

HR/employee survey:

How well do HR teams understand their workforce?

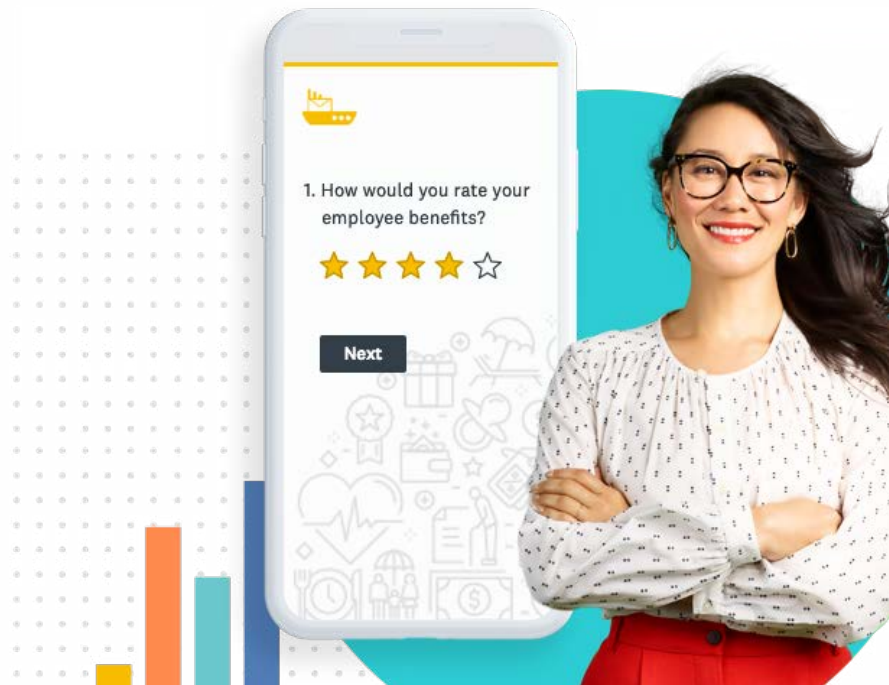


Intro

Are your HR initiatives aligned with employee needs? Do you ask your employees about their workplace happiness often enough? Are they comfortable giving honest feedback?

Like you, we were curious, so we surveyed 960 Americans with full-time jobs to discover how they feel about their employee experiences and career prospects. We didn't only target employees—we also wanted to hear from people who work specifically in HR (43% of the overall respondents). We were curious if HR teams and employees in other departments are aligned around issues like employee engagement, career opportunities, and areas for improvement over the next 12 months.

HR professionals and employees agree on most issues—perhaps that is because 94% of HR teams check in with employees either very or somewhat often. And they are most likely to use surveys and meetings with teams and individuals to assess employee experiences. But, there are areas of disagreement between HR and other employees, which surprised us. Read on to understand where HR and other employees are aligned, and where they diverge.



LEGEND



ALIGNED

Workplace issues where HR teams and employees in other departments are aligned.

MISALIGNED

Issues where HR teams and employees are not aligned.

ALIGNED

89%

of HR professionals regularly check in on employee happiness



Check in with employees often

Most employees (38%) said they receive employee engagement surveys annually, while 33% said quarterly. The majority (48%) feel they spend just the right amount of time completing surveys, while 42% said not much time at all. Only 9% of workers feel they spend too much time.

Employees aren't shy giving feedback. Only 10% feel uncomfortable doing so and are hesitant because either they fear possible repercussions, worry that others would find out what they wrote, or don't want to offend their managers.

The takeaway

With such positive sentiment to survey-taking, don't be afraid to survey employees more often if you survey annually. And if you're surveying quarterly or annually, consider asking more questions, especially if you can demonstrate that employees will not be penalized by providing honest feedback, anonymous or otherwise. Frequent check-ins will help fix the disconnects between HR and employees that we'll discuss later.

ALIGNED

53%

of employees are approached by external recruiters either very or somewhat often



Employees are open to external opportunities—and HR pros know it

HR respondents overestimate the number of employees who are open to exploring external career opportunities—but not by much. 81% of HR respondents believe employees are either very or somewhat open to exploring external opportunities, compared to 79% of employees. Uncannily, 23% of HR respondents believe employees are approached by outside recruiters very often—the same percentage of employees who felt likewise.

Key takeaway

As US unemployment continues on its [downward trend](#), it becomes increasingly difficult to attract and retain talent. In fact, HR respondents list talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention as their top 3 challenges in the next 12 months. Keeping a frequent pulse on employee sentiment is vital.

