

Equativo Research Plan

Project Context & Background

The project mission is to make the workplace better by creating a platform that provides a safe place for employees to engage with their employers without fear of recrimination or discrimination and allow them to interact with each other to seek direct advice and guidance.

The platform aims to bridge the communication gap between employees and employers. There is a strong business case for this, as companies with highly engaged teams generate 21% more profit than those who don't, and it has been found that two-thirds of people globally are not engaged at work.

Initial Problem Statement

During our first client meeting, we conducted a problem framing exercise which resulted in the following problem statement:

Employees need a trusted place to communicate and learn to feel empowered and engaged at work.

Research Objectives

We will aim to conduct a variety of research to gain insight into the reported gap in communication between employees and employers. We will seek to validate assumptions about employee engagement and retention rates, and more specifically, that providing a platform for communication will increase engagement, and by increasing engagement companies may decrease employee turnover and improve productivity.

Initial Assumptions

There are a few assumptions that we will try to validate in our research. These include:

- Employees would like to engage with their employers or other employees
- Employees do not currently engage with their employers on 'human' issues
- Having a safe place to communicate will increase employee engagement
- Employees would like to discuss things anonymously
- Employees trust their employers to open up
 - A platform to provide employees with advice or an opportunity to bring attention to a situation would make employees feel safe and provide an outlet to do so.

Research questions

- Get insight into how minority groups feel about expressing themselves at work
- Gain an understanding of how employers and employees define employee engagement
- Assess whether people feel engaged at work
 - What causes their change in engagement level
- Find out if people feel they can express concerns when necessary
- Get insight on how employees can find out policy information
 - What is their take on it (perceived privacy, ease of use, etc.)

Research methods and deliverables

For this research, we will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods as listed below.

Quantitative: The quantitative analysis will support the understanding of “the What?”.

Survey: We will conduct a survey to get insight into engagement and peoples’ perceived ability to communicate openly at work.

Competitive Analysis: We will perform a competitive analysis to gain insight into the current market and business opportunities.

Domain Research: We will look at the domain to understand the current marketplace and research in this area. We would like to gain insight into the findings of researchers and the current trends.

Qualitative: The qualitative analysis will support the understanding of “the Why?”.

SME Interviews: We will conduct interviews with Subject Matter Experts to gain insightful information about the domain and pain points.

User Interviews: We will conduct interviews with users to gain insight into their motivations, attitudes, behaviours and goals, and try to understand their pain points and frustrations within this domain.

Audiences

Our users would be anyone that works for a company who has purchased the platform. This includes people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities and so on.

Interview participants

For the user interviews, we will look to talk to a variety of people, including minorities or people who are different from the dominant culture of work.

For the SME interviews, we will look to speak with people who have experience in inclusion and diversity or HR roles. For example, those who are knowledgeable about their company's policies or have evaluated tools for measuring and improving employee engagement.

Interviews will be conducted both online and in-person. When conducted online, we will use video chat through Zoom. In-person interviews will be conducted in-person at WeWork.

The interview participants and the interview schedule are laid out in the following document:

[Interview participants & schedule](#)

Appendix: interview guide and scripts

Interview guide

We will aim to finalise our research by the end of sprint 1 (29th January).

We will aim to conduct 5 user interviews and 3 subject matter experts with a diverse range of participants from a variety of fields and backgrounds.

User Interview script

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today, I really appreciate you taking the time. We are here today to do some research for a new startup that is looking to provide a platform to improve employee engagement with their employers. The purpose of this interview is to understand a little bit more about the relationship between employees and their employers, on topics relating to diversity and inclusion, corporate policies and engagement.

We are interested in hearing about your perspective and experiences, but we understand that some of these questions or topics may be sensitive, so please let us know if you don't feel comfortable discussing anything, we can just skip the question.

These questions may be answered in relation to your current role or any past roles, please feel free to talk about any experience, but rest assured we will not share any of this information with your employer and your answers will be protected and anonymised.

Our conversation should last around 20 minutes. It would be great if I could record this, just to make sure I don't miss anything. The recording will be kept secure and I will be the only one who can listen to it. Would that be ok with you?

As a reminder, if at any point you don't feel comfortable answering a question, please let us know and we will move on to the next. Do you have any questions before we start?

- What is your current or most recent role at work?
- What type of company do you work for (in terms of size and industry)?
- How long have you been in your current role? *(if no details given about the previous role ask what they were doing before)*
- When do you feel most engaged at work?
 - Why do you think that is?
- Are there times when you haven't felt as engaged?
 - Why is that?
 - Is there anything your company could have done to help you?
- How well would you rate the following from 1-5, 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied?
 - Learning and training
 - Benefits
 - Compensation
 - Career development prospects
- Are you aware of your company's policies on certain things, for example, parental leave, redundancy package, holiday policy?
- If you wanted to access information on that policy, would you know where to find it?

