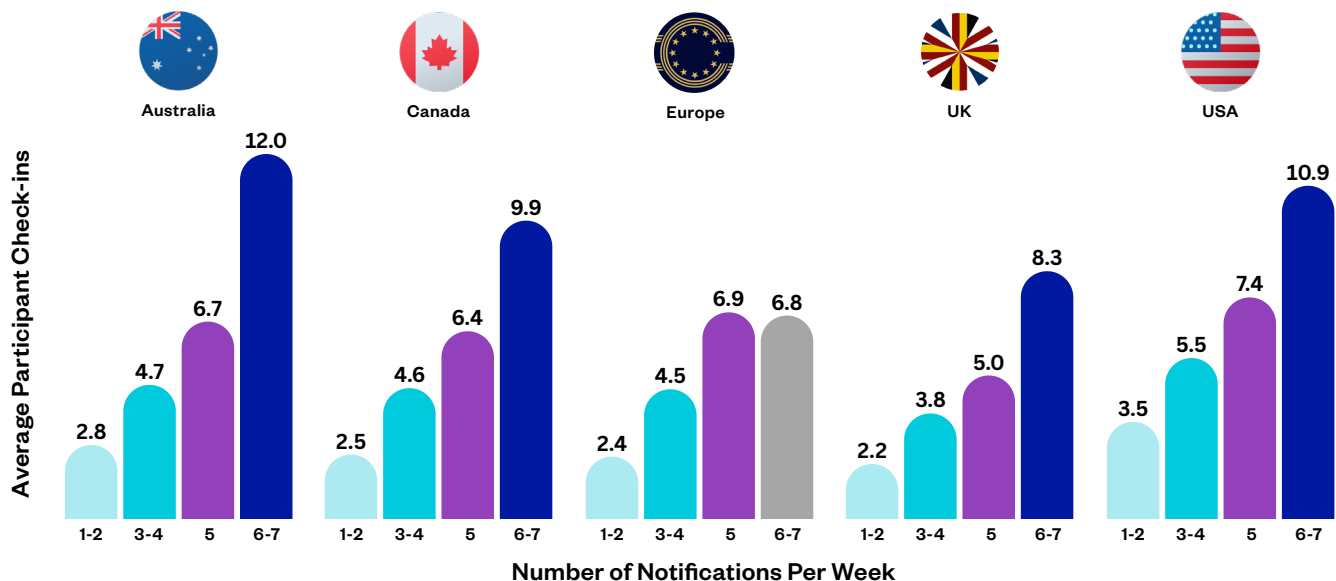
The more often a participant is reminded of their commitment to behavior change (and encouraged to reflect on their progress) the more engaged they're likely to be.

Participant Engagement Increases with More Notifications



This trend holds true across all industries and geographies:

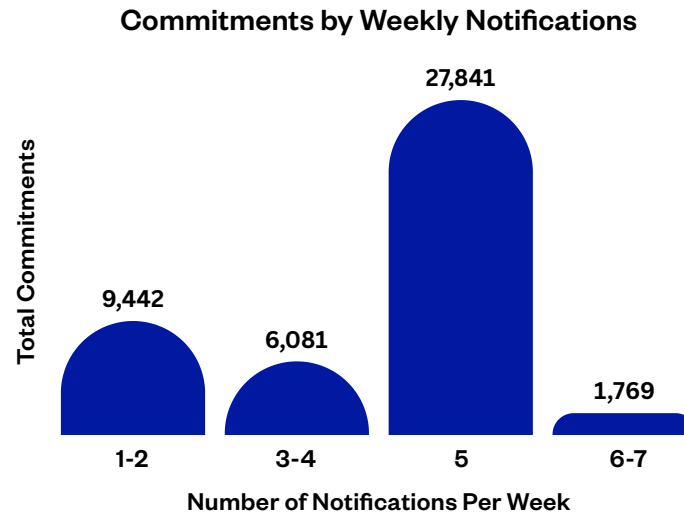
Participant Engagement by Weekly Notifications by Country/Region



Most noteworthy is the substantial increase in engagement when participants receive 6+ notifications/week. (Europe has only a handful of commitments with 6-7 notifications so we should not draw conclusions about that group). As the Actionable methodology is to nudge a max of once/day, 6+ requires notifications on non-working days.



Not surprisingly, very few commitments (less than 4%) are set to receive notifications 6+ times/week.



Encouraging participants to commit to behaviors they can practice 6–7 days per week significantly enhances engagement.

The two caveats worth noting:

- 1** The behavior change a participant commits to needs to be something they can actually practice 6+ days/week. Often, this requires restructuring the commitment to be less tactical and more... behavioral.
- 2** The participant needs to **choose** to receive notifications/nudges 6+ days / week. Intrinsic motivation is an important element to sustained engagement. As a facilitator, you can typically achieve this by leveraging the 3:1 Ratio, ensuring participants have plenty of opportunity to find their own reason to want to change.

Go Deeper: How to Craft Effective Behavior Change Commitments



Go Deeper: How to Motivate Participants to Want to Change



Opportunity:

Less than 4% of participants (1,769) selected 6+ notifications weekly, despite a significant potential benefit:

- Participants opting for **6+ days/week** notifications saw a **58% increase** in Engagement over those who received 5 notifications/week.



