



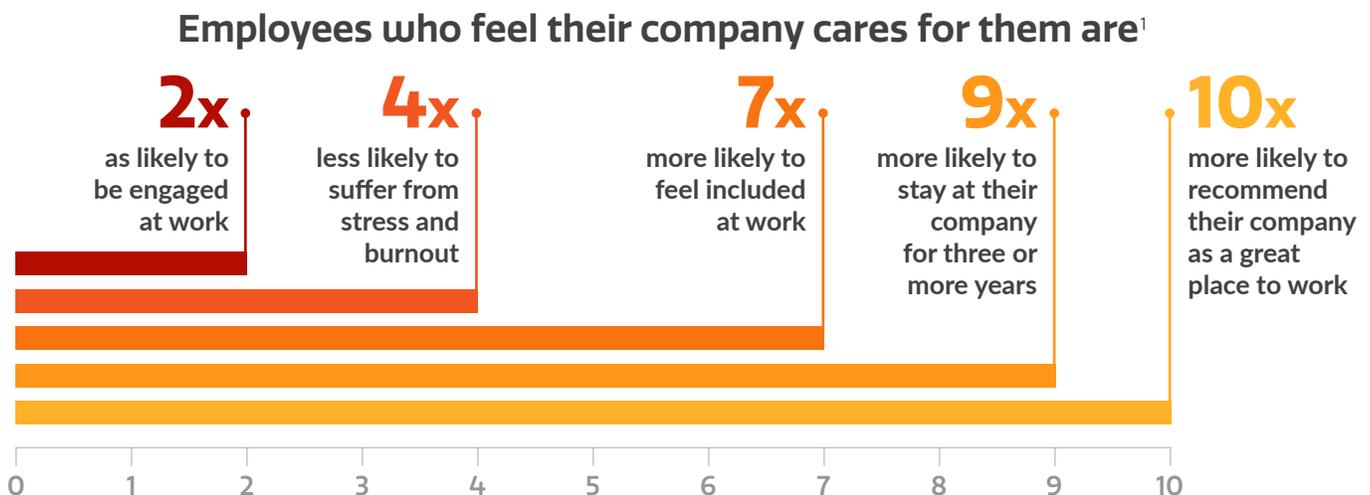
How to Make Employees Feel Heard and Valued in the Workplace

Being able to listen to, recognize, and value employees can be a challenge, but it's one that effective organizations need to be able to manage. Leaders who heed feedback build trust and create opportunities for achievements to be celebrated daily.

Employees who feel they are listened to and recognized feel more valued — then become motivated to be more productive. So how can managers and leaders build these powerful components into the business model?

Why should we care?

Listening to and valuing employees has two main benefits: making work more enjoyable across all teams and improving your bottom line. It takes time and commitment at all levels to nurture both the trust employees need to thrive and the employee engagement organizations need to succeed. Upfront this looks like a lot to take on with a lot of new processes to implement, but in the long run, building a culture where employees feel valued can have positive impacts on retention, productivity, and attracting top talent.



¹[The Science of Care, Limeade](#)

How do you make employees feel heard?

When employees feel like they matter and their feedback is put into action, organizations are equipped to make better choices and can encourage more useful commentary within and among teams.

What it takes to listen

Let employees know their concerns have been acknowledged. Employees feel listened to when positive action is taken in the direction of their requests and actions that make them feel unheard are avoided.² Being proactive to prevent misunderstandings can save you a lot of problems – negative work culture, reduced employee engagement, increased turnover rates and more – in the long run.³



Employees feel heard when employers:

- **Build on ideas:** Teams rely on employees to bring new ideas forward, whether to improve processes, shape culture, or change everyday routines. Effective leaders expand on good ideas and build new solutions together. Work with employees to bring their ideas to life.
- **Act on ideas:** Employees feel heard when leaders use feedback to make things happen. Managers and leaders who listen to employees can provide the tools, training, and resources to help their team grow with the organization.
- **Communicate:** Effort counts too! Even if there isn't room to implement all the feedback, it's important for employees to know they aren't being ignored.

