

Change is possible:

Practical steps to Transform Employee Frustration into High Impact Change

A Playbook: Insights and Strategies from
Trickle's recent webinar to help *you* make it
happen.



Introduction



Hello,

I'm excited to share a playbook filled with valuable insights from our recent "Be the Change" webinar series. Our focus for the webinar? Turning employee frustration into high-impact change.

Drawing from Dr. Kevin Teoh's groundbreaking report, "Organisational Wellbeing Interventions: Case Studies from the NHS" our expert panel* provided actionable strategies for organisational change, even with limited budgets and resources.

We know your time is precious, so we've created this playbook of practical activities that you can start implementing in your workplace **today**.

If you're one of the many organisations trying to address the challenges of staff burnout and retention (and the corresponding impact on productivity) on a limited budget, you'll find Dr. Teoh's point crucial: to create healthier workplaces, we need to focus on workplace factors rather than individual interventions.

Watch the [webinar replay](#) to experience the full captivating discussion, or read on to learn how to apply each of Dr. Teoh's six principles in practice.

I hope you enjoy it and find it useful for engaging with your teams to make positive change happen.

Paul

Paul Reid
Founder & CEO
Trickle

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- including Dr. Teoh and Martin Osler (Chief People Officer at Johnston Carmichael)

Six Principles from Dr Kevin Teoh

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PRINCIPLE 1: STAFF WELLBEING IS A SYSTEMS ISSUE

Even the most healthy, positive, resilient individual is likely to get broken down over time if their working environment and the team they're working with is challenging.

This means that, for change to be effective, you need to take a systemic, preventative approach to improving work environments, rather than focusing on individual interventions

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Start small and create a ripple effect If you're feeling overwhelmed by the combination of high employee demand and limited resources, start with something small that you can achieve.

Trickle CEO, Paul Reid, recalled an organisation that took the simple step of changing the structure of a meeting in response to employee feedback. Replacing a long-winded 7-hour case load review with a highly productive 3-hour discussion of priority cases transformed the session – and freed up a half a day a month for each team member.

Showing that you've listened and got a quick win boosts morale. This creates a ripple effect that puts bigger changes within reach. As Dr Keoh told us, 'You can't fix everything but you can do something.'

See employees as people not resources Instead of asking employees what they need to be high performing resources, treat your staff as people.

Dr Keoh suggests you have informal conversations and ask simple questions such as: What can we do differently? How can we help you? What are the demands on you that we can change?

PRINCIPLE 2: TAILOR THE INTERVENTION TO THE CONTEXT

An intervention that works well in one team or setting won't automatically be effective elsewhere. Dr Keoh recommends that before implementing a change, you take a step back and work with your team to evaluate: What is our context? What is our issue? What solutions are appropriate to us?

This will give your employees voice and agency – and help you create a tailor-made solution that is right for your situation.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Engage with staff based on different sites and roles

Managing staff across multiple sites or employees who work from home can be far more complex than working with an organisation that is based in one location. As Johnston Carmichael's CPO, Martin Osler, commented, 'There has not been a more complex time to be a manager of people than now – with hybrid working, post-Covid and in this technological era.' Think about practical ways to hear voices from all parts of your organisation and understand all your staff members' needs, for example, by bringing together one or two people from each site to work on a joint plan to grow the organisation.

Make it easy for employees to speak up

If people feel able to speak up and see leaders take their suggestions seriously, it gives them a sense of psychological safety.

You can show your staff you're listening by providing an easy-access route to give feedback anonymously, such as Trickle's employee voice platform; through creating an open space for discussion, like the employee-led forum Martin Osler oversees at Johnston Carmichael, or simply by asking your staff what their issues are and how they would like them addressed.

As Dr Keoh reflected, 'The reality is, many of us are overworked, and the knock-on effect is we don't have space to reflect, space to think and space to change. Giving people space to have those conversations is really important.'

PRINCIPLE 3: INVOLVE STAFF IN THE PROCESS

A big barrier to change and engagement is that people don't think they can raise issues with leadership or that they'll be listened to.

Involving staff in each stage of the process gives you insights into the issues that are impacting them, enables you to create solutions that are tailor-made for the context and gives employees voice and agency, improving their sense of ownership of the work that is being done.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Reframe feedback as a conversation

When you're faced with a list of largely unachievable employee demands, change can feel difficult. However, if you reframe feedback as a conversation, the process becomes far more constructive.

As Paul advised, if an employee asks for something you can't deliver, don't ignore it. Instead, say: 'We can't do number 1 right now because... but we can progress numbers 2 and 3.'

This response is really powerful: it shows you've listened, it sets out what you will do – and the 'because...' helps people to understand why you can't immediately take forward their idea.