Social Support

The people most immediately in regular contact with the participant play an outsized role in how that participant applies what they learned in a workshop.



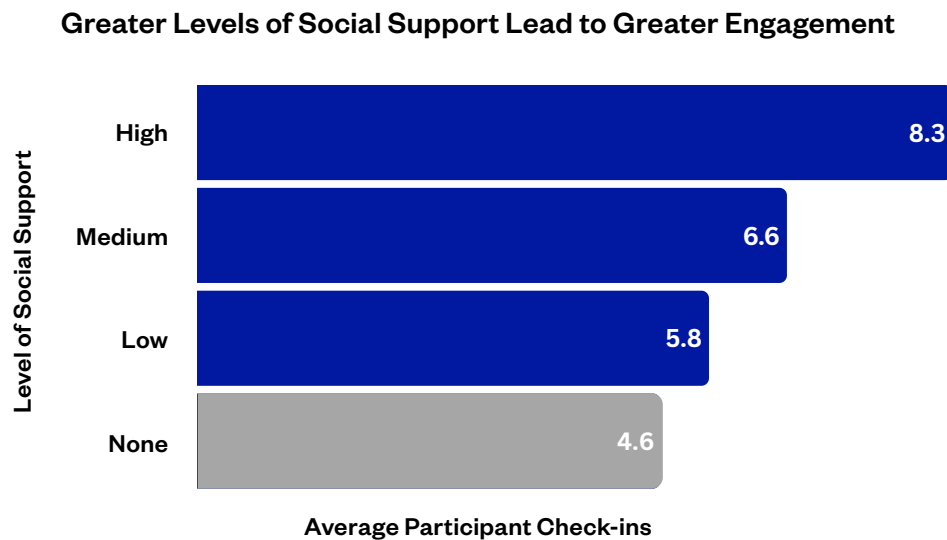
Social Support

Participants' environments significantly influence behavior-change sustainability. Proactively shaping this environment via "Social Support" enhances engagement and impact.

There are three elements of social support we track via Actionable:

- **Accountability Partners**
- **Facilitator/Consultant Engagement**
- **Peer Visibility**

The more social support a participant has, the more engaged they're likely to be in establishing their new behavior.



For simplicity, we've organized the level of social support a participant receives into 4 groupings: None, Low, Medium and High. Those levels are determined based on the total number of "check-ins" a participant received across all social support channels (Accountability Partners and Facilitators) over a 30-day period, as well as whether they had "peer visibility" on their commitment. ("Visibility on" was counted as 1 check in).

