Aniline

Leadership Performance & Development: PowerSchool Group

Leadership Performance & Development

This report offers a comprehensive analysis of a company's leadership performance and leadership development. It evaluates key areas such as leadership effectiveness, training programs, decision-making processes, and leadership influence on company performance and culture in order to pinpoint strengths, identify areas for improvement, and recommend actionable strategies for enhancing leadership across the organization.

Powerschool Group

Executive Summary

PowerSchool Group exhibits a split leadership landscape where frontline managers and departmental leaders are generally supportive and empower employee growth, yet significant shortcomings persist at the executive level. While formal training and on-the-job mentoring initiatives foster talent development, strategic incoherence, inconsistent communication, and unchecked leadership turnover undermine overall trust, employee satisfaction, and organizational resilience.

Key Leadership Strengths

- **Empowerment & Growth Focus**

    - Leaders at the team level encourage skill development and foster an innovative environment. Employees consistently praise approachable supervisors and mentors who create safe spaces for idea sharing and career advancement.
- **Approachable, Collaborative Culture**

    - Direct managers are recognized for their accessibility and genuine support. This localized approach promotes a collaborative work environment that boosts day-to-day engagement and productivity.
- **Structured Training & Mentorship Initiatives**

    - The company's blend of formal leadership courses, role-specific programs, and on-the-job mentoring provides foundational development for high-potential talent and technical leaders. These initiatives, while informal in some areas, support diversified leadership growth.

Key Leadership Risks and Areas for Improvement

- **Strategic Incoherence and Executive Instability**

    - Employees report a lack of clear, long-term strategic direction from senior leadership. Negative perceptions—such as descriptions of the CEO as "uninformed and incompetent"—coupled with frequent leadership turnover and radical cost-cutting (e.g., aggressive offshoring), contribute to a culture of uncertainty and fear.
- **Inconsistent Communication & Accountability**

    - Communication from executive leadership suffers from opacity and frequent shifts in messaging, which erode trust across the organization. An overreliance on quantitative KPIs, with insufficient emphasis on qualitative feedback, hinders a holistic evaluation of leadership effectiveness and team alignment.
- **Ineffective Change Management and Decision-Making**

    - Change initiatives are hampered by shifting priorities, arbitrary decision-making, and departmental silos. The disconnect between strategic decisions at the executive level and the operational realities of frontline teams exacerbates employee dissatisfaction and stifles innovation.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

- **Enhance Executive Transparency and Strategic Alignment**
  - Establish a clear, long-term strategic vision articulated through transparent and consistent communication. Integrate qualitative leadership metrics with quantitative KPIs to reflect a balanced evaluation of performance.
- **Streamline Leadership Development and Coaching**
  - Extend structured leadership development programs across all levels by formalizing mentoring processes and clear progression pathways. Focus on building soft skills such as emotional intelligence and strategic communication in addition to technical proficiency.
- **Strengthen Cross-Departmental Communication and Collaboration**
  - Standardize communication channels and foster two-way feedback loops to bridge gaps between executive decisions and frontline execution. Promote cross-departmental initiatives that reinforce a cohesive decision-making culture and mitigate siloed practices.

In summary, while PowerSchool Group benefits from strong, supportive middle management and formal leadership training initiatives, its executive leadership's strategic inconsistencies and communication gaps pose measurable risks. Addressing these issues with targeted transparency, coherent strategic planning, and enhanced development programs is essential to building a more resilient, unified organizational culture.

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1. Leadership Effectiveness   Jun 19, 2025 4:31 PM

How do employees rate the effectiveness of current leadership?

Negative

⛔ Key Findings

There is a major disconnect between top leadership and frontline employees, with numerous employees expressing deep dissatisfaction with the CEO and overall strategic direction.

While middle management is generally viewed as supportive, high managerial turnover undermines stability, continuity, and career progression.

A pervasive fear-based culture, marked by monitored feedback and lack of genuine recognition, is contributing to employee disengagement.

Specific departments, notably within the Support organization, suffer from arbitrary decision-making and micro-management, further eroding trust.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific initiatives are being implemented to address the strategic misalignment and improve the effectiveness of C-level leadership?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the organization plan to mitigate high managerial turnover and ensure consistent, supportive leadership across all levels?

Executive Summary

• Overall Assessment

  • Employee perceptions of leadership at PowerSchool Group are notably mixed. While there are pockets of support and development at the team level, significant concerns persist regarding strategic direction and consistency at higher levels.

• C-Level and Senior Leadership

  • Numerous employees express strong dissatisfaction with top leadership. One employee stated, "The CEO is the most terrible, uninformed and incompetent CEO ever," reflecting deep-seated frustration with the strategic decisions and vision coming from the top.

  • The recurring theme of a fear-based culture, where feedback is intensely monitored and a lack of genuine recognition prevails, contributes to a broader sentiment of disconnect between senior leadership and frontline realities.

