



# The Employee Voice Layer

Using AI to Understand What Employees Are Really Saying

## Surface What Matters

Move from scattered feedback to meaningful patterns

## Identify Issues Earlier

Catch emerging problems before they escalate

## Understand Experience

Include remote, hybrid, and frontline teams



# Alex Grande

Your Guide to All Things Recognition & Rewards



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Alex Grande is a web developer with a passion for motivation and human behavior.

As the CEO of Recognize ([RecognizeApp.com](https://RecognizeApp.com)), Alex has spent over a decade engineering the "Human API", using technology to scale the fundamental psychological need for appreciation.



# AI Terminology & Protocols

Before diving into HR data, it helps to understand the basic AI terms and the options available to modern organizations.

## LLMs & Copilots



Large Language Models, like GPT-4 or Claude, understand language. Copilots are assistants that work alongside employees to complete tasks through direct human prompts.

## Autonomous Agents



AI systems designed to handle multi-step tasks on their own without constant prompting, for example, automatically clearing inboxes.

## Cloud AI vs. Local AI

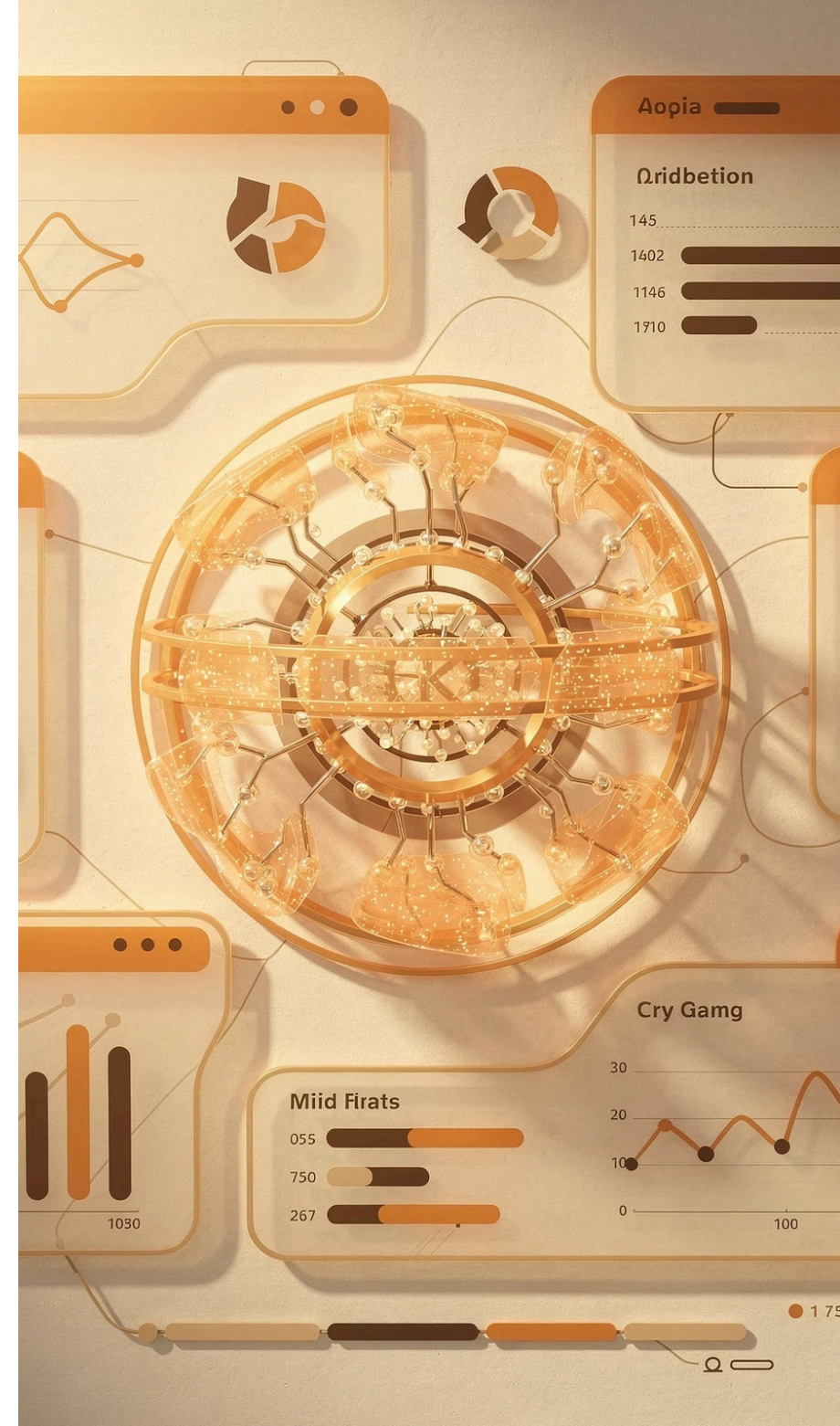


Cloud AI processes data externally, such as in Azure, while Local AI runs entirely on internal hardware for stricter privacy needs.

## Model Context Protocol (MCP)



An open standard that gives AI models a secure, universal way to connect directly to external data sources and tools.



# Autonomous Agent Tools & Alternatives

Organizations have several options when choosing AI agents, depending on their technical expertise and use case. While OpenClaw is a popular open-source agent that connects through messaging apps, there are several strong alternatives.

## Business Operations & Workflows

- **Lindy** - visual builder with triggers and actions for creating agents
- **Sai by Simular** - managed service for business automation with a secure three-tier approval system

## Browser Automation

- **OpenAI Operator** - handles end-to-end web tasks
- **Bardeen** - ideal for Zapier-style browser automation

