



Company Culture Smart Brief: 23andMe

Disclaimer Notice: This report is provided exclusively for the use of Aniline's customers and subscribers. All rights are reserved and governed by Aniline's Terms of Use, available at www.aniline.io. Aniline sources the most up-to-date and relevant data from thousands of potential sources to construct its unique employee perception indices. The proprietary AI and ML algorithms utilized in this report are designed to predict a company's perception trajectory and provide actionable insights by monitoring how management actions impact employee perceptions. Any unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of this material is strictly prohibited.

Company Culture

This report delves deep into the organizational fabric of a company, providing an overview of its culture. From evaluating the alignment of mission and values to analyzing leadership behavior, professional growth opportunities, employee relations, work environment, and corporate social responsibility, this report offers a holistic view and makes targeted recommendations for improvement.

Powerschool Group

Executive Summary

PowerSchool Group's culture exhibits clear strengths in employee well-being, team-level collaboration, and a compelling mission-driven focus that resonates with frontline staff. However, persistent challenges in executive leadership consistency, opaque decision-making, and uneven HR and performance management practices risk undermining employee engagement and organizational stability in a rapidly evolving EdTech landscape.

Key Cultural Strengths

- **Robust Well-Being and Benefits**
 - A comprehensive benefits package—including flexible work arrangements, unlimited PTO, and proactive wellness initiatives such as CEO-endorsed mental health days—reinforces a commitment to work-life balance and employee health.
- **Supportive Local Leadership and Team Environment**
 - Direct managers are consistently praised for their supportive, hands-on approach, fostering collaboration, clear role accountability, and a “safe space” for daily operations. This grassroots leadership builds immediate trust and enhances team morale.
- **Mission-Driven Focus and External Impact**
 - Employees take pride in a mission centered on improving K-12 education through innovative technology. This clear external purpose differentiates PowerSchool in the competitive EdTech market by aligning employee motivation with societal impact.
- **Opportunities for Professional Development and Collaborative Learning**
 - Informal initiatives such as buddy systems, on-the-job mentoring, and exposure to cutting-edge technology encourage continuous learning and innovation, contributing to a dynamic and adaptive work culture.

Key Cultural Risks

- **Inconsistent Executive Leadership and Communication**
 - A notable disconnect exists between inspiring frontline management and higher-level executives whose rapid strategic shifts, opaque decision-making, and unidirectional communication erode trust and create uncertainty.
- **Top-Down Decision-Making and Rapid Strategic Shifts**
 - Centralized, fast-paced decision-making often leads to abrupt restructurings, layoffs, and impersonal implementation. This approach diminishes employee participation and can undermine long-term commitment to the company's mission.
- **Inequitable HR Practices and Performance Management**
 - Despite attractive benefits, inconsistent HR processes, minimal merit-based salary adjustments, and performance management systems perceived as punitive—rather than developmental—undermine employee morale and hinder clear career progression.
- **Gaps in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**
 - While the company fosters a diverse work environment, disparities in treatment across regions and employee groups, coupled with inconsistent application of equitable practices, challenge the integrity and fullness of the inclusive culture.

Conclusion

PowerSchool Group's culture benefits from strong local leadership, robust well-being initiatives, and a mission that inspires pride among employees. However, resolving issues associated with executive leadership inconsistencies, top-down decision-making practices, and uneven HR and DEI implementations is critical. Addressing these risks through more transparent communication, structured feedback loops, and consistent, equitable practices will enhance overall employee engagement and fortify the organization's competitive edge in the dynamic EdTech market.

Generated date: 19.06.2025

Time period for analysis of reviews 24 months

1. Culture, Mission & Values

Jun 19, 2025 4:31 PM

What are the key attributes of this company's culture and values?

Neutral

Key Findings

Employees praise the company for its collegial and employee-centric culture with a strong mission focus on positively impacting K-12 education.

Significant concerns exist regarding operational instability, including frequent restructuring, layoffs, and internal politics driven by cost-cutting measures.

A clear disparity is observed between the inspirational top leadership and the inconsistent performance of middle management, where issues like micro-management and opaque appraisal processes persist.

Although initiatives like formal buddy systems and continuous learning are in place, outdated onboarding practices and unclear career paths hinder full talent development.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What initiatives or changes are being implemented to better align mid-level management practices with the company's strong top-level vision?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the company addressing concerns related to operational instability and internal politics to build lasting employee trust?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you elaborate on the strategies planned to improve onboarding processes and career path clarity to enhance talent development?

Key Attributes of PowerSchool Group's Culture and Management Practices

- Culture & Values
 - The culture is notably multifaceted. On one hand, many employees appreciate the "awesome work culture" and "great people" that foster a collegial, flexible, and employee-centric environment. For example, one employee noted, "I was once proud to be a part of this org," highlighting the positive internal spirit.
 - Conversely, significant concerns persist regarding instability and internal politics. Comments such as "Unstable company with continual layoffs for no reason other than the greediness of shareholders" reveal that some employees feel the culture has shifted toward cost-cutting at the expense of trust and cohesion.

- Mission & Strategic Focus

- There is a strong, mission-driven focus on impacting education positively. Employees mention that they “love the mission and the industry” and appreciate working on cutting-edge technology that supports K–12 districts.
- However, inconsistency between mission and strategic decisions—like frequent restructuring and acquisitions—could alienate staff and dilute the clear purpose that once unified teams.

- Leadership, Goal Setting & Decision Making

- Senior leadership is often admired; one employee remarked, “The CEO is a gem of a person,” indicating inspirational top-down influence and open communication at the highest levels.
- In practice, though, middle management is reported as inconsistent. Frequent leadership turnover, micro-management, and opaque appraisal processes (“intense pressure on reviews”) undermine accountability and clarity in goal setting and employee development.

- Talent Development & Communications

- Initiatives such as formal buddy systems and continuous learning opportunities speak to an investment in talent growth. Employees feel that “you get to learn new things” in a generally collaborative and supportive environment.
- Yet, complaints about outdated onboarding and ill-defined career paths suggest that improvements in consistent communication and robust performance management practices are needed to fully realize their strategic vision.

This complex blend of inspiring mission and supportive leadership at the top, counterbalanced by operational instability and management silos, shapes PowerSchool Group’s competitive edge and internal challenges alike.

Assess the company mission, vision and values.

Neutral



Key Findings

The mission is well-regarded and inspires pride among employees, though there is concern that strategic decisions, such as frequent acquisitions, may not fully align with this core purpose.

The ambitious vision to become a market leader in educational technology is diluted by a perceived lack of clear direction, as highlighted by employee comments regarding uncertainty.

While the values promote employee growth, collaboration, and continuous learning, inconsistent communication from leadership undermines their impact in everyday operations.



Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How do you plan to ensure that strategic decisions, such as acquisitions, remain aligned with your core mission?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific measures are being implemented to provide a clear and unified vision among all employees?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How will leadership address the communication gaps that are affecting the consistent reinforcement of your values?

Below is an analysis of PowerSchool Group’s mission, vision, and values based primarily on employee perceptions:

- Mission

- PowerSchool’s mission centers on serving schools and educational communities through robust, innovative

products. Many employees echo this sentiment; one noted, “I believe in the product & our mission to serve schools,” reinforcing that the mission is a genuine source of pride and purpose. However, while the mission excites those on the front lines, some employees feel that strategic decisions—such as frequent acquisitions—sometimes stray from this core purpose.

