Culture by Design:

Why HR Leaders Are Shifting to an Employee-Driven Approach

Seramount Monthly Briefing

Want to see more of our latest insights?

Subscribe for monthly updates delivered straight to your inbox.

Sign Up →

LinkedIn Newsletter

You can also **subscribe to us on LinkedIn** for our top stories across Seramount.

Meet Your Presenters

Mike Colucci
Senior Director,
Partner Development, Seramount

Rumbi Petrozzello
Head of Strategy,
Consulting, Seramount

1 The Evolution of Workplace Culture

2 Understanding Employee Needs in Today's Workplace

3 Transform Your Culture by Centering Employee Voices

Why Culture Matters More than Ever

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

ebn

Leaders beware: Revenge quitting on the rise in 2025

HR DIVE

Manager burnout may hit hard in 2025

Managers are the backbone of any company, and their well-being affects productivity, employee satisfaction and business success, Top Workplaces said.

By Laurel Kalser • Jan. 9, 2

HR DIVE

RTO has mixed results for employee morale, survey shows

Many organizations aren't sure about the effects that RTO policies have had on recruitment and retention, Pearl Meyer says.

HR DIVE

'The Great Detachment' has 79% of employees disengaged at work

BY **BRIT MORSE**
February 18, 2025 at 8:27 AM EST

Corporate and team culture significantly impact employee performance and intent to stay

72% of employees would consider leaving for a more inclusive environment

Poisoning the Well: Having a Toxic Culture is Costly

35% of workers describe their company culture as "**toxic**"

Workplace incivility *(n.)* rude, disrespectful, or insensitive behavior

2/3 of workers have **witnessed or experienced incivility** in the past month

3x more likely for employees who experience incivility to **feel dissatisfied with their job**

50% more likely for employees who experience incivility to **leave the organization within the year**

Employees today **expect to shape**, *not just experience*, company culture.

From Top-Down to Bottom-Up: What Has Changed?

The Shift from Leadership-Driven to Employee-Centric Culture

Leadership-Driven Culture

▶ Decisions and values are set by senior leaders

▶ Team dynamics are guided by strong chain of command

▶ Productivity and achievement are the primary focus

Employee-Centric Culture

▶ Employees contribute ideas and help shape the culture

▶ Open communication and collaboration are encouraged

▶ Employee satisfaction and development are emphasized

Source: https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2018/07/19/the-five-cs-of-employee-centric-company-cultures/

What Happens When You Center Employee Voices in Your Strategy?

Organizations see **multiple benefits** after shifting from a leadership-driven culture to an **employee-centric approach**

Increased **engagement** and **trust**

Enhanced **innovation** and **retention**
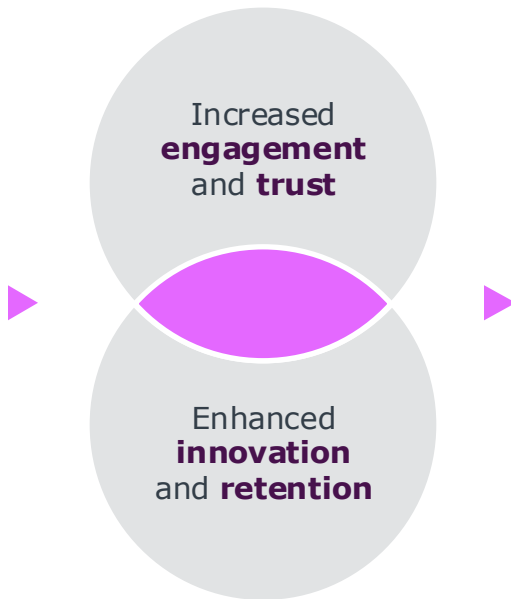
Innovation: Employees have unique perspectives and insights that can drive creativity and innovation

Engagement: When employees feel heard, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated

Retention: Employees who feel valued and respected are more likely to stay with the organization

Ingredient X: What's the Secret to Higher Performance?