## Open-Source & Self-Hosted

- **Hermes Agent** - excellent self-hosted multi-platform agent deployments
- **NanoClaw** - high levels of local control and isolated sessions

## Coding & Engineering

- **Cursor** - the leader for IDE-native AI assistance
- **Microsoft Code** - Visual Studio coding tool by Microsoft

# The Reality of Survey Fatigue

Traditional employee feedback methods are no longer enough on their own. The average employee survey response rate sits between **30% and 40%**, which raises an important question about whose voices are actually being heard. Survey fatigue happens when employees feel worn down by repetitive questions and by not seeing any real follow-through from leadership. When feedback disappears into an HR black hole and nothing comes of it, trust fades, and employees start to hold back.

Metric	Percentage of Workforce
Feel pressured to withhold honest feedback	<b>47%</b>
Believe surveys accurately capture satisfaction	32%
Believe HR always takes meaningful action	27%
Actively withhold honest feedback occasionally	20%

# Fusing Active Surveys with Passive Data

**Passive Organizational Network Analysis (ONA)** looks at metadata from communication platforms, like who emails whom, Teams channel membership, and calendar overlap, without asking employees to fill out a form.

- ✔ Research shows that **72% of employees** are comfortable with passive listening practices when employers use data from internal work systems rather than personal social platforms.

## Active Surveys

Pulse checks, annual engagement surveys, exit interviews

## Passive ONA

Email metadata, Teams channels, calendar overlap patterns

# The Microsoft Ecosystem: Viva Insights & Copilot

For organizations using Microsoft 365, the foundation for continuous listening is already there.



## Microsoft Viva Insights

Pulls together de-identified data from email, calendars, chat, and survey feedback to highlight workplace collaboration patterns across the organization.



## Microsoft Copilot

HR leaders and managers can ask questions directly in Viva using natural language, instead of waiting weeks for a data analyst to build a report.