- Vision

- The company is portrayed as aiming to be a market leader in educational technology. Employees reference rapid growth and cutting-edge technology, suggesting an ambitious vision of innovation and expansion. Yet, comments like “company absolutely without direction” reveal that the vision is not universally translated into clear, stable strategy. The tension between acquiring new companies to fuel growth and maintaining a consistent, customer-centered product strategy indicates an ongoing challenge in aligning vision with operational priorities.

- Values

- Core values appear to emphasize employee-centricity, continuous learning, and collaboration. Positive perceptions highlight a supportive work environment with “great culture” and plenty of opportunities to learn and grow. For example, one employee remarked on the organization’s commitment to personal development. Nonetheless, there are concerns about inconsistent communication and leadership practices; phrases such as “not much communication from leadership” suggest that the intended values are not uniformly reinforced in day-to-day operations.

In summary, while PowerSchool Group’s mission and values resonate well with the workforce—drawing motivation from a shared dedication to educational impact—its ambitious vision is sometimes undermined by operational inconsistencies. Enhancing communication and aligning strategic decisions more closely with its stated mission and values could further empower employees and solidify cultural integrity.

Evaluate the extent to which diversity, equity, and inclusion at the company is emphasized in the company culture.

Neutral

Key Findings

Powerschool Group is recognized for its strong emphasis on diversity and inclusive hiring practices, creating a welcoming and multicultural community.

Employee feedback indicates significant equity concerns, with specific disparities noted between American and Indian employees regarding treatment, compensation, and career progression.

There is an underlying perception that the DEI approach can come off as overly political or globalist, signaling a need for standardized, transparent policies and measurable goals to ensure consistent fairness.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you provide specific examples or quantitative data that illustrate the disparities in treatment between American and Indian employees?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What metrics or benchmarks are currently used to measure the success of both diversity and equity initiatives across different regions?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What strategic changes or policy adjustments are being considered to standardize DEI practices and ensure fair treatment in areas such as compensation, promotions, and career development?

Employee reviews reveal a mixed picture regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at Powerschool Group. Several voices praise the company's emphasis on diverse and inclusive hiring and a sense of belonging, while others raise serious concerns over equitable treatment.

Key Insights:

- **Positive DEI Emphasis**

- Multiple employees note that “the workplace culture is diverse and inclusive, which makes it easy to feel part of the community.”
- There is evidence that the company's hiring practices and community-building initiatives actively promote diversity, contributing to a vibrant, multi-cultural work environment.

- **Equity and Fairness Concerns**

- A significant number of reviews point out disparities between American and Indian employees, with one remark stating, “American and Indian employees are not treated equal.”
- These concerns extend to offshoring trends and inconsistent treatment, suggesting that while diversity is celebrated, equity in opportunities, compensation, and career progression remains inconsistent.
- Some employees also critique the approach as being overly “globalist” and politically driven, which may not resonate universally.

- **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Establish clear, measurable DEI and equity goals that are communicated company-wide to reduce perceived biases.
- Standardize policies across regions to ensure fairness in promotions, compensation, and growth opportunities regardless of geography.
- Enhance management training on DEI best practices to foster both an inclusive culture and equitable treatment.

Overall, while Powerschool Group appears to genuinely value diversity and inclusion—as evidenced by positive remarks regarding community and cultural variety—there is a clear need to address equity issues to ensure that these values translate into consistent, fair treatment for all employees.

Evaluate corporate social responsibility at the company.

Neutral

Key Findings

PowerSchool clearly excels in external CSR by leveraging its mission-driven products to enhance K-12 education, which employees highly value.

Employee feedback highlights significant internal challenges such as inconsistent HR processes, perceptions of favoritism, and concerns around diversity and inclusion.

There is a notable disconnect between the company's strong external social impact and the mixed internal treatment of its employees.

Recommendations emphasize the need for robust internal policy improvements to align the company's internal practices with its external CSR commitments.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps is PowerSchool planning to take to address the internal issues such as inconsistent HR practices and favoritism?

How does the company intend to strengthen its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives to better align internal employee treatment with its external CSR mission?

Could you elaborate on how PowerSchool will benchmark and integrate internal CSR practices with industry best practices to create a more cohesive overall strategy?

Below is an evaluation of PowerSchool Group's corporate social responsibility (CSR) based largely on employee perceptions, with some comparisons to industry best practices:

External Impact – Mission & Education

- PowerSchool's core products directly benefit K-12 institutions, enriching educational outcomes. Numerous employees expressed pride in this mission, with one noting, "I love the mission and the industry," underscoring the company's positive external social impact.
- The focus on innovative technology for schools reflects a strong CSR element by addressing societal needs in education, a key differentiator compared to some competitors in EdTech who integrate community partnerships and outreach more extensively.

Internal Practices – Employee Treatment and Fairness

- While the mission resonates externally, several employee comments raise concerns about internal CSR. For example, one review stated, "Little Care for Employees as People," highlighting perceptions of inconsistent policies, favoritism, and issues around diversity and inclusion.
- Employees report that despite a generally collaborative work environment and good work-life balance, sporadic instances of nepotism, unclear HR processes, and vulnerability to frequent restructuring can undermine trust in the company's commitment to its own workforce.
- This suggests that while the company's external CSR benefits (improving education) are evident, the internal social responsibility aspect—safeguarding and empowering employees—is not uniformly realized.

Recommendations for Enhancing CSR

- Strengthen internal policies with robust diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and ensure transparent, consistent HR practices to regain employee trust.
- Benchmark against industry leaders who integrate employee well-being with external social impact, creating a more cohesive CSR strategy overall.

In sum, PowerSchool Group delivers significant societal value through its mission-driven products for education. However, aligning internal practices with these values remains essential to build a fully integrated CSR culture that benefits both the community and its own employees.

What is the predominant leadership approach across organizational levels, and how does it impact employee engagement and execution?

Negative

Key Findings

There is a stark contrast between supportive, approachable direct managers who foster employee growth, and erratic upper management whose inconsistent and reactive approaches create confusion.

Employees report that mixed signals, rapid strategic shifts, and micro-management from senior leadership undermine clarity and erode trust.

The disconnect between the transparent, positive practices at the operational level and the chaotic, misaligned directives from higher-ups negatively impacts overall employee engagement and execution.

Recent organizational shifts, such as the acquisition, seem to have exacerbated the instability at senior levels, contributing to a culture of uncertainty.

Action recommendations

How can upper management improve the clarity and consistency of their communications to better bridge the gap between strategic decisions and frontline execution?

What specific measures can be implemented to align the reactive approaches of senior leadership with the supportive practices of direct managers?

How can the company address the negative impact of recent organizational changes, like the acquisition, to rebuild trust and enhance overall employee engagement?

Key Observations on Leadership Approach and Impact

• Direct vs. Upper Management

- Direct managers are regularly described as supportive, approachable, and genuinely invested in employee growth. One employee noted, "My manager is kind and accommodating," illustrating a clear commitment at the operational level that enhances day-to-day collaboration and professional development.
- In contrast, many employees express frustration with upper management. Leadership at higher levels is seen as inconsistent and reactive, with one comment stating, "Management got acquired and all current directives are a chaotic mix of outgoing executive priorities and trying to prepare for the new company." This reveals misalignment in vision and communication.

