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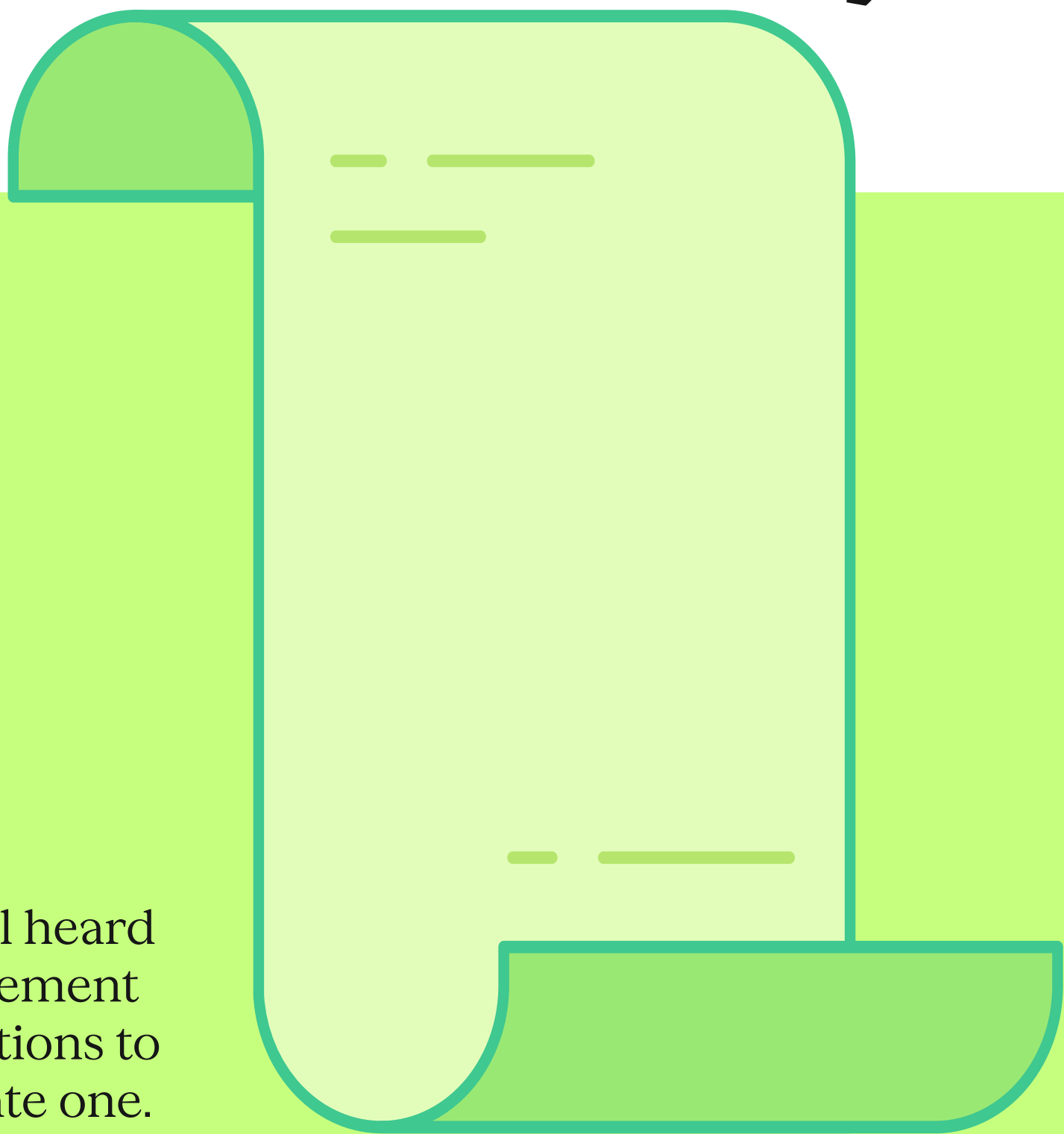
A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating

High-Response Employee Engagement Surveys

Make your employees feel heard with well-designed engagement surveys. Learn what questions to ask and how you can create one.

Disengaged employees result in a [32% decrease in operating income.](#)

Here's another shocker.

According to Gallup, 85% of employees worldwide are either disengaged or actively disengaged in their jobs.

That means a large portion of businesses are likely incurring, or about to incur losses.

Now, this isn't just another problem for you; it directly impacts your revenue, growth, and overall success.

