workhuman*

A Guide to Employee Surveys

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Customers are essential to business. So, when a customer has feedback about a product change or delivery mishap, you take it with open ears because the customer is always right, and where would we be without them?

The same can – and *should* – be said about employees. Without workers to build products and provide services, the customers wouldn't have anyone to give their feedback to!

As retention continues to be a challenge for businesses across industries, now is a good time to ask yourself: Are you treating your employees like the most important asset they are?

If you aren't sure of the answer, the best thing to do is ask. If you do, both you and your employees will reap the benefits. In this paper, we will provide everything you need to know about the importance of employee engagement surveys, as well as share six tips to keep in mind as you build, send, and act on them.

# Breaking down employee engagement surveys

What are employee surveys?

Employee pulse surveys are quick, in-the-moment questionnaires given to employees to gauge engagement, morale, productivity, and other invaluable insights. By understanding how an employee base feels in real time, leaders are better able to solve problems that could be affecting employee morale.

Why are employee surveys important?

Employee engagement surveys provide leaders with the opportunity to get straight to the source of organizational issues like retention and engagement simply by asking their employees how they are feeling.

The best relationships are built on open communication and trust; having that rapport is essential when it comes to conflict resolution, feedback, and problem solving. Employee surveys act as the instrument that cultivates this relationship between workers and an organization.

Conducting an employee survey allows organizations to gain insight on the pulse of their workforce while also giving employees the chance to feel heard. And while this combination has the potential to positively affect the business's bottom line, simply conducting a survey is not enough on its own. In fact, taking feedback without acting on it can have the opposite effect, making it even more vital these surveys are done correctly from beginning to end.
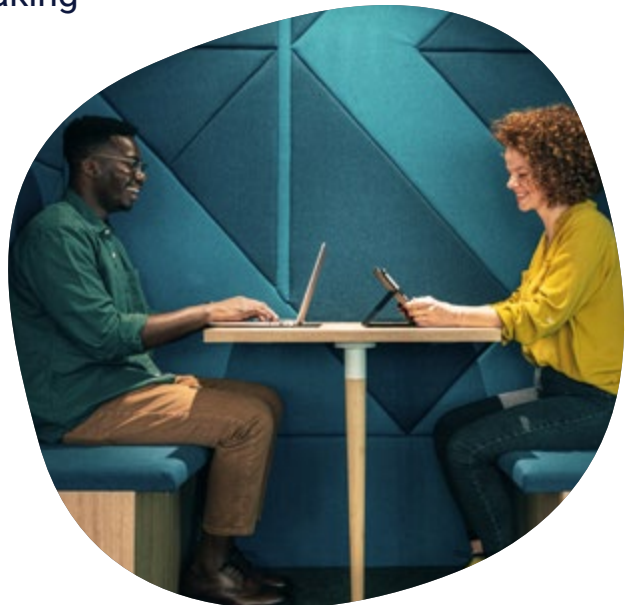
How has remote and hybrid work changed the need for employee surveys?

The rise of remote and hybrid work shines a light on the importance of connection at work. When workers don't feel connected to their co-workers or company, they're less engaged, not to mention much more likely to leave the company.

This lack of connection affects every facet of the business. A recent Workhuman® survey of full-time workers found remote workers were less likely to say they feel confident and more likely to feel uneasy about change compared to on-site workers. If you also consider the potential for burnout (49% of all workers said they had too much work to do over the past year), the more important the need to understand your employees' feelings and concerns becomes.

# Six best practices for employee engagement surveys

Clearly, employee surveys are important. But how do you actually build and deploy them? What do you do once you have the results? What should the survey focus on? Here, we break down the best practices for building and acting on employee engagement surveys.

Embedding open communication and feedback into an organization's culture is a big task, but it doesn't have to be expensive. Workhuman's Moodtracker® is a free employee engagement survey tool with no restrictions on the number of surveys deployed – unlimited recipients and unlimited sends. And while these surveys have the potential to improve the business' bottom line, leaders and their employees must be on the same page for it to be a success.

Leader-employee disconnect

48%
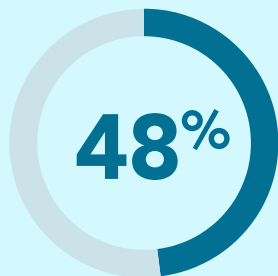
of senior managers report surveys being highly valuable, while

45%
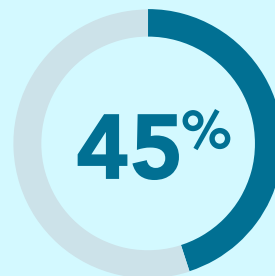
of employees said the same surveys had little to no value.

