



# 10 Mistakes to avoid when it comes to employee participation

Overcome participation barriers with proven strategies for success

You've launched an employee well-being program and only a few employees have signed up and logged in – now what? Here are 10 questions to ask yourself to break through the participation barrier to keep your program fresh and your employees coming back.



Many organizations rely on fixed experiences for employee well-being that are compelling at first but get stale pretty quickly. As a result, employees miss out on all your program has to offer. And without employee participation, your well-being program will stall, causing a ripple effect of serious problems for both your employees and business.

So, what's the secret to sustained employee participation? This guide will walk you through common well-being program participation barriers and pain points with proven strategies and best practices to keep your employees coming back.

**The benefits of employee engagement can have a lasting impact, with Gallup research stating that engaged teams experience 81% lower absenteeism than their less-engaged peers, 41% fewer quality defects and 43% lower turnover.**

# What does participation really mean?

Employee participation and engagement are commonly referred to as the same thing. In fact, many people swap the two for one another a lot. But there is a big difference that's important to call out.

## Employee participation

Think of employee participation as an action in a well-being program. Participating in an employee well-being program can be anything from when an employee signs in for the first time, accesses available benefits and resources, or when an employee completes an engagement survey to provide feedback on plans to improve their well-being and work experience. It can also mean employees interacting or collaborating with the organization and each other.



## Employee engagement

Employee engagement is a deep connection and sense of purpose at work that creates extra energy and commitment. It goes beyond action to create a lasting impact and investment, and it's often the result of participation.

Throughout this guide, we're focused on strategies to boost long-term participation that ultimately increases employee engagement and well-being – reducing costs and administrative burden.

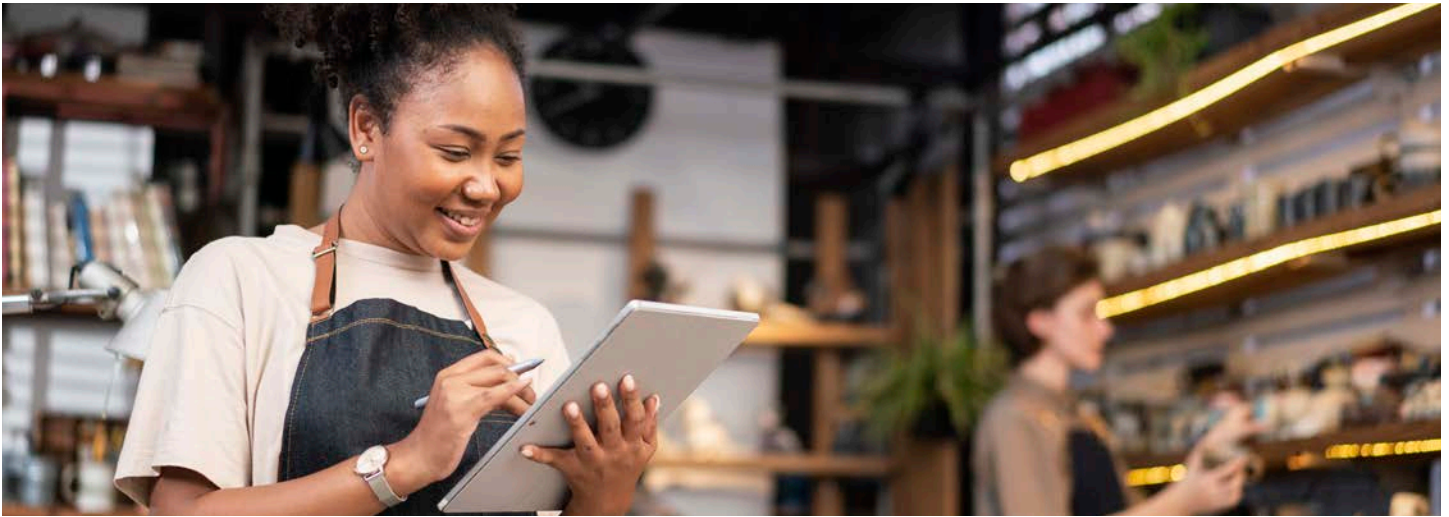
**86%** of Limeade users report being engaged or highly engaged employees

## The importance of sustained participation

Well-being programs benefit employees and employers, but only if employees are participating. Without employee participation, it's impossible to have positive well-being outcomes. When it's easy, fun, convenient and rewarding, long-term employee participation in a well-being program is possible.

