



Actionable.

Make Learning Stick

How to Drive Engagement in Leadership Programs

2025 Actionable Insights



Letter from Chris

I've been drawn to the "knowing-doing" gap ever since I came across the concept 18 years ago.

The very fact that we could be inspired to change but not act was a mystery and paradox to me back then.

The more I've studied it – the longer I've attempted to solve for it – the more I've come to appreciate that it's actually not that complicated.

For functioning adults to change behavior, we need three things to be true:

1. We need to know "how" to change
2. We need a strong enough "why" to want to change
3. We need a clear path to make that change stick

Simple. Not easy.

And, sadly, not the focus of most corporate learning programs.

Even in 2025, we tend to over index training design to address point 1.

We focus on content and delivery, teaching people how to change, when "how" is rarely the challenging question.

Participants can learn "how" in more ways than ever before. YouTube Videos, GPT chats, LMS libraries with lifetimes worth of content can all teach us "how."

It could be argued we now have too much "how." We're inundated with content in all facets of our lives. Too much noise. Not enough signal.

"How" is rarely the problem.

"How" is also no longer the sole domain of L&D and, by extension, it's not where we can provide the most value.

"Why" is still a problem for many people.

With a constant deluge of notifications, noise and competing priorities, we (often) avoid the challenging work of tapping into our motivations. We become reactive to the alerts and demands of others versus asking what we really want, why we want it, and what impact achieving it will have on our lives (and the lives of those around us).

Most training programs would benefit from a re-balancing.

Less content. More context.



More opportunity for participants to find their own reason why they should want to apply anything they've learned.

And even then...

Intrinsic motivation isn't enough to make learning stick.

Even once participants have a strong, personal "why" for making the change happen, they need a path forward to practice and realize that change.

This third element of change – the shaping of the path to making change stick – is, in my opinion, the domain of learning professionals.

This is where we can provide the most value and create the greatest impact with our work.

The report you're reading is our latest attempt to demonstrate what works, consistently, in shaping that path for your learners.

In the following pages, you'll find declarative statements and unanswered questions. Obvious trends and curious anomalies.

Our work is by no means complete, but I can say this for certain: **how we support participants *after they leave the room* is the determining factor in making change happen.**

My hope is that you'll take what's relevant for you – right now – and apply it to your programs.

That – as an industry – we can expand our attention beyond only what happens in the room.

That we continue to align with the best interests of the organizations and participants we serve.

That we can help make meaningful change happen; consistently and undeniably.

This is the future of Learning & Development.

Lean in. Your work matters.

Chris Taylor
Founder | Actionable.co



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Engagement: What it is & Why it Matters

"Sustainment" as it's often referred to comes in two parts: The **commitment** to applying concepts from the learning, and the **follow through**, or what we call "Engagement."

Actionable.co's Habit Builder technology helps participants (a) convert good intention into a daily practice, and then (b) stick with their commitment to change over a three-to-four-week period.

Actionable tracks three key metrics through that process:

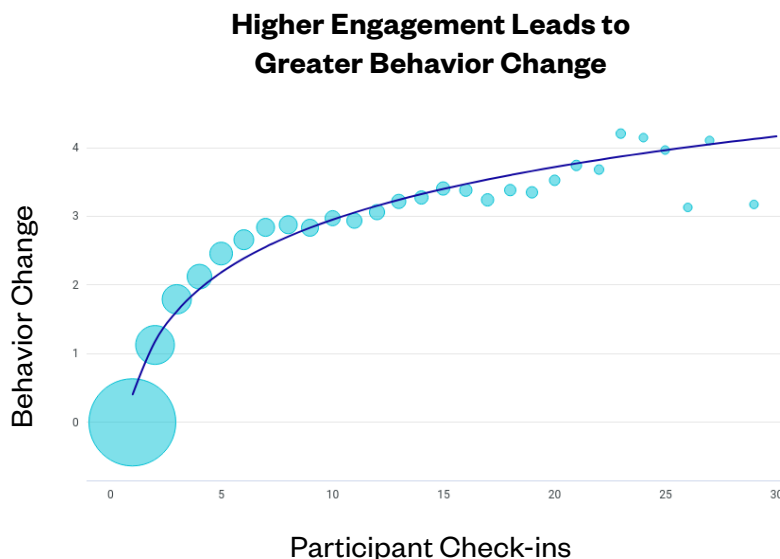
- **Adoption:** Percentage of workshop participants who commit to behavior change.
- **Engagement:** Participants' frequency of reflecting/checking in on their commitment.
- **Impact:** Measurable progress toward the intended behavior change.

This report focuses on how to increase **Engagement:** how to make learning stick longer, and drive the desired behavior change as a result.

[Our most recent report on increasing Adoption can be found here.](#)

We're focused on Engagement here because:

- a) Facilitators and program designers can directly influence Engagement, and
- b) Engagement directly correlates with measurable impact.



This report examines the levers that drive higher Engagement.

They broadly organize into 2 categories:

- "Daily Practice" (**3**) and
- "Social Support" (**6**)