Recognising a challenge can be enough to make it go away

The simple act of recognising there is an issue and talking to employees about how to resolve it has a big impact: solutions are much more powerful if they come from your workforce rather than driven from the top.

Indeed, simply having the conversation may be enough to make the challenge go away. Paul gave the fascinating example from a university who, using the Trickle platform identified the number one frustration for students was people talking in lectures. Seeing it ranked as number one was enough to stop people talking in the lectures – without lecturers doing a thing.

PRINCIPLE 4: GET SUPPORT FROM LEADERS

Support from leaders is important for freeing up resources and role modelling. It's also key in terms of mindsets – what leaders do and say makes a huge difference.

Dr Keoh highlighted the example of a midwife team leader who said that her staff don't get tired. As a result, tiredness was seen as a weakness, and team members felt unable to access support that had been put in place, such as restrooms and fatigue training. In contrast, when a leader takes regular breaks, only sends emails in working hours and books holidays, staff also feel able to take these positive actions.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Create a psychologically safe environment where staff learn from mistakes

Helping staff understand why they're doing a piece of work allows you to have conversations around vulnerability: what do we need to do to get there and how do we learn from our mistakes along the way?

Set the boundaries (particularly around mistakes that have legal consequences) but treat day-to-day operational errors as learning opportunities. As Dr Keoh noted, it's important to recognise that mistakes happen – and the best way to respond is to acknowledge them, learn and then try again. This can be as simple as starting a team meeting with asking: What went well for you this week? What didn't work? What can we learn? How can we do better next time?

Remember to give praise and thanks

When people are busy, we forget to say well done and thank you.

As Martin highlighted, the need for more recognition (distinct from pay or benefits) comes up every year in their people surveys. Staff aren't necessarily looking for a monetary reward or a tangible benefit. The simple act of saying, 'Thank you,' or, 'Well done,' or giving an employee a Shout About* or Fist Bump** on Trickle can help people feel recognised and valued. Making this a core part of a line manager's approach can make a massive difference to employee engagement.

*Shout About - a feature on the Trickle platform where you can share company news, recognise team wins & enhance your sense of community

**Fist Bump - Give a virtual high-five to colleagues & encourage peer-to-peer support.

PRINCIPLE 5: INTERVENTIONS ARE ITERATIVE

Effective interventions are not a one-off programme or policy: the world of work will change, demands will change and your workforce will change, so you need to continually adapt what you're doing.

When it's done right, it's not simply about the change that happens but the process of being heard that makes employees feel that they are valued and recognised.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Look at interventions as a process not a distinct activity

Don't get hung up on trying to develop the perfect intervention. A key insight from Dr Keoh's report is that it's far more useful to view interventions as an iterative process rather than a distinct activity. In other words: try something, evaluate, learn and then adapt to make it better next time.

To regularly take the pulse of your organisation, use a tool such as Trickle's 'How Was Your Day'* feature or ask your employees simple questions such as: What do you need to perform well? What do you need to be happy?

See this as part of an iterative dialogue: find out what the current issues are and respond to the points raised.

***How Was Your Day** - a feature on the Trickle platform where you can track company-wide or individual team sentiment using a single click emoji system

PRINCIPLE 6: PLAN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Impactful change needs to be planned in as a long-term, iterative process, with buy-in from all relevant stakeholders across teams and the organisation. This approach ensures that change initiatives are sustainable, adaptable, and integrated into the core functioning of the organisation

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Build change into your workplans

Don't look at intervention as a distinct change programme, layered on top of other areas of work.

Instead, Dr Keoh recommends that you align intervention with your existing resources and priorities and embed it within the work you're already doing.

Make sure your company values are clear

Dr Keoh reflected that having an overarching vision and clear, understandable company values can make it simpler to explain why changes are (or are not) happening.

Even if you can't make a change that staff have asked for, responding to their feedback will help them to feel heard and valued – providing a sense of control and recognition that acts as a foundation for high impact change.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP TO TRANSFORM YOUR EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

Here at Trickle, we want to help create workplaces where all staff can speak up about their ideas and issues – allowing innovation and productivity to flourish.

If you'd like free, tailored advice on how to take your employee engagement to the next level, book your **30-minute employee engagement healthcheck**

We only offer five slots per month, so book in fast!

Contact details

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www.trickle.works



Who are Trickle?

We are an employee voice platform that transforms your employees' ideas into action, enabling meaningful change.

Trickle empowers your team to raise ideas, offer feedback, praise peers, and more in just one click. With optional anonymity, it promotes a safe, open environment for impactful communication and collaboration.

Our customers use Trickle for all sorts of reasons, from transforming employee engagement to improving productivity. Check out the diagram below to see how. Curious to learn more? [Give us a shout](#)—we'd love to show you what Trickle can do for your team!

Strategic Goals of Top-Performing Organisations

