Experts' edition
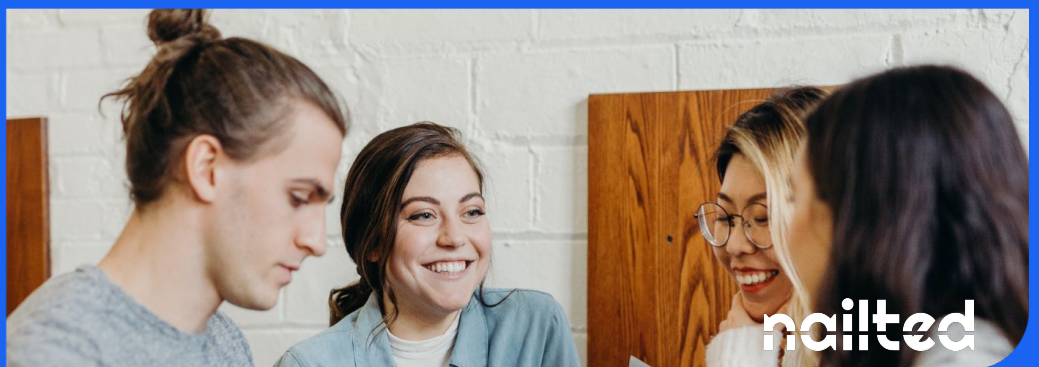
2021

Tech Culture Report

The evolution of company culture in the tech industry in 2021

nailted

Index

1. Introduction

> *"77% of employees say that a **strongly engaged culture** makes them do their best at work"* Source | Eagle Hill [1]

> *"85% of global employees worldwide **are not engaged** at work"* Source | Gallup [2]

Company culture is a valuable asset that has an impact on almost every aspect of a company.

Building and preserving a positive company culture has become essential to any organization that wants to succeed. From attracting top talent to retaining valuable employees, it's the backbone to cultivate a happy workplace.

When there's positive company culture, it's easier for employees to find a purpose in their work and, therefore, satisfaction, engagement and productivity rise.

The present research shows **an overview of how company culture in tech organisations has evolved** over the years, how they care for their employees, their level of satisfaction and well-being, and how they feel at work.

This analysis examines 5 of the most relevant aspects within a positive company culture: **employee satisfaction, company values, work environment, communication & feedback and employee   recognition**.

To accomplish this research, the core of the investigation has been based on the anonymous data the Nailted app generates. Data from over 5500 anonymous employees has been collected and analyzed, between April 2020 and March 2021. Moreover, additional data from 6 relevant external references has been used to contextualize the present research.

All comparisons that reflect evolution have been established by contrasting the data collected for the 2020 Tech Culture Report and the present one.

2. About the author

Nailted aims to help companies align their teams with their company culture; understanding, encouraging and boosting their efficiency through an organizational culture based on feedback. We assist people to work on their company culture and employee engagement to transform companies into better places to work.

Nailted guides you, and your entire organization, to apply best practices on employee engagement toward the creation of a culture that everyone wants to belong to. Nailted is not just an employee engagement platform, we help leaders, managers and HR teams deliver the best employee experience and learn how to understand their people and involve everyone in the company.

Our web solution, a framework oriented to achieve engagement and based on good practices of the industry in terms of feedback and people management, allows teams to get into a continuous improvement cycle through recognition processes and feedback.

Moreover, through these processes, you will obtain more than 50 metrics, which offer real visibility of what happens in your team, so that you can make more well-informed decisions based on data.

Nailted is not just a tool, but a way of driving real change in terms of employee engagement and company culture.

nailted.com

3. What do we mean by company culture?

Company culture is defined by shared values and people's behaviors. It refers to the predisposition of a company to create a positive work atmosphere for its employees by putting in common certain attributes that guide the decisions they make, the way they work and how they interact with each other.

It encompasses certain core aspects that, carefully taken into consideration, lead to positive outcomes in any company. These key aspects include employee satisfaction, company values, work environment, communication and feedback and employee recognition.
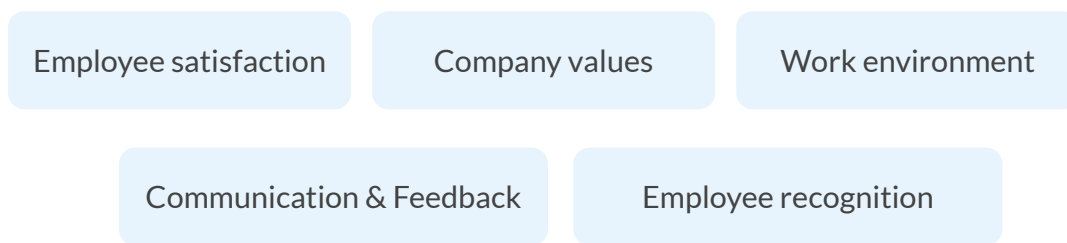
A positive company culture is deliberately promoted and results from giving answers to questions that, sooner or later, arise: Do we have constructive feedback processes in our company?, Do we recognize the good work and achievements of our employees?, Do we preserve an anonymous communication channel to express all opinions freely?

