Lattice

Using AI to Turn Engagement Surveys Into Action

Table of Contents

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If you don't act on employee feedback, surveys can do more harm than good.

At best, you'll look well-intentioned but ineffective. At worst, you'll look like you're using surveys to disguise a lack of real commitment to change — turning a trust-building tool into evidence that leadership doesn't listen.

Of course HR teams and leaders aren't sitting around thinking, *let's ignore what people tell us*. The problem is more practical: survey data lives in different places, takes forever to sort through, and can be hard to interpret. Even when the issues are clear, figuring out the best fix isn't always obvious. And sometimes the feedback stings — leaders may hesitate to confront where they're falling short.

This is where AI can really help. Instead of spending hours buried in spreadsheets, you can use AI tools to sift through all that survey data in minutes. They'll pull out the main themes, highlight patterns, and give you a clear picture — without you having to read every single comment.

As Chuck Marcelin, director of HR at Hudson Valley Property Group, put it in our *2026 State of People Strategy Report*:

" HR leaders should really emphasize that AI is a tool to enhance our work, not replace us. It'll change how we operate, and we might not need to expand teams as often, but that human connection will always be essential."

Chuck Marcelin
Director of HR, Hudson Valley Property Group

This ebook will explore how your HR team can use AI to move faster, understand your employees more deeply, and scale your efforts across the organization, without burning out.

① Analyze the Results

Raw survey data is just the starting point. Before you can plan next steps, you need a clear picture of what employees actually said. This phase is about turning thousands of open-ended comments and scores into insights you can act on quickly and confidently.

1. Use AI to identify key themes and patterns.

AI-powered summarization can comb through thousands of responses and boil them down to the big ideas. It surfaces issues that come up repeatedly — and even flags the ones people feel most strongly about.

That way, instead of spreading your post-survey response across multiple problem areas, you can focus on what matters most to your employees.

