


How great managers follow up
survey results with their teams

PeopleInsight


A photograph of two men sitting at a table in a meeting room. The man on the right is speaking and gesturing with his hands, while the man on the left listens. There are papers and a water bottle on the table.

How great managers follow up survey results with their teams

Whether your organisation has just engaged in a quick pulse survey, or an in-depth census survey, as a line manager, you are in a crucial role. Your team will be looking to you to learn about the results, and more importantly, what is going to happen next.

Whilst the organisation at the top level may put in place broad strategic programmes to address the findings, it's often improvements closer to home that make a big difference to employees. You're the go-between for your leadership and employees, relied on to make the connection between the current state of engagement and the aspired state of engagement.

Great managers know you need to meet with employees, determine plans for moving forward, and report back. They also know it's just the right thing to do to show your people their voice has been listened to and appreciated.



How to make employee survey follow up work for you

First things first

As a great manager make sure you understand the overall survey results, and what's expected of you next:

1. At the organisational level:

- Do you understand the key messages and issues from the overall results? What is their context? How do they impact your team?
- What are the next steps overall?


2. By your organisation

- You may have been invited to results briefings, action planning sessions or 'train the trainer' workshops. Use the tools and techniques from these to follow up with your team. Or follow the guidance below.
- Look out for updates about post-survey progress and changes to share with your team. Perhaps introduce a standing slot at a team meeting to keep people informed and engaged.

Survey follow up: It's a conversation

Survey follow-up is really about having an honest conversation with your people after each employee survey. You should jointly examine survey results, converse about where to celebrate and improve, and discuss the best way to go about it.

Remember, whilst people need time to absorb and reflect on results, the key focus is to create meaningful action as a result.



What does best practice survey follow up look like?

There's no one size fits all approach to survey follow up, but some kind of face to face meeting is vital for discussion and action planning. As a manager, here's some key behaviours to remember:

Action is an ongoing thing

The last thing you want to do is raise employee expectations and then disappoint by letting engagement initiatives fizzle out. Use an initial get together followed by embedding action item updates in regular team meetings, online chat, team newsletters, 1:1s or all hands meetings – whatever fits your style and process.

Make it about the employees

Take an objective approach to avoid swaying employees with your own leadership bias. This helps you steer clear of a 'leadership vs. employees' situation, which can actually decrease engagement.

Be humble

Some of the feedback might be about you, requiring a touch of humility on your part. Admit that you don't have all the answers, and you need your employees' help to get them. Prepare yourself to hear comments that might aggravate or offend you and take it for what it's worth – honest and helpful feedback. You'll be much more credible and respected for accepting feedback than defensively rejecting it.



Initial results follow up meeting

Prepare

Using your results dashboard, read through your team's results. You may also want to look at overall organisation results and action areas to see how you compare. We recommend focusing on:

- **Overall response rate** - a good response rate is 70% and above, The higher the response rate, the more representative they are of the views of your team.
- **Engagement 'score'** - made up of 5 key indicators that combine to show how 'engaged' your team is.
- **Themes** - Have a look at the variation – for example 'Leadership' might score well but 'Autonomy' might be comparatively lower. This will give you some initial clues as to where to focus your attention.
- **Key drivers** - The higher the key driver score, the more of an influence this question has on engagement. So, if this question has a high score – celebrate and maintain; a low score - it should be an action area for improvement.
- **Greatest variance against the last survey results** - this will show you what has changed for the better or worse since last survey.
- **Open text comments** - look at these last, so that you can research key issues you've identified in the data to learn more about them.

[Have a look at our dashboard intro video here](#) - Password: **PIdashboard1#**

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Plan and communicate your meeting

Get your meeting organised and invite attendees, remembering to inform them of:

- Meeting purpose
- Logistics – when and where
- Meeting rules

Acknowledge your people's input into the survey and thank them for taking part. You are here now to share their collective responses and invite them to help shape actions – you need their views, their voice is heard and important. Express positivity in your plans for improvement; this first interaction sets the tone for all to follow.

Provide a quick overview of survey results. Don't go into too much detail, and don't share your 'conclusions' at this stage - just bullet out a few key items like:

- Overall response rate
- Engagement 'score'
- Key drivers
- Greatest variance against the last survey results
- Greatest variance against the overall organisation results

Tip: Try to schedule the session so your flexible / part time workers can attend in person, remotely if absolutely necessary. Be realistic about how much time the session will take – we recommend 90 minutes. You may want to recruit a meeting moderator or note taker so you can chair the meeting effectively.

