

Productivity under pressure:

The HR guide to lasting performance

How people analytics powered by frequent employee surveys helps organizations avoid burnout, disengagement, and costly turnover



Why productivity is top of mind in Europe

Across Europe, organizations are feeling the pressure. Economic uncertainty, a tight labor market, and rapid technological change are reshaping how work gets done. At the same time, burnout and absenteeism are on the rise, and hybrid working continues to challenge focus and team cohesion.

All of this puts productivity at risk. And when productivity dips, engagement, innovation, and results soon follow. For leadership teams, this is a business concern. For HR, it's both a challenge and an opportunity: to shape how people experience work and to create the conditions for performance that lasts.



Short-term push vs. long-term productivity

Many organizations chase short-term gains by cutting costs, reducing teams, and pushing for faster results. But this mindset comes at a cost: burnout, disengagement, presenteeism, and higher turnover.

HR often sits right in the middle of this tension, under pressure to deliver results quickly, but also responsible for protecting people's wellbeing. Balancing both is exactly where **sustainable productivity** comes in.

Sustainable productivity means people can perform well today, and still have the energy, skills, and motivation to perform well tomorrow. In other words: it's not about asking employees to run faster, it's about making sure the track is clear and that they have the right shoes to run on it.



Why people analytics is key to sustainable productivity

Here's the challenge: most HR dashboards only track HRIS data such as headcount, demographics, or turnover. This tells you what happened, but not why.

At its core, people analytics means using data systematically to guide better decisions in HR and organizational development. This includes both “hard” HRIS data (like absences, sick leave, or tenure) and “soft” insights from employee surveys (like engagement, satisfaction, mental health, leadership quality, or team dynamics).

Surveys play a central role in this mix. They uncover risks of fluctuation, highlight retention and engagement drivers, signal issues like stress or poor team cohesion early on. In other words: they reveal the lived employee experience – something HRIS data alone can never capture.

What makes people analytics so valuable is the combination: when you connect quantitative data (such as absence or turnover rates) with qualitative insights (such as employee perceptions and needs), you get a complete picture of what is driving or blocking productivity. This enables HR to design targeted retention measures, prevent burnout before it takes hold, and guide the development of a culture that grows with its people.

For example, HRIS data might show a rise in resignations. But only survey data can tell you if people are leaving because of workload, poor leadership, or lack of career opportunities. Combined, these two data sources give you the full picture and allow you to act before problems escalate into resignations, long-term sickness, or loss of productivity.

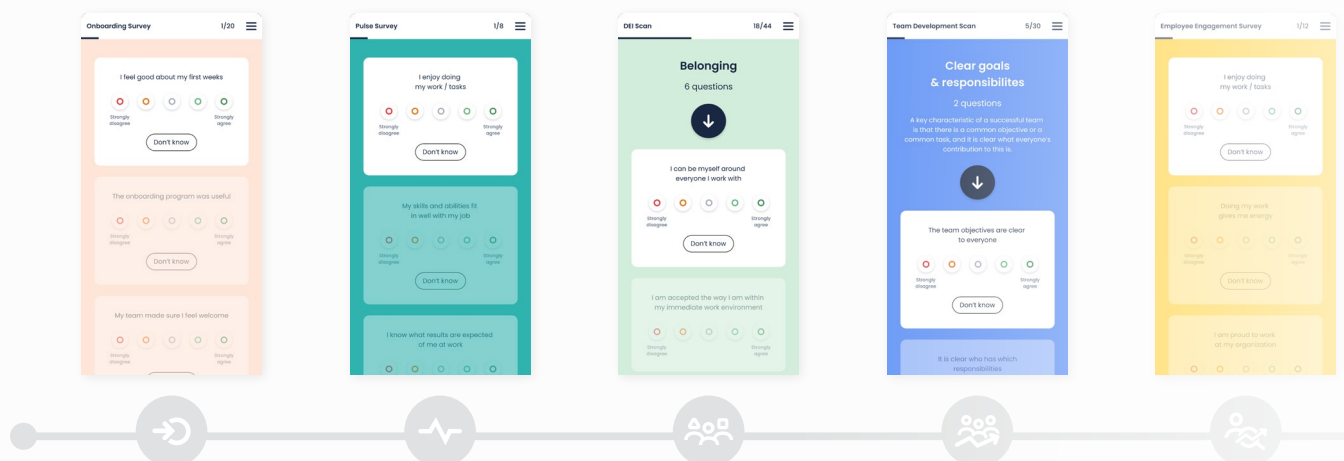


How surveys make productivity measurable

Productivity is influenced by many factors. Clear goals, good leadership, opportunities to grow, fair workloads, and healthy team dynamics all play a role. Together, they form the pillars that hold productivity up.

