



Research Insights on Worker Well-being, Sustainability, and Organizational Performance

Executive Summary

Made available by Wellness Works Canada

in partnership with Mitacs and the University of Alberta

For more information visit <https://www.resources.wellnessworkscanada.ca/research>

Note: this is part of a larger research project to determine what evaluation mechanism (s) employers can use to measure worker well-being, organizational performance and environmental sustainability in an effective and efficient way and design a tool that employers can use.

To learn more visit: <https://www.resources.wellnessworkscanada.ca/research>

Executive Summary

While the strategic importance of worker well-being, environmental sustainability and organizational performance, are widely recognized, many organizations struggle to measure and act on these areas—limiting organizational decision-making, employee engagement, and long-term success. This survey examined how organizations currently perceive and measure these three interconnected domains and aims to uncover gaps, barriers, and opportunities for improvement. Based on the experiences of 110 employers, the following top insights surfaced:

1. Organizational Performance & Worker Well-being Lead, Environmental Sustainability is the Weakest Link

When asked about the perceived importance across the three domains, organizations prioritize organizational performance and worker well-being. The increasing focus on worker well-being reflects companies' emphasis on the value of talent and employee health. By contrast, environmental sustainability remains the weakest link—perceived as secondary, poorly measured, and resource-limited. Without urgent attention, this gap risks employee engagement, morale, and organizational performance.

Implication: Leaders must recognize environmental sustainability as an emerging strategic area to mitigate future operational or reputational risks and meet growing stakeholder demands.

2. Measurement Maturity Varies by Company Size

Medium businesses have the most balanced and consistent practices across all three domains. Large and enterprise businesses show strong collection but risk efficiency stagnation, could be in part due to complex internal structures. They report fewer “plans” responses, suggesting possible stagnation rather than active development. Small businesses, though weaker in actual data collection, show the strongest intent to improve—particularly in well-being (37% planning)—potentially indicating that intent exists, but capacity may be limited.

Implication: *Regardless of company size, there is room for improvement. Understanding the data maturity helps companies identify the right areas for investment with Scalable tools and guidance enabling small businesses to catch up standardized practices helping larger organizations avoid stagnation.*

3. Barriers Are Size- and Dimension-Specific

Measurement is not a one-size-fits-all process. Common barriers include the absence of clear standards, limited internal awareness, and vague indicators. Small businesses often struggle most with technical know-how, highlighting the need for external support and easy-to-use frameworks. Medium and large organizations face greater challenges around internal awareness and data management practices, while enterprises tend to be most affected by cost concerns and structural inefficiencies.

For Worker Well-being, a lack of leadership support and data collection difficulties are core negative factors. For Environmental Sustainability, the perceived importance of measuring organization performance and standardized methods matters.

Implication: *Build a unified measurement culture applied across all business areas. Companies that excel at measuring organizational performance also tend to perform better in sustainability, demonstrating the power of strong measurement practices. To get there, implement strategies to clarify metrics, accelerate feedback loops, and, most crucially, secure leadership support.*

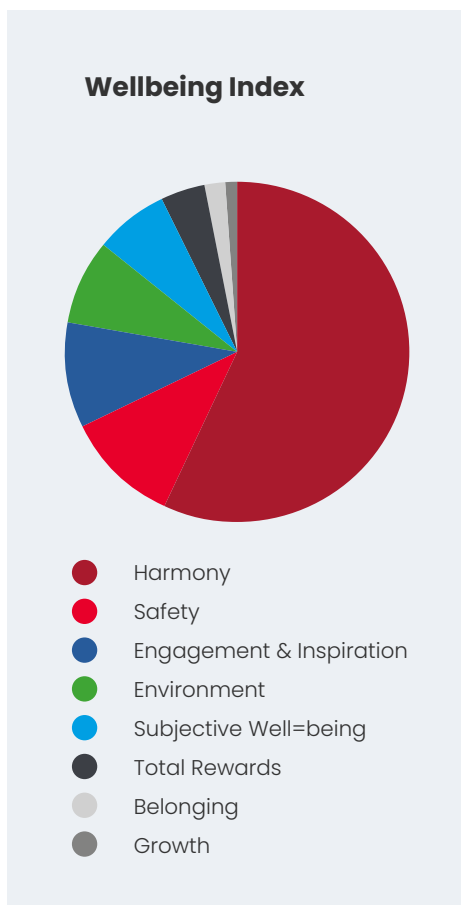
4. Tools are Mature but Fragmented, Integration is the Core Gap

