



Building a Great Team Culture with Real-Time Employee Feedback

Measuring employee engagement without being overly intrusive can be challenging. So too, employees need to feel valued and safe being truthful when they participate in engagement surveys.

Common methods of gathering employee engagement data don't always address these needs. In software businesses, which typically operate on agile processes, things can rapidly change from one day to another. Therefore, ideally a solution is needed that can provide a timely understanding of employee matters, without becoming annoying.

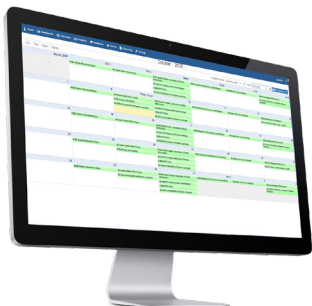
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Geoff Vandegrift
Vice President of
Product Engineering

Challenges in an improved culture

Like many organizational leaders, understanding what drives employee engagement is key to successful growth and ongoing innovation. Geoff Vandegrift, Vice President of Product Engineering at Ad Astra, a leading higher education scheduling software provider, was unhappy with the engagement tools he encountered. He decided to seek out a better way of getting this data. He shared his biggest challenges:

- He takes his role as a leader seriously, yet pulse surveys were the only way he could think of to give him information beyond daily interactions with employees.
- There was a need for people to be able to share feedback anonymously, so they would feel safe sharing even critical observations without fear of reprisal.
- The organization, which employs around 110 employees, includes an engineering department with a flat organizational structure which makes it too burdensome to do formal performance reviews. A light touch peer review system is the perfect stand-in.



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Vandegrift had to also be sensitive to the fact that Ad Astra is a family-like organization that has focused on building a great engineering culture. In addition, new leadership has made safety an even bigger priority of the culture and so far it's working well.

Finding the right employee engagement software

However, there is always room for improvement, and Vandegrift seized the moment to find the right solution for Ad Astra. He was looking for a better way to replace traditional surveys with something less disruptive.

One explicit objective was to develop a good peer review system running all the time instead of just at merit increase time. He shared, "A manager can never know someone well enough. The best judge of work is determined by one's peers." He adds, "When delivered anonymously, positive feedback is completely trustworthy and valuable."

After researching other employee engagement companies, Vandegrift landed firmly on Thymometrics' real-time employee feedback solution. He says Thymometrics directly solved the problem of needing an internal, easy to use peer review system. But there have been other unexpected benefits.

"I don't think it's easy to draw a direct line from what something like Thymometrics does to achieving an outcome," he says. "I often use the metaphor of gardening.

A gardener does a lot of indirect stuff to create the best environment for the plants. He might move a plant to get more/less sunlight or dryer/wetter soil.

He might fertilize. He might amend the soil. He might do some pruning. None of these actions force the plant to fruit. It's all just conducive to it. Thymometrics is the thing that helps me know what kinds of actions I need to take to make the environment the most productive it can be."

The insight provided by real-time employee feedback reporting has been valuable to Vandegrift. In terms of being able to explain things to the company's owners, who have always been supporters of employee engagement, it's easier to show patterns in employee responses as they correlate with specific events.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that the experience was understandably having an adverse impact on employees. He was able to discern how efforts to help employees feel safer were reducing employee concerns based on their responses.



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Advice for getting the most out of real time employee engagement

Taking the initiative to ensure that all employees participate in the employee engagement survey, Vandegrift designed an employee onboarding document that explains how to use the Thymometrics tool, why it's important to complete the brief survey, and how it benefits them.

During the interview process, the company is very clear that engagement tracking is a part of its normal processes. Vandegrift indicates, "The mission is mostly accomplished. We are still learning how to make this work and people are still getting used to this."

For leaders who have a similar situation and want to improve employee engagement and performance, Vandegrift has some recommendations. He says, "Choose carefully. The tool you pick has the ability to disrupt by being too burdensome or being seen as "big brother". On the other hand, it has the ability to help you create a first-class environment that is the envy of employees."

He also warns against using a product purely because it looks "pretty". This can be deceiving as the interface may not work the way you need it to. Select a solution that is adaptable, customizable, and provides the best insights -- like Thymometrics does.

Lastly, the main advantage of Thymometrics is the communication suite. This provides the ability for employees to speak freely from wherever they happen to be, or from whatever device they happen to be using at the time.

There is a certain comfort in being able to share more thoughtful responses in this manner because it gives employees a chance to reflect and compose a message that is more considered and authentic. And if there is a matter that needs immediate attention, two-way communication allows a supervisor or HR to respond in a secure way so that the employee knows he or she is being taken seriously.



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Overall, the Thymometrics real-time employee engagement solution is built for companies of all sizes and industries. Leaders can use it to lean in as deeply as they feel comfortable. It doesn't demand much time so it's more usable in everyday business.

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About Ad Astra



Ad Astra, is an industry-leading developer of popular scheduling software now used by over 500 colleges, universities, and systems worldwide. Headquartered in Overland Park, Kansas, the firm offers powerful data-informed software and consulting services that support the goal of allocating space and faculty, forecast student demand, and accelerate student completions. In fact, Ad Astra holds the patent for its innovative methods of determining student demand for academic courses. In 2018, Ad Astra was recognized in the educational industry as the recipient of the Complete College of America Seal of Approval for Structure.

About Thymometrics

Founded in 2012 and privately owned, Thymometrics provides real-time analyses into the ongoing relationship between an organization and a group of people. Thymometrics uses cloud-based, mobile-friendly technology to assess and facilitate employee engagement in mid-size and large businesses. Thymometrics has its headquarters in the UK with sales offices in New York, USA. For more information, please call +1 646 760 9323 in the USA, +44 (0) 1223 750251 in Europe or visit thymometrics.com.
