



Employee Surveys That Work

The Art of Driving Engagement with a Feedback Loop



Table of Contents

- 4** Surveys: Your Secret Weapon for a Better EX
- 7** Benefits of Regular Employee Feedback
- 9** So, What Type of Survey Do You Need?
- 15** Gaining Trust with a Repeatable Process
- 17** Creating a Feedback Loop
- 18** Surveys Set You Free



In order to make a positive impact on employee engagement, HR must know the needs, expectations, and aspirations of their workforce. The best way to do that? Get ***really good*** at employee surveys.

Most companies operate with a revenue-first approach. This leaves little (if any) time spent understanding what it's like to work for their own company. Winning companies operate with a people-first approach and constantly use surveys to optimize and improve their employee experience (EX). Happy employees lead to better customer interactions, which leads to more revenue.

This ebook gives detailed insight into the different survey formats, best practices, and how to implement a repeatable survey process. A well-thought-out survey strategy will build employee trust over time, creating an always-on feedback loop to help you deliver a better EX and retain your workforce.

Surveys: Your Secret Weapon for Better EX



The holy grail of HR is an engaged workforce—when employees feel emotionally invested in and connected to the long-term success of your company.

But how do you get there? How do you turn your company into a great place to work?

By listening to your employees.

Surveys hold the answers to the hard questions about what needs to change in order to deliver a better EX. They help crack the code about what's going on with your workforce so that HR can take action.



Unfortunately, surveys are often executed poorly or, worse— aren't sent at all.

Most companies put the majority of their focus on revenue and customer satisfaction. While this may generate quick, short-term revenue wins, this people-last approach is not sustainable. Burnout, quiet quitting, and voluntary turnover always follow. These problems will surface at some point and are detrimental to the long-term success of any company.



Winning companies know that happy customers and long-term revenue growth begin with a focus on **employee satisfaction first**.

This happens through regular surveying. When HR can clearly identify which moments of their Employee Experience (EX) are broken or missing, it takes the guesswork out of where to focus their efforts.

Employees who don't feel valued at work are

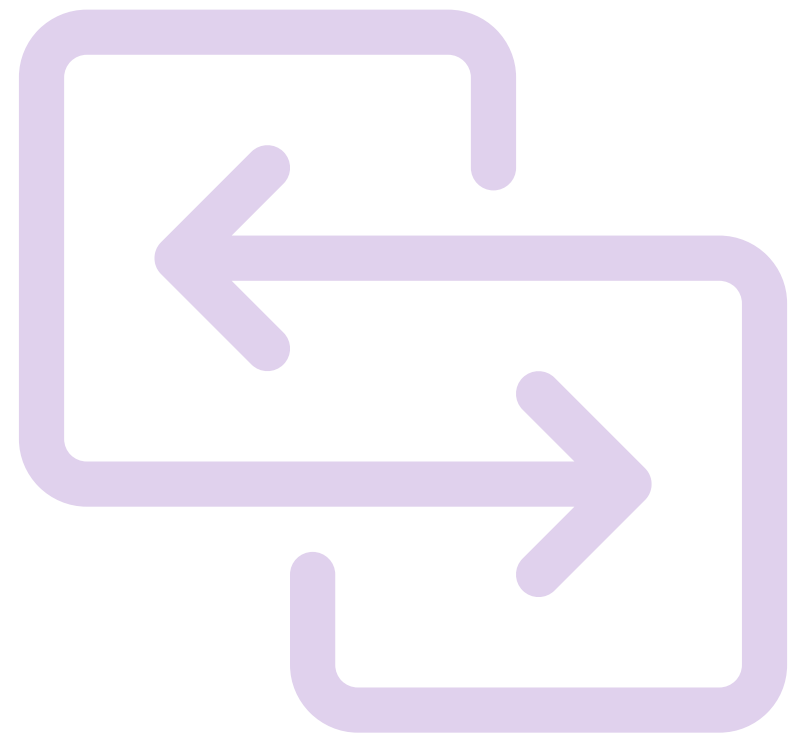
76%
more likely to look for another job.

Voluntary turnover is expensive: The average costs to replace an employee are:

- \$1,500 for hourly employees
- 100% to 150% of an employee's salary for technical positions
- Up to 213% of an employee's salary for C-suite positions

While surveys are the best way to measure and optimize your EX, there are a variety of ways to approach them, which can make things feel complicated and overwhelming. Understanding the different survey formats available, getting crystal clear on the goal of the survey, and knowing what questions to ask are half the battle.