## In the Flow of Work

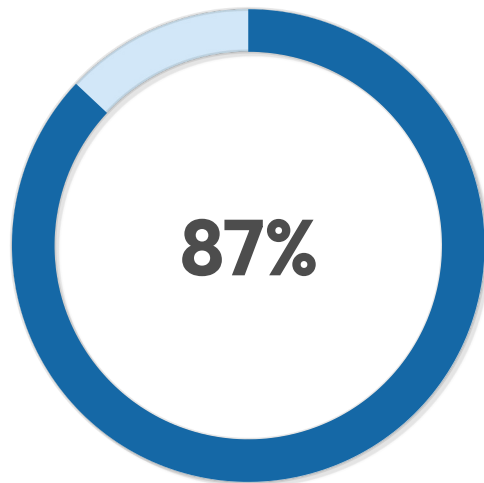
Review collaboration trends and employee sentiment inside the tools your team already uses every day, without switching contexts.



# Mining Teams & Slack Metadata for Burnout

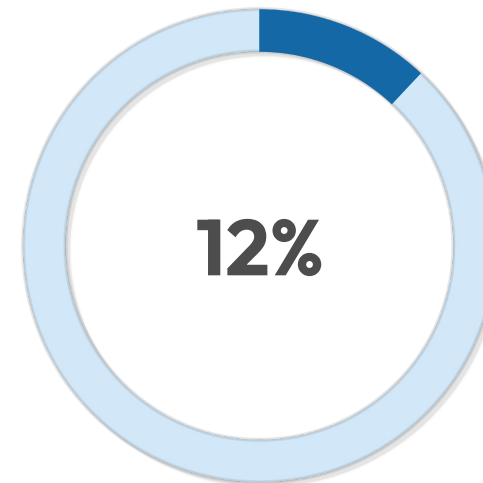
Communication metadata from platforms like Microsoft Teams or Slack can be an early warning sign of employee burnout. Microsoft's Work Trend Index points to a pattern called "**Productivity Paranoia**", where **87% of employees** say they are productive at work, but only **12% of leaders** have full confidence in their employees' productivity.

Behavioral Pattern in Teams/Slack	Potential Burnout/Turnover Risk Signal
Sustained after-hours messaging	Chronic lack of work-life boundaries and off-hour pacing
High volume with short intervals	Severe context-switching fatigue and cognitive overload
Shrinking internal network	Network isolation. Shifting to direct messages over public channels is an early flight risk indicator



**Employees Feel Productive**

Self-reported productivity from Microsoft Work Trend Index

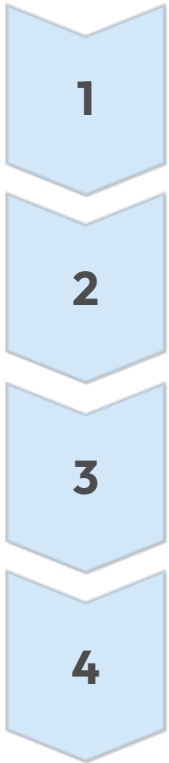


**Leaders Agree**

Leaders with full confidence in employee productivity

# Utilizing Copilot for Survey Analysis

Reviewing thousands of open-ended survey comments used to take weeks of manual coding. Now, tools like **Microsoft Copilot integrated with Viva Glint** can summarize **14,000 employee comments in seconds.**



## Extract Themes

Quickly surface semantic themes from thousands of open-ended responses

## Identify Outliers

Flag anomalies and edge cases that manual review would miss

## Track Sentiment

Monitor sentiment polarity across complex multilingual datasets over time

## Push Insights

Deliver actionable insights directly to frontline managers



# Concrete Prompts: Analyzing Survey Data with Copilot

When working with exported survey data in Excel or with Copilot's analyst agents, it helps to standardize prompts so you get structured, reliable outputs.