Employees believe a positive company culture has a direct impact on their performance at work. Source | Eagle Hill [1]

77% consider that it increases their ability to do their best at work.

76% have experienced improvements in their productivity and efficiency.

74% have improved their ability to best serve customers.

73% feel more committed to help achieve their company's goals.

70% feel more devoted to ethical behaviors.

67% believe it increases their innovation and creativity.

4. The evolution of company culture in the tech industry in 2021

As it was previously discussed, to achieve a positive company culture, we must take a close look at certain core aspects:

Employee satisfaction	Company values	Work environment

Communication & Feedback	Employee recognition

However, it's equally important to take into account several indicators within those aspects that give additional visibility on what works and what doesn't within them.

For example, when looking at employee satisfaction we can get a sole result that offers a general overview of how satisfied employees are in the company. Let's say your employees' satisfaction is not as high as you would have expected, **how would you work on improving it if you don't know what isn't working as it should?**

That's why you need to take a closer look, to come up with valuable conclusions that will help you take more actionable decisions.

Based on that statement, this research is supported by an extensive investigation of those core aspects and their principal indicators. Its main purpose is to offer a more detailed vision of how company culture has evolved over the course of an uncommon year to everyone within the tech industry.
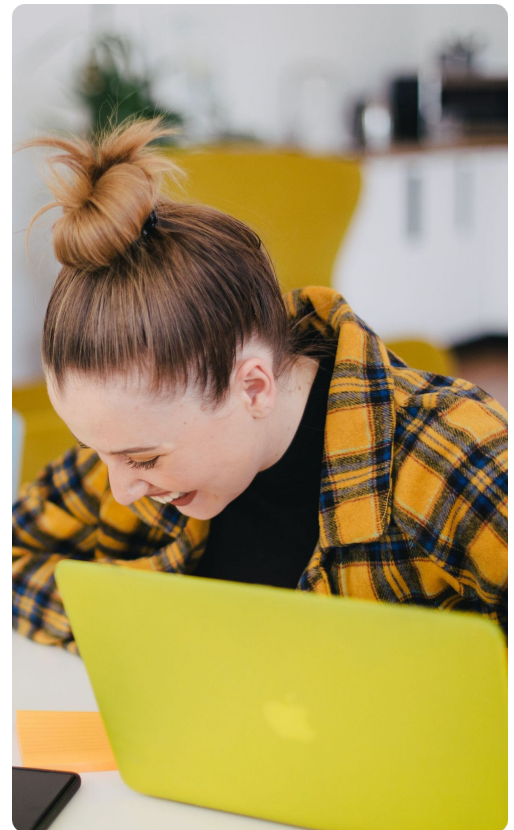
4.1. Employee satisfaction

*Tech companies **have increased their eNPS to +35** in 2021, 6 points above the previous year.*

Over the past few years, offering good salary conditions, comfortable work environments, additional days off or other showy perks was enough to set the foundation for a good employee satisfaction.

Nowadays, **employees demand something different**, they aim to work where they feel motivated and listened to, where they can progress in their careers and for a company that has a company culture they would love to belong to.

It's a fact that getting employee satisfaction data has become fundamental for course-correcting through these unpleasant times. Most companies are making great efforts to increase, or even just maintain, their employees' satisfaction but, **is it materializing in good results?**
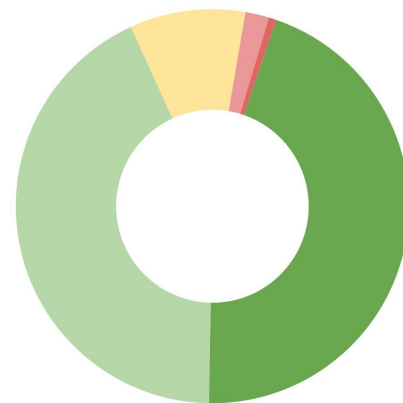
What aspects are making the highest impact on employee satisfaction?
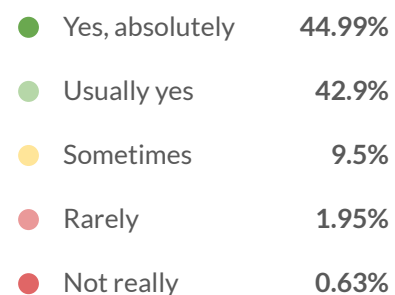
Confidence in their work

Employees' confidence has experienced improvements compared to 2020. **75.53% of respondents understand their goals and objectives**, 5.68% more than the previous year. Furthermore, only 1.58% of employees affirm they don't comprehend how their work contributes to achieving the objectives of the company.

Comfort in the workplace

In 2021, employees from tech companies have perceived improvements in how comfortable they feel at work, 2.23% more employees feel absolutely comfortable. Still, **65.96% of employees don't feel that way**. Moreover, there are some employees who affirm not feeling comfortable, 7.02% .

Respondents answered to this statement:
I understand how my work contributes to the company goals

● Yes, absolutely	**44.99%**	
● Usually yes	**42.9%**	
● Sometimes	**9.5%**	
● Rarely	**1.95%**	
● Not really	**0.63%**	

Source | Nailted

Employees answer to this question:

Do you feel comfortable in your workplace?

