Because Vend is a software as a service company, we are metrics fanatics at heart. We have a company-wide focus on doing analysis and then taking intelligent risks. To get stakeholder buy-in to any of our people initiatives in a data-driven culture, we need to use data in our decision-making process. Being able to show correlations to improvements from any potential people initiative is important.

Our engagement score is one of our four key pillars for how we’re going to build a billion dollar company. We know we need an engaged workforce. We talk about it in stand-ups, we talk about it with the executive team every couple of weeks. The board sees our people analytics results monthly. Having the data on hand that we need to make decisions, and measure results, saves us time and ensures we’re applying resources in a way that will have impact.

In this ebook with Culture Amp we’re sharing how we’ve shaped a people analytics strategy that works for us, but we’re not data scientists by any means. We are a pretty normal people and culture team who leverages technology to do the analytical heavy lifting for us. We hope this insight into what we’ve done at Vend helps you shape your people analytics strategy.

Penelope Barton
Chief People Officer, Vend

Jordyn Riley
Employee Experience and Development Officer, Vend
Contents

Collecting information .................................................. 04
Vend’s HR stack .............................................................. 05
Answer questions with data .......................................... 06
People analytics journey .............................................. 07
Engagement ................................................................... 08
Effectiveness .................................................................. 12
Experience ....................................................................... 13
5 Lessons ......................................................................... 14
Collecting information

In most organizations, there’s a lot of people data already being collected. It can be categorized into four buckets of information.

**Employee information**
- Position information
- Remuneration
- Turnover
- Diversity
- Headcount
- Training attendance
- Recruitment

**Connection and feedback**
- Engagement scores
- Onboarding and exit surveys
- Candidate NPS
- Frequency of 1:1 meetings

**Performance and productivity**
- Performance scores
- 360° feedback scores
- Business intelligence data (e.g. customer NPS, churn, revenue)
- Careers page performance

**Everything else**
- Communications engagement (e.g. newsletter readership)
- Comments and interactions
At Vend, we gather most of the information in the four buckets from some sort of HR tech platform. We truly believe that HR tech is changing the way that HR teams can use data in companies around the world. There is a tool out there to help you with everything, provided you have accurate employee information.

Our current HR tech stack is made up of:

15Five - to facilitate regular 1:1 conversations between managers and employees

BambooHR - for employee information and demographics

Culture Amp - for surveys and analytics on employee engagement, employee experience and employee effectiveness

Greenhouse - our applicant tracking system

Payscale - our pay system

AskNicely – how we measure candidate NPS

Each of these systems solve problems on their own. BambooHR has information about tenure and progression through different roles and time since someone’s last pay increase. Greenhouse allows us to do recruitment including benchmarking to market and tailoring each role down to the very, very specific skills that you need to (think coding languages for developers – something that’s important in the tech space). We’re also able to easily and quickly understand the number of applicants we have and our time to hire.

The in-built functionality of each platform alone saves us time and makes us more effective, but bringing together the data from the platforms is even more powerful. BambooHR integrates with Culture Amp, which is great as things change a lot between engagement surveys and it makes it easy for us to update everything, including demographics. For platforms that aren’t integrated, we’re able to export and correlate data.
Once you’ve got reliable data, you can use it to answer specific questions, identify opportunities for improvement, establish baselines, make decisions and measure impact. Where we’ve been successful, we’ve had a hypothesis, tested it and then confirmed it.

**Why are people leaving?**

Understanding why people leave can be complex. We have feedback from exit interviews, so we can identify trends over time. A quantitative approach we’ve used in the past is to combine our Culture Amp engagement scores and our turnover data from our HRIS. Combining these two pools of data we can see what the leading indicators are for turnover. Not just what will help us improve our engagement, but also which low scores indicate someone is likely to leave.

**What’s the impact of regular 1:1 meetings?**

To see the correlation between consistent one-on-one meetings and engagement, we took our data capturing the frequency of 1:1 meetings from 15Five and ran it alongside Culture Amp engagement scores for teams. What we found there, unsurprisingly, is a strong correlation with effective 1:1 meetings and team engagement. As a result, we’ve now wrapped a whole program of work around effective 1:1 meetings.
We use Culture Amp at Vend and have for about three years now, and it’s really no secret that we’re massive fans of the tool. Engagement is extremely important to us, as it drives all the people decision making that we do internally, and what our focuses are going to be for the coming months. Culture Amp helps us to gather this insightful information.

We use Culture Amp for not only employee engagement but also employee experience and employee effectiveness. You can follow our approach in the diagram on the right.

