



Seattle SHRM Monthly Meeting

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Employee Engagement

Tips for a Successful Survey Process:

- ✓ **Start with a strategy:** Are you trying to change behavior and send a message? Are you measuring the full realm of engagement, such as including drivers and outcomes, or only outcomes? Are you using it as an opportunity to gather data to inform other HR programs? Is there a desire to understand more about your culture as well? Your overall goals should guide the questions that are asked.
- ✓ **Determine resources and support:** Do you have the opportunity to include an expert in the content development process or in other steps? Are you prepared and equipped to keep the data confidential if you conduct it in-house? Are you prepared and equipped to run reports and support action planning? If selecting a consulting firm or vendor, be sure you understand their view of engagement, how it fits with your strategy, and their true expertise in this area.
- ✓ **Ensure you have leadership buy-in and support:** Is your main leader supportive in providing input to the content, ready to be responsible for taking actions, and ready to be a main communicator both before and after the survey? Is he/she/they genuinely interested in employee feedback and the employee experience? A disengaged or disingenuous leader can be detrimental to your goals.
- ✓ **Communicate:** Being transparent with employees and managers about the process starts to open doors for accurate feedback. Talking about the survey ahead of time ensures that it is not a surprise and aids in better response rates. Talking about the results is the best way to keep communication going within the organization, and being transparent and inclusive with action planning is the best way to incite true behavior change.
- ✓ **Let the data be a starting point, not an end:** When organizations rely on survey data as the only information about how a manager is doing, or how employees feel, it begins to be a dangerous tool. This should be a starting point of a series of conversations between management and employees, within teams, across teams, and within the leadership team.

As a series of medical tests is to your health history, so is a survey to your organization. It can tell you where the problems are and what they are, but not how they got there or how to fix them.

Discussion Points for Nontraditional Assessment

Between HR and Manager or Leaders:

- When convincing managers or leaders why, **appeal to what is important to them**: it could be genuine care and concern for employees, or data and research showing the link to individual performance, company performance, and customer satisfaction.
- Remind leaders and managers that **feedback is important for improvement and growth**, theirs personally and the organization.
- Give **examples of what you could learn** from using a formal measurement once a year: areas for managers to improve, possible drivers of attrition/retention before they become issues, input for HR services and programs, ideas for innovation or key company initiatives, overall sense of company pride and confidence in leaders. Then give **examples of upcoming decisions that could be influenced from employee input**, or examples from your own experience where survey results yielded positive change.

Between HR and an Employee:

- When trying to assess individual engagement, make sure it is an **appropriate time** that does not conflict with a performance evaluation timeframe or other employment decisions. **Prepare the employee** ahead of time that you want to talk about their employee experience if they are comfortable discussing it with you.
- **Maintain confidentiality**; do not share individual statements with managers or others. Your goal is to use a structured interview process to **gather data from many people, looking for themes or trends**, and then using those themes or trends to help you coach managers or work with a developing team.
- **Potential topics to cover**: a time when they felt most energized and alive at work (anywhere) and why, the things they most like about the company, job, team, and manager, and the things that (if changed) would make the biggest difference to their overall performance.

Between a Manager and an Employee:

- When trying to assess individual engagement, make sure it is an **appropriate time** that does not conflict with a performance evaluation timeframe or other employment decisions. **Prepare the employee** ahead of time to talk about their employee experience if they are comfortable discussing it.
- **Maintain confidentiality**; do not share individual statements with others. Your goal is to use a structured interview process to **gather data from the entire team, looking for themes or trends**, and then using those themes or trends to help you become a better manager and improve their employee experience.
- **Potential topics to cover**: a time when they felt most energized and alive at work (anywhere) and why, the things they most like about the company, job, team, and your management style, and the things that (if changed) would make the biggest difference to their overall performance.

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