- How do you currently contribute ideas towards business strategy?
- Have you suggested your company changes its policies on anything or voted for a change in policy?
- Some people have expressed feeling uncomfortable discussing certain topics at work. How comfortable would you feel discussing the following topics at work from a scale of 1-5, 1 being very uncomfortable and 5 being very comfortable?
 - Mental health
 - General health issues
 - Sexual orientation
 - Parental needs e.g. expressing milk
 - Religious needs
 - Harassment or bullying
- Who would you feel most comfortable discussing these with?
- Does your company have any networks or groups where you might be able to discuss things more freely?
- If you were to raise an issue with one of these topics, do you trust it would be handled appropriately?
- Can you think of any other discussion topics of this nature that have been raised at work?
- Do you feel your company could support you or your colleagues better? If so, how?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about diversity and inclusion?

SME Interview script

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today, I really appreciate you taking the time. We are here today to do some research for a new startup that is looking to provide a platform to improve employee engagement with their employers. The purpose of this interview is to understand a little bit more about the relationship between employees and their employers, on topics relating to diversity and inclusion, corporate policies and engagement.

We are interested in hearing about your perspective and experiences, but we understand that some of these questions or topics may be sensitive, so please let us know if you don't feel comfortable discussing anything, we can just skip the question.

These questions may be answered in relation to your current role or any past roles, please feel free to talk about any experience, but rest assured that your answers will be protected and anonymised.

Our conversation should last around 20 minutes. It would be great if I could record this, just to make sure I don't miss anything. The recording will be kept secure and I will be the only one who can listen to it. Would that be ok with you?

As a reminder, if at any point you don't feel comfortable answering a question, please let us know and we will move on to the next. Do you have any questions before we start?

- What is your current role at work?
- What type of company do you work for in terms of size and industry?
- How do you think other employees feel about your company in terms of satisfaction?

- How engaged do you feel the employees are?
- How do you define employee engagement?
- Does your company try to improve engagement? If so, how?
- How do you feel about your company's policies?
- How would one access information on your company's policies on certain things, for example, parental leave or a redundancy package?
- Do you feel your company's policies are in the interest of the company or the employee?
 - Why?
- Do you feel employees have the opportunity to influence company policy?
- How openly are the following topics discussed at work? 1 - 5, 1 being not discussed at all, 5 being discussed freely.
 - Mental health
 - General health issues
 - Sexual orientation
 - Parental needs e.g. expressing milk
 - Religious needs
 - Harassment or bullying
- Who would be the go-to person if an employee wants to discuss one of these topics?
- Are there any other challenges that you think employees are facing at work?
 - Do you feel your company could have supported employees better? If so, how?
- Does your company have any networks or groups where you might be able to discuss things more freely?
- Does your company use any software to measure and improve employee engagement?

- If so, can employees see the company policies on this?
 - Do you do any employee surveys?
 - How do you manage employee feedback?
- Is there anything else you want to mention?

Survey Questions

Screening Questions

- Are you over 18 years of age? (if no > end)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. We are looking to understand the relationship between employees and their employers, on topics relating to diversity and inclusion, corporate policies and engagement.

These questions may be answered in relation to your current role or any past roles, please feel free to talk about any experience, but rest assured your answers will be protected and anonymised.

If you're not currently employed in a company, please fill out the rest of the questionnaire keeping in mind a company where you have worked in the past.

- How many people work at your company?
 - 1-10
 - 11-100
 - 101-500
 - 501-1000
 - 1001-10,000
 - 10,000+
 - Not currently employed
 - Self-employed

Other Questions

- How do you feel about your company?
 - Very satisfied - Very dissatisfied (5)
- How engaged do you feel at work?
 - Very engaged - Very disengaged (5)
- Please check the statements that are true for you.
 - I receive good direction from management
 - I know what's expected of me
 - In my company, there is good communication
 - My workload is manageable
 - I feel challenged at work
 - I receive recognition for the level of contribution and effort I provide
 - I feel confident about my job security
 - I regularly receive feedback about my performance
 - None of the above

- Do you know how to access information on company policies e.g. parental leave, redundancy package, holiday policy, etc.?
- Do you feel comfortable contributing ideas towards business decisions? (very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not comfortable)
- Some people have mentioned not feeling comfortable discussing certain topics at work. Would you feel comfortable discussing the following topics at work? Please check the ones that you would feel comfortable discussing at work.
 - Mental health
 - General health issues
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender
 - Parental needs e.g. expressing milk

- Religious needs
 - Harassment or bullying
- If there is something you don't feel comfortable addressing at work, what is the reason for that?
 - I don't trust my manager
 - I fear repercussions
 - I don't feel it would make a difference
 - I worry about how people would react
 - I personally don't feel comfortable talking about it
 - Other:
- If you were to raise an issue with one of these topics, do you trust it would be handled appropriately? (no trust at all - strong trust (5))
- Do you feel your company could support you better? If so how?
- If you were CEO what is the one thing you would change?

- What is your age range?
 - 18 - 24
 - 25 - 34
 - 35 - 44
 - 45 - 54
 - 55 - 64
 - 65+
- What is your ethnic background?
 - Asian
 - Black
 - Mixed
 - White
 - Other
- Which gender do you identify with?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary / gender fluid
 - Other