Low = 1-2 Social Support check-ins

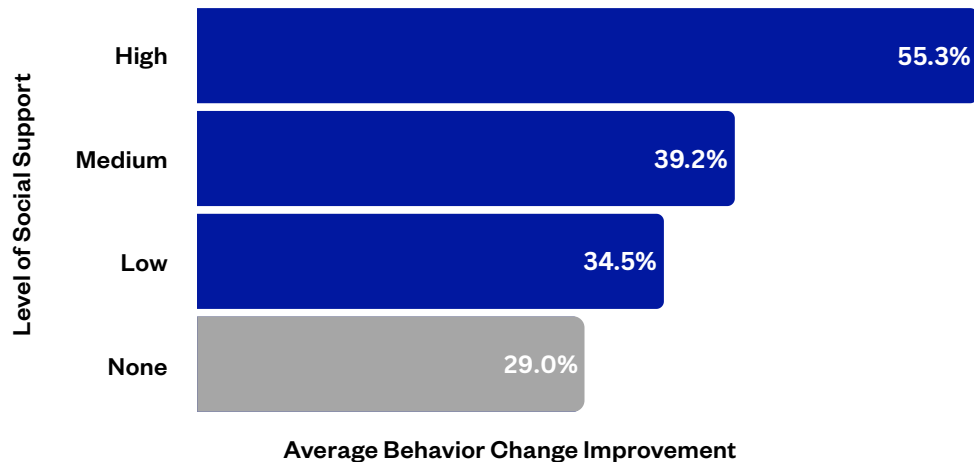
Medium = 3-4 Social Support check-ins

High = 5+ Social Support check-ins



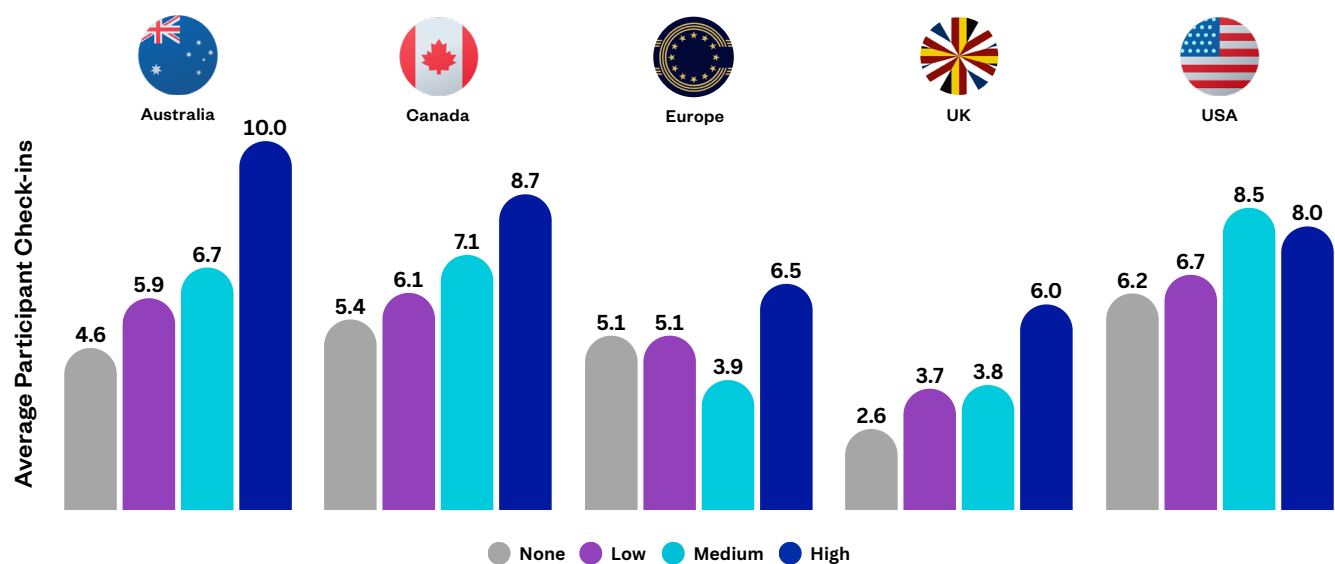
As noted earlier, greater engagement = greater impact. From this study, we found that participants with high levels of social support reported 91% greater behavior change than those with no social support. (55.3% vs 29.0%)

Participants with High Social Support see Greater Average Behavior Change



High Social Support correlates with substantial jumps in engagement in Australia, Canada and Europe. Curiously, medium social support correlates to the greatest improvement in the US, with high support levels offering nominal improvements in engagement.

Participant Engagement by Social Support by Country/Region

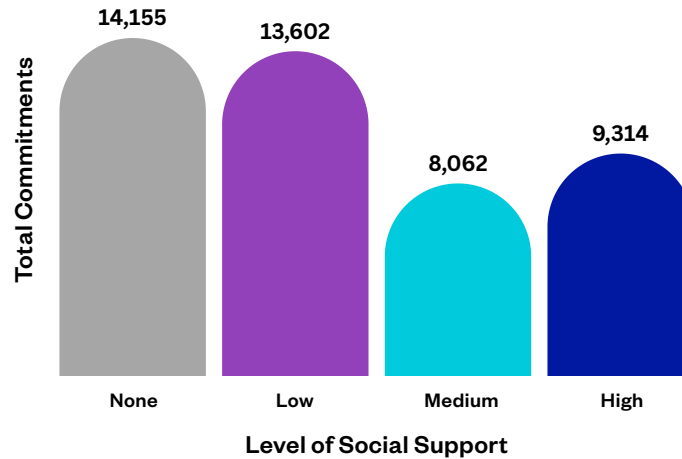


As we'll explore in more detail in subsequent sections of this report, all elements of Social Support are underutilized.



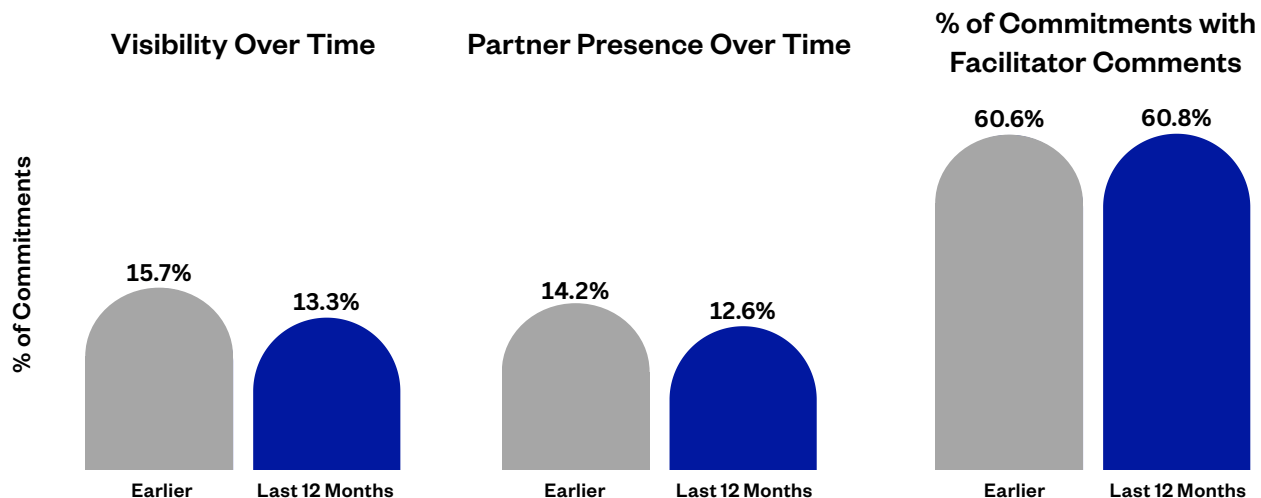
Of the 45,133 behavior-change commitments analyzed, only 20% were classified as having a high level of social support.

Most Behavior Change Commitments do not have High Social Support¹



When we dig into the data a degree further, we see that there is still substantial opportunity for greater change impact through greater social support.

