

A study by Salesforce revealed that employees who felt like their voices were being heard were [4.6 times](#) more likely to do their best work.

This research summarises exactly why employee voice is so important — both for the business and the employees' wellbeing. Although seemingly minor in the grand scheme of a company's inner workings, simply listening to employees can strongly influence processes, finances, and employee satisfaction.

An often overlooked resource, employees are a fountain of knowledge in the workplace, with unique perspectives on how the company functions on the floor. By successfully tapping into these insights, organisations can begin to grapple with implementing improvements and redesigning work processes.

Reengineering these processes through employee voice and innovation could help respond to increasing customer demand and cut costs.

First, however, you need to ensure practical strategies are in place to help reach maximum employee voice potential. There also needs to be a method of ensuring that employees' voices are being listened to in order to instil real change in an organisation.

There are also some fundamental principles for creating successful two-way communication to keep in mind for encouraging employee voice:

- Active listening
- Create a safe space
- Listen to everyone, not just the loud ones
- Be prepared to act on the findings

But how can you activate employee voice? And why does it even matter?

In this Trickle guide, we'll cover:

- [What Is Employee Voice?](#)
- [The Importance of Employee Voice](#)
- [How to Capture Employee Voice](#)
- [Advantages of Employee Voice](#)
- [Overcoming Concerns about Employee Voice](#)
- [The Link Between Employee Voice and Organisational Performance](#)

By the end of this guide, you'll have a full understanding of what employee voice entails and how you can harness its full potential to drive innovation and valuable change in your organisation. Whether you're working from home or back in the office, this guide will help lead you towards a fully engaged and satisfied workforce.

## What Is Employee Voice?

Employee voice is defined as giving employees opportunities to express their ideas, concerns and opinions without the fear of either social or workplace consequences. These ideas then feed into the organisation's decision making, meaning that employees have the ability to influence change.

Employee voice exists where a business has implemented mechanisms that enable leaders to have an ongoing conversation with their staff to make sure every voice is heard. Two-way communication empowers everyone in the organisation to have a say, leading to innovation and productivity and improved operating procedures.

Organisations can drive this two-way communication through individual and collective channels, either by speaking directly to management or indirectly through representatives. Employee voice can also be expressed through modern apps like Trickle and more traditionally through team meetings.

Listening to your employees and finding a way to take their feedback on board will

ensure [higher satisfaction rates](#), according to the CIPD, highlighting the importance of employee voice in employees' overall wellbeing.

## The Importance of Employee Voice

Employees who have a platform to share valuable insights can drive change within organisations to create more streamlined, sustainable operations. Without this, employees will remain silent, as they won't see the value in speaking up, which can cause long-term problems with seemingly no solution and prompt employees to jump ship.

Employee voice is essential for the organisation for many reasons:

### To identify workplace problems

Creating a space where employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions will give rise to valuable insights into their experience within the company. If there are negative points, such as inefficient processes, the decision-makers within the company have the chance to rectify this and work on preventing it in the future.

### To improve your brand

If a company embraces a transparent and open dynamic, employees are more likely to become brand ambassadors. New starters often treat online reviews and professional networking sites as their first port of call when researching a company, making brand ambassadors an important piece in the corporate puzzle.

If employees feel their opinions don't matter, they may be more inclined to share this via word-of-mouth, which could end up causing harm to your brand.

## To boost employee engagement

Implementing employee voice mechanisms can improve employee engagement, i.e., employees' relationship with the company. Disengagement can have costly consequences for a company. In fact, according to [Gallup](#), disengagement costs around one-third of an employee's salary in lost productivity.

Actively listening to and acting on employee feedback creates a sense of belonging and teamwork, which in turn makes employees more likely to be engaged with the organisation.

## To improve decision making

Open dialogue between employees and senior management creates an environment conducive to effective decision making. Employees have a unique experience with the company compared to management figures. This means they can share unique insights into how the company is running, identifying any inefficiencies. Lead decision-makers can then take this onboard, leading to faster problem solving and speedy decision making.

## To drive innovation

Employee voice is key to harnessing knowledge and ideas from across your organisation to drive innovation. Creating an environment where employees are free to speak up can help you tap into a vast source of insights. With a supply of unique perspectives, you're then better equipped to plan strategically and future-proof your organisation with new, more efficient processes and innovative solutions to outperform your competitors.

# How to Capture Employee Voice

There are several options you can explore when trying to activate employee voice and translate it into actionable change:

- Feedback
- Facilitate continuous change
- Regular check-ins
- Employee involvement in high-level meetings
- Company-wide discussions

Learn more about these methods and how you can implement mechanisms to capture employee voice successfully below:

## 1. Feedback

Giving your employees an opportunity to discuss company policy, problems, and any other concerns means giving them a space to share their issues. Feedback can be formal or informal. An informal chat between a manager and employee can open the conversation and encourage employees to share their questions and concerns. Formal feedback can take the form of regular company-wide forums, which we discuss in more detail below.