With Lattice's AI-powered Engagement Insights tool, you get these summaries instantly, no manual tagging or spreadsheet work required.
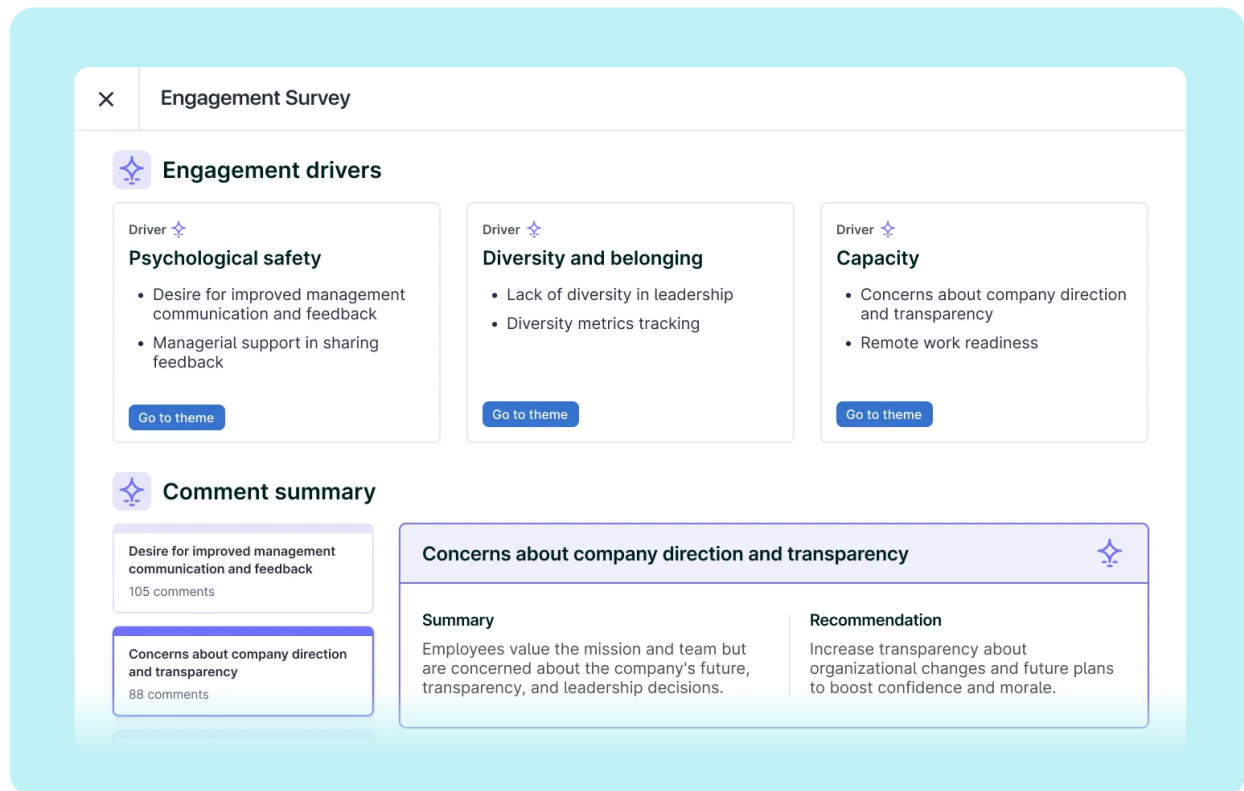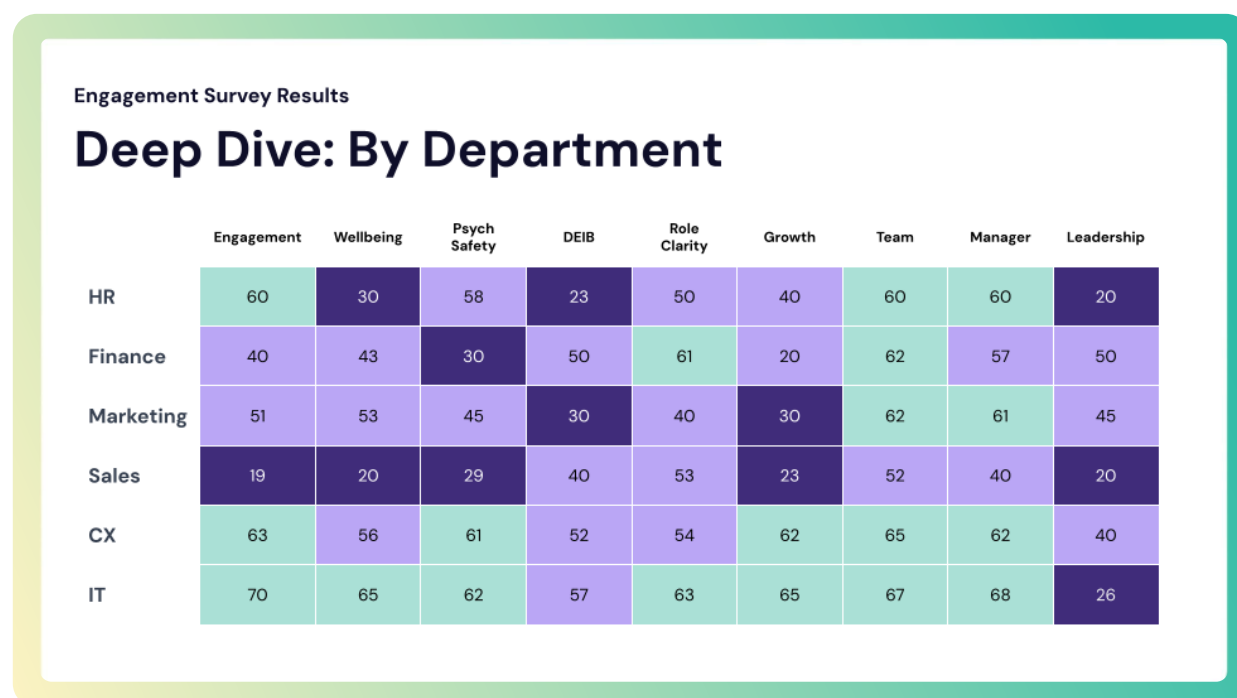

Lattice instantly summarizes open responses — no tagging or spreadsheets required.

2. Compare data across segments.

Break the data down by department, tenure, location, manager — whatever matters most to your team. Instead of manually building endless pivot tables, AI can instantly group and analyze feedback for each segment, then flag patterns you might miss.