## Themes, Outliers & Recurring Patterns

*"Give me a report with three sections: Trends, Outliers, and recurring themes from the survey responses. Use bulleted lists, and cite examples with quotes and frequency counts. [Paste responses]"*

## Sentiment Categorization by Policy

*"Act as an HR analyst. Review these open-ended comments about our return-to-office policy. Sort the feedback into positive, neutral, and negative sentiment, and list the top three friction points mentioned by employees."*

## Quarter-over-Quarter Comparison

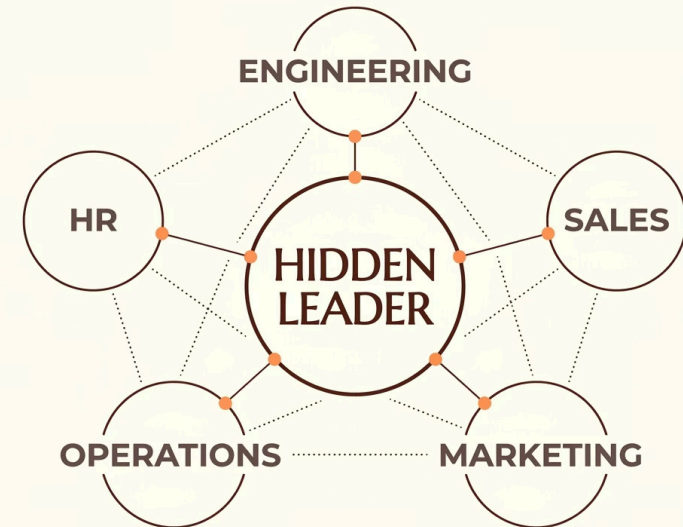
*"Compare the sentiment in the Q1 comments with the Q2 comments. What new themes have emerged around managerial support?"*

# Organizational Network Analysis (ONA)

Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) visualizes the **informal relationships** in your company. It shows how work actually gets done outside the formal org chart. ONA helps identify "**hidden leaders**" or bridging individuals who connect siloed departments.

⚠ Research shows that **85% of culture renovation initiatives fail** because companies do not identify these informal influencers.

By mapping these hidden networks, HR can identify which cross-functional ties are dangerously weak and which employees are overburdened with information requests.



# Integrating Peer Recognition Data

Peer-to-peer recognition tools are a rich, non-survey source for understanding organizational networks. Instead of asking "who do you work well with?" in a survey, recognition data gives you an **objective, ongoing record** of who is actively helping others.

Recognition Preference / Metric	Statistical Finding
Prefer non-monetary rewards (e.g., public praise)	<b>55%</b> of employees
Want recognition from peers	<b>41%</b> of employees
Receive peer recognition weekly in practice	<b>63%</b> of employees
Feel valued in firms with formal recognition programs	<b>92%</b> of employees

# How Recognition Data Enhances Copilot

When peer recognition data is integrated into your HRIS, like Workday, and connected to the **Microsoft Graph**, Copilot becomes much more intelligent.



Copilot can cross-reference survey engagement scores with recognition data to give managers a fuller view of team health. For instance, an AI agent can flag that a specific employee is creating a lot of cross-department value, based on the recognition badges they receive, while also showing signs of burnout in their collaboration metadata.

# Concrete Prompts: Querying Recognition & Collaboration Data

If your recognition and HR systems are connected to Microsoft Copilot through Graph Connectors, HR leaders can query the system to support talent decisions.

## 1 Cross-Functional Recognition Query

*"Based on the peer recognition data from the last 6 months, which employees in the Engineering department received the most cross-functional praise from the Sales team?"*

## 2 Hidden Influencer Identification

*"Analyze our Viva Insights collaboration data and peer recognition logs. Identify any employees who are highly connected bridging individuals but have not received a promotion in the last 2 years."*

## 3 Recognition-Driven Communication

*"Draft an email to [Employee Name] thanking them for the recent peer recognition they received for the Q3 product launch."*

# Ticketing Systems as a Listening Channel

Support ticketing systems like **ServiceNow** or **Zendesk** are an important passive listening channel. Copilot can analyze ticket trends to show HR where employees are running into the most operational roadblocks.

