The Happiness Index

FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR ORGANISATION

Creating an Employee Engagement AND Happiness Strategy

Contents

Introduction

Welcome! Across 9 chapters we'll outline how you can future-proof your organisation by creating an employee engagement and happiness strategy. From exploring why current methods are failing - to boosting response rates, we lead you through every step of the journey.

The
Happiness
Index

"How will this guide help me, my organisation and my people?"

The global pandemic has supercharged the pace of change in the workplace. This makes discussions around working models, mental health and workplace culture boardroom priorities.

Leaders and the HR community have a golden opportunity to rebuild and grow their organisations, rather than sticking with the same old broken model.

Understand how creating an employee engagement and happiness strategy can help your organisation create a thriving culture that sets your business up for long term success... then learn how to deliver it!

9:10 AM 80%

The
Happiness
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Daily Insights
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Employee Voice 24/7

8.0

Your Surveys

Defining Employee Engagement
AND Happiness

The Happiness Index is the first platform in the world which allows you to measure your employee engagement AND happiness. We think this is really important because it helps you understand how your people think and feel – giving you a holistic view of company culture. Don't worry if you're not sure what the difference is, or why you should care about both. Let's deep-dive into the definitions and why you should care.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGAEMENT

What is Employee Engagement?

When HR professionals talk about employee engagement, sometimes they're talking about culture and sometimes they're talking about productivity. What we mean by engagement is how connected people feel to their work.

There are different drivers of employee engagement. We describe these as neuroscience themes. They are meaning and purpose, role clarity, personal growth, and enablement. Depending on your team and the way they think, feel and behave, these different factors will play different roles and look different. For example, for some people role clarity is key, and they prefer to have clearly defined areas of responsibility, while others like to be able to get involved in different projects.

In our neuroscience model, there are two brain types that influence employee engagement. They are Reflective and Rational.

Companies with engaged employees outperform those without by 202%
- Gallup

Why is Employee Engagement Important?

It's hard to understate the importance of employee engagement. Engaged employees are not only likely to perform better individually, but they're also more likely to stay at your organisation. Something that is particularly important as we enter into "The Great Resignation".

At The Happiness Index we believe that your biggest asset as an organisation is your people. Attracting and retaining key talent is likely an important part of your people strategy. In 2018 Facebook did a study into their employee engagement data and found that those who stayed found their work enjoyable 31% more often, used their strengths 33% more often, and expressed 37% more confidence that they were gaining the skills and experiences they need to develop their careers. Employee engagement is all about helping ensure your people are enjoying their work. Giving them clarity, purpose and personal growth will create thriving, engaged teams.

> When HR professionals talk about employee engagement, sometimes they're talking about culture and sometimes they're talking about productivity. What we mean by engagement is how connected people feel to their work.

Defining Employee Engagement
AND Happiness

> **Happy employees are 13% more productive**
> **- Oxford University**

EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS

Why is Employee Happiness Important?

Despite how it may seem initially, happiness is not a fluffy metric. In fact, study after study shows that happiness is linked to the bottom line. Not only are happy employees more productive, but organisations with happier employees excel on the stock market even when other factors are controlled for.

The pandemic has had a big impact on our mental health and wellbeing. Happiness is likely to have been impacted, which will undoubtedly impact on the performance of your people. Collecting quantitative and qualitative data on your employee happiness, you can ensure you're getting the most out of your people.

Of course, it's not all monetary. Looking after your people is also ethically the right thing to do!

BRINGING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND HAPPINESS TOGETHER

So far we've talked about employee engagement and happiness and the different factors that go into creating a happy and engaged workplace. We believe that all these factors play together to create thriving workplace cultures. Ultimately, this means you're creating the best possible environment for your team to achieve your goals.

As you can see in the diagram, the different areas, or neuroscience themes, feed into brain types and then into employee engagement and happiness. From here you can build a thriving culture.

THRIVING CULTURE

HAPPINESS   ENGAGEMENT

BRAIN TYPES

Instinctive Emotional   Reflective Rational

NEUROSCIENCE THEMES

Safety   Relationships   Meaning & Purpose   Clarity

Freedom   Acknowledgment   Personal Growth   Enablement

The Importance of Engagement & Happiness

We believe that happiness and engagement are two sides of the same coin. Our brains are evolved to need both. We often talk about employee engagement and happiness as being parts of the same car. Engagement is the sat nav and happiness is the fuel. Engagement gives us direction and happiness creates energy. It's one thing knowing where you want to go, it's another to have the energy to take you there!