Decide what your ground rules will be and include the list in your meeting invite. If you don't already have meeting rules, here are some ideas:

- 1. Everybody contributes** - All opinions are welcome and worthwhile. Speak your mind, agree, disagree, or challenge an opinion expressed – one person at a time.
- 2. Everybody listens** - Listen to others' opinions, as you would want them to listen to yours.
- 3. Be respectful** - We're all on the same team – including the chair and note taker. Don't be rude, judgmental, or condescending. It's not productive, and it's not cool.
- 4. Give it your all** - This meeting is your chance to impact your own work experience. The outcome will be worth the time and effort it takes to participate.

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Running your meeting

For a full session plan to run with your team, with activities, practical resources and top tips see People Insight's [Action planning workshop toolkit & guide](#).

Example meeting schedule

Approx. timings (90 mins)	Activities
05 minutes	Introduction - Ignite the fire
15 minutes	Explore your results - To provide a top-level overview
30 minutes	Discussion & deep dive - To understand what your results mean
30 minutes	Action planning - To plan how you are going to prioritise action
10 minutes	Plan summary - Agree how you and your team can commit to this

Tip: Ignite the fire from the start by using a compelling opening statement to inspire your employees. Explain why you're there and what you all plan to accomplish – and ask others what they want to get out of it. Think about your body language, facial expressions, levels of energy and how much fun you want to make the session.



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Explore your results

Dive into your survey results. Use your Dashboard or presentation (depending on what has been provided). Use the key points as highlighted in section 'Prepare' above as a structure.

Tip:

Be open - Make sure every statement is fact. Don't try to frame results making them seem better or worse than they are. Your employees know the truth, and spin will only disengage them.

Be objective - Stay objective when you present survey results, both in your language and tone. If you communicate your personal thoughts about the results, you might sway employee opinion and steer your focus group off course.

Be inviting and don't leave questions to the end - Get a dialogue going throughout your presentation – ask questions – 'Is this surprising? Is this clear? Does this make sense?' When employees feel that you're talking with them instead of at them, they're more likely to open and share their honest opinions during discussion.

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Discussion & deep dive

After you've shared the survey results, open the floor for more employee discussion. Spark conversation by asking a few opening questions, like 'are there any surprises you want to explore?'

Then you may want to dive deeper, using questions such as these below:

01. Are you satisfied with overall score, where would you like it to be next year?
02. What do you think our strengths and hotspot areas are?
03. What do we need to dig deeper into?
04. What other evidence exists in the team to back the finding up or explain them?
05. What are the barriers to change?

For related exercises and activities, please see [Action planning workshop toolkit & guide](#).

Action planning

Once you have reviewed and discussed the results – it's time for action planning. Spend some time as a group brainstorming actions that could be taken around areas where you scored less positively or identified in the Deep Dive activity.

Agree as a group which actions you want to prioritise. We usually recommend no more than 3 if you actually want to get change to happen. Prioritise actions with the biggest impact – for example to address low performing, highly correlated questions, or questions with the greatest variance from the overall organisation or from a previous survey.

Think about a mix of quick wins and longer-term strategies so people can see short term momentum and longer-term commitment.



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Summarise your actions either in the Dashboard planning tool, in the 'Action planning workshop toolkit & guide' or using your own systems, making sure you are clear:

- Who owns the action
- Acton deadline
- How the action will be communicated
- How success will be measured
- How you'll overcome barriers
- Resources needed

You might not get time in this session to complete each of your priority areas, this isn't a problem, but ensure that there is a process to address issues identified.

Plan summary

Round off the meeting by:

- Thanking employees for their time personally
- Review commitments and explain your next steps for action
- Agree when you will communicate

Regardless of how well you or your employees thought the session went, you'll have the opportunity to try again. Learn from what worked well and what didn't so you can make sessions like these an engrained part of your culture. Ideally you and your team together can positively impact work experience at your organisation.



Other ideas for great survey follow up

Cancer Research UK (CRUK) show great survey follow up by creating hundreds of manager-team interactions

[See the full case study here](#)

CRUK incorporated measuring line manager competencies into their employee survey with a framework created by People Insight. They recognise that effective line management is vital to staff feeling committed to the charity’s ambitious strategic objectives.

