



Unlocking People Success at Your Organization

Principles and practices to make
culture a competitive advantage

Introduction

The last few years have forced companies to adapt to changes at a rapid rate. A global pandemic caused a shift to hybrid work and more workplace mental health awareness. The Great Resignation and a period of high growth put retention and hiring into focus. And then, an impending recession and economic downturn pushed many to do more with less and put an even brighter spotlight on retention.

But even as we all have had to pivot and adjust, one thing remains the same: People are the heart and soul of our organizations. Every product, invention, innovation, and discovery was made by individuals or teams working together to achieve a meaningful goal. People are critical to the success of any company, particularly in uncertain times. And it's our people who will adapt, innovate, and find new ways of working together effectively to move your organization forward.

Over the years, Lattice has worked with thousands of customers globally, and we've seen time and again that companies who put their people first see better business outcomes. The reason? Because when people succeed, businesses succeed.

In this ebook, we'll explore what people success means, what that success looks like from the employee's view, and what HR strategy principles are most important to nurturing people success at your organization.



What Is People Success?

People success happens when organizations align, engage, and motivate employees to do their best work. To do this, leaders need to build a culture that values and safeguards employee authenticity while also strongly encouraging them to stretch beyond comfort to learn and improve.

Lattice believes that these conditions are prerequisites to feeling successful at work. We've grouped them into four distinct pillars.

The Four Pillars of People Success

Purpose

Employees want to do work that's meaningful to them, and they want to be part of a company driven by a meaningful mission. For some, that mission is to save lives or to pioneer a best-in-class technology. Others may value being at a market-leading public company, while still others love the challenge of building something bold and new within a start-up. Purpose also comes from having a clear understanding of their role in that mission. How is their work contributing to the business' overall success? And how is that recognized?

Community

It's estimated that we spend a third of our lives at work, so naturally, feeling a connection to the people we work with is essential. Every workforce is a community, whether you nurture it or not. If that community isn't respectful, supportive, and inclusive, people can't imagine being successful there. In this current moment, where so much work is shifting to hybrid arrangements, employees may expect flexibility in how and where they work, but they do still want to feel connected to those they work with. And they want to be comfortable bringing their whole selves into a setting with a palpable sense of belonging.

Trust

Employees need to trust their leaders. They expect leaders to be transparent and authentic in how they communicate about the business and its future. Just as importantly, they want leaders to engage in a dialogue about their needs. Employees also expect leaders to take their feedback and make quick and impactful adjustments in response.

Growth

Humans are wired for growth. We seek out opportunities to improve ourselves and our abilities, and we want to look back over our lives and see how much we've achieved and built. So it's only natural that we want the same from our careers. Employees want to work for leaders who actively invest as much in their long-term development as they do in their short-term productivity.

Employees who experience all four pillars are set up for the most success. They feel appreciated and empowered to do their best work. And they thrive in the comfort of knowing where they are headed and that they have opportunities to grow.

People leaders know that hiring and retaining great teams is never easy. Having an inspiring people success culture can be a real differentiator, and — if you're not providing that culture — top performers may seek out that feeling of success elsewhere. In fact, Lattice research has found that *over half* of employees in both the US and the UK are prepared to move on from a new role just three months in if it isn't meeting their expectations.

So how do companies create a culture of people success? Over the years, Lattice has honed in on eight principles and behaviors that work together to build those cultures. That's why Lattice built what we call the People Success Platform.



8 Principles That Drive People Success

1 Performance and engagement are deeply connected.

Employee performance and employee engagement aren't always thought of together. When we think of performance, we usually think about productivity and the ability to hit business targets. Meanwhile, when we think of engagement, we tend to equate it with job satisfaction and culture.

[Decades of organizational research show us](#) that they are much more connected than they seem to be on the surface. When employees are highly engaged, they perform better at work. They're more productive, proactive, and motivated.

When your employees are high-performing, they can see how their great work positively impacts your company overall. If they receive great feedback on how to continue to improve, their work only gets stronger. And — surprise! — both visibility on our impact and quality feedback are drivers of engagement, which means those employees are more likely to stay at your organization and, you guessed it, keep doing great work.

So it follows that, when your performance management and engagement programs are connected by running processes on a coordinated cycle of reviews and surveys, the results of these two critical elements of any People strategy give you better results. Nurturing this reciprocal relationship is a solid first step to creating that people success culture.