Organizations mainly use traditional measures such as employee surveys, HR analytics, and turnover/retention rates, which are mature and easy to implement. Engagement surveys, communication resources, and custom qualitative tools also widely adopted to fit their context. However, the survey also shows that many organizations lack formalized methods and call for the need for effective practices, such as visualization, year-to-year comparability, and cross-domain integration. This creates a growing expectation for tools that not only collect data but also connect insights across domains and translate them into action. Notably, in environmental sustainability, this gap is most visible: “Not Measuring” ranks as the second-most common response after energy consumption.

Implication: *The critical need is not more data, but integrated solutions that connect data across worker well-being, organizational performance, and environmental sustainability and drive actionable improvements.*

5. Organizations Want Actionable, Specific Metrics

Survey responses were matched to the Wellness Works Canada Well-being Index, revealing the most desired indicators:



60%
Harmony

Encompassing work-life balance, effective time use, manageable workload, and overall happiness—suggesting a desire for tools that capture the nuanced qualitative aspects of workplace well-being beyond mere attendance or basic health.

11%
Safety

Focusing on aspects like health, physical safety, psychological safety, incidents, anxiety at work, and discrimination—indicating a foundational concern for employee well-being.

10%
**Engagement
& Inspiration**

Emphasizing job satisfaction, job quality, security, advancement opportunities, autonomy, recognition, and retention—reflecting a desire for tools that measure motivational and developmental aspects of the workplace experience. Clear measurement practices have yet to be established.

These priorities align with the most frequently cited specific metrics: psychological safety, job satisfaction, and absenteeism for worker well-being; customer experience, operational effectiveness, and employee performance for organizational performance; and carbon footprint and green workplace initiatives for environmental sustainability. Yet the green workplace aspects are often vague and scattered (e.g., air quality, temperature), indicating that clear measurement practices have yet to be established.

Implication: Future measurement solutions must provide tangible, quantifiable metrics aligned with organizational priorities, not just broad intentions.

6. Strategic Gap: Market Opportunity for Integrated Solutions

“Integrated measurement unlocks competitive advantage”

Across domains, companies reveal both fragmentation and ambition. The market gap is clear: organizations need tools that are scalable and capable of cross-domain integration, and they need measurement solutions that translate employee well-being, organizational performance, and sustainability into actionable intelligence.

Implication: Leaders who integrate measurements across three domains will gain strategic clarity, improve employee engagement, and unlock competitive advantage.

Appendix

Figure 1 – Average Importance Rating

Note: Higher scores indicate greater perceived importance (1=Not important at all, 5=Very important).



Figure 2 – Data Collection Methods by Business Size

- Collect & Measure as Combined Metric
- Collect & Measure Separately
- No Data Collected
- Plan to Measure as Combined Metric
- Plan to Measure Separately

