

HR Insights

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Helping Employees Feel Heard

Employees who feel disregarded by their organization are more likely to get frustrated, feel burnt out and quit. Forbes listed being unheard by supervisors and feeling “overlooked or ignored” as two of the [top ten reasons](#) employees leave their jobs. This can devastate employee retention rates, increasing hiring costs and making it challenging for employers to keep talented workers. Conversely, a study by workforce management organization Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG) found that organizations are more likely to perform well financially when employees feel heard, engaged, and a sense of belonging.

This article outlines strategies employers can utilize to make workers feel seen and heard, ultimately boosting retention and attraction rates, increasing employee engagement and positively contributing to company culture.

What It Means to Be Heard

Being heard may have a different meaning for individuals. Employees generally feel heard when they're included in decision-making processes, such as how to proceed on a project or what aspects of their benefits plan could be improved. Allowing employees to have a say in how things are done makes them feel like their opinions are valued and instills a sense of control over their work life. This can improve employee well-being and loyalty.

Why It Matters

Research from UKG showed that [86% of employees](#) feel that different voices at their organization aren't heard fairly, with almost half (47%) saying underrepresented voices, such as those of young and essential workers, are less valued by their employers. Two in three (63%) of workers feel their manager or employer has ignored

their voice, and 75% don't feel heard on critical issues, such as safety, benefits and time off requests. As a result, many employees (34%) would rather quit or switch teams than voice their genuine concerns to management.

Organizations that effectively engage and listen to employees often see vastly different responses regarding employee engagement and productivity. Most (74%) employees report being more engaged and effective when they feel heard at work. Nearly all (92%) of highly engaged workers feel listened to in the workplace, compared to 30% of highly disengaged workers. It's evident that actively listening and responding to workers is crucial for a productive and loyal workforce. Therefore, employers must act proactively to ensure employees feel engaged and valued.

Helping Employees Feel Heard

Creating a company culture where employees feel their opinion is valued relies on several factors. Employers should consider the following strategies to help workers feel valued:

- **Encourage communication.** UKG found that 47% of employees are more likely to share feedback anonymously, via a third-party site such as Glassdoor or Indeed, than through internal channels. This is primarily caused by employees feeling ignored (63%) by managers or employers, not taken seriously



(34%) or not cared about (35%). This poses a significant problem for employers. If employees aren't willing to provide feedback, employers will remain unaware of potential workplace problems. Therefore, it's crucial that employers proactively ask for employee feedback. For the best results, this should be done through multiple channels, such as internal surveys and one-on-one meetings with supervisors.

- **Respond to employee concerns.** Employees are unlikely to provide feedback if they believe their opinions will be ignored. Unfortunately, 40% of workers don't think their input leads to actionable organizational change. Employers must embrace constructive criticism by actively listening to employees, addressing concerns and being transparent about workplace decisions.
- **Focus on employees as people.** A recent survey by analytics company Gallup found that fewer than [one in four](#) American workers strongly believe their organization cares about their well-being. Showing employees that they're valued goes a long way toward making them feel their opinions matter. Employers can show employees they're valued by allowing them autonomy in certain areas, such as offering flexible scheduling, remote work options or employee growth opportunities beyond mandatory training. This can be done through mentorship or education opportunities.
- **Educate supervisors.** Leadership plays a crucial role in making workers feel valued. Managers and supervisors should be encouraged to view feedback as constructive criticism, not a personal attack. Additionally, ensuring leaders understand critical aspects of emotional intelligence, such as active listening, body language and eye contact, can ensure employees don't feel dismissed or ignored when voicing concerns.

Conclusion

When employees feel chronically overlooked and unheard, employers may experience high rates of turnover, poor attraction rates, low employee morale and worsened productivity. Proactively asking for and responding to feedback shows employees that their voices are heard. This can significantly impact employees' feelings about an organization, ultimately improving an employer's bottom line.

Contact us for more workforce guidance.