For example, it might reveal that new hires in one region consistently rate onboarding lower than other teams. Or that a specific department's engagement scores have dipped over the past two quarters.

Engagement Survey Results

Deep Dive: By Department

	Engagement	Wellbeing	Psych Safety	DEIB	Role Clarity	Growth	Team	Manager	Leadership
HR	60	30	58	23	50	40	60	60	20
Finance	40	43	30	50	61	20	62	57	50
Marketing	51	53	45	30	40	30	62	61	45
Sales	19	20	29	40	53	23	52	40	20
CX	63	56	61	52	54	62	65	62	40
IT	70	65	62	57	63	65	67	68	26

Easily break down results by department, geography or role with Lattice's AI analytics.

Those kinds of insights help you zero in on hotspots that need attention — and highlight bright spots you can replicate elsewhere.

> ### 💡 Pro tip:
>
> To make this repeatable, decide up front which slices matter most — like department, tenure, or geography. Then, when the survey closes, export the data or use your analytics tool to compare average scores and sentiment across those slices.

Look for patterns and outliers. For example, if one department's engagement score is more than ten points below the company average, that's worth a closer look. A big positive gap can be just as revealing.

3. Review historical trends and benchmark your results.

Don't just look at this cycle in isolation. AI can quickly pull data from past surveys to show how scores are moving over time — whether engagement is steadily rising, or a particular team's satisfaction has slipped for two quarters in a row.

Build a simple trend dashboard so you can see how things shift from one survey to the next.

Pick the metrics you'll track every time — maybe eNPS, your top engagement drivers, or a few key question scores tied to company goals.

Keep a running year-over-year chart so you can spot real movement. And set clear targets, like "increase eNPS by five points over the next year." When you can show leadership a three-year trendline, it's easy to tell whether a dip is just a blip or something bigger.

💡 Pro tip:

With Lattice, you can use Mercer-powered benchmarks for even more context. These benchmarks show how your company's scores compare to similar organizations by industry, company size, and region.

That way, you can see whether a low score is truly a red flag or simply on par with what's typical in your market. For example, if your overall engagement score is 68 but the industry average is 65, you may already be ahead of peers. On the flip side, if you're sitting at 72 and competitors average 80, you know there's room to improve.

This external lens helps you prioritize which gaps need attention and makes it easier to explain your results to leadership in a meaningful way.

Compare engagement levels with industry benchmarks powered by Mercer and Lattice data.

4. Use visuals to communicate trends clearly.

Numbers can be tough to digest in a spreadsheet, but a well-chosen chart instantly tells the story. Instead of scrolling through rows of data, leaders can spot trends and trouble spots in seconds.

AI tools can help here by automatically transforming raw survey data into clean, shareable visuals — like heat maps that highlight low-scoring teams or line graphs that show how engagement has shifted over time.

You might consider pairing those visuals with short, explanatory captions so people immediately know what they're looking at and why it matters. For instance, a heat map could carry a quick note like, "Onboarding satisfaction improved 12 points company-wide, with the sharpest gains in EMEA." Adding that extra context makes the data more useful, helping leaders move from simply seeing the data to knowing what to do next.