And let's take it one step further. What if you could also see these connections happening on your People analytics dashboard, delivering insights through combined streams? Viewing performance and engagement data points in the same view will help you make better data-driven decisions about your HR strategy and help prove the effectiveness of those programs.

Applicable Pillars:

 Purpose

 Trust

 Growth

On the Lattice platform:

Lattice has always seen the vital link between these two foundational processes, which is why Lattice Performance Management and Lattice Engagement are interconnected by design. Managers on the ground can see progress on goals and feedback alongside engagement data for their team all in one view.

Meanwhile, HR teams can use Lattice Analytics to gain a broader understanding of these two critical data streams, both separately and when they intersect. Importantly, you can use this data to better identify your most at-risk segments and make proactive changes to head off regrettable turnover. For example, you'll be able to look to determine how or why your top performers may feel disengaged. Or, if you're seeing a team struggling performance-wise, dig into survey results to see if cultural issues may be hurting their ability to do their job effectively.

2 Continuous feedback is the key to great performance.

Performance management is evolving. For decades, companies relied on the once-a-year performance review to evaluate employee performance. But these all-or-nothing appraisals were time-consuming and, worse, seen as ineffective. In one CEB survey, [90% of HR leaders said that traditional performance reviews don't produce accurate information.](#)

Companies are increasingly turning to [continuous feedback](#) as a more thoughtful approach because it goes beyond only looking back at past performance; it also allows for a focus on growth and improving future results. With continuous feedback, managers guide employees in the course of their daily work or one-on-one conversations. So if an employee is struggling in their role, managers can course correct in the moment to help them improve instead of holding those comments for months later when the behavior has likely impacted the employee's ability to meet goals.

The best feedback cultures encourage two-way conversations. Just as managers provide employees with direction and celebrate wins, employees should feel empowered and encouraged to deliver feedback upward, telling managers what they need to be successful, like needing resources or helping clearing blockers. And employees should also feel empowered to ask for feedback from both managers and peers to take ownership of their own performance journey.

But, this feedback loop doesn't replace regular performance reviews. Reviews are still an essential checkpoint along the feedback road, measuring how much progress has been made and rewarding great work. And if continuous feedback is happening, instead of dreading reviews, employees will know what's coming, and what's said *in* the review won't ever be a surprise.

Lastly, these feedback conversations don't just have to focus on performance; they can also incorporate employee development. Not only will you have the opportunity to prepare your people for what the business will need tomorrow, but you'll also be helping prepare them for what they likely want from the next step in their careers.

Applicable Pillars:

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On the Lattice platform:

James Clear in *Atomic Habits* says that the first step to building a good habit is to “make it obvious.” Lattice wants you to make feedback a healthy habit. That’s why the Lattice Performance dashboard puts everything you need to have effective feedback conversations in one visible view. Managers can prepare for discussions by checking progress on goals, viewing public and private peer feedback, and adding talking points to their 1:1 agenda. And to ensure a two-way conversation, Lattice 1:1 agendas are open to employees and managers, so both can contribute talking points in advance of the meeting.

During the meeting, both individuals can use the agenda for recording notes and setting action items. And when it’s time for performance reviews, these past agendas and notes are easily accessible alongside goals progress and issued praise to ensure a fair and transparent evaluation.

And if you’re trying to improve feedback participation, Lattice makes it easy to view feedback data within Analytics, showing who and how many people requested or delivered feedback on a given team or department.

3 Alignment distills purpose and creates clarity.

There’s nothing as empowering as being part of a team strongly rowing together in the same direction. That feeling is called alignment, and alignment starts with goals. Outstanding performance requires clear expectations, and when you define expectations through strategic goals, you define the direction in which everyone should be rowing.

Many businesses already realize this. In a [Harvard Business Review Analytic Services report](#), 82% of survey respondents said they consider the use of strategic goals “extremely critical” or “very critical” to their organization’s overall success.

Whether using Objectives and Key Results, (OKRs), SMART goals, KPIs, or another approach — when goals are defined well and visible to the whole company, employees clearly see how their accomplishments contribute to the business, driving a sense of defined purpose and a desire to do their best work. And many leaders already know this to be true. In that same HBRAS report, 100% of respondents reported that their highest-performing employees had a formal link between their individual goals and the company’s corporate goals.

But that alignment is not simple to create. In fully functioning OKR cultures, People teams, leaders, and managers work hand-in-hand to communicate goals at every level, transparently showing the whole structure — from the company’s most strategic goals down to an individual’s operational ones.