Top Motivators for Employees to Work Hard
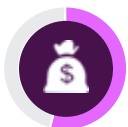
54%
Earn a raise
or bonus

45%
Perform well for
direct supervisor

40%
Enjoy their
work

40%
Further
develop skills

38%
Receive recognition
or praise

34%
Advance to a
higher lever

30%
Contribute to
company success

16%
Something
else

Source: Seramount research.
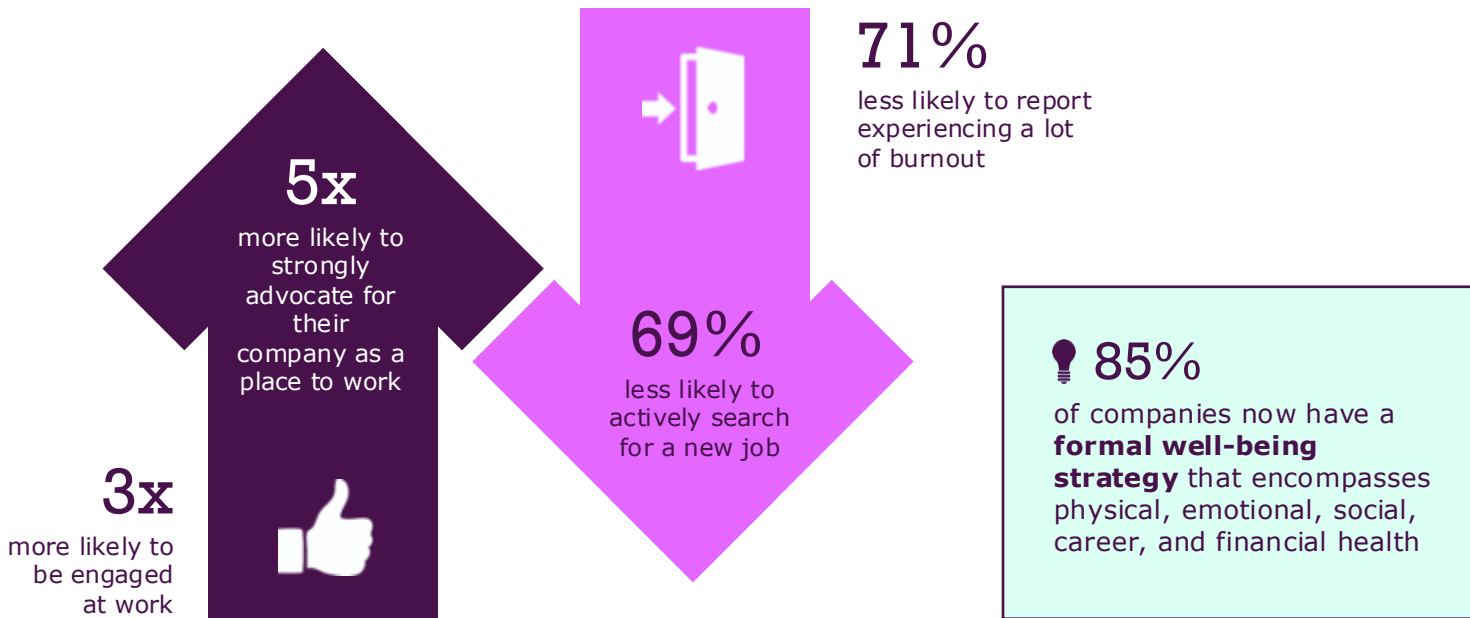
Retain Top Talent, Drive Innovation, and Stay Competitive

Employees who strongly agree that their employer cares about their overall well-being are:

5x
more likely to strongly advocate for their company as a place to work

3x
more likely to be engaged at work

71%
less likely to report experiencing a lot of burnout

69%
less likely to actively search for a new job

85%
of companies now have a **formal well-being strategy** that encompasses physical, emotional, social, career, and financial health

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved. **seramount.com**

Sources: "Transforming Workplace Culture Workbook," 2025, Seramount; Harter, Jim, "Leaders: Ignore Employee Wellbeing At Your Own Risk," Gallup, July 6, 2023.

