



What's Working...

I sort of hate shopping.

I always leave stores feeling defeated. There's just nothing there made for me. It feels like a big waste of time and I don't have much time to spare. The clothes are too trendy, too seasonal, too long for my short little Irish legs. Counterintuitively, the bigger the store, the more likely I'll leave feeling awful. It seems that I've become accustomed to a level of personalization through the internet that simply isn't sustainable for a brick-and-mortar store. I want to easily find the things I want when I want them and in the colors and sizes that I need. Maybe I am a millennial after all...

I think that employees are experiencing a similar feeling of dread about returning to a work experience at an organization that has never once asked them what they want. The glut of data available to leaders today is overwhelming. People are reading articles and trends and studies, consuming media about the future of work, and keeping up with the biggest companies' hybrid or return to work decisions... But what's still missing from the conversations at the tippy top of organizations, and what has become arguably the most important aspect, is personalization — actual input from the people who work there.

A recent [pulse survey from Future Forum](#) displays some shocking stats around the disconnect between leaders' perceptions and the realities of employees' lives. "Two-thirds (66%) of executives report that their companies' post-pandemic planning conversations are happening primarily at the executive level, with little to no direct input from employees or consideration of their preferences." Even more amazing, is that the same amount (66%) somehow also believe that "they're being "very transparent" regarding their post-pandemic policies." It should come as no surprise that less than half (42%) of employees agree.

I don't think these leaders are evil. I'm not even sure that they're being negligent. I think they're shopping at a store full of culture and engagement questions from the Autumn line when they should be seeking out a bespoke tailor.

They're asking and relying on the answers to the wrong questions.

Here's the danger of asking the wrong questions: they elicit lazy feedback.

- *Did you like shopping here today? Nope.*
- *Were you able to find what you were looking for today? No. I needed a v-neck shift dress for my inverted triangle body shape and there wasn't a-one to be seen. So I'm leaving and not coming back.*

Feelings are often a stopping point. Culture and engagement surveys result in sentiment and feelings-based responses — eliciting said lazy feedback. Lazy feedback engenders negative sentiment because it can make the problems feel vague and insurmountable and it fails to really diagnose the issues. Specific feedback, on the other hand, not only gives the ability to take action but also shows that you are truly interested in a person's opinions and ideas about how to shape the organization. Feeling heard and validated instills pride and ownership.

We have a very simple, yet somehow radical concept: let's just ask people what they want. We do that by taking a consumer research approach to work experience. The disruption comes with asking those right questions in a fast, efficient, scalable, and affordable way. We do that through tech.

We've got more thoughts on asking the right questions and using your deep knowledge of workplace design and best practices to elevate your client conversations. You can read all about it in [our new ebook: A SEAT ABOVE THE TABLE](#). Download it and let us know what you think.

Back to online shopping,
Ami



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