Ticketing Metric	What It Measures	Why It Matters For HR
First Response Time	Time between ticket creation and first agent response	Sets expectations for support responsiveness
Total Resolution Time	Time from ticket creation to final resolution	Shows the true efficiency of end-to-end handling
Employee CSAT	Post-resolution feedback, or the percentage of satisfied users	Gauges satisfaction and highlights areas for improvement

📌 HR should keep an eye on these ticketing metrics to spot operational friction and identify systemic issues before they affect engagement scores.

# Concrete Prompts: Turning Insights into Action

HR can use Copilot in apps like Word and Outlook to turn insights from surveys and passive data into practical action plans and communications right away.

## Executive Summary Email

*"Draft with Copilot: An email to department heads that summarizes the top 3 concerns from the recent pulse survey and outlines our commitment to addressing meeting overload."*

## Manager Action Plan

*"Act as an HR Business Partner. Create a step-by-step manager action plan to reduce context-switching fatigue based on the attached Teams collaboration metrics."*

## Policy Rewrite

*"Rewrite this return-to-office policy memo so it sounds more empathetic and supportive, while keeping it under 300 words."*

# Measuring Copilot's Own Impact on the Workforce

## Why Measure AI Impact?

As you roll out AI tools, it helps to listen to how employees are experiencing them. Adoption without feedback can create blind spots, and even new sources of frustration.

## What to Track

- Copilot usage metrics from Viva Insights
- Employee sentiment from Viva Pulse & Viva Glint
- Correlation between usage and workload reduction
- Job satisfaction scores for Copilot users vs. non-users