Benefits of Regular Employee Feedback



Employee feedback is the best way to understand which aspects of your EX need immediate attention. Unfortunately, because this tends to be entirely the HR team's responsibility, which can be somewhat unfair. Gallup says 70% of the employee experience is the relationship between the employee and their manager—that's a lot out of HR's hands!

Surveys are the best way for an already busy HR team to gain a clear understanding of the current state of their EX, as there are so many interactions and moments that HR couldn't possibly be aware of without surveying.

Yes, they are an investment in time and focus from an already busy HR team. But a worthy investment—potentially solving the mystery of your engagement issues in the long run.

If you currently lack leadership buy-in to your survey strategy, here are a few ways to explain in terms they care about.



Save Time and Money

A recent [UKG study](#) found that over 40% of unhappy employees who quit their job during the Great Resignation could have been avoided simply by people having a conversation with their managers. Voluntary turnover it's expensive and can be avoided! When you implement meaningful changes resulting from survey data and encourage a feedback culture, you're more likely to retain the workforce you worked so hard to recruit, hire, and onboard. This will save you time and money in the long run.



Make Data-Driven Decisions

No more feeling around in the dark for answers as to why employees are disengaged (and no more virtual happy hours to solve deeper culture problems!) When the correct survey format is used to ask the right questions, HR will begin to have a clear roadmap of which EX moments are broken or missing. No more guesswork; you'll know exactly where to focus HR's time and energy with confidence.



Increase Productivity

When employees see their opinion at work matters, they're more likely to feel connected to their work. As you build trust with employees, they will begin to open up more and more about what tools, benefits, and resources they need to do their best work.

So, What Type of Survey Do You Need?

There are three main formats, and you should use a mix of all 3 throughout the year. Each has a different strategy to give varying levels of data.



eNPS Survey



Employee Engagement Survey



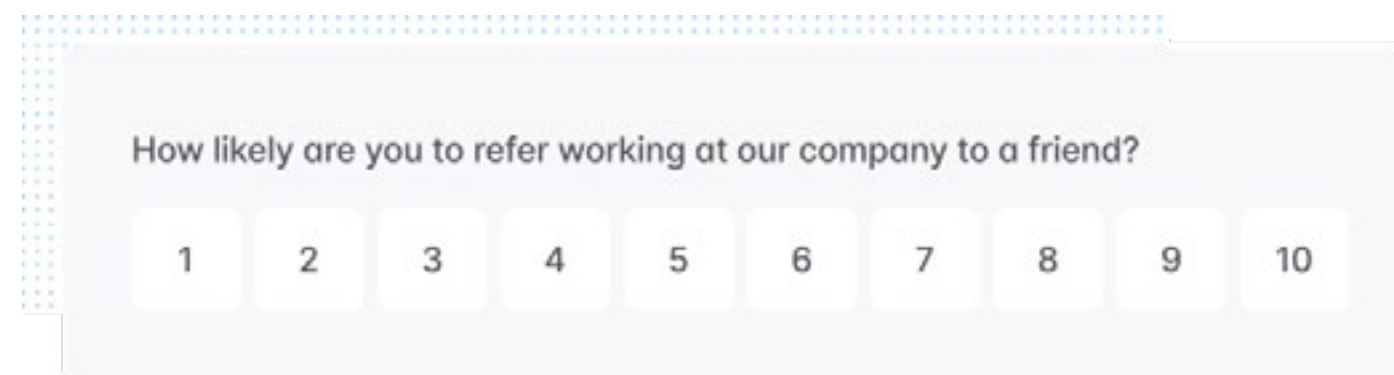
The Pulse Survey

1. eNPS Survey

eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score) is a quick, easy and effective way to track employee engagement and measure the company's culture and how this impacts its people.

An eNPS survey consists of one simple question with a scaled answer:

How likely are you to refer working at our company to a friend?



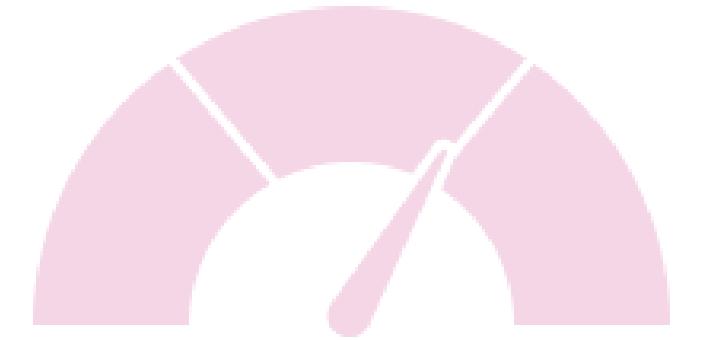
How likely are you to refer working at our company to a friend?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

eNPS tends to have a higher participation rate than other surveys because it's quick—one-scaled question.

