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The Definitive Guide to Anytime Listening





Employee Anytime Listening, Explained

The employee listening landscape has evolved over the past few decades. What used to involve conducting periodic employee engagement and pulse surveys with the goal of improving workforce engagement, retention, and well-being now encompasses creating ongoing touchpoints with team members to get immediate, timely feedback — intelligence that's used to guide continuous recommended actions based on employee sentiment, behavior, and suggestions.

This new, advanced, and proactive type of listening, also known as employee activation, not only enhances outcomes for employees, but can lead to ideas and innovations that elevate the customer experience, improve employee productivity and performance, generate additional revenue, and drive overall business outcomes.

Organizations at the top of the employee experience maturity curve have gained a competitive advantage by prioritizing employee activation, a two-pronged strategy that involves:

- **Empowering employees** to share their ideas, suggestions, and solutions in their daily flow of work
- **Mobilizing key stakeholders** across the organization to take action based on employee feedback in targeted ways that have an impact on business operations and performance

Companies that truly activate their employees do so by cultivating an environment where employees are empowered to share their voices in real time and are mobilized to drive change and innovation. This is a shift that moves the accountability for creating change from the hands of HR to the hands of every employee.



BUSINESS OUTCOMES			
Higher Revenue	Reduced Costs	Increased Productivity	Increased Customer Loyalty

Ultimately, to enable employee action, companies must grant employees the authority to share what’s on their minds at all times using always-on, anytime listening — and give key players across the organization access to these insights in real time.

In other words, anytime listening is crucial to achieving true employee activation — and this guide will walk you through how to build out an effective anytime listening program.

While the old way of doing things — using traditional annual engagement surveys and employee lifecycle-based listening — still offers valuable feedback and has a rightful place within organizations, these methods often focus on broad enterprise-wide or HR-related topics, like training or onboarding. Because these touchpoints are only conducted periodically, they miss the “in the moment” feedback that sparks great ideas or surfaces the often hyper-specific obstacles that employees in different roles and departments encounter daily.

Anytime listening means integrating feedback opportunities into daily workflows, such as including an always-on feedback link for capturing anytime survey responses in your company’s intranet, app, Slack, or Microsoft Teams and then using technology to analyze that feedback and automatically send real-time insights and alerts to the appropriate team members. Feedback is no longer bottlenecked, caught up in slow analysis, only shared with HR and other leaders, or held up in long-term action plans.

Rather than replace the traditional engagement survey, anytime listening is a complementary activity that enables organizations to collect ideas from employees while they’re in the flow of work, such as right after they finish a call with a customer, submit an IT ticket, use an HR system, or attend a team meeting.

Anytime listening has the potential to solve a number of business problems, from personnel turnover to an emerging crisis.

Three Use Cases for Anytime Listening

Use Case #1: Improving Employee Retention

While traditional employee exit surveys may suggest that people are leaving because they're not being paid enough, compensation is rarely the reason individuals start job searching. Typically, people begin looking for other opportunities when they don't feel valued, feel they have a minimal impact at work, are frustrated with too much undervalued work, or don't feel like they belong.

These more common reasons for turnover can be addressed with an anytime survey that gives employees the opportunity to share their ideas about their work tasks, company processes or systems and tools, or their impact on the customer.

Most importantly, organizations must act on this feedback at the local team level (and, where necessary, escalate any issues to leadership) to ensure employees feel heard and valued, and that they're able to have an impact. By doing so, companies have the chance to address the most common reasons for turnover.

Use Case #2: Addressing Time-Sensitive Business Issues

When a business issue arises — such as a change to a system or a new acquisition — companies have the chance to take an immediate pulse and find out how employees are feeling about the change. They can simply add a question or two about the issue into an existing anytime survey and then call

attention to it through their usual communication channels, such as an announcement on the intranet or in a regularly scheduled team meeting.

This gives workers the opportunity to share their thoughts right away, and provides managers with the information they need to quickly problem-solve with their teams. Plus, any insights gathered can be rolled up to leadership to take quick action.

Use Case #3: Improving Delivery on the Brand Promise

Organizations can use anytime surveys to evaluate how well they're delivering on a given brand promise — or embodying a core value or ensuring a cultural change takes place — by including a scaled question that directly addresses the brand promise, value, or cultural change.