"Highly engaged business units achieve a 10% increase in customer ratings and a 20% increase in sales
- Gallup"

Where Current Methods of Measuring Employee Engagement Go Wrong

So you're measuring your employee engagement across your organisation but you're not seeing the results you're looking for, right? We speak to organisations daily that measure employee engagement but aren't able to translate the data into achieving the goals they have set themselves for their people strategy. *Want to know why this is?* Here are the main reasons:

1) You're Not Measuring Happiness

If you're only measuring employee engagement and not happiness, you're missing a trick. Engagement is only one part of the puzzle. The picture won't be complete if you don't also know what your people are feeling.

By measuring happiness as well as engagement you'll benefit from a holistic picture of what your people are thinking and feeling. This means you'll be able to create a data-led people strategy that speaks to the head and the heart of your organisation.

Many companies we speak to only measure engagement, and then don't understand why they are still struggling with retention, recruitment or diversity issues. This is due to a lack of happiness data. Simple as that!

2) You're Not Measuring Often Enough

Too often we see people only measuring employee engagement once a year. The issue with this is that you're only getting a snapshot of engagement at the exact time you're sending out your survey. The feedback you're seeing is historical and is unlikely to be their current reality. Essentially, you may be creating action plans for things that are no longer relevant! Engagement and happiness fluctuate day to day as people's personal and professional situations change.

What we recommend you do instead is an always-on listening approach, supplemented with regular surveys which deep-dive into specific areas. The benefit of this is that you will be able to get ideas of patterns and trends. This means if you catch an individual, team or department on a bad day you won't be making knee-jerk reactions.

> **Many companies we speak to only measure engagement, and then don't understand why they are still struggling with retention, recruitment or diversity issues. This is due to a lack of happiness data. Simple as that!**

3) You Aren't Guaranteeing Anonymity

One of the most common issues we see HR teams facing is their data lacks in quantity or quality. In other words, it's misleading. This can lead to HR teams making the wrong decisions or feeling that their teams aren't interested in taking part in feedback surveys. We find it's often a symptom of people not trusting that their comments are truly anonymous. Sometimes this leads to people not giving candid feedback, but equally, it can result in fewer responses.

Using a third party – like The Happiness Index – with clear privacy protocols in place, makes people feel more comfortable giving honest feedback.

4) You're Not Closing the Feedback Loop

Everyone has been in situations where they've given feedback but felt that it hasn't been taken on board. This can also be the case with employee feedback.

We typically see two ways that this plays out. Firstly, people don't see the direct consequences of their feedback. This leads to people becoming disengaged from the process or the company entirely. The other issue can be that HR teams need more context or clarity around some feedback to action it. This leads to delays which are perceived as inaction.

In both cases being able to directly respond to feedback will solve the problem. We call this closing the feedback loop. Frequently presenting data and the actions that are going to be taken from them should be a key part of any engagement measurement strategy. In our platform, we include functionality that allows organisations to respond to comments without breaking confidentiality. Problem solved!

5) You Don't Have a Single View of Your Data

The last common issue we see is that people collect a lot of data but aren't able to process this in a way that facilitates real insight and connections. Often HR teams have disjointed and siloed data across different surveys throughout the employee lifecycle, e.g; onboarding, employee engagement and exit interviews. This means there isn't a clear picture of overall themes which can be used to create actionable insight.

Powerful analytics features, reporting and dashboards are key features of many employee engagement platforms. However, where these can fall down is that the separate parts of the employee lifecycle aren't taken together. This may lead to you missing out on important themes or trends.

Of course, this isn't an exhaustive list of issues we see, and we're always up for a challenge. If you think you have a problem that falls outside of the common issues we've outlined above we'd love to talk to you to see if we can offer a solution.

If you want to see an overview of how our platform can help strengthen your people strategy then please download our free Ebook, _The Little Book of Happiness_

THE LITTLE BOOK OF HAPPINESS

The Happiness Index

The Employee Engagement & Happiness Platform

BOOK A

FREE DEMO

How and Why to Measure Employee Engagement and Happiness

The pandemic has changed the world of work forever. We're seeing a lot of stress on people's mental and physical health, and organisations rethinking how, when and where their people work. This poses particular challenges for People and HR teams. If you're looking to get an accurate assessment of your culture, and how your people think, feel and behave, we recommend measuring both employee engagement and happiness.

Why Measure Employee Engagement and Happiness?

There are many reasons as to why we believe organisations should care about their employee engagement and happiness. They range from the fact it's the right thing to do to make sure your people are happy (what kind of leader doesn't want people to be happy) to the fact that it makes good business sense.

