

Employee Listening:

A Guide to Practical Questions for an Empowered Organisation

Creating an Engaged & Empowered Workforce:
A Series of Practical Guides

Continuous Improvement, or Continuous Empowerment?

We've all heard of Continuous Improvement before, but Continuous Empowerment? Is that actually a thing? Well, yes it is, and it's something we believe in passionately at smartcrowds.

Continuous Empowerment starts with the premise that your workforce is your most important asset. And that by opening up 'always-available' channels for your employees to become the drivers and owners of continuous positive change – from start to finish – your organisation can not only meet, but exceed its goals.

Continuous Empowerment has three key elements:

- 01  **EMPLOYEE LISTENING**
- 02  **ACTIONABLE FOLLOW UP**
- 03  **DELIVERING IMPROVEMENTS**

In this guide, we focus on the first of these, **Employee Listening** – what does it look like and what practical steps can you take to get it right?

Employee Listening Characteristics

Employee listening isn't a quarterly or annual survey. Instead, it's an always on channel that consistently takes the 'pulse' of how people are feeling and what they are thinking. A good employee listening programme has five key characteristics:



IT'S SHORT

The individual survey elements are short and sharp. They only ask a small number of questions per survey – one to three preferably.

If you ask too many questions you'll end up losing focus. You can always ask more in other surveys.



IT'S FAST

You need to provide a 'one-click' experience to access the survey.

You don't want any menus or complex navigation, and it should take only 15 seconds to answer the questions – at most. Your employees are busy people!



IT'S SIMPLE

Ideally, you want single tap icon responses – emojis, yes/no/don't know, thumbs up and down etc.

Don't ask text questions – you'll only get fewer responses and it'll be harder to draw any conclusions from them.



IT'S ALWAYS ON

You need to make it available any time, 24/7. Catering for every day responses is better, should employees feel the need.

Your staff should be able to contribute any time they want, based on how they feel right now, 'in the moment'.



IT'S ANYWHERE

Constant Listening means any device, anywhere.

Your people are not always at their workstation. If they can't engage on the train right now, chances are they'll be too busy later.

Getting Started

It can sometimes be difficult to know where to start with employee listening, but experience has taught us that choosing one of the following 10 areas can act as a great launch pad for learning how your employees really feel about things:

01. Workforce Empowerment
02. Inclusion and Diversity
03. Job Enjoyment, Satisfaction and Engagement
04. Mental Health Wellbeing
05. Skills and Resources
06. Purpose, Direction, Accountability and Performance
07. Organisational Affiliation/Company Pride
08. Teamwork/Co-operation/Collaboration
09. Quality of leadership and Management
10. Creativity, Innovation and Change

Try not to have any survey 'downtime' – periods where no constant listening pulse surveys are available. There are always some things that staff would like the option to contribute to (for example 'I'm happy at my work today').

To help you get started, we've shortlisted five of our favourite pulse questions for each category over the next few pages, but you can find a more extensive list here [<<download>>](#)

Empowerment and Accountability

Achieving a high level of empowerment through accountability is the foundation of high-performing teams.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I feel that I am regularly consulted about my views on work-related issues
- I have freedom to make decisions that have significant impact on the quality and output of my work
- I feel empowered to make key decisions in my role
- I have influence over how I am measured to demonstrate success in my role
- I have influence over how my personal KPIs are achieved

Low average scores and/or downward trends may be indicative of overly prescribed roles and micromanagement.

Inclusion and Diversity

Equitable employers respect the unique needs, perspectives and potential of all their team members. As a result, diverse and inclusive workplaces earn deeper trust and more commitment from their employees.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I believe that people of different backgrounds, characteristics and beliefs are welcome here
- I believe that a person's background, characteristics and beliefs do not affect their ability to reach their potential
- Fair procedures exist to raise concerns of discrimination
- My organisation treats concerns of discrimination fairly
- I am confident that all staff are paid fairly based on the role and benefit they bring to the organisation and not their gender, race, colour, ethnic background or sexual orientation

Low average scores and/or downward trends may be indicative of perceived unfairness in progression paths.

Job Enjoyment, Satisfaction and Engagement

Happy employees are more loyal to the company and its objectives, they go the extra mile to achieve goals and take pride in their jobs, their teams and their achievements.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment
- I am sufficiently challenged by my work
- I understand how I can develop my role
- I know how I contribute to the success of this organisation
- I see real opportunity to grow and develop in this organisation

Low average scores and/or downward trends may be indicative of lack of leadership, development or communication.