• Middle Management and Departmental Variation

  • Direct managers and local team leaders are generally seen as supportive. Comments like "Management is always there to support you in any way possible" and "My supervisor is kind and accommodating" indicate that employee-level leadership can be effective.

  • However, the inconsistency is evident as several employees report high managerial turnover—one noted, "I have had 5 different managers in my time working here"—which undermines continuity, mentoring, and career progression.

  • Specific departments, particularly within the Support organization, are criticized for arbitrary decision-making and micro-management, further eroding trust.

Conclusion The disparity between supportive direct management and problematic C-level leadership creates an environment of mixed morale. Aligning strategic vision with consistent, transparent, and empathetic leadership practices across all levels is essential to bolster overall employee confidence and retention.

What are the greatest perceived strengths and weaknesses of company leadership?

Neutral

⬡ **Key Findings**

Employees appreciate the leadership's focus on empowerment and skill development, which fosters an innovative and growth-oriented environment.

The leadership is recognized for its open-minded and collaborative approach that encourages experimentation and continuous learning.

There is a significant concern regarding the absence of a coherent, long-term strategic vision, which generates uncertainty among employees.

Inconsistencies in leadership practices, including instances of micromanagement and internal politics, have led to mixed experiences and diminished trust in guidance.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What concrete measures are being planned to establish and communicate a clear, long-term strategic vision to reduce uncertainty among employees?

How does management intend to address the issues of leadership inconsistency and micromanagement to foster a more stable work environment?

What strategies can be implemented to balance the current emphasis on empowerment and innovation with the need for more consistent and transparent leadership practices?

Below is an analysis of Powerschool Group leadership based primarily on employee perceptions:

Strengths: • Empowerment & Growth Focus
– Employees appreciate leaders who encourage skill development. One employee stated, "I want to thank the leadership for creating a work environment where employees are empowered to grow their skills and develop in their careers."
– Leaders are seen as approachable and supportive, fostering an environment where fresh ideas are welcomed and innovation is encouraged.

• Open-minded & Collaborative
– Several reviews highlight that leadership cultivates a safe space for experimentation. For example, an employee noted, "The leadership embraces an open mindset, encourages fresh ideas, and provides a supportive, safe space," underscoring a willingness to challenge the status quo.
– This approach supports a culture of continuous learning and ensures employees feel their contributions are valued.

Weaknesses: • Lack of Coherent Strategic Vision
– A recurring concern is the absence of a clear, long-term plan. Employees have commented, "There is no big picture plan, they are making it up as they go," which creates uncertainty and undermines trust in future direction.
– Without a consistent vision, teams may struggle with alignment and long-term career development.

• Leadership Inconsistency & Micromanagement
– Frequent fluctuations in leadership style and turnover have led to mixed experiences. Reviews mention that "management is a hit or a miss," reflecting concerns about inconsistent guidance and, at times, excessive micromanagement.
– Additional issues include internal politics and favoritism, which further exacerbate employee dissatisfaction and hinder talent retention.

In summary, while Powerschool Group leadership is praised for its empowering, growth-centric, and innovative approach, challenges persist around strategic clarity, consistent management practices, and a tendency toward micromanagement that ultimately create an environment of uncertainty for employees.

How is leadership held accountable for their actions and decisions?

Negative

⬡ **Key Findings**

There is an overreliance on quantitative KPIs (like sales quotas and productivity metrics) that may overshadow the qualitative aspects of effective leadership.

Employee feedback indicates that raising concerns often leads to being gaslit or ignored, suggesting a culture that does not value open, honest dialogue.

Local team leaders tend to demonstrate supportive behaviors, whereas senior leadership exhibits inconsistencies in transparency and accountability.

Frequent leadership changes, conflicting priorities, and the offshoring of roles are eroding trust among employees.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

How does the company plan to integrate qualitative feedback and employee input into the current KPI-focused evaluation of leadership?

What systems or processes will be implemented to ensure consistent accountability and transparency across both local and senior leadership levels?

What measures are being considered to stabilize leadership roles and address issues such as rapid turnover and conflicting priorities to rebuild employee trust?

• Performance Measurement:

- Leadership at PowerSchool Group is primarily evaluated using quantitative KPIs such as sales quotas, productivity metrics, and measurable progress on project outcomes. One employee noted, "Remote work is great but very metrics based with unrealistic targets," highlighting an over-reliance on numbers that can sometimes overshadow qualitative leadership contributions.

- Although some managers are praised for providing opportunities to learn and innovate, the focus remains on hitting predetermined targets, which may not capture the full spectrum of effective leadership behavior.

• Leadership Accountability:

- Employee perceptions reveal significant concerns regarding accountability. A recurring sentiment is that when employees express concerns, "if you raise concerns, expect to be gaslit and ignored," suggesting a culture where feedback is not systematically welcomed.

- Accountability appears uneven across departments. Local team leaders and direct supervisors often receive high marks for being supportive and empowering, yet many employees believe that senior leadership, especially in areas like Support and product management, lack transparency and consistency.

