

Measuring Connectedness & Culture

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Almost 25% of HR professionals don't survey employees.

And the pros who survey frequently or occasionally often aren't 100% confident in what they do.

"It feels like there's not enough time, not enough resources to do what we want to do," said Hillary Champion, Director of People Growth at Facebook, during HR-Morning's masterclass Measuring Connectedness & Culture.

Even the HR leaders at Facebook struggle with meaningfully surveying employees. The restraints on time, resources and desire to do what you want to do are on both sides of the actual surveys: Leaders are crunched to initiate surveys and act on the feedback.

But Facebook has found success in many ways, much of it through its Workplace from Facebook platform, when it comes to surveying employees.

Here are their best practices – and practical tips almost any HR pro can use.

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MEASURE WHAT?

Every company has different needs for feedback – and what they will do with that feedback. So that’s the first critical factor in measuring how employees feel about where and how they work: What is your goal?

For instance, you might want to measure different elements of your company culture, what drives employee motivation, how do employees feel about new leadership or what effects a merger or acquisition is having on them.

“At Facebook, we flex what we measure all the time,” Champion said. “We can get that 20,000-foot view from [different] surveys.”

They do a larger **Pulse Survey**, which has about 30 questions, twice a year. That helps set a baseline for employees’ feelings on many things such as culture, connectedness, diversity & inclusion, and policy. It can also help HR pros gauge interest in and feelings for current issues.

Facebook HR supplements the bigger surveys with **Micro Pulse Surveys**. They’re done quarterly and include about four rating questions and a comment question. They get feedback on what’s top of mind, what’s pressing and any ongoing issues from the biannual Pulse Surveys.

For instance, they use Micro Pulse Surveys to get feedback on new or evolving initiatives such as onboarding, training and internal projects.

For HR Pros: Try an annual or biannual bigger survey, letting employees know that’ll set a baseline on sentiment. Then bolster it with regular quarterly or monthly smaller surveys that hit the topics that employees were most passionate about in the larger survey, explaining what you’ve done or will do as a result of the feedback.



SURVEY WHO AND ASK WHAT?

“Survey fatigue is a very real thing,” Champion said. “What’s worse is lack of action.”

So you want to get feedback, but not too much. And you want to act, but not without reason.

At Facebook, they send the Pulse and Micro Pulse Surveys to all employees so it’s six surveys they’re asked to do each year.

While the Pulse Surveys give a larger view, the Micro Pulse Surveys give leaders a chance to get feedback on current issues. What’s most important, though, is they only ask for feedback on things they can act on.

For instance, there was no sense asking employees about the comfort of their desk chairs when they moved to remote work because they weren’t going to supply everyone with new chairs. However, they could ask employees to rate how connected they felt to their peers while working remotely because they could do something to improve that.

For HR Pros: Make sure your survey and respondents align. Ask all employees to respond to surveys about broader things such as company culture and connectedness once or twice a year. Invite employees who are touched by a topic you want to get a read on – perhaps just remote employees about technology issues, facility management employees on cleaning protocols or front-line employees on customer experience – throughout the year with shorter, rating-based surveys.



GET MORE RESPONSES?

One struggle many HR pros have with surveying employees is response: Many employees don’t take the time to respond, care about the issues or believe their opinion matters.

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While the best way to get a strong response is to prove you use the feedback, Facebook does more to get a solid response – which is 96% for the biannual one and more than 50% for the pulse surveys.

For one, they've created a balance between anonymous and confidential surveys. Fully anonymous surveys – when HR doesn't know the identity of the respondents – are tougher, but necessary sometimes, because they can't connect the dots. For instance, they'd never know if people who rated their relationship with their manager "great" stayed with the company longer.

So they use more confidential surveys – when a select group of HR leaders can link responses to employees, but don't share that information. They do share the quantitative data such as sentiment ratings with front-line managers, so they understand what their employees as a group feel. And they'll share comments anonymously.

HR also sends an invitation to employees just before they send the survey to drive interest. They keep the survey live for two weeks so people have a good amount of time to participate. And they created a live dashboard so managers can see the number of responses that come in.

That gets many managers to drive participation even further. Some have encouraged responses by even promising to rap a song or take a pie in the face if a certain percentage of their employees respond!

For HR Pros: To get more survey participation, get support from the top. Ask leaders to encourage employees to respond candidly, ensuring their feedback will be confidential and taken seriously. Send invitations and reminders to participate over a week or two.

DO WHAT NOW?

Surveys are good, but action is even better. HR leaders want to survey, act and follow up in a timeframe that shows employees their feedback was heard and valued.

“You don’t want to keep surveying people until you don’t have time to take action on it,” Champion said. “Do the thing [they want], and then it’s time to survey again.”

For instance, at Facebook, they watch for a 70% positive response on a topic or issue. If it drops below that in their Micro Pulse Surveys, they act to improve it before they survey on the issue again.

That was especially important when the company went to an almost exclusive remote workforce.

“Like most companies we had to be super agile this year,” said Sameer Chowdhri, Global Head, Workplace for HR at Facebook.

So they invited employees to a Micro Pulse Survey, asking about things such as productivity, comfort and challenges with remote work. They needed quick insight so they could act to help employees in their new environments.

For HR Pros: Act! Most importantly, act quickly after surveying. You might want to make plans on what you can change, improve or stop before the survey. That way, when you get results you’re positioned to act based on how employees respond.