Absolutely	**34.04%**	
Yes	**38.51%**	
Occasionally	**20.39%**	
Not very much	**6.20%**	
Not at all	**0.82%**	
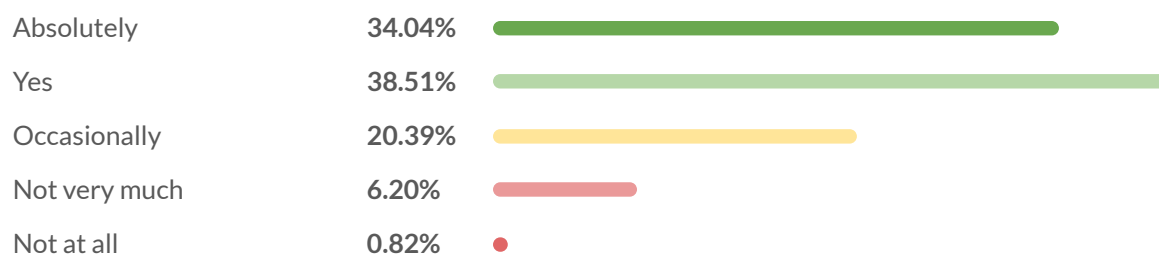
Source | Nailted

Access to everything they need

Employees in tech companies have perceived improvements regarding getting access to everything they need. Concerning material resources -equipment, tools, etc.- 3.8% more employees appreciate great advancements in this concern. If we look at non-material resources -information, training, data, knowledge, etc.- this increase is substantially higher, by 7.36%.
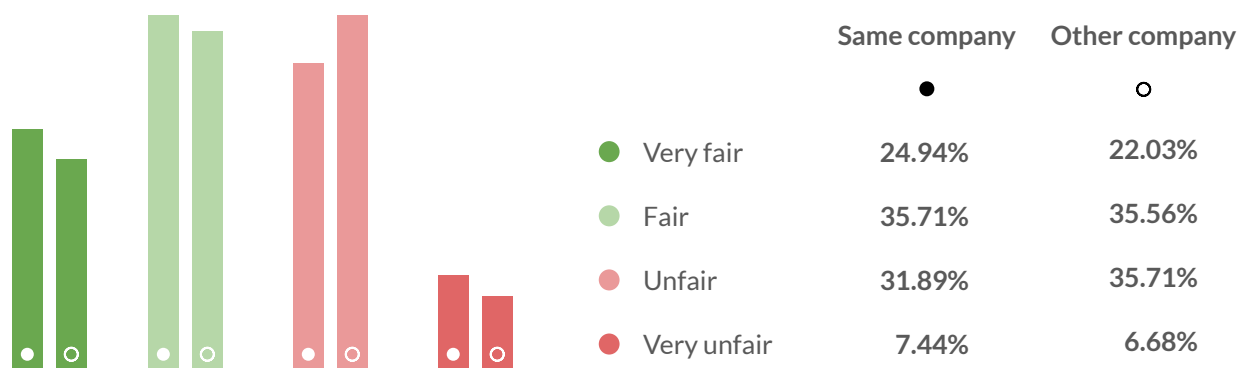
Perceptions on salary

Employees' viewpoint on salary has varied compared to last year. In 2020, 27.68% of employees considered their salaries were unfair in relation to their skills, in 2021 we can appreciate a diminution by 3.26% in that perception; **tech employees think their salaries are fairer now than before**.

Still, there's a high number of employees who think their salary is not as fair as it is for other employees with a similar job in the same company, 39.33%, and in different companies, 42.39%.

Respondents answer to the following questions:
Do you think your salary is fair compared to same roles within your company?
Do you think your salary is fair compared to same roles in a different company?

	Same company ●	Other company ○
● Very fair	24.94%	22.03%
● Fair	35.71%	35.56%
● Unfair	31.89%	35.71%
● Very unfair	7.44%	6.68%

Source | Nailted
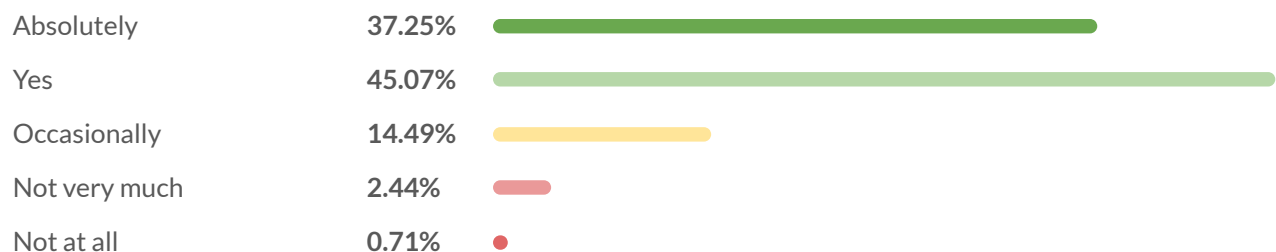
4.2. Company values

Employees' priorities when deciding between jobs have changed. Before, most people would say that salary was their top priority. However, nowadays the paradigm has evolved and **employees give more importance to achieving alignment between their values and the company's** rather than obtaining a higher salary.