- There is also notable frustration over rapid leadership changes, conflicting priorities, and the offshoring of roles, which further erodes trust in the accountability framework. The preference for a narrow focus on metrics over holistic development has contributed to perceptions of a leadership style that prioritizes numbers over people and long-term strategic vision.

• Conclusion:

- While PowerSchool Group relies on clearly defined KPIs to gauge leadership performance, the current approach to accountability raises concerns. Balancing quantitative measures with qualitative feedback and fostering transparent, consistent responses to employee input are critical. Addressing these areas could enhance trust, reduce turnover, and better align leadership practices with the company's overall mission and culture.

Describe and evaluate leadership training programs and leadership development effectiveness, especially for high potential talent and managers in the company.

`Positive`

⬣ **Key Findings**

Powerschool Group employs a multi-faceted leadership development approach by combining formal mandatory courses with role-specific training and on-the-job mentoring.

The company differentiates its development programs to cater to mid-level managers, high potential talent, and executive leaders, ensuring tailored content for technical versus managerial roles.

Employee feedback reflects a positive impact, emphasizing an open feedback culture and effective informal mentoring that empowers leadership growth.

Departmental nuances are considered, with specialized training in areas like engineering and customer success, reinforcing both technical proficiency and leadership skills.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific metrics or KPIs does Powerschool Group use to evaluate the success of its leadership programs for high potential talent and managers?

How does the company differentiate and customize its training content for technical versus non-technical roles within the leadership development framework?

Can you provide examples of how employee feedback has led to concrete adjustments in the leadership training or mentoring initiatives?

Overview: Employee feedback suggests that Powerschool Group blends formal training with informal, on-the-job development to foster leadership capabilities across different levels and functions.

• Formal Initiatives
– Mandatory Courses: Several employees noted that leadership-related courses are compulsory, indicating structured training modules covering topics such as communication, team management, and strategic thinking.
– Role-Specific Programs: While detailed program names are not widely disclosed, there appears to be differentiation between technical and non-technical leadership streams; for example, engineering roles emphasize technical depth alongside managerial insight.

• Mentorship and Informal Practices
– On-the-Job Mentoring: Employees repeatedly mention the benefits of daily interactions with approachable supervisors. As one employee recounted, "I want to thank the leadership for creating a work environment where employees are empowered to grow their skills and develop in their careers," highlighting an organic development culture.
– Open Feedback Culture: The leadership encourages regular feedback and idea-sharing, with many indicating that the environment is designed to nurture emerging leaders through direct coaching and hands-on problem solving.

• Differentiated Leadership Development
– Manager-Level: Mid-level managers benefit from focused managerial training and performance reviews that are embedded within daily operations. Departments like Customer Success reportedly rely on close, supportive direct management to cultivate leadership skills.

– Executive-Level: While less formalized, executive leadership development is understood to occur through strategic retreats, cross-departmental alignment sessions, and board-level interactions that reinforce company vision and direction.

– Departmental Nuances: New joiners in more technical departments are often told, "For new joiners, Powerschool is a launch pad filled with exciting opportunities," emphasizing an engineering-first culture with a strong emphasis on technical and leadership growth.

This overview thus illustrates Powerschool Group's multi-pronged approach to developing leadership capabilities, blending structured learning with the everyday mentorship and feedback that comes from a dynamic work environment.

How do employees rate the availability and effectiveness of leadership development programs and opportunities?

Neutral

⬣ Key Findings

Employees appreciate approachable local leaders and a supportive environment, especially within technical and innovation teams, which fosters hands-on development opportunities.

There is a significant gap due to the absence of structured mentorship and formalized career guidance, leading to inconsistencies in leadership development.

Frequent leadership turnover and micro-management practices contribute to uncertainty and hinder the rollout of coherent, long-term development initiatives.

Reports of siloed teams and negative feedback loops, including perceptions of being gaslit, indicate that employee concerns are not systematically addressed.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific components do employees believe should be incorporated into a more structured leadership development program?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is the high rate of leadership turnover affecting the consistency and effectiveness of current development initiatives?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What mechanisms can be implemented to ensure employee feedback is effectively integrated to improve leadership development programs?

Based on employee perceptions, leadership development opportunities and programs at PowerSchool Group receive mixed reviews. Some employees acknowledge a supportive culture with opportunities for growth, while others pinpoint gaps and inconsistencies that undermine development efforts.

Key Strengths: • Accessible Local Leaders: Several employees praise approachable managers and an open-mind leadership style that "truly cares about your long-term growth." In some departments—particularly within technical and innovation teams—employees find that the opportunity to learn and lead is evident through hands-on project assignments. • Empowering Environment: There are positive anecdotes of leadership providing a "supportive, safe space" where individual contributions are recognized and encouraged, boosting early career confidence.