• Communication & Decision-Making

- Employees appreciate transparency and responsiveness from supportive leaders, yet several comments highlight a disconnect between high-level decisions and ground-level execution. The rapid shifts in strategy, coupled with micro-management tendencies and mixed signals, have led to confusion and reduced morale.
- The absence of consistent messaging and the habitual change in leadership directives appear to hinder robust execution and long-term engagement.

• Impact on Employee Engagement and Execution

- Empowered direct management fosters a collaborative environment, evidenced by remarks about good teamwork and professional growth opportunities.
- Conversely, the ambiguous, frequently shifting directives from senior leadership erode trust and impede

sustained execution. Employees feel caught in an environment where the “chaos” at the top disrupts consistency, ultimately affecting motivation and clarity in roles.

Executive Insight:

While Powerschool’s frontline leadership demonstrates strong support and nurtures engagement, the upper echelons are seen as erratic and misaligned with daily realities. Strengthening consistent communication and aligning strategic direction across all levels could markedly improve employee engagement and operational execution.

How effectively does the company leadership communicate and model the desired culture and stated values of the company?

Neutral

Key Findings

Local managers are praised for their supportive, team-oriented approach, effectively communicating goals and fostering professional growth at PowerSchool Group.

There is a clear disconnect between executive leadership and product teams, with high-level decisions overly focused on shareholder numbers rather than on sustaining product quality and employee engagement.

Employees have expressed that executive communications are inconsistent and vague, leading to uncertainty about the company’s long-term vision and alignment with its stated values.

The shift from a quality-focused culture to a financial bottom-line approach, especially post-IPO, has resulted in abrupt restructuring, layoffs, and offshoring, which undermines cultural consistency.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you provide examples of how the inconsistent communication from executive leadership has impacted team morale or project outcomes?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What measures is the company considering to realign executive decision-making with the innovative and collaborative culture valued by frontline teams?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the company planning to address the concerns around abrupt restructuring and offshoring to restore trust and maintain its stated cultural values?

Key Observations on Leadership Behavior at PowerSchool Group

• Local Management and Daily Operations

- Many employees praise their immediate supervisors for fostering a supportive, team-oriented atmosphere. One employee noted, “My manager made sure everyone was on the same page and had our backs,” reflecting a hands-on approach that nurtures professional growth and collaboration.
- Local leaders are viewed as adherents to agile principles, effectively communicating goals and providing adequate training, even as some teams lament inadequate onboarding and inconsistent training practices.

• Executive Leadership and Strategic Direction

- A recurring theme is the disconnect between executive leadership’s strategic priorities and the day-to-day realities of product teams. Numerous employees indicate that, “leadership only cares about numbers,” suggesting that high-level decisions often prioritize shareholder value over product quality and employee engagement.
- The shift from a quality-focused to financial bottom-line approach—particularly since going public—has led to

abrupt restructuring, layoffs, and offshoring that many feel undermines the culture of inclusivity and consistency.

- Communication from the top is frequently criticized as inconsistent, with strategic shifts and unclear long-term visions further contributing to employee disengagement.

- **Impact on Company Culture and Value Creation**

- The mixed leadership behavior creates a bifurcated culture: while frontline management builds a collaborative and learning-rich environment, executive-level decisions sometimes erode trust and stability.
- These dynamics challenge the company’s ability to fully leverage its stated values—especially around continuous improvement and accountability—which in turn may impact talent attraction, retention, and long-term market competitiveness.

In summary, while local management tends to reinforce PowerSchool Group’s mission through supportive, agile practices, executive leadership often falls short in aligning strategic decisions with the core values and operational realities cherished by employees.

Evaluate the effectiveness of communication from leadership.

Negative

Key Findings

Leadership communication is predominantly one-way, with employees reporting a lack of genuine two-way dialogue that leaves their feedback unaddressed.

Frequent strategic shifts, such as abrupt layoffs and unpredictable changes in direction, contribute to uncertainty about the long-term vision.

A significant transparency issue exists among upper management, evidenced by opaque decision-making and perceived hidden agendas that undermine trust.

While direct managers are often praised for providing personal support and mentorship, there is a clear disconnect between this positive local communication and the ineffective messaging from the top.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does leadership plan to introduce structured two-way communication channels that encourage regular employee feedback and dialogue?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific measures will be implemented to increase transparency in decision-making, especially during periods of rapid change or crisis?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: In what ways can the effective communication practices observed at the lower management levels be leveraged to improve overall leadership communication and strategic alignment?

Key Observations:

- **Inconsistent and One-Way Messaging**
- Employees frequently report that leadership communication is unidirectional. One staff member noted, “there is no two way discussion happening,” illustrating that feedback is not routinely sought or acted upon.
- Frequent shifts in strategy—including abrupt layoffs and changes in direction—add to the perception that messages from the top are inconsistent, leaving teams unsure of the long-term vision.

- Lack of Transparency and Trust
- There is a recurring theme of opaque decision-making. As one employee put it, “it starts at the top & there's 0 transparency from our leaders,” reflecting serious concerns about hidden agendas and secretive partnerships.
- This secrecy, especially during restructuring phases and downturns, undermines trust and makes employees feel expendable, which further erodes morale and commitment to the mission.
- Mixed Communication Efficacy
- Direct managers and lower levels often earn praise for personal support and mentorship. However, disconnects between upper management and day-to-day operations widen communication gaps—resulting in misunderstandings and a lack of strategic alignment.

Recommendations for Improvement:

- Regular, structured communication forums (e.g., town halls, Q&A sessions) that encourage two-way dialogue can bridge the feedback gap.
- Clear, consistent strategic messaging and post-decision follow-ups would reduce uncertainty and rebuild trust.
- Enhancing transparency during crises and change management can help align employee efforts and sustain engagement.

Conclusion:

While Powerschool Group’s immediate teams enjoy supportive leadership, the overall effectiveness of leadership communication at the upper levels remains compromised by inconsistency and opacity. Addressing these challenges is vital for stabilizing the company culture, boosting morale, and ensuring that employees remain aligned with the long-term strategic vision.

Evaluate the extent to which leadership incorporates employee feedback.

Negative

Key Findings

Powerschool Group uses multiple structured feedback channels, but the excessive frequency of meetings may dilute the effectiveness of meaningful engagement.

While some teams report that leadership actively listens and responds, there is significant inconsistency with some employees experiencing tokenistic behaviors and even gaslighting.

Frequent managerial turnover contributes to an uneven follow-through on employee feedback, undermining trust and raising concerns about the genuineness of leadership’s responsiveness.

The overall inconsistency in how feedback is both collected and acted upon negatively impacts employee morale, engagement, and long-term organizational health.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does leadership distinguish between actionable feedback and tokenistic input, and what specific measures ensure employee concerns lead to substantive changes?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What strategies are being implemented to address the inconsistency in feedback responses across teams, especially considering the high managerial turnover?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does Powerschool Group measure and evaluate the effectiveness of its feedback channels, and are there plans to refine these processes to reinforce employee trust?

Below is an evaluation of employee feedback at Powerschool Group, along with observations on how feedback is collected and addressed by leadership.