Your employees are your most valuable asset, and if they aren't engaged, your company's future could be at risk. One way to understand employee needs, concerns, and aspirations is through employee engagement surveys.

But what questions should you ask to truly understand them?

In this guide, we'll cover everything you need to know about employee engagement surveys –the most important questions to ask, the benefits of conducting them, a step-by-step approach, and how a tool like ClearlyRated can help.

What is Employee Engagement?

Employee engagement is an indicator of how invested employees are in their jobs. Engaged employees are typically more productive, motivated, and less likely to leave their jobs. They actively participate in company initiatives, share innovative ideas, and create a positive work culture.

It's important to note that employee engagement is not the same as employee satisfaction.

Satisfaction is a narrower concept that focuses on how content and happy employees are with their immediate working conditions, such as compensation, benefits, work-life balance, and relationships with managers and co-workers. They may not be necessarily aligned with the company's vision or motivated to go above and beyond.

The impact of employee engagement in numbers

Here are a few stats that quantify the importance of engaged employees.

Disengaged employees contribute to **$7.8 trillion** in lost productivity globally each year

Companies with high rates of employee engagement are **22% more profitable**

Employee turnover dropped by 31% in organizations with high employee engagement

92% of the leadership agree that high engagement leads to happier customers

Despite the benefits, only **31% of employees** report they are engaged

Levels of employee engagement

Employee engagement can be categorized into four levels. We will further explore four key aspects for each level –emotional commitment, behavioral indicators, organizational impact, and measurable outcomes. Use these four categories to classify your survey respondents.

A. Highly engaged

- **Emotional commitment**

  Only **31% of employees** are engaged in a workplace. Such employees are deeply invested in their work and the company's success. They view the organization's goals as aligned with their own purpose and career growth.

- **Organizational impact**

  Contribute to higher productivity, improved innovation, and reduced turnover. **22% more likely** to say that they will not job hunt.

- **Behavioral indicators**

  Demonstrate discretionary effort and are **2.5 times** more likely to exceed expectations. They proactively support colleagues and drive team initiatives.

- **Measurable outcomes**

  These employees will have high scores on engagement surveys (8-10/10), consistent participation in company activities, and a role in shaping a positive work culture.

B. Moderately engaged

- **Emotional commitment**

  These employees meet expectations and deliver quality work but lack deep emotional investment in organizational goals. While they feel a sense of responsibility toward their role, their connection to the company's mission is limited. They may be satisfied with their job but are not fully motivated to go above and beyond.

- **Organizational impact**

  Generally steady in performance but at risk of disengagement if not supported or recognized. They might leave if offered a better opportunity elsewhere. Creating a recognition-rich working environment can transition them to engaged employees in no time.

- **Behavioral indicators**

  Fulfill responsibilities but don't usually take the lead or initiate change. Participation in company events is moderate, and they show limited enthusiasm for new opportunities. Their lack of engagement can sometimes stem from poor team collaboration, especially in remote roles. Increased in-office collaboration may help move them into the engaged category.

- **Measurable outcomes**

  Average scores (7-8) in engagement surveys, meeting but not exceeding key performance indicators (KPIs), and fluctuating participation rates in new initiatives.

C. Barely engaged

- **Emotional commitment**

  Exhibit minimal enthusiasm or interest. These employees do the bare minimum and avoid additional responsibilities.

- **Organizational impact**

  Their lack of engagement can spread to others, affecting team morale and productivity. Absenteeism and task errors may also increase.

- **Behavioral indicators**

  Passive during meetings, rarely contribute new ideas, and often show signs of burnout or job dissatisfaction.

- **Measurable outcomes**

  Low scores on engagement surveys, high rates of task incompletion, and frequent absences. These employees are more likely to job hunt or disengage further.

D. Disengaged

- **Emotional commitment**

  These employees feel detached from the company, their roles, and colleagues, often showing minimal enthusiasm or commitment. They may struggle to find meaning in their work, leading to decreased motivation and productivity. In some cases, they actively express discontent, which can negatively impact team morale.

- **Organizational impact**

  Directly contributes to lost productivity and higher operational costs. Just one disengaged employee costs an organization **$2,246 per year**

- **Behavioral indicators**

  Frequently underperform, are resistant to change, and can influence others negatively through criticism or gossip. Absenteeism and turnover are high in this group. Nearly **69% of disengaged employees** would leave for as little as a 5% increase in pay.

