**Employee Opinion Surveys: Taking the pulse of your workforce**

Managing employee perception and expectations is a key people management priority. Perception is reality for employees. Understanding employees’ perception is critical to define how to communicate, manage and anticipate necessary changes to make an organization better.

One of the best tools to use to assess employees’ perception of the work environment and better understand employee morale is to conduct an Employee Opinion Survey.

When conducting an Employee Opinion Survey, keep the following best practices in mind:

1. **Frequency:** We suggest conducting an annual employee opinion survey to check the pulse of employee morale. If you do it more often than this, it may not give enough time to implement needed changes. If surveys are further apart than one-year, you may lose touch with the pulse of employee morale.

2. **Confidentiality:** It is crucial that employees feel as though their responses will be anonymous. Without the feeling of security, they will not fully express potential concerns. Using an independent third party to conduct the survey is the best way to obtain open, honest, candid feedback without risk to employees that confidentiality will be violated or they will be narrowed out for corrective action.

3. **Content:** Obtain information for all key employee areas and concerns such as: communications, teamwork, recognition, feedback, pay, benefits, leadership, equity etc.

4. **Question Formats:** Use both multiple choice scoring/ranking information and essay questions which give employees the opportunity to leave comments. This gives you both statistics and comments to work with. An example of a question might include your making a statement like: “My supervisor has given me feedback about my performance within the last 6 months”. Then, the employee would indicate his or her level of agreement: “Strongly Agrees, Agrees, Disagrees, or Strongly Disagrees.”

5. **Results:** Once you have the preliminary survey information from employees, as a management group, identify two or three key focus areas that will have the greatest impact for the organization and are high areas of concern for employees. Organizations error when they try to focus on too many areas at once.

6. **Share the Information:** Communicate the survey results to your staff being open and honest with the data. Let employees know the key focus areas and why they were selected. Also, inform employees that many of them will be asked to participate further in helping the organization get to the root causes of problems in the defined focus areas and to develop possible solutions. It is a good idea to release the data to all managers and supervisors in advance of sharing result with employees so they are not blind-sided.

7. **Employee Participation:** Involving representative employees from all areas helps you define root causes of the key focus areas of concern and obtain optimal solutions in how best to solve the challenges. Allowing employees to be part of the solution creates employee ownership, gets their buy-in, shows
them you are listening and helps to prevent rumor spreading or negativity.

8. **Action Items:** Once the focus teams define the problems and give recommendations, find items that can be implemented immediately and help employees see the connection between their feedback and the organization listening and taking action. Make sure that the focus team understands that they are making recommendations that must be approved by management. When possible, allow the focus team to present their ideas to the management team for consideration. It is important to select some of their ideas to implement so they feel that their effort was worthwhile and the company is listening. For ideas that cannot be implemented, provide an explanation.

9. **Implementation:** Work on the key areas over the year and any other easy to implement items identified in the survey. Find opportunities to communicate the changes made and subtly show the connection between employees expressing their options in the survey and how it brought about the change. This shows employees that they have a voice in the organization and encourages them to continue to look for opportunities to bring about change and improvements.

10. **Repetition:** The following year, do the survey again using a similar process to continually work toward improving your work environment, employee morale and engagement.

The system outlined is a clear cut way to assess opportunities for improvement and find new ways to boost morale and impact employee engagement.

Employee engagement significantly increases in work environments where morale is high, employees are satisfied with their job and they feel appreciated. Strong employee morale and engagement, results in high productivity and business results.

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**Employee Opinion Survey Assistance**

Contact HR Service for assistance with your employee opinion surveys or to conduct a leader effectiveness survey.

Call or E-mail for a free consultation at: (801) 685-8400 or Ken@hrs Serviceinc.com. Visit us on-line at: www.hrserviceinc.com