- Feedback Collection and Channels

- Employees report that feedback is meant to be gathered through structured forums such as general team meetings, larger sales and company-wide sessions, and direct interactions with supervisors. One reviewer noted, "I was expected to attend every general team meeting," highlighting that while there are numerous channels, their excessive frequency may dilute their effectiveness.
- Some employees also share that their input is solicited for continuous learning and culture updates. However, there are concerns that feedback channels are sometimes tokenistic. For instance, one employee remarked, "if you raise concerns, expect to be gaslit and ignored," suggesting that not all feedback is captured or acted upon adequately.

- Leadership Response and Follow-Through

- In certain cases, leadership is recognized for being responsive and open. An employee observed, "managers and leadership listen to what you have to say and take action," illustrating that on some teams feedback does lead to tangible improvements.
- On the other hand, numerous comments point to inconsistency in how managers respond to employee concerns. Multiple reviews mention rapid managerial turnover and a lack of sustained direction, which not only undermines trust but also creates uncertainty regarding whether employee feedback truly shapes strategy.
- Inconsistent handling of feedback – ranging from supportive and transparent to dismissive and even gaslighting – ultimately impacts morale, engagement, and retention.

- Impact on Organizational Health

- When employees feel heard and see their input reflected in decisions, it positively influences innovation and productivity. Conversely, feeling ignored erodes trust and may drive turnover.
- A consistent, transparent feedback process that actively involves frontline perspectives across all levels of leadership would further enhance employee engagement and overall organizational success.

Identify the top three actions that could be taken to improve employee satisfaction with leadership.

Negative

Key Findings

Employees report significant issues with leadership communication, noting a lack of follow-up and transparency that leaves their concerns unaddressed.

Leadership quality across levels is inconsistent, with upper management frequently receiving negative feedback compared to direct management.

Current HR practices around compensation and recognition are perceived as underperforming relative to industry standards, risking the loss of key talent.

★ Action recommendations

Enhance Transparent, Two-Way Communication by implementing regular town halls, Q&A sessions, and confidential feedback channels, ensuring employees are heard and understand leadership decisions.

Invest in Leadership Development and Accountability by launching targeted training programs, establishing clear performance metrics, and using 360° feedback to align leadership behaviors across all management levels.

Strengthen Merit-Based Recognition and Talent Retention Practices by revising HR policies to align compensation, promotions, and project assignments with industry standards, thereby improving morale and retaining top talent.

• Enhance Transparent, Two-Way Communication

- Recommendation: Implement regular town halls, Q&A sessions, and confidential feedback channels so that employees feel genuinely heard and understand the rationale behind leadership decisions.
- Context: One employee noted, “I reported the issue through a portal... no explanation regarding action,” highlighting a clear gap between message and follow-up at the upper levels.
- Potential Impact: This will strengthen trust in leadership, reduce feelings of isolation, and ensure that strategic pivots are communicated clearly and consistently.

• Invest in Leadership Development and Accountability

- Recommendation: Launch targeted leadership training programs, combined with clear performance metrics and 360° feedback, to better equip managers at every level.
- Context: Feedback such as “some leaders are really bad” and “direct management has been great for me, but upper management could communicate more” demonstrates that leadership quality is uneven; structured development can align managerial behavior with company values.
- Potential Impact: Strengthened leadership capabilities will foster a supportive culture, reduce turnover, and empower managers to make well-informed, empathetic decisions reinforcing team cohesion.

• Strengthen Merit-Based Recognition and Talent Retention Practices

- Recommendation: Revise HR processes to ensure compensation, promotions, and project assignments are equitable and benchmarked against industry standards.
- Context: As one employee observed, “Many products have seen their top talent and product experts lost due to compensation that is woefully under industry standard,” indicating that current policies risk losing valuable expertise.
- Potential Impact: Fair recognition and competitive rewards will improve employee morale, decrease turnover, and build a sustainable pipeline of internal talent that trusts leadership’s commitment to their long-term growth.

How are key decisions made and implemented across different organizational levels?

Negative

! Key Findings

Decision-making is highly centralized, with strategic choices being made solely by top executives (e.g., the CPO), leaving lower-level employees with little to no input.

The organization prioritizes rapid decision-making for financial agility over inclusive and consultative processes, which leads to erratic shifts in strategy.

Employees perceive the communication of decisions as impersonal and abrupt, undermining morale and a collaborative culture.

There is a significant lack of cross-departmental accountability, resulting in confusion and delays during decision implementation.

Local managers' efforts to foster open communication are consistently undermined by swift, top-down directives and insufficient upward feedback.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific mechanisms can be introduced to enhance bottom-up feedback and ensure that employees at all levels have a voice in strategic decisions?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can the company balance the need for rapid decision-making with the requirement for clear, inclusive, and personalized communication throughout the organization?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What steps can be taken to improve cross-departmental accountability, ensuring that decisions are effectively implemented and responsibilities are clearly assigned?

- Overview of Top-Down Decision-Making

- Employee feedback indicates that strategic decisions are chiefly made at the upper echelons. For example, one employee noted, "On the product team, no one but the CPO has any real decision-making power," underscoring a strongly centralized, top-down approach.
- Major shifts—such as the move to focus on financial bottom lines post-IPO, offshore cost-cutting, and acquisitions—are initiated rapidly with little apparent consultation at lower levels.

- Speed Over Inclusivity

- There is a clear tension between rapid decision execution and meaningful employee involvement. Numerous employees feel that decisions aimed at cost-efficiency and market agility come at the expense of a thorough, inclusive process. One team member remarked, "Management changes their mind on strategy and direction regularly," highlighting the rapid but erratic pace of decision-making that leaves employees struggling to keep up.
- This fast-paced approach often results in decisions being communicated in a "cold blooded, sudden, impersonal" manner, which can demotivate those expecting a more collaborative culture.

- Implementation and Cross-Departmental Challenges

- The lack of cross-functional accountability is evident—employees frequently note that "Nobody wants to take accountability for a decision," leading to prolonged project delays and confusion regarding priorities.
- While some local managers do foster open communication and provide essential support, their efforts are undermined by rapidly shifting strategies and insufficient upward feedback loops. This disconnect limits the potential for a consensus-driven environment and reinforces the notion that decisions are ultimately profit-driven rather than people-centric.

In summary, Powerschool Group's decision-making is predominantly top-down and fast-paced, prioritizing financial goals over inclusive dialogue. Enhancing transparency and fostering systematic, cross-departmental collaboration could help align swift execution with greater employee engagement.

How effective is the performance management system in driving results and employee development?

Negative

Key Findings

Although some employees appreciate the leadership's willingness to listen, many feel that the system mainly highlights weaknesses rather than promoting genuine employee growth.

Frequent project reassignments and unclear performance objectives create inconsistencies in how employees are evaluated.

An overemphasis on quantitative metrics and unrealistic targets is contributing to burnout and undermining the quality of feedback.

There is a notable disconnection between performance evaluations and rewards such as compensation and career advancement, which negatively impacts morale.

The pressure to provide overly positive feedback, under the threat of potential harassment, stifles honest communication and limits the system's developmental value.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific initiatives is the company planning to shift the focus of performance evaluations from identifying weaknesses to fostering real growth and development?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the organization addressing the challenges of frequently changing assignments and unclear objectives to ensure more consistent and fair evaluations?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What measures will be implemented to balance quantitative metrics with qualitative feedback, particularly to mitigate burnout and better align evaluations with compensation and career advancement?