Mapping Your Cultural DNA: Identifying Promoters and Detractors

"Thinking only about your employer's culture, how likely are you to recommend your current employer to your family and friends as a potential employer?"

DETRACTORS

PROMOTERS

Negative, disengaged employees who undermine the values of the organization

Positive, engaged employees who embody the values of the organization

Employees who actively discourage others from contributing

Individuals who can articulate the company culture clearly

People who are hesitant to adapt to change or new ideas

People who actively participate in team activities and initiatives

1 The Evolution of Workplace Culture

2 **Understanding Employee Needs in Today's Workplace**

3 Transform Your Culture by Centering Employee Voices

The Power of Being Heard: Why Employee Listening Matters

Actively Listening and Acting on Employee Feedback Lowers Turnover
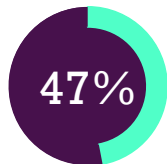
47% of turnover is due to an unhealthy company culture
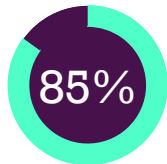
85% of employees are disengaged in their current job

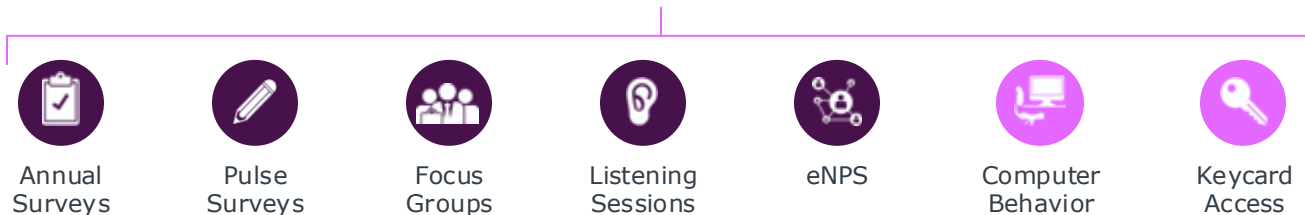**1.5–2x** of an employee's current annual salary is required to replace lost talent

Why Listening is Important

Listening to employees allows leaders to **understand the challenges** their employees may be facing **and how their experiences vary** across departments, levels, demographics, and other characteristics.

How Can You Create a Workplace Where They Want to Stay?

Active and Passive Employee Listening Tools

| Annual Surveys | Pulse Surveys | Focus Groups | Listening Sessions | eNPS | Computer Behavior | Keycard Access |

Pointers

- Ask about employees' perceptions of the company **and** about their individual experiences
- Consider employee interactions, communication styles, and performance review feedback

- Recognize employees who consistently contribute to a positive and productive environment
- Identify employees who consistently undermine productivity and engagement efforts