💡 **Pro tip:**

With Lattice, you can export polished slides with one click, ready to share with leadership or the whole company. Not using Lattice yet? Our Engagement Survey Result Presentation Template gives you an easy starting point for turning key insights into a deck that everyone can understand.
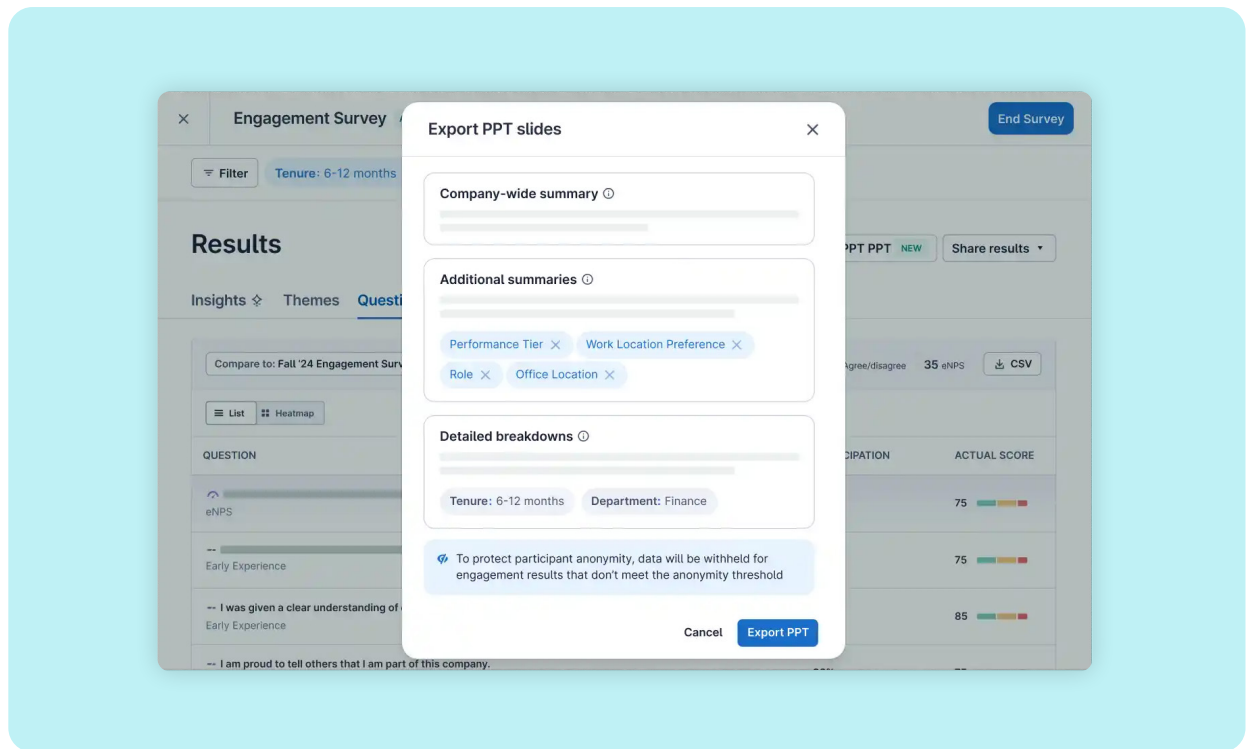
Export your Lattice survey results as a Powerpoint with one click.

➋ Build an Action Plan

Insights only matter if they lead to action. Once you've analyzed the data, the next challenge is translating themes into clear next steps that employees can see and trust.

1. Share results — clearly and strategically.

Employees are clear about what they expect after a survey. According to a [2024 Visier survey on engagement surveys](#):

- 31% want regular updates on how their employer has acted on their feedback
- 26% want more transparency about company changes.

To share your results effectively, start with a short, human narrative before you dive into numbers. For example:

❌ "The engagement score was 71, down three points from last year."

✅ "In this survey, you told us you value flexible schedules and want clearer career paths. Those themes came through across every department, with especially strong feedback from newer hires."

Also, don't just send out the same communication to everybody. Think about what each group actually cares about and shape your message to fit. Executives may want a concise link to business goals. Managers need practical takeaways for their teams. Employees might be looking for reassurance that their voices were heard.

Structure your communication around three simple, memorable points:

1. **What we heard:** Summarize key themes and notable data points in plain language. For example: "You told us workload balance and career growth are top concerns."

2. **What we're doing next:** Outline concrete actions or experiments you'll start, even if they're small first steps.

3. **When we'll follow up:** Share when people can expect the next update and how you'll measure progress.

> 💡 **Pro tip:**
>
> Announce a clear timeline for updates, such as, "We'll report back in 30 days with our initial actions." Setting a public deadline signals accountability, builds trust, and keeps momentum so results don't disappear into a drawer.

2. Prioritize what matters most.

Anyone who's ever run a survey can tell you they can surface a flood of ideas and requests. Trying to fix everything at once almost guarantees slow progress and diluted impact.

The smarter move is to focus on changes that will make the biggest difference now. Just a handful of focus areas is enough to create visible and meaningful momentum.

