Action Planning Guide

Employee Engagement Survey 2025

Action Planning Guide

For Macalester 2025 Engagement Survey

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This guide will help you work with your team to create specific action plans in response to the 2025 employee engagement survey results.

Purpose

Research indicates that administering engagement and/or feedback surveys without appropriate follow-up can have the unintended consequence of decreasing employee engagement, satisfaction, and morale. This document outlines best practices for developing action items you and your team can take to improve the work environment.

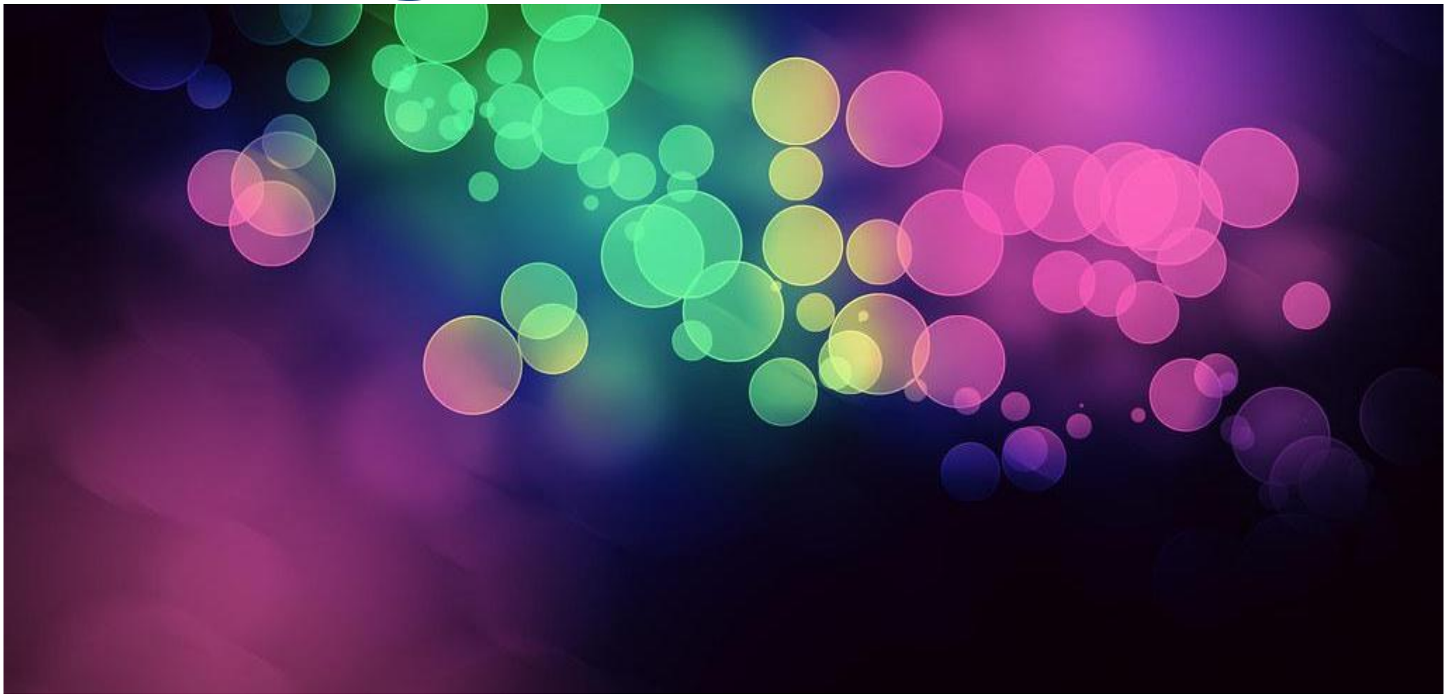
Focus Areas

This guide includes resources for sharing results and for taking action.

→ Sharing Results	→ Taking Action

01

Sharing Results



Below are some common best practices and guides for managers to use when sharing results with their employees.