Key Observations on Performance Management at Powerschool Group

- Mixed Experiences and Inconsistencies
- Some employees appreciate that "managers and leadership listen to what you have to say and take action," suggesting pockets of supportive feedback. However, many note a system that often feels structured to expose weaknesses rather than foster growth. One employee observed, "It's important for potential employees to be aware that the system may feel as though it's set up more to highlight failures than to foster success and support employee growth."
- Frequent shifting of assignments and unclear objectives—"I kept getting moved from one project to another, with no proper closure"—underscore systemic inconsistencies that impact performance evaluations.
- Overemphasis on Metrics and Unrealistic Targets
- Several reviews highlight a heavy reliance on quantitative metrics: "Remote work is great but very metrics based with unrealistic targets and pulled in multiple directions." Such pressure may lead to burnout and compromise the quality of feedback, skewing performance judgments and limiting meaningful development.
- The focus on KPIs can undervalue soft skills and team collaboration, which are critical in a collaborative work culture.
- Impact on Employee Development and Fairness
- Many employees report that performance appraisals do not adequately correlate with compensation or career advancement. Comments like "you will do more work than in your job description with no extra pay" illustrate a

disconnection between effort and recognition, negatively affecting morale and retention.

- Intense pressure during reviews—with one employee noting, “if you don’t provide glowing remarks, you risk facing harassment”—signals an environment where candid feedback is potentially stifled by fear of repercussions.

Overall, while parts of the performance management system at Powerschool show promising elements of support and development, pervasive inconsistencies, unrealistic targets, and an overemphasis on metrics create barriers to fair evaluation and sustainable employee growth. Addressing these concerns with clearer, consistent performance criteria and enhanced feedback processes could yield significant benefits to both results and company culture.

To what extent does the company support professional development and career growth?

Neutral

Key Findings

The company has a supportive and collaborative learning environment with hands-on learning and a buddy system that helps new hires integrate effectively.

Employees enjoy flexibility and autonomy which promotes creative problem-solving and exposure to new technologies.

There is a significant reliance on self-guided training due to the absence of formal career development programs, leading to employee frustration.

Outdated internal documentation and fragmented, siloed departments hinder the establishment of consistent mentorship and structured career pathways.

Overall, while the culture is vibrant at the operational level, the lack of clear advancement criteria poses a risk of long-term organizational fragmentation.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you elaborate on any initiatives planned to develop formal mentorship programs and update the current training documentation?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What strategies are being considered to address the siloed departmental structures and inconsistent HR processes affecting career progression?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the company plan to measure the success and impact of its professional development and career growth initiatives over time?

Powerschool Group exhibits a mixed approach to professional development and career growth, characterized by both strengths in on-the-job learning and notable areas for improvement.

Key Strengths: • Supportive Learning Environment:

- Employees frequently mention the opportunity to “learn a lot and grow” through hands-on work and cross-functional projects.
- The buddy system for new hires and an open-door policy from management facilitate immediate peer-to-peer mentoring, fostering a collaborative atmosphere. One employee noted, “I am confident that anyone who joins will find a place where the contributions are valued and they can grow professionally.”

• Flexibility and Autonomy:

- The culture rewards self-initiative and continuous improvement, with many employees appreciating the freedom to explore new technologies and techniques.

– This dynamic environment, coupled with exposure to cutting-edge products, often sparks creative problem-solving and skill diversification.

Areas for Improvement: • Structured Career Pathways:

– Multiple perceptions highlight that professional support largely depends on self-guided training rather than formal, company-supported programs.

– Outdated internal documentation and fragmented training initiatives have left some feeling that “promotions and opportunities... do not come” despite consistent performance.

• Siloed Teams and Inconsistent Mentorship:

– While immediate supervisors may be supportive, siloed departments and inconsistent HR processes impede systematic career progression.

– Employees express frustration over the lack of clear mentorship programs and formalized advancement criteria.

Overall Impact on Company Culture: Powerschool’s culture, though vibrant and employee-centric at lower levels, risks becoming fragmented when formal professional development mechanisms are weak. To sustain its reputation as an innovation-driven, inclusive workplace, it would be strategic to invest in structured mentorship, updated training platforms, and transparent career roadmaps that align with the company’s mission and support long-term talent retention.

Describe the company’s major communication style and norms.

Negative

Key Findings

The company relies heavily on a top-down communication style, which leads to unnecessary escalation of routine issues and creates uncertainty among employees.

There is an imbalance between formal communication (such as emails and meetings) and informal team-level interactions, with the formal channels often being inconsistent.

Frequent revisions in strategy and overuse of formal notifications contribute to internal confusion and dilute the overall clarity of the company’s messaging.

Excessive reliance on formal channels, including overloaded meeting schedules, hampers effective knowledge sharing and undermines employee empowerment.

The organization is aware of these challenges and is considering streamlining their communication processes and enhancing decentralized feedback to improve employee engagement.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How do employees feel the top-down approach impacts their day-to-day decision-making and overall empowerment within the organization?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you provide specific examples of instances where the balance between formal and informal communications has either succeeded or failed?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What concrete steps or tools is the company considering to streamline communication and reduce the overload of redundant meetings and emails?

• Overview of Communication Style

• Powerschool Group exhibits a predominantly top-down communication approach. One employee noted, “I was also sent an email from the same manager with a CC to the director,” underscoring a formal chain of command

that can sometimes overly escalate routine issues. This centralization can dilute the clarity of the message and foster uncertainty, especially during times of shifting organizational priorities.

- Balance of Formal and Informal Channels
- While formal emails and scheduled meetings are common, there is also evidence of strong localized, informal communication. One employee remarked, “My manager made sure everyone was on the same page and had our backs,” highlighting supportive, team-level interactions. However, this mix is uneven: formal communications from upper management often suffer from inconsistency and rapid strategy changes, resulting in excessive meetings and emails that burden employees rather than empower them.
- Clarity, Efficiency, and Cultural Impact
- The frequent revisions in strategy and the intensity of formal notifications contribute to a perception of internal confusion. Although some employees appreciate “clear roles and responsibilities” and transparent policies, others report that the rapid-fire changes and redundant formal channels hamper effective knowledge sharing. Barriers such as overloaded meeting schedules and fragmented communication systems detract from building a truly collaborative culture.
- Recommendations for Improvement
- Streamline communications by reducing unnecessary formal escalations and periodic, redundant meetings.
- Enhance decentralized feedback loops to empower mid-level managers in conveying stable, consistent messages.
- Invest in collaboration tools that balance formal updates with organic, team-level exchanges to foster a more inclusive culture.

This blended approach would support Powerschool Group’s mission and help realign corporate messaging with the ground-level experience, ultimately strengthening employee engagement and trust.

How well does the company manage employee engagement and feedback?

Neutral



Key Findings

Employees feel empowered at the grassroots level, with immediate supervisors and local teams being supportive and valuing contributions.

Formal feedback channels are present but often result in generic responses and inconsistent follow-through, leaving some issues unresolved.

There is a sharp contrast between the positive local management experience and the negative perceptions of upper management’s handling of feedback.