Areas Needing Improvement: • Lack of Structured Programs: Multiple comments note a clear absence of formalized career guidance and leadership development. One employee remarked, "there is a lack of guidance and career development for all employees," indicating that while mentoring may exist at the team level, it is

neither systematically designed nor consistently applied across functions. • Inconsistency and Turnover: Rapid leadership turnover and micro management are frequently cited. This inconsistency in leadership style hampers the rollout of coherent, long-term development initiatives, leaving some employees feeling uncertain about their growth trajectories. • Siloing and Mixed Signals: Employees report siloed teams and shifting policies that dilute leadership continuity. As one comment underscores, "if you raise concerns, expect to be gaslit and ignored," suggesting that feedback loops essential to effective leadership programs are not robust.

Recommendations include developing structured mentoring programs, consistent performance criteria, and clearer progression pathways. Ensuring steady leadership continuity and regularly incorporating employee feedback may bridge current gaps and foster a genuinely empowering environment for future leaders at PowerSchool Group.

How are potential leaders identified and nurtured within the organization?

Neutral

⬣ Key Findings

In certain teams, potential leaders are identified based on demonstrated innovation, initiative, and strong performance, which fosters a culture of empowerment.

Nurturing practices, such as mentorship, cross-functional projects, and exposure to diverse challenges, are effective in some areas but not uniformly applied across the organization.

Employees report inconsistent identification processes and career growth opportunities, with internal politics and frequent restructuring impeding a systematic leadership development approach.

There is a clear need for a company-wide, transparent framework for leadership development that aligns with industry best practices in EdTech.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Could you provide specific examples from different departments that highlight the disparity in leadership identification and nurturing practices?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What concrete steps are being planned to address the inconsistency and internal political challenges affecting career growth opportunities?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does PowerSchool plan to develop and implement a systematic, transparent leadership development framework in line with industry best practices?

Based on employee perceptions, PowerSchool Group's approach to identifying and nurturing potential leaders is a mixed picture of strong initiatives in some teams and inconsistent practices overall. Key insights include:

• Identification
– Leaders are often recognized through demonstrated innovation, initiative, and performance. One employee noted, "I want to thank the leadership for creating a work environment where employees are empowered to grow their skills and develop in their careers," implying that individuals who actively contribute ideas and show commitment stand out.
– Informal identification occurs via peer recognition and direct supervision. Yet, some comments—such as claims of "no opportunity for career growth"—suggest that this recognition varies considerably across departments.

• Nurturing Practices
– In certain areas, emerging leaders benefit from supportive manager relationships, exposure to diverse

projects, and a culture that "fosters an open mindset, encouraging fresh ideas while maintaining a supportive and safe space."
– Initiatives like cross-functional work and flexible, innovative project assignments appear to create a dynamic environment for leadership development.

• Areas for Improvement
– Several employees highlighted inconsistent career paths and internal politics that impede clear advancement. Frequent restructuring and shifting priorities often mean that nurturing efforts are not uniformly applied across the organization.
– Compared to industry best practices in EdTech, where structured leadership development programs are common, PowerSchool could benefit from a more systematic and transparent process for identifying and advancing high-potential talent.

In summary, while certain teams at PowerSchool demonstrate proactive mentorship and empowerment, a more consistent, company-wide framework is needed to align talent identification with robust development opportunities.

How effective is leadership in communicating to all levels of the organization?

`Negative`

⚠️ **Key Findings**

While leadership is appreciated for its approachability and openness, the frequent leadership changes have resulted in inconsistent messaging across the organization.

Contradictory communication and a lack of transparent follow-through are eroding employee trust and creating confusion about strategic direction.

Communication challenges extend to departmental processes such as HR and internal advancement, compounding overall internal dissatisfaction.

⭐ **Action recommendations**

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What steps are being taken to stabilize leadership and ensure a consistent communication strategy that aligns with long-term organizational goals?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does leadership plan to improve transparency and follow-through, particularly when shifting strategies or initiatives?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What measures are in place to address the departmental communication gaps, especially within HR and internal advancement processes?

Powerschool Group's leadership communication receives mixed reviews from employees, with both strengths and critical gaps noted:

Key Strengths: • Approachability & Openness: Several employees appreciate leadership's accessibility. For example, one comment stated, "The leadership team at PowerSchool is approachable and genuinely open to feedback," suggesting that when engagement occurs, leaders are receptive and align decisions with the company's vision.
• Collaborative Tone: Some departments enjoy a supportive atmosphere where ideas are welcomed and fresh perspectives encouraged, contributing to an environment where innovation can flourish.

Areas for Improvement: • Inconsistency Due to Frequent Changes: Multiple voices cite "constant leadership change" as a fundamental challenge. New leaders often overhaul existing initiatives, leading to confusion and undermining long-term projects. This instability makes it difficult for employees to feel secure in the strategic direction communicated from the top.
• Lack of Transparent Follow-Through: Several employees mentioned issues around contradictory messaging. One employee noted, "Management would say one thing and then it appeared to do something else," highlighting that messages are prone to shift without clear rationale. This inconsistency erodes trust, particularly when concerns are raised—another employee cautioned, "If you raise concerns, expect to be gaslit and ignored."
• Departmental and Process Gaps: Communication challenges also surface in HR and internal advancement processes, where slow or ambiguous responses further complicate internal mobility and morale.

