



GUIDE

The SurveyMonkey employee engagement handbook

How to create, send, and analyze engagement surveys
to improve employee satisfaction and workplace culture

The purpose of this guide

Deepening connection in today's dynamic workplace

As workplaces evolve rapidly, prioritizing employee engagement has become a critical differentiator for successful organizations.

Yet, [our recent study](#) on how workers view HR revealed a concerning gap: Only 43% of workers think HR professionals do a good job at keeping employees engaged and satisfied. HR teams, as key partners in guiding employee engagement efforts, now have a significant opportunity to spearhead new strategies for employee experience and retention.

In this guide, we'll help you gather and leverage employee feedback effectively to equip leadership with powerful data and recommendations to improve the overall employee experience. We'll walk you through the process of creating, conducting, and analyzing employee engagement surveys using SurveyMonkey. You'll be able to enhance your approach to employee engagement and make meaningful improvements for your organization.

A handbook of our latest best practices, including:

- Using AI to create more effective surveys
- Choosing the best times to send surveys and deciding the length of surveys
- How HR pros use SurveyMonkey for employee engagement



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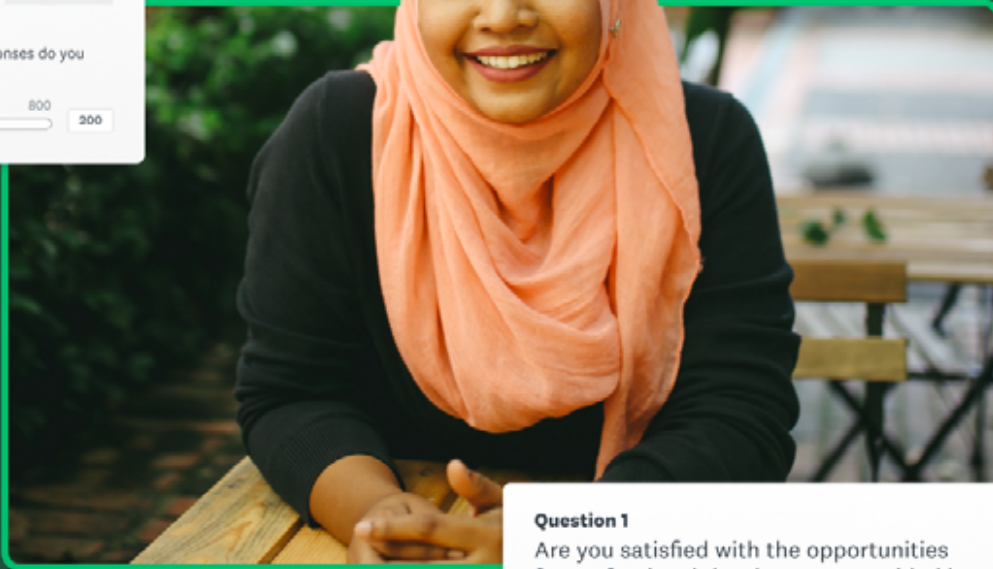


Who do you want to survey?

 Country	 Gender
 Age	 Household Income

How many responses do you need?

0 800



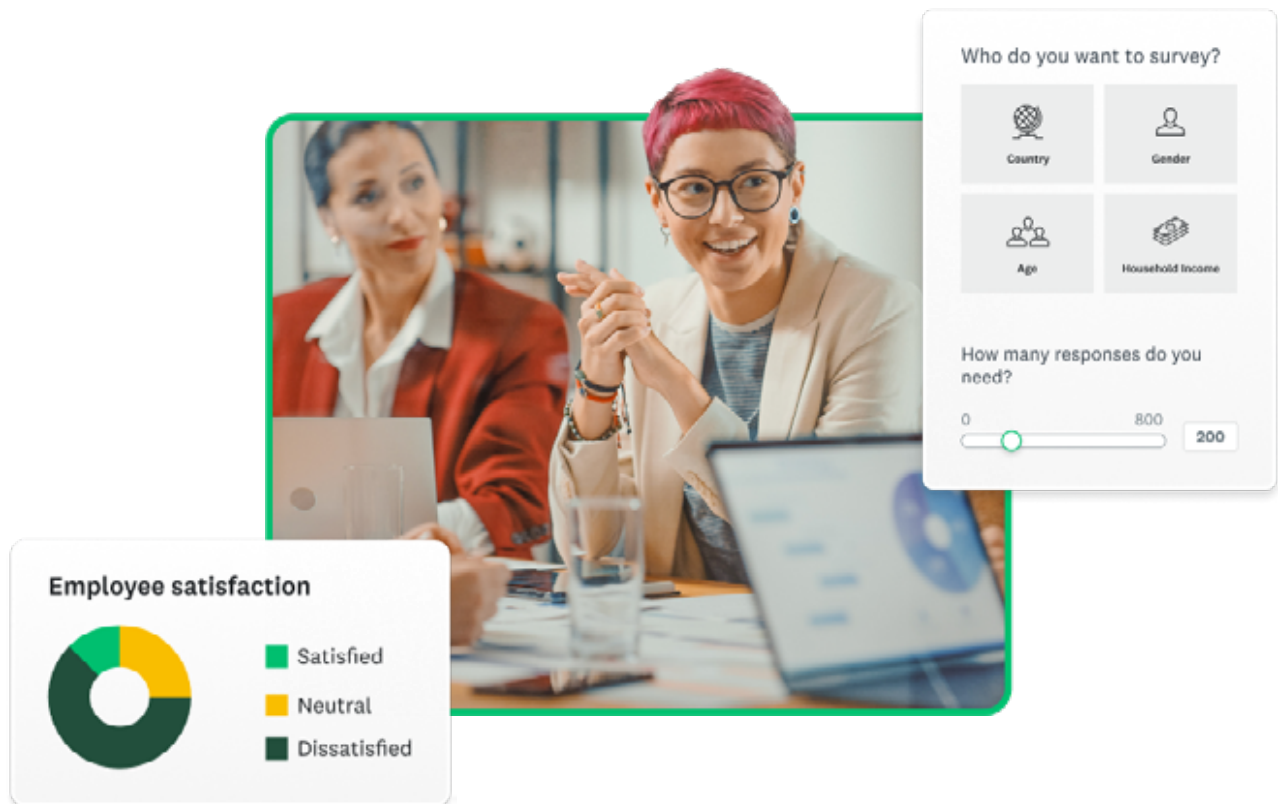
Question 1
Are you satisfied with the opportunities for professional development provided by the company?