Organizational support is foundational to the success of any well-being program. Efforts to help inspire participation of a well-being initiative can fall flat if employees do not experience their company culture as caring and supportive. It's up to leaders to take on the participation challenge – but first you need to identify the barriers before you can overcome them.





## The challenge with participation

While employers now recognize the benefits of having a healthy and happy workforce by using a well-being program, many struggle to create sustained participation in these programs, and often see low participation rates or a lack of engagement from employees. Perhaps employees are hesitant to participate due to a lack of interest or time, while others may feel that their employer does not truly value their well-being.

Despite these challenges, sustained employee participation is crucial for the long-term impact it can have on employee well-being. By participating in a well-being program, employees can improve their physical and mental health, reduce stress and increase job satisfaction. This can lead to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and better overall job performance. In addition, sustained participation can lead to long-term behavior changes that can have a positive impact on an employee's overall health and well-being, as well as drive down healthcare costs for the organization.

Let's explore the common challenges with program participation employers face today:

## 10 questions to ask yourself to break through the participation barrier

### 1. Do employees have a work environment that offers opportunities to focus on their well-being?

Consider the current state of your employees' work environment, whether that's on a shop floor, in a hospital room or at home in a personal dedicated workspace. A work environment can include everything from health and safety measures to company culture and connection. Skimping on relationship building, communications, office

resources, employee training and safety measures by offering a one-size-fits-all program approach will miss the mark for your diverse workforce.

Employees want to feel valued for their specific skillsets and contributions, trusted, informed with clear, transparent communications and resources, and that their company invests in their continued growth and development — including career advancement opportunities. It takes a holistic approach to well-being that considers all aspects of the work environment to get employees involved and participating.

## 2. How do you know the right frequency of employee communication?

Recent research found that workers now spend two workdays a week in meetings and on email. On top of that, 57% of workers' time is spent using office software for communication — in meetings, email and chat. Digital overload is a real problem in the world of work. Spamming employees with multiple forms of communication that lacks purpose and intention can actually have a negative effect and result in inadequate communication between employees and the company. Communication remains crucial to productivity and business success, but it's effective communication that will drive more participation.

Strategic support from purpose-driven experts who leverage data strategy and science to create a communications plan for your well-being program can help craft the winning combination of communication for your employees. Looking into user activity, topic popularity, social engagement and more to deliver personalized and targeted communications can increase efficiency up to 2.5 times.

## 3. Is technology working for you or against you?

Technology is at your fingertips, but leveraging technology to execute a strategy is a different matter. It's not always as easy as it should be. It's important to evaluate if your technology is working for you or against you. If you're feeling tangled in technology with multiple logins and navigations, and that your

systems and processes are overcomplicated, it's likely your technologies are not helping your people, or your company reach their full potential. Technology is not the solution, it's the enablement to the solution.

Easy access to everyday communication, resources and benefits in one unified experience drives program participation. A personalized well-being experience delivered into your people's flow of work allows for greater connection and guides employees to the right resources at the right time. For admins, leveraging real-time data and insights through streamlined reporting can create a data-driven proactive strategy to help you reach your goals.

## 4. What's the purpose of your well-being program?

Do you know the "why" behind your well-being program? Is it to boost job satisfaction? Care for your employees? Improve business outcomes? Maybe it's all of the above — and more. If you don't know the purpose behind your well-being program, and your employees don't feel the meaning and authenticity of the program you're offering, participation is going to plummet.

According to our research with Quantum Workplace, when employees feel they have higher well-being, they are more likely to be engaged in their work and to feel supported by their organization. This requires building a program around a unique set of values and empowering employees to rally around one unified mission. A holistic well-being program that reflects and promotes your company's culture, mission, vision and values, will be more effective in the long run.