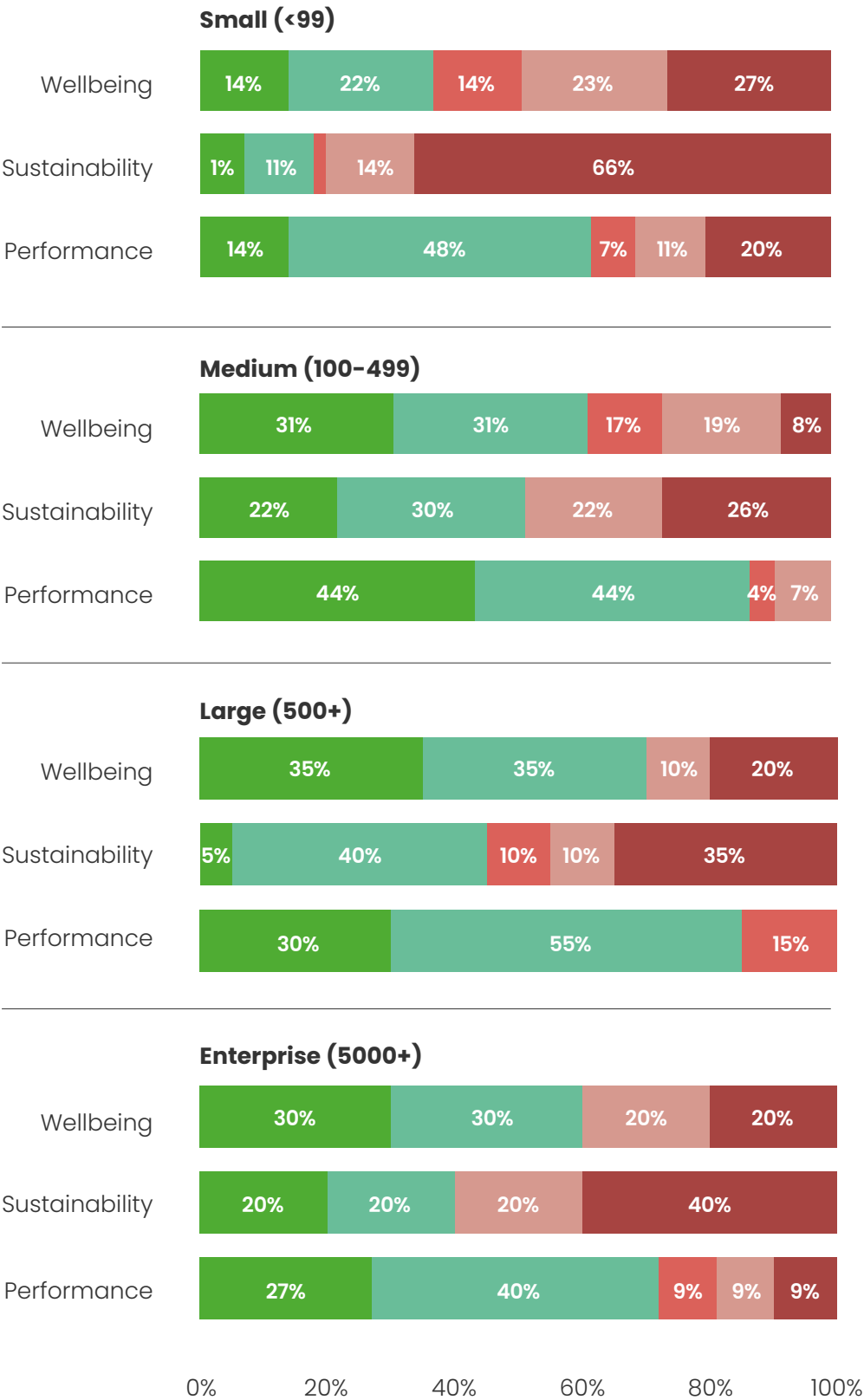


Figure 3 – Average Barrier Rating by Business Size

Note: Higher scores indicate greater barriers to effective measurement (1=Not at all, 5=Extremely).

