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**Step by Step Guide to Employee Satisfaction Surveys**

**By Martin Day**

The benefit of running an annual employee survey has for a long time been widely accepted but many organizations have been put off by the amount of effort that is required.

Many organizations who have bit the bullet and conducted their own internal employee satisfaction surveys have often relied on word-processors to allow them to design and compile a survey, then gone through the effort of printing and distributing the survey and spent time chasing and collecting the completed surveys and then even more time transferring the survey response information into a meaningful management report.

Fortunately with the introduction of the Internet and hosted survey websites like

[www.surveegalaxy.com](http://www.surveegalaxy.com)

what was once a time consuming, resource hungry, long winded and cumbersome process is now slick, quick and easy.

This document provides a step by step guide to help implement a survey that will bring considerable benefits to any organization.

**Step 1 – Identifying The Need**

The reasons an organization would need a survey are as wide and they are long. Listed here are a few of the common reason why employee satisfaction surveys are conducted.

**Event Driven**

If your organization is about to embark, or is going through, a change management program employee surveys can assist in managing the change, measuring the effectiveness of the change, help to deliver a 'message' and gather valuable feedback throughout the change cycle.

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For organizations that are experiencing rapid growth employee surveys can monitor internal communications and management structures to ensure that employees are aware of their reporting and management responsibilities.

Where an organization is suffering from poor moral brought on by either internal or external influences an employee survey can be used to identify the specific concerns of employees so those concerns can be properly addressed.

Where there is an increase in turnover of staff employee surveys can help an organization identify the underlying cause of employee unrest and through their findings help find solutions.

Periodically

As part of a periodic assessment, surveys will help an organization review their personnel and monitor on an individual level job satisfaction, training and career development.

Employee surveys also offer senior management the opportunity to look at the soft underbelly of their

organization to confirm that their 'top down' view of the organization matches the reality and 'bottom up' perspective.

With the help of employee surveys an organization can establish good employer/employee communication that will in turn bring both direct and indirect benefits.

### Step 2 – Management Buy-In

Management buy-in is always desirable for any initiative and many will argue that it is essential to ensure a successful employee survey, however, in some instances the findings of an employee survey can lead to kick-starting a management that has grown complacent and detached from their employees.

Some organization may be fortunate in that the senior management recognize and drive the need for employee surveys, while in others the management may need to first be convinced of the direct and indirect benefits an employee survey will bring.

The level of management commitment to an employee survey will have some bearing on the nature of the survey and to some extent will help determine what questions are to be asked and the manner they are asked.

A management that is supportive of the initiative may require feedback on specific areas of the business or they may give the go ahead because they feel confident that the results will only confirm that the level of employee satisfaction throughout the organization is high.

In nearly all cases it is good practice to at least try and get management to buy-in to the employee survey from the very start as they have a lot to gain and are in a position to effect any change that is

later identified as being required.

### Step 3 – Designing The Survey

Designing a good survey will take some time and effort but by following the basics of survey design and concentrating on the 'need to know' questions and removing the 'nice to know' a survey will rapidly take shape.

Determining the exact questions that should be asked will be entirely dependent on the individual organization, its structure and the previously identified primary need and objectives of the employee survey.

When considering what questions to ask consideration should be given to how the results are to be analyzed. For example there may be a desire to ask for individual comments but these types of answer formats can be very time consuming and cumbersome to analyze and should therefore be avoided or used sparingly.

With online surveys it is generally better to do a few smaller surveys than one very long survey as the longer the survey the higher the drop out rate will be.

### Step 4 - Proof Reading And Testing

#### Grammar, Spelling And Clarity

Before publishing the survey make a careful check for spelling and typing mistakes and incorrect grammar. If available it is always better to have someone who has not been involved in designing the survey to proof read the survey with clean eyes, if no one is available try to take a break before checking through the survey again.

#### Say What You Mean And Mean What You Say

When checking the survey you need to consider the survey from the viewpoint of the respondent, you may know what you mean by each question but will the questions be clear to the employee?

#### Allow The Employee To Answer Truthfully

For closed questions where the employee will be required to choose from a number of available responses have you allowed the employee to answer accurately? Make use of responses like 'Don't know', 'No comment' or 'Not Applicable' where you have made the question mandatory but the employee may not be able to answer.

Consider allowing the employee to include an 'Other' answer but also appreciate that 'Other' answers will add to the complexity when analyzing the survey results.

#### Don't Require A Response To Questions That May Not Have One

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Check that for any questions that you have made mandatory you do require an answer, for example open questions such as asking for additional comments should not be mandatory unless you definitely require the respondent to write a comment.

### Check You Will Be Able To Analyze The Data

Check through the survey again but this time looking at how the results of the survey will be analyzed. Consider how you are likely to want to analyze the survey data, have you asked the right questions to be able to perform detailed analysis? For example if you wanted to view the detailed response data from the perspective of the different genders, or maybe departments, check you have asked the employee to indicate their own gender and/or department.

### Don't Ask Anymore Questions Than You Need To

Consider all the questions in the survey and look for questions that are not 'need to know'.

### Test The Link And Try Completing The Survey

Publish the survey and then send the survey's link to a number of people who will be willing to test the survey. By completing the survey yourself you will get a feel for how the respondent will view the survey. From your own and others feedback stop and make adjustments to the survey as required.