Competitive Context: While some competitor organizations have managed to build stable and transparent communication channels across all levels, Powerschool Group would benefit from reinforcing consistency in messaging, ensuring follow-through, and establishing clear, long-term strategic communication frameworks across departments.

In summary, Powerschool leadership has promising attributes in approachability and idea-sharing, though the lack of consistency and transparency in communications remains a significant challenge.

What methods and channels of communication are most frequently used by leaders?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

Leaders at PowerSchool use a variety of channels—emails, company-wide announcements, team meetings (both in-person and virtual), internal portals, HR channels, and one-on-one interactions—all intended to disseminate information.

While direct manager interactions are effective and appreciated for their clarity and personal touch, broader communications from senior leadership are marked by inconsistency and opacity.

The disconnect between high-level messaging and actual follow-through has eroded employee trust and led to skepticism about strategic decisions.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Can you provide a specific example where senior leadership's communication was inconsistent or opaque, and explain how this affected your trust in their decisions?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What improvements do you believe could enhance the clarity and consistency of communication from senior leadership across the organization?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How might the company establish more effective two-way communication channels to ensure feedback is both received and addressed adequately?

Key communication methods and their effectiveness at PowerSchool are mixed, as reflected in employee perceptions:

• Common Channels Used by Leaders
– Leaders primarily utilize emails, company-wide announcements, and team meetings (both in-person and virtual) to relay decisions and updates.
– Internal portals and HR channels are frequently leveraged for formal communication, while direct managers engage via one-on-one interactions.
– Regular check-ins and scheduled meetings are intended to foster transparency and discussion across teams.

• Assessment of Communication Effectiveness
– In some teams, direct communication from immediate managers is effective. One employee noted, "Direct management is awesome and truly cares about your well being," highlighting a positive impact at the local level.
– However, several comments indicate that high-level messaging tends to be inconsistent and opaque. As one individual remarked, "Management would say one thing and then it appeared to do something else... never giving you the true answer." This inconsistency breeds confusion and erodes trust.
– The lack of clear, two-way communication channels at the senior leadership level has driven employees to feel disconnected and skeptical about decisions, suggesting that channels meant to promote transparency often fall short.
– Compared to industry best practices—where leaders maintain consistent, clear, and iterative feedback loops—PowerSchool's methods seem uneven, particularly regarding conveying strategic changes and sensitive decisions.

In summary, while certain communication channels (like direct manager interactions) are effective and appreciated, overall employee sentiment indicates that the broader communication strategy suffers from inconsistent follow-through and insufficient transparency. Addressing these gaps could enhance trust, clarity, and employee engagement across all levels.

How does leadership communication style and effectiveness impact employee satisfaction, performance, and key business outcomes?

Negative

⬢ Key Findings

Inconsistent and ambiguous executive-level communication is creating confusion, false urgency, and misaligned priorities that directly impact productivity and operational efficiency.

Siloed teams and frequent acquisitions amplify the effects of conflicting directives, hindering effective cross-functional collaboration and long-term planning.

While direct managers foster positive engagement through clear communication, the disconnect at the executive level erodes trust and diminishes employee satisfaction.

A pronounced emphasis on revenue over genuine employee support leads to a lack of timely feedback and recognition, escalating stress and turnover.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: Could you describe specific instances where inconsistent executive messaging has directly led to operational setbacks or misalignment in project priorities?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can the effective communication practices observed at the manager level be adapted by executives to build more transparent and trust-based communication?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What strategies are being considered to balance revenue objectives with the need for genuine employee support and timely feedback?

Powerschool Group's leadership communication exerts a multifaceted impact across key business outcomes – productivity, operational efficiency, employee engagement, and satisfaction. Drawing primarily on employee perceptions, the following insights emerge:

• Productivity & Operational Efficiency
– Inconsistent messaging and evolving directives create confusion and false urgency. One employee noted, "a lot of times there is false sense of urgency created by the leadership team," resulting in misaligned priorities that hamper project execution.
– Siloed teams and frequent acquisitions drive inefficient processes, as conflicting directives hinder collaboration. Departments like tech support report challenges when leadership shifts priorities, impacting long-term planning and resource allocation.

• Employee Engagement
– Clear communication at the manager level often fosters a supportive and inclusive environment. Employees value managers who listen and are responsive, resulting in higher day-to-day engagement.
– Conversely, executive-level communications suffer from ambiguity. A recurring concern is, "Management would say one thing and then it appeared to do something else and when people asked questions, they got roundabout answers," which undermines trust and diminishes proactive involvement across teams.

• Employee Satisfaction
– While many employees appreciate the personal growth opportunities and good work-life balance enabled by direct managers, dissatisfaction rears its head when leaders appear to prioritize revenue over genuine support.
– Feedback indicates that leadership's failure to transparently address concerns yields disengagement. This divide is particularly apparent in departments where the lack of timely feedback and recognition compounds stress and turnover.