NOT AT ALL A LOT

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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CHAPTER ONE

Using SurveyMonkey for HR



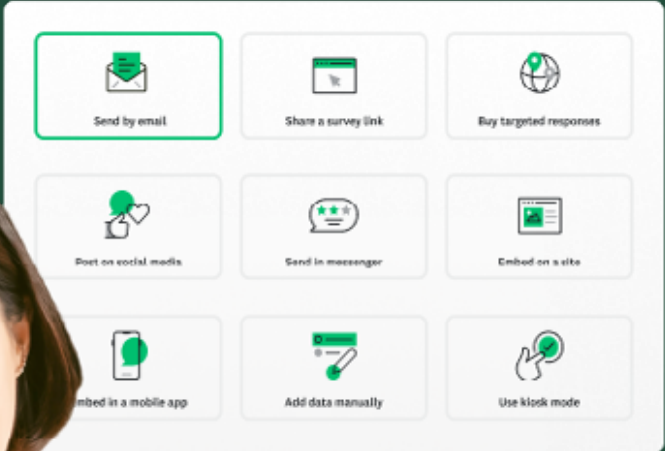
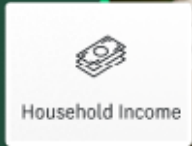
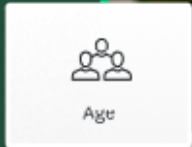
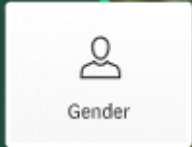
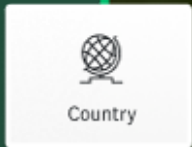
Effective HR management often involves a simple yet powerful process: Ask, Listen, and Act. This approach can set you apart from many HR pros and significantly enhance employee experiences.

However, sometimes it's hard to get employees on board. According to [our report](#), the primary reason workers hesitate to provide open and honest feedback about their experiences is lack of faith in the outcome. A striking 44% of employees don't feel their feedback will lead to any real changes. This points to a disconnect between gathering feedback and implementing meaningful changes based on that input.

44%

A striking 44% of employees don't feel their feedback will lead to any real changes.





CHAPTER TWO

Survey planning

It's one thing to talk about insights-driven action, but at SurveyMonkey, we apply our own methodology internally. Here's how our HR leadership puts insights into action:

ONE

We **analyze data from multiple angles**—in aggregate, by functional group, and by geography—**to gain a comprehensive understanding.**

TWO

We **share findings transparently** with our executive team and leadership across different functions and regions.

THREE

We believe in **addressing all feedback, even when action isn't feasible.** We acknowledge what we've heard and explain why certain changes can't be implemented, which is crucial for maintaining employee engagement.

FOUR

We aim for a 70-80% participation rate in our surveys. This ambitious target allows us to hear from a broad set of voices and segment findings effectively.

FIVE

HR professionals at SurveyMonkey act as intermediaries between employees and leadership, working with leaders and managers to develop actionable plans that align with organizational goals.