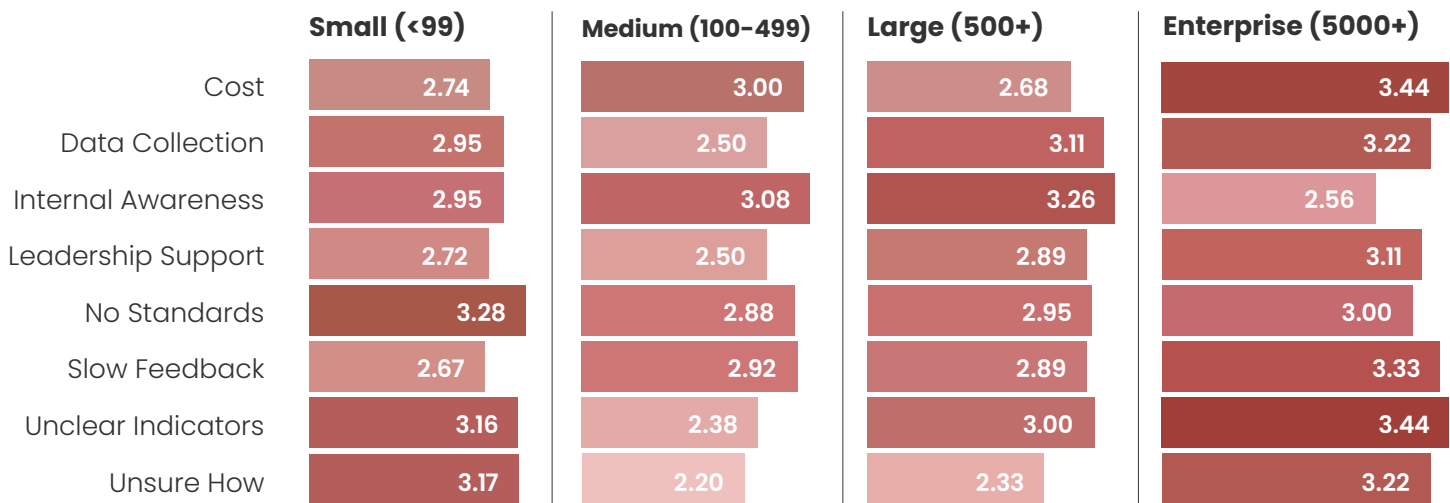
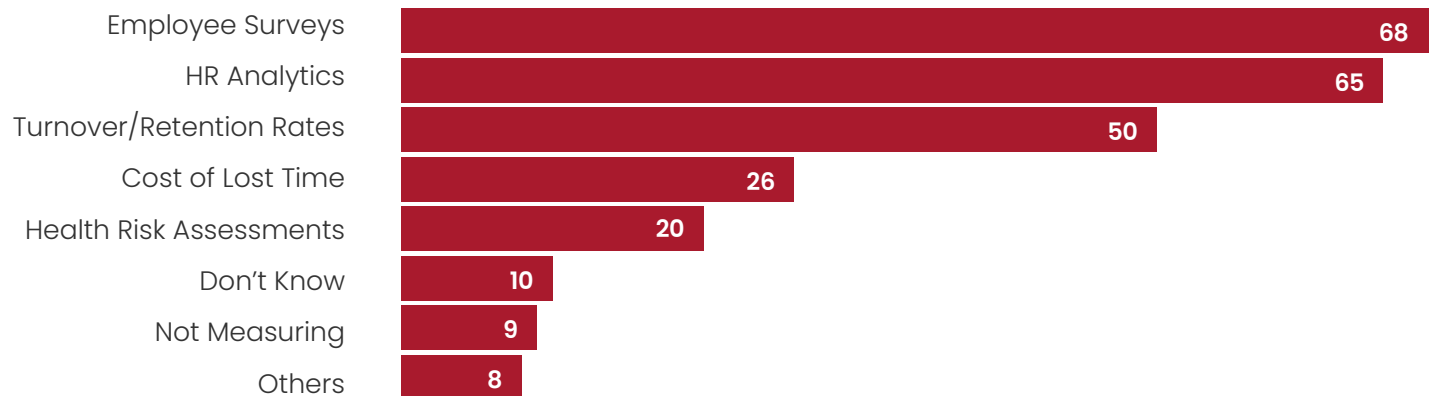