The following pages provide more detail on each.



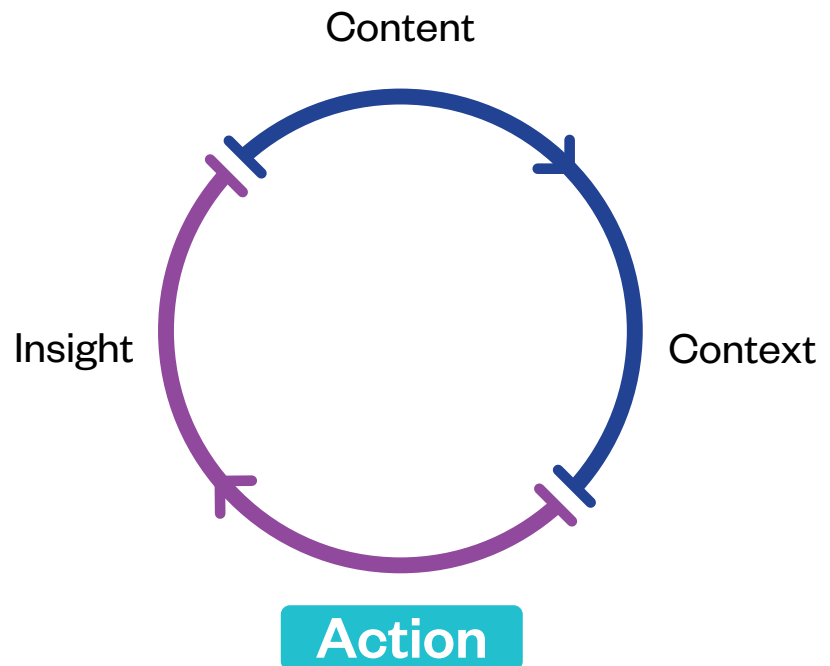
Recap:

- Higher levels of Social Support correlate with substantially increased behavior-change outcomes.
- Effects are particularly strong in Australia, Europe, and Canada.
- Currently, most commitments have low or no Social Support, highlighting a significant opportunity to improve the impact of most leadership programs.

How to Activate each Social Support Element

There are three components to Social Support: Accountability Partners, Facilitator Engagement and Peer Visibility. Each of these can be activated in isolation, or “stacked” to drive even greater engagement.

- Happens in a training room with a facilitator
- Happens outside of the training room, and when participants are on their own in most cases



Go Deeper: Learn the Insight-Action Flywheel





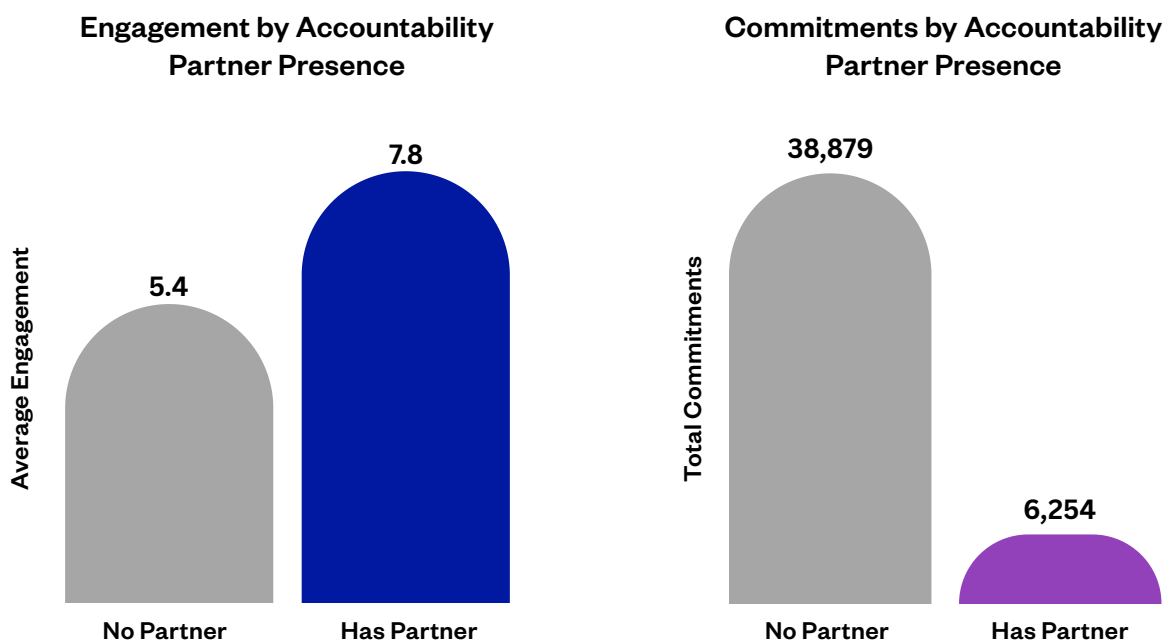
Accountability Partners

An Accountability Partner, as defined by Actionable, is an individual invited by a participant to support them in achieving a behavior change.

The Accountability Partner receives an invitation, agrees to the role, and is then prompted, typically on a weekly basis, to check in with the participant to assess their progress.