There's oodles of science backing up the fact that organisations with happier more engaged employees perform better:

Happy employees are 13% more productive. (Oxford University)
Creating a thriving culture can increase revenue by 400%. (Forbes)
Happy companies performed better on the stock market by 2.3-3.8%. (Grow the Pie)
Companies with engaged employees outperform those without by 202%. (Gallup)

We could write a whole book about why it makes sense to care about these things. In fact we have. Check out our book, _Freedom to be Human: The Business Case for Happiness._

Before you can start to make an impact on employee engagement and employee happiness, you need to measure and understand where your organisation is at the moment.

The benefit is that you will be able to put your people in the centre of your people strategy. Active listening and measurement allows you to ensure that the changes you make to your culture are meaningful because they're the ones that your people need and want.

How to Measure Employee Engagement and Happiness?

"How do I measure employee engagement?"' is a question asked by many HR professionals. Although it has long been thought that engagement is hard to measure, this is simply not the case. Technology has stepped into the breach when it comes to giving qualitative backing to both organisational culture and the ROI of investment in your people.

There are inexpensive tools which can be used when measuring employee engagement. Survey Monkey and Google Forms are popular choices. However, using a third party tool like The Happiness Index brings greater accuracy and speeds up the process. This is because using a third party allows you to bring experts onboard to ensure you get the data you need as well as data processing, meaning you can use your data more easily.

Another area where we excel is in collecting truly anonymous data. When contributors believe their feedback cannot be attributed back to them, you are more likely to get candid feedback which accurately reflects your people's happiness and engagement. This will allow you to highlight your strengths and build on any weaknesses.

Lastly, our platform uses advanced AI and machine learning to process comments and track common themes. This will save you from manually processing them, and will instead free you up to really understand how your people think and feel, to create targeted action plans.

A Word of Warning

The second you bring numbers to the party people start to think of targets. We really don't think happiness should be thought of as a target, and you should avoid "toxic positivity" which rejects difficult emotions.

Happiness and engagement are bound to ebb and flow, particularly in uncertain times. The same Oxford study which found that happy workers were 13% more productive, also found that a major influencing factor was good weather. This is not something you can control.

Similarly, the stresses and strains of the global pandemic will also have had impacts on happiness and culture which are outside of your control. For this reason, rather than having targets when it comes to the happiness and engagement of your team, you should simply try to measure and understand it.

Once you have significant quantitative data, you can then use this like a weather report. Giving you ideas of trends, and areas for improvement. This will allow you to ensure that any changes that you make to your people strategy are informed by the data you gather. Not only this, but you will also be able to ensure that the changes you are making are helping you to achieve your goals.

Another area where we excel is in collecting truly anonymous data. When contributors believe their feedback cannot be attributed back to them, you are more likely to get candid feedback which accurately reflects your people's happiness and engagement.

Rachel Armstrong | Learning & Development Business Partner | One Manchester

Working with The Happiness Index has helped us cement our culture of care. We've managed to forge a stronger emotional connection with each other which has resonated throughout the organisation, and driven our colleagues to go above and beyond even though this has been one of our hardest years.

Measuring Happiness and Engagement in a Global Context

One of the challenges we speak to people about time and time again is 'measuring employee experience across different locations'. Frequently this includes those with multiple locations such as a head office, warehouses and public facing locations, such as shops, pubs or restaurants. Creating meaningful insights across very different locations and working environments can be hard. This may be amplified when considering multiple locations across different countries, time zones or even continents.

1) A Language Barrier

We've talked before about why you should measure employee engagement AND happiness. However, when we think in a global context, it is particularly important. This is because although all languages have a word for happiness, it's not equally easy to translate the concept of employee engagement.

When we've been working to make our platform available in French and Spanish, for example, there hasn't been one widely used phrase which can be slotted in for employee engagement. This means we have to define and give context to the concept.

Happiness is a deeply human emotion. Everyone is familiar with it, regardless of their mother tongue. This means it's a great way of ascertaining how your people are feeling regardless of their location, language or culture.

2) Cultural Differences

Although we work in many areas where the business language is English (for example in India) – culture both inside and outside of work varies a great deal. This is important when it comes to segmenting and analysing your data. But also in terms of understanding differences between locations or individuals.

A good example of this is the difference between UK and US work norms. While both countries share the same native language, their work cultures vary. An obvious difference is the amount of holiday or vacation time that might be expected. There's also the case of when people might be expected to be reachable by phone or email.

By looking at happiness AND engagement, you can start to think more globally about how people are thinking, feeling and behaving within your workforce.

3) Location, Location, Location

We find that many of the organisations we speak to find it challenging to measure across locations, because the working environment can vary significantly. Sometimes this might not only be due to physical location, but also the type of location.

