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CWT Center for Workforce Transformation
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The State of Employee Listening 2025

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Introduction

In 2025, the organizational landscape continues to shift. Technologies like generative AI and automation are transforming the way we work, and employees' expectations for what makes for a positive employee experience are transforming alongside them.

Now in its fourth year, Perceptyx's annual State of Employee Listening study, conducted by the **Center for Workforce Transformation**, includes the key employee listening and action practices utilized by the most successful organizations and the resulting business success they experience relative to their peers. For the first time, the report also includes new insights from learning & development (L&D) professionals to reveal how the most mature organizations are uniting listening and learning to make both more effective.

Organizations that utilize these listening and action best practices are:

12x more likely to continually evaluate the success of their listening program in addressing their business priorities

9x more likely to have made real progress toward the achievement of their top business and talent objectives

6.2x more likely to be very satisfied with their listening and action program today

1.8x as likely to be using employee listening data and 360 feedback to personalize their employee coaching and development programs

1.9x as likely to have effective employee coaching and development programs

The data make it clear: aligning employee listening programs with business objectives, ensuring robust follow-through, and then leveraging that data for personalized coaching and development all lead to positive, measurable outcomes. Organizations that successfully integrate these practices not only boost employee engagement, but also drive innovation, customer satisfaction, and improved financial performance. HR leaders must continue to refine and mature their listening and learning strategies, ensuring they have the right systems in place to act on employee feedback at all levels of the organization.

Successful organizations understand that their greatest competitive advantage lies in motivating their people to action — listening to their feedback, equipping them with the right skills and resources, and creating space for them to take intentional data-informed steps to improve their employee experience. This is the key to a high-performance culture.

Research Focus:
The Convergence of Listening, Acting & Learning

The employee experience landscape has evolved over the years we have reported on the state of employee listening, yet many key factors remain consistent. For this fourth annual report, we continue to examine the practices that constitute a comprehensive listening and action strategy, how organizations are listening today, the topics they are focused on, and, importantly, how they use employee feedback to take concrete actions at all levels to improve the experience. We also revisit how HR leaders are connecting their listening strategy to broader business and talent priorities — outside of a core desire to capture and decode employee sentiment — and how effective those strategies are today.

Given the growing focus on personalization and even hyper-personalization in the learning and development (L&D) space, we also sought to understand current leadership development practices and whether organizations are integrating employee feedback to deliver more tailored development programming for people leaders. Leaders in large organizations will gain insight into how they compare with other, similar organizations and what the right next steps are to effectively transform their workforce — and especially employees in leadership roles — through listening and action.

To answer these questions, we interviewed more than 750 senior human resources leaders from global organizations with 1,000+ employees, including decision-makers, influencers, and practitioners deeply involved in their organizations' employee listening and L&D programs.

Using the information gathered from this current study and the previous **2022**, **2023**, and **2024** State of Employee Listening studies, the Center for Workforce Transformation team of behavioral scientists has developed:

- A 4-stage maturity model that describes the progression of an employee listening and action program from its most fundamental to its most robust,
- An **interactive assessment** to help any organization determine where they sit today along this continuum, and
- Proven strategies to evolve a listening and action program and realize the associated benefits.

One thing that hasn't changed is that no two organizations approach listening and action exactly the same way. However, there are many consistent practices that create successful outcomes, and we frequently see organizations that don't use them struggle. We want to highlight these practices so organizations can start from where they are today and move toward a more effective listening and action program in the future.
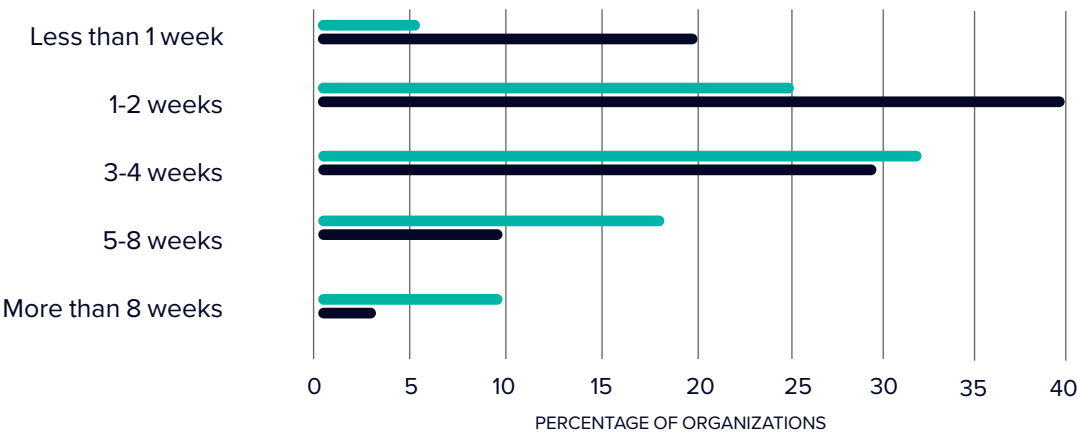
The listening and action environment has changed rapidly over the past decade.

2014	2022	2023	2024	2025
18% surveying more than once per year	**60%** listening at least quarterly	**70%** listening at least quarterly	**78%** listening at least quarterly	**75%** listening at least quarterly
Several months to share and develop plans	**60%** share results within 4 weeks of survey	**70%** develop plans within 4 weeks of survey	**70%** develop plans within 4 weeks of survey	**70%** develop plans within 4 weeks of survey

The time it takes managers to receive data after a listening event is decreasing.
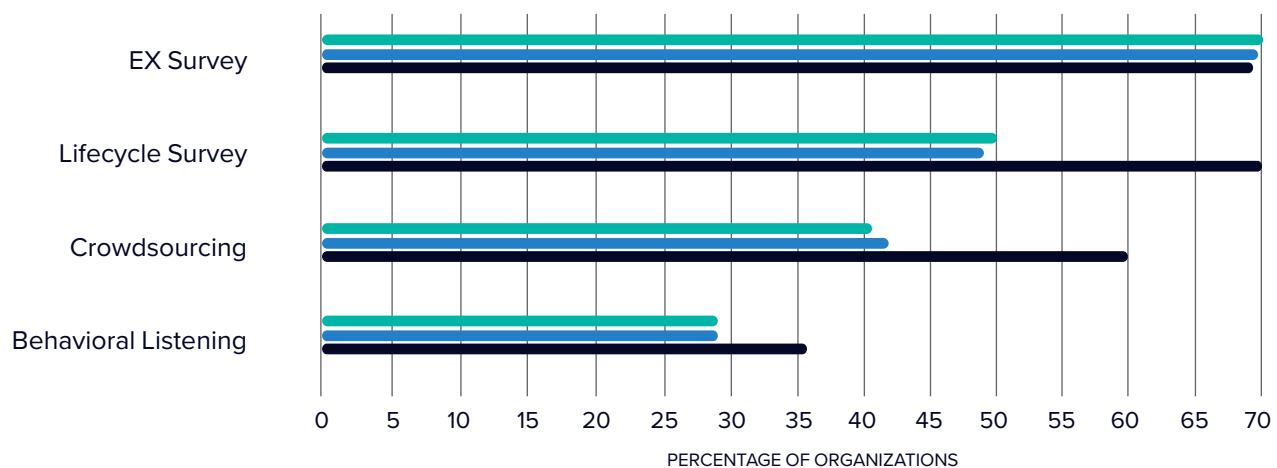
● 2022   ● 2025

