

workhuman*

5 Ways to Measure Wellbeing and Inclusion

HELP LONELY EMPLOYEES THRIVE – AND QUANTIFY THE IMPACT





The workplace has always been a place of community and camaraderie. However, in this global and dispersed landscape, with 93% of iCIMS survey respondents saying flexibility is top of mind when deciding to apply for or accept a job, making friends at work is less of a guarantee for today's young workers.

Forward-thinking HR practitioners are taking notice. At Workhuman® Live 2024:

- Workhuman® CEO Eric Mosley featured research from YouGov, which found **30% of millennials “always or often” feel lonely**, and 22% have “no friends” at all.
- Global DEI thought leader Raven Solomon shared Ypulse survey data showing **Gen Z identifies “technology overdependence/addiction” as a top concern among their generation**, ranked among inflation, the pandemic, and racism, because of its impact on social connection, mental health, and wellbeing.

This crisis of belonging is a top concern among organizations who care about supporting their people's holistic wellbeing and psychological safety. But how do you know if your policies and programs are driving an equitable and inclusive culture? Here are some ways to measure and quantify the value of belonging.

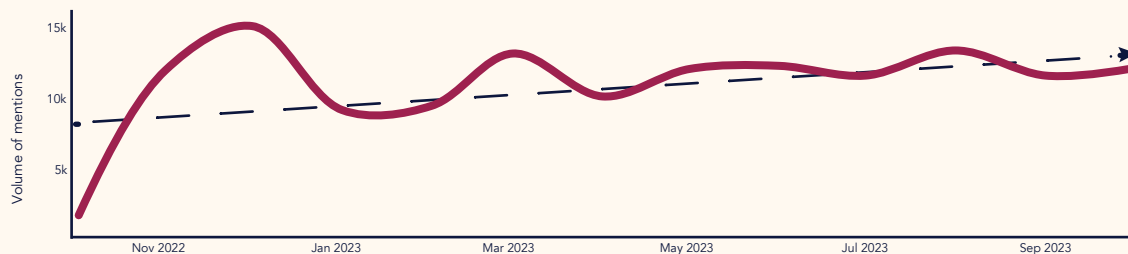
ONE

Listen to your people.

The best way to determine if your employees feel included is to ask them. Performance management, coaching, and other one-on-one conversations yield information about sentiment within each team, and exit interviews provide powerful, less filtered insights into the emotional life of your organization. Establish processes by which you'll consistently capture, document, and analyze the data to ensure it is as objective and robust as possible.

Natural language processing (NLP) analysis from Workhuman® iQ can also provide a lens into wellbeing and belonging and track sentiment shifts over time. In 2023, we looked back on 12 months of recognition data from Workhuman® customers and found the volume of recognition messages mentioning wellbeing topics like burnout and stress increased significantly – especially in the healthcare and government industries.

Recognition messages mentioning wellbeing topics



Source: "Recognition Playback: Findings From a Year of Gratitude," Workhuman, 2024

TWO

Conduct official surveys.

People with strong feelings will usually find a way to share their thoughts, but some folks may only speak up if asked. Use surveys to help to elevate and include the voices of that silent majority.

There are two great options here, and a combination approach will give you the most holistic view of wellbeing:

1. As a part of your **long-form engagement survey**, ask employees to rate their sense of belonging on a scale. Including this allows you to slice that data with an intersectional lens, providing a benchmark to track the impact of your current and future inclusion efforts and triangulate thoughtful, qualitative data against larger, quantitative datasets.
2. Capitalize on the agility of a **short-form or pulse survey** to capture insights more frequently. Try asking new employees about belonging during their 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day marks, for example, or check in with tenured employees randomly or at triggered milestones.

In both types, be sure to balance direct questions (Do you feel a sense of belonging and inclusion at work?) with subtle ones (Do you feel your team accepts and cares about you as a person?).



Our pulse survey showed we had a 10-percentage-point increase in colleague engagement. That shows you how an intentional focus on recognition and reward can make a difference on engagement.

JONATHAN VILLAIRE
Colleague Experience Manager
Point32Health
Source: [Workhuman Live](#), breakout session, 2023



THREE

Celebrate accomplishments in and out of work.



It's key to monitor and measure inclusion efforts and how they're contributing to overall psychological safety and wellbeing. The Celebrations Suite from Workhuman comprises Service Milestones[®], Life Events[®], and Community Celebrations[®] – powerful tools to promote feelings of belonging, acceptance, and in-group identity, and all backed by 25+ years of people analytics experience.

Customers such as Merck, SSOE, CAA Club Group, and Minto Group use Celebrations as levers to help people feel closer to their organizations while:

- Measuring quantity and quality of participation by keeping track of activity levels per employee and average peer engagement with each post.
- Measuring engagement levels in real time with each post, quantity of replies, and quality of participation.

Gallup and Workhuman research found that employees recognized for work and life events are **3x as likely to feel connected to company culture, 3x as likely to say their company cares about their wellbeing, and more than 30% more likely to say they plan to remain at the organization.**

Service anniversaries are an excellent opportunity to remind employees they belong – and observe their inclusion within the organization. Consider following a service milestone award with a pulse survey or one-on-one check-in to measure participation and effectiveness.

“We’ve had more than 2,000 new hires celebrated, and eight 20-year anniversaries, which is just amazing when you’re celebrating such long tenures. We’ve utilized Bravo for a wealth of different reasons, but one of my favorite memories was celebrating Employee Appreciation Day.”