Figure 4 – Worker Wellbeing, Environmental Sustainability – Selected Measures

Worker Wellbeing – Selected Measures



Environmental Sustainability – Selected Measures

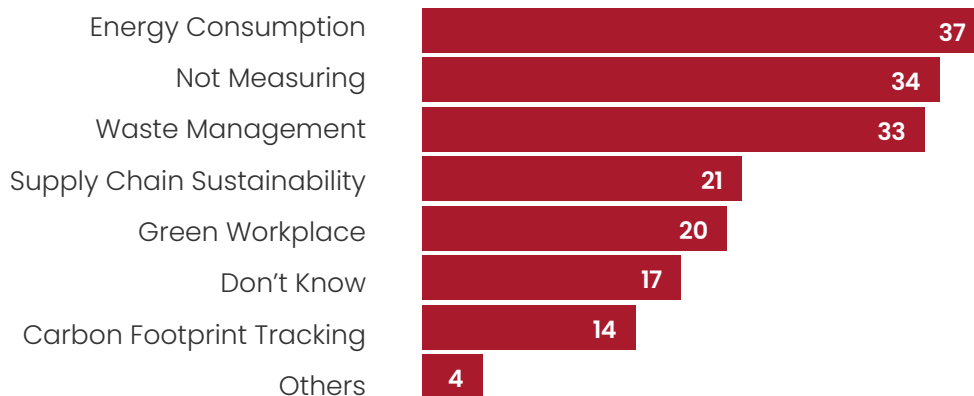


Figure 5 – Tools and Resources Used by Categories

Selected by Categories



Figure 6 – Tools and Resources Used by Top Bigrams in Open-ended Responses

Top Bigrams in Responses

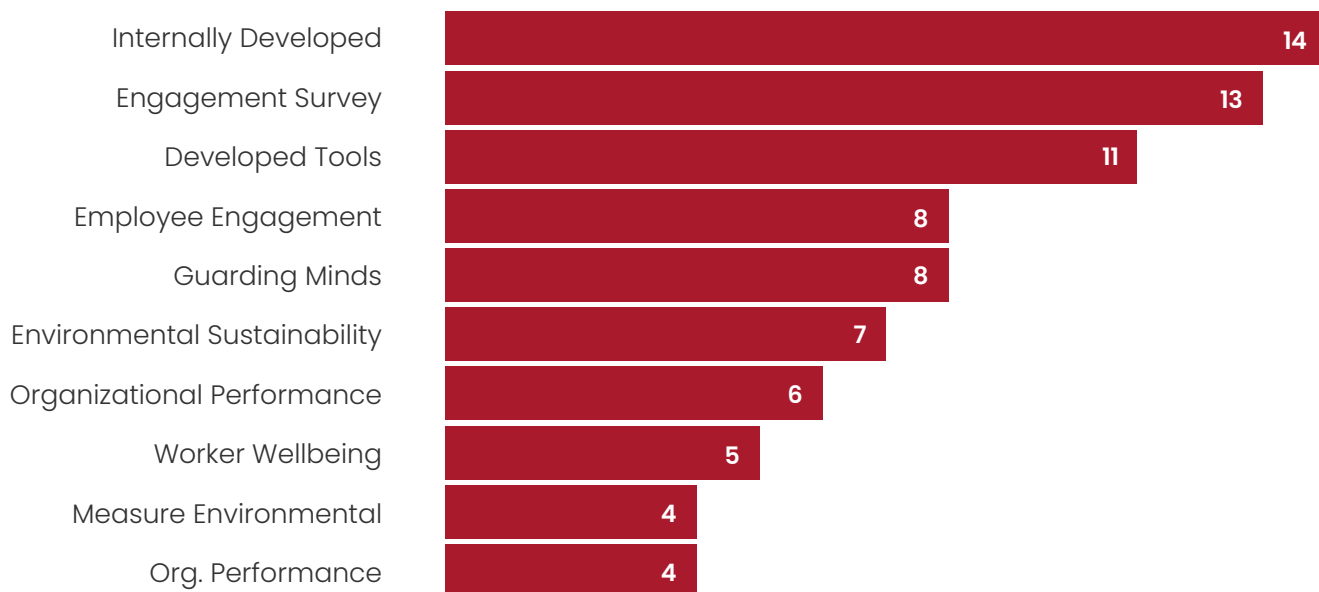