The challenge is knowing which of these pillars needs urgent attention right now. You don't need to fix everything at once; you just need to spot and remove the blockers standing in the way of people doing their best work.

Frequent surveys make this possible. They give you timely insights into where teams are struggling, so you can act fast and focus your efforts where they will make the biggest impact. Think of it as keeping your finger on the pulse of your organization, instead of waiting for the annual health check.



With and without continuous surveys

When organizations continuously listen, onboarding is smoother, retention is higher, and productivity builds steadily over time. A continuous strategy can take many forms, but it usually includes a few different types of surveys:

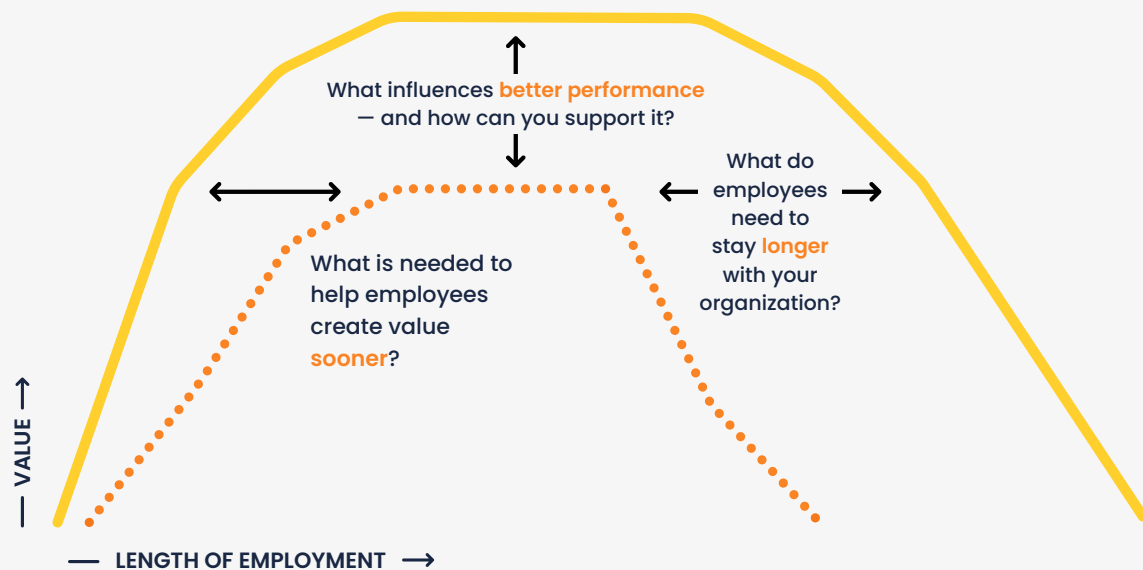
Onboarding Surveys to help new hires get up to speed quickly, **pulse surveys** to zoom in on specific topics or teams, and targeted scans, such as a **DEI Scan**, or a **Team Development Scan** to keep wellbeing and collaboration on track. Annual **Employee Engagement Surveys** then provide the big-picture view, while shorter check-ins ensure progress stays on course. Together, these listening moments also show what employees need to stay longer with the organization, helping HR shape stronger retention strategies.

When organizations don't listen, issues go unnoticed until it's too late — when turnover rises or workloads become unsustainable. This contrast is best seen in the graph below:

Effectory's promise

Increasing sustainable productivity for organizations in all sectors

- ● ● No employee listening strategy in place
- Continuous employee listening strategy in place



Some HR leaders worry that continuous listening will add more work. In practice, it often makes things easier. Smaller surveys like pulses are quicker to run and act on, while the annual organization-wide survey gives the broad strategic view. Team Development Scans can be started and followed up by teams themselves.

Combined, they form a balanced listening strategy that reduces the strain on HR and delivers timely insights to sustain productivity.



Discover what drives productivity in your organization

In today's climate, organizations can't afford to leave productivity to chance. The sooner you know what drives or blocks it, the sooner you can act.

Effectory helps organizations listen from onboarding to exit, and every moment in between. With three decades of experience, we know that sustainable productivity doesn't come from pushing people harder. It comes from understanding what enables them to do their best work, and using people analytics that combine HR data with survey insights to act on it.

Want to see how this could look in practice? Book a quick demo and see how integrating employee insights into people analytics can make productivity measurable and sustainable.

