

# Employee Survey Data Anonymity Guidelines

**Document Owner:** People Analytics Team

**Last Updated:** December 2024

**Classification:** Internal Use Only

## Purpose

This document provides guidelines for handling employee survey data to ensure respondent anonymity is protected while still enabling meaningful analysis and reporting. All team members with access to survey data must follow these guidelines.

## Core Principles

- Individual responses must never be attributable to a specific employee
- Aggregated data should not allow inference of individual responses
- Free-text responses require additional scrutiny before sharing
- When in doubt, apply stricter anonymization

## Quantitative Data Rules

**Minimum Group Size:** Do not report scores for groups with fewer than 5 respondents. Aggregate into 'Other' or parent group.

**Cross-tabulation Limits:** When breaking down by multiple dimensions (e.g., department + tenure), ensure each cell has minimum 5 respondents.

**Outlier Handling:** If one person represents an extreme score in a small group, consider whether including that data point could identify them.

## Free-Text Response Handling

Open-ended responses require careful review before inclusion in any report or summary. Apply the following redaction rules:

- **Names:** Remove all names of employees, managers, executives (e.g., 'Sarah in Product' → '[a Product leader]')
- **Specific Roles:** Generalize unique roles (e.g., 'the VP of Engineering' → 'a senior leader')
- **Dates/Events:** Remove specific dates that could identify situations (e.g., 'the meeting on Jan 15' → 'a recent meeting')
- **Identifying Details:** Remove unique circumstances (e.g., 'the only person on the London team' → 'an employee')
- **Direct Quotes:** Paraphrase rather than quote when the wording could identify the author
- **Team Size References:** Remove mentions of specific team sizes (e.g., 'our team of 3' → 'our small team')

## Redaction Examples

**Before:** 'Mark Davidson needs to be replaced as VP Sales. He plays favorites with the NYC team.'  
**After:** 'Concerns raised about Sales leadership playing favorites with certain regional teams.'

**Before:** 'Sarah Chen in Product keeps changing priorities every sprint.'  
**After:** 'Concerns about frequent priority changes affecting team productivity.'

**Before:** 'The meeting on Jan 15 with the CEO was a disaster.'  
**After:** 'A recent leadership meeting was perceived negatively.'

## Reporting Guidelines

- Summaries should synthesize themes, not reproduce individual comments
- When quoting is necessary, ensure the quote cannot identify the respondent
- Leadership reports should focus on patterns and trends, not isolated feedback
- Never share raw free-text data with managers
- Department-specific themes should only be included if expressed by multiple respondents

## Handling Violations

If you believe survey anonymity has been compromised, contact the People Analytics team immediately. Violations of these guidelines may result in loss of data access and disciplinary action. Employee trust in survey confidentiality is critical for honest feedback.

Questions? Contact [people-analytics@company.com](mailto:people-analytics@company.com)