

*Stribe*

## **The A to Z of Pulse Surveys**

How to get started, what your employees will tell you, and how to make the most of their feedback



# Introduction



You may already know that keeping your employees engaged is important, but you'd be surprised how important it is. The levels of engagement within your team can play a huge role in the success or failure of an organisation.

Engaged employees care, they want to reach their individual and team goals and do the best work they can. Teams with more engaged employees are proven to make their companies more profitable and successful.

However, despite all of this, a lot of organisations aren't giving engagement enough attention. Some might not know how to measure engagement, and those that do – don't measure on a regular basis. It's common to see those that are new to engagement relying on quarterly or annual surveys, making it tough to get a complete picture of how well they're engaging their employees over time.

Gallup reports that only 34% of workers are engaged in this fast-paced world of work, challenging HR leaders to turn their teams around. This need for more frequent employee feedback and workplace surveys has led to the popularity of 'pulse surveys' in the workplace.

Pulse surveys allow organisations to measure and respond to employee feedback faster than ever before, allowing HR leaders to make timely positive changes in the workplace.

Sounds great, right? Well, before you dive in, pulse surveys need to be used in the right way for you to maximise engagement within your organisation.

In this eBook we'll be discussing how to get a pulse survey up and running, what your employees will tell you, and how to make the most of their feedback

**When people are heard,  
teams are happy.**



# What are pulse surveys?



Simply put, a pulse survey is a method for organisations to measure feedback. They are different from most traditional employee surveys - which are usually lengthy in the number of questions, and used sparingly (usually once/twice a year). Pulse surveys are short and sweet. They allow organisations the flexibility to measure whatever they believe is important to track, on a regular basis. What makes pulse surveys stand out is their frequency, consistency and length.

## Frequency

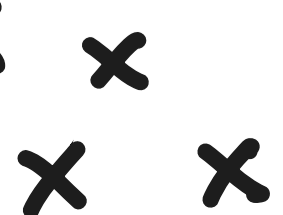
Pulse surveys, when sent out frequently, allow you to track trends and see any changes in your employees behaviour, feedback or general sentiment. Some organisations send pulse surveys monthly or even weekly, giving them real-time information into the engagement and wellbeing of their teams. However, survey fatigue is something to avoid. Sending out too many pulse surveys may discourage your employees from leaving their feedback, or they may forget which ones they've responded to and which ones they haven't. If you increase your frequency and your overall response rate drops, try spacing out the time in between each survey.

## Consistency

Pulse surveys are not often sent ad-hoc, or for specific events, unlike more traditional employee surveys. The beauty lies in sending pulses at regular and meaningful times, allowing you to check-in with your employees more often and compare how they are feeling over a period.

## Length

Pulse surveys, in their nature, are meant to be simple. Make your questions short and sweet. The less effort you need from employees to respond, the better your response rate. At Stribe, we make it really simple for employees to reply to our customers' pulse questions. Making a response is as simple as clicking a happy or unhappy face, a yes/no question, or multiple choice.



# Why pulse? The benefits.



To really boost engagement, pulse surveys need to be used in the right way, and in a way which compliments your organisation. A poor string of pulse questions may actually decrease engagement, so it's important that you put thought into every pulse you send out. However, done well, pulse surveys benefit everyone, from employees to HR leaders and management.

Here are some benefits:

## Quick turnaround time

Pulse surveys are simple to read and respond to, which means that the time it takes to receive responses and your employee data is much quicker than other forms of employee surveys. This allows you to make agile changes to your organisation before any issues or conflict develop and grow.

## High response rates

As mentioned above, pulse surveys make it easy for employees to respond, which means that you can generate a high response rate (as long as you don't overuse or misuse this tool). This is great because a high response rate means the pulse results better represent an organisations employee base.

## Employee buy-in is easier

Encouraging employees to take part in surveys is much easier when you explain how simple it is to complete a pulse survey question (or string of questions). For instance, Stribe's pulses can be completed within your inbox!

## Good value for money

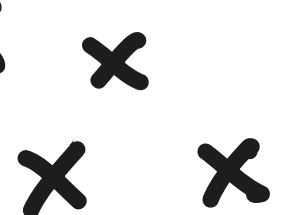
Annual engagement surveys can be expensive for organisations because of the time and expertise involved in creating them, and also how long it takes to gather and assess the data it produces. Pulse surveys can often be done in-house with the aid of online tools that are easy to manage.

## Quick resolutions to problems

Pulse surveys allow you to quickly find and fix problems as they arise, rather than letting them build up over a traditional annual survey cycle. This makes for much happier employees!