*82.32% of employees **feel motivated by the mission and purpose** of their company*

Employees answer to this statement:

I like the mission and purpose of my company and these motivate me

Absolutely	**37.25%**
Yes	**45.07%**
Occasionally	**14.49%**
Not very much	**2.44%**
Not at all	**0.71%**

Source | Nailted

One of the main benefits of aligning company values to employees' values is improving teamwork and work relationships in the company. **98.27% of employees affirm they and their teammates work well together**, while only 1.73% consider the contrary.

While thinking about establishing company values, making sure everyone work aligned is important, but making everyone feel part of the team is essential. When people feel part of the team, they are more committed to advocating for what the company believes in. In 2021, **80.61% of employees from technology companies affirm feeling part of the team**.

77.24% of respondents feel alignment with the company's direction, 9.92% more than last year

The key to achieving alignment

A good way to align companies and their employees is to have a policy of clear communication and transparency. This research found out that this is a common value among most tech companies, as **94.82% of employees state that their direct manager is transparent with the team**.

As stated on the side graph, 78.06% of people from the tech industry confirm that their direct manager is completely transparent with them. Compared to the previous year, this statement proves that entirely transparent communication between managers and teams in the tech sector **has significantly improved by 37.72%**.

Respondents answered to this statement:
My direct manager is transparent with the team
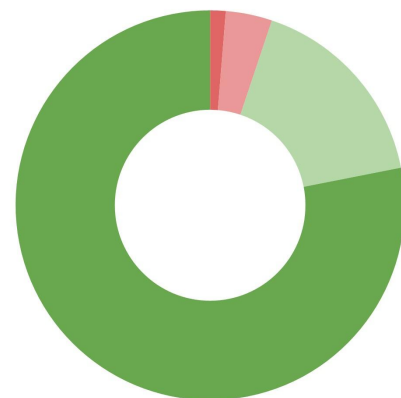
● Yes, absolutely	**78.06%**	
● Usually yes	**16.76%**	
● Rarely	**3.85%**	
● Not really	**1.29%**	

Source | Nailted

4.3. Work environment

*82.93% of employees believe their work environment **reflects their company culture***

According to a Randstad's research on employer branding, 41% of respondents stated that a good work environment is one of the main reasons to remain in their companies [3].

Maintaining a good work environment fosters employees' productivity and engagement, whereas a poor one develops conflicts and increases turnover.

A good work environment **can be mainly appreciated looking at how employees trust each other**. As it can be appreciated in both graphs, the level of trust within tech companies is quite high.

Respondents answered to this statement:
My manager is someone I trust
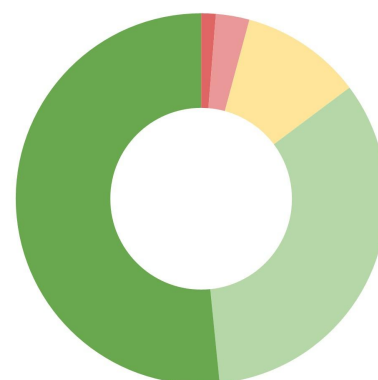
🟢 Yes, absolutely	**44.99%**
🟢 Usually yes	**42.9%**
🟡 Sometimes	**9.5%**
🔴 Rarely	**1.95%**
🔴 Not really	**0.63%**

Source | Nailted

Employees answer to the following question:
Is peer-to-peer communication transparent and honest?