Positive Indicators and Early Warning Signs

Traditional Listening Tools Only Tap Into a Fraction of Employees' True Feelings
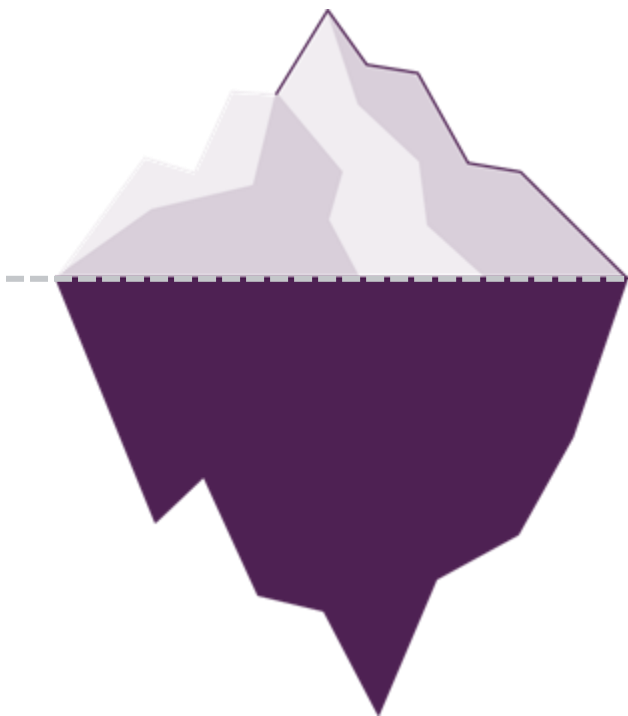
Lagging Indicators

Commonly Available Employee Data

Insights learned from engagement surveys

- Referrals
- Turnover
- Workload
- Promotion Rates
- Engagement Scores

Leading Indicators

Underlying Systemic Issues

Root causes of the beliefs and sentiments employees fear sharing with peers, managers, or senior leaders

- Unclear Decision-Making
- Fear of Retaliation
- Microaggressions
- In-Group Mentality
- Limited Feedback
- Distrust
- Minimal Representation
- Few Promotion Opportunities
- Selective Access to Senior Leaders

1 The Evolution of Workplace Culture

2 Understanding Employee Needs in Today's Workplace

3 Transform Your Culture by Centering Employee Voices

Sustaining Change Through Active Listening

Strategic Planning

Initiating the process by defining objectives and scope

Listen to Employees

Collecting employee feedback via surveys and/or listening sessions

Re-Align Stakeholders

Ensuring all parties are on the same page with the insights

Connect with Key Stakeholders

Engaging key individuals to gather diverse perspectives

Analyze and Share Insights

Analyzing data to provide actionable insights to stakeholders

Support Future Planning

Ongoing assessment and progress tracking to meet employee needs

Measuring the Impact and ROI of Holistic Listening

Career Development

Engagement

Retention

Challenge

Employees voiced unhappiness with career opportunities

The division's engagement scores dropped 12-points in a year, far below company average

Employees were leaving the firm at high rates

Key Insight

Managers provided performance feedback, but didn't feel equipped to have career conversations

Employees reported high stress levels due to not understanding divisional priorities and feeling disconnected from leadership

Burnout and unpredictability were the primary reasons for leaving, but leadership was hesitant to rethink staffing

Proposed Strategy

People Developer Training
Build managers' capability to have career conversations

Leadership Touchpoints
Created a series of town halls, open office hours, and informal touchpoints with leadership

Social Contracts
Create team level agreements to ensure project coverage and build in resilience breaks

Resulting Impact

Career conversations increased **52%** and satisfaction with career opportunities increased **30%**

50% of employees who reported having one foot out the door were retained

Attrition rate decreased **36%** within two years (from 57% to 21%)

Transforming Feedback into a Competitive Advantage

Assess360's Three-Part Solution to Gather and Leverage Employee Feedback

Employee Voice Sessions (EVSs)

- Anonymous, online focus groups moderated by experts
- Gather rich, qualitative data that breathes life behind the numbers
- Paint an authentic picture of the employee experience

Listen Differently

To accurately diagnose your pockets of disengagement

Comprehensive Data

- Provide a comprehensive, digestible view of Assess360 findings
- Nuanced picture of current state and strategic gaps
- Make data easy to share and explain to stakeholders

Monitor Regularly

To capture changes in employee sentiment on the culture and their experience

Expert Talent Consultants

- Talent professionals with decades of experience
- Guide you through stakeholder alignment and data-driven decision-making
- Instill confidence in you and your engagement strategy

Act Intentionally

To deploy proven practices that re-engage employees

seramount

Talent Solutions for Better Workplaces