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations are diversifying their listening programs, with many more using methodologies such as crowdsourcing (60% in 2025 vs. 43% in 2024) and listening for behaviors like 360 feedback (36% in 2025 vs. 28% in 2024) than in prior years. However, with the addition of new listening methods, there has been a slight reduction in the frequency of full census listening events (92% in 2025 vs. 98% in 2024). Despite this, 95% of decision-makers report maintaining or increasing their listening efforts in the last 12 months, with 94% planning to do the same in the upcoming year. With various listening events occurring throughout an organization, most of the enterprises in our study are continuously gathering feedback.

Organizations are broadening their programs to include more types of listening.

● 2023   ● 2024   ● 2025

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS

Not only are organizations asking for employee feedback in a variety of ways, but they are as diverse as ever in the aspects of the work experience they hope to measure. While employee engagement continues to top the list, the gap between the most common topics is as low as we have seen in the study's four-year history. Interestingly, the biggest change in the topics studied is the increased importance of two categories, especially for L&D leaders, as they think about new programs and processes for 2025 and beyond: career growth and performance enablement.

Top Themes Enterprises Are Seeking Employee Feedback About:

42% Employee Engagement
40% Growth & Development
39% Performance Enablement
38% Teamwork & Collaboration
37% DEIB
37% Well-being

In 2025, a substantial shift was observed in the barriers to successful listening programs. While taking effective action remains one of the top five barriers cited, internal capabilities are emerging as a bigger concern. While organizations are expanding their listening programs, resources to act (HR time, analytics capabilities, alignment to business strategy) are insufficient. Only about 1 in 4 organizations have the internal support they need, with half relying heavily on external partners. These concerns are a likely explanation for the decrease in overall listening and action maturity seen in this study.

As expected, one of the top qualities organizations seek in a vendor partner — after technology and AI analytics — is the ability to facilitate manager action, along with clear tracking and reporting of those actions. HR leaders recognize that to achieve their program goals, they must drive action deeper within the organization.

Top 5 Barriers to Employee Listening Program Success

30% HR Workload
27% Internal People Analytics Capabilities
24% Manager Talent/Skills
24% Alignment to Business Outcomes
22% Action Planning/Taking Follow-Up Actions

Only 1 in 4

have the support they need to overcome these barriers

Only 1 in 4 have the support they need internally to overcome these barriers. Half lean heavily on external partners.

This struggle to find the internal resources to focus on listening and action internally has hindered program effectiveness and maturity. Only about 1 in 3 are extremely satisfied with their current program, and less than 1 in 4 are confident that their listening strategy will address their business challenges. In contrast, the most mature organizations are 2.5x as likely to be very satisfied with their listening and
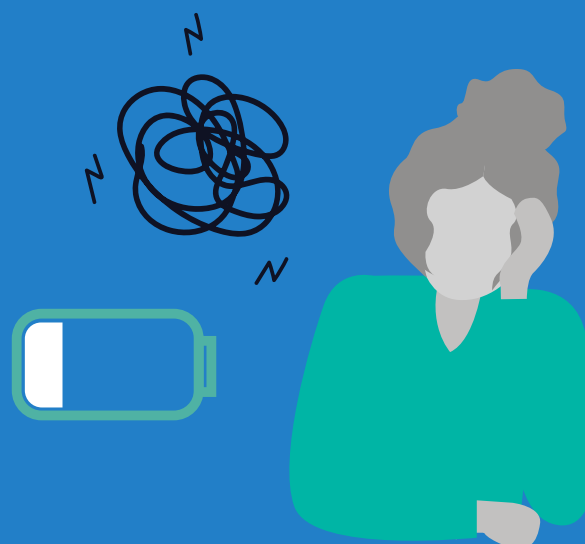
action programs and are confident their programs will effectively solve their key business challenges.

Organizations with the most robust listening and action strategies report different barriers. They no longer cite internal challenges, instead focusing on two key areas: action planning/taking follow-up actions and technical integration with other business data. This underscores the need for an analytics and action program to ensure less mature organizations deliver the right data to the right people for effective decision-making.

A Note About HR Burnout

Given the rapid changes in the Human Resources field and the increasing pressures on HR, it's no surprise that internal resource challenges are emerging for some organizations. In addition to questions about listening and the links to L&D programs, we also asked HR leaders about their personal work experiences. Overall, more than 4 in 10 say their jobs have become much more difficult over the past year, and a full 30% have considered leaving the HR profession entirely. 1 in 3 is experiencing mental and physical exhaustion — early warning signs of burnout — while 1 in 4 admits to already being burned out.

However, organizations that help their HR professionals focus on what they love — improving the employee experience and fostering employee growth — see positive outcomes for both the individuals and the organization. For instance, when leaders can say that their coaching and development program is effective in improving employee performance, or that their organization regularly listens to and acts on employee feedback, they are 1.5x as likely to be fully engaged

in their jobs than if they can't. Additionally, HR leaders in organizations with the most mature listening and action programs are less than half as likely to say they are considering leaving the HR field.

Organizations looking to keep their HR talent healthy and engaged in 2025 should assess the programs they are responsible for. Do these programs have adequate support? Are HR leaders equipped with the necessary resources to execute these strategies? If not, it's essential to identify what can be done to help. Without proper resources, not only will your listening and learning strategies be at risk, but so will your HR leaders' well-being and engagement.