For example, it's often easier to collect data from people in head office. This may be because they tend to work at their computers and so are able to connect to their email via a computer which allows them easy access. The only way to combat this is to ensure that everyone can give feedback whenever and wherever they like. This means allowing people to give feedback 24/7, but also ensuring that feedback can be given on any device.

We also recommend using signage, QR codes or simple URLs to ensure that people are able to give feedback even if they do not have computer-based jobs.

By looking at happiness AND engagement, you can start to think more globally about how people are thinking, feeling and behaving within your workforce.

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3) People-First Data

When collecting data for your people strategy in a global context, it's important to think about what data you're collecting, and how you're collecting it. However, another key element to consider is how you're processing the data afterwards.

You may need to segment your data to understand the impact that cultural, language and location differences are having. This allows you to understand the data within the real human context. However, this can often mean that your people are left uncertain about how anonymous data will be. Within our product we counteract this by only releasing data when there are at least 5 data points within a segment, to help ensure anonymity.

4) Global is Personal

If there's one thing we learnt from 2020, it's that global issues affect all of us, albeit in different ways. Events like George Floyd's murder, the US presidential campaign and environmental disasters sent shockwaves around the entire world. Everyone was affected by these issues, showing that the workforce truly is global.

The biggest and most widely studied is the global pandemic. Studies like the Global Happiness Report show that the impact of the pandemic on mental health is global: worldwide there has been a 10% increase in people feeling sad or worried the previous day. However, as the report also highlights, this experience isn't universal.

As the popular internet meme explains, the pandemic sent us all into the same storm but in different boats. By way of an example, the report's authors draw attention to the case of Asia Pacific, where governments in countries like Australia and New Zealand were able to make use of non-medical interventions to reduce cases dramatically compared to other nations. Where there were more lockdowns, like in the UK, there was a bigger impact on mental health.

5) Making the Global Local

We are moving to a more global workforce. Organisations are recruiting top talent from around the world. Cultural diversity is not just a buzzword at the moment – it's a vital way to ensure that your business is working for your team and for your bottom line. A diverse workforce is more likely to be happy and engaged, as well as more creative and productive.

Even if you don't currently have international offices, it's very likely that many of your people won't speak English as their first language. This means having a people strategy that works regardless of cultural context or language. It's key that your people strategy grows as you do – to ensure your organisation is future-proofed.

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"Happy employees are 12% more productive than the norm and 22% more productive than their unhappy peers
- Inc.

How to Build an Employee-Centric Listening Programme

"When employees say they want their voices to be heard, they are really saying they want leaders who will not just hear them, but really listen to them." – Forbes

Thinking about starting an employee listening programme, but don't know where to begin? Use our step by step guide to think about how you will structure your process end to end.

1) Start With an Open Mind

We all think we know our organisations, but it's impossible for anyone to know exactly what everyone else is thinking or feeling. When you start an employee-centric listening programme, it's best to put aside your feelings about what you think is, or isn't working within your organisation. Instead listen to what your people have to say.

If you bring prejudices or opinions into the process too early this can derail progress, and make your people feel they aren't being listened to. This could cause problems with later surveys.

To make the most out of your employee listening programme, you need buy-in from your people.

2) Build Trust

To make the most out of your employee listening programme, you need buy-in from your people. The best way to do this is to build trust by being transparent. This means clearly explaining the process, timelines and outputs from the outset.

Another key aspect to trust is anonymity. You will get both more and better data from this because your people will trust that their feedback will not be linked back to them. This will allow you to get a clearer and more accurate picture of where your organisation is.

3) Make it Manageable

The best thing you can do when starting your employee listening programme is to make sure that gathering, analysing and most importantly giving feedback is as easy as possible. Ensure there's an easy link to follow, information and deadlines are clearly signposted and surveys aren't too long or complicated.

We believe that surveys should be available in appropriate languages on any device, but particularly should be accessible on mobile devices and desktop computers so people can give feedback when and where they like.

You don't want someone opening the link and being faced with a wall of questions and text. Letting people know how long the survey is likely to take them, and how far through they are will help manage expectations.

4) Listen First

We are often asked about benchmarking employee engagement and happiness. While we have access to millions of data points across hundreds of companies in 92 countries, we don't actually believe that benchmarking against all this data is the best way for organisations to achieve their goals.

Instead, we recommend benchmarking against yourself, as every culture is unique. Start your process with a survey that gives you a good idea of where your culture is and what the priorities are within your organisation. This will put you in a strong position to achieve your goals.