## Happy employees equal happy customers

If you have dissatisfied employees in customer-facing roles, it's only natural that this will have a negative impact on your levels of customer service. If you want to develop customer loyalty through great customer service, engagement helps to make that a reality.



# Psychological safety at work

If you want to foster a great company culture and the perfect conditions for high-performing teams, psychological safety is very important. Recently, Google found that it was the most important factor to supercharge team effectiveness.

According to Google's findings, almost all of their employees were reluctant to engage in behaviours that could negatively influence how others see them. After all, we rely on our careers to live the life we want to live, so risking the chance of being seen as a 'problem-employee' or potentially harming workplace relationships, is not ideal. Because of this, it's understandable that this reluctance to be critical is a natural strategy in the workplace, however, it is also detrimental to effective teamwork.

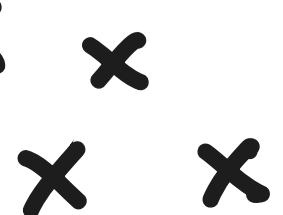
**"The safer team members felt with one another, the more likely they were to collaborate, partner up, and to take on new roles."**

Employees within teams that offer higher psychological safety are less likely to leave an organisation, bring in more revenue, and they're rated as effective twice as often by executives.

Pulse surveys not only offer a space for your employees to speak up about any concerns, but they also offer anonymity. When your employees know that their answers are totally anonymous, they can speak freely about how they feel. This freedom allows your employees to speak the truth, helping organisations to learn the valuable and honest feedback employees might be otherwise wary of sharing. This is all while developing a stronger feeling of psychological safety at work.

Making a survey anonymous - and preventing any personal information from being collected or seen by the people running the survey - is the most important way to show your employees that you value their honest opinions. As a result, it's important that you put steps in place to make sure that any promises of anonymity to your employees are kept.

For instance, at Stribe our system is fully anonymous - and only the employee will ever be able to reveal their own identity. To keep anonymity protected, we also restrict segmentation of pulse survey results to a minimum number of 5 responses. This also applies to segmentation by teams, locations and gender etc. For example, if there are less than 5 people who work in "London" in the "Sales" team, you are unable to export these results as it may give you an idea of which individuals gave some particular feedback.



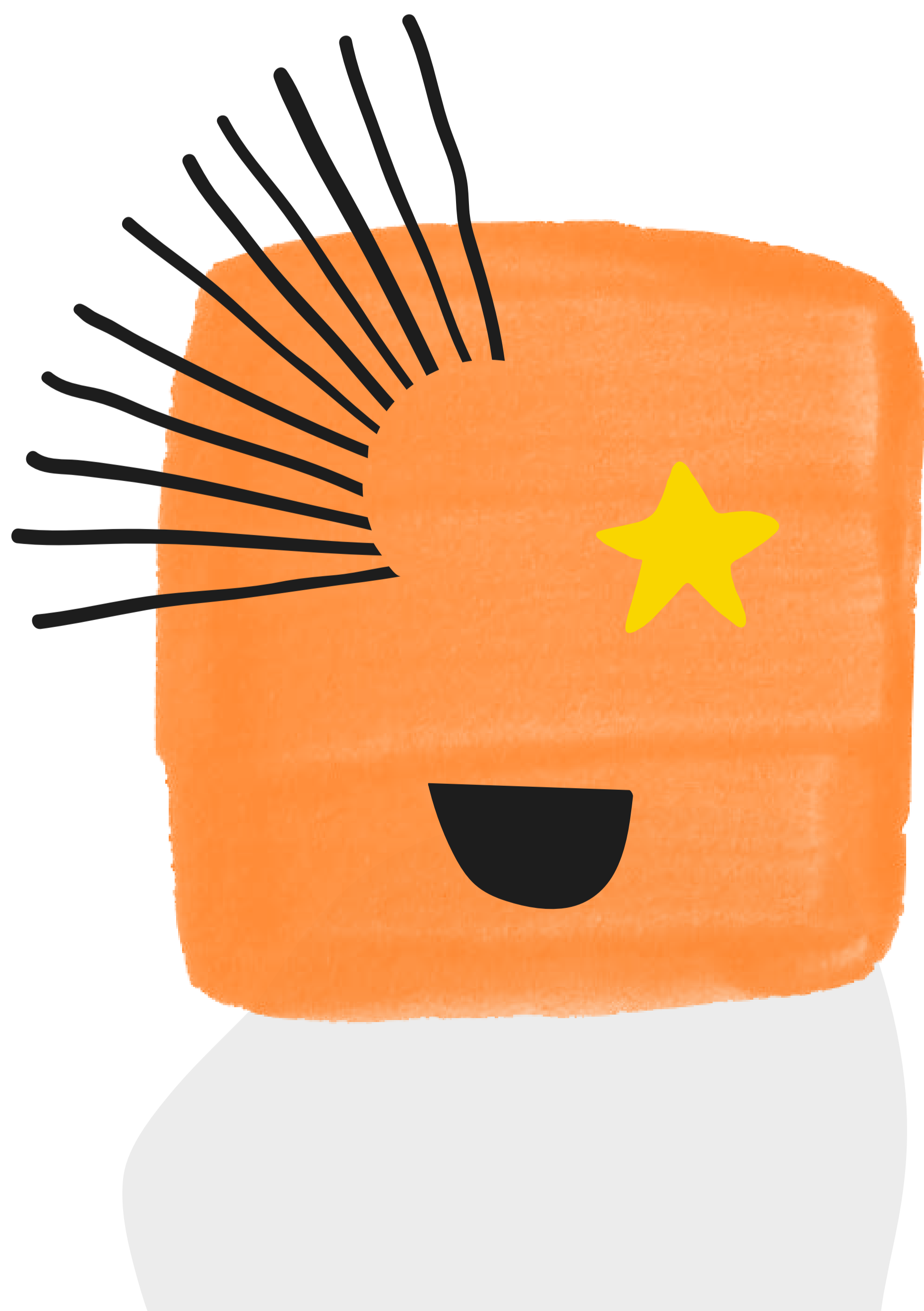
# How do you send pulse surveys?