Employee Listening and Action Maturity Today

750+
Organizations

13
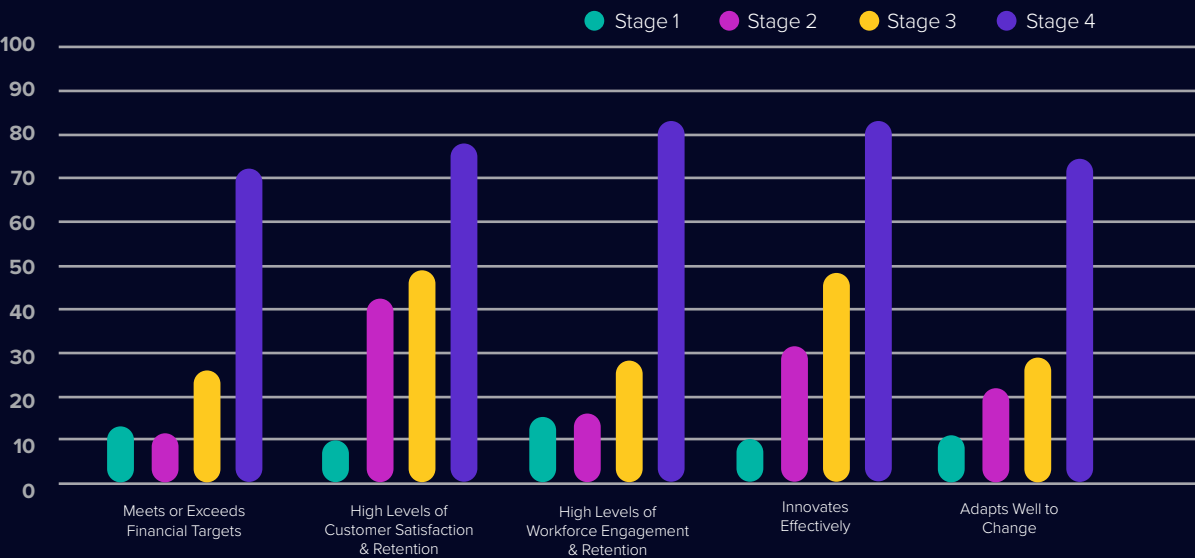**Differentiating Listening Practices**

4
Stages of Listening and Action Maturity

Perceptyx's first comprehensive study of large organizations, conducted in 2022, examined more than 65 common practices in employee listening. Of those, 13 emerged as key differentiators in achieving more favorable people and business outcomes and organizations were categorized along a maturity curve. Since then, Perceptyx's Center for Workforce Transformation has been using this 4-stage maturity model to define the listening and action strategies across organizations. These stages describe the quality of the listening and action program and the steps needed to move an organization up the continuum from listening and acting episodically to a continuous listening and action strategy that activates all employees in the process of creating positive change.

The most mature organizations are:

6x as likely to exceed financial targets,
8x as likely to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction,
6x as likely to retain talent, even during times of high attrition,
6x as likely to adapt well to change, and
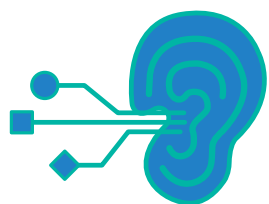**8x** as likely to innovate effectively

Organizational Outcomes by Maturity Level

Key Differentiators of Listening and Action Maturity

Researchers at the Center for Workforce Transformation identified some significant commonalities within each maturity level. Each has a component of both listening and action — present in the most mature organizations and lagging in those less mature organizations. When present, these factors ensure that organizations can move more quickly from gathering and reporting insights to impacting the daily experience of employees and the business outcomes they touch.

Listening Channels

Are you matching the listening event to the business problems you are trying to solve?

EX Survey	**69%** use today
Lifecycle Survey	**70%** use today
Crowdsourcing	**60%** use today
Behavioral Listening	**36%** use today

A mature listening and action strategy begins with the business problem or talent priority that needs to be addressed and takes a holistic view of all listening events to ensure that the right people provide feedback on the right subjects, at the right times, using the right methodology. Less mature organizations often ask the same survey items at the same cadence and connect the findings after the fact, leaving gaps without relevant insights. This includes targeted listening about any behavior changes or action steps employees have observed and participated in to ensure that investments in employee listening show a measurable impact.
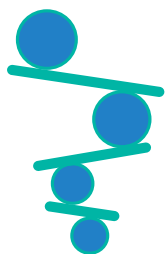
Speed

How long does it take for employees to feel the change?

While **88%** of organizations provide results within 4 weeks, Stage 4 organizations are nearly twice as likely to initiate action that quickly.

A traditional employee listening and action event has a cycle of feedback, action planning, and hopefully follow-through. At the end of this cycle, the goal is that these actions result in changes employees can feel. While technology has certainly accelerated the timeline from gathering feedback to reporting results, many at the lower levels of maturity get stuck early on — either by holding results centrally or not expecting everyone in the organization to participate in action-taking. Even for those with high listening maturity, actions disconnected from daily work and real follow-through remain key challenges. Organizations need ways to involve employees at all levels in easy, prioritized, relevant, and proven actions that enhance day-to-day effectiveness rather than distract from it.

Agility

How quickly can your listening and action strategy adapt to new business needs?

68% of Stage 1 organizations have the same listening strategy as a year ago, while **78%** of Stage 4 organizations have made significant changes.

A successful listening strategy can adapt to new business and talent priorities as they arise and quickly take action on the relevant feedback. Organizations that do this well spend less time crafting the perfect questions to track over decades and more time focused on quickly gathering the most relevant information and taking effective action. An agile listening strategy is one that can adapt the questions, adapt the listening methodology, and suggest meaningful action as new problems surface. Mature organizations understand how to take information from one listening event and turn it into actions whose effectiveness can be assessed with the next listening event. Leaders in agile listening organizations ask themselves: What information do we need? How can we get it? What do we need to do differently now that we have the information?

Integration

How do all the listening events in your organization work together to form a comprehensive listening and action strategy?

74% of Stage 4 organizations connect employee listening data to other business priorities compared with just **10%** at Stage 1.

The most effective organizations integrate employee feedback with other key metrics and business systems to understand the unique impact employees have on important outcomes. This includes connecting the appropriate level of employee feedback to important metrics for individuals, teams, departments, and the organization at large. Early in the maturation process, connecting disparate listening events may be enough. These are the cleanest and most direct relationships. As an organization matures, an assessment of action steps is included to demonstrate collective behavior changes. However, to demonstrate impact on the outcomes that matter most to executives, qualitative and quantitative connections to other measurable data must be made. The relationships between employee feedback and other areas of the business are just one of many key inputs, so care must be taken to understand these linkages and how they fit into the broader business and talent environment where the organization operates.