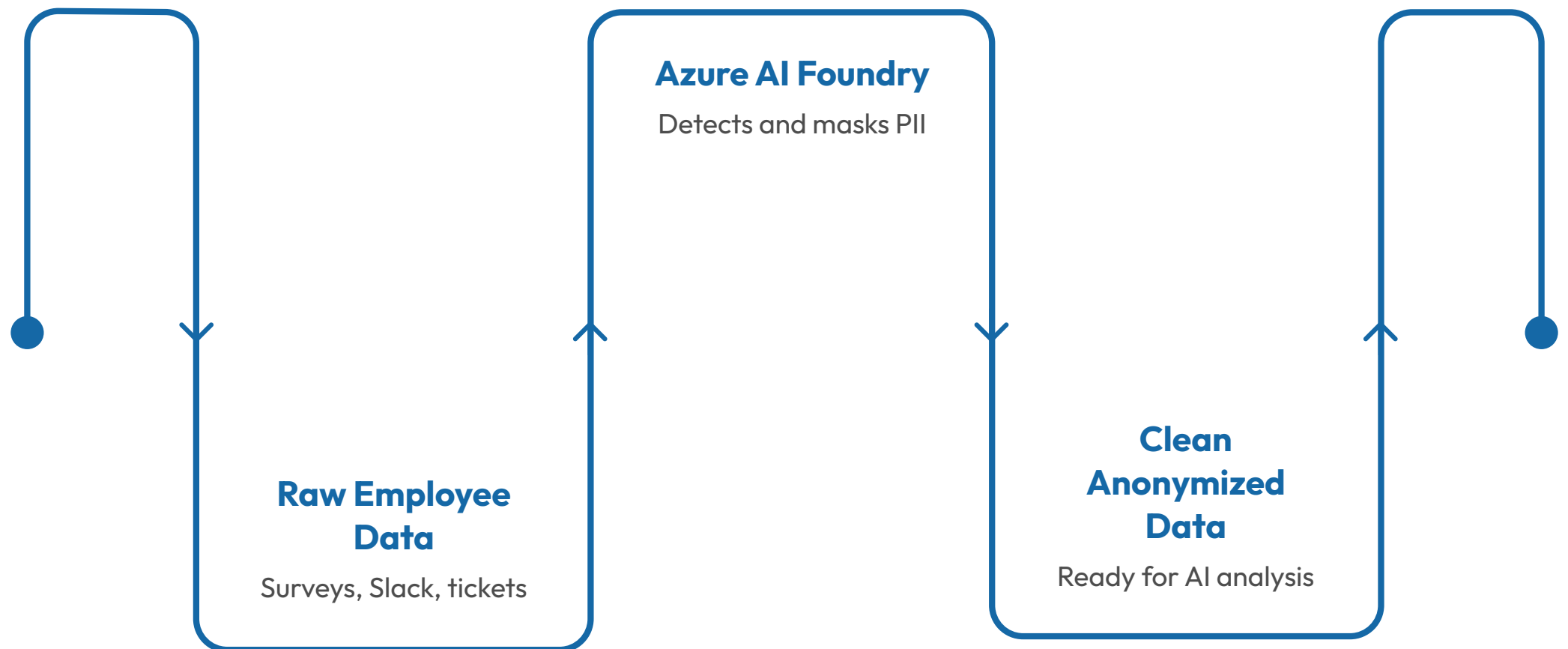


Microsoft provides **Copilot Impact survey templates** in Viva Pulse and Viva Glint. These templates help HR connect Copilot usage metrics with employee sentiment data, so it is easier to see whether employees using Copilot are actually experiencing lighter workloads and higher job satisfaction.

# Security and PII Redaction in Azure

When feeding employee feedback, Slack data, or HR ticketing transcripts into AI models, **privacy matters**. Enterprise solutions like **Azure AI Foundry** use automated PII (Personally Identifiable Information) detection. Before text is analyzed for sentiment or summarized, the system automatically detects and masks personal identifiers to help reduce bias and support compliance.

Azure PII Redaction Use Case	Organizational Benefit
Masking identifiers in resume screening	Reduces unconscious bias in recruitment workflows
Redacting call center transcripts	Secures names and contact details before HR analysis
Replacing values in ML training data	Protects confidential data when training internal models





# Establishing Safe Boundaries and Access

When using Copilot to interact with sensitive HR systems, you need to set up **User-Delegated Access**. This ensures that when an employee asks Copilot a question, the AI only retrieves data that employee is allowed to see.

## User-Delegated Access

Copilot only surfaces data the requesting employee is authorized to view, helping prevent cross-boundary data leakage between roles or departments.

## The Privacy Concern

While employees are generally comfortable with AI scanning internal system data, **57% still cite privacy invasion** as their main concern when boundaries are unclear.

## Clear Communication

Make it clear to employees that private interpersonal communications are off-limits for AI analysis.

# Testing and Evaluating Copilot HR Responses


If you build custom HR agents in **Copilot Studio**, you should test them carefully to make sure they provide accurate policy information. Use Copilot Studio's evaluation tool to run automated, scenario-based tests.

## Compare Meaning

Answers have the same meaning, even if worded differently. Best for behavioral, flexible, or concept-based queries.

## Exact Match

Evaluates exact wording. Best for precise, fixed text requirements like policy citations and compliance language.

 **Why This Matters:** Inaccurate HR policy responses from an AI agent can create legal liability, erode employee trust, and undermine the entire AI adoption initiative. Test early and test often.

- Run scenario-based automated tests before deployment
- Test edge cases and ambiguous policy questions
- Set up a regular cadence for re-evaluation as policies change
- Document test results for compliance and audit trails

# The Future of the Intelligent HR Team

By combining active survey data with passive collaboration metrics from Teams and recognition platforms, HR teams get an **objective, 360-degree view** of the organization.