Having an Accountability Partner increases participant check-ins from 5.4 to 7.8; a 44% improvement in engagement.

Surprisingly few behavior change commitments actually include an Accountability Partner. Out of 45,133 total commitments, only 6,254 had an Accountability Partner identified.



Go Deeper: How to Encourage and Equip Accountability Partners in your Programs



The simple, cost-effective act of encouraging participants to select an Accountability Partner could provide significant impact improvements to most learning programs.

Even if the Partner never checks in with the Participant, simply having one moves the needle (6.0 vs 5.4 check-ins on average with no Partner)

And... Interaction level matters. The more the Partner engages, the more the Participant does likewise.

Specifically, we can see that ~weekly check-ins (4x+/month) correlate to disproportionately high levels of participant engagement.

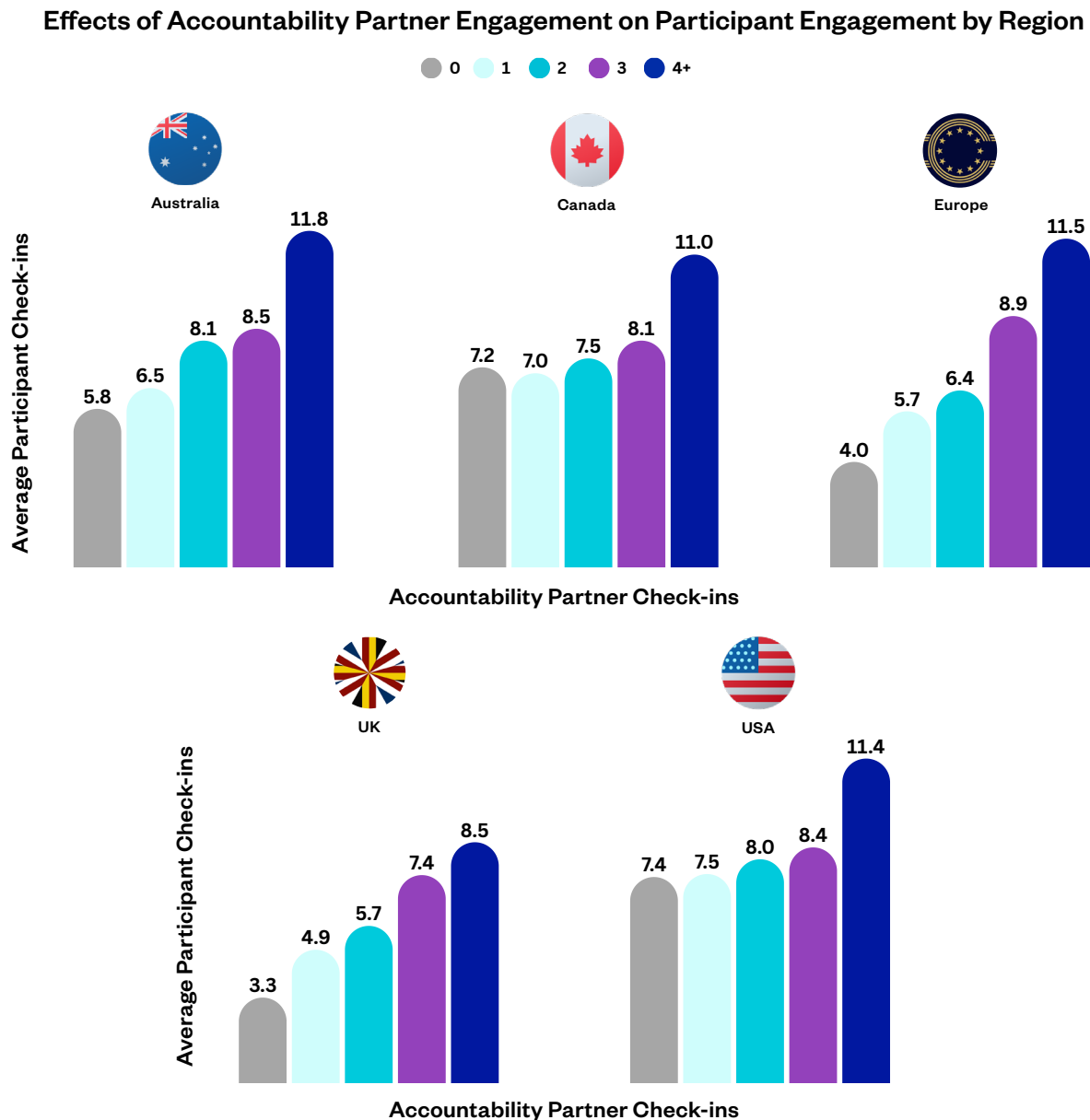
4+ Partner Check-ins Correlate with a 113% Increase in Participant Check-ins



Go Deeper: How to Encourage and Equip Accountability Partners in your Programs



This trend is consistent across all regions and industries, with particularly notable effects in Australia and Europe.