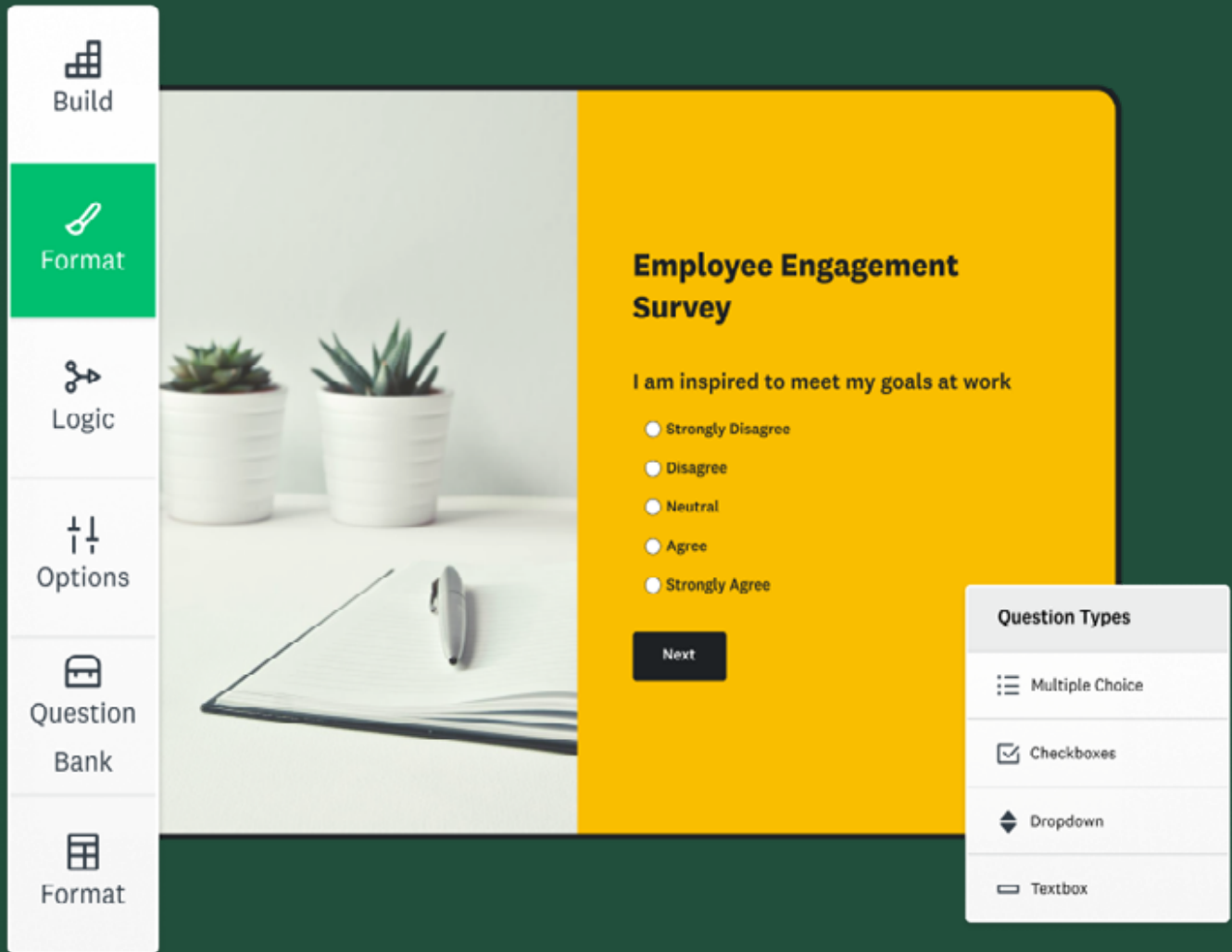
SIX

SurveyMonkey HR pros later **resurface how insights-driven actions are progressing over time** to show continued commitment to employee engagement.



Listen to our Chief People Officer, Becky Cantieri, explain how we use feedback to shape workplace experience in our webinar, [“Unlock employee experience feedback.”](#)





CHAPTER THREE

Survey creation and sending

Acting on survey results is not just important—it's non-negotiable. When you ask employees for their thoughts and opinions, you're entering into an implicit agreement. This agreement is based on trust and respect, and it carries significant implications for your organization's culture and success.

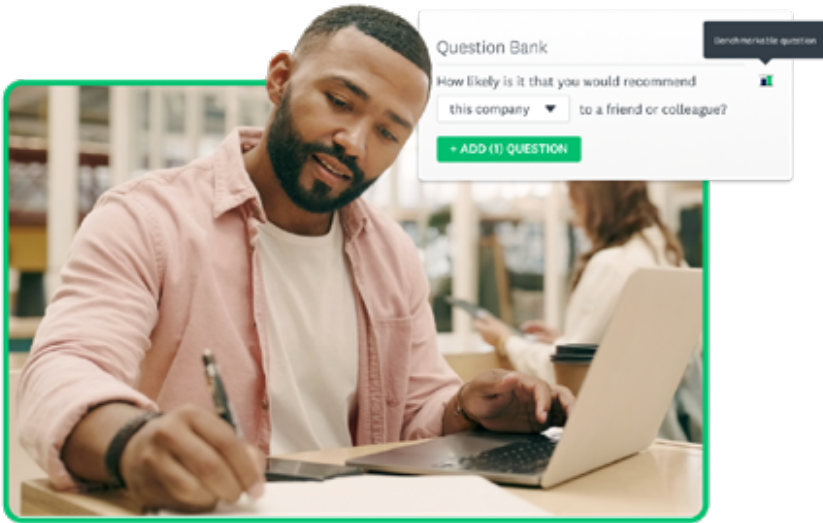
To keep these conversations going and ensure feedback reaches the right stakeholders, you need a robust system in place. This is where SurveyMonkey comes in, providing actionable insights through an easy-to-use platform.

SurveyMonkey benefits	Supporting features
Deliver honest feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anonymous response options• Benchmarkable templates
Get feedback quickly and easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR-specific templates• SurveyMonkey Genius
Analyze data intuitively	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamlined reports and dashboards to filter and compare results (rule-based tagging)• Sentiment analysis• MaxDiff analysis (best-worst scaling)
Pinpoint areas to improve and act with agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automatic, real-time updates• Controls and shareability to make sure the right person receives the right feedback at the right time

These features are designed to streamline your survey process, from creation to analysis and action. Moreover, the SurveyMonkey platform is constantly evolving, introducing unique products like [SurveyMonkey Genius](#) and [SurveyMonkey Forms](#).