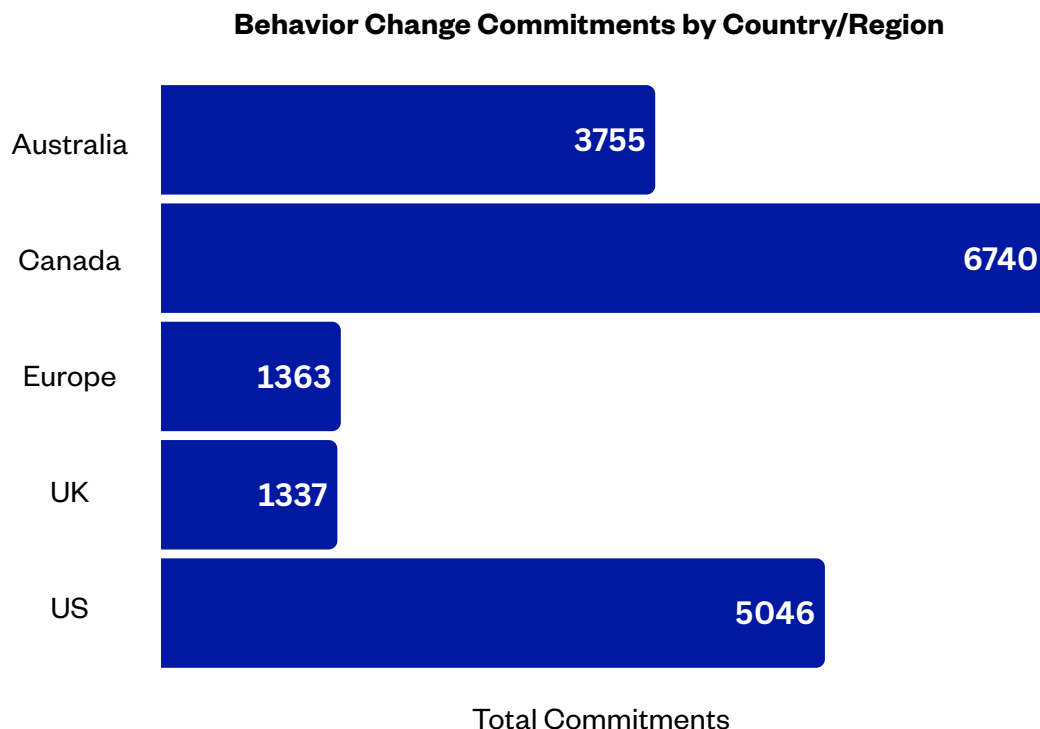
Where the Data Comes From

This report analyzes data from 25,497 behavior-change commitments across 2,740 facilitated leadership sessions globally (Jan 2023-Dec 2024).

705 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.

Most programs included focused on Leadership, Culture Change, or Sales Skills.

All programs were professionally facilitated by external consulting firms.





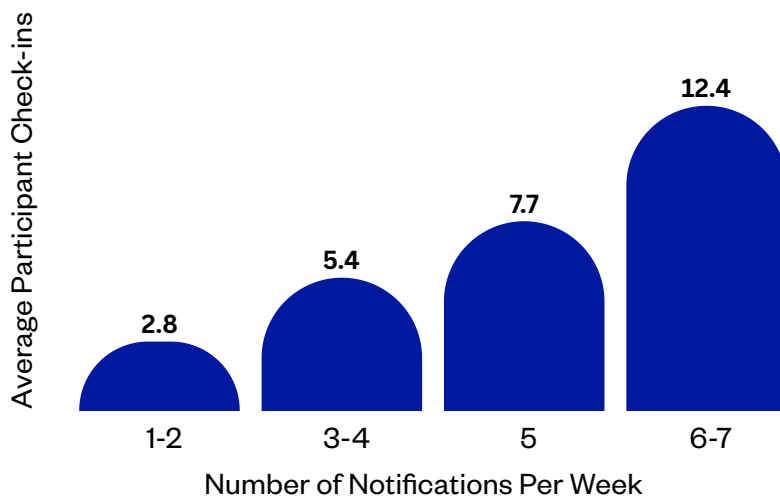
Daily Practice

While the majority of this report focuses on Social Support levers (i.e. creating an environment that supports learners' change activities), it is worth noting how important the **structure of the commitment** can be. Predominantly - **is the commitment something the participant can practice daily?**

The more often a participant can practice their change commitment, the more regularly they'll have opportunity to reflect on their progress.

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

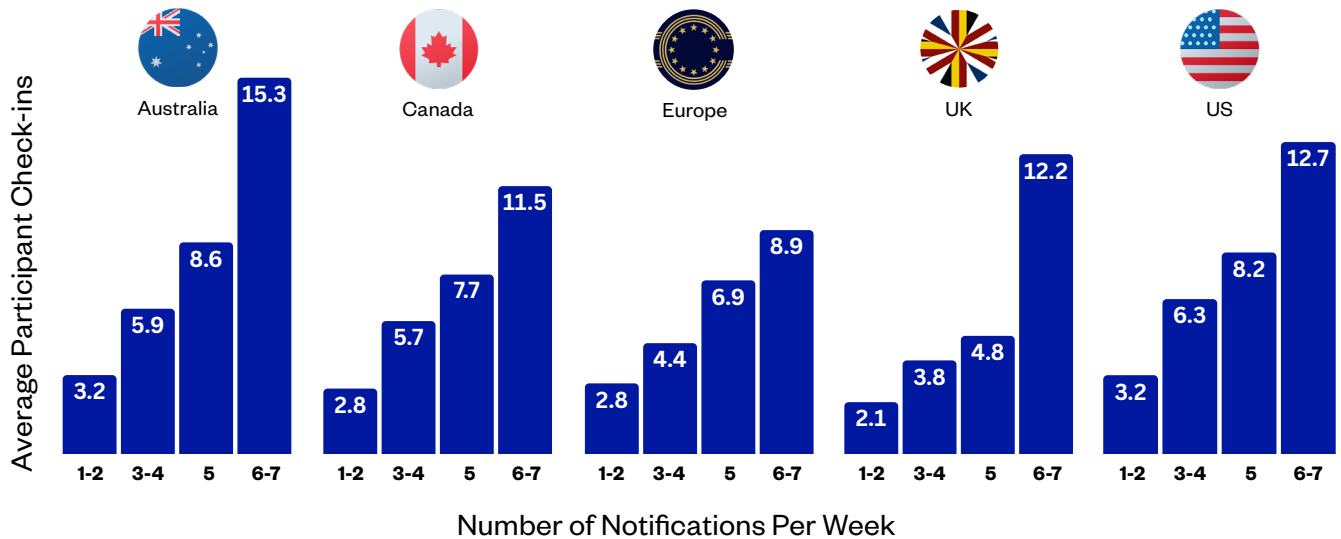
Participant Engagement Increases with More Notifications