This survey is based on the original Net Promoter Score, a measurement of customer loyalty pioneered by Bain & Company. Organizations have used this method for decades to measure satisfaction of their services. Now, you can replicate it to measure a quick, internal sentiment of how engaged your workforce is.

When conducting eNPS, it's important to keep in mind that it won't tell you precisely what needs fixing, just that things are... possibly not quite right. But you'll have a baseline and starting point to show you improved sentiment over time as you continue to survey. For best results, you should conduct an eNPS 1-4 times per year and keep the question the same.



Having trouble getting leadership to buy into the importance of surveys?

Begin with a quick eNPS survey. If the average score is lower than 10 (a perfect score), there's work to be done on your EX. You now have the data to show leadership there's some level of disconnect with the EX of your workforce and what they expect and it's likely time for a deeper engagement survey.

2. Employee Engagement Survey

This deep-dive format is your employee engagement gold mine. It measures the motivations, hopes, fears, and pitfalls of almost every aspect of what it's like to work at your company.

Because the engagement survey allows your people to provide detailed and department-specific input, it gives you an incredible amount of insight into the broken or missing moments of your EX that need attention.

The main goal of sending an engagement survey is to start a conversation between employees and leadership to very clearly see which moments are broken or missing from the employee experience.

Employee engagement surveys are a rich source of data for HR, but one that can take longer to sift through to find patterns across so many candid, deep responses. Nevertheless, it is an investment that can hold shocking but crucial feedback. When employees trust the process and take the surveys seriously, this can quickly become the roadmap of where HR should spend their time and energy.

Best practice: Because it's so big, explain to your employees why you're sending this survey to help increase employee participation. (i.e., I know this survey is a little long, but it will help us learn how to give you a better employee experience!)"

When the survey closes, you will have a lot of data. Notify your leadership team that you need to set aside at least 1–2 days to get into the uninterrupted headspace of analysis to take the data in properly.

Similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, your workforce needs to be measured against the **Employee Hierarchy of Needs**. Gallup created a simple 12-question methodology to avoid question fatigue while still gathering deep and valuable insights across the entire employee journey. Over 2.7 million employees from over 100,000 teams were studied to craft this time-tested formula.



Gallup's 12-Item Engagement Survey:

Here are the 12 statements with a scaled answer that give you a clear picture of how well you're meeting the basic needs of your workforce:

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
9. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a best friend at work.
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

3. The Pulse Survey

The pulse survey is exactly what it sounds like—a more frequent check-in to keep a pulse on how things are going. It's a quick, 1-3 question, painless check-in sent on a more regular basis.

Pulse surveys are great for getting more specific details on an issue identified in your last engagement survey or measuring employee satisfaction to a solution you recently implemented. They work exceptionally well when trying to increase the more regular habit of measuring engagement.

For example, a pulse survey question can look like this, with 1-3 statements including a slider scale:

In the last engagement survey, we learned a lot of you didn't have the necessary tools to do your job well. How can we help?

1. I am comfortable using my home office and feel I have a good posture. *

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. I have access to the correct software and applications needed to do my job well. *

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. I never struggle to find answers to my everyday work-related questions. *

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. Anything else you'd like to add?



Because they touch on more specific areas of concern, employees may not take them as regularly if they don't feel affected by the questions being asked. (ie: the product team is thriving and engaged under their leader, but the customer success team is having a difficult time with their leader.)

Best Practice: To form a new habit for everyone, send a pulse survey at a monthly cadence. Keep questions short and specific, and always include an open-ended response option. Sometimes employees have more to say than just a rating.

Bonus Tip

Anonymous Vs. Not

When crafting your surveys, it's important to decide whether the format will be anonymous or not. Once you decide, make it very clear to employees. Sometimes it can be helpful to know who is behind the answers, as it allows for faster problem-solving. Keep in mind however, you will be sacrificing a lot of the actual story if you're not using an anonymous format.



Anonymous data is particularly valuable because employees feel more freedom to be honest, and speak the whole truth. It also prevents employees from painting a false, rosy picture leaving HR wondering why engagement is still so low if survey responses were favorable.