Employees feel unheard when employers:

- **Are dismissive.** Even if there is someone to listen, there might as well not be if that person ignores what they hear or shoots down ideas without consideration. Effective organizations prioritize avenues of communication and encourage free flow of ideas.
- **Offer insufficient action.** Leaders and managers might attempt to show they are listening with half measures, temporary solutions, diversions, and delays – but compromises made in bad faith can be just as bad as no action at all.

² *Feeling Heard: Experiences of Listening (or Not) at Work*, Kriz et. al. (2021)

³ *Webinar: How to Make Employees Feel Heard & Valued in the Workplace*. (2022)



Give equal attention to remote team members!

Feeling heard is especially important for remote employees. It's up to you to create opportunities to listen from afar, and that means being deliberate about how you stay in touch and stay in tune with every employee — in the office, on the road, or at their kitchen table.⁴

Talk about listening

Let all employees know you are available to listen, not just the loudest in the room or your favorites. It's impossible to make everyone a friend, but it's more than possible to find time to listen. Make a point to support camaraderie and teamwork, keeping lines of communication warm, professional and open.

Opportunities for listening

Listening happens in a lot of contexts. What's right in one might not work in another, but every avenue to connect holds potential to help employees feel heard. Which of the following listening opportunities is your organization taking advantage of?

- ✓ Group meetings
- ✓ One-on-one meetings
- ✓ Performance reviews
- ✓ Email, phone calls and instant messaging
- ✓ Suggestion box submissions
- ✓ Questionnaires
- ✓ Anonymous surveys
- ✓ An engagement management tool, such as TINYpulse



⁴An analysis of employee recognition: Perspectives on human resources practices. (Brun & Dugas, 2008)

Taking action:

Give employees a voice in business decisions

- Survey team(s) on strategy: Ask and you shall receive!
- Solicit feedback regularly, as well as before and after events and big projects.
- Make feedback a part of your standard operating procedures.

CASE STUDY:

TINYpulse customer – a construction company

- A customer in the construction industry surveyed employees and it became clear to the owner that his employees were unclear about the direction of the company.
- At the next annual company goal planning, the owner presented the yearly objectives and key results (OKRs) early.
- This gave employees time to review, comment and provide feedback.
- The owner was able to present the OKRs again, this time with the employees' feedback in mind.

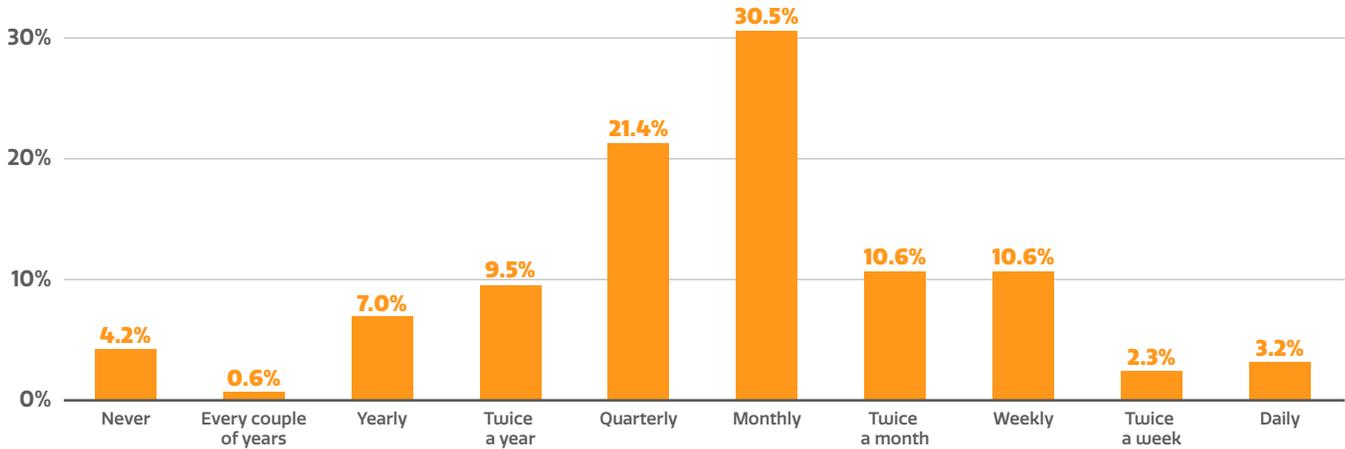
OUTCOME

- Leaders in the organization reviewed all the feedback to inform decisions.
- Employees reported feeling more clear about the direction for the company.
- Employees better understood how their role is connected to top-level OKRs at the company.