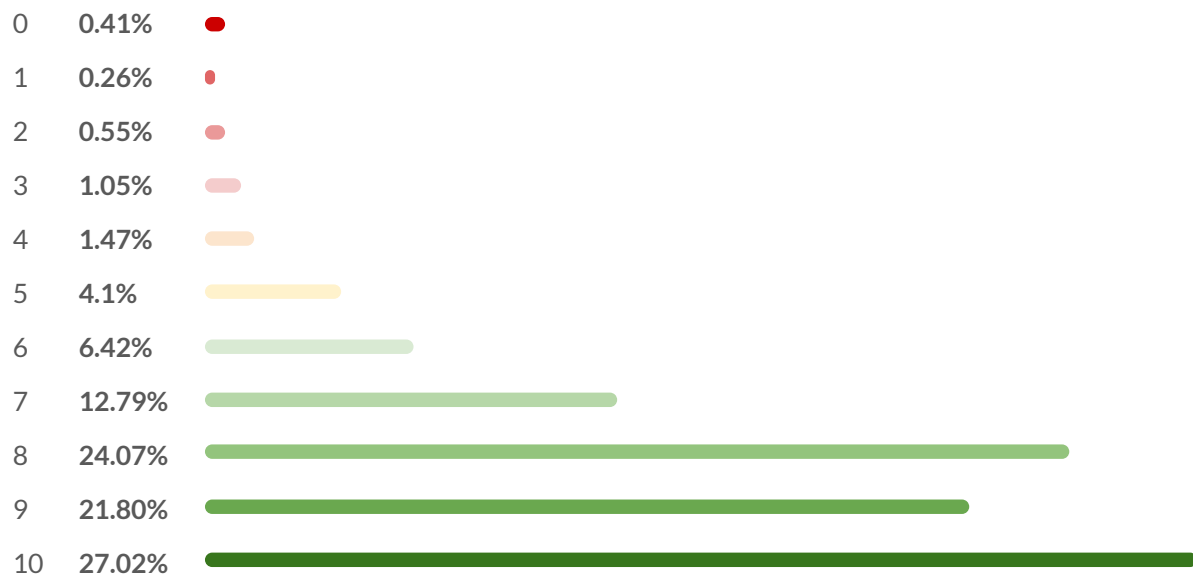|		
Yes, absolutely	**29.33%**	
Usually yes	**65.54%**	
Sometimes	**3.06%**	
Rarely	**1.88%**	
Not really	**0%**	
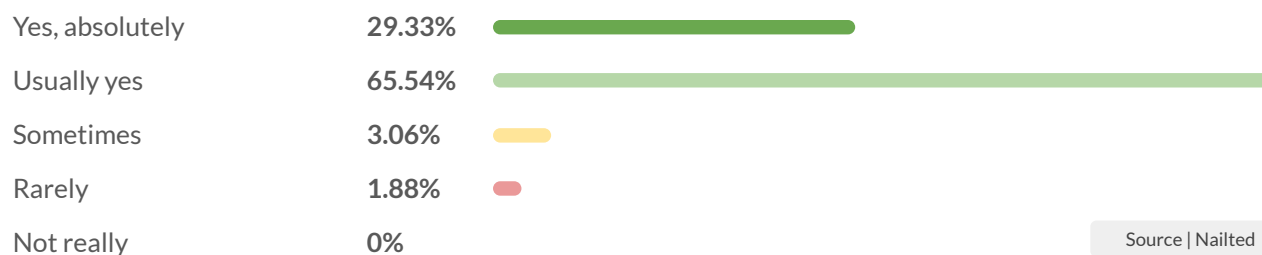
Source | Nailted

Do employees believe their companies are a good place to work?

According to a study on workplace well-being, 89% of employees working at companies that support well-being initiatives are **more likely to recommend their company as a good place to work** [4].

Employees answer to the eNPS question:
On a scale of 0-10, how much would you recommend your company as a good place to work?

0	**0.41%**	
1	**0.26%**	
2	**0.55%**	
3	**1.05%**	
4	**1.47%**	
5	**4.1%**	
6	**6.42%**	
7	**12.79%**	
8	**24.07%**	
9	**21.80%**	
10	**27.02%**	

Source | Nailted

Considering this data, most employees from tech companies recommend their organization as a good place to work. However, is there a real correlation between a company supporting well-being initiatives and their possibilities of being recommended as a good place to work?

57.02% of respondents consider their companies takes care of employees' mental health -stress, anxiety, etc.-, 72.81% consider their company performs actions to promote a healthy life -activities, programs, resources, etc.- and **68.99% of employees feel they can maintain a healthy balance between their work and their personal lives**. However, there's a minimum change if we compare it to the previous year, a rise by 0.04%.

4.4. Communication & Feedback

*82.32% of employees consider **feedback valuable***

Giving and receiving feedback in a professional setting is valuable because it helps people become more effective at their jobs, facilitates smooth workflows and communication and creates a sense of camaraderie among team members. Compared to the previous year, 7.43% more employees have experienced improvements in the feedback received by their managers and 31.82 % more employees on the feedback received by colleagues.

Respondents answer to the following questions:

Are you satisfied with the frequency your manager gives you feedback?

Are you satisfied with the frequency your colleagues give you feedback?

		Manager ●	Colleagues ○
●	Yes, absolutely	32.33%	25.22%
●	Usually yes	34.89%	67.11%
●	Sometimes	20.57%	4.3%
●	Not very much	8.43%	3.16%
●	Not at all	3.54%	0.18%

Source | Nailted

Do tech companies listen to their employees?

## *79.92% of employees feel they can **express their opinions freely***

Feedback is not the result of two great communicators coming together to exchange opinions.

Feedback is the result of a company culture where giving and receiving feedback and expressing opinions freely are encouraged and promoted.

In a true culture of feedback, any employee can comfortably participate in speaking up to share their thoughts and observations.

A culture of feedback promotes healthier communication by increasing trust between team members and teaching employees how to proactively problem-solve through giving feedback.