Repeat this process until you are happy with the survey.

### Check The Data

Take time to view the online summary results of the test data and confirm that the data is being collected in a manner that can be properly analyzed and that will give meaningful results.

## Step 5 - Promoting And Deploying The Survey

Where all or the majority of employees have access to the internet or company intranet deploying the online survey is as easy that ABC, either via email or by establishing a link to the survey from your own website or Intranet.

Where there are some or many employees that do not have direct access to the internet there are a number of alternatives that can be used from issuing the survey in printed form, providing a shared terminal or giving them an incentive to complete the survey at home.

### Anonymous Responses?

There is a choice to allow all surveys to be completed anonymously. Allowing a survey to be anonymous may encourage employees to speak their minds enabling the survey to provide 'a warts and all' report, in turn giving management an opportunity to address underlying problems before they become serious.

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However, allowing anonymous comments also allows employees to be more cavalier and flippant with their responses. Some organizations would therefore only want to consider comments where employees are prepared to stand by their convictions and that will also provide an opportunity to follow up the specific concerns of individual employees.

The decision to allow anonymous responses or not will, among other factors, be down to the individual organization, the specific nature of the survey, the surrounding circumstances, the management style and the existing employer/employee relationship.

### Step 6 - Monitoring The Survey

While the survey is in progress you will be able to view the summary results online and also monitor in real-time the number of surveys that have been both started and completed.

If after a few days the number of completed surveys falls short of the expected target it is advisable to send periodic reminders to employees asking them to complete the survey.

### Step 7 – Analyzing The Results

There are no hard and fast rules for analyzing the data. Much depends on the individual survey, the questions asked and the number of responses.

Most surveys will benefit from many of the results being displayed in graphical as well as tabular form.

When first analyzing survey data often a number of 'headline' results will immediately stand out that will provide you with a general overview and, providing the right questions have been asked, give you an instant assessment of the mood throughout the organization as a whole.

Where the results give areas of concern a more detailed analysis may be advisable. For example if

employees were asked if they felt the organization provided equal opportunities to both genders and 25% gave a negative response it would be useful to know the gender split of the organization and also to look at what the gender split was of the 25% that answered negatively. Was the negative view shared by employees of both genders, evenly spread throughout the organization, or of a particular gender from a particular department?

There is a method of reporting that presents the result data in tabular and/or graphical form allowing those who are interested in the results to view the raw data.

Often used as a compliment to the first, another method is to interpret the results and provide an analysis of the data and offer a view as to what the meaning is behind the results, what circumstances may have contributed to the results being as they are and, where the results indicate a negative, what initiatives could be taken. Such analysis if done by a single individual is likely to be very personal, if done by a committee it is still likely to be objective and therefore open to interpretation.

### Step 8 - Further Action

Probably the most important step is the last. An employee survey will either confirm that the perfect organization exists or it will highlight areas that are less than perfect by identifying individual and common concerns.

It may be that further more detailed surveys are required that target specific areas. For example the survey may reveal that employees working in a particular department are collectively unhappy, but the reasons for their dissatisfaction may not be clear. A smaller, specifically targeted follow-up survey may help reveal the root causes.

When employee surveys are periodically run an organization that has taken steps to address issues will see their efforts reflected in subsequent survey responses. Almost all organizations have some problems and it helps an organization's moral to see that a channel is available that will allow problems to be highlighted, addressed and resolved.

### Summary

These guidelines are intended to help an organization conduct successful employee satisfaction surveys, they are however, only a guide.

Each organization is different in style and structure and the organizations 'personality' will go some way to influencing the tone and nature of the survey and organizations will have many different circumstances and primary reasons for conducting a survey.

By utilizing existing technology and conducting surveys online you are now able to monitor the heart beat of an organization, quickly, easily and, by using websites like Survey Galaxy, at minimal cost.

Martin Day is a Director of Survey Galaxy a web site that allows anyone to create, design and publish online surveys. For more information please visit

[www.surveygalaaxy.com](http://www.surveygalaaxy.com)

### **Paid Surveys – Do They Really Work?**

#### **By Joey Merrick**

Being paid to take online surveys has become a very sought after internet business. Simply pay a small fee to a paid survey site and they will send you a list of companies that will send the surveys to you.

All you need to do is sign up with these companies and the surveys will show up in your e-mail box and you will get compensated for your time. Depending on the company you can be paid in cash, entered

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into large cash drawings, or be compensated with discounts and merchandise.

The cash surveys can range from a couple of dollars for a really short survey to \$15–25 for longer surveys that can take around 30 minutes to complete. Not bad wages... One problem that many people have is that they will sign up for some free survey list and then gripe that they get lousy surveys.

We have tried both and when we signed up with reputable survey companies we saw much better paying surveys as opposed to the sweepstakes, prizes, and \$2 surveys we saw when we were being cheapskates.

Whenever you get surveys in your e-mail box they will tell you what kind of survey it is, what the compensation will be, and how long it will take to complete. So you will always be able to see if a particular survey is worth your time and effort.

Paid Surveys are a great way to earn some extra money in your spare time. The surveys show up in your inbox and you decide when and if you are going to fill them out. The key is to sign up with a reputable company that will give you the better paying surveys.

\* This article may be distributed with the authors resource box intact.

Joey Merrick is the webmaster of

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where you will find

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