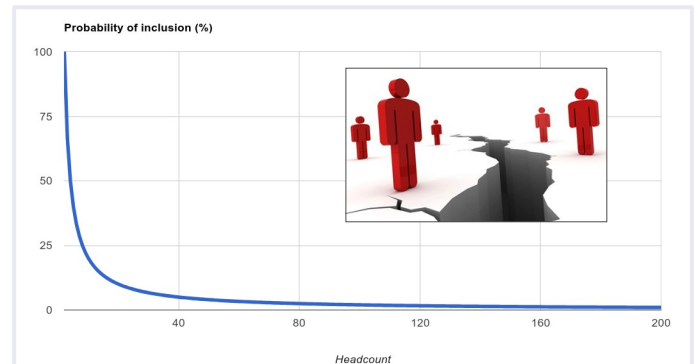


Improving organizational performance with active feedback channels

Organizational divisions exist for important reasons, but they can also stifle innovation.

As businesses grow, additional departments and locations allow them to address respective markets more effectively. However, increased specialization comes at a cost, often creating a “silo” mentality that can lead to insularity and even misalignment between groups as well as a culture averse to new thinking. With the average employee now working for a larger organization¹ and for a shorter duration² than ever before, continuous improvement software can help your business maintain an aligned, integrated, and responsive culture that's critical to ongoing success.

Businesses and processes scale, but people don't. A 2014 Harvard study concluded that the 1978-observed “Allen Curve” (an exponential drop in communication among colleagues based on increasing distance) holds up despite a proliferation of electronic channels³. When employee n joins an organization, the introduction of $n-1$ possible new connections means that the odds of an employee being party to any particular interaction quickly drops to near-zero. At most companies with headcounts greater than “Dunbar's Number” (~150 people), it becomes likely that some employees will have no contact with each other at all. With an estimated 90% of team conflict caused by misunderstandings⁴, accidental breakdowns in communication are far more likely to impact performance and retention than any other cause.



*Even within one office location, the odds of a given employee interacting with another about a shared issue become small at scale. **Reducing the number of “hops”** is critical both for consistent communication and when prioritizing new opportunities, allowing for faster and more effective resolution.*

Organizations don't know what they don't know, but their members do. Companies will often conduct surveys to capture employee/customer feedback and gauge current sentiment. While helpful, inherent limitations of this approach include a uni-directional set of questions, lag between issue surfacing and identification, low and/or skewed participation rates and, crucially, no ability to collaborate on effective solutions.

The price of dated information and a perceived lack of opportunities for engagement is high: Gallup estimates that disengaged employees cost U.S. companies \$500 billion in lost productivity each year⁵. When employees are provided with a platform in which they can speak up and be heard (something 78% of U.S. workers and 89%

1) <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/econ/g12-susb.pdf>

2) <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t16.htm>

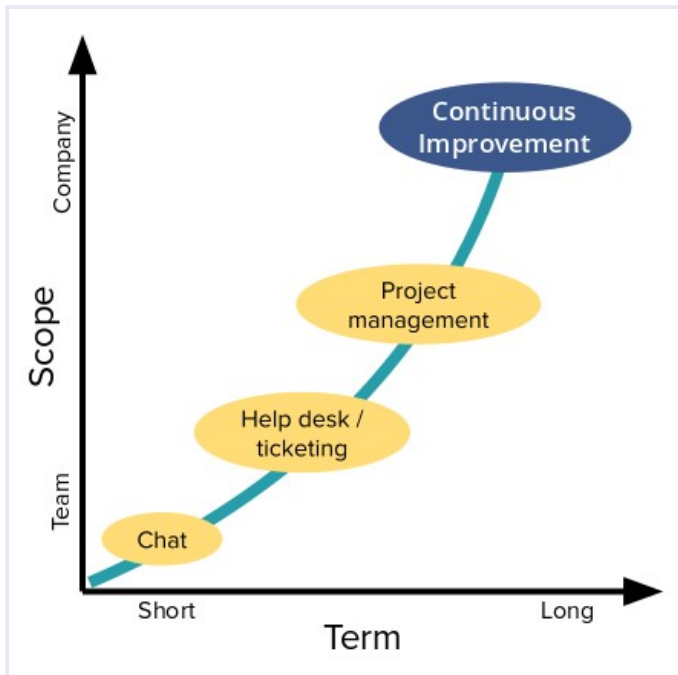
3) <https://hbr.org/2014/10/workspaces-that-move-people>

4) Project Management Institute, 2005.

5) <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/162953/tackle-employees-stagnating-engagement.aspx>

of Millennials seek in an employer⁵), they feel more valued and become an integral part of the conversation. When users are able to contribute and vote on what is most relevant and helpful to them (or not), management can make more informed, data-driven decisions, taking all voices into account without bias.

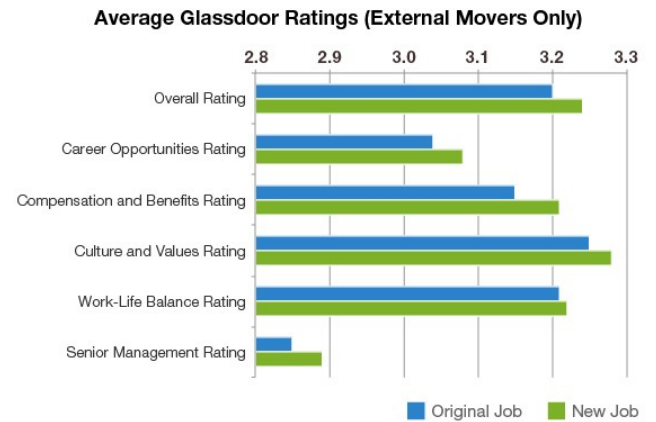
Timely and honest feedback is essential. Informed action is even better. The best tools for continuous improvement provide an effective means to surface issues and weigh options while giving employees the opportunity to offer their talents in pursuing agreed outcomes. By removing the effect of silos within organizations, ideas can be raised and evaluated quickly while also giving agency to the people committed to seeing conversation through to conclusion.



*Effective continuous improvement tools must balance immediate access with long-term planning, capturing input and expertise from all sides on **issues that are often less "urgent" yet more important** to the organization.*

According to Glassdoor, a **better company culture is the #1 reason employees leave their jobs**. The replacement cost of a mid-level employee is estimated to be approximately **150% of annual compensation**. (ERE Media)

When Employees Do Leave, They Usually Do So for Better Company Culture



Source: Glassdoor Economic Research (Glassdoor.com/research)

Take care of organizational health and the numbers take care of themselves. The adoption of continuous improvement tools is becoming widespread, with implementations already in use at some of the world's largest and most successful organizations including Google, IBM and Vodafone.

By combining the radical candor afforded by a neutral forum with the safety of a moderated environment and accountability of a voting system, organizations can improve alignment while acting on new insights regardless of their size.

To learn more about ViaVote and its approach to continuous improvement, please visit www.viavote.com or contact us at info@viavote.com.

5) <http://www.conecomm.com/news-blog/2016-cone-communications-millennial-employee-engagement-study-press-release>