Key Points:

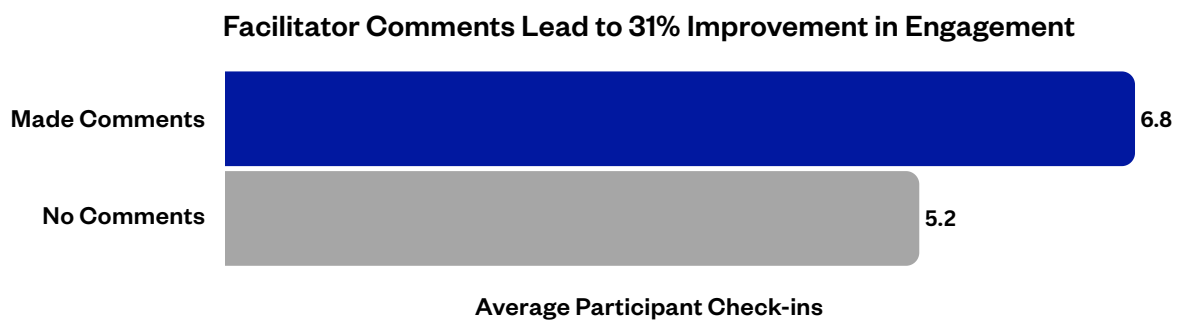
- **44% increase in engagement by simply having an accountability partner.**
(Up from 41% in last year's report)
- **Only 14% of participants currently select a partner.**
(Down from 19% in last year's report)
- **113% increase in engagement if the partner checks in at least once per week.**
(Up from 108% in last year's report)



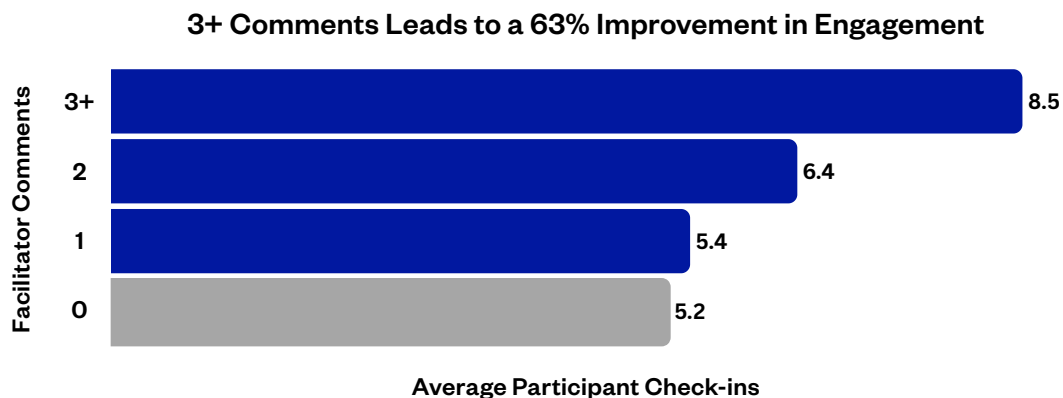
Facilitator Engagement

Facilitators are often limited to what happens in the room, but our data shows that when they engage with participants in the weeks following a session, they significantly boost the likelihood of participants following through on their commitments. We define facilitator engagement as the facilitator entering the Actionable platform to provide encouragement, coaching, or additional content at specified intervals.

Facilitators and consultants extending their role beyond sessions dramatically enhance participant engagement. Active facilitator interactions post-session reinforce commitment sustainability.



Consistent facilitator interaction can have a material impact on Engagement. While there are small improvements with any number of comments, the real gains come when facilitators comment at least once a week. At three or more facilitator comments over a 30-day period, average participant check-ins jump to an average of 8.5.



Go Deeper: How Facilitators Engage Efficiently & Effectively, Post Training Session

