

13 Key Aspects To Consider When Selecting An Employee Engagement Survey Tool

Forbes Human Resources Council

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Employee engagement surveys are a general measure of the happiness of a business's workforce. After all, happy and satisfied employees are typically less likely to leave the company for greener pastures. The feedback from these surveys is crucial in helping the company adapt to the needs of its employees.

The tools that a business uses to conduct these surveys should demonstrate some basic functionalities that help the company be more effective at managing their workforce and helping them be better at their work-life balance. To help, 13 members of [Forbes Human Resources Council](#) explore some of the key aspects an employee engagement survey tool should have to be truly useful to a business.

1. Simplicity

Simplicity is key! Remember, your workforce may be completing their survey “on the fly” at the office, at a client site, in the line for a plane or in a coffee house. We complete engagement surveys twice a year, so it has to be intuitive. Otherwise, participation is negatively impacted, which in turn makes the results less relevant. - [Paul Phillips, Avanade](#)

2. Analytics

Data isn't useful if you can't look at it from perspectives that are meaningful to your organization. Your engagement survey tool should allow analysis of data by location, and team, manager and division, as well as demographics, and present data in multiple forms. The best flexible analytics tools provide deeper understanding of employee sentiment and a path for you to show employees they're heard. - [Jennifer Marszalek](#)

3. Metrics

Tools can have a lot of flexibility on designing the questions but not many tools have the flexibility on reporting and ability to link to other systems. You don't just want metrics that are obvious; you want predictability, linkages to business metrics and financials etc. -- essentially translating "what people feel" to business metrics that can give meaningful performance improvement goals. - [Hafiza Gujuran, AlixPartners](#)

4. A Great User Experience

It doesn't matter how scalable an employee engagement survey tool is or how many reports it can generate if employees don't complete the survey -- and if it's too long or difficult to navigate, that's just what will happen. Employee engagement surveys must provide a great user experience in order to allow employees to complete them easily and capture an accurate snapshot of engagement levels. - [John Feldmann, Insperty](#)

5. Focus Areas And Best Practices

Getting useful data insights is just the first step -- it's more crucial to learn how to look and act on it to enhance engagement. A tool that provides key focus areas and best practices recommendations to guide organizations to come up with action plans and implement the, can make a real difference. - [Jyoti Khadgawat, Smule Inc](#)

6. Alignment On What 'Engagement' Means

Are you clear and aligned with the vendor's definition of engagement? Questions in the survey should align with that definition or be a driver of engagement. Does the vendor have evidence to show how their tool sets the stage for improving engagement? Is there a library of action steps you can take to address concerns? Can they segment your data based upon your potential or other demographic data? - [Phyllis Wright, Ph.D., VRM Mortgage Services](#)

7. Security And Confidentiality

Your employees expect their survey responses to be anonymous, and it is an important feature to consider when selecting an employee engagement survey tool. Find out how it stores personal data and if it complies with GDPR legal requirements. - [Greg Furstner, SkillPath](#)

8. Flexibility In Reporting

Make sure the tool you choose has various ways to deliver the results and data -- raw, slices, easy to drill down, and so on. Being able to create the right metrics and story for your organization is critical when reviewing these results, versus relying on their standard reports. This way, you're able to deliver meaningful action plans and engagement movement that matches your company's goals. - [Melissa Anzman, bettHR](#)

9. Mobile Compatibility

When engaging employees, you need to reach them where they are -- on their smartphones. Surveys gain the most respondents when they can access the survey and related imagery easily on their handheld so they can complete the survey on their

commute or down time. Test your survey internally with a beta group first to ensure it is mobile friendly. - [Cat Graham, Cheer Partners](#)

10. Definition, Validity And Applicability

I found it helpful to have answers to these questions: Do I have a definition of what engagement actually is in my company? Does the tool provide validity -- i.e., does it really measure what it is intended to measure? What kind of data does the tool provide and am I able to use it? - [Reinhard Guggenberger, FalconStor](#)

11. Data That Translates To Action

Scientifically-backed survey design and multiple frequency options (beyond annual) are key, but buyers must also consider what the tool offers in addition to raw data. Look for a tool that translates feedback and data into action managers can implement before the next survey takes place; otherwise staff sees the surveys as pointless and the employee experience overall as a low priority. - [Natalie Baumgartner, Achievers](#)

12. Technology Stack Integration

Look at how it fits into your technology stack. Don't implement a tool that is unable to seamlessly integrate into the existing tech stack, or one that will cause friction for employees when using the tool. - [Kristina Johnson, Okta](#)

13. Global Outlook

Most employee engagement survey tools have many common features. Organizations and their workforces are no longer local. With millennials joining the workforce and the rise of the gig economy and remote work, it's imperative for a survey tool to provide global solutions and benchmarks. This enables businesses to identify risks and opportunities in their niche markets. - [Nish Parikh, Rangam Consultants Inc.](#)