# 4X

**A manager of wellness at a professional services organization explained how they have seen improvement to well-being-related webinar participation by 4x. They attributed this to increased employee awareness and accessibility through the Limeade solution, which enabled them to inform a larger number of employees about the content and making it more convenient to participate.**

Forrester Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study 2022

## 5. Are leaders and managers really involved?

59% of employees Limeade surveyed said leadership involvement was one of the most effective factors for a successful well-being program. Get a pulse on leadership buy-in for your well-being program. Are leaders truly involved? Are they actively promoting and participating in the program?

With the majority of employees feeling leadership involvement is key to success — leaders need to step up their game. Leaders should create an environment that truly supports well-being initiatives. They need to model behavior and set aside time for well-being activities like walking meetings, stress relief breaks and lunch-and-learn events. Setting an example and making well-being a priority paves the way for other employees to do the same.

## 6. Does the well-being program serve the needs of all employees?

You may think you know what employees want, but each employee is different. Employees are interested in varying initiatives and expect their well-being program to address their unique needs. Some might be looking for social connection or access to benefits, while others might utilize coaching programs to tackle lifelong obstacles such as mental health or diabetes.

A well-being program that provides listening tools is an effective way to better understand the unique needs of your workforce or team. With pulse surveys and polls, managers can have a targeted approach to catalyze and act on employee feedback quickly and privately. These real-time insights into your at-risk employees can enable managers to target employee groups with science-backed activities that promote mindfulness, resilience, sleep health, stress management, work-life meaning and more — depending on what it most relevant to your specific employee.

## 7. Is it too complicated?

If it's not simple, employees won't want anything to do with it. You can't expect employees to use (and keep using) a well-being program if it's too complicated to understand. Consider whether you're offering employees the proper tools, resources and support to get started.

A holistic approach to well-being focused on what matters most to your organization can drive 90% program effectiveness. From the onboarding experience to daily activity, program efficiency is crucial to maintain and increase participation.

## 8. What's motivating employees to participate?

Are your employees just going through the motions? Or is your well-being program truly driving lasting change? The latter should be your goal, with employees engaged and motivated to make an impact. It's easy to fall back on offering additional incentives, but we know that incentive design only drives 2% of participation. So, what else can you do to motivate employees?

Get down to the core of what's driving your employees to act. A well-being program that provides actionable insights to discover what motivates your employees can help you make the proper improvements to keep them coming back. To maximize sustained participation, it's important to provide a mixture of meaningful rewards for employees. When companies use intrinsically meaningful incentives to support employee well-being, there's more consistent average weekly activity usage in their program. While leveraging extrinsic rewards can be helpful for captivating awareness and driving initial boosts in registration and participation, average weekly participation trends are not associated with offering monetary rewards (e.g., a healthcare premium discount).

## 9. Are you asking for opinions and feedback?

Feedback is critical for employees to feel connected and engaged to their organization. It allows them to have a say in the decisions that affect their work and provides a sense of ownership and accountability. It can also help employees feel more connected to their peers and the company culture, which can lead to a stronger sense of community and belonging. Consider whether you're opening the door for transparent employee feedback, as well as acting on that feedback through various polls, surveys and communication.

Giving employees a voice allows them to feel heard and valued, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation. It also provides employers with valuable insights into the employee experience, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes. This is an essential tool for creating a positive and engaged workplace culture that promotes employee well-being and organizational success.

## 10. Does your company create opportunities for teams to connect?

Social isolation and loneliness are prevalent in today's workforce. Strong social connections and workplace relationships are key to employee well-being. A Gallup poll found that having a close friend at work had become even more important since the pandemic, and the rise in hybrid and remote work. Team connection provides essential social and emotional support, and even ties to business outcomes.

An integrated experience that makes it easy for companies to meet employees in their flow of work so they can stay informed and inspired at work can boost connection. Paired with a lively social feed where team members can share kudos, cheers and highlight wins is a great way to get everyone involved and celebrate together at just the touch of a button.

# Every barrier is a strategy waiting to happen.

Next, we'll take a look at Limeade proven strategies for maximizing participation.

