

eBOOK:

The Importance of Taking Action on Employee Feedback





A FRONT LINE WITH ONE FOOT OUT THE DOOR

In this historically tough labor market, employee engagement and overall retention efforts are more important than ever. So far in 2022, approximately 400,000 jobs have been added to the U.S. economy every month. In May, transportation and warehousing alone added 47,000 jobs, with overall employment rises seen in warehousing and storage, truck transportation, and air transportation.

As more jobs open up, so does the temptation faced by your frontline workers to switch companies, which places redoubled pressure on your labor strategy. What at first looked like a Great Resignation has blossomed into the Great Reimagination, a full-throttled workforce revolution in which employees are demanding more—better growth opportunities, job flexibility, and greater overall job satisfaction.

A Q2 2022 WorkStep study found that 77% of frontline supply chain workers are looking to change jobs over the next three months. Why? A whopping 70% of those surveyed feel that their voices are not being heard. With 41% of the participants stating that management never seeks feedback and 8% responding that they're only asked to provide feedback once a year, it's no surprise that so many voices are feeling muffled.

When you're in the middle of extreme market situations it can seem like the tide will never turn. But it always does, and the labor market will make a u-turn. So employee engagement is an evergreen effort, regardless of labor market trends. You have to maintain a steely focus on engagement as a central component of your retention strategy so your business can weather shocks and maintain a stable workforce.

Engagement is just the start.

We've already shown in [a previous eBook](#) the importance of employee engagement, how the traditional survey and feedback process is broken, and how checking in with workers drives retention and encourages hiring, but gathering employee feedback is only the first step.

Engagement is a two-way street. Yes, you have to listen to your employees, but then you also have to act on their feedback. Otherwise, your efforts risk being seen as little more than lip service. What's the point of asking your employees what they need, if there are no concrete steps taken to act on their feedback? The last thing you want is for your strategy to backfire and employee disillusionment to actually increase because they feel there was a disingenuous show of engagement with little intent to improve their working conditions.



70% of frontline supply chain workers feel that their voices are not being heard.



**SOMETIMES ACTION
RESULTS IN
ORGANIZATIONAL
CHANGE**

**SOMETIMES IT
DOESN'T**

**IN EITHER CASE,
COMMUNICATING
YOUR DECISION
WITH EMPLOYEES IS
KEY**

Taking Action

If there's one mantra we live by here at WorkStep, it's that you should be checking in with employees often. Of course, with a high check-in frequency it's not practical to expect that every employee response will yield a direct and demonstrable action item. That's okay, your employees aren't expecting a response to every check-in if you've established engagement as a continuous, ongoing company-wide cultural approach. It does, however, behoove you to take action and instrument change on major rounds of feedback, employment milestones, when overall feedback analysis is indicative of issues or areas for improvement, and when signs point to a potential quit event or other serious issue. And what's more important, is taking the right action that drives positive outcomes for both the worker and employer.

Action results in happier employees.

When you act based on employee feedback you indicate to them that they are partners in the organization, that they have agency, and that they can affect change. Everyone likes to know that they are empowered to influence their own destiny, and once workers feel heard, they're more likely to participate in future engagement efforts because they know their feedback is valued and not just going into a black void.

Action doesn't have to be a change in policy or procedure.

When a new policy is informed by employee feedback, tell them. Let them know that you appreciate that they took the time to respond to check-ins and that they should be proud to have influenced change to make the company stronger.

But sometimes action means no change. Perhaps you reviewed feedback and decided that the best course for the organization is to maintain the status quo. The decision to not change policy is an acceptable action, but you should communicate to employees that you've listened to their feedback and understand their concerns. And then explain why policies are remaining as-is and why that is best for the organization, and thus, ultimately, for them as well.

Create an Action Plan Approach

Like in all endeavors, a deliberate, calculated action framework is recommended over ad hoc methods in which you act in a reactive manner and fight fires as they appear. A proactive, measurable strategy allows you to gauge progress and ROI, making it easier to demonstrate success to superiors, and thus increase buy-in, boost organizational support, and ultimately strengthen the overall chance of success.

We advocate for an Action Approach rather than an Action Plan. It's more than just semantics. A plan can be seen as something you do once but since we recommend ongoing, routine, periodic employee check-ins, action also has to have an analogous, ongoing approach.

Taking action isn't something you do once or on a schedule, it has to be driven by ongoing employee feedback and a part of organization-wide culture.



Response Action Types

In general, there will be four response action types that fall under two broad categories: Employee-specific and Generalized actions. You should have a clear definition of who in your organization is responsible for acting on each, and how often those team members are expected to report to their superiors and assess success.



Employee-specific Actions

These actions are unique to the individual employee in response to their specific feedback and very rarely impact organization-wide policies.

1. **Critical** — Action items that should be taken immediately to prevent a quit event, ensure safety, or prevent legal liability, for example.

Direct employee supervisors and their managers should understand that it is their responsibility to inform HR and act on these matters ASAP.

But they can't act if they don't know the issues exist. You'll need an engagement platform that offers you the control to provision managers with access to engagement data specifically for their direct reports and proactively highlights critical issues, accompanied by recommended immediate next steps.