When discussing employee voice, it's also important to create two-way communication channels. [Trickle](#) is an app that helps employees engage with the company and their colleagues to share their concerns and suggestions from the ground-up. Through comments called "trickles", employees can share their views and monitor them until a conclusion is reached. This way, employees can see exactly how their opinions are translating into real change.

While employees' feedback is significant in the employee voice realm, leaders

within the company need to share constructive and forward-thinking feedback to their employees as well, leaving the floor open for employees to discuss their views. This active listening and engagement includes the employee in the overarching conversation of how to improve processes while boosting their performance.

## 2. Facilitate continuous change

Listening to your employees is only one part of the employee voice equation — there needs to be continuous improvement to show their voice matters.

When it comes to traditional, more formal communication methods (like surveys) the results are often slow to see, which can frustrate employees and prevent them from being upfront in the future. However, if employees see real change unfold continuously, they'll feel like a valued participant contributing to a better work environment.

Trickle makes continuous change easy. With real-time feedback from your employees, ranked by what's most important to them, you can tackle issues and make improvements fast and strategically. You can then update your team on Trickle and explain how you're addressing issues, creating a more transparent and collaborative work culture.

## 3. Regular check-ins

One-on-ones give employees the opportunity to go into more detail regarding their issues. When employees feel comfortable sharing their suggestions with management, it prompts a feeling of belonging — boosting their overall satisfaction.

With a huge number of people continuing to work from home, it's important not to overlook these check-ins in the new teleworking era. According to [Forbes](#), 20% of remote employees say they lack a sense of belonging since the pandemic. It's important to keep listening.

Implementing a digital “open door” policy could give your employees the confidence to come forward with their concerns and improvements. It can be as simple as creating time in your days when employees can call.

Speaking up isn't always easy for some employees, so creating anonymous avenues is important. Trickle's Moodsense feature allows you to capture employees' general feelings towards a situation — without the added pressure of a one-to-one meeting. Using this feature, you gain actionable insights while giving your employees a voice no matter who or where they are.

## 4. Employee involvement in high-level meetings

A major part of embracing employee voice is giving employees the opportunity to take part in the decision-making processes. The most effective way to do this is simply by including them in meetings with key decision-makers, internal influencers or stakeholders.

This is easier to do when working with a small team. However, for larger teams, you could prioritise high-performers and those interested in the process. This then becomes an incentive, as well as a robust plan for implementing ongoing improvements.

Involving employees in board-level meetings is not only beneficial for employee satisfaction. It also gives the company a new perspective. Employees can bring

fresh ideas to disrupt out-of-date processes and streamline operations. It's not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

## 5. Company-wide discussions

Organising company-wide meetings to encourage innovation and opinion-sharing is a valuable way to increase employee voice. In these forums, the workforce can give their views on the company's direction and management.

Although traditional conferences are no longer possible, virtual company-wide meetings are a great alternative. In these meetings, employees can bounce ideas off each other and management figures to find innovative solutions to company-wide problems. In this way, companies can progress with the input of every member, helping to fuel a sense of belonging.

## Advantages of Employee Voice

Effectively capturing employee voice — and acting on it — brings a host of benefits for both your organisation and your employees.

### Improved company culture

Employee voice represents transparency, inclusivity and clear communication, all of which are essential aspects of creating a first-class company culture. Open dialogue means you can discover more about your employees, what they value and what's important to them. These discussions open up the company's culture for positive change — tailoring the culture to something everyone can value, align to and feel supported by. Creating an environment where people feel valued also leads to a more satisfied workforce overall.



## Higher collective learning

Studies suggest that employee voice is linked to increased collective learning within teams and organisations. This is because when employees feel comfortable sharing their opinions openly and honestly and contributing to collaborative decision making, they're encouraged to leverage the different skill sets and natural diversity of the team. Employees will also feel more confident when asking for extra training or help for a particular task.

Collective learning is essential to prepare the workforce to tackle challenges head-on and helps organisations adapt to ever-evolving conditions. It also builds teamwork, critical for improving work processes.

## Employee retention

Employee voice leads to greater employee engagement, which is a great tool to achieve higher employee retention rates. Although it isn't a guarantee that employees will stay, it shows them they are valued in their current position and the work they do.

When employees feel that their opinion matters and that the organisation intends to act on feedback and not just sweep it under the carpet, you will find that they're much less likely to look elsewhere.

## Positive environment

When employees feel unable to speak out, negative emotions like resentment and anger can fester unchecked. These emotions can create a roadblock for creativity and chip away at motivation, productivity and performance.

If this happens across the company or departments, a negative atmosphere can build up and lead to an overall drop in performance. If these problems aren't nipped in the bud, you may face problems like increased attrition, in other words, employees leaving on their own accord.