Respondents answered to this question:
How much importance does your company give to your opinions and suggestions?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★   28.53%

★ ★ ★ ★   42.32%

★ ★ ★   20.10%

★ ★   6.86%

★   2.15%
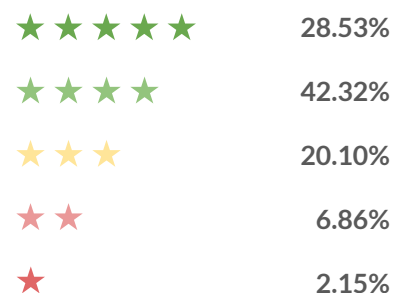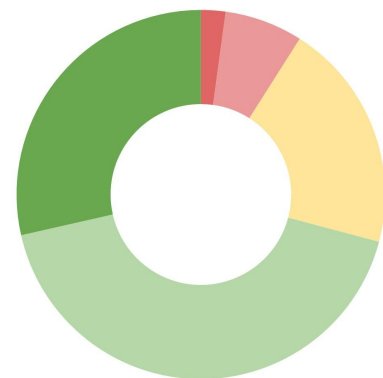
Source | Nailted

Do tech companies encourage constructive feedback?

Creating a culture of feedback communicates that you value every team member's voice and want them to be a part of moving the company forward.

When delivered well, feedback is constructive. It doesn't just criticize a particular employee's performance or a poor workflow; it offers a potential solution, or at the very least, invites a solution. That being the case, feedback helps to identify and quickly resolve a company's weak spots… and ultimately, improves outcomes.

Employees respond to the following statement:
When someone gives me feedback at work, it is always in a respectful and constructive manner

Absolutely	**48.01%**	
Usually yes	**38.86%**	
Sometimes	**10.08%**	
Rarely	**2.47%**	
Not at all	**0.55%**	
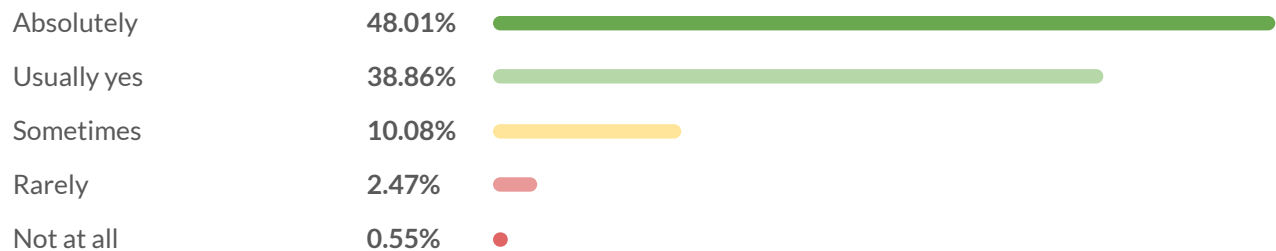
Source | Nailted

To sum up, it could be appreciated that **86.87% of employees in tech companies affirm they receive constructive feedback**. This is highly relevant because receiving constructive feedback supports the professional and personal development of individual employees. Feedback helps employees to learn both their strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately, to become more effective for the rest of their working lives.

Furthermore, **85.32% of respondents believe that they get enough feedback** to understand how to improve.

4.5. Employee recognition

92.36% of employees confirm that they always receive significant and honest recognition

Creating a culture of recognition can be enormously beneficial to any business. Not just encouraging team members, but helping leaders to build stronger, more profitable businesses.

Positive Psychology News has proved that giving recognition frequently **increases productivity by 31%** [5]. Furthermore, according to a Forbes analysis, 36% of employees affirm that the lack of recognition is a main factor in leaving their job [6].

Recognition can be understood differently or given in diverse ways. However, all of them have something in common: to be effective, it must be real and honest.

Giving recognition is more powerful than ever, but, do tech industry companies give enough recognition to employees?

Respondents answered to this question:
How would you rate the frequency with which you receive recognition for your work
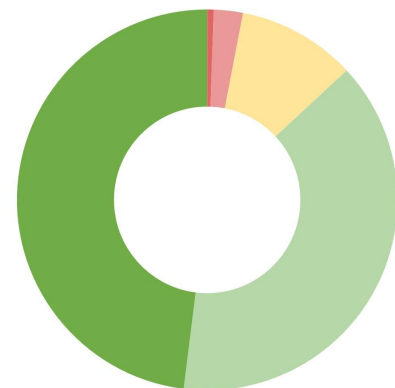
● Ideal	**48.01%**
● Very good	**38.86%**
● Good enough	**10.08%**
● It could be better	**2.47%**
● Insufficient	**0.55%**

Source | Nailted

Do tech companies make employee recognition happen?

Recognition between team members – or between team members and management – is simply the practice of recognizing specific success and positive behaviors in the workplace.

Nonetheless, **recognition doesn't happen spontaneously**, it is not so simple to implement recognition in the workplace, especially between team members.

It has been stated that employee recognition is often overlooked and underutilized. In fact, a Gallup research affirmed that **51% of employees are disengaged at work – suggesting** [7], among other things, that they have never received recognition for their efforts and accomplishments.