But communication is just one step along an ongoing cycle, as goals should never be treated as “set it and forget it”; they must be revisited regularly to ensure that they stay timely and relevant to shifting business needs and priorities. Goal-setting data from the thousands of companies that use Lattice shows that [over half of all goals have a timeline of 90 days or less](#), giving teams the right mix of flexibility and accountability.

Applicable Pillars:

 Purpose

 Trust

On the Lattice platform:

Lattice OKRs & Goals is the starting point for effective performance management. In Lattice’s [People Program Models](#), we recommend three main components: goal alignment, performance management, and employee experience. And every model we recommend begins with setting those all-important expectations to create a definition for success and a sense of purpose.

You can use any goal-setting framework in Lattice OKRs & Goals, but our customers have seen significant improvements when they adopt the OKR framework. Objectives create meaning, answering the question, “Where do I want to go?” Key Results define the specifics of “How will I get there?” Objectives tend to be ambitious, pushing beyond what seems possible or even comfortable. Key results break down that objective into measurable, actionable tasks.

Once defined, goals are entered into Lattice, where you can track how effectively you perform against the targets you’ve set over time. They are highly visible on your Lattice dashboard and viewable in the 1:1 tool. You can also easily drag specific goals for discussion into your 1:1 agenda to make it a topic for any regular feedback meeting.

Leaders and HR teams can also track goal creation and performance in Lattice Analytics. Since Performance Management is interconnected with Engagement, you can gather valuable insights like seeing how the most effective teams at hitting their targets feel about the company.

4 Listening must be coupled with action.

If you want to bring about cultural change at your company, start with the simple act of listening. Listening *could* mean having dozens of individual employee conversations, but you can cover more ground and topics (and possibly get more honest input) using employee engagement surveys.

Regular surveys let you assess the employee experience and engagement levels across the organization to identify culture problems — often before they start. Set goals for what you'd like to learn about your culture; it may be that you are seeing high attrition among women, and you want to dig into retention for underrepresented groups. Then you'll select questions, design your survey around those target areas, and gather input on areas like belonging, satisfaction, and manager effectiveness.

Once the survey concludes, you'll analyze the results to get a clear sense of what your engagement priorities should be. But this is where many organizations fail in their listening strategy. They go through the trouble of surveying and learning but don't commit to acting on the findings.

When you take the trouble to ask your people what meaningful change would look like, you are entering into an agreement with them that you'll act on that feedback. When you couple listening with action, you signal to employees that they work for a company that values their input and concerns.

Follow up that analysis by creating a plan of changes, activities, and programs to address those priorities. And to complete the cycle, track your plan's progress with short, frequent surveys to take a "pulse" on how effective those actions have been.

Applicable Pillars:



Trust



Community

On the Lattice platform:

Lattice Engagement has everything you need to build out an effective listening strategy — from eNPS to onboarding and exit surveys to pulse surveys. Start by agreeing on what's most important to measure, and then structure your surveys toward those goals using our expertly curated question bank. All questions in our question bank are rated on a [Likert scale](#) and allow for direct employee comments. By using the questions in Lattice's question bank, you'll eventually have access to our benchmark data, enabling you to compare your data to companies of similar size or industry. But keep in mind that you're not limited to our library; you can absolutely customize with your own.

Next, decide your cadence and timing. As with performance management, how often you conduct engagement surveys isn't one-size-fits-all. When deciding on a survey cadence, [Lattice Advisory Services recommends](#)

looking at two factors: the state and trajectory of your company and team autonomy.

Once complete, Lattice Analytics helps you organize your data, identify themes, and do an impact analysis — making it easy to narrow in on areas of focus and then easily share them with your org. To make your plan even more impactful, consider turning some engagement initiatives into Lattice OKRs & Goals. Setting goals for this kind of culture-building work shows a true dedication to seeing things through. And finally, close the loop by using Lattice [Pulse Surveys](#) to measure how impactful those initiatives are.

5 Equity is non-negotiable.

In a recent [Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey](#), 65% of HR respondents say diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEIB) is a high strategic priority. Still, only one-third of those surveyed say they're very successful at creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. And our own research has found that [over half of employees](#) in the US and the UK agreed that biases were impacting pay decisions, one of the most critical tools organizations have to make sure employees feel properly valued for their work.

It's easy to understand why DEIB is a priority to these People leaders. In addition to these aspects of work being critical for our society at large to adopt, research has shown that diverse teams achieve great results and drive better business performance overall. According to [a study by McKinsey](#), "racially and ethnically diverse companies have a 36% higher likelihood of outperforming less diverse companies." And "companies that are in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are 25% more likely to have above-average profitability in comparison to those in the last quartile of diversity."