5) Prepare for Honest Feedback

You may find the feedback is more candid than you expected particularly if you've included free text. Free text is very important in an employee-centric listening programme as it allows people to speak to you openly and freely using their own words. This gives you a much better chance to understand how your people are feeling and thinking as humans, rather than just as numbers on a scale.

Don't become discouraged or take it personally. At this stage it's key you all see the results as an opportunity to learn, grow and develop a people strategy that will support your entire organisation.

6) Respond to Feedback

A key way to put your people in the centre of your employee listening programme is to close the feedback loop. Try to reply directly to individual comments to ensure your people feel heard without breaking anonymity.

This gives more power to the employees allowing them to own the process, while still hearing directly from leadership. This is particularly important in larger or remote organisations where people tend to have less direct contact with leadership.

7) Share Results and Plans

The next step is to share the results of your survey with the wider organisation, as well as action steps you will be taking off the back of the feedback. Ideally you will include timelines and measurable markers so that your people will be able to see that their feedback has been listened to and acted upon.

By committing to transparency and honesty you will build trust within your organisation. This will help you gain further insight in any follow up surveys or activity you run. You will also get a better response rate, meaning you can trust the data more.

We recommend that you are clear and honest about any areas you are unable to tackle, as well as blockers. The more transparent you are with your people, the more employee-centric your people strategy will be.

8) Keep Listening

Many organisations complete one-off surveys and call it a day. This is a mistake. Humans go through waves of emotion, and one-off surveys only provide a snapshot of how your people are feeling, thinking and behaving.

Instead we recommend continuous employee listening. This will provide a much clearer picture of the true state of your organisation's happiness and employee engagement. This approach has two benefits:

First - listening is caring. It creates an environment where people always feel acknowledged and therefore more willing to get involved. Rather than only when you want to listen.

Second - constantly monitoring your organisation's sentiment means you can address concerns before they balloon into something much harder to fix. Organisations can focus on the most critical areas and put together timely and relevant action plans.

By committing to transparency and honesty you will build trust within your organisation. This will help you gain further insight in any follow up surveys or activity you run. You will also get a better response rate, meaning you can trust the data more.

Dawn Browne | People & Talent Director | Fuller's

"Despite the pandemic proving incredibly tough for the hospitality sector, we have kept people at the heart of our organisation. We've continued to invest in our pubs and our people so that we emerge as a stronger business. The launch of our new employee engagement and happiness programme is key to the delivery of our people agenda. We like to build long-term partnerships with suppliers that share our values, which made The Happiness Index a perfect partner for us."

Defining, Measuring and Improving Employee Experience

So we've talked about employee happiness and employee engagement. It's time to throw another term into the mix: employee experience. People tend to use these phrases in lots of different ways, so we thought it might be helpful to talk about what specifically we mean in this context.

What do We Mean by Employee Experience?

When we talk about employee experience at The Happiness Index we like to think about how happy and engaged your people are across their entire journey with your organisation. This means we like to think about how people interact with an organisation from the day they apply for the role, to the day they leave.

There will likely be a natural ebb and flow to how your people feel throughout the year. For example, if you work in financial services, there may be a pressure point around tax season. In retail you may find people are more stressed around sales times or the festive period. Some organisations and individuals find that there is a period which is sometimes known as the "three-year itch" when someone has been in the same position for a while.

When Can You Measure Employee Experience?

Of course, you can (and should) measure Employee Experience during your regular check-in. Perhaps in your regular culture surveys or any pulse surveys you do throughout the year. To really get a feel for employee experience, we recommend also running specific surveys at key trigger points in your people's careers.

Our customers who want to measure the full employee experience typically start with our Onboarding and Exit surveys. Onboarding surveys might be run in weeks 2 and 12, and then at 6 months. Within the first two weeks, employees will have developed their initial perceptions of the company and their role. This is followed up at the 3 month stage, which is likely to be when employees feel more settled, and they should truly understand how they feel about the role and the organisation. Finally, the third survey is at 6 months, which is when research shows colleagues are at their most engaged, motivated, and productive - it is very difficult to bring these levels up after this point, but they can be maintained through sustained and effective management and support. This gives you a holistic view of new starters' experiences.

Exit surveys are also very helpful, and getting an idea of how your people think and feel as they leave can be invaluable to many organisations to really understand their attrition rate.

On top of these, some of our customers have found success with additional surveys around key service anniversaries, life events (such as returning from parental leave), promotions or internal job moves to keep on top of the overall employee experience. In conjunction with your regular touchpoints throughout the year it will give you a consistent view of how your people are thinking, feeling and behaving as they go through their career journey with you.

You may want to think about other key milestones in your organisation. Where do you think your pressure points are? Do you have a high number of apprentices leaving after qualifying? Do you have a low rate of maternity returners?