## Limeade best practices for participation

Well-being programs benefit both employees and employers, but only if employees are participating. When a program is easy, fun, relevant and rewarding, sustained employee participation in a well-being program is possible. And Limeade best practices can help.

Here are 3 main strategies that are key to inspiring employees to participate in their company's well-being program:

**1. A supportive and caring company culture strategy**

**2. An integrated, inclusive and intentional program design**

**3. A robust and varied communication strategy**

# 1. A supportive and caring company culture strategy

A caring culture is the strongest predictor of well-being outcomes. We know that what happens at work affects people's lives outside of work, and vice versa. It's no longer about work-life balance, but work-life harmony. When companies provide support for the whole person, employees feel cared for.

The support mentioned above needs to come from both local and company-wide efforts – meaning managers, teams and peers, environment and networks, leaders, culture, strategic alignment, tools and programs.

Limeade Well-Being helps companies amplify the care and support they provide to employees by connecting the dots between what employees experience at work and in their personal lives. Efforts to help inspire participation of a well-being initiative can fall flat if employees do not experience their company culture as caring and supportive. As a result, employees see Limeade as a natural and authentic extension of the company's culture and they are more inclined to participate regularly.

## Limeade research found that employees want to feel:

- Valued for their unique skillsets and contributions at work
- Trusted to do their work and that they can trust their leadership to follow through on their word
- Informed with clear, transparent communications and resources
- Invested in their continued growth and development, from skillset to career advancement opportunities

# 2. An integrated, inclusive and intentional program design

Investing in employees and providing equitable opportunities to support their well-being demonstrates care and creates an inclusive environment. With the help of a strategic partner like Limeade, your well-being program is designed to integrate all initiatives and individuals. This starts with measuring all aspects of whole-person well-being through the Limeade Well-Being Assessment that provides more insights and opportunities as to what matters in overall well-being and experience. The more data you have at your fingertips, the better you can target relevant content to employees based on their needs in the moment.

## Other best practices include:

- Personalize the experience with behavioral science-backed well-being activities that keep the content fresh throughout the year
- Reach global employees in their local language and deliver a personalized experience with culturally relevant activities unique to your culture and each employee



## Other best practices continued:

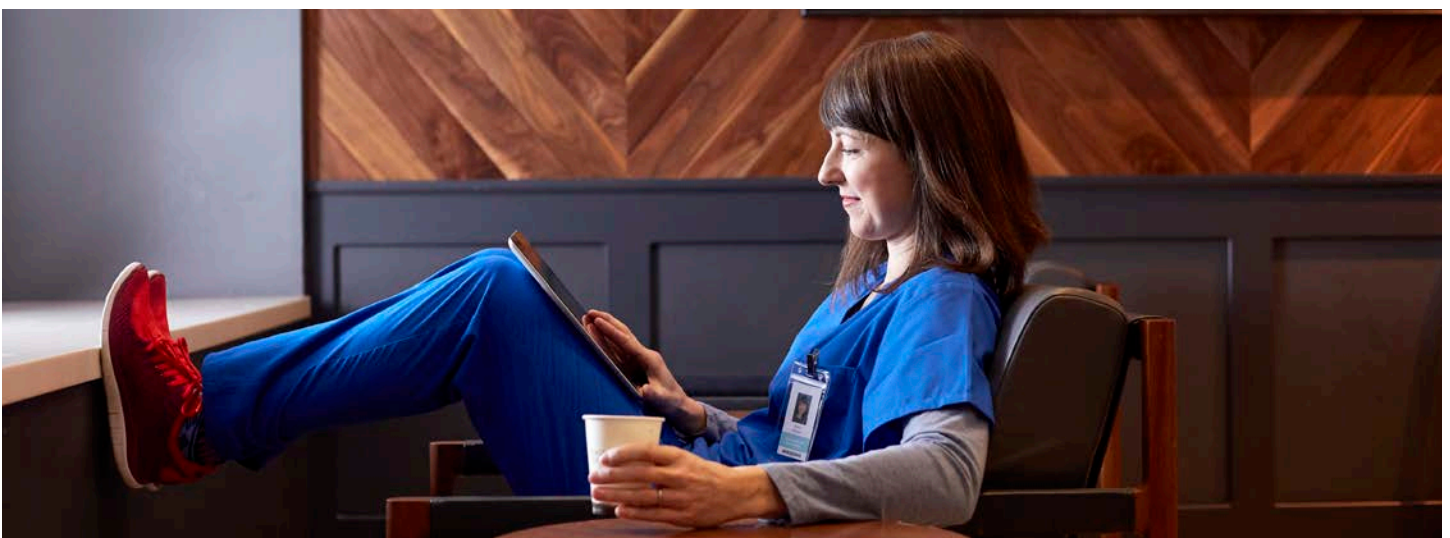
- Promote social connection by highlighting Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), on-going events and opportunities across the company, and recognizing one another in the Limeade experience
- Record and post meaningful communication and updates regularly from leadership
- Enlist leaders from all levels across the company to sponsor and evangelize activities
- Equip leaders with data so they can take action at an organization-wide and local level
- Leverage listening tools including the comprehensive Well-Being Assessment and pulse surveys