What the data says³

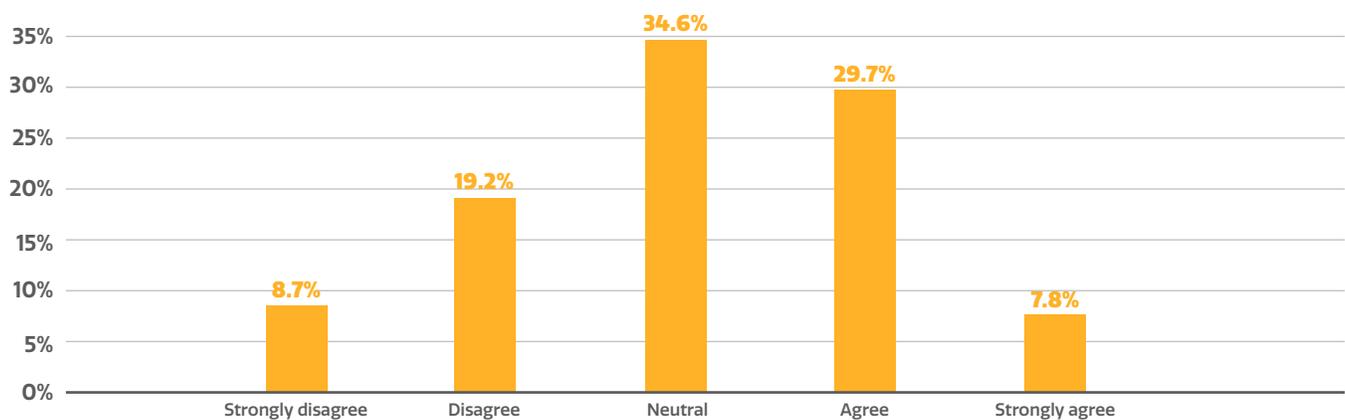
How often would you like the opportunity to give feedback to your employer through employee surveys?



People want to give feedback

- When it comes to answering surveys, employees typically want to give feedback about once a month.
- 95.76% of employees want to be able to give at least some feedback.
- 57.20% want to give feedback at least monthly.

Desire for more feedback from managers



Most people don't mind getting feedback

- 72.1% of employees are neutral toward or would prefer more feedback from their managers.

³ Webinar: How to Make Employees Feel Heard & Valued in the Workplace. (2022)

How to recognize employees in a meaningful way

Recognition in the workplace is when an employee is acknowledged and celebrated as an individual or part of a team. There is room for more positive recognition in every part of an organization, so be sure to stay vigilant so you can identify and take advantage of these plentiful opportunities:⁴

What does recognition look like?

- **Congratulations and acknowledgement** of a job well done after a particular project or work task. Celebrate those who make success possible with gratitude and praise.
- **Acknowledgement and trust** in employees' skills when working and making decisions. Rely on the skills and judgment of those who demonstrate competence.

What should be recognized?

- **Personal accomplishments:**
“Let’s hear it for ... !”
- **Tangible results:**
“... exceeded the goal by 10%!”
- **Excellence in work practices:**
“Did you hear how ... resolved that issue?”
- **Dedication to the organization:**
“... has been a reliable worker for five years.”
- **Teamwork:**
Peer-to-peer recognition or shout-outs

Where does recognition happen?

- **Across the organization:** Recognize teams, departments and individuals. Whether through TINYpulse Cheers, meetings, apps, newsletters, emails, annual conferences or banquets – recognition counts.
- **Vertically:** Performance reviews give managers and supervisors the opportunity to point out employee success, while praise from their own team points managers to winning priorities.
- **Among peers:** A proverbial ‘pat on the back’ from a colleague, gratitude for helping out in a jam, and everyday collegial appreciation nurtures a culture of care.
- **Public recognition:** Don’t save all the social media and PR for executives. Get the word out about the people and teams who drive your success!