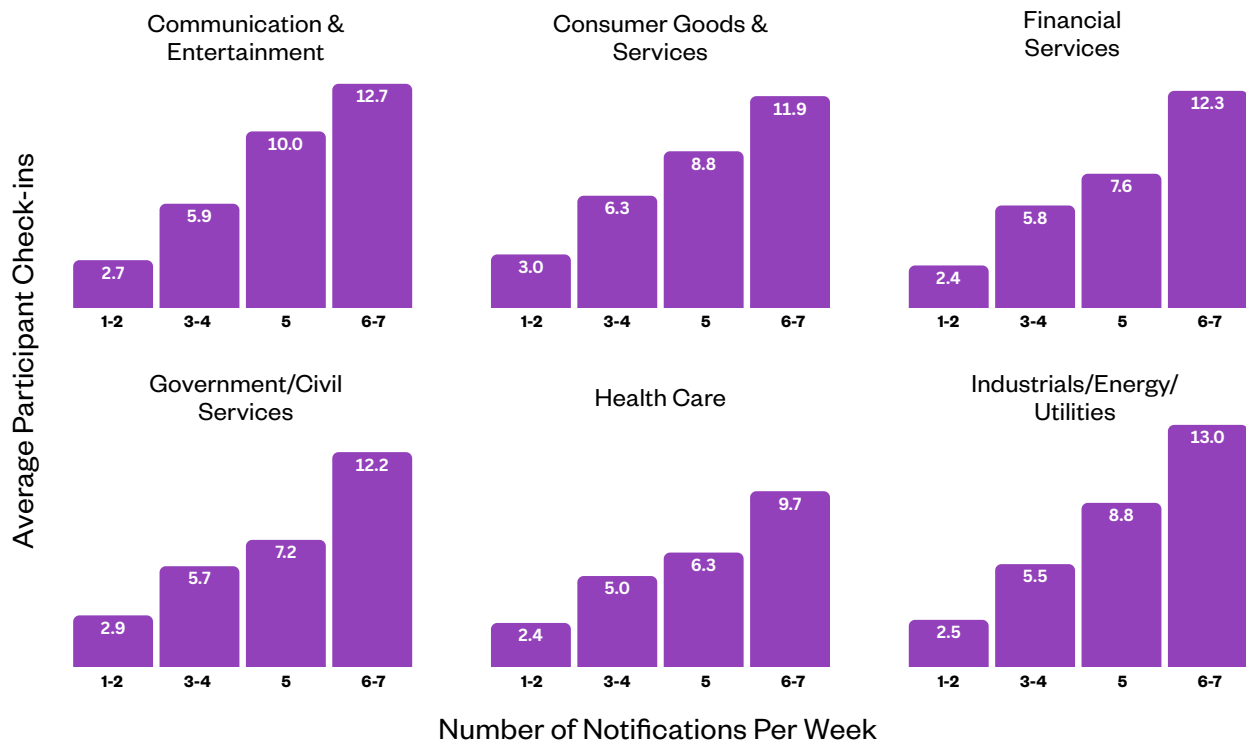
Encouraging participants to commit to behaviors they can practice 6-7 days per week significantly enhances Engagement.

This trend holds true across all geographies and all industries:

Participant Engagement by Weekly Notifications by Country/Region



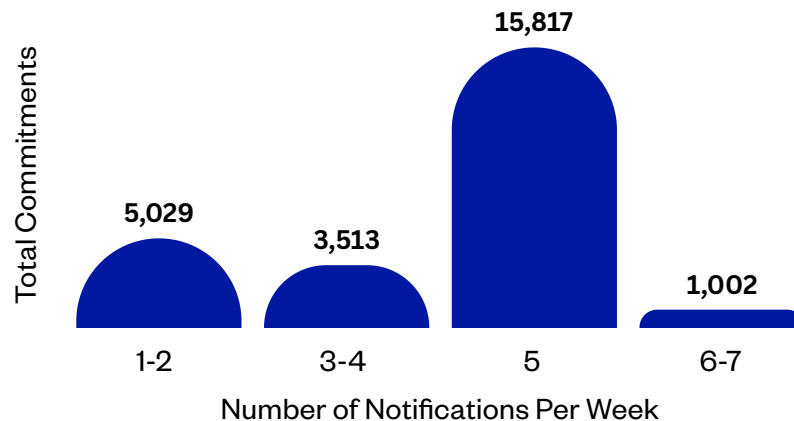
Participant Engagement by Weekly Notifications by Industry



Most noteworthy is the substantial increase in Engagement when participants receive 6+ notifications/week. As the Actionable methodology is to nudge no more than once/day, (and most participants work 5 days/week or less), 6+ notifications requires the participant to commit to a behavior they can practice on non-working days.

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

Most Participants Chose to Receive Nudges 5 Days/Week



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 specific and more... behavioral.
- 2** The participant needs to choose to receive notifications/nudges 6+ days/week. As a facilitator, you can inspire intrinsic motivation by 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 (1002) selected 6+ notifications weekly, despite a significant potential benefit:

- Participants opting for **6+ days/week** notifications saw a **61% increase** in Engagement over those who received 5 notifications/week.



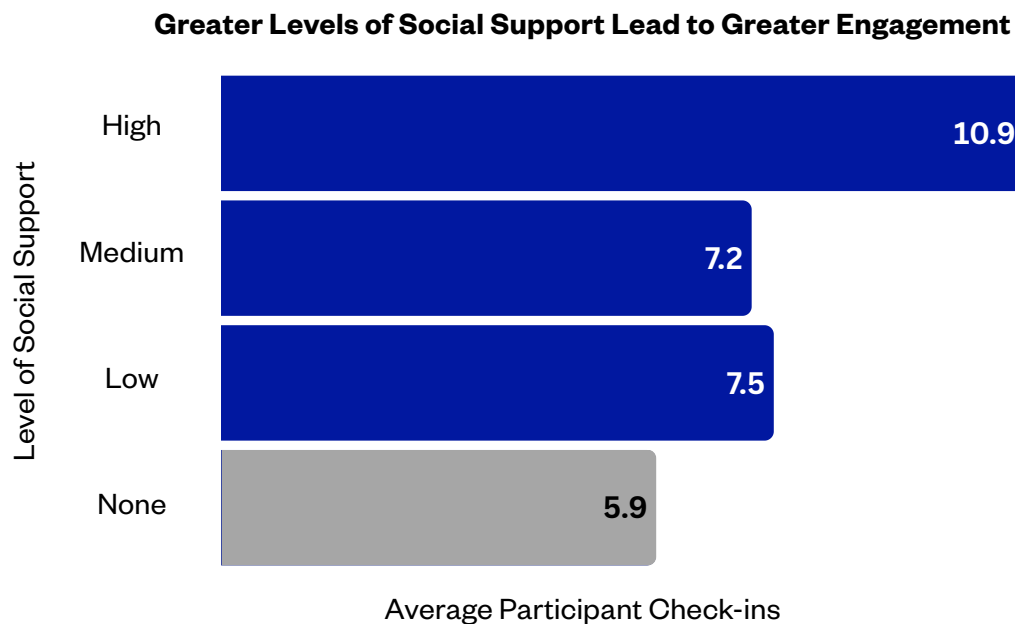
Social Support

Participants' environments significantly influence behavior-change sustainability. Proactively shaping this environment via "Social Support" mechanisms enhances Engagement and - by extension - 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.