- **Measurable outcomes**

  A drop in engagement survey participation, high absenteeism rates, and increased turnover risk. Targeted interventions are necessary to address their concerns

It's important to note that employees are not permanently assigned to these categories. Engagement levels can fluctuate over time based on various factors such as changes in leadership, team dynamics, or workplace initiatives.

By actively addressing their concerns, you can move employees from one category to a higher level, improving overall engagement across your organization.

Why Measure Employee Engagement?

Employee engagement directly impacts business performance, with highly engaged organizations **reporting 23% higher profitability** (Gallup, 2023). Here are five evidence-based reasons to measure engagement

1. Identify areas for improvement

Measuring employee engagement reveals insights into key areas, like team collaboration, leadership performance, and workplace flexibility.

Let's say your employee engagement survey reveals that many employees feel they don't have enough vacation leaves to recharge. If you respond by increasing vacation days and then observe a noticeable drop in absenteeism, it's concrete evidence that your efforts are making a measurable difference.

Similarly, if low eNPS scores point to a lack of growth opportunities, introducing professional development programs can help address this issue.

2. Predicting and reducing turnover

High employee turnover is costly and disruptive. A Gallup article shows replacing an employee can cost 1.5 to 2 times their salary.

If your teams show declining engagement scores, these are early warning signs of potential turnover within the next few months. With this advance notice, companies have the chance to implement retention strategies, like offering targeted training, addressing compensation issues, or improving work conditions, to keep valuable employees from leaving.

3. Align company goals with employee goals

Employees and the company often have different motivations and goals. Engagement metrics help bridge these gaps. When employees see their personal goals aligned with company initiatives, they're more motivated to contribute.

For example, if an employee wants to improve customer relationship management but is repeatedly assigned backend tasks with no client interaction, it creates a misalignment that can leave them feeling disconnected from their career goals.

4. Evaluate company culture

While many companies claim to have a great culture, the true picture often comes from the employees' perspective. Engagement metrics provide objective data about the employee experience.

If surveys show low scores in team strength, leadership can take steps to implement team recognition programs or promote collaboration through team-building activities.

5. Tracking the ROI of any new HR changes or initiatives

Introducing a new HR policy, like a hybrid work model or wellness program? Engagement metrics help quantify the impact of these investments. They let you see whether changes are moving the needle in the right direction or if further tweaks are needed.

This data also helps HR teams justify resources for successful programs and quickly adjust or discontinue ineffective ones, ensuring efficient resource utilization.

Pro-tip   Use a platform like ClearlyRated to automate both employee and customer experience management, all from a single, easy-to-use dashboard.

What is an Employee Engagement Survey?

An employee engagement survey is a method to measure how emotionally committed and invested employees are in their work and the organization.

Unlike other employee surveys, the engagement survey evaluates factors such as job satisfaction, motivation, sense of purpose, and alignment with company values. These directly impact engagement and productivity.

Questions of these surveys typically assess various aspects of the employee experience, from job satisfaction to career growth opportunities.

Employee engagement survey questions are usually answered on a scale (1 to 5 or 1 to 10) making it easy to track changes over time. You must have a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions for detailed feedback.

These surveys can be conducted anonymously or non-anonymously, depending on the goal. Anonymous surveys are those where respondents' identities are not linked to their answers, ensuring privacy and encouraging honest feedback. Non-anonymous surveys link responses to individual employees, allowing for personalized follow-ups and targeted actions.

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If asked, how likely would you be to recommend ClearlyRated as a good place to work to a friend or family member?

Not at all likely   Extremely likely

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Don't Know

Benefits of Employee Engagement Surveys

Employee engagement surveys can be of different types, such as culture pulse surveys, employee benefits surveys, and eNPS surveys, each focusing on different aspects of the employee experience. Regardless of the type, these surveys can help your company with.

1. Early detection of issues and improvement areas

Employee surveys can give you early warnings about potential workplace problems. For example, if multiple employees in a department report feeling overwhelmed with their workload, it could signal understaffing issues that may in the future lead to burnout or resignations.

Similarly, if surveys show low scores in career development opportunities, HR must establish training programs before talented employees start looking elsewhere. Circulating surveys is a proactive approach and much more effective than dealing with problems after they've escalated.

Use ClearlyRated's real-time detractor alerts to spot dissatisfied employees early and resolve their concerns before they escalate.