It feels good to be recognized and to recognize others. Positive feedback has a way of fostering better attitudes in the workplace – and produces positive results to go along with it.

Not sure where to start when it comes to recognition?

Ask. Find out how people want to be recognized with a survey.

⁴*An analysis of employee recognition: Perspectives on human resources practices. (Brun & Dugas, 2008)*

Taking action:

Build recognition into your processes

- Make it habitual.
 - Leaders should exemplify gratitude and appreciation.
 - Incorporate regular moments of recognition.
-

APPLICATION:

Start today, plan for later

Recognition comes in many forms and sizes.

IMMEDIATE

- Build appreciation and praise into team meetings.
- Choose one team member per week to celebrate. Be specific why.
- Share the successes of your team with leaders.

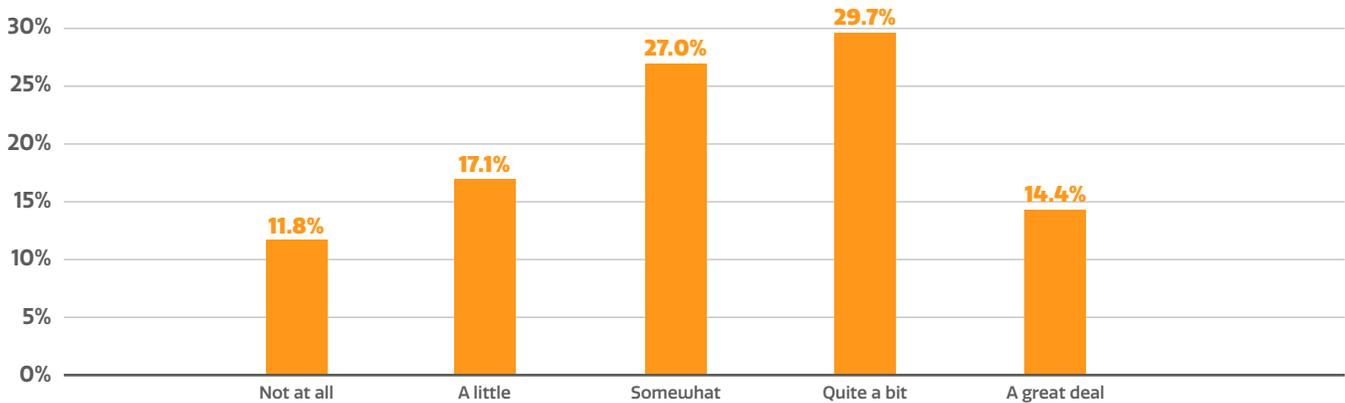
LONG-TERM

- Get in the habit of recognizing employees on a regular basis.
- Identify opportunities for recognition. There's room for gratitude, recognition and awards in weekly meetings, project kick-offs, annual events and more.
- Recognize promotions. As people grow with the organization, share about how their new roles and responsibilities reflect the excellence they've already shown.



What the data says³

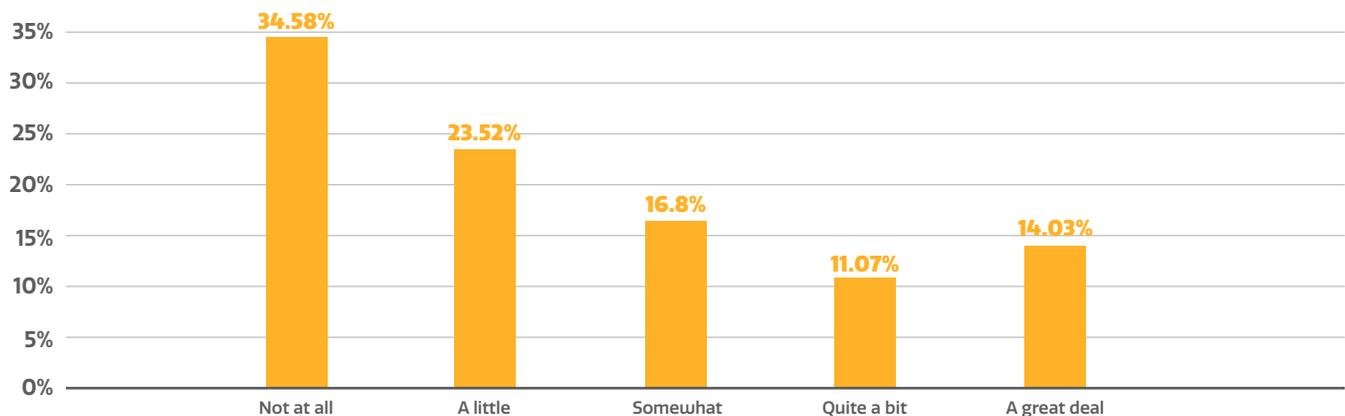
How much would employee recognition improve social and cultural connection?