Overall, Powerschool Group's communication at the executive level significantly affects critical business outcomes. Enhancing consistency, transparency, and cross-functional collaboration could drive greater productivity, operational efficiency, and overall employee satisfaction.

How are key decisions made within the leadership team?

Negative

> ⬣ **Key Findings**
>
> Executive-level decision-making is highly centralized and opaque, leading to inconsistent directives and eroding employee trust due to perceived favoritism.
>
> Middle management is consistently praised for its supportive and receptive approach, providing a stark contrast to the top-down practices of senior leadership.
>
> There is a significant disconnect between the transparent, collaborative processes at the departmental level and the opaque strategies of the executive team, which undermines a unified strategy.
>
> Siloed operations and limited cross-department collaboration further compound the issues, preventing the establishment of a cohesive, company-wide decision-making culture.

> ⭐ **Action recommendations**
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific measures can be implemented to enhance transparency and consistency in executive-level decision-making?
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How can the positive collaborative practices of middle management be leveraged to foster more unified, company-wide decision-making?
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What strategies can be introduced to address the issues of favoritism and siloed communication in order to rebuild employee trust in senior leadership?

Key takeaways on decision-making at Powerschool Group reflect a dual dynamic across leadership tiers:

• Executive-Level Decision-Making
– Decisions are highly centralized and top-down. Frequent leadership changes and inconsistencies are noted by employees; one remarked, "Management would say one thing and then it appeared to do something else."
– Strategic choices, such as cost-cutting through offshoring and acquisitions, indicate a focus on financial imperatives rather than long-term employee or product development.
– This centralized approach has led to perceptions of favoritism and a lack of transparency, eroding trust among staff.

• Middle Management and Functional Decisions
– Direct managers are frequently praised for being supportive and receptive. An employee stated, "Direct management is awesome and truly cares about your well being," highlighting pockets of effective, collaborative decision-making.
– At the departmental level, decisions seem more decentralized, with managers actively engaging teams and considering employee input. However, this is counterbalanced by silos that inhibit broader consensus-building across functions.

• Collaboration and Consensus
– While some teams operate with collaborative intent, overall decision-making remains uneven. Cross-department collaboration is hampered by "very distinct lines between employee groups," diminishing the potential for unified strategic direction.
– The contrast between receptive middle management and the opaque, inconsistent practices of senior executives underscores a gap that, if closed, could enhance both innovation and employee commitment.

For enhanced effectiveness, Powerschool Group might focus on increasing transparency at the executive level and fostering interdepartmental collaboration. Aligning top-down strategies with the positive, consultative practices seen in middle management could bridge the current disconnect and build a more cohesive decision-making culture.

How are decision-making processes perceived by employees?

Negative

⬣ Key Findings

Employees perceive decision-making as ambiguous and inconsistent, leading to widespread uncertainty about company priorities and strategies.

Frontline staff feel excluded from the decision-making process, with feedback often ignored or dismissed, resulting in feelings of being gaslit.

There is a disconnect between supportive mid-level managers and detached senior leadership, with the latter making decisions that negatively affect product development and overall morale.

Department-specific issues, such as overly complex strategies in product/technical teams and rigid process mandates in support functions, are exacerbating stress and talent retention challenges.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific instances can you detail where decision-making ambiguity clearly impacted employee engagement or project outcomes?

How are current efforts by mid-level managers addressing frontline concerns, and what feedback have they received regarding this support?

What initiatives or structural changes are being considered to make the decision-making process more inclusive and transparent for all departments?

Below is a focused analysis based on employee perceptions specific to PowerSchool Group:

• Overall Ambiguity and Inconsistency
– Many employees feel that decision-making lacks clarity, creating a sense of uncertainty. One employee noted, "Management never once truly praised enrollment for their work," underscoring the disconnect between leadership actions and frontline recognition.
– Frequent leadership changes and shifting priorities are common complaints, with decisions seeming ad hoc rather than strategically driven.

• Non-Leadership Perspective
– Frontline employees describe decision-making as top-down and, at times, dismissive of their input. For example, one employee stated, "If you raise concerns, expect to be gaslit and ignored," reflecting feelings that employee feedback is neither sought nor valued.
– Micro-management is prevalent in many teams, leading to stress and reduced autonomy. This has reportedly resulted in frustration and unclear career development paths.

• Leadership Differentiation
– Mid-level managers exhibit a mixed record; some are praised for being supportive and empowering, with comments like "Direct management is awesome and truly cares," while others are seen as mere figureheads for client appeasement, leaving little time for actual team engagement.
– Executives are often perceived as disconnected from day-to-day realities. Comments such as "Executives

are making decisions that cripple product development" highlight a view that executive decisions are profit-driven, with insufficient consideration for operational challenges and employee morale.

• Departmental Variations and Impact
– Product and technical teams face undefined strategies and overly complex product lines, leading to frustration over direction and innovation.
– Support functions, by contrast, suffer from excessive process mandates and limited decision latitude, which further strains workplace satisfaction.
– Overall, these perceptions contribute to elevated stress levels, reduced morale, and challenges in retaining top talent.

