Employee Surveys as a Management Tool

Dr. Mark Ellickson
Opinion Research Specialists, LLC
Employee Surveys are Used to Improve Organizational Effectiveness

Key Indicators

Job Satisfaction & Commitment

Organizational Productivity & Effectiveness
Key Indicators

Work place factors that strongly influence employee job satisfaction & commitment
Key Indicators

- Work environment (safety, tools and equipment, space, temperature, etc.)
- Co-workers, immediate supervisor, department head
- Workload distribution
Key Indicators

- Pay and benefits
- Promotional opportunities
- Training opportunities
- Performance appraisal
- Communications
Key Indicators

Utilization of job skills

Work unit morale

Procedural fairness

Workplace stress
Key Indicators

- Arranged in a hierarchy similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
- Lower level needs must be met before higher level needs
Key Indicator Hierarchy

- Work/Life Harmony
- Growth Opportunities
- Affiliation
- Pay & Benefits
- Safety & Security
Key Indicator Hierarchy

Employees must feel physically safe in their work environment & free from harassment & intimidation

Safety & Security
Key Indicator Hierarchy

Employees must perceive their pay/benefits as equitable relative to their job demands
Key Indicator Hierarchy

Employees must feel a sense of belonging, teamwork, pride in their work, & share the City’s vision & mission
Key Indicator Hierarchy

Employees must feel that there are sufficient opportunities for individual and professional growth through skill development, education, & career advancement.

Growth Opportunities
Key Indicator Hierarchy

Employees must feel that there is a balance between work & personal life—child care, flex-time, wellness programs, etc.

Work/Life Harmony
Job Satisfaction

Employee commitment & retention

Job performance & motivation

Physical health & psychological well-being

Organizational Productivity & Effectiveness
Importance of Monitoring Key Indicators Over Time

- Diagnoses problem areas before they escalate out of control—proactive vs. reactive
- Maintains open communication channels & sends the message that city officials are concerned about employee needs
Steps in the Survey Process

1. Planning
2. Sampling
3. Questionnaire Design
4. Analysis & Writing
5. Communicating Results
Planning

1. Define Primary Objectives of the Study

   - Key Indicators
   - One-Time Only Questions
   - Demographic Questions
Planning

Demographics

- Union Status
- Departmental Classification
- Employment Status
- Gender
- Years of City Service
- Supervisory Status
- Age
Planning

1. Define primary objectives of the study
2. Determine who collects the data

In-House vs. Consultant
Consultant

- Ensures Confidentiality & Anonymity
- Higher Response Rate
- Greater Objectivity
- Adds Credibility & Professionalism
- More Expensive
Planning

1. Define primary objectives of the study
2. Determine who collects the data
3. Determine method of data collection

Mail Vs. On-Site
# Mail vs. On-Site

## Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>On-Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>Medium–High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Moderately High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling Ease</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Moderate–Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Time</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Less Expensive</td>
<td>More Expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>More Dept. Specific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning

1. Define primary objectives of the study
2. Determine who collects the data
3. Determine method of data collection
4. Develop a realistic time table
**Develop a Realistic Timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Development</th>
<th>2–4 Weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Initial employee survey or part of an on-going survey cycle?

- Includes printing
Develop a Realistic Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Development</td>
<td>2–4 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Implementation*</td>
<td>1–6 Weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mail vs. On-Site Survey

*Depends on # employees if on-site
Develop a Realistic Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Development</td>
<td>2–4 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Implementation</td>
<td>1–5 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Analysis &amp; Report</td>
<td>1–3 Weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complexity of analysis & report
Develop a Realistic Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Development</td>
<td>2–4 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Implementation</td>
<td>1–5 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Analysis &amp; Report</td>
<td>1–3 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4–12 Weeks</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sampling vs. Sample

Census vs. Sample

Sample only if census is too costly &/or logistically impossible.
Sampling

Full-Time vs. Part-Time

Contract
Seasonal
Temporary
Questionnaire Design

1. Questionnaire Layout

- Visually appealing
- Should not be too long—not over 8 pages
- Refrain from asking “nice to know” questions
- Include cover letter
Cover Letter

- Describes the purpose of the survey
- Identifies improvements & changes based on previous survey findings
- Provides instructions for completing & returning the survey
Cover Letter

Assures confidentiality & anonymity

- Survey is being administered by an independent agency
- No city employee allowed access to questionnaires
- Written comments typed
- Mailed directly to independent agency, postage-paid
Cover Letter

Name & phone number of contact person

Signed by a city official—city manager, mayor, etc.
Questionnaire Design

2. Questionnaire Content

- Key Indicators for Trend Analyses
- One-Time Only Quest. — Current Issues
- Demographic Questions
- Open vs. Closed-ended Questions
3. Questionnaire Flow

Importance of first set of questions

- Tied closely to survey’s primary objectives
- Relatively easy to answer—no open ended
- Of interest to all respondents
- Demographic questions always go last
Questionnaire Design

4. Questionnaire Wording

- Focus
- Brevity
- Clarity
Focus

Each question should focus on a specific issue or topic.
Brevity

Survey questions should be as short as possible while still conveying the essential meaning.
The meaning of each survey question should be clear and consistent. Vocabulary should be kept as simple as possible.
Overall, how satisfied are you with your immediate supervisor?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Sure
- Not Satisfied

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
Analysis & Report Writing

- Executive Summary
- Methodology
- Report Body
- Questionnaire
A brief summary of the survey’s major findings
Methodology

- Demographic profile
- Survey design
- Response rate
Report Body

Overall Analysis

Trend Analysis

Demographic Analysis
Questionnaire

Include a copy of the questionnaire with percentages at the end of the report
Communicating Summary
Results to Employees

- City Newsletter
- Staff Meetings
- E-Mail
- City Mgt./Dept. Head Retreat
Using the Survey Results

Tell employees what actions the City will take to address problem areas identified in the survey
Respond to employee concerns that can be easily addressed.
Devise short- to long-range plans to address the more complex issues & give progress updates to employees.
Provide explanations for employee concerns that cannot be changed
It is critical that employees know they are being listened to & that some of their concerns are being addressed.
Opinion Research Specialists, LLC

Dr. Mark Ellickson
Springfield, Missouri
(417) 889-4506