For example, imagine one of a company's brand values is "continuously innovating." In this case, the business could ask employees to indicate their level of agreement with a statement like "I was able to innovate at work today" on a scale of 0 (indicating "do not agree at all") to 5 (indicating "very strongly agree"), along with an open-ended comment section for individuals to elaborate on why they feel the way they do. Companies can then draw insights based on comparing the comments of those who agree with the statement with those who do not agree to find out the drivers behind those differences.



Launching an Anytime Listening Program: The Complete Checklist

Follow these best practices to ensure success with using anytime surveys to gather feedback and ideas from your people.

Planning & Governance

Establish a clear objective for your listening program. Align your efforts to addressing a specific business need.

Identify an executive champion who is responsible for setting expectations for your listening program, including determining what actions will be taken as a result of survey findings and who will report these actions to the team for transparency and accountability.

Meet with individual teams to understand their business routines and the best way to integrate anytime surveys and action into their regular flow of work.

Set clear expectations for managers. Managers should be prepared to drive action — using feedback and ideas from the anytime survey to solve problems — and report these actions to the executive champion and team members for accountability.

Get started by creating a single targeted survey addressing one specific business problem.

Program Design

Use existing communications channels to introduce your listening program and send updates about your surveys, such as at all-hands meetings, department meetings, or team huddles — or via the company’s app, intranet, or newsletter.

Integrate your listening efforts into the regular flow of work, making it a part of how work gets done instead of creating an outside, standalone process. Setting up new processes solely for anytime surveys is a recipe for failure. Using existing business processes will ensure more responses, foster longevity for the program, and will enable greater action.

Regularly remind managers and employees to take part using existing processes and communications channels to drive continuous engagement. Avoid setting up a passive listening program that will stagnate over time.



We asked. You answered. We listened and made an update to our PTO policy. Share your ideas with us at companyinternalwebsite.com/survey

Establish a responsive listening program that has teams work through solutions in real time as employees submit feedback and ideas, so it becomes natural for team members to participate in sharing feedback on an ongoing basis.

Survey Design

Establish a name for your anytime survey program. Include a logo or icon that’s easily recognizable to convey the purpose.

Keep things short. Include no more than 2-5 questions.

Ask questions related to solving a specific business problem, whether that’s driving innovation, improving the company’s culture, etc.

Include an open-ended question without character limits to give employees the space to state what’s on their mind, regardless of the other questions included in the survey.

TIP



Regularly communicate changes that have been implemented as a result of the survey to drive ongoing participation.

Implementation & Participation

Make anytime surveys easy to find and available at all times. Employees should be able to easily share their thoughts at any moment in time.

Use the right channels. Anytime surveys should be available where employees actively engage.



Company Intranet



Employee App



Text Message,
Email, Video



In Employee
Breakroom,
Next to clock-in/
out system



Inventory System,
POS System

Let everyone participate. Don't simply collect a sample and close the survey.

But don't force participation. Responding should be an option, not required.

Make anytime surveys identifiable. In today's digital age, most employees believe it is not possible to be truly anonymous, and attempts to promise otherwise creates distrust. Making the feedback and ideas identifiable allows employees to be recognized for good ideas and makes it easier to close the loop with them by addressing an issue they raised.

Be transparent. If you are collecting identifying information, let employees know this upfront.



Analysis & Action

Publish survey results in real-time dashboards for instant and continuous analysis.

Leverage AI-powered [text analytics](#) for immediate analysis of open-ended text responses.

Democratize insights across the organization. Role-specific dashboards, insights, and trending topics should be distributed at all levels on an ongoing basis to guide decision-making to ensure transparency and to empower employees to suggest ideas for solutions.

Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dashboard of trending topics• Option to share ideas
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dashboard of team-specific feedback and ideas• Option to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare team view to other teams• Crowdfund ideas from team• Enter actions taken• Close the loop with employees or the team• Recognize employees for good ideas
People Analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dashboard of issues to escalate
IT, Facilities, HR, Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dashboard of critical issues related to role
Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dashboard of employee feedback and ideas

Drive immediate action. The appropriate teams should be prepared to react to feedback in the moment as employees raise issues, share ideas, and suggest solutions. Waiting to take action will only weaken employees' trust and break the system you're working to build.