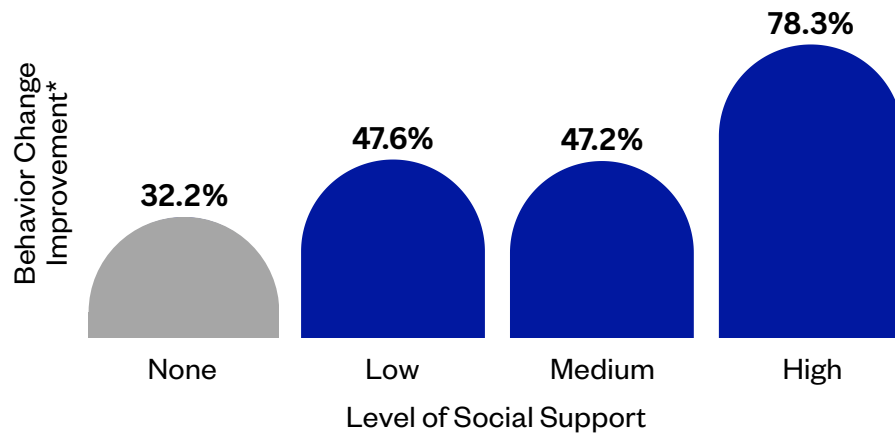


For simplicity, we've organized the level of Social Support a participant receives into 4 groupings: None, Low, Medium and High. Those levels are determined by the total number of "social check-ins" a participant received across Social Support channels (Accountability Partners & Facilitators) over a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

- **High = 5+ Social Support check-ins**
- **Medium = 3-4 Social Support check-ins**
- **Low = 1-2 Social Support check-ins**

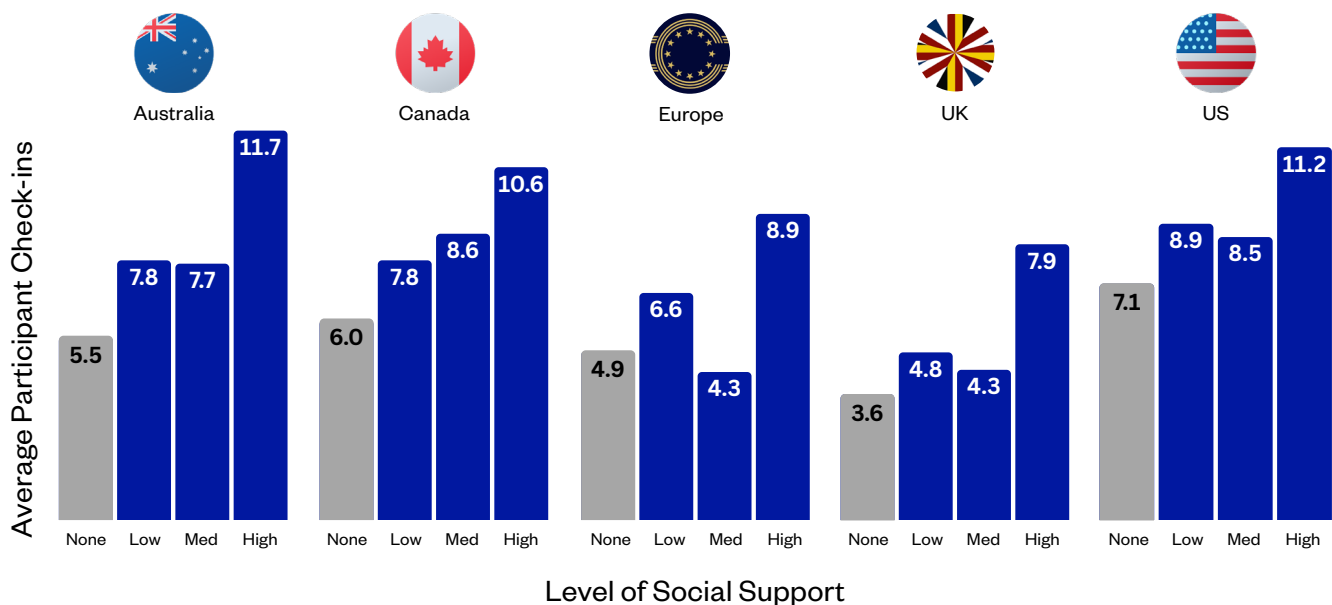
As noted earlier, **greater Engagement = greater impact**. From this study, we found that participants with high levels of Social Support reported 143% greater behavior change than those with no Social Support. (78.3% vs 32.2%)

Participants With High Social Support See Greater Behavior Change



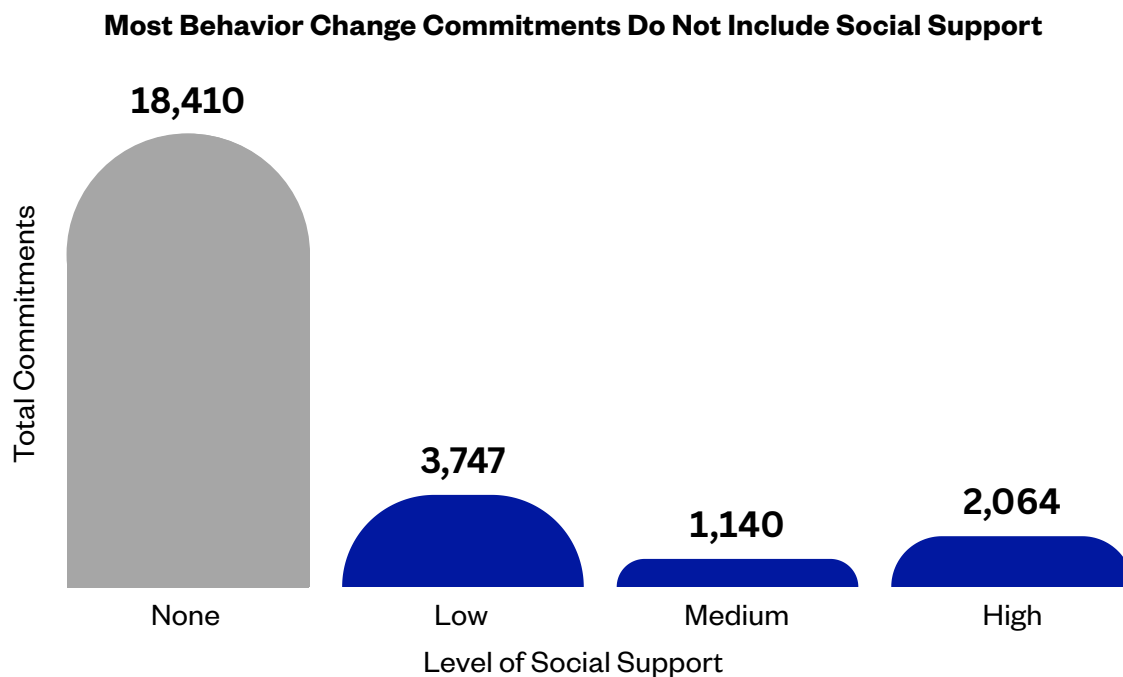
This correlation holds true in all markets. High Social Support is particularly effective in Australia, Europe and the United States.