Frequent strategic changes and a lack of sustained leadership engagement contribute to employees feeling that their concerns sometimes fall on deaf ears.

Although work-life balance and technical growth are emphasized, the disconnect between team-level empowerment and upper management responsiveness undermines the overall feedback process.



Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific measures could be implemented to ensure that feedback submitted through formal channels receives consistent and actionable responses from upper management?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: In what ways can the company bridge the gap between supportive grassroots practices and the inconsistent leadership communication observed from upper management?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How might the organization better integrate frontline insights into strategic decisions to build trust and enhance the overall employee engagement process?

Below is an evaluation synthesizing employee perceptions at PowerSchool Group regarding employee engagement and feedback:

- **Empowerment at the Grassroots Level**
 - Multiple employees note that “team members and managers alike feel empowered to contribute ideas” and that every voice is valued.
 - Immediate supervisors and local teams are seen as supportive, with comments like “my supervisor is kind and accommodating” underscoring positive day-to-day engagement.
- **Feedback Mechanisms and Responsiveness**
 - Formal channels exist to report concerns, yet outcomes are mixed. For example, one employee shared, “I reported the issue through a portal... I was met with ‘I am sorry that was your experience,’” indicating that while feedback systems are in place, follow-through can be lacking.
 - Regular meetings and performance reviews sometimes feel more mandatory than constructive, with some citing “too many pointless meetings” and inconsistent responses from management.
- **Leadership and Cross-Departmental Alignment**
 - While lower-level management is consistently praised, upper management has been critiqued for frequent strategic changes and limited engagement with frontline issues.
 - Employees express frustration over shifting priorities and a tendency for concerns to “fall on deaf ears,” pointing to a need for more consistent, transparent leadership communication and action on feedback.
- **Impact on Company Culture**
 - Positive indicators such as a healthy work-life balance and a commitment to technical growth are attenuated by reports of inconsistent responsiveness.
 - The divergence between strong team-level support and the lack of cohesive follow-through at higher levels is a key area for strategic improvement.

In summary, while PowerSchool Group excels in fostering a supportive, empowering environment within teams, there is clear room to refine and standardize responsiveness to feedback—especially from upper management—to fully harness employee engagement and drive lasting cultural and operational benefits.

Assess the company's support for employee well-being.

Neutral

Key Findings

Powerschool Group offers robust benefits—comprehensive health insurance, flexible work arrangements, and unlimited PTO—that are explicitly designed to support employee well-being.

The CEO’s introduction of wellness/mental days signals a strong top-down commitment to mental health, setting a positive tone from leadership.

Supportive leadership and a generally collaborative team environment are noted by employees, which can enhance the overall work culture.

Inconsistencies in managerial practices, including micromanagement and abrupt strategy shifts, contribute to significant workplace stress.

High workloads, frequent layoffs, and unequal treatment in policies (e.g., work-from-home flexibility and favoritism) undermine the practicality and uniform application of wellness initiatives.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What concrete steps are being taken to standardize managerial practices across departments to ensure consistency in supporting employee well-being?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the company addressing the high workloads, frequent layoffs, and other operational stressors that seem to counteract the intended wellness benefits?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you explain any specific feedback mechanisms or strategies in place to monitor and improve the real-world application of the wellness initiatives?

• Benefits and Wellness Initiatives

- Powerschool Group offers attractive benefits—including robust health insurance, flexible work arrangements, and unlimited PTO (subject to management approval)—that are designed to support employee well-being. An employee highlighted that “the CEO included wellness/mental days,” which signals a top-down commitment to mental health.

• Leadership and Team Environment

- Several employees note supportive leadership and a collaborative team environment, with one remarking, “My supervisor is kind and accommodating.” Such experiences reinforce the idea that when leadership is engaged, employees can access crucial emotional and mental health support.
- However, inconsistency in managerial practices is evident. Reports of micromanagement and abrupt shifts in strategy contribute to feelings of stress and uncertainty across teams.

• Stress Triggers and Organizational Challenges

- High workloads, frequent and sizable layoffs, and an ever-changing organizational direction are cited as major stressors. One concerned employee stated, “This burnt me out very quickly and eventually, I got sick and had to miss a day,” underscoring how operational pressures can undermine well-being.
- Discrepancies in treatment—such as unequal work-from-home policies and perceived favoritism—further exacerbate stress, suggesting that benefits may not translate into consistent, supportive practices on the ground.

• Overall Assessment

- In theory, Powerschool’s policies and benefits foster a supportive environment for mental health. In practice, however, gaps in leadership consistency and high-pressure work periods detract from these efforts. To enhance well-being, further attention should be directed to aligning managerial practices across departments, ensuring that the promise of wellness initiatives is uniformly experienced across the organization.

Evaluate how well the company fosters a collaborative environment.

Neutral

Key Findings

Powerschool shows strong intra-team collaboration and effective onboarding practices that enhance day-to-day operations.

The buddy system and continuous learning initiatives help facilitate rapid knowledge sharing and skill development among new hires.

Interdepartmental silos remain a critical issue, limiting effective cross-functional integration and complicating company-wide projects.

Internal conflict management challenges such as reported internal politics and micro-management undermine broader collaborative efforts.

While remote work policies offer flexibility, coordinating with offshore teams across different time zones remains a significant challenge.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific strategies are being considered to bridge the interdepartmental silos and improve cross-functional collaboration?

How is the company planning to address conflict management and internal politics to reinforce trust and effective teamwork?

What measures are in place or planned to standardize communication and collaboration tools to mitigate challenges in remote and offshore teamwork?

Overview: Powerschool exhibits a solid foundation in fostering collaboration within individual teams, yet challenges persist in bridging interdepartmental silos, managing conflicts, and optimizing remote coordination.

Strengths in Collaboration: • **Intra-Team Synergy:** Many employees praise internal teamwork. One noted, “A valuable opportunity to learn and collaborate with highly talented colleagues,” highlighting that supportive management and peer learning drive effective day-to-day operations. • **Onboarding and Continuous Learning:** Initiatives, such as buddy assignments for new hires and access to modern learning resources, facilitate knowledge sharing and skill development. • **Remote Work Flexibility:** The company’s hybrid and remote work policies provide employees with a flexible framework, enhancing engagement and personal productivity.

Opportunities for Improvement: • **Cross-Functional Integration:** Despite strong intra-team collaboration, silos remain. Feedback like “there are very distinct lines between employee groups which makes working together difficult” suggests that projects spanning multiple departments could benefit from more structured interdepartmental platforms and clear communication channels. • **Conflict Management & Internal Politics:** Instances of internal politics and micro-management have been reported—exemplified by concerns that “management only looks out for themselves”—which undermine collaborative efforts. Implementing more transparent conflict resolution processes could enhance trust. • **Optimizing Remote Collaboration:** While remote work is widely appreciated, challenges such as coordinating with offshore teams due to time-zone differences are evident. Investing in standardized communication tools and best practices for remote collaboration may alleviate these issues.

Overall, Powerschool’s culture is strong at the team level with a clear commitment to learning and support. By addressing interdepartmental coordination and enhancing conflict management strategies, the company could

significantly boost its overall collaborative environment.

Assess the extent to which employees have adequate resources to perform their roles.