Figure 7 - Desired Metrics - Wellbeing Index

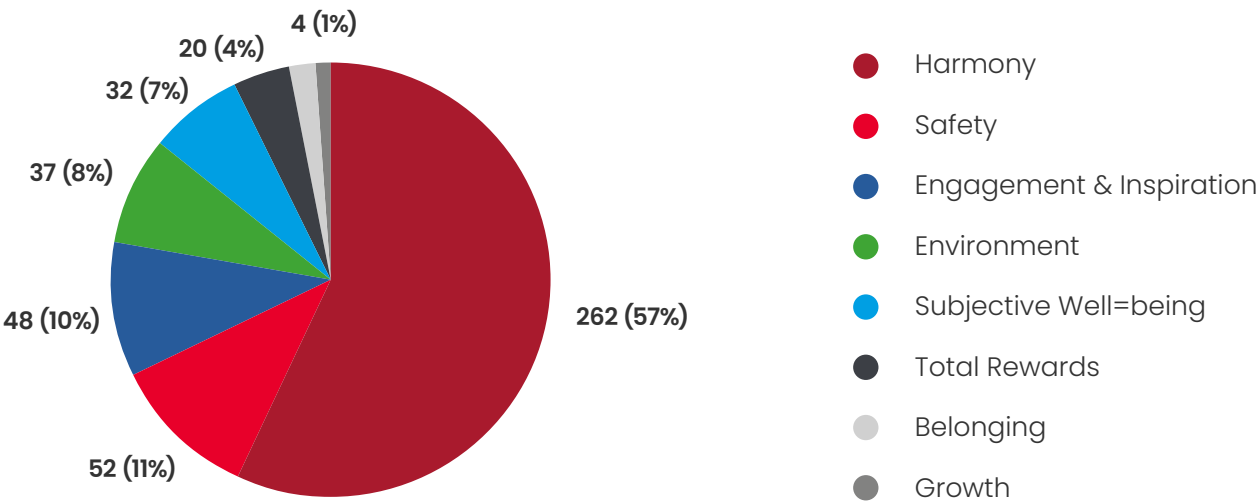


Figure 8 (a) - Desired Metrics - Top Bigrams in Worker Wellbeing

Worker Wellbeing - Top Bigrams

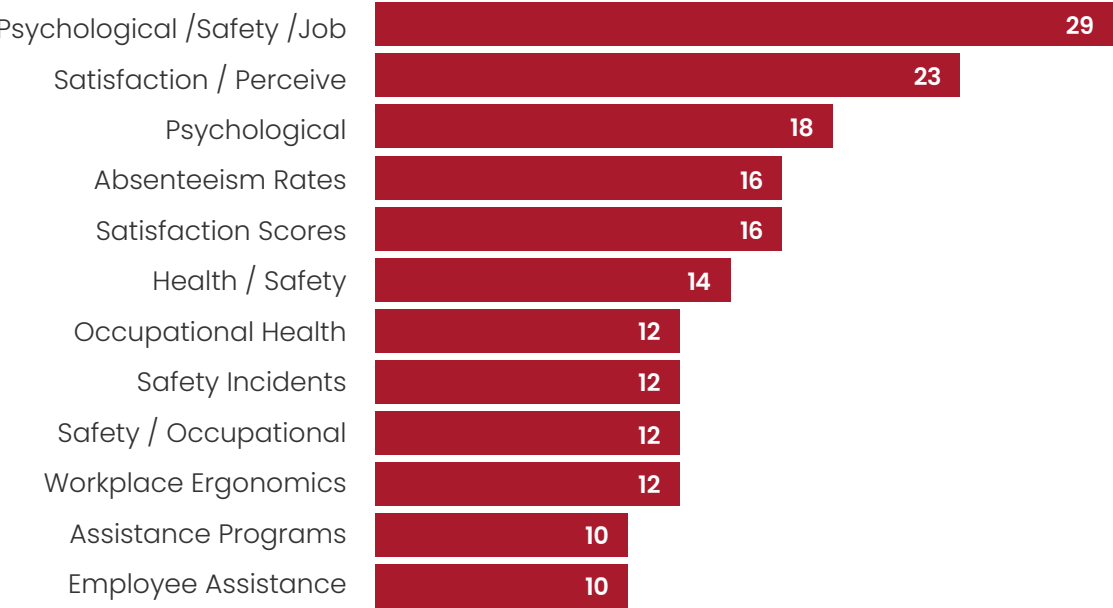


Figure 8 (b) – Desired Metrics – Top Bigrams in Organizational Performance

Organizational Performance – Top Bigrams

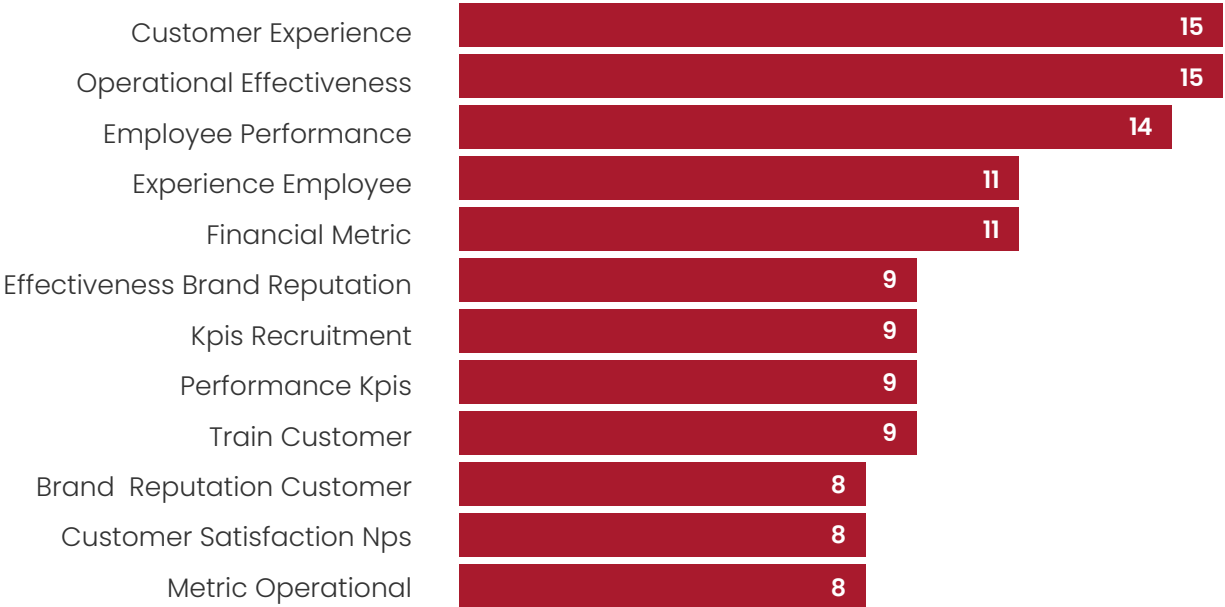