When it comes to sensitive topics and getting to the root of disengagement issues, an anonymous survey is key. Use the anonymous format whenever possible.

Gaining Trust with a Repeatable Process

Getting employees to jump for joy every time you send a survey won't happen overnight. It's possibly the most challenging part for an organization of any size to get employees to actually take the surveys.

There are three main reasons why employees resist:



They don't think anything will happen with the results



They're scared of retaliation from offering honest feedback



They don't feel leadership will understand their daily struggles

When HR and leadership demonstrate that they care and prove it through implementing meaningful solutions, employees will slowly begin to open up. It's important to follow the steps below (no matter the format of eNPS, engagement, or pulse) to help HR stay on track and create an experience where employees know what to expect:

Goal – Get clear on the goal you’re trying to accomplish.. If you aren’t sure, start with an engagement survey to uncover which of Gallup’s 12 engagement drivers needs your attention.

Build the survey in simple, succinct language.

Announce Share with employees that your survey is coming in written, visual, and verbal formats.

Deploy – Send out your survey but never before you’ve announced it first. If employees are caught off guard, it could affect participation rates.

No, you’re not crazy. Studies have shown people need to hear a message at least seven times. The same can be said about your surveys!

Remind - employees to take the survey **and** managers to bring it up in their regular 1:1s.

Close and Analyze - When a survey closes, set aside time to analyze the data in detail to find patterns in the answers.

Debate and Decide - HR then presents the data and possible solutions with the leadership team and opens up the conversation for healthy debate.

Thank and Close the Loop - Employees need positive reinforcement for taking the survey, even if the results are negative. Make sure to communicate your appreciation of their time invested in the survey.

Implement your new solution with plenty of communication about what you’re doing: We’re implementing a new project management tool because in our last survey, you told us it was hard to work cross-functionally among teams.

Pulse survey to gauge satisfaction in a few weeks/months and ask how satisfied they are with the implemented solutions.

HR needs a seat at the table. Or, at least to be invited into private discussions with the leadership team to gain executive-level buy-in and problem-solve as a team.



Creating a Feedback Loop

A feedback loop happens when the output of something gets recycled back in as input. In the workplace, building a feedback loop means following a repeatable survey process that gives employees the same survey experience almost every time.

This invisible momentum builds trust in HR, leadership and the survey process over time. Employees who trust surveys are much more likely to participate and give honest feedback. This data is critical to answering the hard question about why your people are disengaged.

When employees tell you something needs to change, implement a solution and survey to see if your new solution fixed the issue.

If so, good job! You've optimized a part of your EX— move onto your next survey with a different engagement driver focus (refer to [page 12](#) (the 12 engagement questions)).

If it didn't, don't panic. Sometimes we miss the mark. Learn more about where the solution fell short and try implementing a new, second solution. Then survey to see if that worked. This is your feedback loop!



Surveys Set You **Free**

A good employee experience happens with an empathetic leadership team, authenticity in your survey strategy, and transparency for what happens next after a survey closes. You want to reinforce employee confidence in their leaders and the organization they work for, and **surveys are your best bet to help you get there.**



With the majority of the employee experience being the employee-manager dynamic, HR can still make a big, lasting impact on engagement levels and drive retention and productivity with a regular survey cadence. By choosing the proper survey format, asking the right questions, and implementing meaningful solutions, you can deliver a best-in-class EX no matter your company size, bandwidth, or budget.

A well-thought-out survey strategy is a big first step to becoming a people-first (not revenue-first) organization. When employees have more of their basic needs met, you'll see better customer relations, a healthier bottom line, and higher employee productivity.

This always leads to a happier, more engaged workforce who feel connected to and passionate about the work they do.

Engaged employees don't quit; they stay.

No more feeling around in the dark for ideas to solve disengagement. The answers are all with your people.

You just have to ask!



Pingboard is the Employee Experience Suite built for growing businesses that put their people first.

Build a culture of connection for your workforce, even before their first day, with Pingboard's org charts, automated onboarding, and communication tools. Foster community and engage employees and leaders in a positive feedback loop of creating, measuring, and refining experiences through recognition, 1:1s, and surveys. Everything happens in one place that employees truly enjoy using, all the while amassing actionable insights to move your business forward. **Elevate your employee experience with Pingboard!**

©2023 Pingboard Inc. • 21750 Hardy Oak Blvd., Suite 104, PMB 46048, San Antonio, TX 78258-4946

pingboard.com