The 4 Stages of Organizational Listening and Action Maturity

Stage 1: Episodic Listening and Action

2023
20%
of organizations

2024
11%
of organizations

2025
9%
of organizations

Organizations at this stage tend to have a traditional and straightforward listening strategy, often focused on a single survey event or a few isolated survey events on a tightly planned schedule. Their action strategy tends to be centered in Human Resources, with most follow-up to employee feedback seen as a function of HR. Listening events such as exit surveys, employee experience surveys, or developmental 360s are centered in different, discrete areas, often without connection. Their listening strategy tends to be consistent year after year, with few changes and is often successful at accomplishing a few discrete people-focused goals. However, employee listening results are typically isolated from the larger business strategy, and translating the impact of employee feedback to the broader organization, including executives outside of Human Resources (HR), is difficult or missing. These organizations tend to act in a top-down manner, with planned, contained distribution of results and actions. It's simply not seen as important or necessary for others to participate in the action.

Stage 2: Topical Listening and Action

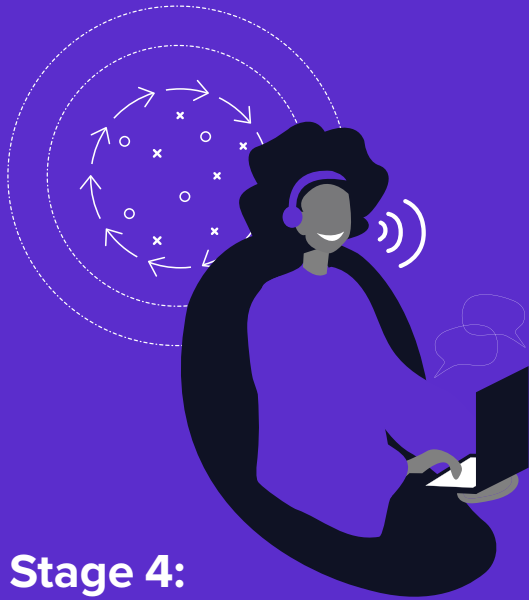| **2023**	**2024**	**2025**
30%	**17%**	**37%**
of organizations	of organizations	of organizations

Organizations at this stage have seen the benefit of applying employee feedback to not only large-scale listening events but also to deep-dive topical events (e.g., M&A, IPO, senior leadership changes), projects geared toward specific goals (e.g., DEIB), or broad-scale moments in the life of an employee such as exit surveys or 360 feedback for managers. These listening projects are still discrete and still centered in Human Resources, but often other departments reach out to HR to ask for assistance with their own specific goals. While each project likely has a broader business priority attached, closing the loop to demonstrate that impact is often unsuccessful. Results are communicated, though not integrated with the day-to-day priorities of individuals, teams, or departments. Actions taken in response to employee feedback are still top-down but often reside within the specific department seeking the feedback. Action is encouraged at lower levels, but there is no clear accountability mechanism or resources dedicated, so change is sporadic and the focus tends to be on compliance (did a manager submit an action plan?) instead of outcomes (did the employee experience improve because of actions taken?).

Stage 3: Strategic Listening and Action

2023	**2024**	**2025**
27%	**36%**	**39%**
of organizations	of organizations	of organizations

Organizations at Stage 3 have established a clear connection between their listening strategy and other business priorities. They often address business problems and concerns using multiple methodologies, utilizing listening channels outside traditional surveys. Less importance is placed on a single, large-scale listening event; instead, that survey is used to diagnose successes and opportunities to improve with additional listening and action. There is some integration of employee experience perceptions of the moments that matter across the employee lifecycle: hiring, onboarding, exit, promotion, etc. Manager development is sometimes personalized with EX listening or 360 feedback data to ensure the right behaviors are targeted for growth. There are strategic, well-publicized actions happening throughout the organization, and leaders at all levels are comfortable interpreting and acting on feedback. There is some accountability in place for action and managers are given tools to encourage their development. Executives don't make major decisions without seeking suggestions from employees or understanding the impact on people's perceptions. Messaging about the feedback received and the actions to be taken is transparent and communicated throughout the organization.
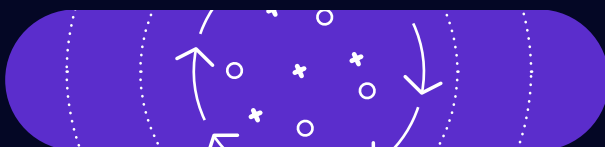
Stage 4:
Continuous Listening and Action

2023	2024	2025
23%	**36%**	**15%**
of organizations	of organizations	of organizations

The employee experience is not the responsibility of HR or the executive team. Instead, everyone is activated to contribute to the conversation.

The most mature organizations have a robust and flexible listening program, integrated deeply into their overall business strategy, enabling workforce transformation at speed and at scale. Stage 4 organizations continue to track and get ahead of workforce issues using regularly planned census events, but are also able to determine the problem they intend to solve and quickly deploy the proper type of listening to address it. Manager and leader development plans often include important information about leader behavior as captured through 360 feedback or other behavioral listening specifically focused on those leaders. The most significant need for organizations at this level is a mechanism for increasing speed and scale of actions, without disrupting the flow of work. Managers get frequent developmental feedback and have the tools and support to work with their teams to make substantive changes quickly. The employee experience is not the responsibility of human resources or the executive team. Instead, everyone in the organization is activated to contribute to the conversation whether by asking, answering, contributing an idea or solution, participating in developmental work to change their behavior, or listening deeply to team members.

Listening Maturity Differs by Organizational Characteristics

As the Center for Workforce Transformation continues to assess and track organizational maturity across time, we wanted to combine data to assess maturity for different types of organizations. Because of systemic factors within organizations of different sizes or industries, segmenting them for comparison can provide important new information. Looking at the combined datasets of more than 4,000 HR leaders across all four years of our study, we noted a number of key differences.

Organization Size

One characteristic of importance is the size of an organization. Organizations of different sizes come with different resources (perhaps a small HR team versus a robust, multi-team HR service center), different change readiness characteristics, different corporate footprints, and different business challenges.

The largest organizations had a fairly even distribution across the different maturity levels. This shouldn't surprise us as while they may have large teams and plentiful resources, the distance between executive teams and the frontline is large, making it difficult to implement changes quickly. That said, innovative CHROs and a desire for a very public employee value proposition (EVP) may prompt these organizations to radical change.