## Listen Continuously

Bring together active surveys with passive ONA and recognition data



## Analyze at Scale

Use Copilot and autonomous agents to process large data sets in real time



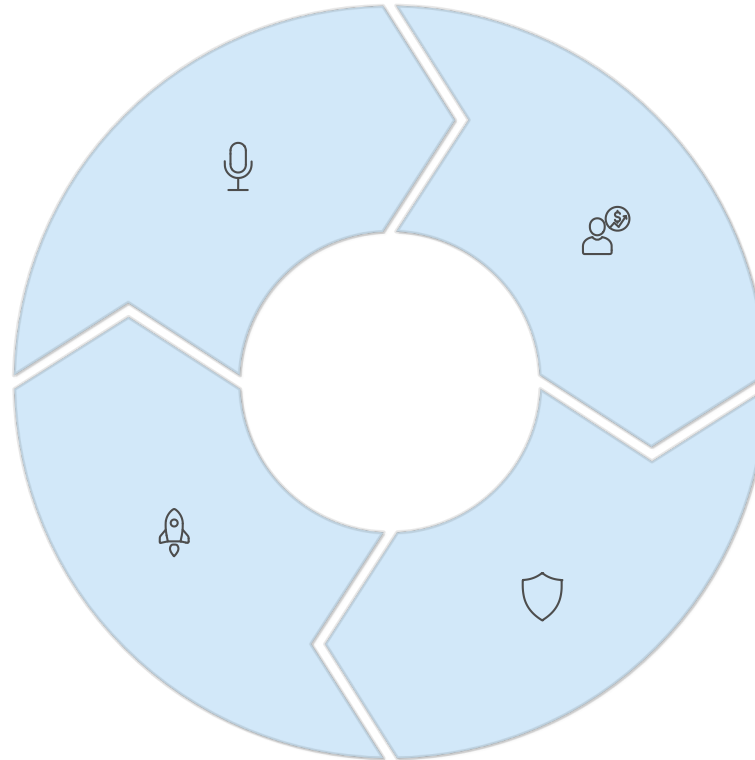
## Act Strategically

Spend less time on spreadsheets and more time on data-driven interventions that protect well-being



## Protect Privacy

Apply PII redaction, user-delegated access, and clear communication boundaries



The result is a proactive HR department that spends less time manually building spreadsheets and more time executing data-driven, strategic interventions that protect employee well-being and move the business forward.

## NEXT WEBINAR

# How to Fix Low Participation in Employee Recognition Programs in Under 30 Days

## Connect & Learn WEBINAR

Tuesday, June 9th

1PM - 2PM EST

How to quickly diagnose and fix low participation in employee recognition programs within 30 days.



**Tuesday, June 9 | 1 PM ET | 10 AM PT**

### Key Takeaways:

- Why recognition participation drops after launch
- The most common engagement breakdown points
- Quick operational fixes that drive immediate improvement
- How to increase manager participation without constant follow-up
- A simple 30-day action plan

Interactive format with live Q&A and practical examples.

Reserve your spot and learn what drives real employee participation!

### REGISTER

HERE: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/GtOLbrAATK27IOEt7L637g#/registration>



**LIVE DEMO**

## Making Recognition Actually Work for Your Team

**Recognize**

### Making Recognition Actually Work for Your Team

📅 Thursday, June 25 ⌚ 1 PM ET | 10 AM PT

★★★★★

**JOIN US**

**David Jones**  
Recognition Solutions Partner

**Jess Vigorito**  
Director of Marketing

RecognizeApp.com

👉 **If improving engagement and retention is on your radar, this will be a high-value 45 minutes for you!**

**Thursday, June 25 - 1 PM ET | 10 AM PT**

### What you'll see:

In this 45-minute live session, you'll see exactly how modern organizations are making recognition visible, consistent, and impactful across remote, hybrid, and field-based teams.

### Live Demo Includes:

- + Real-time recognition feed
- + Automated milestones and celebrations
- + Manager insights and engagement tracking
- + Ways to drive adoption across distributed teams

### Bonus:

- Live Q&A
- \$100 gift card raffle
- 🎁 \$1,000 in rewards credit for new customers

**REGISTER HERE:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ICwMyjOxTSaieLHbBF8cDA>