## What tools should you use?

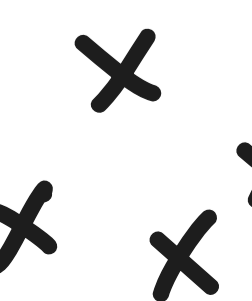
It is possible to ask your employees questions about how they're feeling by email, or by using a free-to-use online form. As simple as this may sound, it can actually make pulse surveying your employees a lot more difficult.

Pulse surveys are meant to be sent to your employees on a regular basis, this is so that you can take timely action in response to what your employees tell you. Using these more manual methods of asking for feedback makes setting up a survey, and also extracting the responses, a mammoth task.

Luckily, employee engagement software makes creating and distributing pulse surveys - and visualising your results - a breeze. Using Stribe, you can easily send questions (or a string of questions) to your employees, your data is then collected and arranged into charts for easy viewing. If you like, you can dive deeper using our sentiment analysis tool, read individual comments or segment your data.



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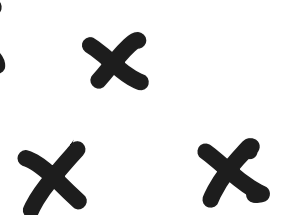


# Q&A - Some common questions and what your employees might say...

There's a science to what questions are best for pulse surveys - because how the questions are arranged, what is asked, and what response options are available, can all have a significant effect on the results you get. It's important to give your organisation the best chance of generating useful insights that you can then act on. We recommend each of your questions meet the following guidelines:

- ① They are simple to read and understand
- ① They only ask about one thing at a time
- ① They are worded neutrally (not leading your employees one way or another)
- ① They only ask about something you can actually improve (or affect)

At Stribe, a lot of thought and science-backed research goes into our template question sets. Let's take a look at some of the most commonly asked pulse questions and explore what your employees might say...



# How happy are you at work?

## What they might say and what it means

**Scale response:** Higher scores indicate higher levels of happiness, and vice versa. Although even neutral responses could be considered as unfavoured results.

**Potential Comments:** According to recent research, the most common causes of unhappiness in the workplace are rooted in three main areas. It is likely that any negative responses stem from one of the following issues:

**Low job control:** A lack of control over the work that needs to be done, and/or the workloads involved, can act as a strong emotional demotivator.

**A poor effort-reward ratio:** If an employee feels like they're not being adequately rewarded or appreciated for their hard work, this can play a big role in their mood and performance at work.

**Lack of work-life balance:** Employee burnout is one of the major causes of employee dissatisfaction. In a recent study, 595,000 workers admitted to suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety, causing an estimated 5.4 million lost working days.

Positive comments are more likely to be straightforward, addressing the reason for their happiness, such as excellent support at work or being appreciated by their superiors to managers, for example.

There's a lot that contributes to developing an engaged group of employees. A high average score means you're doing great work to keep everyone feeling this way.

On the other hand, it's important you see where any lack of happiness stems from. Show your employees that you care about them enough to make changes to address these issues and you'll be one step closer to a happier team.