And with major productivity and collaboration [app integrations](#) available, we can seamlessly fit into your existing HR tech stack, enhancing your ability to act on employee feedback efficiently and effectively.





As we delve deeper into the process of conducting employee engagement surveys, it's important to keep in mind that a well-planned survey not only yields more actionable insights; it also sets the stage for meaningful organizational change.

Let's explore the key steps in this process:

STEP ONE

Define your scope and objectives

While it may be tempting to address every aspect of employee engagement simultaneously, such an approach often leads to diluted efforts and less than optimal outcomes. Instead, focus on specific, measurable objectives. For instance, you might aim to “increase employee satisfaction with career development opportunities by 15% over the next six months,” or “reduce voluntary turnover rate by 10% in the coming year.”

Once you've established this baseline, you can conduct more focused surveys on specific aspects of engagement, such as management performance or career development opportunities. The goal is to gather insights that will inform effective strategies, not to change everything at once. By clearly defining your objectives, you ensure that your survey efforts align with your overall employee engagement goals and organizational needs.

STEP TWO

Align areas of action

Remember to align your survey objectives with your organization's strategic goals. If your company is undergoing digital transformation, for instance, you might prioritize surveys that assess employees' adaptability to change and their perception of technological training opportunities. By defining clear, relevant objectives, you ensure your survey efforts drive meaningful improvements in employee engagement and support broader organizational success.

By connecting your engagement efforts directly to business outcomes, you not only justify the resources invested but also demonstrate the strategic value of HR to the broader organization.

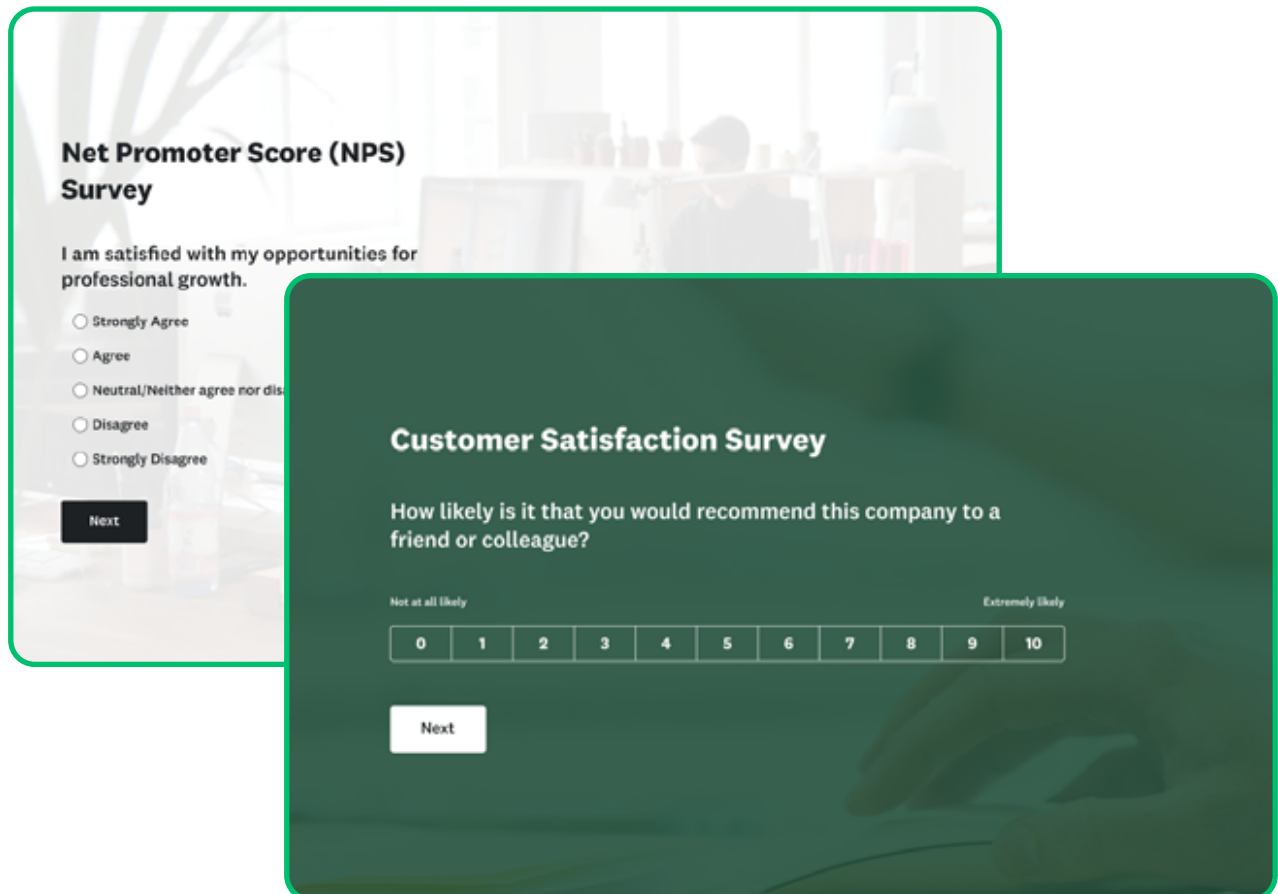


STEP THREE

Consider the cadence

If you're new to engagement surveys, you could start with a comprehensive assessment using an employee engagement template to identify key drivers of engagement in your organization. Based on these results, you can then conduct focused pulse surveys on specific areas. For example, if your initial survey reveals low scores in work-life balance, you might follow up with a targeted survey on flexible working arrangements and workload management.