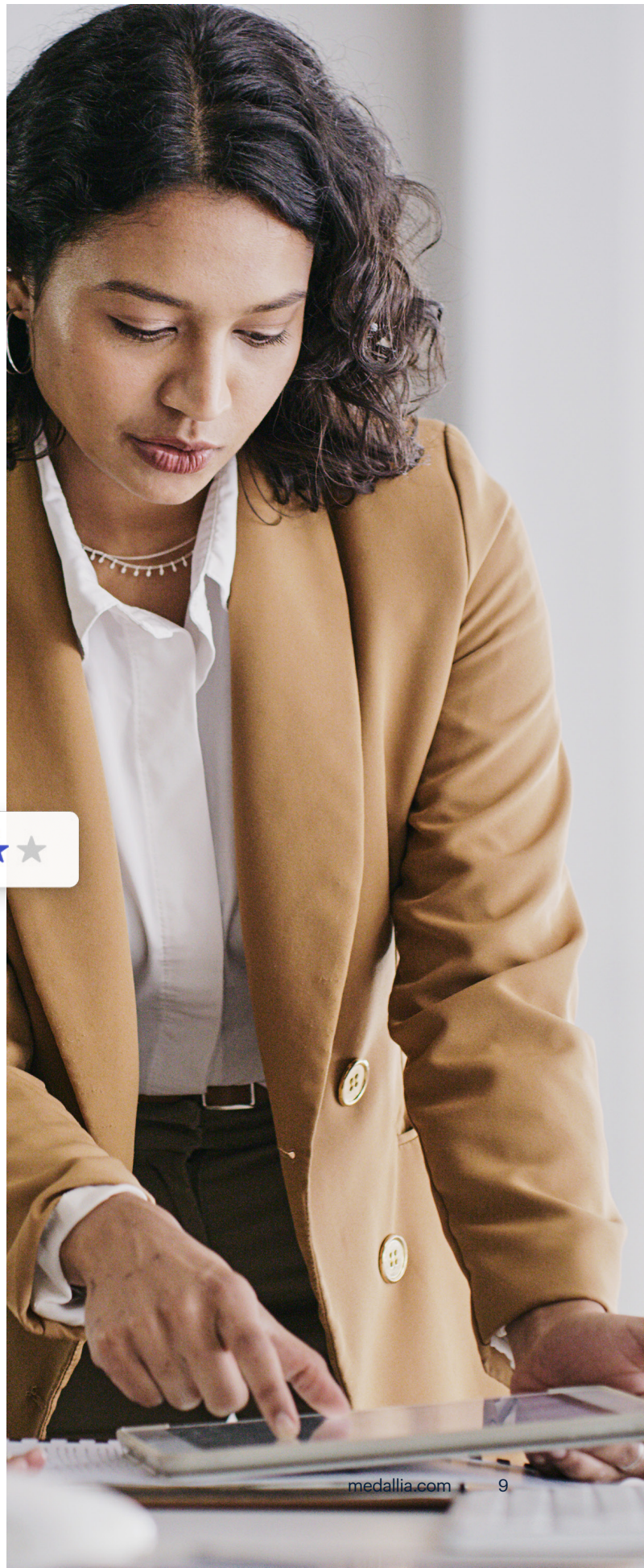
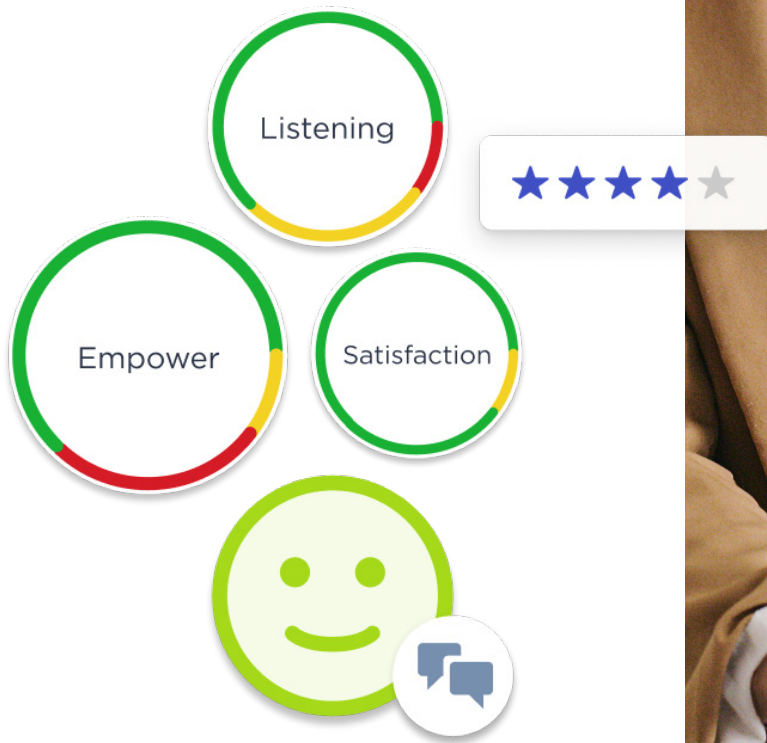
Take action at the local level. Anytime surveys are designed to inspire problem-solving, new ideas, and best practices at the team, department, and location level. Employee engagement surveys are for driving action at the enterprise level.