Results Scorecards

Following the survey, Managers were given ownership of their scores and have autonomy to drive change within their teams. They received a Manager Insight scorecard showing how they were rated on the 12 aspects of leadership, benchmarked against all other CRUK Managers. This was used to prompt open conversations within teams, about engagement.

For example, one Manager went through the scorecard with their direct reports to get more detailed qualitative feedback on each point. Another worked with their Manager to put together a suggested development plan and then shared that with their team. Senior team members even showed their Scorecard results to Managers in ‘Spotlight Sessions’ to share their experience and ideas.

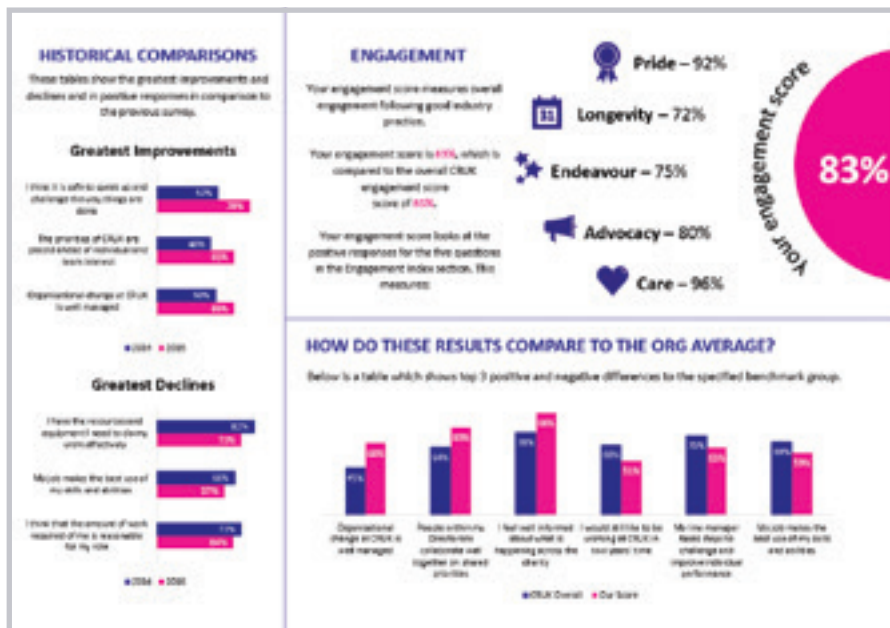


Manager Insight Report.
All results are fictitious to preserve anonymity

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Smart Communications

Entirely bespoke, visual employee engagement reports were created by People Insight for CRUK to share feedback from the survey and highlight action areas. These reports allow Managers to instantly see the issues, share highlights with their teams and move onto action planning with clear priorities.



Following the survey, Managers also:

- Used a new 180-degree pulse tool to check their progress against the Index
- Underwent a targeted development programme led by external coaches
- Made use of a Manager Toolkit taking them through the full employee lifecycle, offering best practice advice, tools and templates for managing and developing people
- Had the Manager Insight Index incorporated into their performance development reviews

Communicating change

CRUK briefed people on the vision and benefits of the programme from the outset to bring them along on the journey. This focus on communication continued at each step of the process, communicating proactively with Managers to make sure they felt equipped to share updates and achievements with their teams.



Vinci Construction UK's (VINCI) continuous survey follow up

[See the full case study here](#)

As well as active action planning, VINCI has a great programme of survey follow up, so much so that listening, acting and communicating is a continuous cycle.



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Field visits

In between surveys Managing Directors spend time on field visits and 'back to the floor' days. They are constantly listening and adjusting through their ongoing field visits and team meetings. They hear what people's most current issues are and whether post survey action impact is felt by the front line. They deliver a post-field visit engagement report delivered to managers, so they know post survey action implementation is monitored and sincere.

Ongoing communications

Communications are extensive throughout the year so actions committed to are really visible. For example, in their business plan HR managers have committed:

- **You said:** You wanted more regular feedback
- **We will:** promote 1:1s with managers and hold ½ day manager training on what good 1:1s look like
- **We expect you to:** engage with 1:1s proactively

- **You said:** You wanted increased recognition
- **We will:** launch an improved departmental reward and recognition scheme
- **We expect you to:** nominate your colleagues, and thank people when they do a good job

Other examples include team newsletters written by managers, acknowledging survey results and how changes will be made.

Please see [Action planning workshop toolkit & guide](#) for help with action planning.

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