## 3. A robust and varied communication strategy

To promote and inspire participation, provide communication about your well-being program throughout the year. You can keep employees aware and inspired to log into their well-being program regularly throughout the year and through multiple modalities, including email, flyers, mentions in company, department and team meetings, SMS, kiosks and more. Limeade data shows that using polls and surveys to understand employee experience and gather feedback is strongly related to average weekly activity usage. Drive participation by asking employees about their experience, providing avenues to solicit feedback anytime and get their ideas. The

more personal and relevant the message is, users will tend to see more value and feel that the experience is tailored for them.

Take things one step further by enlisting advocates, like designated Well-being Champions, to promote your well-being program and drive awareness and interest among employees on a regular basis. Champions are designated employees who act as cheerleaders for your well-being program and help connect the dots between company events, initiatives, information and what employees see and do in the well-being program.



# How to solve your well-being program participation problem

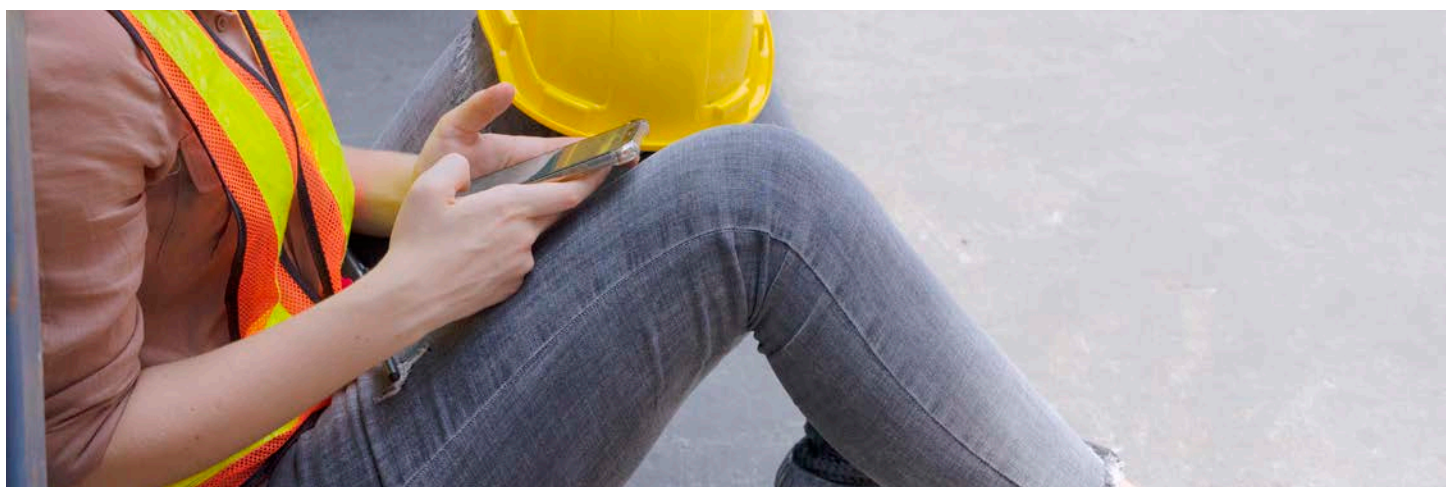
Now that we've identified your participation barriers, discussed relevant strategies and steps to overcome them, let's take a look at how a holistic approach to well-being can help you reach your goals.

