

Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Hear Me

This element of engagement can be viewed as an employee's "internal stock price." It measures the sense of value that employees put on their work and their organization.

Employees want to feel valued. They want to know that their input is important and that they are making a significant contribution and a difference to the environment in which they work. This feeling creates a greater sense of inclusion among workers and reinforces their sense of self-worth.

On average, fewer than one in five workers strongly agree that they receive meaningful feedback when they make a suggestion about improving performance. Improving the proportion of employees who rate this item highly can have a substantial effect on customer ratings, productivity, employee retention, safety and profitability.



Asking for individuals' input and considering it can lead to better decision-making in two ways:

First, employees are typically closer to important matters than the manager is, so their ideas are often good ones.

Second, when people feel involved in making a decision, they typically have a greater sense of responsibility or psychological ownership of the process, which can mean better business results.

Nearly half of employees who say their opinions count at work also feel their current job brings out their most creative ideas. Among those who are neutral or negative on this element, **only 8%** feel their creativity is well-employed.

The ways in which a manager listens and processes an employee's thoughts and ideas shape whether the employee feels valued for their contributions.

As a manager, sometimes the ideas you hear won't be the best. But listening to and giving feedback on ideas helps employees feel like you heard them and considered their opinions. Appreciating and responding are what's important. It makes employees feel valued.

As a manager, you should routinely ask yourself:

- ✓ How do I show my appreciation for employees' opinions and ideas?
- ✓ What do I do with my employees' ideas or opinions?
- ✓ How do I follow up on my employees' opinions and ideas?
- ✓ How often do I ask how my employees feel about their work?
- ✓ How am I making sure my team members feel comfortable sharing their feedback or ideas with me?

Three Ways to Create a Culture of Idea Sharing

- 1 **Accepting** Be open to each team member's opinions and feedback.
- 2 **Proactive** Regularly contact others to get their opinions.
- 3 **Responsive** Provide feedback on opinions you solicited.

Creating a Greater Sense of Responsibility and Ownership

The best managers are always listening to what's happening on the ground floor. Asking for employees' input is valuable because it shows employees that their manager cares about what they think. It promotes open, creative dialogue between manager and employee. Asking for opinions also fuels new ideas that can positively influence business results.

Engaging Conversations

Employee engagement depends on the circulation of ideas and opinions that make the team more effective in meeting the demands before them. Discussing, refining and implementing new ideas is productive and invigorating. It builds employees' confidence in their roles, creates a sense of belonging, and helps employees see that their efforts can and do make the organization and everyone it provides services to better. Asking the following questions can help managers ensure that their employees feel like they count:

- What makes you feel valued here?
- How do you know your opinions matter?
- Who needs to hear your ideas?
- In the past six months, when have you felt your opinions mattered?
- Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how the team can improve the quality of service we provide to our internal partners and customers?
- Do we need to add quality checks? Are there areas in which you see risk of errors or mediocre performance?
- What is your best idea for improving our team?
- Are there areas in which you see room for improvement? How do you think we should fix these areas?
- Do you feel comfortable enough to tell it like it is? How can I make you feel more comfortable with sharing your thoughts and ideas?

Best Practices

The most effective managers make employees feel like their opinions count at work by incorporating the following behaviors into their management style and approach:

- Be open and receptive to feedback.
- Think of new ways to solicit feedback, opinions and ideas from your employees.
- When an employee asks to talk about something, immediately schedule time to listen.
- Schedule regular times to talk with employees to specifically ask for their opinions.
- Follow up regularly with employees about their ideas, even if action did not occur.
- Provide open and honest feedback on employees' opinions and ideas.
- Treat your team like business partners by sharing information about the company that you would not typically think to share.
- Advocate for your employees' good ideas. Get others to consider their opinions and suggestions.
- Create a safe environment for ideas. Make sure every employee is comfortable enough to tell it like it is.
- Celebrate the implementation of employee-generated suggestions or ideas.