

# Gain leadership buy-in for a new performance management system



Learn how to convince leaders to invest in a new performance system.

 **Culture Amp**

# Introduction

**Performance management, done right, can give your organization a competitive advantage.**

**Implementing a new performance approach is a multi-step process. Before you can start making changes, you'll need to show company leaders the ROI of making this investment.**

**To gain leadership buy-in, customize your approach. Anticipate what each stakeholder cares about, challenge assumptions with data and insights, and package your learnings into a compelling business case.**

**The tips and exercises in this workbook will guide you through each step of the buy-in process.**

# How to use this workbook

This workbook is designed for use alongside the eBook, [A step-by-step guide to implementing a new performance management system](#). We recommend reading the eBook before beginning the exercises and activities.

## This workbook covers six key steps for securing leadership buy-in:

### 1. Discover:

Understand the problem you're trying to fix.

### 2. Consult:

Identify key stakeholders and their points of view.

### 3. Define and refine:

Collect proof points to support your claims.

### 4. Collaborate:

Consult with employees and managers to validate your approach.

### 5. Choose the technology:

Select a technology platform that addresses your organization's needs.

### 6. Set the business case:

Develop and present a business case to the executive team.

These steps will help you develop a more nuanced and balanced business case. Implement one step at a time to get the most value from this workbook.

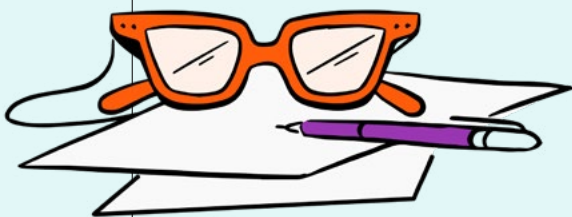
# Step 1: Discover

## Understand the perspectives of your main stakeholders

The first step to creating a compelling business case is discovery – the process of exploring, at a very deep and comprehensive level, the problem you’re trying to fix.

To do this effectively, you must explore how different stakeholders feel about the current state of performance management. What do they like or dislike about it? What would they want in a new tool? What might inspire them to support you in implementing a new tool?

Focus on the people who will be most directly impacted by the new performance management system: employees, middle managers, and your HR team.



## Exercise 1.1 Brainstorm:

For each main stakeholder, brainstorm reasons you think they would or wouldn't support a new performance management tool.

Stakeholder	Why might they support implementing a new tool?	Why might they resist implementing a new tool?
Employees	<i>They want more clarity on what's expected from them.</i>	<i>They don't feel like they have time to learn a new process.</i>
Employees		
Middle Managers		
HR Team		

Next, you'll want to test your assumptions about each group. The following exercise will help you develop an action plan for learning more about each stakeholder group.

## Exercise 1.2

### Come up with an action plan:

Choose 1-3 ways to learn more about each of your stakeholders' pain points.

#### Idea Bank

Look at survey data

Review employee stay/exit interviews

Analyze employee survey comments

Set up 1-on-1 meetings

Run a deep-dive discovery session

Hold a focus group

Stakeholder	How you will learn more about them	Implementation plan
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at employee stay interviews</li> <li>Review engagement survey trends and comments</li> <li>Hold a focus group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review stay interviews, engagement, and exit surveys</li> <li>After identifying trends, schedule focus groups to discuss learning</li> </ul>
Employees		
Middle Managers		

Once you've created an action plan, you can start setting up meetings, gathering information, analyzing data, and identifying trends. Record what you learn during this process.

Before moving on, we recommend comparing your findings with the assumptions you made in Exercise 1.1.

# Step 2: Consult

## Understand the perspectives of your executive team

Next, you will work with your leadership team to understand performance management from their perspective. This is a critically important step, as many of the people you talk to will likely be key decision-makers.

Your goal is to get the context you need to effectively position the new performance management system as a solution to the executive team's pain points. You're not trying to get them to see things from your perspective; instead, you want to learn how to frame the problem and solution so that it speaks to their unique perspectives.

To achieve this, consult with members of the executive team to learn more about them. The following exercise will help you identify the factors and individuals that hold the greatest sway over the most influential decision-maker: the CEO.



## Exercise 2.1

### Create an influence map:

Assess the factors and individuals that impact your CEO, so that you can make the most of these channels.