And even whole economies can benefit. [A recent PWC report](#) shows that increasing the female employment rate to match that of Sweden (the strongest performer for gender diversity in the workforce) would provide an annual boost of just under £5 trillion or US\$6 trillion to OECD GDP.

But you can't attract diverse teams without working to retain them.

That's why equity is such an important part of the DEIB equation. The reality is that some employees have less access to resources and privileges or may be impacted by bias. Equity means all individuals at the organization have an equal opportunity to succeed on a leveled playing field. That leveling happens when companies work to provide support and remove barriers. Employees need to see effort across the board: in how they receive feedback, in how pay decisions are made, in promotion processes, and in whether they see themselves represented in senior roles. Without equity, inclusion — the key to retaining diverse hires — just isn't achievable.

The only way to create that kind of workplace is to make equity an absolute non-negotiable in how the company does business. Equity requires a strong commitment to various areas where inequity can show up, and adhering to that commitment shouldn't be open to discussion.

In the long run, a dedication to equity helps promote self-confidence, encourages empathy and collaboration within teams, and ultimately leads to a healthier, more efficient working environment. [Studies support this](#), too, showing that diverse teams are more innovative and experience much more happiness in general — core elements of people success.

Applicable Pillars:

 Purpose

 Trust

 Growth

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On the Lattice platform:

Since equity needs to happen consistently within your organization, you should view every People process through that lens. The Lattice platform can help you make those processes more equitable:

- **Performance Management:** With the right tools and processes, [reviews and feedback can help reduce unconscious biases](#). For example, weekly feedback tracked in Lattice 1:1s can help managers concentrate on “areas of focus” instead of more subjective topics. And equitable employee reviews on a well-designed system that includes thoughtful review questions can better steer skilled managers away from common bias pitfalls.
- **Compensation and Grow:** Lattice Compensation and Grow creates more transparency into levels, compensation philosophy, pay bands, and matrices. Employees are then reassured that they have a clear understanding of promotion and compensation decisions and that they're being treated fairly.
- **Engagement:** Surveys help HR teams take the DEI temperature within their organization at scale, measure change, and make informed, data-driven decisions; while also taking the burden off employees to self-report unequal practices. Lattice Engagement has a DEI survey template to make taking that first step easier.
- **Analytics:** With the launch of Lattice's DEI Analytics & Reporting, demographic, performance, and engagement data are combined in one place to give people leaders a clear look at representation across their workforce and provide previously unattainable insights on equity, inclusion, and belonging within their programs and people.

6 Growth shouldn't feel ambiguous.

We've already talked about how employee growth is a pillar of people success. If you're investing in people's long-term career development, they'll work harder and are more likely to stay at your organization. The trouble is that, while many companies recognize the importance of employee development and are willing to invest in it, they likely don't have a framework that helps clarify what a development path looks like at the granular, individual level.

That lack of transparency may be what's causing employees to leave. According to a [Lattice survey of more than 2,000 employees](#), 76% said they would be somewhat or very likely to leave a company due to feeling dissatisfied with the opportunities to progress in their careers. And 29% of employees surveyed said they didn't have a clear view of the career progression opportunities within their company.

The best way to clear up career path ambiguity is to create matrices of job competencies and levels, showing employees how their current role — and other roles they may be interested in — progresses within the company. Then, managers can work closely with employees to build out individual growth plans that provide a roadmap for how they move up in their current track or possibly move into a new track.

Once the plan is in place, managers can have regular conversations to keep employees on track toward their growth goals. In the same survey, 33% of employees say they want more feedback on how they're doing with career progression, whether around areas of improvement or praise for wins.

And to truly make career progression unambiguous, companies should also ensure that progress is recognized. When an employee gets to an evaluation period and is shown to be performing above their current job level, managers should feel empowered to acknowledge that progress through a transparent process for promotions, compensation adjustments, or other rewards.

Applicable Pillars:

 Trust

 Growth

On the Lattice platform:

Lattice Grow is designed to make it easy to build out career matrices and make it easier for managers to have regular conversations about growth.

- **Competency Matrices** define the skills or qualities that employees need to embody to succeed in their roles and the levels of seniority.
- **Individual Development Plans (IDPs)** map out a plan for your employees to achieve those competencies and progress from level to level.
- **Career Tracks** are built into the tool to help leaders easily set up and manage role expectations.