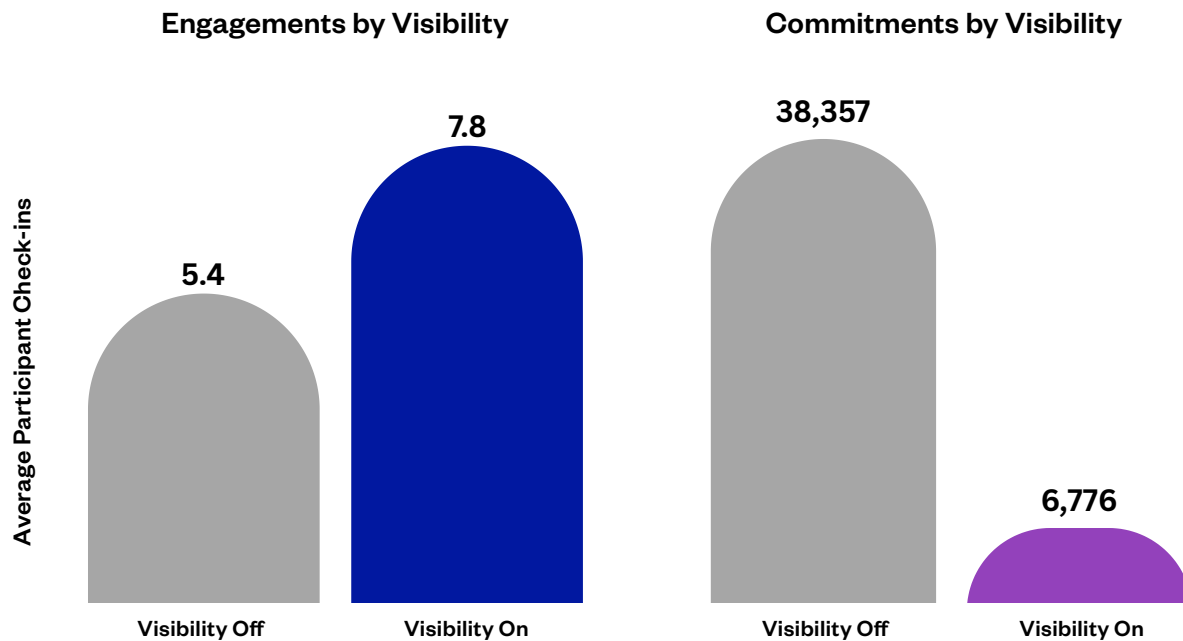




Peer Visibility

Through the Actionable platform, participants can choose to enable “peer visibility”. Turning this feature on allows the participant’s cohort peers to see the focus of their behavior change commitment, how active they are (i.e., check-in frequency), and the rating change from their last check-in. This visibility does not include personal journal entries or comments from accountability partners, managers, or the facilitator.

Participants without peer visibility average 5.4 check-ins, while those with it average 7.8 (44% increase) Yet, only 15% of commitments have peer visibility turned on, (6,776 of 38,357 without. *(Down 1% from last year)*)

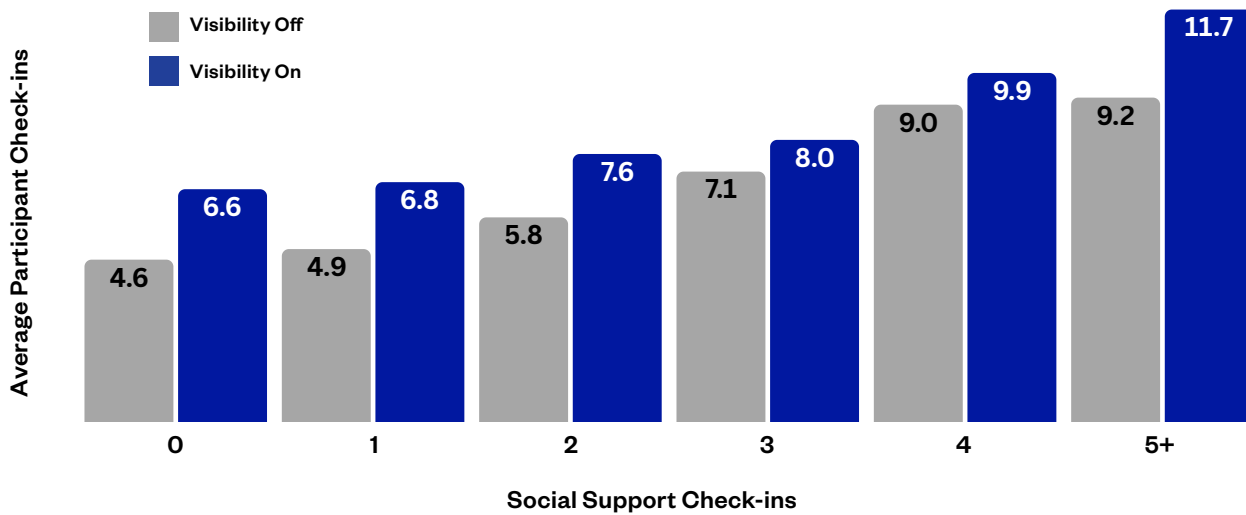


Go Deeper: Normalize Action as Participants Leave the Room



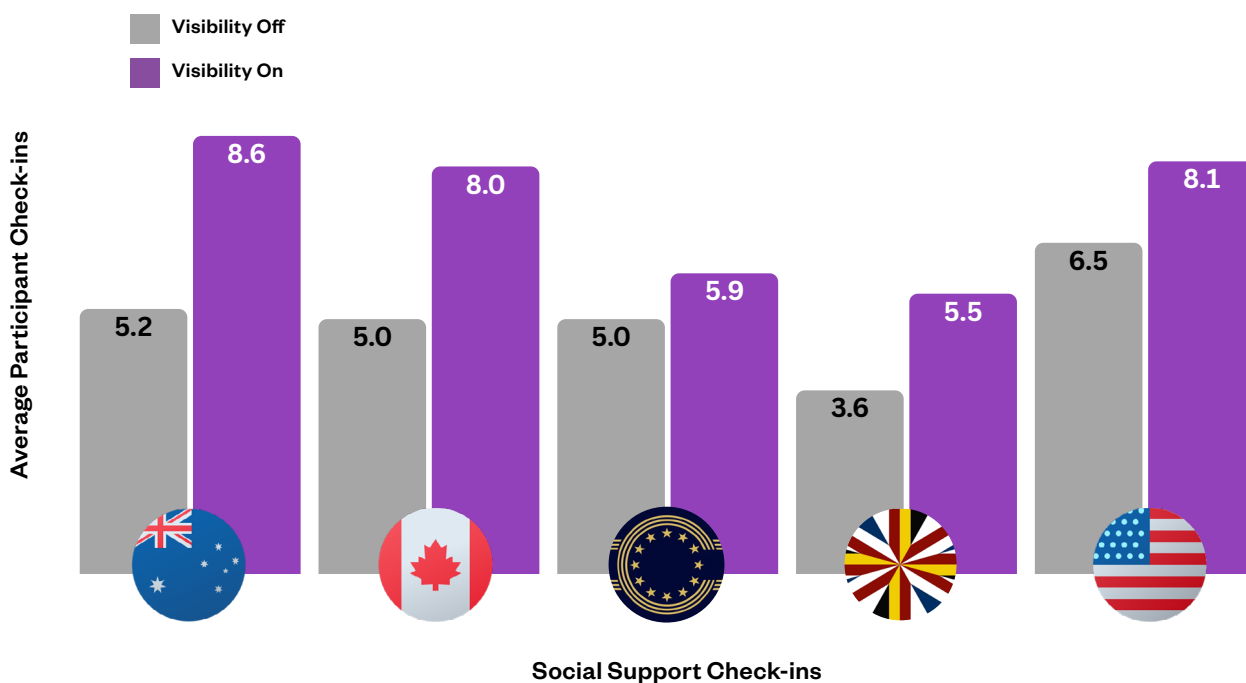
Making commitments visible to peers significantly amplifies their impact, especially when combined with the other Social Support elements of check-ins from facilitators and accountability buddies. Visibility creates peer accountability, fostering greater, sustained engagement.