Being proactive and implementing employee voice mechanisms can act as a defence against a range of challenges stemming from the psychological demands of remaining silent.

## Maintaining a competitive edge

When growing your business, revenue and turnover aren't the only things worth competing for. Your competitors may already be investing in employee voice to gain a competitive edge; in other words, they're capitalising on social capital.

Social capital allows a group of people to work together effectively to achieve a common goal. Through trust and shared values, an organisation can thrive as a whole and drive efficiency.

This social capital is an important ingredient for companies trying to take their business to the next level, as strong personal relationships undoubtedly feed into an organisation's success. Tapping into an underutilised employee voice can give your company the competitive edge it needs to thrive in a difficult market.

## Organisational agility

An environment that encourages employees to air their concerns and opinions is critical if organisations need to adapt quickly to evolving market conditions.

Managers are at risk of losing touch with their employees and how they conduct

their work due to not always being on the “front line”. If employees can be candid about how the business operates daily, managers can implement changes to improve it.

It’s important to note that both transparency and honesty are at the heart of sustainable change. In addition, employee voice can contribute to an effective incentive scheme to better point employees towards meeting business objectives.

If the pandemic has proven anything, it’s that companies need to be on the ball, looking for areas of improvement and taking action, or risk falling behind.

## Overcoming Concerns about Employee Voice

Here at Trickle, we’re fierce advocates of embracing the power of employee voice. However, sometimes there are concerns employee voice will lead to certain disadvantages:

### Manager-employee boundaries

One concern that crops up when it comes to encouraging employees to share their opinion and take part in decision-making processes is the risk of blurring the line between management and employee levels.

But this is not a problem for ground-up solutions like Trickle. Based on collaboration and ongoing improvements, organisations using Trickle can reinforce the importance of employee voice without worrying about an arbitrary hierarchy.

Instead of creating barriers to real change by implementing reporting lines that could hinder open communication, your employees offer anonymous feedback and

suggestions through Trickle — where everyone’s opinion is equal. You can then use this feedback to make improvements before closing the case and moving on to the next priority.

Employees won’t lose sight of their purpose in the company but, by leveraging employee voice, you can transform them into active participants, which boosts engagement and creates stronger relationships overall.

## Complex communication lines

Increasing employee involvement means more lines of communication, which could lead to unclear decision-making protocols. However, this is often only the case if companies fail to promote a culture of transparency or use outdated forms of communication.

Trickle helps overcome the complexities of conventional communication lines by offering a single app where your employees can give their opinions and watch actionable change unfold.

Instead of leaving employees’ suggestions to gather dust in an already-cluttered inbox, through the Champions chat area on Trickle, you can discuss employees’ opinions openly, and determine who’s best to solve any problems.

Communication doesn’t need to be complicated. Trickle ensures that everyone’s on the same page — and on the same app — to eliminate confusion and create harmony between employee voice and decision making.

## Employee Voice and Organisational

# Performance

The advantages of employee voice far outweigh the disadvantages. Implementing employee voice mechanisms that involve employees and giving them the chance to provide feedback is one of the biggest drivers for employee engagement and satisfaction.

Employee voice strategies also develop employee motivation, wellbeing, productivity and overall business efficiency, since harnessing employee voice provides a way to improve work experience and overall job quality. This leads to a more productive, driven workforce — translating into higher levels of customer satisfaction and return on assets in the long run.

Employee voice can have a transformational effect on an organisation and improve performance to achieve sustainable business success by:

- Acting as a key enabler of employee engagement
- Enhancing decision making
- Driving innovation

Most organisations will understand the power of creating a space for open conversations. In fact, 85% of leaders say employee engagement is a priority to them. Unfortunately, only one-third of the previously mentioned leaders actually put strategies in place to make employee engagement a priority.

Employee voice strategies are only successful if management is receptive to making real change based on feedback. When employees are given the freedom to discuss matters openly but feel like their opinions are falling on deaf ears, they'll begin to grow frustrated and ultimately choose to stay silent.

Without action, employee voice becomes a meaningless exercise. However, with a

combination of active listening and action, employees become more engaged, focused, productive and satisfied in the workplace — which leads to a stronger, [better-performing organisation](#).

## Harness the Power of Employee Voice with Trickle

Trickle revolutionises traditional organisational interactions by modernising communication lines and giving everyone a voice. By combining engagement, wellbeing and recognition in one single app, Trickle can help you build a motivated, innovative and dedicated workforce.

We know that making improvements that matter can sometimes feel like a guessing game, especially when employee voice falls by the wayside. With features like Moodsense and anonymous posting, Trickle empowers you to realise strategic, effective changes in your organisation using real-time feedback from those who fuel your business — your employees.

Our tool also allows you to share wins with your whole company using ShoutABOUTs, making your workforce a part of your successes.

Break away from the conventional and start experiencing employee voice from a modern perspective with Trickle. Discover the full productive power of an engaged team with a [demo](#) today.