This dichotomy between supportive managers and distant senior leadership, combined with inconsistent communication, is a critical factor affecting employee engagement and performance at PowerSchool Group.

Evaluate change management programs effectiveness at the company.

Negative

⬡ Key Findings

Frequent leadership turnover and shifting strategic priorities are disrupting change management initiatives, leading to uncertainty in long-term planning.

Inconsistencies at the mid-management level result in disparate employee experiences, with some teams benefiting from supportive leadership while others face inflexible practices.

Rapid acquisitions and continuous process shifts are causing change initiatives to be abandoned or reconfigured before they mature.

The offshoring of key functions is undermining employee trust and further contributing to an unstable change management environment.

★ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What measures are being taken to reduce leadership turnover and establish a more consistent strategic direction for change?

How is the company addressing the disparities in managerial practices across departments, especially regarding flexibility and employee support after life events?

What steps are planned to ensure that rapid acquisitions and process shifts lead to successful change initiatives rather than abandoned projects?

• Leadership Instability & Shifting Priorities
– Employee feedback consistently notes that change management at PowerSchool Group suffers from frequent leadership turnover and shifting strategic priorities. One employee stated, "The leadership only cares about numbers," highlighting a disconnect where executives prioritize metrics over employee development. This constant executive churn disrupts initiatives before they mature, breeding uncertainty and diminishing long-term vision.

• Managerial Execution & Departmental Disparities
– At the mid-management level, experiences vary markedly. While some teams report supportive supervisors —"Direct management is awesome and truly cares about your well being"—others face inflexible leadership, as one employee reflected: "I did not get much flexibility after my maternity due to my manager." This suggests that while certain units effectively guide employees through change, inconsistencies across departments

undermine overall organizational cohesion.
– Additionally, many managers appear more focused on client management than on nurturing team growth, further straining change initiatives that would benefit from a more people-centric approach.

• Change Initiatives & Risk Management
– Rapid acquisitions and frequent process shifts have created a landscape where new initiatives often fail to achieve their intended impact. In many cases, projects are abandoned or reconfigured due to leadership changes before employees can fully engage and benefit.
– The strategy of offshoring key functions intensifies these challenges, eroding employee trust and raising concerns about long-term stability.

Overall, while pockets of effective leadership exist at the managerial level, the overarching approach to change at PowerSchool Group is marred by unstable executive guidance, inconsistent managerial practices, and reactive risk management. Strengthening continuity in leadership and adopting a clear, employee-focused change strategy could significantly improve organizational resilience and talent retention.

If this company were to face a major crisis next week, how would it fare?

Negative

⬡ Key Findings

The company suffers from leadership instability and a lack of a cohesive strategic vision, as evidenced by frequent leadership turnovers and perceptions that the company is 'making it up as they go.'

Operational readiness is hampered by resistance to new technology, a legacy mindset, and unclear, siloed processes that would likely delay a coordinated response during a crisis.

Cultural issues, including toxic internal politics, low employee morale, and negative views on senior management (e.g., being described as a 'pack of buffoons'), further weaken the crisis response capability.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps is the company considering to stabilize its leadership and establish a clear strategic vision ahead of any potential crisis?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the company plan to address its operational inefficiencies, such as resistance to new technology and siloed processes, to ensure agility during emergencies?

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What initiatives are being implemented to improve employee trust and resolve internal conflicts, so that staff can effectively support crisis management efforts?

Key Observations in a Crisis Scenario:

• Leadership & Strategic Direction
– Employees frequently note that the company lacks a cohesive vision. One quotes, "There is no big picture plan, they are making it up as they go," underscoring concerns about inconsistent strategic direction.
– Frequent changes at the senior level—including multiple leadership turnovers and restructuring—suggest that a crisis would likely expose further fragmentation and delay decisive action.

• Operational Readiness & Execution
– Several comments indicate resistance to adopting new technology and struggling with a legacy mindset. This

could hamper rapid adaptation when swift, innovative responses are required.
– Inconsistent processes and internal silos, as reflected in employee concerns about "toxic politics" and unclear roles, may lead to delays in mobilizing a unified crisis response.

• Culture & Employee Engagement
– While many employees appreciate a supportive work environment and opportunities to learn, these positives are undermined by perceptions that "High level management is a pack of buffoons." Such sentiments suggest that frontline dedication may not translate into effective crisis management if leadership fails to provide clear guidance.
– Ongoing issues with job security, offshoring, and favoritism could further erode morale during periods of heightened uncertainty.

Conclusion:
Despite a strong base of dedicated team members, PowerSchool Group's deep-rooted leadership instability and operational inefficiencies make it less resilient in a major crisis. The workforce's positive spirit might be overwhelmed by a lack of clear, stable direction. To strengthen crisis response, immediate efforts to consolidate leadership, streamline operations, and establish transparent, cohesive strategic planning would be essential.