#### Idea Bank

Harvard Business Review

Chief Technology Officer

Chief Financial Officer

Chief Operating Officer

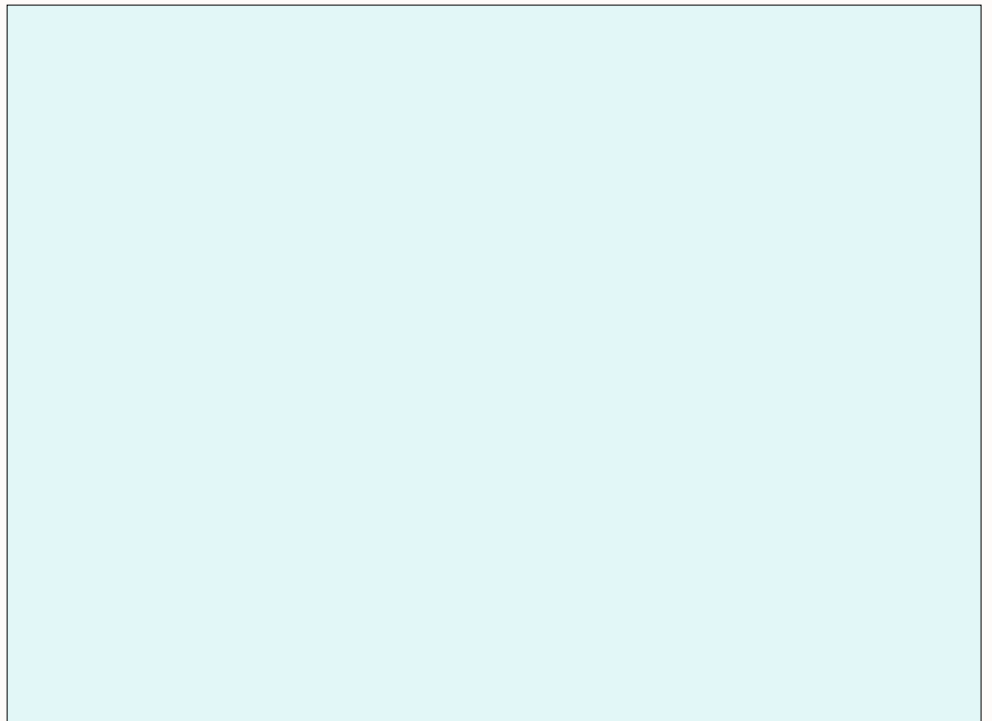
Chair of Board

CEO's executive assistant

CEO of competitor company

1. Who is the key decision-maker at your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who/what influences the key decision-maker?



### 3. What do you know about each of these factors or people?

*Ex. The Chief Operating Officer recently got budget approval for a new location; The Chief Financial Officer is known to resist change*

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

f. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

g. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

h. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

i. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Once you've identified the CEO's biggest influences, you're ready to set up meetings with key players in the decision-making process. Pay attention to:

- What aspects of the current performance management approach concern them?
- What is their awareness level and experience with performance management tools?
- What goals are they trying to achieve, both in regard to performance management and outside of it?

Take notes on the language they use and the types of proof points they find most convincing. This will set you up to make a strong business case that incorporates the language, narrative, and problem-solution framework that are most compelling to your executive team.

Following these meetings, try to identify and engage champions of change – executives who support your plan and can help influence others in your organization.

**Tip: Learn what your executive team wants and their preferred communication methods**

- Schedule 1-on-1 meetings with your CEO and other members of the executive team
- Take notes on the language your executive team uses so you can weave these words into your narrative when you present your business case
- Analyze previous communications from your CEO to understand how they structure their messaging (e.g., visual cues, heavy data, snappy proof points, etc.)
- Conduct round table discussions with other executives to
- sense-check your CEO's responses and to see if your team aligns with them

# Step 3: Define and Refine

## Strengthen your argument with external data

In Steps 1-2, you collected internal data and insights. Now, it's time to incorporate external data sources to demonstrate a strong return on investment.

In this step, you will gather data points that align with the key concerns of the CEO and executive team and use this information to define and refine your pitch.

Our organizational psychologists and data scientists have shared a few helpful proof points to get you started. Our data indicates that:

- ☐ Employees who feel their performance review process is fair are 46% more engaged. [\[Source\]](#).
- ☐ Productivity levels increase by as much as 56% when companies adequately manage performance. [\[Source\]](#)
- ☐ Employees are 3.6X more engaged when they feel they have a voice in setting their own goals and aligning them with company initiatives. [\[Source\]](#)
- ☐ 95% of managers are dissatisfied with current performance management processes. [\[Source\]](#)
- ☐ Continuous performance cycles can significantly increase managers' inclination to provide helpful feedback. [\[Source\]](#)



You're welcome to use these statistics in the next exercise, in which you'll seek out concrete statistics and data to support your business case.

## Exercise 3.1 Fact-finding:

What kind of proof points will strengthen your argument? In this exercise, you will first brainstorm the benefits of performance management. Then, you will conduct research to find data-informed evidence to support your perspective.

1. What do I want to prove?	Evidence	Source
<i>Effective performance management leads to higher engagement</i>	<i>Employees who feel their performance review process is fair are 46% more engaged.</i>	<a href="#">Culture Amp</a>

# Step 4: Collaborate

## Understand what managers and employees want from a performance management system

Next, check in with the people who will use the performance management platform daily: managers and employees.

Your goal is to identify the must-have features that employees and managers want. This is a crucial step to ensuring that the new tool meets their needs and expectations.



## Exercise 4.1 Brainstorm:

Write down pain points you think employees at your company face with the current performance management system. Brainstorm which performance management platform features can help address their pain points. Then, rank each feature by priority (High, Medium, Low)

Pain point	What platform feature can address this pain point?	Priority
<i>Employees feel like they don't receive enough critical or timely feedback from their managers and peers.</i>	<i>The ability to give and receive feedback more easily, preferably consolidated in an easy-to-reference centralized dashboard.</i>	<i>Medium</i>

Following this exercise, set up time to speak with employees at your organization. Ask them about their primary pain points and the features they feel would most improve their performance management experience.