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 25,497 behavior-change commitments analyzed, only 27% (6951) had any level of Social Support, and less than 9% (2064) were classified as having a high level of Social Support.



Recap:

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

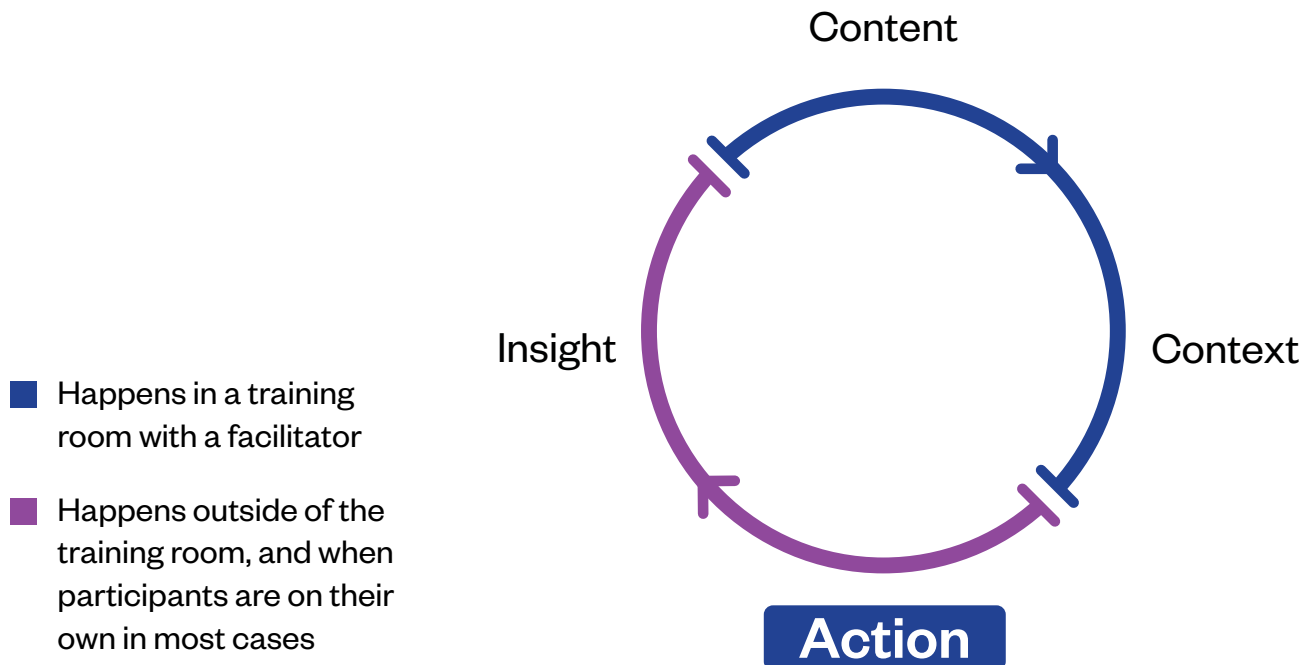


How to Activate each Social Support Element

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.

While they may (and should) be established “in the room,” they take effect back on the job, as participants are putting the learning into practice.

At Actionable, we call this the “action” phase of the Insight-Action Flywheel:



Go Deeper: Learn the Insight-Action Flywheel





Accountability Partners

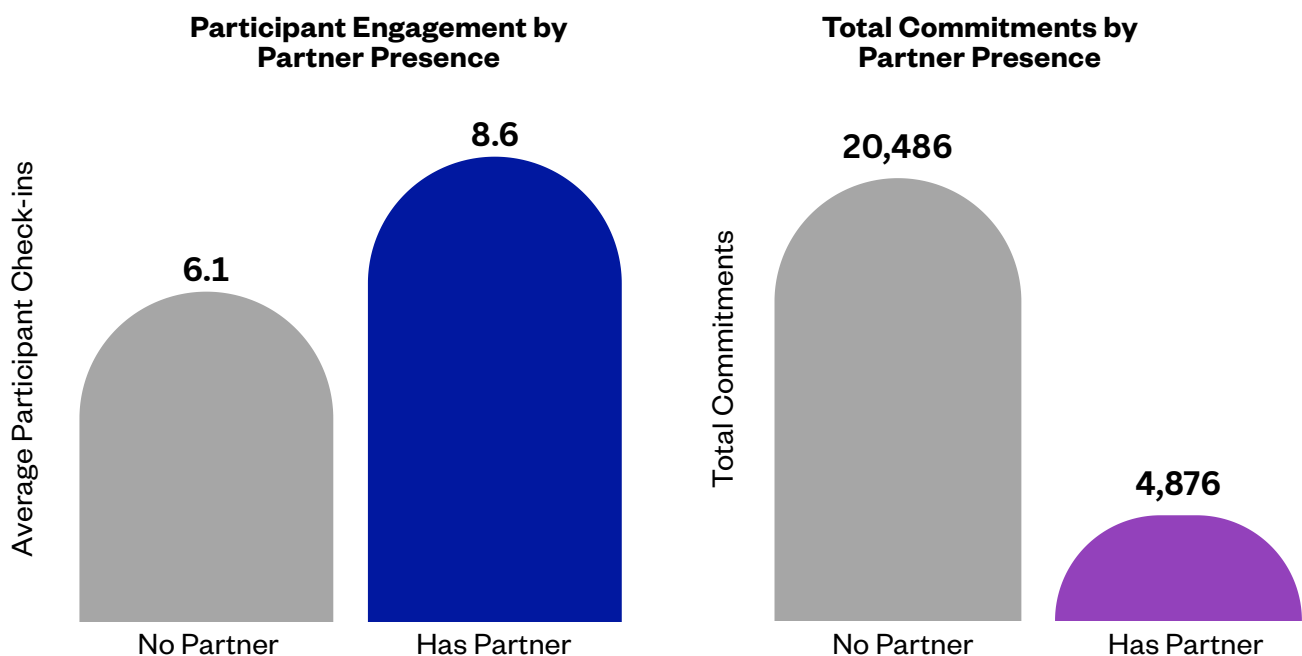
An Accountability Partner, as defined by Actionable, is an individual invited by a participant to support them in achieving a behavior change.