Enterprises with less than 20,000 or more employees cluster in the middle of the maturity curve. They may have the resources to do a lot of listening, but effective actions on that scale, as well as clear integrations to other performance outcomes elude this group. For most, the clear next step is to begin to draw connections to other business and talent outcomes and focus all employees on implementing the desired changes.

Small enterprises have many of the same challenges, as noted by a decline in robust action-taking, but they remain among the most mature due to their agility and speed. The common barriers of HR workload and lack of internal analytics capabilities rear their heads here and securing a strong external partner may ensure a renewed focus on next steps. For organizations of all sizes, effective follow-up remains a core barrier to the success of the listening program success.

Listening Maturity Differs by Size of the Organization

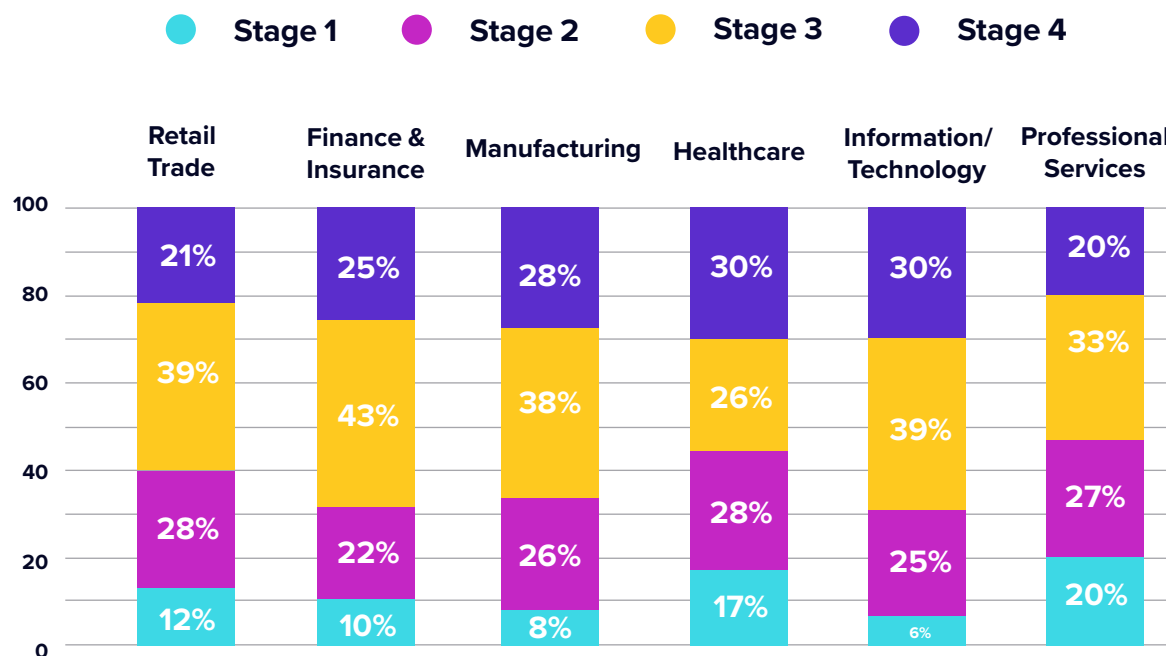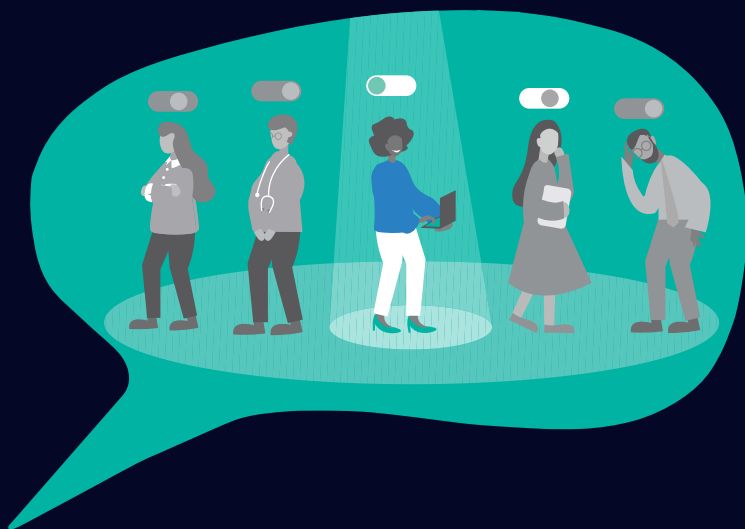| Org Size	1K-5K	5K-10K	10K-20K	20,000+
Stage 4	27%	23%	16%	27%
Stage 3	35%	33%	39%	25%
Stage 2	26%	28%	31%	26%
Stage 1	12%	15%	14%	21%

Industry

The industry an organization belongs to can also impact its level of listening maturity. High-turnover organizations, like those in retail, are much less likely to cascade actions down to the frontlines. This is often the case because the workforce population who responded to the listening event, including front-line management, is markedly different by the time results are disseminated and action is taken. In addition, organizations with large frontline populations can be difficult to reach, difficult to discuss results with, and difficult to action plan with because it disrupts their flow of work. In contrast, organizations with populations who spend most of their time captive in front of a computer may be easier to reach. However, their HR populations are among the ones suffering from data and work overload, stopping many of them at Stage 3. Those populations may also have more difficulty drawing clear relationships between listening insights and other performance metrics as they are often more subjective.

Listening Maturity Differs by Industry

Legend: ● Stage 1 ● Stage 2 ● Stage 3 ● Stage 4

	Retail Trade	Finance & Insurance	Manufacturing	Healthcare	Information/ Technology	Professional Services
Stage 4	21%	25%	28%	30%	30%	20%
Stage 3	39%	43%	38%	26%	39%	33%
Stage 2	28%	22%	26%	28%	25%	27%
Stage 1	12%	10%	8%	17%	6%	20%

Movement in Maturity: Regression to the Mean

The 2025 study showed an interesting organizational phenomenon. While many of the most mature organizations saw internal resources dwindle and a pullback to a strategy that includes less in the way of analytics and action, the least mature enterprises pressed ahead by adding more modern types of listening to their portfolio. The great news is that for many organizations there is more and better data than ever before. The not-so-great news is that without the proper analytics resources and action strategies in place, the programs themselves aren't having the intended impact.