Participant Engagement is Higher with Combined Social Support



Peer visibility is particularly effective in Australia and Canada, where it correlates with a 65% and 60% increase in engagement, respectively.

Effects of Commitment Visibility on Participant Engagement by Country/Region





Conclusion & Action Steps

Development programs yield greater, sustained behavioral changes when strategically designed to maximize engagement through daily-practicable commitments, frequent nudges, and intentional social support.

Action Steps:



Encourage commitments suitable for daily reflection. (4)



Advocate for participants to opt-in for more frequent weekly notifications. (7)



Systematically integrate Accountability Partners, promote active Facilitator involvement, and make commitments peer-visible. (10)

Embracing these levers will drive significantly higher Engagement, ensuring your programs deliver lasting impact.





Resources

The report you've just reviewed provides insight on the relative impact of daily practice and social support in sustaining and amplifying behavior change. Engagement is one part of ensuring your training programs drive demonstrable impact for the client organization. Other reports in the set can be accessed below at no cost.



Adoption Report How to Optimize Session Logistics



Impact Report How to Tell the Business Impact Story



2025 Insight Report Elevate Your Training Impact



The Behavior Change Toolkit starts with a 13 Question Self Assessment, and then provides the specific trainings and tools to sharpen your own programs through the Impact Consultant framework. Completely Free.



Start the Assessment





About Actionable

Since 2008, Actionable.co has been focused on solving just one problem: “How do we reliably translate new learning into value-creating behavior change?”

In other words:

How do you make learning stick, in a way that's measurable?

What started as business book summaries (2008) evolved into corporate training (2011), a team based learning methodology (2014) and, ultimately, behavior change technology for corporate trainers and organizations (2019).

In partnership with a small network of boutique consulting firms, Actionable has supported over 6000 corporate change initiatives, resulting in over 2,000,000 data points related to behavior change in a corporate setting.

In addition to Insights reports (like this one), we've leveraged our experience to provide consultants with technology, methodology, playbooks and a robust community to help them consistently (and demonstrably) drive lasting behavior change for their clients.

Do you lead a consulting practice? We'd be happy to provide a deeper understanding of the Habit Builder technology and explore how we might work together to amplify and measure your behavior change impact.

- Working with Actionable provides consultants with access to:
- Playbooks and best practices for immediately amplifying impact
- Technology to support learners in their application of learning
- Standard and custom report templates to efficiently communicate impact
- Machine learning generated recommendations
- Global benchmarking for you and your clients
- Private access to a global peer forum of like-minded consultancy owners
- Unlimited coaching and hands-on support

Consultants interested in leveraging Actionable in their own work can visit [Actionable.co](https://actionable.co) or [book a call](#) to explore possibilities.





Actionable's models and technology wouldn't exist were it not for the exceptional research and publications of BJ Fogg, Charles Duhigg, Robert Keegan, Lisa Lahey, Michael Bungay Stanier, Daniel Pink, Daniel Kahneman, Sir Ken Robinson, Simon Sinek, James Clear, Dan Heath, Chip Heath, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Katy Milkman, Angela Duckworth, John Kotter and many, many more.

This report, in particular, would not have been possible without the collaboration and innovative spirit of the over 500 consulting firms and 1000+ consultants we've worked with in bringing a behavior change focus to corporate learning programs across the globe.

While behavior change and "habits," specifically, have become popular topics in the public zeitgeist over the last 10 years, these consultants (and their clients) have been the pioneers in believing "more is possible" when it comes to supporting and proving impact.

Let's continue to move the needle. The work matters.



Contributors



Chris Taylor

As Founder and President at Actionable.co, Chris helps facilitators, consultants and coaches ensure transfer of learning & proving the behavior change impact of their programming. When he's not growing Actionable.co, Chris can be found ensconced in the kitchen, music studio, or on the playground with his two young boys.



Leah Patriarco

Leah helps organizations with meaningful missions use data intentionally and effectively in order to tell their story and positively impact their communities. She is dedicated to helping Actionable.co's consultants, clients, and staff have access to clear and compelling data. When she's not delving into data she can be found baking for friends, hosting games nights, or picking up a new hobby to add to the already long list.



Actionable.

2026