AI can help with that first pass. It can sift through responses, spot the themes that come up again and again, and flag the ones carrying the strongest positive or negative sentiment. This saves hours of manual tagging and ensures you don't miss patterns hidden in hundreds or thousands of open-text comments.

Lattice makes the process simple. Its Key Driver Analysis goes beyond counting comments: it shows which themes have the strongest influence on overall engagement scores, including eNPS. That way, the effort you put in lands where it matters most.

Once you've done that, use your judgement to validate. For example, something mentioned only a few times but with strong negative feelings — like employees saying they don't feel safe raising concerns — deserves urgent attention. A widely mentioned but low-stakes issue, like complaints about the coffee, can probably wait.

It also helps to bring a few managers into the conversation early, while you're still deciding where to focus. They're close to the day-to-day and can add context that isn't obvious from the survey data.

For example, a manager might explain that a spike in "workload" complaints is tied to a short-term project that's wrapping up next month — so it may not need a big structural change. Someone else might highlight a practical tweak — like shifting meeting times — that could make a real difference without a lot of cost or delay.

By tapping into that ground-level perspective early, you avoid chasing issues that will resolve on their own and put energy into changes employees will actually feel.

> ## 💡 Pro tip:
>
> Pick a short, focused list of priorities and explain the "why" when you communicate with employees. A range of three to five is usually enough to drive real progress without overloading your team.

Just as important, acknowledge areas you've chosen to defer and clearly state that the feedback has been received and logged for future action. That transparency builds trust and signals that every comment is valued — even if it isn't addressed immediately.

3. Set actionable goals.

Good insights only matter if they lead to specific next steps. Once you've chosen your focus areas, turn each one into a clear, concrete objective that has three things: an owner, a deadline, and a way to measure progress.

Think of it like creating mini-projects out of each theme. Here are some starting points you could adapt:

Feedback Theme	Possible Goal	How to Measure
"We want more feedback."	Add biweekly 1:1 coaching questions to every manager's calendar.	Pulse surveys asking if employees feel they receive regular feedback; track use of Lattice "Growth Areas."
"We're burned out."	Pilot a no-meeting day or run a workload review. Encourage managers to conduct a wellbeing check-in for at-risk employees.	Lattice Employee Health scores; stress-level or well-being questions in follow-up pulses.
"Career growth feels limited."	Create quarterly career-mapping sessions or peer mentoring circles. Add development checkins to the review cycle.	Participation rates; pulse survey questions on career clarity.
"We don't feel recognized."	Launch a peer recognition program or add a monthly shoutout segment in all-hands meetings. Have managers post Praise in Lattice for their teams.	Recognition posts or shoutouts logged in Lattice; employee sentiment in follow-up surveys.
"Communication is inconsistent."	Introduce a biweekly company-wide update email or Q&A forum with leadership.	Engagement metrics on the update email; number of questions submitted to leadership.

A few extra pointers to keep in mind:

- Set timelines that are realistic but visible. A goal like "launch peer recognition within 60 days" gives enough time to design the program but keeps urgency high.

- Choose owners who have authority and bandwidth. Assigning a name, not just a department, makes follow-ups easier and avoids the "everyone's job is no one's job" problem.

4. Equip managers to lead the change.

Managers are the bridge between HR plans and everyday employee experience. When they're informed and supported, they can turn survey insights into daily habits — running better one-on-ones and spotting early warning signs.

Without that connection, even the best engagement strategy struggles to reach employees. As Natalie Breece, chief people and diversity officer at ThredUp, put it in Lattice's *2025 People Strategy Report*, "HR shapes culture by setting the vision and defining the values — managers bring them to life."

Begin by giving every manager a concise, team-specific summary of the survey results, including the key themes and sentiment data. Offer a short discussion guide or run a training session on how to interpret the findings, hold constructive team conversations, and translate ideas into commitments.

Ask each manager to co-create a simple action plan with their team within a month of the survey and share progress in regular leadership or HR check-ins. Encourage ongoing dialogue by having managers begin meetings with a "feedback minute," or schedule monthly touchpoints to revisit action items and celebrate wins.