2. **Ongoing** — Immediate, ongoing action items that can be taken in response to an employee's specific feedback.

Ongoing actions are employee-specific actions meant to increase employee satisfaction and boost morale on a day-to-day basis. Examples include job shadowing programs, hands-on training, meet and greets, and mentoring programs.

As with Critical actions, you'll want to leverage technology that allows you to provide engagement access to direct supervisors so they are empowered and expected to respond with low-impact, cost-effective actions that don't require approval from their supervisors.

Your technology solution should automatically suggest these actions and, in many cases, allow supervisors to execute with the click of just a button or two.

General Actions

Often when gathering feedback, you will notice recurring themes that span across employee responses. General actions are not specific to any one individual but taken after data analysis of broad employee feedback and comparison against departmental/organizational goals, industry benchmarks, and past analyses.

1. **Localized/Departmental** — Action taken to address departmental or localized issues or areas of improvement.

Department heads and their lieutenants are prime candidates to own these action items within their departments and their direct superiors should be responsible for monitoring their progress and success.

2. **Organizational** — Action taken at a company or organization to address structural, systemic issues.

Ownership should be at the executive or senior management level. By their nature, these actions are the most complex to implement and in some ways the most important and consequential because of their far-reaching impact.

Organizational actions should be taken after a careful review of employee feedback and an analysis of potential unintended consequences. If possible, consider A/B testing to pros and cons. For instance, perhaps you can test a new policy in one region and assess whether it raises employee satisfaction before implementing throughout the organization.





Share Results & Close The Loop With Employees

Sharing your engagement results with employees as part of your Action Approach is critical. Closing the loop with workers helps drive satisfaction and makes the workers feel listened to. Yes, it can be a scary proposition, but what makes it scary is also what makes it so powerful. By sharing your engagement results while preserving employee anonymity, you build trust while holding everyone accountable—and both employees and customers will appreciate the transparency.

Once you commit to ongoing engagement and ongoing action, you can be confident that you will see marked improvement in both day-to-day operations and overall employee satisfaction. You will have less to fear and all the more reason to encourage the positive feedback loop that results from sharing positive engagement data, which in turns boosts morale, leads to even better engagement data, and so on.

Communicate Your Reasoning

Always explain the rationale behind action items. Change drives progress but change can also be scary if it seems to have been decided in a vacuum and appears to come out of nowhere. Communicate clearly and in advance why you are making changes, how they were driven by employee feedback, and why the changes will make the organization stronger. After a set, predetermined time, follow up to communicate the success (or failure) of these changes and any pivots deemed necessary.


Involve Managers

Your managers and supervisors are on the front lines and know your employees better than anyone so involve them early in the planning process. Their unique perspective will yield ideas that you may not have thought of and they're well-positioned to assess the effectiveness of your Action Approach with firsthand insight as to whether workers are demonstrating signs of improved efficiency and seem more satisfied.

Involve Employees

Like managers, employees are also on the front lines—but since they're the ones carrying out the day-to-day tasks, they will have even more ideas you won't think of on your own. Since you're ultimately creating your Action Approach to make them happier, there is no one better able to advise as to what should go into your strategy.

In fact, asking employees what sorts of action responses they'd like to see included in your Action Approach arsenal and then including it in your strategy can very much be seen as the first action item in your plan.



Share your engagement results with employees at all levels to build trust and hold everyone accountable.

Follow up, Iterate, and Leverage Technology

Consistent engagement means consistent feedback, and if you're following the suggestions in this eBook, consistent action.

But no plan is perfect. Monitor progress and assess the success of your efforts by operating with clearly defined retention KPIs, which we've covered in a previous eBook. Use what you've learned in this eBook and what you discover through your analysis to iterate and refine your approach across departments and organization-wide.

And when selecting a technology partner, seek out a platform that streamlines both the engagement and action process in an intuitive, easy-to-use manner for both frontline workers and managers.

The right technology should allow you to gather real-time anonymous feedback by checking in at key milestones and provide insights that allow you to benchmark satisfaction and retention across your organization and against industry peers. As we've seen, engagement is only part of the process, so demand a solution that automatically recommends actions based on employee feedback.

The Suggested Actions You Need To RETAIN Your Workforce

Meet WorkStep RETAIN, the modern engagement platform with automatic anonymous check-ins throughout key milestones of an employment journey that provides clear, real-time analysis of workforce morale.

With a contemporary, easy-to-use dashboard, RETAIN offers compelling data visualizations, highlights potential issues, and benchmarks against industry peers so you can draw meaningful conclusions and combat turnover in a proactive, informed manner.

And with recently introduced Suggested Actions—a repository of quick, bite-sized actions your managers can take to improve retention—your RETAIN workflow is now stronger than ever.

Empower your managers with the data and actions they need to combat turnover.

- Gain insight into your lowest-performing themes
- Take action based on our curated list of next steps
- Track each action to measure impact based on employee favorability and retention



WORKSTEP

**Helping supply chain companies hire
and retain their frontline workforce.**

**Ready to see how RETAIN's Suggested Actions
can strengthen your retention strategy?**

Learn more at:

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