Negative

Key Findings

While some departments utilize modern cloud technology, legacy systems and poor integration continue to impede overall resource effectiveness.

Staffing issues, including a high proportion of inexperienced and offshored employees, are negatively impacting team performance and product quality.

The reliance on self-directed learning in the absence of structured training programs leaves employees without consistent support for skill development.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific legacy technology issues are most disruptive to your daily operations, and how might modernizing these systems improve efficiency?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the reliance on less experienced, offshored staff affecting team morale and product quality, and what strategies could be implemented to attract more seasoned talent?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What steps can be taken to establish a more structured onboarding and ongoing training program that effectively addresses current skill gaps?

Assessment of Resource Adequacy at Powerschool Group

• Tools and Technology

- Some departments benefit from access to modern, cutting-edge tools—employees frequently mention opportunities to “work with groundbreaking cloud technology.”
- However, several voices express concerns about legacy systems and poor integration. One employee noted, “The technologies used will be very outdated,” highlighting a need to modernize and streamline the tech stack to improve efficiency and competitiveness.

• Staffing and Talent Allocation

- While collaborative team environments are often praised, concerns over staffing quality persist. Multiple employees have observed, “There is a large percentage of cheap and inexperienced employees,” suggesting that reliance on underqualified staff—compounded by a trend toward offshoring—may impede product quality and team morale.
- An inconsistent approach to filling roles, particularly on the US side, has led some teams to feel stretched thin and lacking in the seasoned expertise required for rapid innovation.

• Training and Process Support

- Although the company encourages self-driven skill improvement, resource gaps in structured training remain evident. One employee stated, “Training – be prepared to train yourself as long as you work for them,” underscoring the need for more comprehensive onboarding and ongoing development programs.
- Frequent HR process launches and evolving internal directives further add complexity, suggesting that clearer communication and stable processes could better support employees’ day-to-day responsibilities.

Overall, while Powerschool Group’s culture and collaborative spirit are key strengths, targeted investments in modern technology, more experienced staffing, and structured training resources would enhance operational

efficiency and create significant value for the organization.

Evaluate the emphasis on flexibility within the company culture.

Neutral

Key Findings

While the company prominently promotes a flexible work environment with generous remote work options, self-guided schedules, and hybrid models, there is a notable contradiction with the enforcement of mandatory in-office hours.

Employees report that the flexible policies enhance autonomy, innovation, and work-life balance, which are critical for fostering a positive and engaging culture.

Despite the stated value of flexibility, practical challenges such as fixed in-office requirements and time-zone issues for global teams indicate inconsistencies in policy implementation.

Performance metrics and scheduling pressures may contribute to increased employee stress and burnout, undermining the intended benefits of a flexible work environment.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the company justify the mandatory in-office requirements alongside its stated commitment to flexibility, and what are the underlying operational reasons for this policy?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps is the company taking to mitigate time-zone challenges and performance pressures that negatively impact the flexible work arrangements?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Has there been an evaluation of the employee feedback on the practical challenges of the flexible policies, and what adjustments are being considered to better align policy with practice?

Key Takeaways on Flexibility at PowerSchool Group

- **Stated Flexibility Policies** – The company explicitly promotes a flexible work environment. Numerous employee comments highlight generous remote work options, self-guided schedules, and hybrid models. One employee noted, “Remote employees are self-guided and given generally flexible schedules,” underscoring that flexibility is a formal part of the company’s value proposition.
- **Positive Impacts on Company Culture** – Many employees appreciate the autonomy and work-life balance enabled by these policies. This flexibility fosters innovation and personal growth, with professionals feeling empowered not only in their daily tasks but also in pursuing new projects. The ability to choose working arrangements has contributed to a strong sense of community and employee engagement. – The culture of transparency and open communication further reinforces the flexible environment, allowing employees to adjust workflows to accommodate personal and professional needs.
- **Practical Challenges and Negative Impacts** – Despite the stated policies, some employees experience significant constraints in practice. For example, mandatory in-office requirements—“We are forced to be present in the office for at least 6.5 to 7 hours and for 3 days mandatorily”—highlight inconsistencies between policy and everyday reality. – Time-zone challenges for global teams and metrics-based performance pressures sometimes undermine the intended flexibility. Such practices risk increasing stress and burnout, eroding trust, and potentially impacting talent retention.

In summary, while PowerSchool Group clearly prioritizes flexibility on paper and offers a remote-friendly environment that benefits employee growth and work-life balance, discrepancies in practical implementation create friction. Aligning mandatory scheduling requirements with the company's flexible ethos could further strengthen the culture and drive sustainable employee satisfaction.

Assess employee perceptions of safety and support in the work environment.

Neutral

Key Findings

Employees report strong support at the immediate manager and team level, which creates a safe space and fosters a sense of belonging within smaller groups.

Initiatives such as upskilling and transparent, feedback-oriented practices contribute positively to perceptions of professional growth and support.

There is a marked concern regarding top-level leadership practices, where feelings of expendability and job insecurity stemming from frequent restructuring and layoffs are prevalent.

Inconsistencies across departments, including reports of toxic politics and misaligned HR policies, highlight uneven support and safety perceptions within the organization.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you detail how immediate managerial support has specifically counteracted the broader organizational issues, and what practices are most impactful?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific elements of top-level leadership do employees believe contribute to their feelings of expendability and job insecurity?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How might the organization standardize practices to ensure consistent safety and support across all departments amidst concerns of toxic politics and misalignment in HR policies?

Below is an analysis of employee perceptions regarding safety and support at PowerSchool Group based primarily on internal employee feedback:

Key Areas of Support: • Immediate Manager Engagement:

- Many employees stress that direct managers create a “safe space” where team members feel supported. One individual noted, “My manager made sure everyone was on the same page and had our backs,” highlighting how localized support fortifies day-to-day safety.
- Peer collaboration and team camaraderie are frequently mentioned, contributing to a generally positive, supportive environment at the team level.

• Initiatives for Professional Growth:

- Employees appreciate opportunities for upskilling and personal development. Initiatives such as structured learning programs and transparent, feedback-oriented leadership contribute to a sense of being invested in, reinforcing psychological safety.

Areas of Concern: • Leadership and Job Security:

- A recurring theme among negative perceptions is the disconnect between supportive team-level management and higher-level leadership practices. One employee remarked, “People don't feel safe and they don't feel committed to the mission when they know how expendable leadership sees them.”

- Frequent restructuring, offshoring, and layoffs have introduced uncertainty about long-term job security, undermining the feeling of being genuinely cared for at the organizational level.

- Organizational Inconsistencies:

- While many employees highlight positive support within their immediate teams, others point to “toxic politics” and misaligned HR policies that detract from a cohesive, secure work environment.
- Inconsistencies across departments suggest that safety and support are not uniform, with some groups experiencing excellent support and others feeling isolated amid broader organizational instability.

Overall, the picture emerging is one where supportive managerial practices coexist with systemic challenges at the leadership level. Addressing these higher-level concerns could further enhance employee perceptions of safety and commitment across PowerSchool Group.

Assess the role and effectiveness of the Human Resources function at the company in achieving the target culture, including employee trust, effectiveness, and HR impact on company culture.

Negative

Key Findings

Employees feel that HR acts more to defend management than to support and protect their interests, which has created a significant trust deficit.