The Accountability Partner receives an invitation, agrees to the role, and is prompted to check in with the participant to assess their progress (1x/week).

Having an Accountability Partner increases participant check-ins from 6.1 to 8.6; a 41% improvement in Engagement.

Despite the high impact (and virtually non-existent cost) of Accountability Partners, surprisingly few behavior change commitments actually include a partner.

Out of 25,361 total commitments studied, only 4,876 leveraged an Accountability Partner (19%).

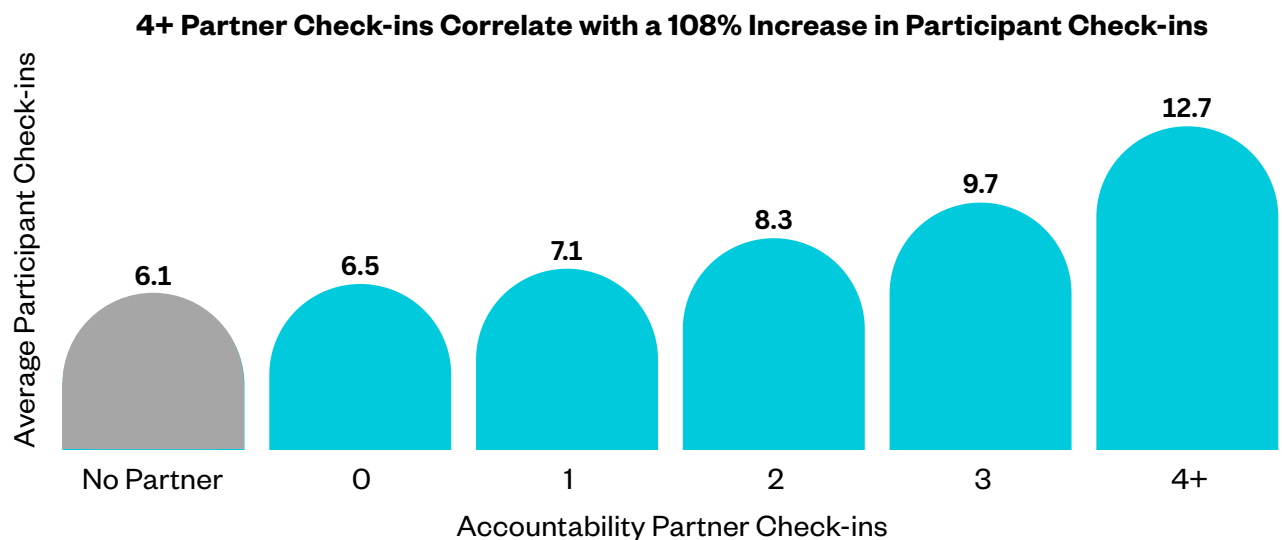


The simple, cost effective act of encouraging participants to select an Accountability Partner can significantly improve the impact of most learning programs.

Even if the Partner never checks in with the Participant, simply having one moves the needle (6.5 vs 6.1 check-ins on average with no Partner)

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

When partners engage with their participants 4+ times / month, there's a consistent and substantial improvement in participant check-ins.

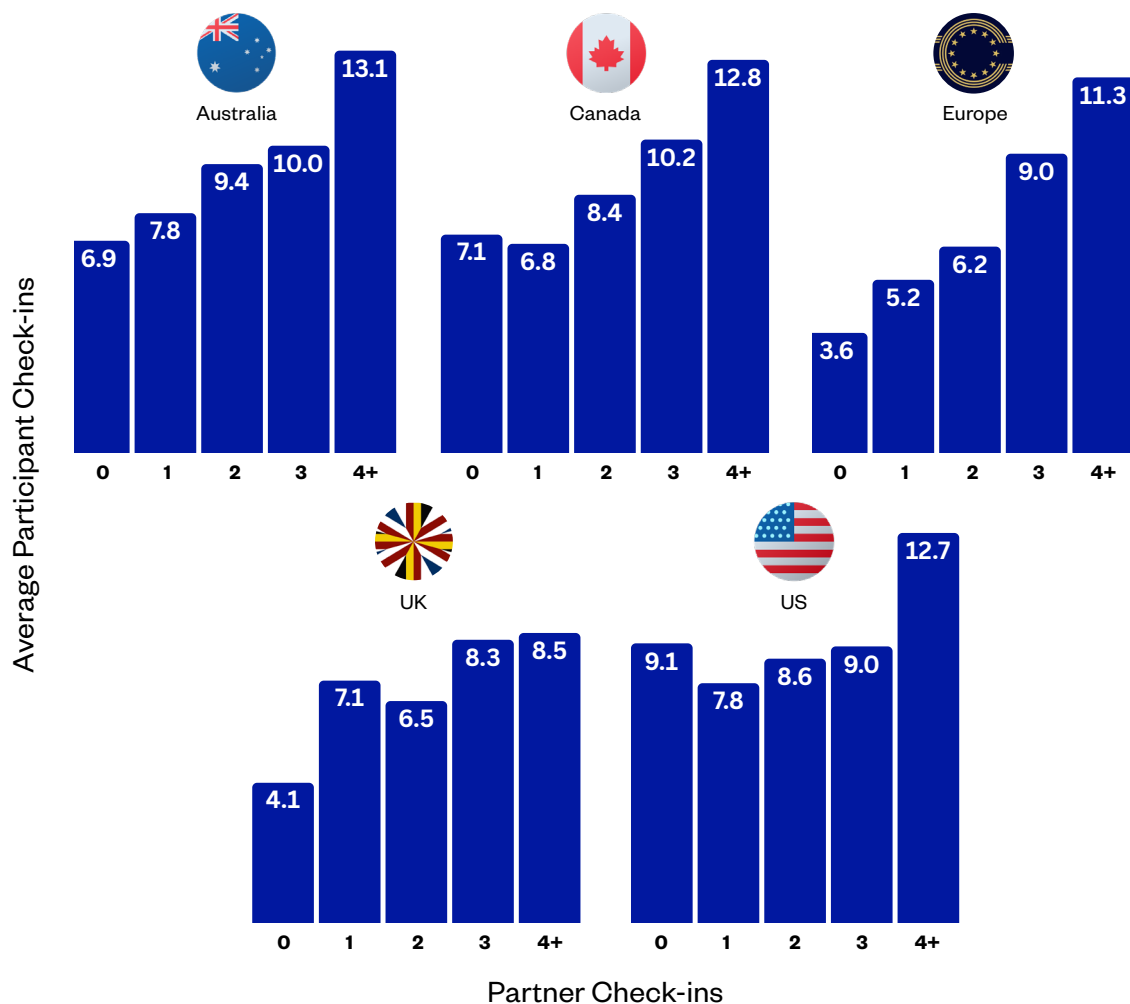


**Go Deeper: How to Encourage and Equip
Accountability Partners in your Programs**



The relative power of Accountability Partners is consistent across all regions and industries, with particularly notable effects in Australia, Canada and the United States.

