

# What Your Survey Results Might Be Telling You

## And What To Do Now

Six early warning signs in your Trust Index results – and how high-performing companies respond.

## Culture risks rarely announce themselves

They often begin with subtle shifts: fewer shout-outs in meetings, a dip in survey participation, employees complaining about their teammates. These early warning signs are easy to dismiss, but they often signal deeper issues brewing beneath the surface.


Organizations that stay attuned to employee feedback – especially through consistent, high-trust listening – are better positioned to catch these signals early. It's not about preventing one big failure; it's about responding to the small signs before they compound.

As a Great Place To Work® Certified™ organization, you already know the power of listening – and the Trust

Index™ gives you a clear, data-backed view into how your people are really feeling. We're here to help you go even deeper, uncovering the stories behind the scores and turning insights into action.

Below are six common red flag patterns we see in survey data, why they matter, and what high-performing teams do differently, according to Principal Customer Experience Manager Eliot Bush.

**Tip:** Customers with Analyze and Accelerate subscriptions can measure and view all the focus areas and Trust Index statements outlined below. To dive deeper, [connect with your CSM.](#)



"The Trust Index gives you a clear, data-backed view into how your people are really feeling."



## Red Flag #1

**People are leaving  
– and others are  
wondering if they  
should too**

### What to watch for:

*Focus Areas: All*

Trust Index signals to review:

- “My work has special meaning: this is not ‘just a job.’”
- “I am treated as a full member here regardless of my position”
- “I want to work here for a long time”

### Why it matters:

Turnover is often the most visible outcome of deeper culture issues. It affects productivity, morale, recruitment costs, and your brand reputation. Once people start leaving, others start questioning whether they should, too. Turnover is often the result of earlier engagement or trust issues – not the first sign.

### What great companies do:

Leaders at great workplaces are intentional about connecting all employees to the mission of the organization. They also excel at modeling the values of the company, emphasizing that how something gets done is as important as what gets done.

When it comes to the data, great companies analyze employee feedback to understand pockets of dissatisfaction. And, because both purpose and well-being drive intent to stay, great companies compare these metrics to confirm if employees are:

- Staying for the right reasons
- Truly engaged when they stay



## Red Flag #2

### Teams are tuning out

#### What to watch for:

*Focus Areas: Credibility, Collaboration, Pride*

Trust Index signals to review:

- "People are willing to give extra to get the job done"
- "Management involves people in decisions"

#### Why it matters:

When teams start to tune out, it's often a sign that turnover or performance issues could be around the corner. Disengaged teams miss deadlines, stall innovation, and struggle to collaborate, all of which can chip away at trust in leadership and slow progress on business goals.

#### What great companies do:

They monitor participation in things like all-hands meetings, team offsites, learning sessions, recognition programs, and ERG events, since dropping attendance could be an early indicator of disengagement. Managers are encouraged to rebuild momentum with small habits:

- Inviting input
- Showing appreciation
- Realigning priorities

When it comes to the data, they benchmark results, identify areas that have slipped year-over-year, and coach managers to take small, visible steps to rebuild connection.



## Red Flag #3 Frustration is bubbling up

### What to watch for:

*Focus Areas: Fairness*

Trust Index signals to review:

- "I have the resources to do my job"
- "I feel I receive a fair share of the profits"

### Why it matters:

Complaints can signal a disconnect between what employees expect and what they experience. That gap can drag down morale, productivity, and trust. If left unaddressed, it can push high performers out the door.

### What great companies do:

They dig into frustration by demographic, clarify what's driving concern, and communicate clear next steps. Eliot says, "Talk about the exact problem you're trying to solve – and why it matters to your people."



## Red Flag #4

### Transitions are testing culture

#### What to watch for:

*Focus Areas: Integrity*

Trust Index signals to review:

- “Management keeps me informed about important issues and changes”

#### Why it matters:

Transitions – whether it’s a new leader, a merger, or a tech rollout – often disrupt communication and connection. If not managed intentionally, they shake confidence in leadership and create inconsistent experiences across teams. Even positive change can be destabilizing if employees feel left behind or uncertain.

#### What great companies do:

During periods of growth or transition, great companies survey more often as faster cycles help track shifting culture dynamics. They also reinforce cultural strengths, like recognition and clarity, ensuring all employees, old and new, experience alignment.

Eliot advises: “Make sure new employees are having a similar experience to the people who were there before by looking at survey scores by tenure.”



## Red Flag #5

# Trust in leadership is slipping

### What to watch for:

*Focus Areas: Credibility, Communication, Integrity*

Trust Index signals to review:

- "Management is competent in running the business"
- "I can ask management questions and get a straight answer"

### Why it matters:

Trust in leadership directly impacts engagement and retention. If people lose faith in where the organization is going or how decisions are made, they're more likely to disengage or leave. In crisis or change, trust becomes either your strongest asset – or your biggest liability.

### What great companies do:

At typical workplaces, the further an employee is from the C-suite, the less informed they feel. In fact, only about half of individual contributors and frontline managers feel well-informed.

Great companies over-communicate strategy, align managers on key messages, and deliver on promises. "People want to know why issues matter to them, specifically," Eliot notes. Trust is rebuilt through action and consistency.



## Red Flag #6

### People feel overlooked

#### What to watch for:

*Focus Areas: Equity, Pride*

Trust Index signals to review:

- "Management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort"
- "Everyone has an opportunity to get special recognition"

#### Why it matters:

Appreciation fuels motivation, morale, and loyalty. When celebrations disappear, it can feel like effort goes unnoticed. Recognition is one of the simplest, most powerful ways to reinforce trust and belonging.

#### What great companies do:

They make recognition a daily habit, not just a program. Eliot explains, "If recognition doesn't feel fair or consistent, people will assume other things aren't either." Managers are key to noticing effort and sharing appreciation.

When it comes to the data, great companies check employee comments for root causes if scores are slipping and use heatmaps to identify which leaders or teams are driving lower scores.



## Any action beats no action

With data comes the power to tackle culture issues before they escalate. Even with limited capacity, meaningful change is possible. Eliot encourages teams not to get stuck in all-or-nothing thinking: “You don’t need a massive HR program to get managers thinking about how they show appreciation or clarify expectations.”

Start with small conversations. Compare results to past surveys or benchmarks. Ask: What’s working, what’s slipping, and what can we do about it today?

## Be specific

General goals rarely lead to meaningful outcomes. Eliot recommends:

“Give people incentives that benefit them personally. When you say, ‘Here’s the goal, here’s why it matters, and here’s how we’ll measure it,’ you’re far more likely to see follow-through.”

Effective action plans define what success looks like — fewer repeated messages, better clarity, or stronger collaboration.

## Why it pays off

What do Great Place To Work Certified™ companies and the *Fortune* 100 Best Companies to Work For® have in common? They’re both guided by the Trust Index Survey — and they act on what they learn.

Certified companies retain employees at twice the U.S. average, and those on the 100 Best list outperform the stock market by nearly four times. Listening to employees — and responding with clarity and purpose — drives real business results.

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## Need help interpreting your results?

[Talk to your CSM](#) or explore our next-level planning tools — including benchmarking dashboards and Trust Index heatmaps — to pinpoint where to focus next.