Recognition improves feelings of connection

- 88.2% of employees indicated recognition would be beneficial for increasing social and cultural connection at work.
- Well-communicated recognition can have positive effects beyond making employees feel recognized in the moment, making them feel more connected, collaborative and engaged with the organization in the long term.

To what extent have you experienced a lack of recognition at work



Employees notice when their hard work is not recognized

- 66.4% of employees report at least some lack of recognition at work.

³ Webinar: How to Make Employees Feel Heard & Valued in the Workplace. (2022)

What does being valued mean to your employees?

We feel valued when the people around us — especially those who make decisions that impact us — care about us.

For employees, that means respecting opinions, noticing contributions, and acknowledging accomplishments. It means respecting others for not only what they contribute, but for who they are. It's also important to remember that the way organizations show positive regard for employees won't be the same for every person in every situation.⁵

Navigating mutual respect

Each of your employees may prefer to be shown respect in a different way. The depth of cultural and personal experiences that build our understanding of respect make it hard to define — but easy to recognize.

Generalized respect: 'We' are all valued in this organization

The mission and vision of an organization speaks to something greater, while policies lean on shared values across the organization. Stakeholders promote a culture where gratitude and recognition play an important part.

Particularized respect: This organization respects 'me'

When we recognize the attributes, behaviors, and achievements a colleague brings to the table, we show that we value not only their work, but also them as a person.



“To get real diversity of thought, you need to find people who hold different views and invite them to the conversation.”

— Adam Grant

Do you know what your employees value?

When organizations recognize different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, they demonstrate generalized respect and show every employee that he or she is valued. To help an employee feel valued as an individual, it helps to understand what they find valuable in their own life.

Priorities outside the workplace, as much as priorities in the workplace, define how employees feel most valued in the workplace. Think of the whole person when giving and receiving feedback.

⁵ *Respect in organizations: Feeling valued as "we" and "me"* (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017)

Taking action:

Make employees feel valued

- Nurture reciprocal trust.
 - Demonstrate and value respect for and among workers.
 - Offer public recognition and personal affirmation.
 - Ask for honest opinions and respect them.
 - Change how things are done in response to feedback.
 - Respect employees' time, emotional wellbeing, family and interests outside the workplace.
-

APPLICATION:

Ask the right questions

- How do you work best?
- How can I promote your growth?
- What does success look like to you?



How organizations can actively show they care

Remember that valuing, listening to, recognizing and caring about your employees begins at the first encounter and continues until their exit from the organization. Starting with clear communication shows you value and care about their input from the start, and sets a standard for the entire employee relationship going forward.

✔ Show care for basic needs

- Have policies in place to protect the safety and security of the workplace.
- Ensure that dignity and respect are at the center of interactions. People first!

✔ Honor integrity, time and effort

- Show fairness and nurture mutual trust.
- Make sure the work people do has meaning.

✔ Foster personal growth and development

- See each employee as a whole person, with unique motivations and priorities.
- Listen to your team and find ways to connect.
- Recognize when individuals and teams find success, and respond to feedback appropriately.
- Leave room for supporting professional growth while growing the bottom line of a business that cares about its employees.

✔ Nurture the deeper values that drive an organization and keep great people on board

- Keep an ear out for what makes employees feel like they have a purpose.
- Make it a priority to build a more caring culture for everyone.
- Help employees see the impact of their work on the community and the world.