Communicate any actions taken. Regularly report what actions have been taken across the team level and by function across stakeholder groups (employees, managers, and executives) to ensure transparency and accountability.

Measuring Success

Set realistic expectations about participation rates. Since the purpose of anytime surveys is to empower employees to share feedback and ideas for problem-solving, organizations shouldn't expect the same levels of participation as traditional engagement surveys. Response rates may be significantly lower. Aim for a response rate of 20-25%.

Monitor other metrics, such as response count, ideas raised, problems solved, issues identified, impact on customers, best practices identified, and KPIs related to closing the feedback loop, such as time to respond, time to close the alert, number of overdue alerts, etc.





8 Myths & Misconceptions About Anytime Surveys

Myth #1: Response rates must be very high — 80% or higher.

Fact: Response rates of 20-25% will provide your team with enough insights to take action.

Myth #2: Frequent surveys “bother” employees.

Fact: Anytime surveys that are integrated into employees’ regular flow of work are nondisruptive and won’t cause survey fatigue. They give employees the option of speaking up about what they care about when they care about it, and companies can get much better information and richer responses as a result.

Myth #3: Industry benchmarks are a key focus of surveys.

Fact: Annual engagement surveys are great for benchmarking. Anytime listening surveys are designed to help individual departments get visibility into the obstacles employees are facing on a day-to-day basis and what any potential solutions are. These insights don’t need to be benchmarked externally, however they may be useful for comparing performance across departments or locations.

Myth #4: Organizations should survey employees on everything the business needs to know all at once.

Fact: Asking too many questions at once can be overwhelming for employees. Anytime surveys need to be short — and they should always include an open-ended question, because companies may not know what employees want to open up about. More frequent surveys that offer more choice during the survey process will provide companies with richer insights.

Myth #5: HR and executive leaders should review the results first and then cascade down to managers and finally employees.

Fact: The primary reason for anytime surveys is for local teams and departments to raise issues and solve problems in real time. The systems used should be able to provide quick insights right away.

Myth #6: Action planning is the responsibility of leaders.

Fact: Taking action is everybody's responsibility. Employees should be empowered to create the environment in which they work — to be part of the solution. This shouldn't be left to managers or leaders. Everyone should be involved and engaged in addressing the problems organizations are up against every day.

Myth #7: Data analysis and communication should be centralized in one team.

Fact: When insights and analytics are available at the team level, it makes it easy for them to see what's happening and take the appropriate action in the moment, without having to wait for analysis and insights from HR or leadership.

Myth #8: Follow-up measurement is a pulse survey of a subset of questions.

Fact: Follow-up measurement should involve asking about specific business problems companies want feedback on and allowing employees to choose whether to respond to those issues or to provide information about something else that's on their mind.



Ready to Launch Your EX Program?

We're here to help you unleash your organization's full employee experience potential.

Our team of in-house employee experience experts is made up of leading professionals with deep real-world expertise across industries.

[Reach out to our experts today to discuss how you can launch your own program.](#)

About Medallia

Medallia is the pioneer and market leader in customer, employee, citizen, and patient experience. As the leading enterprise experience platform, Medallia Experience Cloud is the mission-critical system of record that makes all other applications customer and employee aware. The platform captures billions of experience signals across interactions including all voice, video, digital, IoT, social media, and corporate-messaging tools. Medallia uses proprietary artificial intelligence and machine learning technology to automatically reveal predictive insights that drive powerful business actions and outcomes. Medallia customers reduce churn, turn detractors into promoters and buyers, create in-the-moment cross-sell and up-sell opportunities, and drive revenue-impacting business decisions, providing clear and potent returns on investment. For more information, visit www.medallia.com.

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