If you use Lattice, these steps become faster and easier. Lattice AI automatically highlights team-specific themes, generates talking points for team meetings and one-on-ones, and can even draft collaborative action plans. It sends nudges to keep engagement topics on the agenda.

Even better, it can answer questions like, "What should I cover in my next one-on-one based on our latest survey?" so managers start each conversation with a ready-to-use outline.
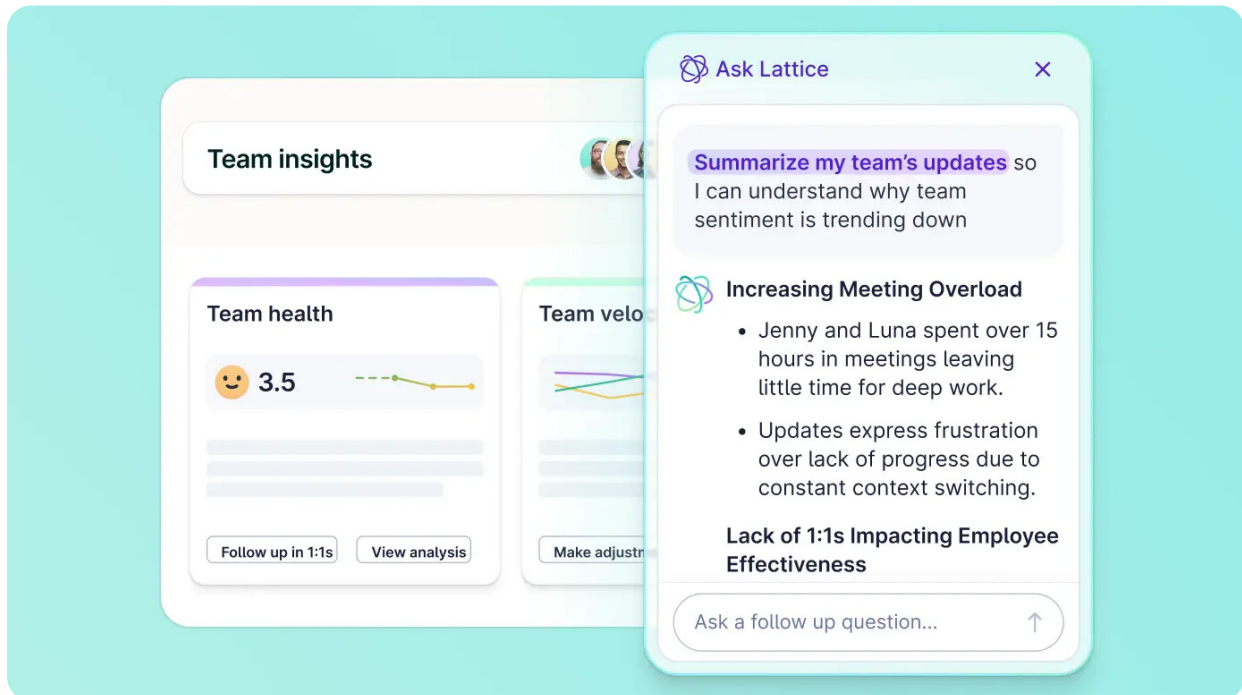

Lattice gives managers AI-powered insights that boost team performance, flag burnout risks, and guide career conversations.

3 Track Progress and Iterate

Collecting feedback and sharing an action plan isn't the end of the job. You still need to check how the changes are landing and stay connected with employees as things unfold.

