

Employee Opinion & Attitude Surveys: Why they are more important in the current economic climate

“Your attitude determines your altitude” *Stephen Covey*

In good times it is vital to attract, motivate and retain key employees particularly if it is a tight market. We want to know what keeps our employees happy and their satisfaction high, and employee opinion and attitude (EO&A) surveys provide a direct opportunity to keep our finger on the pulse. However, in tougher times, EO&A surveys have an even more valuable role to play. With little fat to play with, we need to know that what we are aiming for is being achieved, in the most effective and efficient manner.

In particular, EO&A surveys:

- Provide comprehensive and systematic assessment of current operating practices. Your staff are in a great position to inform you of process and practice efficiencies.
- Provide quality feedback and enable immediate action to improve your business.
- Encourage engagement and empowerment of employees. In these lean times it is even more important to ensure that your employees are involved in the business and optimising their skills.
- Form an effective communication channel and reduce the likelihood of adverse reactions associated with organisational change processes.
- Provide the opportunity to tap into the organisation’s strategic objectives, to review past year and take benchmark for next year. It is not only important to weather the current climate but to make sure that you are focused and enabled for future success when the market picks up.
- Provide data that can be used in problem solving, planning and decision making. During tough times business can tend to be somewhat reactionary, however, each action counts and has an even more significant impact, so it is vital that action is targeted, efficient and effective.
- Provide insight into employee perceptions on a range of general satisfaction issues and aspects relating to business outcomes. Even if it is presently more of an employers’ market, you want to ensure that you are getting the best from your people and that they are committed to the organisation and achieving its objectives.

When implemented correctly, EO&A surveys can be extremely valuable to organisations in this tough economic climate. At this time, more than any other, it is important to ensure that the objectives of your EO&A survey are clearly stated to employees and that an environment of trust is established prior to their implementation. EO&A surveys serve as diagnostics on the degree to which an organisation is carrying out its strategic objective; obtaining and delivering information of immediate use directly into the hands of managers who need it.

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