- **Integrating Growth with 1:1s** enables managers to become career coaches by adding IDP talking points into those regular check-ins.

And once employees show substantial progress on both their performance and growth goals, Lattice Compensation lets leaders easily connect that achievement with promotion and reward.

7 People success starts with managers.

While People teams can help define the programs and goals for people success, managers are the front-line operators that truly make or break a program's effectiveness. Few relationships are more important than one between manager and direct report when it comes to enabling success. Without great managers, employees will never be able to realize any of the four people success pillars we introduced above.

Every pillar — purpose, trust, community, and growth — hinges on a manager following through with relevant behaviors and practices. [Gallup found in its organizational research](#) that “at least 70% of the variance in team engagement is explained by the quality of the manager or team leader.”

Since managers interact with employees daily, they should understand the how and why of each of these key activities. Are they providing corrective and positive feedback in a two-way conversation? Are they acting on engagement strategies that impact their team? Are they creating goals for performance and growth? Are they checking their biases and standing up for equitable treatment?

A popular belief is that people don't leave bad jobs; they leave bad bosses. And a recent [GoodHire survey of American workers](#) bears that out: 82% of respondents said they would potentially quit their job because of a bad manager. And [a survey of SME employees in the UK](#) found that 45% had quit their job at some point as a result of poor management or conflict with their boss.

But [according to Gallup](#), only about 1 in 10 managers possess a high talent for managing. And [CEB research](#) shows that 60% of new managers fail within the first 24 months in their new role. That means many managers are either not eager to manage or not trained to succeed.

What can be done to improve managers? A few things are worth considering. First, recognize that managing is a huge responsibility, so make sure you're promoting those willing to put in that hard work versus just looking at management as the only way to move up in your organization. Secondly, invest in a [manager training and development program](#) and tools, particularly for first-time managers, so that each of them is enabled and encouraged to make their teams — your people — truly successful.

Applicable Pillars:

 Purpose

 Trust

 Growth

 Community

On the Lattice platform:

One of the challenges we describe above is that many managers don't feel set up to succeed at managing. Lattice's platform is like a manager support system to help first-time managers learn and master the best practices that make employees feel heard and supported along their journey.

- **Lattice Goals:** Managers can create and assign goals for their teams and reports that align with department and company goals. Progress on goals is easily viewable in the context of manager conversation tools like 1:1s.
- **Lattice 1:1s:** The [one-on-one meeting](#) is the most important moment of connection for managers and reports during the week. Lattice 1:1s makes it easy to set these meetings up for success by automatically syncing with calendars, creating a starter agenda, and even reminding both manager and report to add items. Alongside that agenda, managers can see goals progress, submitted feedback, and growth tracks — all of which are easily addable to the agenda.
- **Lattice Updates:** Weekly updates allow employees to share a snapshot of wins, blockers, and how they're feeling about work with their managers.
- **Lattice Grow:** Lattice Grow helps managers build out an [individual development plan \(IDP\)](#) that puts growth conversations front and center in any scheduled check-in.

8 People success also starts with leadership.

Sure, we just said that people success starts with managers, but managers can't start this process alone. The job of enabling success requires another critical team: senior leadership. Bottom line, People programs can't just reside with the People team — they need to be co-owned by leadership. That means you need to do more than just bring the nay-sayers along; you also need to fire up the few folks who are willing to be the tip of the spear with you.

Some People teams are lucky enough to have a CEO who values company culture as highly as they do. But it's likely that at least a subset of the executive team will require some convincing. And if you don't want your people success efforts to stall before they get started, you'll have to get that group on board. Here are a few tactics that can help:

- **Use data early and often:** Whether leveraging your own people analytics internally or external research and benchmarks, data is your friend in these executive conversations. Too often, people initiatives may be seen as fluffy and abstract, so numbers will tell a concrete story that ties your work to business outcomes. Your internal data can not only help you highlight urgent issues that need attention, but it can also show how existing programs are making an impact. If you're unsure where to start, [check out these metrics that matter most to CEOs](#). Or roll out an engagement survey that will arm you with immediate data points that could help make an urgent business case.
- **Align HR strategies with company goals:** If you can demonstrate how the need for people success fits in with the business's existing mission, values, and purpose, it'll be easier for leadership to understand why the changes you want to make are so important. Perhaps your program to improve engagement scores can help you better compete for tough-to-hire talent during a high-growth moment. Or maybe improving DEI can help the company save money by keeping top performers from leaving for competitors.
- **Involve them in the planning process:** Chances are, non-HR executives aren't as close to how employees feel as People teams are and may feel blindsided or purposefully left out if they aren't given a round of input. Create opportunities to share data and ideas regularly, and involve leadership in meetings where you're discussing company issues or brainstorming new strategies. Their involvement could get them invested earlier and give them a stake in following through on the solution.
- **Show how you'll measure success:** Nothing looks less strategic than a plan that doesn't say what winning looks like. Like any other business program, you'll want to set measurable goals and report on those results. The better you can prove your programs' effectiveness, the more likely you'll win further buy-in down the line.

