

## Case Study

### Company

Unnamed

### Industry

Unnamed

### Location

Global with 200 Locations and Primary Operations in Europe and North America

### Employees

35,000

## Using an Employee Opinion Survey to Affect Organizational Change

### Overview

Many organizations that administer employee opinion surveys act on the results in the same way. They analyze the survey data to determine specific areas for action, organization-wide and at geographic, division and department levels. This analysis can result in meaningful insight and change. However, employee surveys contain a wealth of data to be mined and most analyses only scratch the surface. When utilized to its full potential this valuable information can stimulate broader and more effective organization development.

This case study describes an organization that used its survey to uncover specific “pockets of greatness” within itself and to further study these discoveries for best practices to model and apply across the rest of the enterprise. The resulting information became a critical aspect of a broader organizational change process.

### Situation

As a geographically dispersed and operationally diverse organization, historically this company operated as several separate entities. This division led to operational, financial and strategic inconsistencies that impeded overall performance and growth. Senior leaders desired to transform the organization into a more unified entity, both in processes and in culture. In addition, they wanted to improve the company’s standing as an employer-of-choice and also add to its reputation as a high-performing innovator.

The TRACOM Group assisted the organization by using an employee survey to identify and study operationally high performing departments where employees were committed and engaged.

### Solution

The TRACOM Group administered an employee opinion survey worldwide in over 200 locations and 11 languages.

The questions asked in the Survey were strategically tied to the organization’s values and initiatives.

Following our initial analysis and presentation of the survey data, the organization expressed interest in understanding those practices that differentiate high-performing departments and locations from their peers. In response, TRACOM created a scorecard from employee survey data to score and rank different units throughout the organization. The scorecard included two dimensions: “Great Place” and “High Performing.” These dimensions produced scores for employee well-being and engagement (Great Place) and operational performance (High Performing).

To develop these dimensions, TRACOM conducted a series of statistical analyses on the survey data. From a rather lengthy survey, TRACOM isolated a discreet set of questions that reliably pinpointed employee perceptions in these two critical areas.

**Great Place:** Focused on issues such as employee relationships with their managers, perceptions of company leadership, opportunities for career development, and work/life balance.

**High Performing:** Measured employee perceptions of department innovativeness, performance culture, efficiency of processes, and decision-making effectiveness.

TRACOM analyzed only those departments or locations having between 50 and 100 employees. Larger groups would have been unwieldy, and factors beyond work group practices could impact the data. Likewise, smaller departments could lead to potentially unreliable results. By selecting departments of 50 to 100 employees, the analysis concentrated on specific practices and management teams.

TRACOM identified departments that scored highest in both dimensions. There was a very high correlation between scores on these two dimensions. Departments that scored high on the Great Place dimension also scored high on the High Performing dimension, indicating that employee engagement is highly related to better operational performance.

Once these departments had been identified, top management of the organization verified that these departments actually were high-performing, efficient, and effective operational units. This verification process established the validity of TRACOM's analysis.

After identifying the high-scoring departments, TRACOM developed a procedure for interviewing employees at these locations to discover specific practices contributing to high performance and engagement. TRACOM utilized a technique known as Appreciative Inquiry to design an interview protocol and process. This technique focuses on positive aspects of the work environment, seeking to discover those things that employees enjoy and value about their workplace, as well as factors leading to operational efficiency and high performance.

Ultimately, the goal was to study these departments to determine why employees are highly engaged and high performing. Once these factors could be identified the company would seek to replicate them in an organization-wide initiative.

Employees from high-scoring locations worldwide were interviewed in group settings. These interviews confirmed the results of TRACOM's analysis—employees at these sites were not only engaged and enthused by their jobs, but their contributions also led to outstanding operational performance. More importantly, the interviews resulted in a set of best practices within high scoring departments.

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## Results

In the case presented here, the organization used the results of TRACOM's survey analysis and best practice study to determine specific practices that lead to employee engagement and performance, and to inform the organization of how it fundamentally views its culture. The information amassed from this study has been incorporated into an organization-wide program of improving its leadership development processes and communications across the organization. The organization clearly understands how these aspects of its culture will affect performance and its bottom-line.

The information from this study is especially meaningful for this company because the best practices come from within the organization. What works well in one company will not necessarily be effective in other companies. Instead of relying on practices that have been developed in other organizations and publicized in popular media, this company was able to determine what works best for them internally.

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Many organizations administer employee surveys, but don't utilize them to their full potential. With a clear strategy and methodology, these surveys can provide a wealth of information, helping organizations gain insight into many facets of their operations and employee experiences.

**For More Information:**

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