Mental Health Wellbeing

Organisations that take a proactive approach to wellbeing in the workplace benefit from increased staff commitment, better retention, reduced absenteeism, and greater resilience.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- How do you feel about your current deadlines and workload?
- How motivated are you at work?
- Do you feel you balance your home life with work life well?
- I feel that I can be myself at work
- Working from home has had a negative effect on my productivity

Low average scores or downward trends may be indicative of poor working practices, harassment, and poor adjustment to change.

Skills and Resources

Giving your employees the skills and resources they need to perform their role at full capacity leads to happier employees, meaning better productivity.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I feel that I am well trained for my role
- I feel that my skills are well utilised in my role
- I have all the tools required to perform my role
- I know where I can find the tools I am missing
- The company's tools or processes impact on my productivity

Low average scores or downward trends will normally be an early warning indicator of unmotivated staff and future productivity issues.

Purpose, Direction, Accountability and Performance

A workforce that knows where the organisation is going and how its efforts contribute to company performance is better able to prioritise work, respond to threats and maximise opportunities.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I am clear on how my objectives impact on the attainment of the organisational objectives
- I know how I am performing against my KPIs
- I know how my division is performing against their KPIs
- I know what the organisation is trying to achieve
- I understand why recent changes have been made

Low average scores or downward trends may be indicative of poorly aligned objectives or poor communication of organisational objectives.

Organisational Affiliation/Company Pride

Organisations with a corporate culture that instils pride in the workplace benefit from a stronger work ethic, increased workforce reliability and consistency, and better customer service levels.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I believe that the organisation's mission is in line with my own values
- I care about the future of this organisation
- I feel I am paid fairly for the work I do
- I understand and value the benefits available to me
- I can see a future for myself in this organisation

Low average scores or downward trends may be indicative of a lack of understanding and/or belief in the organisation's mission and vision.

Teamwork/Co-operation/Collaboration

Strong teamworking across an organisation leads to more efficient problem solving, faster and more regular innovation, more effective learning and a healthy dose of competition that can only be good for business performance!

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- My team are approachable and well-meaning
- The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job
- I feel confident that I can approach people in other business units for assistance when required
- I feel that my manager cares about me
- Disagreements are discussed in a healthy manner in my team

Low average scores or downward trends may be indicative of a culture of cliques or secrecy, leading to low levels of personal connections being made.

Quality of Leadership and Management

Organisations with strong leadership and management are better equipped to motivate their workforce to achieve goals and build a strong work-ethic that leads to reliable performance.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I trust the leaders of this organisation
- I receive honest feedback from my line manager(s)
- I receive meaningful recognition when I do well
- Management makes timely decisions
- If I make a mistake at work, I feel that I can report it without it being held against me

Low scores or downward trends may be indicative of coercive management structures and/or poor leadership communication skills.

Creativity, Innovation and Change

A creative, innovative workforce that embraces change is better able to stay ahead of the competition, deliver better products and services for its customers and retain its most talented individuals.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- I am given time to look at making improvements/innovate
- I don't feel frightened to offer my ideas
- I feel that all ideas are treated fairly
- I believe I would be supported if I try a new idea, even if it may not work
- Management encourages a culture of improvement and innovation

Low average scores or downward trends may be indicative of a culture of cliques or secrecy, leading to low levels of personal connections being made.

What's Next?

Find out how Smartcrowds can help you better understand your workforce.



Book a **Smartcrowds PULSE** 'constant listening' demo.

REQUEST AN ROI CALCULATION

Our Innovation Consultants will carry out a short review and prepare an ROI Calculation for you that highlights the areas where the most significant return is likely to be achieved.

FIND OUT
MORE

REQUEST A SMARTCROWDS IMPACT DEMO

Our smartcrowds IMPACT demo is delivered around the key innovation performance indicators described in this guide. In the demo you'll find out how smartcrowds helps you engage better with your workforce, empower your employees to make change happen, and turn more ideas into more outcomes,




CONTACT US TO
REQUEST A DEMO

Look out for our follow-up guide,
‘Actionable Follow Up:
Practical Steps for Reliable Survey Outcomes’

ABOUT SMARTCROWDS

At smartcrowds, we work with organisations looking to empower their employees, at all levels, to make sustainable, positive contributions to business change and innovation. Our smartcrowds IMPACT programme has been designed to deliver repeatable return on innovation investment, through a 5-step programme that is built around the key leading indicators of innovation performance measurement.



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