1. When just starting out

Before even starting the process of choosing a survey, it's essential to begin by getting buy-in from various sides of the business. Here are a few questions to ask yourself, as well as those involved in the process:

- What is the **timeline**? Can we act on this feedback promptly?

- Who will **receive this survey**? A particular team? A department? The whole organization?

- Is the **C-suite on board** with this strategy? Are they prepared to allocate funds to mitigate any issues the survey identifies?

- Does the **IT team** have the necessary skills and resources to deploy this survey?

- Are your **HR business partners** prepared to answer tough questions about the results of the survey?

- Is your **internal communications team** aware of the survey and the need for it to be communicated widely throughout the company during each stage in the process?

2. When building the survey

Moodtracker has prebuilt surveys for the most prevalent HR topics, including engagement and experience, belonging and inclusion, human-centered workplaces, resiliency, and return to the workplace. Rather than spending time composing ad hoc surveys and wondering whether you have an impactful, well-structured question set, you can instantly use any of Moodtracker's five predesigned surveys with the confidence that you're asking the right questions.

From there, it's as simple as uploading the names and email addresses of the survey respondents, setting a cadence, and sending an invitation.
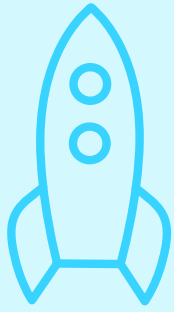
3. When launching the survey

Remember, launch day should not be the first time your employees hear about this pulse survey. Best practice is to create a wide-ranging internal communications campaign spanning from the moment the survey is developed until the learnings have been acted on. Here are a few of the most important things to remember during launch:

- Set **clear expectations** for employees so they understand what the survey is meant to accomplish.

- Provide **detailed instructions** as well as contact information for anyone with questions or comments.

- Give employees enough **time to complete** the survey, but not so much time that it's forgotten.

- Create a **recognition campaign** around the survey to stir up excitement; for example, if the survey has a 100% participation rate, the group receives a Team Award.

4. When analyzing results of the survey

Analyzing the results after a survey concludes may seem a bit daunting. What should you look for? Or worse, what if you don't like what you see?

Before even looking at the results, discuss expectations with stakeholders; even if the data isn't all positive, it's important to be honest and not avoid results that are concerning. The best way to grow is to learn from the past, and it takes real feedback to do that.

With the help of Moodtracker, anyone can easily interpret survey results using the in-depth dashboards built by Workhuman's data scientists. These results include actionable recommendations and insights to see where your pulse results stack up against 50 million data points already in the system. If you are planning to repeat a survey, you'll find a trend line based on the responses over time, making it easy to see the changes in your workforce as they happen.
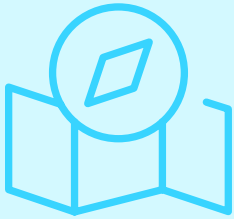
5. When communicating the results of the survey

The work that goes into conducting a survey doesn't end after the responses are collected. According to best practice, the first thing leaders should do after collecting the results is:

- Confirm the survey is closed
- Thank participants
- Outline next steps

Once the expectations have been set, consider sharing the results of the survey in phases to avoid overwhelming employees with too much information. Early results include participation statistics, top and bottom survey results, and the plan of action going forward. This plan of action should take into account:

- Areas of focus and why they are important
- Actions already taken and their successes thus far
- Further follow-up plans with expected results – including a follow-up survey/listening session for employees who would like to share more

Most importantly, remember to be honest, transparent, realistic, and positive when communicating after the survey.

6. When acting on the results

Best practice suggests acting on one or two areas of improvement at a time rather than tackling everything at once. Depending on whom the survey is targeting, creating smaller, more focused plans for specific groups may be a worthwhile investment. Using employee feedback from the surveys and follow-up conversations, build out and communicate plans for improvement to everyone involved.

Whatever the plan is, ensure you can track progress by creating benchmarks and goals to reach over time. Change and development are not linear, nor are they always guaranteed to work, so it's also important to practice patience and keep an agile mindset in the event the plan needs to pivot. And whether it's week to week or month to month, don't forget to continue sharing advancements and challenges with your employee base so they too feel like they are a part of this positive change.

The best part is it's all free!

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