Effects of Partner Engagement on Participant Engagement by Country/Region



Key Points:

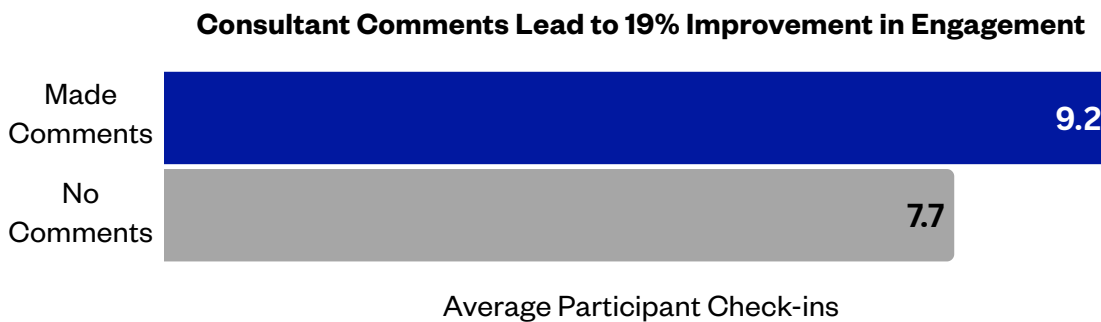
- **41% increase** in Engagement by simply having an Accountability Partner.
- Only **19%** of participants currently select a partner.
- **108% increase** in Engagement if the partner checks in at least once per week.



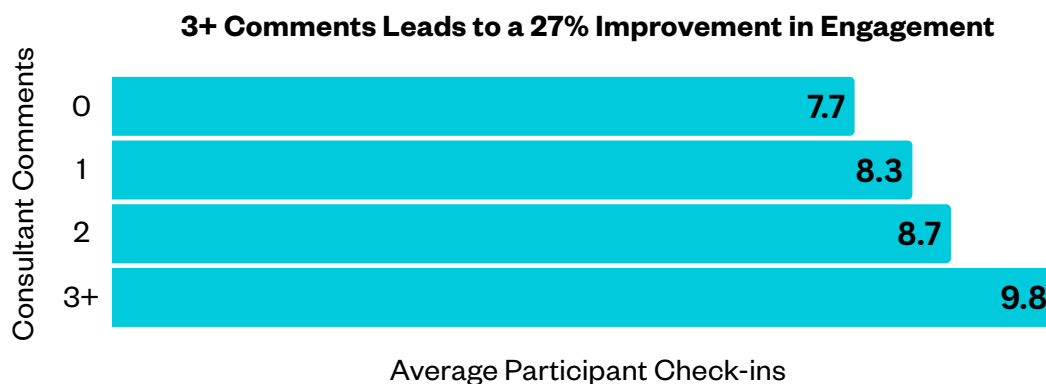
Facilitator/Consultant Engagement

Facilitator influence is often limited to what happens in the room. 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 using the Actionable platform to provide encouragement, coaching, or additional content via in-platform comments at specified intervals.

Facilitators and consultants extending their role beyond the classroom improve participant Engagement by an average of 19%.



Consistent facilitator/consultant interaction improves Engagement even further. At three or more facilitator or consultant comments per month, average participant check-ins jump to an average of 9.8.



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

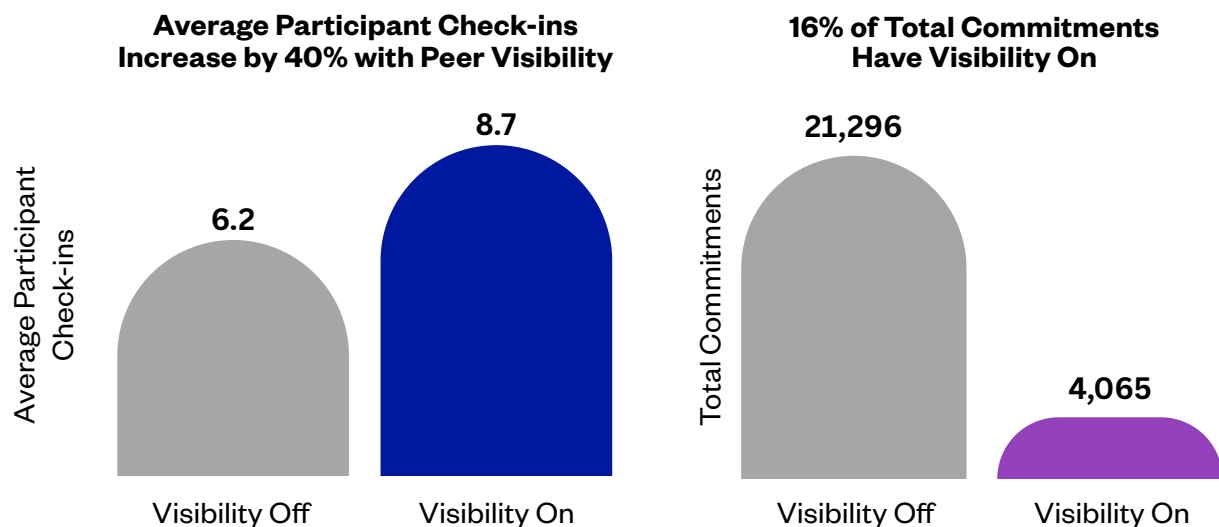




Peer Visibility

Through the Actionable platform, participants can choose to enable “peer visibility.” Turning this feature on allows the participant’s cohort 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.