Taking action:

Advocate for your team

- Advocate for growth and promotions. Go to bat for employees who deserve recognition.
 - Be available for coaching. Get involved with opportunities to help employees grow into their role.
-



CASE STUDY:

Personal story – A great manager

- My favorite manager took time to understand my strengths and explore areas to grow.
- Together we created an action plan that had the best chance to succeed.
- The manager helped me look for training opportunities and supported me with them.
- The manager continued to advocate for growth and support me.

OUTCOME

- I felt valued because the organization was committed to my growth.
- I felt valued because contributions were acknowledged.



How organizations can actively show they care



Final outcome – Putting it all together

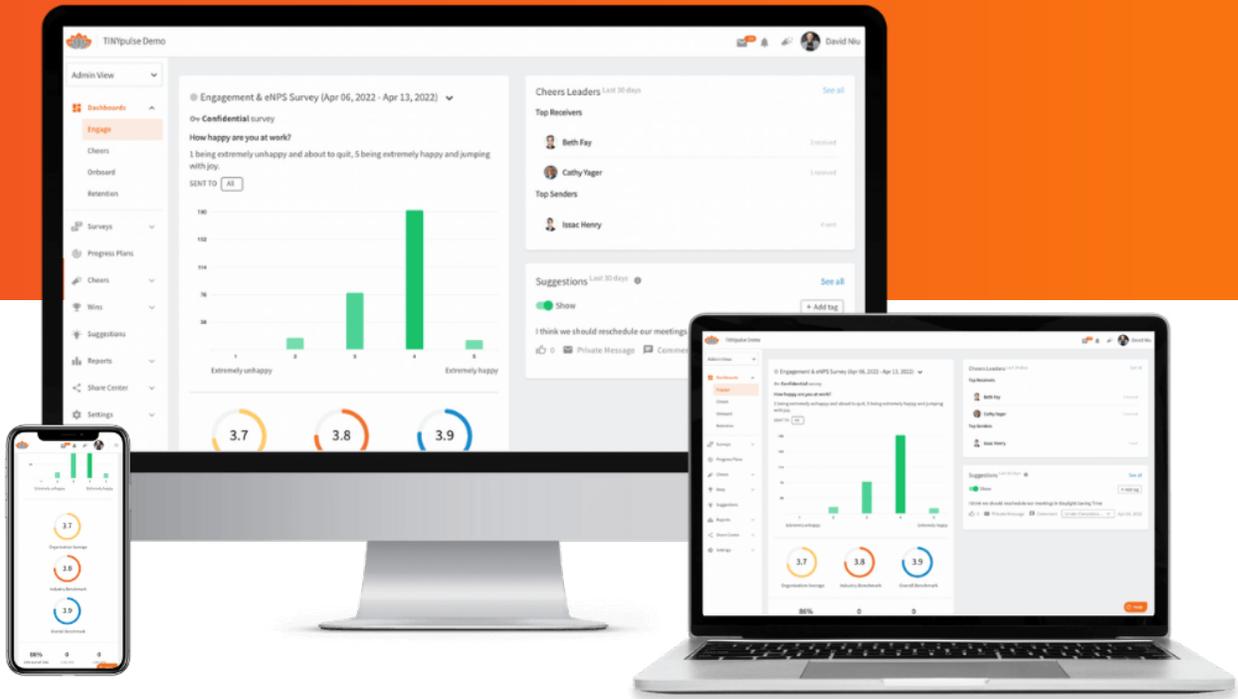
By combining effective listening, proactive recognition, mutual respect and tangible action, your organization can be sure their employees feel heard and valued in the workplace. Even if you start small, the most important thing is to start now.

If you're not sure how to get started, TINYpulse's all-in-one employee engagement platform makes it easy to get a clear picture of your employees' needs so you can know where to focus your efforts and action today.

For a demo of the TINYpulse employee engagement platform [click here](#).

We've got your back.

At TINYpulse, our priority is to help you communicate, identify, and improve employee engagement at your organization. Part of ensuring that success is being available to help you with anything you need to see employee engagement flourish with the platform. Please contact your dedicated Customer Success Manager for further assistance.



tinypulse.com