When developing your survey strategy, it's important to consider different types of surveys that can complement your overall employee feedback program. Three main categories to consider are: 1) engagement and satisfaction surveys, 2) recurring organizational health surveys, and 3) one-time surveys for specific issues or events.



Survey creation and sending

With a clear understanding of your survey's purpose and alignment with organizational goals, you're ready to move into the practical aspects of survey creation and distribution.

We'll next explore other survey design methods, such as leveraging AI-powered tools. We'll also discuss best practices for sending your survey to ensure maximum participation and quality responses.

Design checklist

- Define target audience: Determine who you need to survey to get the most relevant insights. Will your survey encompass the entire organization, just one department, or one team within a department?
- Break down topics into subtopics: This helps organize your survey and ensures you cover all necessary areas. For example, if you are conducting a survey on the topic of growth and development, subtopics may include: leadership development programs, availability of training materials, or mentorship programs.
- Create a logical flow: Structure your survey to move from general to specific questions, as general questions can provide a framework for understanding the more specific questions that follow.
- Keep surveys concise: Aim for under 25 questions to maintain respondent engagement, adding breaks every 5-10 questions. According to our latest [State of Surveys report](#), 53% of respondents said their surveys have 5 or fewer questions per page.

When writing survey questions, clarity and neutrality are absolute necessities for data quality. Questions should be free from bias, use simple language, and avoid jargon or technical terms unless the audience specifically warrants it.

For most surveys, multiple-choice questions form the backbone, as they're easy for respondents to answer and provide quantifiable data for analysis.



Question writing checklist

- Provide balanced answer options: Offer an equal number of positive and negative response choices. For example, in this [Likert scale](#) question: “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the training opportunities provided by our company?” responses could include: Very dissatisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Somewhat satisfied, and Very satisfied.
- Avoid [double-barreled questions](#): Ask about only one thing per question to avoid confusion. For example, instead of: “Do you feel your manager and the organization recognizes your achievements?” you should ask either one question about manager recognition and a separate question about organizational recognition.
- Make [multiple-choice](#) options mutually exclusive and exhaustive: Ensure options don’t overlap and cover all possible responses. For example, for the question: “How do you commute to work?”, instead of giving the options like: Drive or Bus, Train, Bicycle, you should use mutually exclusive and exhaustive options such as Car, Bus, Train, Bicycle, Walk, and Other.
- Use [open-ended questions](#) sparingly: While they can provide context to qualitative questions as a follow-up, these questions can also be taxing for respondents and difficult to analyze. For example, after asking: “How satisfied are you with your current role?” (1-5 scale), you might follow up with: “Please explain the factors that may contribute to your satisfaction or dissatisfaction” to gather specific insights.

For more in-depth recommendations about creating surveys, read our complete guide: [Mastering Survey Design](#).



How to cover sensitive topics

Employee engagement surveys often address sensitive topics such as management performance, workplace relationships, and experiences of discrimination. Handling these areas thoughtfully encourages honest feedback and maintains employee trust. Let's explore best practices for navigating these sensitive areas in your surveys.

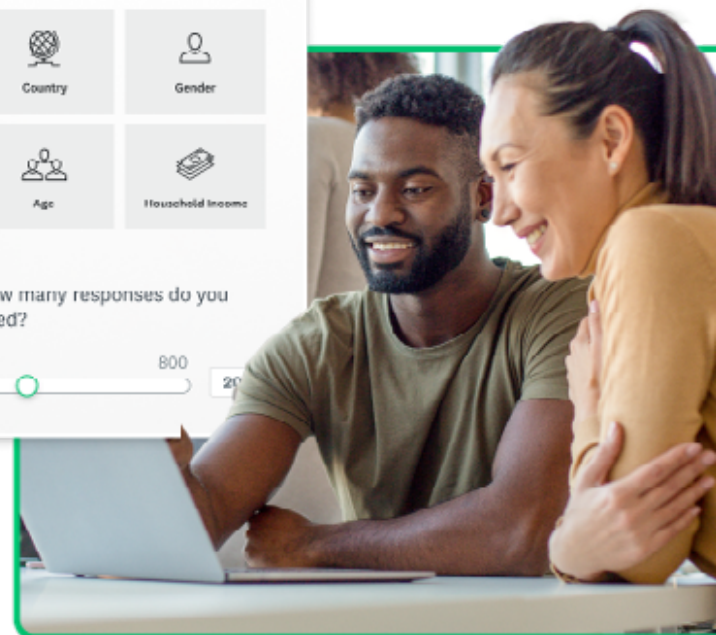
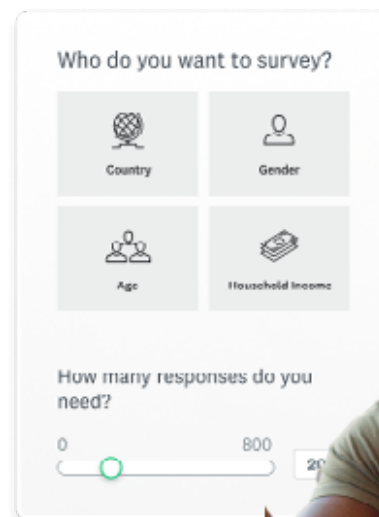
Getting demographics right