Best Practices

- Do try and meet with your full team to present and discuss survey results and invite all employees in your team to attend the presentation/discussion
    - *Bonus Idea:* send a video presentation or audio recording of the results presentation out to the full team afterwards
- Do share the full results of the survey with your team. Do NOT hide unfavorable results

- If your team's response rate was below 5 and you don't have results specific to your team, use the results of the next level above you in the organization
    - Example: Special Events has too few people for an individual report but they are part of the Engagement department's overall results so Special Events can review the Engagement results together as team and discuss how they are the same or different from their experiences in Special Events
- Do allow time for dialogue
- Share next steps with the group before the meeting ends

How to Engage in Dialogue about results

- People often feel most comfortable splitting into small groups to reflect on and discuss results so if the group is large enough for a couple of groups of 3-5, consider breaking out into small groups to discuss after you've presented the data.
- In small groups have them focus on each of these topics one at a time. Depending on the group, you will want to allow for 10-20 minutes for each topic.
    - What surprises or concerns do you have after seeing these results?

- Have someone from each group be a note taker and collect their notes after your session together.

→ After sharing the overall results, share with the group the Key Drivers for the team (these have been provided to you in a slide)
  - These are the survey topics that are the most important and impactful to your team's overall satisfaction. These are usually great areas to focus on for action planning.
  - After hearing these results and reviewing the key drivers, ask the group some follow up questions to better understand why the team responded to those survey items in the way they did and where there may be areas of opportunity for celebration or change. This can also be done in a follow-up meeting to allow time for employees to reflect. Ideas for facilitating feedback are shared in the next section on Action Planning.

Optional Activity: The Mixing Pot

→ If the group isn't always comfortable speaking up in front of peers this activity called "The Mixing Pot" may be helpful to break the ice a bit.

→ This activity allows for everyone to reflect and share but in a more anonymous way. It also helps them hear others differing perspectives and identify that others have the same perspectives as them sometimes. This activity also helps separate the person from the statement which can remove unconscious bias responses.

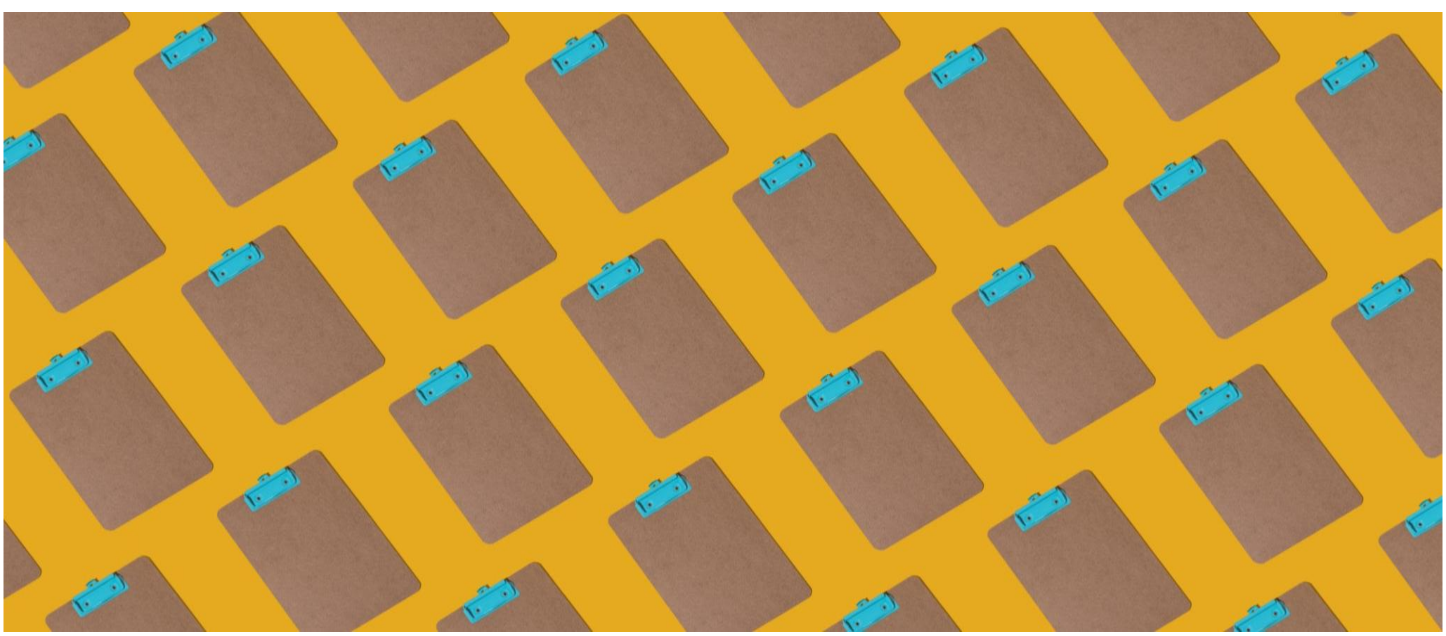
→ Resources needed: Paper strips, pens/pencils, bowls/buckets/etc
  - Activity: The Mixing Pot
    - Divide the group into subgroups of 5-7 and have them sit in a circle if possible
    - Give each person 2 slips of paper that are roughly note card sized or about a ¼ of a sheet of printing paper
    - Ask each person to write down one surprise or one concern they have on each piece of paper (make sure they know to not write their names on the paper)
    - When they are done, they should fold or crumple each piece of paper and toss it into a bowl in the middle of the group
    - A group member should mix up the papers a bit and then take two slips of paper from the bowl and pass it to the next