The red line is an illustration of our employee engagement cycle, with step one being to establish a baseline, which is what we do with our larger engagement survey. Tracking progress is what we do with our shorter surveys, usually sent about three months after our larger survey to check in on how we’re going in areas that we have been targeting action. We then usually have a second large engagement survey and track progress again.

In the purple, we have the employee experience surveys, which are the onboarding and exit surveys that run on an ongoing basis. In the green, we have the employee effectiveness surveys, which are used by people to drive their growth and development.
When we’re looking at connection and feedback data, what we’re specifically looking for are the drivers of engagement. We can identify these by looking at which questions in an engagement survey correlate highly with the five engagement questions that we ask.

We use the five questions:

- I am proud to work at Vend
- I rarely think about looking for a job at another company
- I would recommend Vend as a great place to work
- Vend motivates me to go above and beyond what I would in a similar role elsewhere
- Even if I had another similar job opportunity, I would still view Vend as the best place for me

Culture Amp then analyzes which other questions in the survey correlate most strongly with the driver questions. We can understand not only how we’re tracking on things like learning and development and leadership, but how much impact those things have on engagement.
## Sharing

Culture Amp is ultimately an HR tool, but it empowers people across the business to be able to make a difference themselves. Not only this, but it's also really easy to use, even for people who aren't technically savvy.

We share our engagement results using manager dashboards. Managers are empowered to own their data and do something with it. It means that the ownership is really removed from the People and Culture team. This is something that we love, because the last thing we want is for people to have to come to us to be able to look at their own team’s information.

This is the initial preview of results in Culture Amp for a team here at Vend. It's some of our real data, so we haven’t included all of the information that a manager is able to access in this screenshot, just a high-level overview. The blue bars indicate agreement on a factor, with the light grey signifying neutral responses, and the dark grey indicating that someone has disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question. The green bars to the right are comparisons to the Culture Amp New Tech Benchmark.

---

**Tip**

Before managers see their results for the very first time in Culture Amp let them know they should look at the percentage of people who have rated something neutral. Sometimes the score can look quite low, but it might not mean that a bunch of their team have responded with disagree or strongly disagree. They may have had a neutral response, which we view as an opportunity as these people can be more easily swayed into the positive. That’s been a real key for us when sharing with managers.
**Access to data**

This is all customizable, so you’re able to share just the information you want. This is comforting to the People and Culture team, as administrators of the survey, because while we’re a really open organization, we don’t want people to access information that isn’t theirs.

At Vend, how much data you have access to in Culture Amp depends on your position in the company.

**Executives:** all data including comments  
**Managers:** information about their team  
**Country manager:** all results for their location  
**Director level:** all results for their department

**Action**

We really stress the importance of taking obvious action across the business in response to survey results. We’ve got a great participation rate in our surveys. Most recently we had 98% participation in our engagement survey, and we think the main reason for this is that people know that their answers are going to make a difference.

One area we’ve taken action on with great success is learning and development. From engagement surveys we knew that this was a low-scoring area, and we could also see that learning and development was a huge driver of engagement. Not only that, but looking at our turnover data and exit survey information in Culture Amp, we could see that scoring negatively on learning and development questions actually led to higher turnover. We felt as a team that we had a lot more that we could do in the learning and development space and the data supported that.

Using the data, we could find out what the root causes were almost immediately and come up with appropriate solutions. When we spoke with people face to face, they were asking for more money and to go on more and more expensive conferences. But through the surveys we could see that the real drivers of change in this area weren’t going to be jetting off to the other side of the world for a conference, but in fact having consistent performance conversations and more constructive feedback. We took this information and rolled out a series of things including: development plans, transparent learning and development benefits, Culture Amp’s new 360° feedback tool and a team development profile.

The actions that we focused on in this area have empowered people to make decisions that fit with their careers and encourage managers to have conversations with their teams about individual growth and development.
Culture Amp allowed for us to measure the impact of these actions over time. In our November 2015 engagement survey, only 56% of people at Vend favourably rated the statement, ‘I have access to the learning and development I need to do my current job well.’ By June 2016 we'd managed to increase this by 23 percentage points to 79 percent overall, which is 13 percentage points above the Culture Amp New Tech benchmark score for this question.

In our engagement survey at the beginning of this year we saw that the scores remained consistent. Not only are we sure that our efforts last year improved the score, we're continuing to ensure that they're staying at a good level.