For questions about gender, race, or ethnicity, include options for respondents to select multiple answers or self-describe, recognizing the complexity of personal identity. When it comes to gender questions in particular, it's important to use inclusive and identity-affirming language. Moving beyond the traditional binary options like "male" and "female" isn't just a trend. In the US, almost **3 out of 4 (73%)** of the surveys sent from our platform that contain a gender question include three or more answer options.

When asking about race or ethnicity, be inclusive and respectful by providing a complete list of options, including "other" with a text field for self-description. Also be sure to allow respondents to select multiple options to accommodate multiracial identities. Additionally, include a "Prefer not to answer" option to respect privacy. Remember that racial and ethnic categories can vary by religion and culture, so tailor your options accordingly. It's also important to provide clear context for demographic questions so that employees understand how you'll be handling their information. Begin with phrases like "For demographic purposes..." or specify which department will be reviewing the data.

Additionally, place demographic questions towards the end of the survey to establish rapport before asking more personal information.

Always be transparent about the survey's anonymity and explain how you'll protect respondents' data, including any plans for aggregation or removal of personally identifiable information when presenting results.



Providing anonymity

Anonymous surveys are a powerful tool for gathering candid, in-depth feedback from employees who might otherwise hesitate to express their true opinions. By not collecting PII such as employee ID numbers or email addresses, these surveys create a safe space for honest communication. This approach not only encourages employees to speak their minds freely, but also mitigates [social desirability bias](#)—the tendency to respond in a way that will be viewed favorably by others.

With the [SurveyMonkey Anonymous Response Collector](#), you can ensure that you're not tracking and storing identifiable respondent information. But don't forget to clearly communicate that your survey will be anonymous to employee respondents. Include a statement with your survey link or in the survey introduction explaining how responses will be handled and anonymity maintained. This increases the likelihood of higher response rates. One last note: when you commit to anonymous responses, you should be avoiding questions that could potentially identify respondents, such as specific job titles.

Other ways to boost completion



Send your surveys midweek

Survey response submissions are higher during the week—with four in five survey submissions happening Monday through Friday. Survey completion rates are highest on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and lowest Sunday and Monday.



Consider optimizing your surveys for mobile

Mobile users are more inclined to take a survey on a weekend than non-mobile users, but still have higher completion rates mid-week.



Take advantage of pre-designed templates and questions

Use of survey templates grew by 2x between 2022 and 2023—and templates deliver 4 points higher completion rates. Plus, using the Question Bank increases completion rates by 9 points.



Survey collection

When sending surveys via email, HR teams can include [custom data about recipients](#), such as department or tenure, while excluding personal information like names or email addresses.

This allows for segmented analysis without compromising individual anonymity. For surveys distributed via a web link, custom variables can be used to track information about respondents, such as department, which can later be used to segment data and gain more nuanced insights.

To maximize the effectiveness of ongoing surveys, consider setting up [Smart Notifications](#) and routing them to specific teams. This not only ensures timely action on feedback but also builds visibility and accountability across the organization. It's a proactive way to demonstrate that employee input is being actively monitored and addressed. Additionally, to boost response rates, send automatic reminders halfway to three-quarters of the way through the data collection period. For instance, if your survey is open for a week, send a reminder after 3 days; for a two-week survey, send reminders after 5-7 days.

If you find that response rates are lower than expected, don't hesitate to enlist the support of executives. Remember, the goal is to collect a representative sample of responses that accurately reflect the sentiments of your workforce. By leveraging these SurveyMonkey features and following best practices, you can ensure quality feedback while maintaining the integrity and anonymity of the survey process.



The image is a composite graphic on a dark green background. In the center, a white circular gauge displays an NPS score of 13. The gauge has a scale from -100 to 100, with 0 at the top. The score '13' is prominently displayed in the center, with 'NPS' below it. To the left, a man with a beard and a dark jacket is looking at a laptop. To the right, a woman with dark hair in a ponytail is smiling and looking at the same laptop. Overlaid on the right side is a white menu titled 'Create a survey' with the following options: 'Start from scratch', 'Start from a template', 'Build with AI', 'Buy Targeted Responses', 'Copy a past survey', and 'Import questions'. Below this, a survey question is shown in a white box: 'Q1 How well did we answer your questions and concerns?'. To the right of the question is a dropdown menu currently set to 'Multiple Choice'. A secondary dropdown menu is open below it, titled 'Question Types', with options: 'Multiple Choice', 'Checkboxes', 'Dropdown', and 'Textbox'.

0
-50 50
13
NPS
-100 100

Create a survey

- Start from scratch
- Start from a template
- Build with AI
- Buy Targeted Responses
- Copy a past survey
- Import questions

Q1 How well did we answer your questions and concerns? Multiple Choice

Question Types

- Multiple Choice
- Checkboxes
- Dropdown
- Textbox

CHAPTER FOUR

Survey use case cheat sheet

Survey uses

Engagement and satisfaction

A comprehensive deep dive into key company questions. Understand where people are at, both across the company and within specific departments and teams.