# I receive meaningful recognition for doing good work

## What they might say and what it means

**Scale response:** Higher scores indicate higher levels of feeling recognised and appreciated at work, and vice versa.

**Potential Comments:** A high average score means you're not only recognising and appreciating your employees, but you're delivering it in the right way. Any comments linked to positive scores should reflect this. It's important to see where your successes lie, so you can continue to maintain this sentiment.

However, a low average score will probably result in comments from your employees asking for more recognition. This could be because they feel deserving of this due to the hard work they put in, which could be going unnoticed.

Comments from low scoring responses could also mention that they are being recognised, but not in their preferred way. Some employees prefer private recognition, compared to in-front of others. Some also react better to results-based recognition, while others react better to appreciation given during working towards a goal - giving them extra motivation.

Take as much as you can from these comments to better keep your employees feeling valued at your organisation.

**To read more about how to effectively recognise your employees, click here.**









# On a scale of 1-10 how proud are you to work for XYZ?

## What they might say and what it means

**Scale response:** A high score will indicate that your employees are engaged, happy in their roles and loyal to your organisation. A low score indicates that your employees see a disconnect between their role and the organisation, having a dim-view of some aspects of the company - be it management, the working environment, or their workload - for example.

**Potential Comments:** What makes an employee proud to work for their organisation?. According to a recent study, employee pride is commonly associated with the following:

-  **Respect for leadership**
-  **See value in the organisation's product or service offering**
-  **A positive company culture**
-  **Belief that their work matters**

We predict that the majority of any positive comments can be related to these. Negative comments may stem from a lack of the above, such as poor management, a product or service that is hard for employees to support, or a poor working environment.

Scores and comments to this question may also reflect how much your employees are aligned to any company-wide goals and mission statement. Taking a good look at each individual response gives you the data you need to be able to

# I have a sense of direction in my role (On a scale of 1-10)

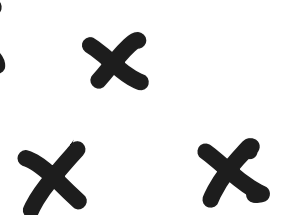
## What they might say and what it means

**Scale response:** A high score will indicate that your employees are content with the direction of their work, their career and potentially even their autonomy. Whereas a low score may reflect micromanagement from above or vague direction on how to perform in their roles, which could be affecting their happiness and performance.

**Potential Comments:** At work, people like to know where they are going and how they are going to get there. A sense of direction, the path they can take, and the destination, are very important to employees in the workplace.

According to a recent survey, when employees were asked how important knowing their potential career path is to their overall job satisfaction, 54% of the employees surveyed responded “very important”, with only 14% saying that their career path is not important to their job satisfaction.

Comments attached to this question will most likely relate to how connected your employees feel to their work, and how clear their long-term horizon looks like within their role and organisation. We can see that employees value having a path carved out for them, so you may find employees asking for more support and clarity in this area.



# Getting the most out of your responses

So, you've got your pulse survey results back. While you may be able to see some obvious trends right away (depending on the tools you use to send the surveys), it's important to dive deeper to see the employee sentiment and individual comments – creating a big picture of how your employees feel about a question or string of questions.

As mentioned earlier, we recommend that your pulse questions begin with a question or statement that's answered using a Likert scale, yes/no button, or symbols to summarise emotion, such as a range of smiley faces (see below). This gives you the quantitative data you need. The follow up questions of “why did you answer this way?”, or along those lines, gives you the qualitative data you need.

For large organisations it might be more difficult, but to better understand the sentiment of your employees - reading as many follow up comments is essential. These comments, the way they're written, the subtle language choices, the tone of voice – all of this conveys a more complete picture on how any individual is feeling.

At Stribe, we have a built in sentiment analysis tool that makes it easier to see the most commonly used words and phrases from your survey results. This is because we're always trying to make it easier for HR leaders to understand and support their team in a time-efficient way.

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# Stribe

At Stribe we believe that when teams are heard, employees are happy

Stribe makes it easier for business leaders and HR teams to support the engagement, wellbeing and mental health of their employees.

We empower employees by giving them a voice, encouraging them to give feedback, suggest ideas, and talk about any worries or concerns. There is complete anonymity with every action, so your employees can give honest unbiased feedback.

Stribe's highly customisable pulse surveys make it simple for organisations to engage their employees, especially for those who are the most hard to reach. This makes it easy to gather both instant and frequent insights to better understand your team.

Stribe connects people, helping them feel happier, safer, and heard in their daily work life. Simple.

Find out more about how Stribe can support your employees here:

[www.stribehq.com](https://www.stribehq.com)