When asked about the barriers organizations face in taking real, effective action on listening event insights, the results were the same for every level within the organization, from senior leaders to managers, from HR to the employees themselves. People are planning, and they are setting goals based on the results, but they are not following through. The consistent number two barrier sheds additional light on the issues organizations face: getting everyone

The consistent number two barrier sheds additional light on the issues organizations face: getting everyone together to plan actions and then execute those actions is disruptive.

together to plan actions and then execute those actions is disruptive. Most organizations struggle to find the time to get everyone together to do the work once, let alone via multiple follow-up meetings. Even among the most mature organizations, follow-through remains a barrier, confirming that action at all levels requires continued focus, even at Stage 4.

Step 1:
Set Clear Program Goals

Step 2:
Define Performance Outcomes Connected to Overall Business Strategy

Step 3:
Secure Executive Support

Step 4:
Listen Frequently and in Multiple Channels

Step 5:
Invest in Advanced Analytics to Target Actions

Step 6:
Act from the Top Down and the Bottom Up

Whether an organization is just beginning its listening and action program or has worked at it for decades, the most successful organizations at every level of maturity begin with the end in mind. This means starting with the important outcomes a business is already working towards and aiming listening events at these goals. Choose metrics that can be both directly impacted by improving the employee experience (e.g., retention) and some that may be impacted more indirectly (e.g., efficiency). Using these outcomes allows the first three steps to work in tandem. When the goals of a listening and action program are connected to the overall business strategy, executives in the organization become more invested in the success of the program and are more likely to contribute positively to the outcome.

As organizations mature in their listening and action strategy, leaders think beyond an annual census survey. They ask themselves if successfully reaching their goals requires qualitative or crowdsourced feedback from employees, or if there is a specific population they should target or an event that should be focused on? They start to look critically at manager development programs to ensure that employee sentiment is a factor that's considered. Once all of this data is amassed, including necessary business data outside of listening events, such as turnover rate, organizations need to ensure they have the resources — either internally or externally — to tell a compelling story about the relationship between

the sentiment of your employees and the progress toward your business goals.

Effective and sustained action to improve the employee experience, while the most advanced step in the maturation curve, doesn't begin at the end of the process. The most mature organizations know that these efforts begin back at Step 1. Proper alignment ensures that all levels of the organization are committed to devoting the time and attention needed to make real change. These organizations have often unwittingly introduced a new barrier to effective action: lots of data. This is not to say that all the data isn't important and doesn't help determine the important places for action. Yet, many people leaders don't have the necessary skills or time in their day to sort through and create actions that will be effective. This is why utilizing advanced analytics to identify and surface the topics where action is not only most needed, but will be most effective is important to ensure no time is wasted in the action process.

Organizations that have sustained success with actions don't plan actions in isolation from the day-to-day work or expect just leaders or HR to act. Instead, those that achieve the greatest levels of success involve employees at all levels of the organization and equip those employees to develop new habits and behaviors that will improve the experience for everyone.

Moving Up the Maturity Curve, One Step at a Time.

As organizations evolve their listening strategies, it's important to systematically build from one step to the next, ensuring a solid foundation for the expanded programs they create. While it can be tempting to skip a step or jump to the end, often this results in less successful outcomes — eroding executive support and buy-in at all levels, and taking the organization backward to do some repair work before moving on.

That said, each step doesn't need to take a long time and it's likely that organizations will find themselves revisiting or struggling to ensure earlier steps are in order with each listening event. This is particularly true when new methodologies or new business goals are introduced.

Stage 4:
Continuous Listening and Action

Stage 3:
Strategic Listening and Action

Stage 2:
Topical Listening and Action

Stage 1:
Episodic Listening and Action

Step 1:
Set Clear Program Goals

Step 2:
Define Performance Outcomes Connected to Overall Business Strategy

Step 3:
Secure Executive Support

Step 4:
Listen Frequently and in Multiple Channels

Step 5:
Invest in Advanced Analytics to Target Actions

Step 6:
Act from the Top Down and the Bottom Up

A Closer Look at Learning and Development

Learning and development (L&D) programs are facing major disruption. While traditional group training is still the most frequent go-to for employee development, new methods of asynchronous and AI-powered learning are on the rise, edging out 1-on-1 coaching in 2025. Not only are these solutions cheaper and faster to implement, they allow for real-time personalization of the content, ensuring that the right people are learning the right skills.

Coaching and Development Methods in Regular Use

48% Group Training/Coaching

42% On-the-Job Mentoring

36% Peer-to-Peer Training/Coaching

33% Asynchronous Digital Platforms

32% AI-Powered Asynchronous Platforms

30% 1-on-1 Training/Coaching

The effectiveness of an organization's L&D program leads to some of the same outcomes as effective employee feedback programs. Organizations with the most effective L&D programs are:

2.3x as likely to meet or exceed financial targets,

2.3x as likely to achieve high levels of workforce engagement and retention, and

2.2x as likely to adapt well to change.

But what makes some of these coaching and development programs more effective than others? Again, it's dependent on some of the same things that lead organizations to effectively act on employee feedback. This should be unsurprising as both are about changing employee behavior, and both work better when leaders start with the end in mind. Successful coaching and development programs are nearly 3x as likely to have a clear set of outcomes defined.

Personalization (tailoring learning using personas, such as managers) and hyper-personalization (tailoring learning using real-time data about an individual learner) of L&D is here, and it's only increasing. 7 in 10 HR leaders say they are doing more personalization in their programs than they were 12 months ago, with just 5% saying they are personalizing less frequently. In addition, nearly 3 in 4 say they plan to do even more personalization in the next year. There are many ways that an organization can personalize their learning, but programs are nearly twice as likely to be effective when they utilize specific data about and from employees. Mature listening organizations have a head start on personalization, with a wealth of data about their employees' experience at their fingertips.

Compared with the least mature listening organizations, the most mature are:

1.8x as likely to use 360 feedback, and

1.8x as likely to use employee experience data to personalize learning.

Given this finding, organizations would do well to ensure that their coaching and development activities and employee listening activities work together, rather than in silos — and the most robust programs already do! **Among Stages 3 and 4 listening programs, 77% also succeed in coaching and development compared with just 40% among Stage 1 and 2 listeners.** This is likely because they use what they learn about employees through listening to improve their coaching and development approach.

