



1 + 3 Method™

Helping Teams Celebrate What Works
and Improve What Matters Most





“ Organisations today are not short of data. Employee surveys, feedback tools and insight platforms provide more visibility than ever into how people are feeling, where pressure exists and what needs to improve.

In many cases, People Leaders have more insight than at any point in the past.

And yet, a familiar challenge persists: Insight is not consistently turning into action.

Employee Engagement declines despite good intentions. Priorities multiply, often faster than they can be delivered. Managers, already stretched, find themselves reacting rather than leading. Over time, the gap between understanding and execution begins to widen.

The issue is not a lack of information. It is the absence of a simple, practical and psychologically informed way to turn that information into focused, meaningful progress.

The 1 + 3 Method™ exists to address that gap.

It offers a clear and human approach that enables teams to begin from a position of strength, focus on what matters most and take ownership of improvement. When teams can confidently answer the questions *‘What are we doing well?’* and *‘What three opportunities to improve will make the biggest difference?’*, progress becomes not only possible, but sustainable.”

Jonathan Austin

Founder & CEO, Best Companies

The Strategic Imperative: Why Insight Alone Is Not Enough

For insight to translate into meaningful improvement, organisations need more than visibility. They need **clarity, focus, ownership and a structure that feels achievable** in the context of already demanding roles.

This challenge has been intensified by several structural shifts.

Hybrid working has reduced the informal alignment that once happened naturally. Managers, who remain the primary lens through which employees experience the organisation, are under increasing pressure and often lack the time and support to lead effectively. **Organisational Clarity** is not always consistently understood, making it harder for individuals to connect their work to a wider purpose.

At the same time, change fatigue has become a genuine barrier, with teams expected to absorb multiple competing priorities.

The result is an increasingly common pattern: organisations rich in insight, but limited in their ability to execute against it.

→ Why Most Approaches to Engagement Fall Short

Too often, organisations attempt to address everything at once. Long lists of improvement areas are generated, each of which may be valid, but collectively they create cognitive overload. **Teams are left without a clear sense of where to focus**, and as a result, progress slows or stalls entirely.

In addition, conversations about improvement frequently begin with what is not working. While logical, this can unintentionally trigger a defensive response, limiting openness and reducing the quality of discussion.

Action planning is also commonly driven from the top down. Initiatives are defined centrally and cascaded to teams, which can reduce ownership and disconnect actions from the realities of day-to-day work.

The result is a familiar and frustrating outcome: strong insight, good intent, but limited and inconsistent progress.

This is not a failure of effort.

It is a failure of approach.





The 1 + 3 Method™ A Simpler, More Effective Approach

The 1 + 3 Method™ is designed to work with human behaviour rather than against it.

At its core, the method enables teams to identify **1 Area to Celebrate** and **3 Opportunities to Improve**.

While simple in structure, it is grounded in behavioural science and designed to make improvement feel both achievable and owned.

By starting with what is working well, the method creates a sense of **safety and confidence**. By limiting focus to three opportunities to improve, it keeps effort **concentrated and manageable**. By enabling teams to define how to respond to the insight, it builds **genuine ownership**.

The method deliberately focuses on areas within a team's sphere of influence, ensuring that improvement discussions remain practical, constructive and actionable.

Individually, these elements are powerful. Together, they create the conditions for sustained progress.

→ What the 1 + 3 Method™ Looks Like in Practice

In practice, the method is both simple and powerful.

Rather than beginning with a list of problems, teams start by focusing on **1 Area to Celebrate**, identified through their b-Heard survey results. Using a combination of survey insight and a structured algorithm, the strongest performing Employee Engagement factor is selected as the starting point.

This is calculated by looking at your highest scoring factor, the factor that has seen the greatest improvement and the factor that has the best performance versus the stretch average. **This ensures that the conversation is grounded in real data, while also creating an immediate sense of Psychological Safety by recognising what is already working well.**

From there, teams focus on **3 Opportunities to Improve**, again identified through the survey data and algorithm. These represent the areas where improvement is most likely to have a meaningful impact on **Employee Engagement**.

While the data determines the focus, the team plays a critical role in shaping what happens next. The conversation moves from *'What does the data tell us?'* to *'What does this mean for us, and what should we do about it?'*

For example, a customer service team might see that 'My Team' is identified as their strongest factor to celebrate, reflecting high levels of trust and collaboration. Their **3 Opportunities to Improve** may then be drawn from factors such as 'My Company' (understanding of direction and purpose), 'Personal Growth' (development opportunities) or 'Wellbeing' (managing workload more effectively).

Importantly, the method focuses teams on areas they can directly influence. Factors such as 'My Manager', 'Leadership' and 'Fair Deal' are critical to overall **Employee Engagement**, but are typically addressed by leadership at an organisational-level rather than team-level workshops. This ensures that discussions remain **constructive, relevant and within the team's control**.

Within a relatively short period of time, the team moves from insight to clarity, and from clarity to action. The simplicity of the approach enables **momentum to build quickly**, while the shared ownership ensures that **progress is sustained**.



The Science Behind the 1 + 3 Method™

The strength of the **1 + 3 Method™** lies not just in its simplicity, but in the depth of research that underpins it. It draws on established principles from psychology, neuroscience and organisational development, all of which point to a consistent truth: **people change most effectively when they feel safe, focused and involved**.