To really get a feel for employee experience, we recommend also running specific surveys at key trigger points in your people's careers.

How Can You Measure Employee Experience?

The exact questions you should ask during employee experience surveys will vary slightly depending on the timings. For example, the questions you ask in an onboarding survey will be very different from an exit interview.

We recommend a couple of things that should be consistent throughout your measurement of employee experience. Firstly, you should always ask how happy and engaged your people are and give them an open text box. This will allow you to gather consistent quantitative feedback as well as giving your people the chance to open up and express themselves as humans.

Secondly, as well as having in-person conversations around your onboarding and exit interviews, we also recommend space and time for anonymous feedback. This is important because it will give you more candid feedback from your people. Although the personal touch is key to building relationships, getting unfiltered opinions at these pivotal moments will help you to power your people strategy.

Lastly, ensuring consistency between touchpoints, teams and individuals will give you a better data-set to work with. Not only does consistency help you to build trust, but you will also be able to spot trends, themes and potential problems or weak spots. These will prove invaluable as you build your people strategy.

> **Knowing how your people think, feel and behave throughout their employee lifecycle will help you identify where the strengths and weaknesses in your people strategy are.**

How Can You Use this to Improve Employee Experience?

Knowing how your people think, feel and behave throughout their employee lifecycle will help you identify where the strengths and weaknesses in your people strategy are. This will help you refine and build a strategy that will put your people, and their happiness and engagement, at the heart of everything you do.

As well as having in-person conversations around your onboarding and exit interviews, we also recommend space and time for anonymous feedback. This is important because it will give you more candid feedback from your people. Although the personal touch is key to building relationships, getting unfiltered opinions at these

How Often Can (and Should) We Survey Our People?

We've said that a one-off annual survey isn't going to cut it when it comes to employee listening. The question then becomes "how often should we be surveying our people?" This is going to vary from organisation to organisation but we wanted to share some ideas with you. We're helpful like that!

1) Not Too Little

We won't dwell on this too much. But for clarity: the reason we don't recommend only doing annual surveys is they only give you a snapshot of what your organisation looks like at a particular point in time. Organisations are made up of humans and humans change on a regular, if not daily basis. So, any data you do gather is going to go out of date very quickly.

To ensure you're not gathering too much feedback, you need to think about resources in your leadership and people teams. How much capacity do you have to fully respond to and action feedback?

2) Not Too Much

On the other end of the spectrum, you can gather too much feedback! We see listening strategies fall flat when organisations focus too much on the first stage of the feedback loop (getting feedback) and not on closing the feedback loop. This diminishes trust. Colleagues don't necessarily feel their feedback has been listened to, and may feel there isn't a point in participating if action isn't taken, so lose faith in the programme.

To ensure you're not gathering too much feedback, you need to think about resources in your leadership and people teams. How much capacity do you have to fully respond to and action feedback? This means thanking your people for their time and communicating the results with them. Even if you are not able to implement changes to address issues that have been raised, you will need to explain why you are not taking action at this time.

3) Juuuuuuust Right

What we tend to recommend to our customers is a cycle that starts with 2-4 touchpoints across your organisation per year. This doesn't mean you need to send out quarterly surveys to the whole organisation (although this might be something you build to - more on this in a minute). Instead you might think about a cadence that includes a variety of touchpoints. You should probably also include continuous listening in your programme but we'll talk about this in depth in a bit.

For example, you may choose to complete an annual survey and a 6-month check-in. This could be accompanied by a deeper dive or specific pulse survey, and targeted pulses and interventions throughout the year, these may be sent to certain departments or cohorts. These could be complemented with employee lifecycle touchpoints, at key points in your people's journey with your organisation for example onboarding and anniversaries.

4) Building Your Programme

As we alluded to earlier, you may want to build up to your ideal programme. Initially your people might not be ready to give feedback so often, particularly if it's something they are not used to. To build trust and buy-in you will need a strong foundation first. As you prove the efficacy of your listening programme you can increase the frequency of your surveys. Some of our customers went from sending out a survey every 2 years, to annually. Or from annual with 6-month check-ins, to regular pulse surveys… and so on.

A key part of building up your programme is that you need to make sure that you're responding regularly to feedback. We call this closing the feedback loop. While we recommend presenting full feedback regularly, you might also consider replying to specific feedback one on one. When doing this you need to ensure that anonymity is maintained.

5) Continuous Listening

As always we recommend listening to your people when they want to talk to you. This means having the option for feedback every day, year-round. Our Employee Voice Survey is ideal for this as it allows people to give feedback as and when they want to.