person. Every person will draw two slips of paper from the bowl until everyone has two

- Group members should then go around the circle and read out loud one of the slips of paper they drew from the bowl. This may or may not be their own slip of paper-it doesn't matter
- After every group member has read one slip of paper, they should go around the circle and read their second slip of paper out loud.
- Group members should not identify to the others which slip/statement is theirs and group members should not try to identify whose is whose.
- Allow the groups time to reflect on what they heard. Were there themes? Were there things they want to dig into more?
- Have each group report back to the larger group (if there is one) what they noticed as themes and what they want to better understand.

02

Action Planning



This section will provide you with resources and best practices to make action planning meaningful and easy.

Best Practices

- → The Key Drivers for your team are an excellent place to look for opportunities for action that will be impactful to your team's engagement at Macalester
- → Identify 1-3 actions to focus on between now and the next survey in March 2026
- → Include the feedback, support, and engagement of as many people in your team as possible
- → Each action item should have a main person who is responsible for making sure it happens and then another supporting individual(s) to help accomplish the tasks within the action plan for that item if needed.
- → Department leadership should approve any actions taken as part of the action plan before the actions are taken.

How to Seek Feedback

Seek departmental feedback when creating action items. This can be done by conducting focus groups, open forums, brown bag lunches, feedback forms, etc at the division/department level to discuss next steps. These can be facilitated by department leadership, by Human Resources, or HR and department leadership in collaboration and typically occur in a setting separate from the initial sharing of results. If you'd like support from Human Resources please reach out to HR@macalester.edu. Below are some tips for how to conduct these feedback mechanisms.

→ **Focus groups** should be confidential, safe spaces.