1. Use pulse surveys and eNPS to measure improvement.

Don't wait a full year to find out whether your action plan worked. Short, focused pulse surveys and eNPS (employee Net Promoter Score) checks can tell you early if changes are landing well.
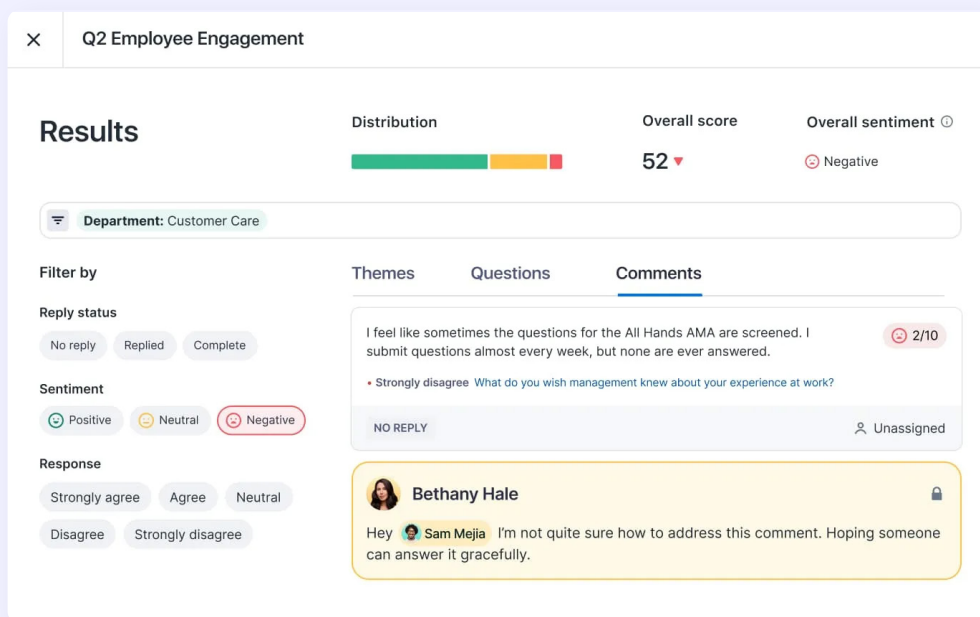
Use Lattice Pulse Surveys to keep an eye on changing employee engagement levels.

For example, if you launched a no-meeting day to reduce burnout, send a three-question pulse after a month asking how the change affected stress levels and productivity.

You can also use these lightweight surveys to test specific hypotheses, like "Has the new career-mapping session improved career clarity?" By tailoring just a few questions to each initiative, you collect more actionable feedback with minimal effort.

> ### 💡 Pro tip:
>
> Keep these pulses brief — just two or three questions. A simple cadence like "one quick pulse every quarter" helps you track progress without creating survey fatigue.

2. Keep the conversation going.

Of course, surveys can't carry the whole engagement load. Regular team conversations bring the data to life and give employees a chance to reflect on what's working (and what isn't).

Encourage managers to build engagement check-ins into one-on-ones and team meetings. They might start with a simple prompt like, "Since the last survey, what change has made the biggest difference for you?"

Alongside regular one-on-ones, create moments for bigger conversations. Host quarterly team retros or department-wide forums where employees can share what's improved and what still feels stuck. A simple prompt like "Since the last survey, what's better and what still needs work?" helps focus the discussion.

Lattice 1:1s and Updates features help managers keep those dialogues on track between formal surveys, but you can accomplish the same goal with any consistent agenda template or shared document.

> **Need help geting started?**
>
> Use Lattice's free [manager one-on-one agenda template](#).

3. Share your progress.

One of the most powerful engagement messages is "You said, we did." When employees see that their ideas led to action, trust grows.

Make wins visible, even small ones. A monthly email, a slide at the all-hands meeting, or a Slack post that says "You asked for clearer career paths — we launched new career-mapping sessions this quarter" all show that feedback matters.

Tie celebrations back to your original themes so the connection is unmistakable. For example, if employees asked for more flexible scheduling, share usage stats and quotes from people who tried the new options.

> ♀ **Pro tip:**
>
> Consider creating a running "You Said, We Did" board — digital or physical — where updates are posted continuously, not just at survey milestones. This keeps progress visible and reinforces that feedback drives action year-round.

4. Follow a clear timeline to keep momentum.

Think of your engagement program as a cycle, not a one-off project. Here's a simple timeline you can adapt for your company.

The dates are illustrative — adjust them to your survey frequency and team size.

