

Connecting the dots  
IN EMPLOYEE LISTENING

# From Surveys to Strategy: Advice for Employee Listening Leaders

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How to turn your survey program  
into a strategic asset



## The most successful employee listening programs don't just report data – they answer real questions, they solve real business problems, and they drive real action.

When designed strategically, employee listening programs can demonstrate ROI by shaping key business decisions, improving retention, boosting performance, and strengthening organizational culture. Unfortunately, many employee listening programs are synonymous with routine surveys rather than being viewed as a way to drive business impact. Survey teams often operate in silos – disconnected from broader business priorities. In this article, we present six steps for elevating employee listening in your organization.

### 1. Approach Employee Listening as a Program, Not a Project

Too often we see organizations run a single engagement survey that is disconnected from all other surveys, sources of data, and business objectives. This is a loss! We encourage our clients to think more holistically about their employee listening program. It should be an ongoing, collaborative effort with an integrated strategy. When organizations treat listening as a one-time project, they miss opportunities to connect the dots between different data sources, track trends over time, and align insights with broader business goals.

### 2. Understand What Your Stakeholders Need

To be taken seriously, survey teams must act as true partners to the business. Identify your stakeholders and key decision makers within the business and learn their biggest challenges. You might even consider holding “voice of the customer” interviews. Build relationships with these stakeholders and engage them early (before survey design) to ensure your program aligns with strategic priorities that matter. These efforts will help you to move from reactive reporting to proactive problem-solving.

*Stakeholder involvement is critical for making meaningful connections between employee listening data and what matters to the business.*

Any robust employee listening program should include foundational questions you ask consistently across time. These topics allow you to track critical metrics to monitor the employee experience. In addition to these foundational questions, you also need to uncover business issues and questions that might not already be included in your measurement plan. Once you understand what questions your stakeholders want answers to, frame your research questions and determine if these data are already available somewhere in the organization or if you need to collect the data.

For example, you might hear that business leaders want to understand what's driving turnover with frontline, early tenure employees. You might already have what you need, or you might need to adapt your measurement plan accordingly. For additional examples, see *Strategic Questions Employee Listening Can Help Answer* on page 4.

### 3. Break Down Data Silos

To generate insights that are truly relevant to different areas of the business, work needs to be done to connect survey results with the data that matters most to varying stakeholders. The barrier here is often siloed data across the organization. Once you have learned what metrics and KPIs matter most to your stakeholders, the next step is to get access and make it useable. Here are three ways to get started:

1. Try to integrate relevant data sources into a single system so you can use it, access it, analyze it, learn from it (connect to business objectives)
2. Integrate XM platforms with other operational systems (e.g., HRIS, CRM)
3. Standardize data architecture (creating common data formats) and establish data governance and quality standards to ensure data from different systems can be integrated

### 4. Deliver Insights, Not Just Dashboards

Giving leaders access to a dashboard isn't enough, they need guidance in interpreting the data and determining actionable takeaways. Whether they are being taught and empowered to do this on their own or have a partner from HR helping them along the way, there should be enablement to help them with data literacy and to understand the story.

### 5. Measure Success by Action, Not Just Scores

Too often, success is measured by scores instead of action. Don't get too tied up in the metrics and inadvertently create a "report card" culture. The most successful organizations know that employee listening should drive true change through real conversations and behaviors, not by inflating vanity metrics. For more, read [here](#). The most effective survey teams don't just report data — they influence decisions and drive action. Start by identifying one business challenge your listening program can directly support and take the first step toward making an impact.

### 6. Communicate to Close the Loop

The final step for elevating your listening strategy is communicating actions taken and their impact. This step is critical for building trust and credibility with both employees and executives. According to one recent study about using listening to enhance productivity, 31% of respondents said their top desire is regular updates on what their employer has done in response to their feedback<sup>1</sup>. Executives and other stakeholders also need to see and be reminded of how listening data is being used to improve organizational effectiveness and business outcomes.

1. 2025 Global Employee Experience Trends. Qualtrics XM Institute. <https://www.qualtrics.com/ebooks-guides/employee-experience-trends/>

# Strategic Questions Employee Listening Can Help Answer

## Onboarding Survey Data

- Which aspects of the onboarding experience predict higher retention 6 months later? 1 year later?
- Are new hires' expectations of their roles aligning with their actual experiences? How does this alignment impact early engagement and performance?
- How does onboarding quality affect the time it takes for new employees to reach productivity benchmarks?
- How effective is manager involvement during the onboarding process in driving engagement and satisfaction?
- Is a mentorship program for new hires associated with faster speed to full productivity?

## Engagement Survey Data

- How do the top drivers of engagement differ across critical job roles?
- What factors contribute most to stress or burnout, particularly among high-performance groups?
- How included do employees feel in key decision-making processes, and how does this perception vary across different teams or demographics?
- Does increasing the frequency of manager check-ins correspond with a reduction in voluntary turnover?
- Do managers who complete action plans drive higher retention, sales numbers, and customer satisfaction numbers in their teams?
- How well is the company supporting internal career growth, and how does this relate to engagement and retention?
- How does engagement relate to client relationships or performance with clients?
- Are our DEI initiatives translating to improved experiences for underrepresented groups? Where are gaps most prominent?
- How are engagement scores evolving as we implement cultural or strategic changes?
- Did the leadership 360 program enhance engagement among their direct reports? Which approach to 360 follow-up drives the most behavior change?

## Exit Survey and Exit Interview

- What are the primary reasons high-performing employees leave, and how do those reasons differ across roles?
- Are there early warning signals in engagement data that correlate strongly with voluntary turnover?
- What do high-performing leavers say about their experience and likelihood to recommend the firm as an employer?
- How well does the firm capture critical knowledge from exiting employees, particularly those in key roles?

## About Newmeasures

Newmeasures is a boutique firm of Industrial & Organizational Psychologists with expertise in designing and executing employee listening strategies. Our mission is to help people within organizations listen to one another so they can thrive – both as individuals and collectively. We are passionate about providing white-glove service and tailoring our services to meet our clients exactly where they are.

We believe that employee listening should connect the dots rather than simply checking boxes. By utilizing multiple listening methods and linking EX and operational data (OX), we help our clients gain the insights they need to make informed decisions in real-time. In addition, our offerings include a built-in system of action to support clients in using employee feedback to improve the employee experience in the ways that matter most.

Contact us to learn how we can help you take your listening program from surveys to strategy.



1-877-888-3817



info@newmeasures.com