2. Higher employee retention

When employees feel heard and valued, they're more likely to stay with the company. Taking action on their feedback, whether by adjusting work-from-home policies, creating more recognition programs, or offering better benefits, improves their morale. This is because they see their input leading to tangible changes in their work environment.

ClearlyRated makes it easy to recognize your employees. When a client rates your company a 9 or 10 on the NPS scale, the tool auto-generates a shout-out to appreciate the involved employees, motivating and engaging them.

With higher morale, employees invest more effort into their work, leading to improved outcomes. Most importantly, consistent surveying and taking action build trust in leadership, showing that they genuinely care about their employees.

3. Opens up a two-way communication channel

Engagement surveys aren't just about collecting feedback. They create a continuous loop of communication between employees and leadership.

Let's say, a survey reveals that 65% of employees feel disconnected from senior leadership decisions. You may deploy solutions like holding monthly "Strategy Spotlights" or "Townhalls" where executives share project updates and major decisions.

Create department-specific action committees based on the feedback. For instance, an IT team that reported communication barriers with other departments now holds bi-weekly cross-functional standups to improve communication.

Now the same team must build feedback verification loops. Send out follow-up pulse surveys to measure the effectiveness of changes. Document success stories, such as, after engineering teams reported feeling siloed, implementing cross-team workshops/sessions led to three new product features and reduced project delays by 30%.

4. Helps track progress over time

Consistent surveying creates measurable data points that allow companies to track their journey. Surveys conducted at regular intervals help track improvements (or setbacks) in specific areas.

Implement tracking methods to turn employee feedback into quantifiable business insights.

You can do cohort analysis (grouping similar characteristic surveyors) to track how engagement patterns evolve among different employee segments (new hires, tenured employees, or across departments)

Similarly, if a leadership development program costs $50,000 and correlates with a 15% increase in team productivity metrics and a 20% reduction in turnover costs, you can calculate precise ROI.

Benchmark your metrics against both internal and external standards. For instance, an eNPS of +20 based on your past scores might seem positive. But, if your industry's top quartile averages +35, it indicates room for improvement.

Track correlations between engagement metrics and business KPIs to identify where your efforts will have the greatest impact.

Step-By-Step Guide to

Conducting Employee Engagement Surveys

Now comes the execution part. The following process will help you in successfully conduct a survey on employee engagement at your company. Every step matters, so be sure to follow each one closely.

Step 1: Design your survey

This step involves planning the structure, length, and format of your survey while keeping the end user (your employees) in mind.

The design phase is also where you'll make important decisions about anonymity, language options, and accessibility. Consider the survey's length and follow the KISS (keep it short and simple) framework to avoid survey fatigue. Your survey should also be visually appealing and easy to navigate.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind

↗ A good rule of thumb is to stick to 10-15 questions that can be completed in under 10 minutes

↗ Use a mix of question types, such as Likert scales (ratings) for quantitative data and open-ended questions for qualitative data

↗ Include clear survey instructions like the deadline, POC, and a progress bar to show the completion status

↗ Ensure the survey is mobile-responsive, as many employees may complete it on their phones

↗ Share the number of questions included in the survey to set clear expectations for the employee

↗ Add a "save and continue" option for longer surveys

↗ Test with a pilot group before the full launch to identify confusing questions, technical issues, or problems with the survey flow.

ClearlyRated lets you create short and sweet surveys that precisely capture employee sentiment, collect the most valuable insights, and customize them for your industry.

Step 2: Prepare questions to ask your employees

The questions you choose will directly impact the quality of insights you collect. First, jot down all the questions you find relevant.

Now, validate the questions to check if each question actually measures what it intends to. For example, rather than directly asking "Are you satisfied with your job?" (which often leads to faking good responses), measure different aspects of job satisfaction through multiple items.

Implement response bias prevention techniques such as rotating question order, mixing positive and negative statements, and including attention check questions (example below).

Please select 'strongly agree' to show you are paying attention to this question.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

When crafting questions, consider both response consistency and test-retest reliability.

For example, instead of a single question about workload, include multiple related items that can be cross-validated: "I have enough time to complete my daily tasks" (direct), "I frequently work beyond normal hours to meet deadlines" (inverse), and "My workload is comparable to others in similar roles" (relative).

Phrase your questions carefully. For example, "How often do you feel your efforts are recognized by the organization?" is better than "Do you feel appreciated at work?". Similarly, ask "How inclusive do you feel the company culture is?" instead of "Do you think the company treats everyone fairly?"

