

How to give employees a voice and its impact on a company

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Giving employees a voice is not just a nice-to-have — it's a strategic lever for loyalty, innovation, and retention. But how do you actually get people to speak up, especially in dispersed teams, such as cleaning and security.

Listening isn't always enough as companies need to create psychological safety, build inclusive structures, and prove that feedback leads to action.

A company's culture and values need to be shaped accordingly to give people the confidence to speak out, to feel that their ideas and feedback will not just be heard, but listened to, understood and considered, and above all that they will not open themselves up to bad feeling or derision.

If such a shift can be achieved, changing culture and giving employees a voice can have a major impact on staff loyalty, retention, morale, as well as employee and client engagement.

Cleaning and security provider [Samsic UK](#)'s HR Director Andrew Safo-Poku Jnr looks at how a company can create such a culture, so that everyone finds their voice, and enjoys the benefits it can bring, not just for employee wellbeing but also for company success.

Giving employees a voice is a strategic decision, often part of a move towards becoming 'people centric' with a bottom-up culture.

The aim is to encourage people to speak up with ideas, highlight issues or things that need to change and encourage them to have a strong input into the company's actions, business decisions and employee welfare.

A framework for open dialogue is required, which can, in turn, instil confidence and reassurance that people will be heard, listened to without judgement, and any necessary actions taken.

It may be that the decisions are taken at a high level, but it is the frontline staff who are the foundation. By giving them a voice you are appealing to their hearts and minds to become more involved in the business.

However, in promoting a 'voice-to-action' model, the challenge is creating the psychological safety that emboldens people to feel confident to talk, knowing that their comments will be treated seriously and that they won't open themselves up to ridicule.

Open communication is key. Surveys can act as a barometer for employee sentiment, unlocking people's thoughts, positive and negative, and provide action points for progression. By telling your people that you want to hear their voice from across the whole business, you are empowering them to speak out, sometimes with hugely positive outcomes.

Workshops and project groups are excellent ways to open dialogue and encourage people to become involved, as is the formation of a work council. By encouraging applicants from across the business, holding interviews and providing training, you can create a group of people who are approachable, have a humane voice, and are focused on communicating better, which in turn strengthens confidence.

It is important that the council members are accessible during work hours and can be approached if colleagues need help or want to discuss issues or share ideas. These representatives should then have the opportunity to share views in a safe, structured meeting, essentially by reporting directly back to HR or the managing director.

Importantly, the work council is not just a platform to hear issues, but also listen to ideas as it gives the business essential insight.

By exploring communication avenues, a support structure can be created, from surveys, work councils and mental health first aiders to open line management structures, whereby people can share their feelings, concerns, and ideas. Managers also feel valued to share workload concerns or pressures because their staff are going to be heard and their thoughts valued.

Implementing feedback loop training for line managers can also help them acknowledge staff input, communicate what is being done, and publicly celebrate suggestions that lead to improvements. These micro-moments build long-term trust.

It is also important that all areas of the business regularly meet, as the meetings provide another opportunity to listen, to discuss what's happening, what's missing, what's wrong, what's right and provide a constant opportunity to check-in. At site level, internal meetings and surveys are invaluable. Regular meetings therefore offer space to listen, surface challenges, celebrate success, and maintain continuous feedback loops.

Company conferences give directors a perfect platform to share what is happening, what ideas are being activated, and the results. They also provide an opportunity for staff at all levels to ask questions and help shape the future of the business through feedback and ideas. It is essential that all feedback is seen as a gift, especially any negative comments, as this is where improvement lies.

In facilities management, there are often additional logistical challenges and language barriers to overcome. Cleaning and security staff don't always work nine to five, with varying shift patterns, full-time and part-time, and people are often spread across different sites; so simply calling a meeting does not always work.

Varied methods of translated communication such as WhatsApp groups, SMS, emails, posters, screensavers, newsletters and notes can all be utilised, ensuring every team member is reached, regardless of shift or site. Such tools can effectively deliver messages and provide ample opportunity for feedback, ideas and thoughts. They can help to prevent people feeling isolated, and reassure them that they can speak up about work and their feelings knowing that support, such as mental health first aiders, is there to help them, and strengthen that emotional safety net.

Continual reinforcement that the line managers are listening, taking action and supporting people therefore helps to create the right psychological space for people to feel empowered to speak up.

It means people can be encouraged to speak out on all aspects of the business, including processes, ESG, employee welfare, charity work, recognition, and personal issues.

After that, it is a case of actions speaking louder than words. There is no point having people put ideas forward if nothing is ever acted upon. This could become deeply demoralising and result in people becoming silent and disengaged. Listening to ideas, putting them into practice and letting people know about it is therefore essential.

This can have a profound result on decreasing staff turnover improving employee engagement metrics, while clients are likely to see better morale and team stability, showing that internal voice and external performance are deeply connected.

Consistent messaging from leadership can also be reinforced, making people understand that there are no wrong questions or bad ideas. A 'no blame' culture can be promoted, focussing on improvement, not fault.

Psychological safety can therefore become the cultural norm embedded through sustained leadership behaviours, the use of structured mechanisms to hear and implement ideas and by providing visible follow-up.

If people truly feel they are being heard and the company is listening, it can have a direct impact on motivation and loyalty, measurable by their performance for their clients.

Giving people a voice can help to create a synergy between a happy, well trained, and motivated workforce and the delivery of a first-class service which, in turn, can grow market position.