Stage	Recommended timing	What to focus on
Survey closes	Immediately	Lock the data set and confirm any last-minute responses.
AI and HR review	First week	Run AI summarization to surface top themes and sentiment. HR or your project team reviews those insights for accuracy and context.
Manager briefings	Within two to three weeks	Share key themes with managers and invite input on findings and next actions.
Action plans finalized	By the end of the first month	Prioritize themes, set clear goals with owners and deadlines, and communicate what will be addressed now versus later.
Follow-through and check-ins	Ongoing after the second month	Managers lead on implementation. HR supports with resources and monitors signals like turnover, recognition activity, and internal mobility.
Pulse surveys and eNPS	Quarterly (or your chosen cadence)	Run short pulses or eNPS checks to gauge how changes are landing. Adjust plans if progress stalls or new issues emerge.
Full-cycle review	Every 6-12 months	Look back on all themes, progress metrics, and pulse data. Capture lessons learned and feed them into the next survey design.

Engagement Doesn't End With a Survey

Running a survey is only the starting line. What really shapes your culture is what happens next. The companies that employees love to work for aren't just good at collecting feedback. They're consistent about acting on it and keeping people in the loop as plans unfold.

AI tools can help you move faster and see patterns you might miss. Strong manager involvement keeps the work grounded in day-to-day reality. And a clear, repeatable workflow makes it easier to keep progress visible long after the survey closes.
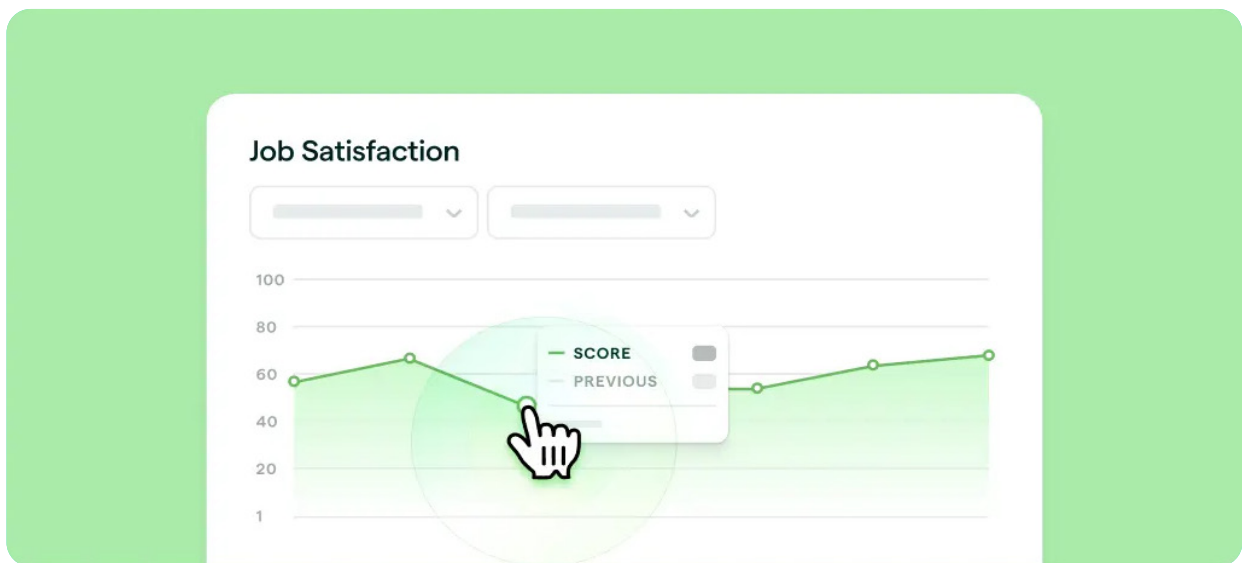
Ready to turn feedback into action? Request a demo of Lattice Engagement or take a product tour and see how your next survey can drive lasting change.

Lattice

About Lattice

Lattice is the #1 AI-powered HR platform that turns managers into leaders, employees into high-performers, and companies into the best places to work. Lattice provides interconnected and intuitive HR tools designed to help people and AI succeed together.

With offices across North America, the UK, and Europe, Lattice serves more than 5,000 customers worldwide, including Anthropic, Calm, Gusto, NPR, Plaid, and more. The company has ranked on the Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies five years in a row.
Learn more by visiting Lattice's site.

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Discover how Lattice empowers thousands of companies to build award-winning cultures.

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