The benefit of continuous feedback is that you can use this data as a weather report. You'll be able to measure changes in your organisation's happiness and spot trends in the way your people are thinking, feeling and behaving. This will mean that you can adjust your people strategy accordingly while not reacting to misleading information.

We recommend pushing the survey, which only has one question and a space for free text weekly. This should be done via a channel that works best for your employees, such as email, text or your internal communication tool. It's important to remind people that the survey is open to them!

6) Bottom Line

However often you end up measuring your people, make sure you listen to feedback, and respond back. If you need to scale back your programme at any time because you lack resource within the people team to take the appropriate steps, that's fine! Just communicate your plans and actions with your people!

We recommend that you are clear and honest about any areas you are unable to tackle, as well as blockers. The more transparent you are with your people, the more employee-centric your people strategy will be.

> **As always we recommend listening to your people when they want to talk to you. This means having the option for feedback every day, year-round. Our Employee Voice Survey is ideal for this as it allows people to give feedback as and when they want to.**

Today's Specials

FLEXIBLE WORKING

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

AUTONOMY

HAVE A VERY HAPPY DAY

The Power of
Pre-Built Surveys

Here's the thing - our platform is designed to help you get the best insight from your people. We're now on V4 of our platform and we've got almost a decade of data and experience that have gone into creating it... we're confident that our employee engagement and happiness platform will turbocharge your people strategy and create a happier, healthier and more productive workforce simultaneously.

While we do offer the option of customising your surveys, we believe that the real power behind our platform is our pre-built surveys. While we don't want to get too sales-y on you, we do want to quickly walk you through why we think our pre-built surveys are so powerful.

Powered by Neuroscience

Every question used within our pre-built surveys is underpinned by neuroscience. This means that there's real science and weight behind every aspect of your survey. So you can analyse your results and get insight into how your people are really thinking, feeling and behaving. Each question is specifically designed to help you create a thriving culture... meaning you don't have to worry about any of them not carrying their weight.

Powered by Data

Part of the magic behind the design of our pre-built surveys is that we've built our platform around 8 key neuroscience themes, see below.

This means that you're able to complete cross-theme analysis amongst the questions within your surveys to help gain a greater understanding of the reasons why your people are thinking and feeling what they are. This gives you true data flexibility.

Powered by Instinct

We know that sometimes your instinct as a leader is your best asset. We've found that our customers can use their instincts to choose particular surveys which then back up their gut feel with real insight. This means you can blend your own knowledge of your organisation with quantitative and qualitative data to really tell the story to your wider team. It also means you can use data to test how good your instincts are...

Powered by Partnership

We believe that more is more when it comes to expertise! That's why a whole team of neuroscience and business experts helped put together our pre-built surveys. By combining our platform with your own knowledge of your organisation's needs, you are armed with all the tools and expertise you could ever need to power your people strategy.

Powered by Community

Alongside each of our pre-built surveys, we've created a library of knowledge to support you in creating actions. Our knowledge hub has been created by our community of experts so you can create an action plan which will deliver results. Plus, you can discuss these with our wider community, to see how other organisations have risen to similar challenges.

Powered by Vision

Our vision is "Freedom to be Human". We know that all people are individuals, so we designed our pre-built surveys to speak to as many people as possible. So you can rest assured that you won't be getting skewed data due to one individual's outlook.

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Powered by Your People

Ultimately our platform is powered by your people. It is designed to uncover what is important to your people when it comes to their happiness and engagement. This means that you will be able to understand clearly where their priorities lie. Then you can build a people strategy that is in line with both your organisation's values and what your people need. Your people are the most powerful resource you have, and our surveys are designed to unlock that power!

To discover more, scan the QR code below and speak with one of our experts today!

The
Happiness
Index

SCAN ME &
DISCOVER MORE

Understanding and Improving Response Rates

One of the topics we talk to organisations about time and time again is their response rates. Typically, they've run a survey in the past and found that not many people responded and they've felt that it hasn't been worth their while. We can empathise! It's demoralising to spend time and effort creating something only for there to be low uptake. Here are some tips and tricks to help you boost response rates and engagement within your organisation...

First, what is a good response rate for an employee survey?

Think of it as a delicate engagement see-saw - you need to get the balance just right. By adopting the correct approach, you will create a programme that factors in the balance between the needs of your business and the needs of the respondent. This will ensure high response rates.

Our benchmark for responses is 74% of employees. We think that this is a good benchmark to aim for and something most organisations can achieve. However, with the correct approach, we find that some of our customers can consistently get a response rate of over 80%. *Want to find out how?* Read on…

> ### Think of it as a delicate engagement see-saw - you need to get the balance just right.