Below are pain and proof points from real people just like you:

Pain point	Best practice	Customer example
<p><b>Personalization</b></p>	<p><b>Custom activities &amp; targeted communication</b></p>	<p>Nielsen used targeted communications to incentivize employees not participating in its 401(k) match program.</p> <p>They launched monthly Fidelity video challenges, web workshops and activities to drive awareness in the program</p> <p><b>Result: 77% of 401(k) challenge participants enrolled or increased their match contribution</b></p>
<p><b>Promotion/ activities</b></p>	<p><b>Communication frequency, fresh content, social channels &amp; campaigns</b></p>	<p>Enterprise used multi-level communications to create a community across more than 9,500 locations worldwide.</p> <p>Managers used local news channels to recognize employees, promote local events and celebrate team success</p> <p><b>Result: 45% active users in the first two months</b></p>
<p><b>Leadership action</b></p>	<p><b>Champion Network, local leader involvement &amp; authenticity</b></p>	<p>Company leaders at Mercury Insurance knew they needed employee champions across the organization to promote well-being.</p> <p>They created a Well-Being Ambassadors program to drive awareness and engagement. As trust grew, so did participation.</p> <p><b>Result: Employee engagement increased 6% in the first year. Employee participation increased over 12% and Mercury experienced a 0% increase in healthcare costs, the first time in 10 years.</b></p>

Below are pain and proof points from real people just like you:

Pain point	Best practice	Customer example
<p><b>Communication overload</b></p>	<p><b>Smart notifications, personalization, omni channel approach &amp; translation</b></p>	<p>Groz-Beckert modernized its internal communication, making it simpler and more effective.</p> <p>Employees received regular updates from managers with personalized information channels</p> <p><b>Result: Within the first three months, over 65% of employees registered and 90% use the app every week</b></p>
<p><b>Tech issues</b></p>	<p><b>Ease of use, global &amp; localization</b></p>	<p>Ryan LLC leveraged a robust, built-in communication system, access to comprehensive reporting, surveys and insights, and clear actions.</p> <p>The Ryan team increased awareness by leveraging the program to provide thoughtful communications, including polls, surveys and gift ideas for employees across the globe</p> <p><b>Result: Increased reach to their global population by over 5x</b></p> <p><b>Global employee registration increased 4x going from 13% to 87% in monthly active users</b></p>






# Limeade can support your efforts so you can execute your program successfully

We're more than a strategic advisor – with Limeade, you receive dedicated access to a purpose-driven partner, white-glove service and hands on support every step of the way. We're real people making real change. And we strive for a high level of intention and genuine connection with our customers. Our dedicated Customer Success Team has decades of well-being experience – technical and tactical – aimed to grow with you over time.

At Limeade, we put well-being at the heart of the employee experience to amplify care and infuse well-being into work.

## How can Limeade support your care efforts?

<b>Feeling invested in</b>		<b>Partnering within your organization</b>
<b>Feeling heard and valued</b>		<b>Normalize prioritizing well-being</b>
<b>Feeling trusted</b>		<b>Feedback loops</b>
<b>Trust in leadership and manager</b>		<b>Leadership visibility</b>
<b>Feeling informed and set up for success</b>		<b>Cyclical manager strategy</b>
<b>Work-life balance and flexibility</b>		<b>Exemplifying work-life boundaries</b>
<b>Feeling included</b>		<b>Create space</b>
<b>A sense of fairness</b>		<b>Employee driven groups</b>



# Limeade is an immersive employee well-being company that creates healthy employee experiences.

Limeade Institute science guides its industry-leading software and its own award-winning culture. Today, millions of users in over 100 countries use Limeade solutions to navigate the future of work. By putting well-being at the heart of the employee experience, Limeade reduces burnout and turnover while increasing well-being and engagement — ultimately elevating business performance.

To learn more, visit [www.limeade.com](http://www.limeade.com).