Employees respond to the following statement:

My company encourages employees to recognize each other's work

Absolutely	**52.61%**	
Usually yes	**38.07%**	
Sometimes	**0.31%**	
Rarely	**7.79%**	
Not at all	**1.17%**	
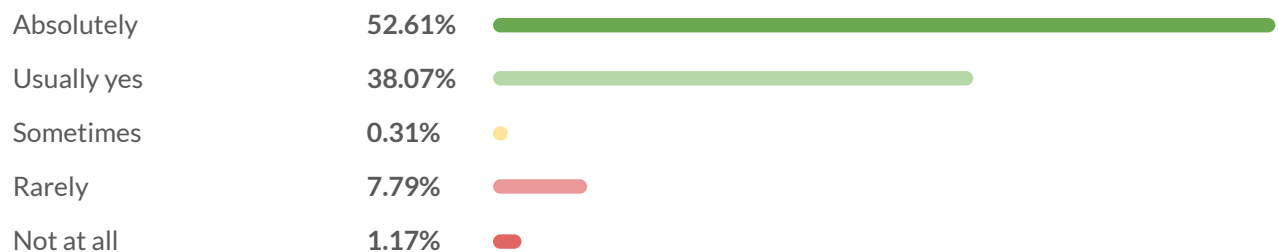
Source | Nailted

5. Conclusions

Considering the answers of the over 5.500 employees included in this report, it can be appreciated that their companies still have a great interest in building and preserving a positive company culture, making their employees feel more satisfied at work and cultivating a happy workplace. In fact, **this interest and commitment has generated a positive impact on their employees**, experimenting a rise in their eNPS by 6 points, getting to +35 in 2021.

What are tech companies focusing on at the moment to improve their company culture?

Transparency: this research shows a prevailing interest right now, materialized in a rise by 37.72%: focusing on communicating with transparency. 78.06% of people from the tech industry confirm that their direct manager is completely transparent with them. This statement proves that a entirely transparent communication between managers and teams is a priority in the tech sector and has significantly improved since last year.

Feedback: related to communicating with transparency, this report demonstrates that tech companies are, everyday more, encouraging unification among employees by motivating them to give feedback to one another. Compared to the previous year, 7.43% more employees feel satisfied with the frequency in which they receive feedback by their managers, and 31.82 % more employees in the feedback received by colleagues.

Alignment: furthermore, fostering alignment between their company's core values and goals and their employees work and contribution is also being highly appreciated by tech companies at the moment, experimenting a rise by 9.92%. By putting the emphasis on offering visibility and giving everyone a voice, tech companies have achieved that 87.89% of employees understand how their work contributes to the company goals, originating a rise in their commitment to the company mission and purpose to 82.32%.

What are tech employees more concerned about?

Trust in their managers: Companies are making great efforts to communicate with transparency. What everyone would expect is that a high rise in transparency would end in a large growth in trust. Nevertheless, trust is up until now a matter to be improved. Especially, the trust employees have in their managers, that has suffered a decrease of 3.77% compared to 2020.

Salary: Employees' salary is still a controversial topic. Even if, as this research has demonstrated, there has been a diminution by 3.26% in the number of employees who consider their salaries are unfair, there's a large percentage of people who still consider it should be better, an average of 40.86%.

Work-life balance: This research shows that tech companies haven't made great efforts to promote any changes in a healthier balance between their employees' work and personal lives in 2021. The data shows that the previous year the results were 68.95% of employees who agreed with the aforementioned statement, this year 68.99%. This minimum change in something as important as this matter to prevent burnout demonstrates that there's still scope for improvements in this area.

6. The experts' word

Irene Sánchez Díaz
People Operations - Rebellion Pay

I'm grateful for this report as it dives into five of the most important elements to achieve a positive culture that generates engagement in employees.

It's really important to show employees how they contribute to the company goals and, every day, employees are more aware of it because of the transparency led by companies. Companies usually do a yearly or monthly overview of the results where they talk about every department and how they contributed to achieving them in one way or another. At this point it is very important to talk about operative departments as People or Finance, whose work is always behind what's visible.

Culture is also really important and we, as a People team, must consider all employees: those who mainly work from home or onsite, those who are shy or extroverted. Taking that into account, we must communicate a common mission and purpose that means something to all of them and create cultural moments that highlight them. For example, having bimonthly talks from people from inside and outside the company that shares these values motivating employees towards them.

Last, but not least, is feedback and recognition, which I think must go together. Nailted is an extraordinary program that helps you with both. From the People team, it's very important to communicate with the managers and show them the importance of feedback and taking time for it.

For some of them, it might seem like a waste of time because they're used to give feedback at the moment, but it's very important for employees' satisfaction that they schedule an appointment just to talk about how they are doing and their concerns. This feedback must include a recognition of the things this employee has succeeded in. Nailted helps you with the recognition part with the claps section. It's really useful and it helps you start your Monday journey with a smile on your face because you know you did something right.

Natalia de Martos
Head of HR - CARTO

There is no doubt, company culture impacts every angle in an organization. Therefore, we need to build it, grow it, and take care of it. Right now, it is not only about launching big and popular initiatives. It is about getting data, comparing your metrics to the industry-based standards, and identifying your strengths and areas you need to work on harder.

Since a positive company culture has so many different components, we have to take a closer look at them, track the impact of what we put in place, change and iterate. Building the culture you want for your organization is a never-ending process that has a major influence on a company's success.

Julio Braceli
Founder, CEO and People & Culture Director - Growara

At Growara we have identified 6 key factors to create a culture with a strong sense of belonging that drives teams towards high performance.