The Critical Link Between Business Outcomes and Employee Listening

It's long established that a positive employee experience leads to better performance outcomes. The great news for organizations is that it's one factor they can control within the walls of their business. While market pressures, competitor decisions, and geopolitical changes impact business performance every day, leaders must act within those constraints instead of on them directly. Similarly, strategic decisions, such as capital improvements or new sales and marketing investments, can have a significant effect on organizational performance, but are constrained by budgets and can be copied or outdone by competitors. However an organization's human capital is truly unique and can be harnessed to produce more, reduce waste, drive customer satisfaction, and innovate effectively — if the employee experience the organization creates enables these things.

HR leaders must first understand the key business and talent priorities of the organization's C-suite and its board of directors. Leaders must then ensure that their listening and action strategy is used effectively to improve the metrics associated with achieving those broader goals. This could include other employee sentiment metrics, such as company advocacy, or more downstream metrics such as a reduction of safety incidents.

After more than two decades of studying enterprise organizations, Perceptyx identified the most common business and talent priorities executive teams are focused on today. By starting there, and orienting each listening event to gather clear and compelling insights directly from employees through multiple methodologies, organizations can clear that hurdle and move on to using advanced analytics to target the appropriate actions.

Employee Engagement/ eNPS

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

Psychological Safety

Safety Culture

Employee Health & Well-Being

Customer Orientation/ Centricity

Manager Effectiveness

Employee Performance/ Employee Productivity

Employee Retention

Career Progression/ Career Pathways

Continuous Improvement/ Innovation

Transformation & Change

M&A Change Management

Hybrid Work Experience

Profitability/ Efficiency

Sustainability

Because the business and talent priorities across large organizations can vary considerably, and will inevitably change over time given both internal and external dynamics, it's important to assess and reassess often. We know that the most mature organizations are already doing this effectively. While in 2025, only a quarter of all organizations studied (25%) have a clear set of outcomes they hope to achieve with their listening programs, that number more than triples for Stage 4 organizations to 87%.

As with the overall maturity level for 2025, these numbers represent a significant pullback from 2024, when leaders were more confident in their business aims and that their listening and action program could help achieve them. Conversely, more leaders acknowledge a need for support from outside their organization to identify these goals. Another significant shift from 2024 is the ability for organizations to get the support they need internally vs. externally from a vendor. In 2024, HR leaders were equally likely to say they had the resources and support internally (42%) and from their listening vendor to overcome their barriers to success. However, in 2025, they are nearly twice as likely to have the support they need to overcome these barriers from their vendor partner as they are internally (50% vs. 27%).

2024	2025
40%	**25%**

have a clear set of defined business outcomes they hope to achieve with their listening and action program

2024	2025
43%	**27%**

are confident their current listening program will help them achieve these business outcomes

2024	2025
40%	**44%**

need external support to identify these outcomes

Connecting the listening and action strategy to the larger business goals of the organization is also a critical step to securing executive support and manager buy-in. **Notably, leaders whose organizations have defined a clear set of outcomes they want to achieve through listening are nearly 3x as likely to say they are making real progress on important business and talent priorities through their program.**

Why Employee Activation is Transforming EX

Regardless of the maturity level of the organization's listening and action strategy, HR leaders say a huge barrier to change is that even when plans are created, they aren't followed through. A key difference for mature organizations is that they have many more people mobilized to act — increasing the probability that effective follow-through occurs. Leaders in organizations activating employees at all levels say their employees feel change much more quickly than those that do not, and more quickly than in organizations with capable HR business partners who create plans but have no direct team accountability for execution.
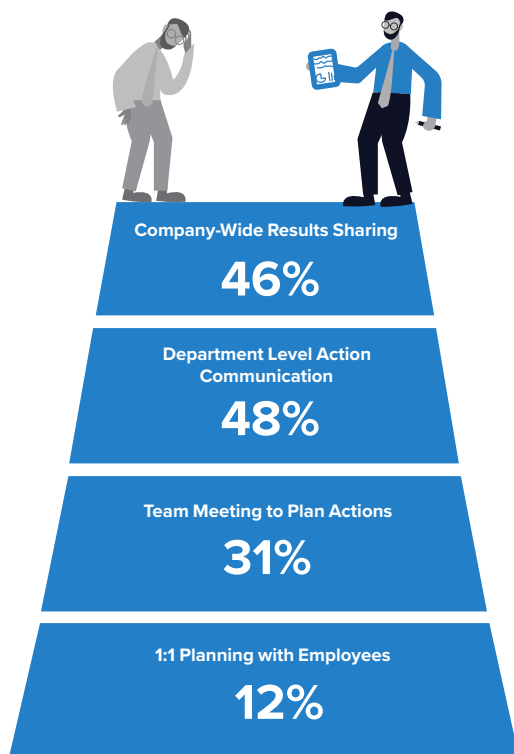
More than

7 in 10

organizations
at Stage 4

Less than

1 in 10

organizations
at Stage 1

are able to create change at all levels of the organization.

Which of the following did your organization do in response to a recent employee listening event?

Company-Wide Results Sharing
46%

Department Level Action Communication
48%

Team Meeting to Plan Actions
31%

1:1 Planning with Employees
12%

Effective action starts with disseminating the feedback captured from listening events. Fewer than 1 in 3 leaders interviewed felt strongly that their organization does a great job of sharing listening results with all levels of the organization. As we get farther away from executive leadership or HR-led action and into the larger employee population, actioning declines until only about a quarter of employees have a direct team meeting to make a dedicated plan. Only 1 in 10 meet with their manager one-on-one about results and to plan action steps.

Organizations hoping to make real changes to their employee experience based on feedback from listening events must be able to act at all levels. This includes identifying strategy changes at an executive level, making policy and programmatic changes in HR, ensuring managers grow and develop the right behaviors to engage their teams, and enabling employees to offer solutions from their vantage point while building new habits that contribute to positive experiences for their colleagues. Some examples of these types of actions might be:

Leadership Actions
- Invest in software because employees report barriers to customer experience with multiple systems.
- Make changes to corporate vision and values when they don't resonate with candidates the organization is hoping to attract or employees who have left the organization.

HR Actions
- Ensure manager development is personalized and effective by incorporating employee feedback on their behaviors.
- Increase focus on retention of certain employee groups when exit interviews suggest a lack of development opportunities.

Manager Actions
- Increase 1:1 time with employees when they report a lack of trust.
- Take the time to ensure all team members have a chance to share in meetings because employees say they need more space to speak up.