CHRISTINE GRANT
Staff Compensation Analyst
GoTo

Source: “How Prioritizing Wellbeing Drives Employee Engagement: GoTo’s Story,” webinar, Workhuman and GoTo, 2023

FOUR

Monitor recognition rates.

Recognition is the most powerful tool in your wellbeing and DEI toolbox. When you align recognition to organizational core values, employees have an easier time finding and living a sense of greater purpose and group contribution. Done right, recognition can also foster an environment of equity and inclusion, shine a light on historically under-supported employees, and shield a diverse workforce against burnout and turnover. Even small shifts in recognition rates can have a big impact.

Employees who strongly agree that they receive the right amount of recognition for the work they do, compared to those who don't receive the right amount of recognition, are **4x as likely to perceive their workplace as inclusive, and 7x more likely to perceive it as equitable.**

Source: "[From Appreciation to Equity: How Recognition Reinforces DEI in the Workplace](#)," Gallup and Workhuman, 2023

A strategic, expertly deployed recognition program will help quantify your inclusion efforts by tracking both frequency of recognition by employee and the value of awards they receive.

FIVE

Drive recognition reach.

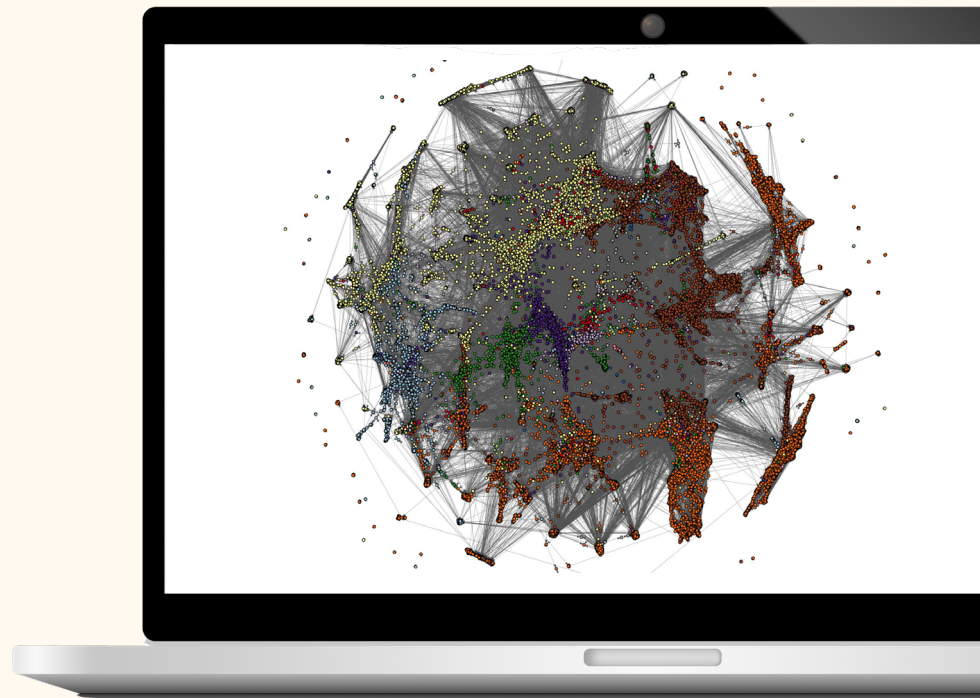
Much like an MRI, a recognition program can illuminate and map the real relationships and affinity that exist in your organization. You can track recommenders, recipients, and congratulators of recognition, and map your work circles to understand how interconnected your teams, business units, and companies are – down to the individual employee level.

Our customer Merck applied a community detection algorithm (Louvain method) to identify, study, and optimize collaboration between 142 distinct employee communities, as illustrated in the following image.



Community Detection Map

Source: Workhuman research,
Merck customer review, 2023



This analysis provides additional insight into how work is getting done (it's collaborative and cross-functional), who's influential (close to the center of the community), and the relationships that lead to information exchange and business impact.

Compare outliers against average reward levels based on similar roles to learn where problems may be lurking. Tracking recognition and slicing by internal demographics can reveal whether one group receives more recognition – or more valuable recognition – than others, making them feel more included and supporting their emotional wellbeing.

Additional considerations for measurement

However you track inclusion, be sure to balance quantitative with qualitative data. Tap into multilateral communications channels: Solicit employee feedback and suggestions, ask for group feedback from employee resource groups (ERGs), and incorporate findings from wellbeing and DEI task forces and focus groups.

Then, be consistent in your tracking of metrics over time and – most importantly – **act on your findings**. Once you spot areas for improvement or places where things are working well, follow through and take action – addressing or duplicating that dynamic. This requires executive support or sponsorship and a commitment to transparent reporting.

While “55% of 18- to 24-year-olds report having received a diagnosis and/or treatment for a mental illness,” 56% of Gen Z and 53% of millennials agree that “an increased focus on mental health at work has resulted in positive change” – according to studies from [McKinsey & Company](#) and [Deloitte](#), respectively.



Policies and programs that increase belonging and wellbeing, as well as equipping yourself with the right [guidance](#) and [measurement tools](#), may make the difference for lonely and struggling employees.

Be a force for positive change – create an inclusion-rich environment in which every employee can thrive. [Contact us](#) today.

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Or read more on our blog: workhuman.com/blog

Join HR’s leading innovators and trailblazers at our next [Workhuman Live](#) conference.

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