Impersonal HR practices, such as prerecorded layoff messages and inconsistent follow-up on reported issues, have undermined transparent communication.

The disconnect between a broadly positive company culture and erratic HR processes risks eroding employee confidence, morale, and long-term talent retention.

Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific actions is HR planning or implementing to improve transparency and rebuild employee trust, especially in critical situations like layoffs?

How is the company addressing the inconsistencies in HR communication and policy enforcement to ensure employees receive clear and supportive guidance?

What feedback mechanisms or benchmarks are being established to assess and monitor the effectiveness of HR's role in promoting a truly supportive culture?

Overview: Employee feedback paints a mixed picture of the HR function at PowerSchool Group. While the broader culture is often praised for its positive atmosphere and work-life balance, underlying HR practices are a source of concern that may undermine employee trust and long-term cultural integrity.

Key Observations:

• Trust and Credibility:

- Multiple employees note that HR is perceived as a tool to protect management rather than champion employee interests. One reviewer stated, "HR is NOT there to protect employees only to defend the company," reflecting a significant trust deficit.
- Concerns over impersonal processes—such as sudden, prerecorded layoff messages—have led employees to feel that HR fails to transparently communicate critical decisions.

• Communication and Process Effectiveness:

- Employees have reported that policy changes and HR processes are inconsistently enforced. One example cited, "I reported the issue through a portal for things like this, I was met with 'I am sorry that was your experience' with no explanation," highlighting a lack of meaningful follow-up.
- These communication gaps, coupled with rapid procedural changes, cause uncertainty and erode confidence in HR's ability to support the workforce effectively.

• Impact on Company Culture:

- Despite the overall positive work environment and supportive teams, the disconnect in HR's approach jeopardizes employee morale. When HR practices appear to favor cost reduction—evidenced by fast-tracked layoffs and a focus on hiring less experienced staff—employees may begin to feel undervalued.

- This dichotomy between a friendly, collaborative workplace and HR-induced unpredictability could hinder long-term employee engagement and talent retention.

Actionable Insights:

- Strengthening transparency in HR processes and clear communication of policy changes can rebuild trust.
- Rebalancing HR's role to genuinely advocate for employee concerns while aligning with strategic company goals is essential for sustainable cultural improvement.

Overall, although the company boasts a commendable workplace culture, addressing these HR challenges is crucial to ensure that internal practices support the positive environment employees value.

To what extent does the compensation structure support and reinforce the company's culture?

Negative

! Key Findings

While employees appreciate the reliable, on-time salary payments and attractive benefits (such as unlimited PTO and flexible work arrangements), there is significant concern over being underpaid compared to industry standards.

Experienced employees and top performers feel their compensation fails to adequately reward their contributions, leading to a sense of undervaluation.

Minimal annual raises and inconsistent bonus structures are creating perceptions of unfairness and obstructing long-term professional growth.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What market benchmarks or data do we have to reassess our base pay levels for experienced and high-performing roles?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can we overhaul our bonus and incentive structures to ensure they consistently reward exceptional performance?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What steps can be taken to improve pay transparency and clearly communicate career growth and promotion pathways to address internal disparities?

Key Strengths and Challenges in Compensation

- **Strengths**
 - **On-Time, Reliable Payments:** Several employees appreciate the consistency in salary processing. One employee stated, "the pay is awesome and the salary gets credited on time," underscoring that timely compensation is a clear strength.
 - **Attractive Benefits:** Alongside regular pay, employees highlight perks such as unlimited PTO, internet stipends, student loan repayment, and flexible work arrangements. These benefits contribute to overall employee satisfaction and work-life balance.
- **Challenges**
 - **Under-Industry Pay Levels:** Despite reliable payments, many experienced employees and top performers feel undervalued. One candid remark was, "I know me & my peers are extremely underpaid for what we do." This sentiment points to a gap between market benchmarks and internal pay structures.
 - **Minimal Raises and Limited Growth:** Several employees noted that annual salary hikes (often 2-3%) do not effectively reward performance, creating frustrations and hindering long-term professional growth. Additionally, differences in compensation across similar roles lead to perceptions of unfairness.
 - **Bonus and Incentive**

Inconsistencies: Many point out that bonus structures are unpredictable and sometimes fail to adequately reward extra efforts, impacting morale and overall retention.

- Recommendations
 - Enhance Pay Transparency: Clearly communicate salary bands, bonus criteria, and promotion pathways to address internal fairness concerns.
 - Benchmark Regularly: Conduct periodic market reviews to ensure compensation is competitive with industry standards, especially for high-performing roles.
 - Implement Merit-Based Incentives: Adjust bonus structures and raise policies to better reflect individual contributions, minimizing internal disparities and retaining top talent.

By addressing these specific challenges, PowerSchool Group can reinforce an employee-centric culture that not only values timely and stable compensation but also rewards performance and industry competitiveness, ultimately boosting both morale and retention.

To what extent does the benefits structure support and reinforce the company's culture?

Positive



Key Findings

PowerSchool Group's benefits package is a cornerstone of its employee-centric culture, emphasizing flexible work arrangements like unlimited PTO and remote work that enhance work-life balance.

The comprehensive health and financial benefits—such as health insurance, stock options, and 401k matching—demonstrate a strong commitment to long-term employee welfare and security.

The company's focus on continuous learning and professional development reinforces a supportive work environment, even amid isolated concerns about compensation and leadership changes.

By offering a modern and flexible benefits structure, PowerSchool differentiates itself from industry peers, boosting employee engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty.



Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How do employees balance the positive impact of flexible benefits with the occasional concerns regarding compensation and job stability?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific metrics or feedback mechanisms are in place to assess the ongoing influence of the benefits package on overall employee engagement and retention?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Are there any planned improvements or adjustments to the benefits structure to address the minor critiques, and how might these changes further enhance the company's culture?

PowerSchool Group's benefits package is a cornerstone of its employee-centric culture, reinforcing work-life balance, security, and professional growth. Drawing on employee perceptions, here are several key insights:

- Robust Work-Life Balance
 - Employees value flexible arrangements such as unlimited PTO, remote work, and personalized schedules. One contributor noted, "I really appreciate the unlimited PTO and flexible work arrangements—they allow me a perfect balance between work and personal life," emphasizing that these policies foster both well-being and productivity.
- Comprehensive Health and Financial Security
 - Generous benefits—including health insurance, stock options, and 401k matching—signal a commitment to long-term employee welfare. This financial security is perceived as integral to maintaining a supportive culture.

As one employee reflected, “The company truly cares about its employees, and it shows in the competitive benefits and overall positive atmosphere.”

- Culture of Continuous Learning and Engagement

- Beyond standard perks, PowerSchool Group’s benefits extend to opportunities for personal development and professional advancement. This investment in talent is critical in a competitive market, helping employees feel valued despite occasional concerns over compensation and leadership changes.

- Differentiation in a Competitive Landscape

- Compared to industry peers with outdated or less comprehensive benefits, PowerSchool’s modern, flexible approach reinforces its reputation as a people-first organization. Despite sporadic critiques regarding pay or job stability, the robust benefits consistently emerge as a key factor in employee engagement and loyalty.

In summary, the quality of PowerSchool Group’s benefits not only attracts and retains talent but also cultivates a collaborative, resilient culture that drives both individual and organizational success.