Employee Actions
- Give recognition to team members in other departments for actions that increase collaboration and cooperation.
- Ask experts closest to the work to contribute ideas for making processes more efficient.
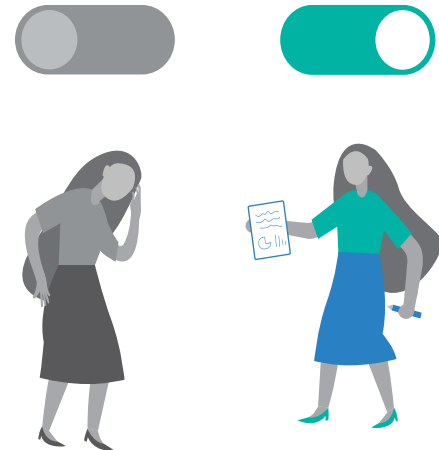
Each of these groups has an important role to play to improve the employee experience. When organizations seek feedback and ideas from active, prospective, or exiting employees, it's essential that they utilize that feedback to make positive changes. When change isn't made, employees begin to wonder if it's worth the effort to continue to contribute to the conversation. This disengagement from the process often precedes thoughts of exit as well as actual exits from the organization — an outcome no leader wants.

However, not all changes are created equal. The closer the environmental change is to the employee's day-to-day work, the more acutely that change is felt. Because of this, managers continue to have an outsized impact on the changes that impact employees most. Traditional manager-led action planning is quite effective when it's done well. The problem for most managers is that while action planning might be getting done, *action taking* falls off. The latest Perceptyx Benchmarks found that even in organizations that expect action to take place, 71% of employees responded favorably that results were shared, 59% said actions were created, but only 51% said improvements were made as a result of their recent listening events. This is consistent with the biggest barrier to effective manager change from this study: goals are set, but follow-through is difficult.

The problem for most managers is that while action planning might be getting done, *action taking* falls off.

When asked, HR leaders also say that their people leaders lack management skills and the ability to interpret results to know what to act on. Research has also shown that managers are increasingly overwhelmed by the competing priorities of the organization and the expectations of their teams. To address this, organizations need a solution that simplifies the reported data and provides relevant suggestions, rooted in behavioral science, for the actions that will be most effective. This frees up managers to actually take action rather than spending valuable time deciding which actions will generate the desired results.

An additional challenge reported is the disruption to daily work operations when teams are pulled together for meetings to review results or discuss responsive actions, including the difficulty of getting everyone together. The disruption of operations is especially true of industries with decentralized, deskless populations like healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, but deskbound workers are not immune. Workers who spend most of their time at desks are overburdened with meetings already, and bolting on an action planning process to their normal work day is often just too much. Even if we remove the constraints of time and practicality, actions disconnected from the work are more difficult to implement and stick with. Instead, the most mature organizations are turning to technology-enabled solutions that allow for consistent and regular action right in the flow of work.

The Journey from Insights to Impact

The key to unlocking the power of employee feedback lies in its integration across the organization. By ensuring that employees at every level — from the board room to the frontline — take action based on listening insights, organizations can achieve new levels of performance. The connection between employee insights and business results is clear. When organizations move from simply gathering feedback to truly acting on it, they foster an environment of trust, engagement, and continuous improvement. Equally important is the integration of learning and development with this feedback. A personalized approach to employee growth, powered by real-time insights, ensures that employees are continually developing in ways that directly align with organizational needs. Organizations that make the most of this integration move from isolated data points to a continuous, iterative cycle of improvement. Ultimately, it's using insights to influence real behavior change — quickly, collaboratively, and sustainably — that sets high-performing organizations apart. The most successful companies are those that not only listen but also apply what they hear to coach managers, foster innovation, and develop their people in meaningful ways. Leaders who commit to making feedback an ongoing process will see tangible, long-term impacts on their organization's success.

Curious how your organization's listening and action program compares?

Perceptyx has updated its exclusive interactive assessment to reveal where your organization sits on the listening and action maturity continuum today, and help you identify the next steps needed to advance and reach your goals.

In just five minutes, you'll be able to:

- Diagnose your current listening and action maturity stage, from Episodic to Continuous,

- Assess your program's unique strengths and opportunities for growth,

- Uncover the key questions to ask as you progress along the maturity curve, and

- Take action to realize the full value of your listening and actioning strategy.

Already completed an earlier version of the assessment?
Leverage the 2025 edition to benchmark your progress and access exclusive guidance from our Workforce Transformation Consultants to keep moving forward.

Launch the Assessment

Methodology

Research for this report utilized panel interviews, conducted in early 2025, with 750+ human resources decision-makers at organizations with more than 1,000 employees. This sample included leaders in the United States and Europe with organizations headquartered in seven countries and operating in all regions of the world. Since its inception, Perceptyx's workplace leadership panel has interviewed more than 4,100 senior leaders representing large, global organizations across all major industries. Comparison data points from previous studies are also included in this report.

About the Author

Emily Killham, currently a Senior Director and Head of the Center for Workforce Transformation at Perceptyx, has dedicated more than two decades to fostering better workplaces through data-driven insights. Her career, marked by a deep understanding of the links between employee experience and organizational success, has included partnering with some of the world's largest organizations, spanning all major industries and geographies. Centered on solving complex challenges through empirical analysis, Emily's expertise in quantifying the impacts of the worker experience on key business outcomes — such as profitability, productivity, turnover, customer loyalty, safety, and absenteeism — has made her a leading voice in the study of the employee experience. She has authored numerous reports on the efficacy of employee listening and action, and is a frequent contributor to discussions on the future of work within HR, tech, and business media outlets such as Forbes, SHRM, The Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, and the BBC.

Emily Killham.
Senior Director and Head of the Center for Workforce Transformation
Perceptyx

CWT Center for Workforce Transformation

BY PERCEPTYX

The Center for Workforce Transformation, operated by Perceptyx, has a mission to educate and inspire executive leaders, managers, and employees through timely, relevant, and actionable insights about the modern work experience. Via original research, media, industry-focused Consortia, peer groups, and exclusive events, the Center is helping to amplify the practices of the world's leading organizations — driving leader and workforce transformation at speed, at scale, and in sustainable ways.

Perceptyx

Perceptyx is the Employee Experience (EX) transformation company, providing enterprise-grade employee listening, analytics, and behavioral science that activates people and delivers business impact. More than 600 global enterprises, including one-third of the Fortune 100, use Perceptyx's multichannel employee listening, AI-powered recommendations, and personalized coaching to close the loop between insights and action. With an unrivaled technology platform and an in-house team of EX Experts, Perceptyx makes it easy for managers, HR executives, and business leaders to align their key business and talent priorities and drive positive organizational change.

For more info, or to speak with a member of our team, visit www.perceptyx.com.