**Cadence**

We aim to make engagement surveys happen quarterly and make sure that they fit in with the other business requirements. For example, we'll never send a survey at the end of a busy sales period, otherwise we wouldn’t get a good participation rate from our sales team. Making the check-ins happen so frequently means that we're able to see any progress in our targeted areas. Having them quarterly means that people don't get survey fatigue.

**Tailoring questions**

Within the Culture Amp platform you can tailor survey questions. For the most part, we use the questions that Culture Amp provides, tailored to our voice. Our internal voice is quite colloquial, so if something says ‘it is’ we'll probably shorten it to ‘it’s’ and of course we throw the ‘Vend’ in there quite a lot. We do put in some pretty tailored questions as well. We like to ask questions around our values, and our mission.

We try and make sure that the questions are actionable. We want to collect data which we know we can take immediate action on, so we've refined the number of questions and the things we ask about to ensure we can use all the data we collect.

Because we really like using the benchmarks within Culture Amp, we try to ensure we don’t change the questions too much. We know that the more we change a question the harder it is to compare ourselves to other groups of people in similar organisations who have answered that same question.
Effectiveness surveys provide unbiased feedback on development opportunities. At Vend, effectiveness surveys are either tailored to a position or to a team. They’re extremely easy to use, particularly in comparison to the 360° feedback tools that we’ve used in the past, and what’s most important is that they’ve really put development into the hands of the individual. Employee Effectiveness is available to everyone at Vend so that they can drive their own growth and development plan.

At the end of an effectiveness survey our managers or an assigned coach go through the scores with the individual, and then they’ll work with them to put together an action plan. This is really where the gold comes out. The actions are almost entirely employee-driven.
The final way that we use Culture Amp is through the onboarding and exit surveys available in the product. Using onboarding and exit surveys shapes the way that we manage our onboarding and exit programs here at Vend.

**Onboarding**

We have a really great onboarding program which we’re extremely proud of, so having data to back up tweaks and changes to it is really helpful. We’ve put a lot of time and effort into developing our onboarding over time. We’re quite emotionally attached to the way that we do it because we love it so much. We look to gather objective information through the surveys from recent starters to help improve the experience going forward. We have two onboarding surveys, one to check how the onboarding program itself went, and then another one a couple of months later.

We use the information that’s gathered in these surveys as the basis for a face-to-face conversation with a member of the people and culture team.

The questions vary from, ‘Let us know if any of your swag was missing from your new starter pack,’ which we can immediately action, through to more meaty questions, such as, ‘Is this role what you expected,’ which we can then dig into in person. We know that having a really great introduction to a company sets the tone for engagement going forward, and it’s good to have an easy-to-use tool at our fingertips to measure this experience, and to support the conversations that we have.

**Exit**

Culture Amp allows us to be able to track changes over time with people who leave Vend. For example, the exit survey asks questions such as, ‘Please indicate the main reasons you are leaving Vend.’ After you’ve had a couple of people resign, you start to get a pool of responses to this question, which means you have a base to look at some of the main drivers of turnover.
5 Lessons

We’re constantly refining our people analytics strategy.

Here are five lessons we’ve learnt along the way.

1. You can start right now!
   You probably have a lot more data than you realize, and you can start your own journey right now. If you are starting from scratch, there’ll be a bunch of different things that you can do immediately, and if you’re really, truly starting from scratch, we’d recommend going back and looking at the accuracy of your data as the first place to start.

2. Experiment
   Conducting experiments with your own data is really important. To find a hypothesis, look at the numbers to see where your baseline is, research to see how you can improve the results, then roll something out and test the numbers again to see if the needle moved.

3. Data is not a replacement (nor will it replace us)
   Data is important, but try not to get too bogged down in it. It can’t replace having a good honest conversation. We’ve found that data supports having great conversations, and there’s no replacement for these.

4. Strive for action – and talk about it
   Strive for action, and show people that you’re doing something with all the data you collect. Strive for participation and buy-in to the action, that’s what truly makes the most impactful difference.

5. Keep an eye on research and best practice
   Finally, keep an eye on this space. There is a lot of cool stuff out there that’s coming, like the text analysis tool that Culture Amp has created to look at the themes in comments, that’s something we’re pretty excited about.
Get started with reliable data

Culture Amp is the world’s most powerful employee feedback and analytics platform. Designed in consultation with our in-house organizational psychologists, data scientists and user experience specialists, it’s easy to use and uncovers valuable real-time analytics anyone can understand.

We’ve got some exciting additions to the platform coming up in 2017 and we’d love to share them with you. Have a chat with one of our people geeks about how we can help your organization.

cultureamp.com/contact-us