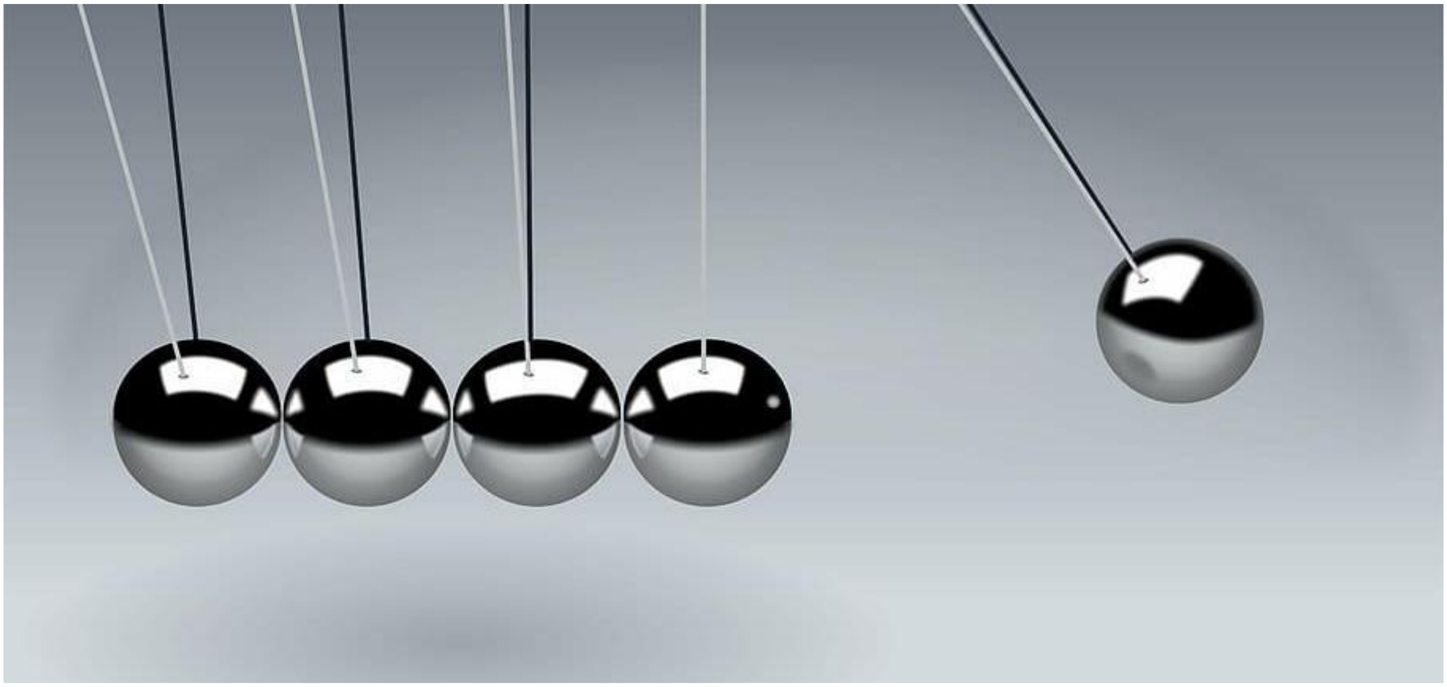
- The survey results are a tool for understanding how a group feels about Macalester and focus groups help us understand why they feel that way.
- Ensure a supervisor and their employee are not in the same group. In fact, you may want to put supervisors and non-supervisors in separate groups.
- Focus groups work best with 6-8 participants. You may need to create more than one group.
- Each group should elect one person to take notes regarding their discussion. These notes should be collected from each group by the moderator at the end of the session. It's often helpful if you provide the groups with a reporting form that includes the questions you want them to respond to.
- If possible, use an outside moderator or facilitator like an HR partner or someone outside of the department who is trained in facilitation (HR can make recommendations and referrals as well).
- Create a set of agreements to guide expectations of each other in this setting. Here's an example of community agreements for reference. Share the agreements at the start of the session and ask if there is anything to be added or changed to make participants feel comfortable.
- Be prepared with several questions you'd like the group(s) to respond to based on the survey results and ideally based on the key drivers identified for your team. Two questions should be sufficient for an hour but have a third prepared in case there is time. HR can assist with developing these questions if desired - hr@macalester.edu
- Utilizing the group reports/notes, the moderator should analyze the feedback for key themes and insights. It's best practice for the moderator to present the key focus group results and finding in a report to the division/department leadership. Leadership should then share the key focus group results with participants and identify action plans created from this feedback.

→ **Open Forums** can be conducted at campus, division, and department levels

- It's important that leaders of the organizational level conducting the open forum are involved and ideally are the moderators.

- These forums should be conducted over several times and days if the department is large in order to ensure all employees have a chance to attend.
- Set forum ground rules at the beginning and explicitly detail how confidentiality will be protected. Utilizing a community agreement and sharing it at the start is an effective way to do this.
- Consider using confidential polling, question submission, or paper forms as an option for attendees to create a safer environment. The moderator(s) can read and share the confidential submissions to the group.
- Have someone taking notes during the forum so leaders have them as a reference.
- Utilizing the notes, the moderator should analyze the feedback for key themes and insights. It's best practice for the moderator to share the key themes and insights with participants and identify action plans created from this feedback.

→ **Feedback Forms** (online or printed) can also be used to collect feedback
  - Design several questions you'd like the respondents to provide feedback on based on the survey results and ideally based on the key drivers identified for your team. HR can assist with developing these questions if desired - hr@macalester.edu
  - It is best to ask 2-3 questions and provide space for open-ended responses.
  - There are several platforms that can be utilized for free including surveymonkey and google forms among others. If you are interested in using Qualtrics as a collection tool, HR can assist with setup since not everyone has a Qualtrics account. Utilizing email may also be an option but is generally more difficult since all responses aren't in one location but dispersed throughout your inbox.
  - Establish and communicate a deadline for responses and provide several reminders. It's best practice to provide at least a week (two is preferable) for responses. Aim to have at least 2 reminders communicated.
  - If using paper forms, ensure that they are collected in a secure manner (usually a locked box).
  - Utilizing the responses, the leader should analyze the feedback for key themes and insights. It's best practice for the leader to share the key themes and insights with participants and identify action plans created from this feedback.