For more ideas on how to get better buy-in, check out [this guide to getting buy-in for HR programs](#) and [these strategies for measuring ROI for HR programs](#).

Applicable Pillars:



On the Lattice platform:

When making a business case for HR needs, the unified Lattice platform is purpose-built to help People leaders gather and compare points to make smarter decisions about strategy and present it upward.

- Scan customized data visualizations to pull the data points you need to make an executive case for programs — from identifying high and

low performers to tracking behavioral trends to seeing ways to support employees throughout their careers.

- With collaborative action plans, research-backed suggested actions, and real-time results tracking, HR teams can more easily build out the plans to improve the employee experience and drive strong cultural outcomes at your company.
- DEIB Analytics & Reporting equips people leaders with the DEI data they need to craft an informed strategy and track progress towards building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive company culture.

Conclusion

While we've focused mainly on tactics here, remember that empathy is the starting point for any people success strategy. People crave belonging to an organizational culture where the clear directive is to help them thrive. And what are cultures but sets of behaviors and norms, supported by systems that encourage those norms? Culture is what motivates your employees to create, innovate, and deliver for your company, and culture is the undisputed difference between good companies and great places to work.

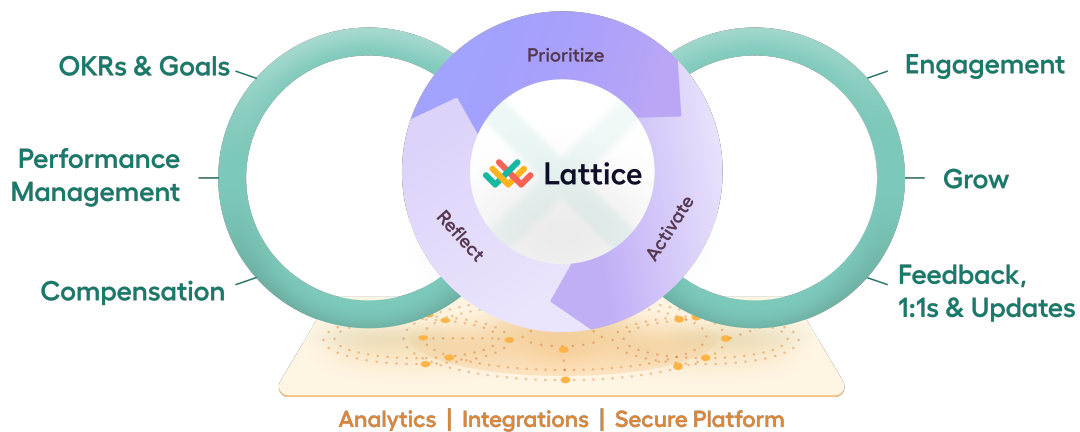
The journey to people success requires effort. At Lattice, we set out to build a platform that would serve as the perfect companion to guide your leaders, managers, and employees along that journey.

Lattice transforms how companies approach people success by connecting performance management, employee engagement, compensation, and employee development in one unified solution. Our analytics helps HR teams and managers better understand what keeps employees engaged, regardless of where they are in the world. Whether your workforce is on-site, remote, or somewhere in between, our platform drives more successful outcomes for your people and, by extension, your business. Experience it for yourself by requesting a [live demo](#).

About Lattice

Lattice is the people success platform that enables HR leaders to develop engaged, high-performing teams. By combining continuous performance management, employee engagement, development, compensation, and growth in one solution, organizations get powerful, real-time analytics that leads to actionable insights turning managers into leaders, employees into high performers, and companies into the best places to work.

The Lattice People Success Platform



Lattice works with companies that aspire to put people first. Whether redefining the beauty industry or building self-driving cars, all of our customers have one thing in common: They value their employees and want to invest in the development and success of their people. To see Lattice's platform in action, [schedule a product tour](#).

Trusted by the best places to work

Join **4,250+** organizations that use Lattice to help power their people strategy

Request a demo

