

How Pendo's CEO uses 15Five To Create Greater Organizational Transparency

ABOUT

Pendo is a product cloud that provides user insight, user guidance and user communication for digital product teams and application owners. With Pendo, these product teams can understand product usage, collect feedback, measure NPS, onboard users, and announce new features in app—all without requiring engineering resources.

Founded in 2013 in the heart of Raleigh, Pendo has raised \$106 million and counts 850 customers, including Zendesk, Salesforce, Coupa, Marketo, BMC, and Sprinklr. Pendo is also the producer of ProductCraft, a destination editorial site with insights by and for product leaders; and Pedomonium, a premier product conference.



INDUSTRY

Product analytics/product cloud

BENEFITS

- Improved CEO visibility among the whole organization
- Early warning indicator for internal roadblocks and product issues
- Greater communication levels between employees and leadership
- Insightful data gathered from employee 15Fives

Pendo is on a mission to improve the world's experiences with software, and with each passing day, they grow closer to achieving it. With over 1,000 customers, including tech giants like Salesforce and Okta, Pendo continually tracks 1.5 billion user actions a day, and improves the product experience for 80 million users every month.

In 2017, Pendo hit a hyper-growth phase. With Series B funding, three new offices, a total of 90 employees, and the lofty goal to quintuple their headcount over the next few years, CEO, Todd Olson wanted to gain better control over the direction of the company culture. Before the expansion into Pendo's new offices, he was able

to gather a sense of the workplace environment by walking through the space and taking time to speak with each employee. With a newly dispersed team, this tactic was no longer practical.

During this stage of the company, big management transitions were also at play as nine new senior leaders were brought on, from the VP level to the C-suite. These leadership shifts unveiled a gap in communication from top-to-bottom, and vice versa. Olson committed to finding a strategic approach to better unify his teams and design an intentional employee experience.



A CEO's key to greater visibility

Olson discovered 15Five and introduced it to his company the same year. His momentum was propelled into the onboarding phase, and he successfully gained full employee buy-in. Olsen did this through his personal adoption of the software, and those within the company organically followed suit.

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What's helped is that I've been really passionate about [15Five]. I made the decision to bring it in — and my title helped with the spreading of it, but I use it and lead by example. I submit my 15Five every week, and I review each of my team members' 15Fives every week.”



TODD OLSON
CEO

Olson sets a high bar for employee feedback and each of his employees are expected to fill out their own 15Five each week. While employee reports are shared with direct managers, Olson's reports are shared with the entire company. He uses this tactic to model Pendo's core value around transparency. Olson has found this to be an authentic way to connect directly with each employee, and he invites everyone within the organization to both review and comment on his 15Five.

BENEFITS OF FILLING OUT 15FIVE'S AS A CEO

- If consistent, this is a great way for leaders to continually hold themselves accountable.
- Many CEOs become less and less visible as the company grows. This is a way to maintain consistent visibility and regularly share updates with employees.
- Voice concerns by being honest and direct, just as any employee is expected to be.
- Share key focuses so others are informed and can better adjust their focus accordingly.
- This is a wonderful and alternative way to share wins and appreciations with the whole organization.



Getting ahead of roadblocks

Pendo uses 15Five as an effective way to gather internal data through the Custom Reports feature. This allows businesses to surface specific questions that will prompt each employee to give an open ended answer, and is especially useful when issues arise that must be raised quickly.

For example, the Pendo leadership team regularly analyzes trends that occur by examining each weekly 15Five. On Tuesdays, their VP of People Ops, Leslie Guckert-Neitzel brings three common topics surfaced through the software.

One week during the leadership meeting, the team became aware of a trend regarding their product. While many of the bug charts that determine how well Pendo's software is performing showed clear signs of any defects, there was an overall sense among the organization that there may be a hidden quality issue yet to be addressed.

Instead of following the direction of the bug charts for their software, they followed their instinct and elevated the concern in the following week's 15Five by asking employees directly. The response from employees validated the concern, and they were able to act quickly.

Had there been a decision solely on the original report, no roadblocks would have been detected in a timely manner, but through the quick turnaround of answers, 15Five was able to act as an early warning indicator.

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According to our VC's, our retention is 5x higher than most companies they often see, especially in terms of the Bay Area. Our attraction has been between 2-3% since we've started (compared to the average 10%), and sometimes it goes lower.”

TODD OLSON
CEO

Although the issue remained hidden for a time, the significance of its impact became apparent after it was surfaced in the app. This internal data contributed to an agile decision that led to necessary product changes.

Pendo has committed to adding 600 jobs over the next five years, and with the help of 15five, will continue surfacing feedback and remain hyper-focused on people and culture.



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I see 15Five as a strategic way to get a good sense of the pulse.”

TODD OLSON

CEO

According to Olson, 15Five is “an important part of our culture,” and he admits to gaining the most value from the solution by taking immediate action after reading each report.

“I see 15Five as a strategic way to get a good sense of the pulse. The effect of our change is much faster than waiting on the lagging indicators to occur.”



About 15Five

15Five is a continuous performance management solution that helps employees grow and develop, in just 15 minutes each week. Through a lightweight weekly check-in, 15Five delivers everything a manager needs to impact employee performance, including continuous feedback, objectives (OKR) tracking, recognition, 1-on-1s, and 360° reviews.

To learn more, visit www.15Five.com