

Employee Opinion Surveys

A Guide to Measuring Staff Attitudes

Employee opinion surveys (EOS) — also known as staff opinion surveys, employee surveys, employee attitude surveys or employee engagement surveys — are used by organisations to measure core aspects of employees' work experiences.

A well-designed employee survey gives feedback on leadership practices, fairness of pay, workplace relationships, team spirit, and opportunities for personal development, among other things. These are all critical components of employee engagement (see below).

By measuring these components, HR and line managers have the ability to identify the root causes of underperformance and to initiate change.

Surveys can also be customized to measure factors, in addition to engagement, that are important for a company.

Why should companies use employee opinion surveys?

By measuring engagement, companies can pinpoint critical issues that are impacting employee performance. A well-designed employee survey will provide specific information, enabling companies to develop meaningful action plans to address these issues.

In most cases, companies can realise immediate benefits by acting on the issues identified through an employee opinion survey.

The cost of conducting a survey can be minimal compared to its benefits, both in terms of employee morale and increased performance.

What are potential pitfalls of an engagement survey?

By far the worst mistake that an organisation can make is to measure employee attitudes, and then do nothing with the results. By committing to measuring employee opinions, organisations are committing to act on the results.

Trust is a key factor in this process, and employees need to see that their input and opinions are being heard and responded to.

If an organisation is brand new to the employee opinion survey process, there are occasionally some growing pains. Employees may initially be mistrustful about the process, and will have concerns about the confidentiality and anonymity of their input.

These concerns are often alleviated through the communication process, as well as the follow-up to the survey in terms of sharing results, developing action plans, and acting on those plans.

Employee opinion surveys and employee engagement

Engaged employees are those who are committed to an organisation and its success. They take ownership of their jobs, have pride in their work, and invest time and energy to help the organisation

succeed. They are more dedicated, work harder, accomplish more and speak more positively about their organisations than employees who are not actively engaged.

Dozens of studies have shown a connection between engagement and business performance. A recent study shows that companies with highly engaged employees have been shown to have significant decreases in quality complaints, lower turnover, and higher revenue growth rates.

It also shows that business performance gains of between 30% and 40% can be realised by organisations whose employees feel highly committed and engaged in their work. Companies with high morale and engagement have been shown to perform about 20% better on stock market price than their industry comparison groups. Further, research shows that engaged employees often increase their quality of work — thereby reducing defect rates by up to 75%.

The bottom line is that there is a significant relationship between employee engagement and performance, and between performance and results.

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