How well does leadership model the target culture to develop a unified and cohesive culture in the company?

`Negative`

> ⬣ **Key Findings**
>
> The leadership exhibits a dual impact, where examples of empowerment and employee development are overshadowed by toxic behaviors such as retaliation against dissenting voices.
>
> Frequent leadership turnover and shifting priorities create unclear role expectations, leading to uncertainty and erosion of employee trust and retention.
>
> Strategic decisions like aggressive offshoring fuel employee insecurity and the perception that profit is prioritized over people, destabilizing the company culture.
>
> There is a clear need for consistent, transparent communication and follow-through on commitments to rebuild a unified and cohesive organizational culture.

> ⭐ **Action recommendations**
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How is leadership addressing the reported inconsistencies and toxic behaviors to rebuild employee trust?
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific steps are being taken to reduce frequent leadership turnover and clarify role expectations?
>
> Follow-up questions to ask Annie: How does the company plan to balance cost-driven decisions like offshoring with initiatives aimed at enhancing employee retention and cohesive culture?

• Dual Impact on Culture:

- Many employees note both empowerment and toxicity stemming from leadership. One employee remarked, "I want to thank the leadership for creating a work environment where employees are empowered to grow their skills and develop in their careers," reflecting instances where leaders champion employee development and open communication. Conversely, another employee observed a "toxic culture where management retaliates against employees who speak up," highlighting leadership behaviors that undermine trust.

• Inconsistency and Frequent Turnover:

- Multiple reports describe constant leadership changes and unclear role expectations. Frequent restructuring and shifting priorities create uncertainty, eroding employee confidence and contributing to high turnover. Leadership inconsistency undercuts long-term strategic initiatives, making it challenging to sustain a unified company culture.

• Strategic Decisions and Offshoring Concerns:

- Critical strategic decisions—such as aggressively offshoring many US-based roles—have fueled feelings of insecurity and devalued employee contributions. This approach not only disrupts team dynamics but also creates a perception that profit is prioritized over people, further straining morale and long-term loyalty.

• Recommendations for Positive Cultural Impact:

- Reinforce transparent, consistent communication across all leadership levels.

- Establish clear expectations and follow-through on commitments to build trust.

- Balance cost-driven decisions like offshoring with robust talent retention practices to secure a supportive and stable work environment.

In summary, while some leaders at PowerSchool have successfully fostered a supportive and growth-oriented culture, the overall influence of leadership is hampered by inconsistencies, toxic behaviors, and strategic decisions that contribute to instability. Addressing these issues through consistent leadership practices and employee-centric policies could realign the company culture with its potential for innovation and collaboration.

What are the most important areas and activities where leadership could improve to better support a healthy corporate culture?

Negative

⬢ Key Findings

Executive leadership lacks a clear long-term strategic vision and transparent communication, as evidenced by strong negative feedback regarding the CEO's competence.

Middle management is perceived to engage in counterproductive micromanagement and fails to authentically support employee development, leading to decreased morale.

Siloed departmental structures and shifting priorities are hindering cross-functional collaboration and innovation, negatively affecting employee engagement.

⭐ Action recommendations

Follow-up questions to ask Annie: What specific changes in executive-level communication and strategy would most effectively rebuild employee trust?

How might middle management adjust its approach to reduce micromanagement and better support career development and team morale?

In what ways can the company break down departmental silos to improve collaboration and ensure that shifting priorities do not stifle innovation?

Key areas for leadership improvement at Powerschool Group include enhancing transparency at the executive level, empowering middle management, and improving cross-department collaboration:

• Executive Leadership

- Several employees express concern over the absence of a clear, long-term strategic vision. One staff member remarked, "The CEO is the most terrible, uninformed and incompetent CEO ever," highlighting a disconnect between executive decisions and frontline realities.

- A more transparent communication strategy that clearly outlines goals and consistently aligns with operational priorities can rebuild trust and guide the organization more effectively.

• Middle Management

- Many employees report issues with micromanagement and a lack of authentic support. For instance, one employee stated, "Managers do not manage employees, they manage clients." This suggests that managers may be prioritizing external pressures over internal team development.

- Effective middle managers should focus on mentoring, recognizing accomplishments, and providing well-defined paths for career advancement, rather than relying on counterproductive micro-level controls.

- Addressing favoritism and ensuring that concerns are acknowledged—rather than being "gaslit and ignored"—can foster a more supportive and cohesive team culture.

• Departmental & Functional Alignment

- Siloed departments and shifting priorities have stifled product innovation and employee engagement. Aligning leadership practices across various functions is essential to break down these silos and enhance collaboration.

- Leadership across departments should standardize processes and invest in talent retention initiatives, especially given the concerns about offshoring roles and inconsistent HR practices.

In summary, Powerschool Group's leadership could significantly benefit from a renewed focus on clear, consistent strategic communication at the executive level and more empathetic, supportive management at the middle level. These changes would not only strengthen employee morale but also drive a healthier, more collaborative corporate culture.