1. Purpose: Employees need to feel connected to the purpose and understand how their job contributes to it. Once they do, their work takes on meaning and they can do it with a passion that they would not otherwise. Organizations have the responsibility to clearly articulate the connection between work and purpose and create conducive experiences.

2. Opportunity: Opportunity is about preparing and empowering employees to make decisions, inviting them to the table, and offering them projects that will expand their skills and relationships. Opportunity is enabling employees to impact the organization and experience the satisfaction of personal and professional growth.

3. Success & Development: Success should be nurtured and celebrated with the help of leaders who remove obstacles and publicly recognize wins, large and small, as they happen. The transition will remain constant. It is almost certain that the emphasis will turn to soft skills as technology takes center stage in the transformation of the workplace.

4. Feedback & Appreciation: Positive and negative feedback is important because it helps break bad habits, reinforces positive behavior, and enables teams to work more effectively toward their goals. Appreciation is as essential to employees as oxygen. Without it, systems fail. People need to know their leaders and peers notice and are grateful for their efforts, especially above-and-beyond work.

5. Wellbeing: The importance of wellbeing is growing because more employees feel stressed, disconnected, and lonely at work. Leaders need to create an environment of inclusivity, work/life integration, and connection to foster a comprehensive approach to wellbeing.

6. Leadership: The successful leader focuses on the social good of both employee and client. This approach transforms a stagnant leader into an inspirational one who solves issues creatively while measuring the larger impact of the company's services and products. Great leaders co-create a shared purpose for their teams and empower their employees to do great work.

Cristina Castiblanque
Talent Acquisition & Employer Branding Manager - Bdeo

The trend towards agile cultures is already a fact. The tech sector has been a pioneer for several years in implementing agile methodologies, which simply gives workers more autonomy and responsibility. The companies that have done so, moreover, coincide in cultures that think in people, they are much more flexible and autonomous and therefore employees are much clearer about the objectives they have to meet and how to work to achieve them.

The values that predominate, in addition to transparency, autonomy and putting people first, also focus on responsibility and teamwork. Bdeo, for example, is committed to the following values: Ambition and commitment, Great teamwork, Trust, Innovation, and even when you have to work hard, it is possible to work in a happy place. So, we always talk about people first, and then about people too ;)

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Shereen Daniels
Founder & Manager Director - HR Rewired | LinkedIn TOP voices 2020

Something to think about, future-focused, is what seems more and more a move towards understanding the nuances of culture as it is experienced by different communities within a workforce. I think the dangers of taking "tech employees feel X, Y and Z", is that we're misunderstanding how different experiences will be felt by different communities, that is linked to how included they feel, but also how progressive the organization is in terms of their culture.

I think the reason why that's really important is because we know that tech has a lot of work to be done when it comes to inclusion, particularly if you think of my world in terms of racial equity and representation. The dangers are that we see all these positives headline numbers in terms of how people are feeling, assuming that everything is great and there is no more work to be done, and I'm specifically thinking about race, LGBTQ, particularly trans people, about mental health and I'm also thinking about the increasing need for employees wanting to see organizations who take a stand on social justice issues, sustainability and climate change.

It will be interesting to show how this fits into the new world of Employee Engagement when it's not so much about the traditional life that we've been used to, so it could be encapsulated in a future-focused way. I think it might be really good and also keeps the report relevant. I'm thinking about some of the organizations I'm talking to, they would want to see the nuances of the data and therefore what story that narrative is telling.

Sofía Correa
Talent Development & Culture Professional

While promoting company culture, it is common to set positive values that look great in the office's entrance (such as honesty or integrity). And this rarely matches the way employees act in reality.

The truly shared values and people's behaviors define company culture. The first step to deliberately promoting a positive and healthy company culture is recognizing which values are those. A quick tip to know if you're on the right path is that the opposite of that value can be a suitable choice as well. For example, you can either set 'people first' or 'client first' as a core value (or driver to make decisions), and both can be right if it's true.

After acknowledging the company culture, you can align processes with it, and the most critical will be the recruitment process.

When companies hire the right people who fit their culture, the turnover ratio drops down, the performance KPIs increase, and people are more likely to be motivated by the mission. Transparency, feedback, and alignment are essential in any positive company culture. Still, my advice would be to work on the foundations of their culture first and, after doing it, to measure the company climate to take action on your improvement areas.

Liam McIvor Martin
Co-founder & CMO - Time Doctor, Running Remote Conference and staff.com

As the months are leading on, it's becoming inevitable that the market is going to permanently shift to a remote-friendly model. As this trend continues, increases in transparency, international salaries, and communication will only become more important as we progress into this new world of work.

David Bonilla Fuertes
Founder & CEO - Manfred

In any company, properly managing talent is key to achieve the company goals, but in a fully-remote company like Manfred is INDISPENSABLE. To achieve it without being together on a day-to-day basis, we need to establish the right channels and tools to foster that employee feedback and communication flow easily.

There's not a tool — not even Nailted— that guarantees your employees wellbeing, but these tools help you avoid problems that become unpleasant surprises and transform them into tasks to work on and improve.

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