The table on the following page summarises the core principles behind the method and their relevance in practice.

→ Research Foundations of the 1 + 3 Method™

Principle	What Research Shows	Key Contributors	Why It Matters for the 1 + 3 Method™
Psychological Safety	People are more willing to contribute, challenge and take ownership when they feel safe from judgement	<i>"People will not take risks if they fear being punished for mistakes."</i> Amy Edmondson , Psychological Safety and Learning Behaviour in Work Teams	Starting with 1 Area to Celebrate reduces threat and creates the conditions for honest dialogue
Threat vs Reward Response	The brain moves away from threat and toward reward, influencing openness to change	<i>"When the brain detects threat, it moves away; when it detects reward, it moves toward."</i> Dr David Rock , Director of the Neuro Leadership Institute	Beginning with 1 Area to Celebrate activates a reward state and increases engagement
Positive Emotion	Positive emotional states broaden thinking and increase problem-solving capacity	<i>"Positive emotions expand people's ideas about possible actions."</i> Barbara Fredrickson , Broaden-and-Build Theory	Celebration expands the team's ability to engage constructively with improvement
Cognitive Load	Too many priorities overwhelm working memory and reduce execution	<i>"The mind can handle only a very limited amount of information at one time."</i> John Sweller , Theory of Cognitive Load	Limiting focus to 3 Opportunities to Improve increases clarity and follow-through
Structural Tension	Motivation increases when people see the gap between current reality and a desired future	<i>"People are creative when they know where they want to go and where they are now."</i> Robert Fritz , The Path of Least Resistance	Clear, focused Opportunities to improve create momentum
Intrinsic Motivation & Ownership	People are more committed to what they help create	<i>"Human beings have a natural desire to be autonomous, competent and connected."</i> Edward Deci & Richard Ryan , Self-Determination Theory	Team-owned Opportunities to improve drive sustained change

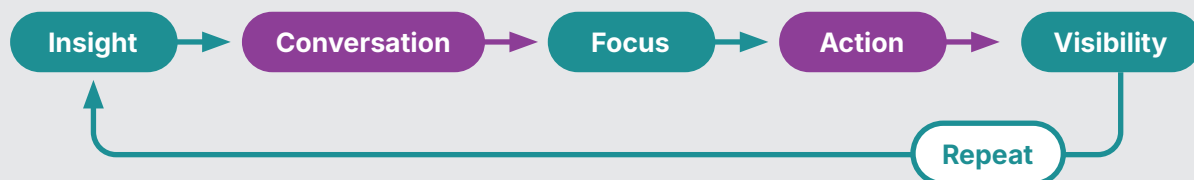
Taken together, these principles explain why the method works so consistently in practice.

It is not simply a framework for discussion, but a way of **creating the psychological conditions required for meaningful and sustained improvement.**

The 1 + 3 Method™ as Part of a System

While the method itself is simple, its impact is significantly amplified when embedded within a broader approach to **Organisational Health**.

At its most effective, this follows a clear and repeatable cycle:



Insight is generated through employee feedback. Conversation happens within teams. Focus is created through the **1 + 3 Method™**. Action is owned locally, while visibility is enabled through our **Elevate** platform, allowing leaders to see how teams are responding and where progress is being made.

Over time, this creates a rhythm of continuous improvement that is both structured and sustainable.

→ Driving Organisational Health Through Clarity and Leadership

Ultimately, the **1 + 3 Method™** is not an isolated tool, but part of a broader system for strengthening **Organisational Health**.

Healthy organisations are characterised by their ability to **adapt**, **align** and **sustain performance under pressure**. At the heart of this are two critical drivers.

The first is **Organisational Clarity**: Ensuring that people understand why the organisation exists, where it is going and how their role contributes to that direction.

The second is **People Leadership**: The capability of managers to translate insight into meaningful, day-to-day action.

When these elements are strong, **Employee Engagement** improves naturally. When they are weak, even the best data struggles to create impact.



Conclusion

Organisations today do not need more data. **They need better ways to act on it.**

The **1 + 3 Method™** provides a simple, human and evidence-based approach to **cutting through complexity, focusing effort where it matters most** and **building genuine ownership within teams.**

It works because it reflects how people actually respond to feedback, change and challenge.

→ What Next?

The **1 + 3 Method™** is a core component of the **Best Companies** experience, designed to ensure your survey data translates into real-world change.

To take the next step, we can work with you to integrate this framework into your wider **Employee Engagement strategy.** Whether through our **Elevate** platform or targeted **People Leadership development,** we provide the tools and visibility needed to make **1 Area to Celebrate** and **3 Opportunities to Improve** a natural rhythm within your organisation.

Insight only creates value when it leads to action.

Let's start the conversation.





Helping make the world a better workplace

For over 25 years, Best Companies has been Recognising and Accrediting organisations as the UK's leading authority on **Organisational Health**.

With our proven 8-Factor Methodology, we help **Measure** and **Improve** how employees feel about their working lives, supporting organisations to become better places to work, boosting performance, productivity and profitability.

We provide actionable insights that enable **People Leaders** and Senior HR teams to identify opportunities for growth and drive meaningful change, supported by next-generation tools such as **Elevate**.

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and performance? www.b.co.uk**