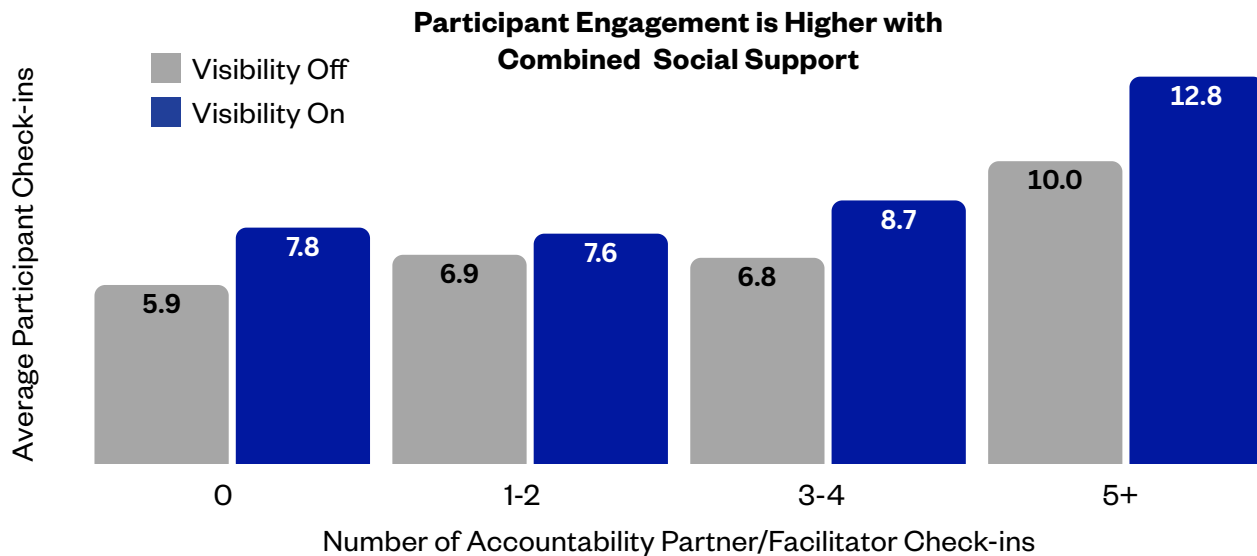
Participants without peer visibility average 6.2 check-ins, while those with it average 8.7 (40% increase) Yet, only 4,065 commitments have peer visibility turned on, compared to 21,296 without (16%).



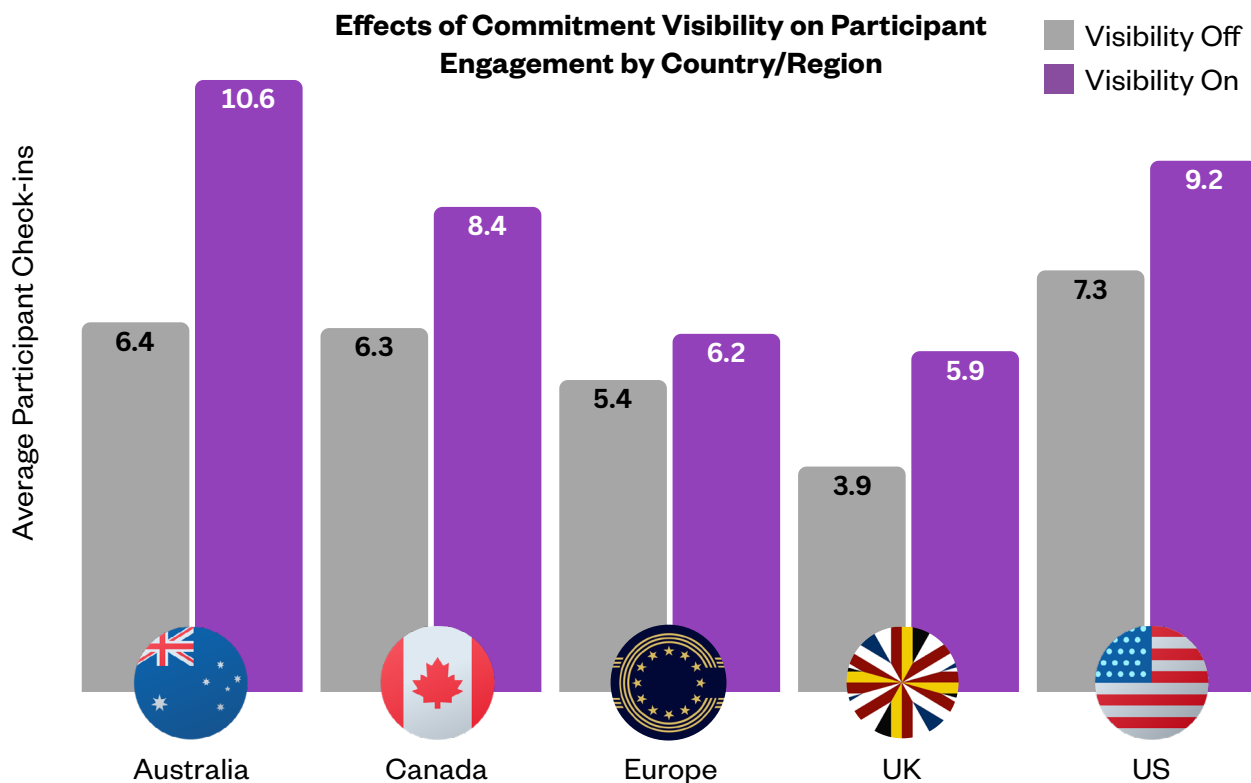
Go Deeper: Normalize Action as Participants Leave the Room



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 Partners.



Visibility creates peer accountability, fostering greater, sustained Engagement. Peer visibility is particularly effective in Australia and the UK, where it correlates with a 65% and 51% increase in Engagement, respectively.





Conclusion & Action Steps

Leadership 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. (3)



Advocate for participants to opt-in for more frequent weekly notifications. (5)



Systematically integrate Accountability Partners, promote active Facilitator/Consultant involvement, and make commitments peer-visible. (9)

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



Behavior Change Toolkit

Want the full playbook to drive lasting, measurable change?

Leverage best practices from 400+ leadership consultants who have integrated Actionable.co's technology and methodology to sustain and prove the impact of their (over 6,800) programs.

It's free, all killer (no filler) and starts with a 13-question self assessment to point you in the right direction.



[Access the toolkit for free.](#)





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-300-consulting firms and 500+ 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.



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2025