Two approaches that can help you gather this information:

- **Conduct a small focus group:**

Ask managers to nominate 4-6 employees from different business units. Ask employees what motivates, energizes, and frustrates them at work.

- **Run a listening session:**

Host a listening session – an unstructured conversation where employees are encouraged to share their perspectives. Participants often encompass a larger group of diverse employees from different business units.

Ask questions such as: “Do you know how your work and performance align with the organization’s goals?” or “If you were your manager, what changes would you make?”

For a more accurate picture of what employees want, make an effort to speak with employees at different levels across the business.

# Step 5: Choose The Technology

Now that you have a clear understanding of what your executive team, HR team, and employees want, you are ready to evaluate which performance management platform best suits your organization.

As you consider your options, differentiate between the must-haves and nice-to-have features. In the following exercise, you will narrow down the features you are looking for.



# Exercise 5.1

## Prioritize platform features:

Below, you'll find a list of performance management platform features. Sort them into three categories: High priority (Must-have), Medium priority (Nice-to-have), and Low priority. If you are looking for additional features, add them to the list.

### ☐ **General**

- ☐ User-friendly
- ☐ Easy to implement
- ☐ Integrates with existing tech stack
- ☐ Empowers managers and leaders to act
- ☐ Expert guidance and support
- ☐ Supports global languages

### ☐ **Performance reviews**

- ☐ Customizable and easy-to-launch
- ☐ Built-in calibrations to reduce bias

### ☐ **Strong data & analytics capabilities**

- ☐ Centralized dashboard
- ☐ Customizable reports

### ☐ **Feedback tool**

- ☐ Enables a 360-degree approach to feedback
- ☐ Makes it easy to give and receive feedback
- ☐ Feedback is centralized and easy to access

### ☐ **Goal-setting tool**

- ☐ Managers and employees can collaborate on goals
- ☐ Individual goals roll up to team, department, and organizational goals

☐ **1-on-1 meeting tool**

- ☐ Managers and employees can collaborate on agendas
- ☐ Individual goals roll up to team, department, and organizational goals
- ☐ Templates and guidance to make 1-on-1s more meaningful

☐ **Recognition tool**

High priority	Medium priority	Low priority

# Step 6: Set the business case

At this point, you've defined the problem, consulted and collaborated with different stakeholders to incorporate their perspectives, refined your business case, and picked your technology platform.

All that's left to do is to consolidate your stakeholder feedback, data analysis, and platform recommendations into a comprehensive business case. In the final exercise, you will develop an "elevator pitch" to refine the narrative you will present to your executive team.



# Exercise 6.1

## Develop an elevator pitch:

Be able to explain your business case clearly and concisely.

### 1. What's the purpose of adopting a new performance management tool?

*E.g., Modernize and streamline our approach to assessing, managing, and developing performance.*

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\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What are our main objectives?

*E.g., Identify our high-performing employees so we can pay attention to their development and retention.*

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\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. What are the expected outcomes?

*E.g., Improved individual and team performance*

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. What are the potential roadblocks?**

*E.g., Competing priorities for HR and executive teams*

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\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **5. How will we measure success?**

*E.g., Meet growth targets in three out of four consecutive quarters.*

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\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Once you've come up with a strong elevator pitch, you have all the pieces you need to make the business case for a new performance management system! As you write, include the following components:

### **1. Introduction**

Set the stage. Establish the need for a new performance management solution and explain the benefits from the perspective of the executive team you're trying to secure buy-in from.

### **2. Objectives**

Establish the goal of implementing a new performance management platform, focusing on the KPIs that matter most to your team (e.g., employee engagement, productivity rate, time savings, etc.)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

Establish who the key players are and describe their responsibilities.

### **4. Implementation plan**

Explain what the implementation process will look like, including expected timelines. We generally recommend laying out your plan over the next year or two.

### **5. Technology recommendation**

Establish the must-have features of the new technology solution.

### **6. Risk and mitigation strategies**

Identify possible risks that would make the new performance management system less effective and establish mitigation strategies for each case.

You now have a concise, well-crafted business case that uses data to present a compelling solution that speaks to your leadership team's concerns while also incorporating the perspectives of your employees, managers, and HR team.

# Build a high-performance workplace

When your people succeed, your business succeeds. A strategic performance management tool supports them both.

We hope the steps and exercises shared in this workbook will simplify and support your efforts to gain leadership buy-in and unlock a culture of high performance and continuous improvement.

Want to learn about the next step – implementing a new performance management system?

[Download the ebook](#)

# About Culture Amp

**Culture Amp Perform** is a powerful science-backed solution built to help managers and teams work better together. By creating a culture of continuous feedback and empowering managers with performance management and goal-setting tools, teams are crystal clear on expectations and feel empowered to do their best work.

[Learn more](#)

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