Use established psychometric scales where possible –the Maslach Burnout Inventory or Utrecht Work Engagement Scale provide scientifically validated question sets. For qualitative responses, employ cognitive interviewing techniques to validate question interpretation. .

Finally, test question sets with a small pilot group first, analyzing response patterns and internal consistency before full deployment.

Step 3: Identify the themes for your survey

This step involves mapping out the key areas your survey will focus on. It's important to choose themes that align with your company's objectives, challenges, and common engagement drivers. Be sure to balance the number of questions across each theme.

Here's a list of common themes and related questions for your survey. We selected these based on patterns found in successful engagement surveys, addressing common disengagement areas like job satisfaction, team dynamics, and manager relationships

Theme	Questions
Job satisfaction	How satisfied are you with your current role and responsibilities?
Career growth	Do you feel supported in pursuing your career goals within the company?
Recognition and rewards	Do you feel recognized and appreciated for the work you do?
Communication	Is it easy for you to communicate your ideas and concerns to your manager or leadership? Do you feel informed about company goals, updates, and changes?
Leadership and management	Does your manager provide the support and guidance you need to perform well?
Work-life balance	Does the company support a healthy balance between your work and personal life?
Collaboration	Can you easily work with other teams or colleagues without barriers or conflict?
Workplace culture	Do you feel company is inclusive and fair to all employees?

Step 4: Launch your survey

Timing and communication are everything when launching your survey. Aim to send out surveys during less busy periods, such as mid-week and outside of major deadlines or project crunch times.

For example, avoid end-of-quarter dates when teams are under pressure. Set a participation rate target, such as 60-70%, to measure engagement success. Offer the option to answer anonymously to encourage more responses. Be prepared for unexpected events, like clashes with urgent projects, and have a contingency plan to delay or relaunch the survey based on the situation, so you're not scrambling to make decisions on the fly.

Coordinate with other departments for a smooth rollout and send friendly reminders to respondents to complete the survey. Don't forget to offer assistance to employees if needed.

ClearlyRated assists you through every stage of **sending the survey,** from organizing contact lists to sending pre-survey announcements that explain why employee input matters and how the feedback will drive meaningful change.

Step 5: Analyze survey responses

Once your survey closes, it's time to draw conclusions from the raw data. Identify trends and patterns rather than focusing on individual responses. Pay close attention to both high and low scores, correlations between different themes, and areas where employees left detailed feedback.

If responses are not anonymous, break down your data by department or team to pinpoint where issues are most prevalent. For example, if a particular department scores low on leadership support, you know where to direct your attention first. Consider looking at past engagement scores to track improvements.

Using ClearlyRated, generate an **in-depth analysis** of your survey results, including industry benchmarks, NPS scores, and detailed feedback.

Step 6: Document and share your findings

The final step is translating your findings into clear reports that highlight key takeaways, action recommendations, next steps, and timelines. Use visuals like graphs and charts to make the data easy to digest. Then, share these reports with your leadership team and employees, outlining how you plan to act on the feedback.

For instance, if employees expressed a need for more flexible work hours, outline the next steps, like piloting a flex-time program. This step bridges the gap between data collection and actual organizational change.

Remember, the real benefit of engagement surveys comes not from conducting them, but from creating actionable plans based on the responses and following through with changes. Regular surveys without visible action can actually decrease engagement by making employees feel their feedback is ignored.

Why Use ClearlyRated for Your Employee Engagement Surveys?

Executing the six-step process for every survey can take up a lot of your time and divert you from high-impact tasks.

ClearlyRated is a complete survey platform that does all the heavy lifting of conducting surveys for you, automating both customer and employee experience management. It's suitable for companies of all sizes and offers a wide range of features, including customizable survey designs, advanced logic, and SMS survey invitations to maximize participation.

The real strength of the tool lies in its analytics and integration capabilities. With real-time detractor alerts, unlimited dashboard logins, and deep CRM integration with platforms like Salesforce and Dynamics, you can quickly act on any feedback. The platform also offers NPS segmentation and tracking features for accountability across locations and departments.

ClearlyRated also supports marketing the outcomes, allowing you to share survey results on platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook, display star ratings on your website and email signature, and download them for future use.

Book a demo ↗

and learn how we can help you build a loyal and engaged team.

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