Figure 8 (c) – Desired Metrics – Top Bigrams in Environmental Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability – Top Bigrams

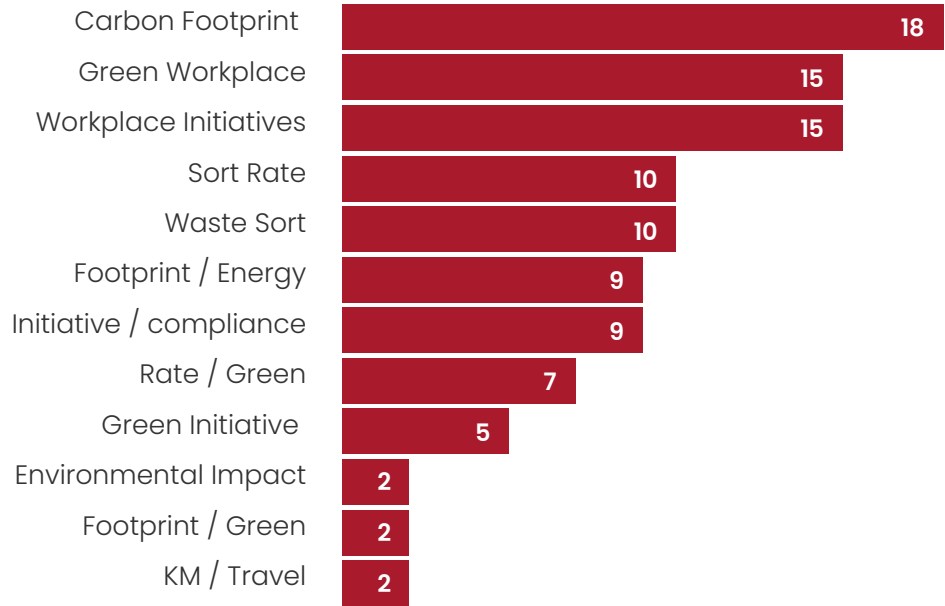


Figure 9 – Key Actions Taken of Current Measurement

Top Bigrams

Engagement Survey	6
Data collection	3
Measurement Tools	3
Real Time	3
Financial Reporting	2
Quarterly Performance	2
Team Debriefs	2

Word Cloud





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