1) Be Proactive

One of the top reasons employees give for not participating is that they think it's pointless. They may think it's a tick box exercise, or that their feedback doesn't matter and won't be listened to. Or that nothing will be done with the feedback. Sometimes this is down to past ineffective listening strategies, but it may also be because of experiences in previous jobs or roles. Being proactive will start to build momentum within your organisation - if people see that you are genuinely actioning feedback, and creating positive change off the back of what their colleagues are saying, then they will be motivated to have their say too.

2) Present Your Plan

Another way you can help your people see that taking part in the survey isn't a waste of time is by communicating a clear roadmap. We recommend explaining the longer-term strategy in the initial communications you create around your strategy. This should include information about when surveys are being launched, how long they will be open for and when people can expect to see the results. Once the results are shared with the wider organisation, you should also commit to an action roadmap. This may include workshops or team-based action planning to involve your people in the outcomes of your programme.

3) Communication, Communication, Communication

To create effective storytelling around your programme, thinking about how you tell your people about your programme is key. Good signposting and branding of your initiative can have a big impact on response rate. Using consistent language and imagery around the programme will help your people recognise and remember your plan. We're talking about marketing here really, but you also need to think about how and where you communicate. Ideally you should put your communication where your people spend the most time. Depending on your team this might include internet or intranet, kiosks, posters or line manager communications.

4) Show Buy-In

One of the best ways to show your people their time won't be wasted is by demonstrating buy-in from all levels of your organisation. Of course, putting your money where your mouth is and investing in a tool like The Happiness Index can show how serious your organisation is about making positive change. But we also recommend launching the programme with a key stakeholder for example the CEO or Chief People Officer. But you can go further. For example, you may create a working group with involvement from across the organisation. Or set up a larger meeting where senior team members discuss what they're hoping to achieve through the activity.

5) Timing is Everything

It might seem obvious but the time you send out your survey and communications can actually have a big impact on the success of your programme. If you launch Friday afternoon, the chances are you will have a poor initial response rate. You will see a similar picture with Monday morning launches. It's not just what day of the week you're looking at though. If you launch for 1-2 weeks during holiday periods you're going to miss people. Thinking about when you're sending surveys, how long they're running for, and how and when you send out updates and reminders will be an important step in planning your programme.

6) Make it Relevant

If something comes out of the blue people are going to be less bothered about answering it. So when you're creating your communication play you'll need to think about how you show that the surveys are part of an overarching people strategy. For example, sending a Wellbeing Survey when you have communicated your wellbeing week or programme coming up, will make it more salient. Similarly, a Future of Work survey is more likely to get a good response rate if it's framed in the context of a return to office plan or a wider review of remote working. And so on, you get the picture. Essentially, people don't like answering random surveys that aren't speaking directly to their needs and wants, so creating the story of that relevance is key.

7) Cover the Basics

One of the most basic, but often overlooked areas of increasing response rate is to make it easy for people to do what you're asking of them. Don't make the survey too long, ensure it's in your primary business language, and make sure it's available to people on the device they're most likely to be using, whether that's mobile or desktop or something else. You also need to make sure you give people ample time to complete the survey. If you have workers who aren't desk-based, for example, you might want to give them a specific 15 minute break. You might need to ensure they have ample WiFi, or a device for example a tablet in a dedicated space. We've found that some tea and biscuits don't go amiss either.

8) Make it Social

Having a team of happiness and engagement advocates or champions will be helpful. Not only to spread the load of action planning, and to help show your team you mean business... but it can positively impact response rates too. These individuals can speak to their colleagues directly about the survey, advocate for its importance and encourage participation. From a neuroscience standpoint this taps into social desirability bias - if we know other people are doing something then we want to do it too. Another great idea is to share response rate league tables. If you generate a bit of competition between teams or departments, you may find that when people see that others are having their say, they will want to get involved too.

9) Don't Give Up

If your first survey doesn't get a great response rate, then it can be tempting to give up. Don't worry though, sometimes customers find that as they build trust and transparency over time, response rates will pick up naturally. You might need to take some time to find the exact formula that works for your organisation. Keep at it and soon you'll find you're able to get plenty of people giving feedback to power your people strategy.

One of the best ways to show your people their time won't be wasted is by demonstrating buy-in from all levels of your organisation.

"Happy employees experience 31% better productivity. They are 37% better at selling and display 3x more creativity than their unhappy counterparts
- Forbes

Contact Us

We'd love to stay in touch with you! Click on the icons to follow us on our main social channels.

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#FREEDOMTOBEHUMAN