How to Create an Action Plan

You've shared the results and you've collected input and now it's time to take action! It's important to follow up after seeking input to show commitment to improving the college, division, and/or department. Following up also shows that you value your employees' feedback and that they have been heard and will see actions to improve as a result.

- Refer to the key themes and insights from your feedback process to help you identify 1-3 action items to focus on between now and the next survey in March. These action items should be tied directly to the survey feedback.
- Utilize the Action Plan Worksheet template in Google Docs
- Share your department action plan with your supervisor so they can assist you in completing the action items when necessary.
- Share the action items with all members of your team. This creates accountability and shows that the feedback was heard and actions are being taken as a result.

Anatomy of an Action Item

- Utilize the Action Plan Worksheet template in Google Docs
- For each of your 1-3 action items indicate the following:
    - The survey result/item you are addressing with the action item
    - The details of the action item - what exactly are you going to do
    - Who is responsible for completing the action item - does not need to be the department leader, although it may be
    - Expected completion date
    - Communication plan-how will you keep employees informed of progress

Post Action Planning Communication

- Be intentional about stating when an action is the result of the engagement survey process and don't be afraid to say it often. Make the connection for employees between what is happening and how it has been influenced by their feedback.
    - Example: Thanks for joining the Data Analytics Department Quarterly Meeting. We started this meeting 2 quarters ago in response to feedback from the engagement survey that indicated employees were not satisfied with the means of communication. Feedback from our survey result focus groups indicated that employees wanted a time to gather together to get to know each other and to hear key updates.
- Seek formal or informal feedback after an action item has been implemented to determine if any changes or updates are needed to better address the concerns

Sample Action Item

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Action Item #1</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Survey Result Being Addressed</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">46% of the department indicated they disagree or strongly disagree with the survey statement “There is open and honest communication at the College”</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Action Details</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Hold a quarterly all department meeting to communicate updates, priorities, changes, and have a featured guest from leadership or a key partner join for an overview of their work or a Q&A session. The quarterly department meeting will be conducted in a hybrid setting; however, staff are encouraged to attend in person if they are able.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Target Completion Date</td><td>Action Item Owner(s)</td></tr>
<tr><td>First Quarterly Meeting to be held on August 19 and the 3rd Wednesday of the second month of the quarter going forward.</td><td>Beyonce Knowles, department manager

Benny Hanna, department coordinator</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Communication Plan</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">● Share the action plan via email with all department staff so they are aware of how the survey results and their feedback are being addressed
● Have all supervisors (and yourself) share the action plan with their staff either at a team meeting or during individual 1:1s or via email
● Send all staff a calendar invitation with meeting details (time, date, location, zoom link, etc) at least 6 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date. In the invitation indicate that in response to the survey results we are implementing a Quarterly Department Meeting
● Solicit feedback about Quarterly meeting content and design at least once per year and share that feedback and related changes with all department staff</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Notes: Looking into the ability to record and how to make recording accessible.</td></tr>
</table>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Action Plan Template

The Action Planning Template in located in Google Docs and can be accessed by:

1. Open in Google Docs
2. Click on Template Gallery in the upper right corner of the screen
3. Click on Macalester College at the top of the page (it should default to that tab)
4. Open the Employee Engagement Survey Action Plan Template document. This will create a version only accessible to you until you decide to share with someone.

Campus results presentation-SAC video

March 2025 SAC Presentation Slides

Sample Questions to facilitate dialogue

- What are some things that could be done differently to create more positive outcomes around these results before the next survey in March 2026? Stay focused on actions that can be taken within your team/department/division.
- What would they like to see as next steps?
- What would need to change or occur to make you more inclined to respond to this survey item with a “strongly agree”?
- What influenced your response to this survey item?
- What are the obstacles to open communication? (Can replace open communication with any survey item)
- What are the specific communication issues that we should be dealing with in a more open manner?
- Did you receive effective training for your present job and if not, what should be changed or restructured to make training more effective? If so, what made it effective for you?
- What are the obstacles to getting the training you need or want and how can these obstacles be removed?