Length:

Between 15-25 questions

Frequency:

Annual, semi-annual, or quarterly, depending on the goals and length of the survey.

Survey Templates:

[Employee engagement for remote workers](#)

[Work engagement](#)

[Stay interview](#)

[Employee satisfaction](#)

Recurring organizational health

Allow companies to quickly sense issues or new employee sentiments, and how company changes have impacted employees.

Length:

Between 5-10 questions

Frequency:

Monthly or bi-weekly

Survey Templates:

[Career development survey](#)

[Culture pulse](#)

[Compensation and benefits](#)

[Employee recognition](#)

One-time surveys

Specific feedback for isolated company changes, events, or anything outside of normal feedback cadence.

Length:

10-20 questions

Frequency:

As needed

Survey Templates:

[Mental health](#)

[Work life balance](#)

[Wage gap evaluation](#)

[Impact of racism](#)





CHAPTER FIVE

After the Survey: Analysis and action

Once you've collected your survey responses, the real fun begins. Analyzing results effectively and taking appropriate action will make your employee engagement surveys truly impactful.

Analyzing the results

SurveyMonkey offers powerful solutions to help you extract meaningful insights from your data. Rule-based response tagging allows you to categorize responses automatically, making it easier to identify trends and patterns. [Sentiment analysis](#) can help you understand the emotional tone of open-ended responses, providing a deeper understanding of employee feelings and attitudes.

Sharing results effectively

When sharing survey results, transparency and timing are key. Present the data clearly and objectively, highlighting both positive findings and areas for improvement. Consider creating tailored reports for different stakeholders, focusing on the most relevant insights for each group. For anonymous surveys, remember to maintain any anonymity in your reporting, especially when dealing with smaller teams or departments.

In terms of timing, be sure to establish a timeline for respondents and stakeholders so they have all the basics and know what to expect: when the survey deadline is, when and how the results will be shared, and when/if there will be follow-up meetings to discuss next steps. This demonstrates that employee voices are already being acted upon—and perhaps more importantly, that they will be heard.



Examples of how to action your data

The most crucial step is turning insights into action. Through a combination of delivering the right insights to the right stakeholders, and aligning your findings with organizational goals, you'll play a large role in developing a clear action plan.

Below are three hypothetical action plans to illustrate how companies can use survey insights to make meaningful change.

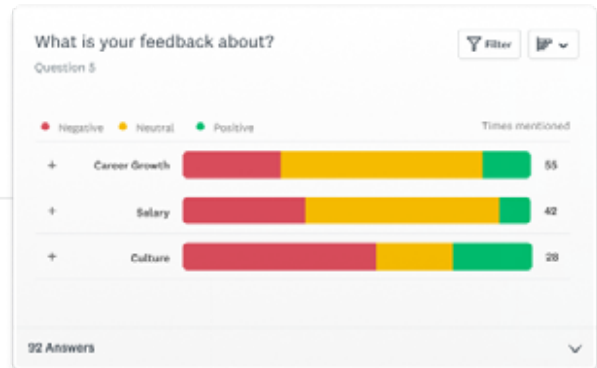
Asher Health

A health and wellness product company, found through age-segmented analysis that younger employees felt they lacked growth opportunities within the company. In response, Asher health rolled out new career paths to foster internal mobility, providing clearer progression routes for junior staff.



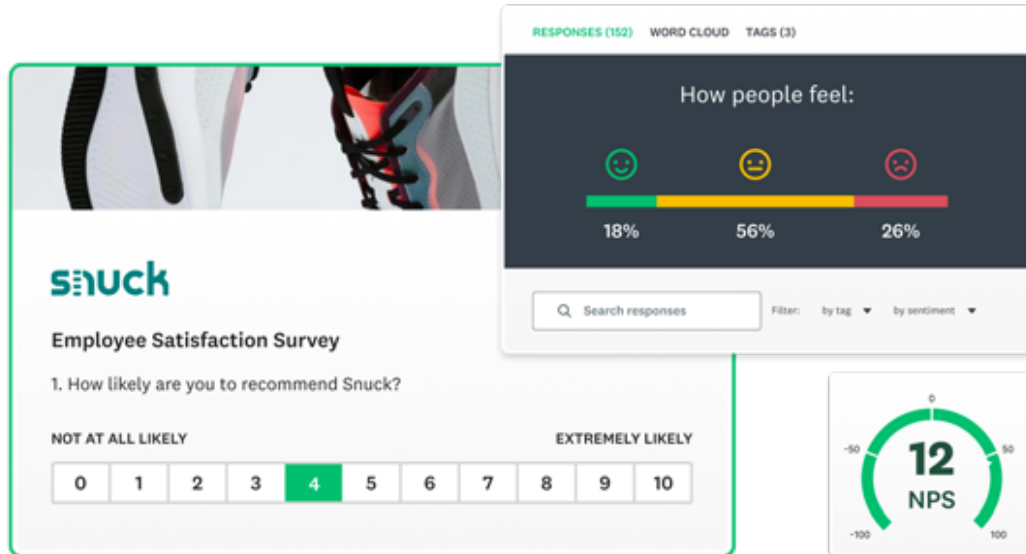
Employee Survey

1. I am satisfied with the career plan offered by my organization.
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree



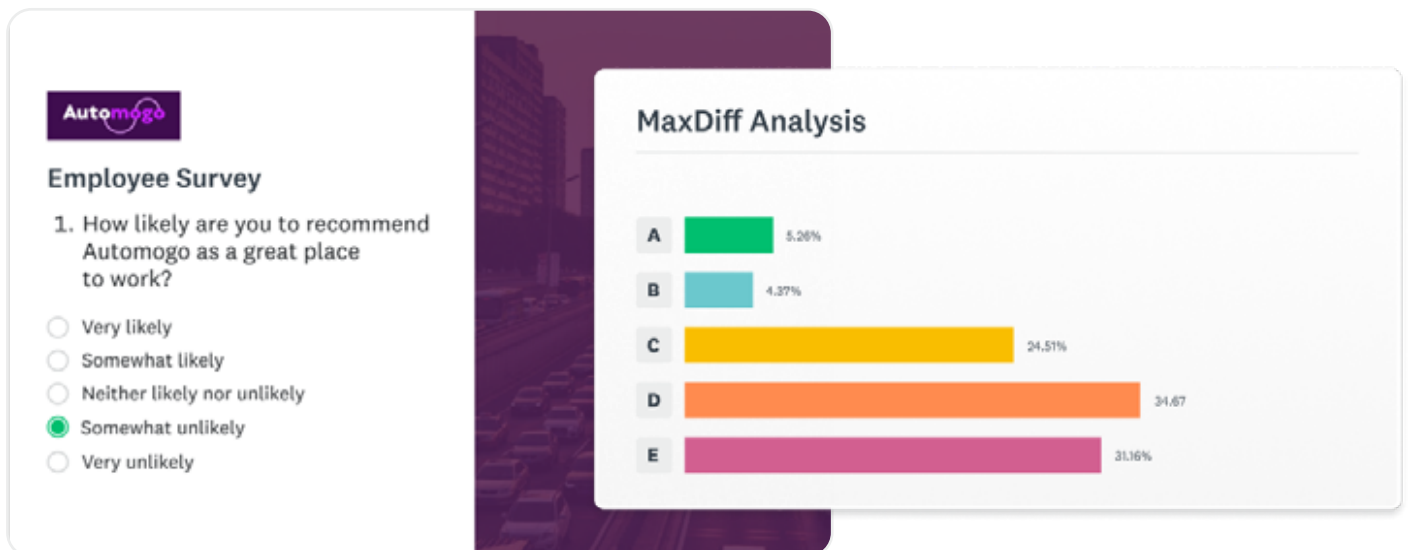
Snuck

A software development firm, used sentiment analysis on open-ended responses and discovered signs of employee burnout. To address this, Snuck implemented more flexible work schedules, allowing employees to better manage their work-life balance and reduce stress.



Automogo

An automotive parts manufacturer, utilized MaxDiff questions to assess employee benefits preferences. The results revealed that mental health support was a top priority for employees. Acting on this insight, when insurance plans came up for renewal, Automogo's leadership chose a plan with enhanced mental health coverage.





CHAPTER SIX

Customer story: Golden State Warriors

REAL CASE STUDY FOCUS:



Golden State Warriors

The Golden State Warriors leveraged SurveyMonkey to transform their employee engagement strategy, demonstrate the power of frequent feedback in driving organizational change and fostering an inclusive culture. Here's how.



They leveraged frequent pulse surveys for real-time insights inclusion

The Warriors implemented monthly pulse surveys through SurveyMonkey, moving away from annual or bi-annual assessments. This shift allowed them to capture real-time employee sentiment, quickly address emerging issues, and continuously improve their workplace. The regular surveys became a key performance indicator for their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, enabling the organization to track progress and adjust strategies promptly.



They utilized segmented data for targeted interventions AI

The analytics capabilities of the SurveyMonkey platform allowed the Warriors to parse data by business unit, department, and demographics. This granular view revealed unique challenges within different employee groups, enabling targeted interventions. By addressing specific needs of various segments, the organization ensured all voices were heard, fostering a more inclusive environment.



They aligned internal efforts with external messaging

The Warriors used pulse surveys to gauge employee sentiment about the organization's response to major social issues as well. This approach helped ensure their internal messaging and employee engagement efforts aligned with their external actions and communications. By maintaining this alignment, the Warriors strengthened their brand authenticity and employee pride, creating a synergy between internal culture and public perception.

Through these strategies, the Golden State Warriors drove a responsive, data-driven approach to employee engagement, underscoring the value of frequent feedback and analysis in building an engaged workforce.



Conclusion

Throughout this guide, we've explored the essential steps for creating effective employee engagement surveys, from planning and design to analysis and action, all powered by the SurveyMonkey platform's robust features and expert insights.

Our platform enables HR teams to rapidly deploy surveys, gather real-time insights, and make data-driven decisions, fostering a more responsive and engaged workplace culture in today's fast-paced business environment.

Get the insights you need to ask, listen, and act.

Find out how to harness survey findings to inform decisions in your organization

[Get Started](#)

 SurveyMonkey