ALIGNED

85%

of employees feel connected to their organization's mission and values



A culture of diversity and inclusion

[Diversity and inclusion](#) has become an important cultural cornerstone at many organizations. An overwhelming 93% of employees and 91% of HR respondents feel it is important to work at a diverse organization that focuses on building an inclusive work environment. So, it's encouraging that 47% of HR pros said their organizations have invested time/resources in diversity and inclusion programs.

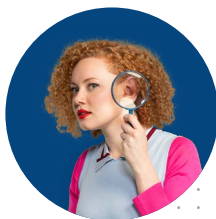
Key takeaway

Ask [diversity questions](#) in your employee surveys to get to know employees on multiple levels, across departments, so you can track representation on different teams. And if you're worried that asking might be sensitive—don't. People are used to being asked about it, and according to the Census Bureau, people are no more likely to skip these types of questions than any other.

MISALIGNED

Employees most want employers to improve benefits/perks and total compensation

Development and training is the No. 2 most-important area for improvement ... but for employees it came in at No. 7 for employees.



Improvements wishlist

We asked both HR respondents and employees what they would change about their organizations if they could. HR pros cited development and training as the second most important area for improvement at their organization, but training didn't make it in the top 5 of employees' improvement lists. Employees prefer to improve benefits/perks, total compensation (which both tied for first place), vacation policy, policies for measuring performance and compensation, career opportunities, and culture.

While benefits and perks was also the #1 area for improvement for HR respondents, total compensation—the other hot area named by employees—trailed as the third concern for HR. The second most important area for HR is recognizing employees for hard work.

Interestingly, employee and HR respondents are more or less equally unhappy with their office facilities. 19% of HR and 15% of employees agree office facilities could be improved.

Key takeaway

Review your employee feedback surveys to see if you're focusing HR resources and budgets in the areas that are important to employees. Do your employees value the types of development and training programs your organization has in place as much as your leaders do? Survey your employees often to ensure that your programs are aligned with what employees want most.

MISALIGNED

9%

of HR pros said they don't understand their employees' happiness, experience, and needs



Understanding your employees' needs, happiness, and experience

A full 91% of HR respondents said they understand their employees' happiness, experience, and needs. But only 74% of employees feel the same.

Additionally, of HR respondents who think they understand their employees' happiness, experience, and needs extremely well, 70% are actively tracking employee engagement through surveys. And the vast majority send this surveys monthly or quarterly.

When we asked employees a similar question, of those who said that they receive employee engagement surveys on a monthly basis, over 70% said their organization understands their experience as an employee.

Key takeaway

While the majority (42%) of HR respondents survey employees quarterly and 30% survey annually, there are opportunities to increase this frequency. You could reserve the more extensive research to happen quarterly and carry out monthly pulse-check surveys. That way, you can ensure the impacts of your programs are on track every quarter, and quickly course-correct if you spot negative trends in monthly surveys.

MISALIGNED

2 in 5

employees say they would be very open to exploring external opportunities



How likely will you lose employees?

It's a reality that employees change jobs in their career, but how confident are HR professionals about retaining skilled staff? 25% of employees said career opportunities would be something they would like more of at their companies. However, there are more HR respondents (44%) who believe employees feel only somewhat likely that they can grow their careers at their company versus 36% who feel it is very likely. HR professionals should know that 42% of employees are very open to exploring opportunities elsewhere and over half of employees (58%) are often approached by external recruiters.

Key takeaway

For HR, knowing how employees feel about professional growth is an important part of how you understand their whole self. Add [career development](#) questions to your next employee survey to help you assess where you can improve growth opportunities for all employees, as well as to help you channel development and training dollars into the right programs.

What are your next steps?

As attracting and retaining skilled talent becomes more difficult, you don't want to leave any gaps in your ability to deliver exceptional employee experiences. Consider the following 4 strategies the next time you survey your employees:

01

Don't be afraid to survey employees more often and ask more questions so you stay close to what they care most about.

02

Get to know your employees on multiple levels, for example by asking questions around diversity and inclusion.

03

Use employee surveys to ensure that you are focusing HR budgets in areas that really keep employees engaged in their work and with the organization.

04

Ask career development questions to help you develop the right initiatives that encourage employees to feel vested in the organization.

By asking the right questions and surveying employees often, you'll stay on top—or even ahead—of what makes them tick. So you can create a happy and engaged workforce.



Create a better workplace with employee feedback

Understand the employee experience holistically.

SurveyMonkey Enterprise helps you get candid employee feedback on all aspects of the workplace, so you can motivate, retain, and grow your employees. From survey templates for employee satisfaction to 360-degree feedback, you'll get data that you can easily analyze to fuel all your employee initiatives.

Start creating your employee
feedback surveys today

[Learn more](#)