

WHAT IS THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

The Survey of Employee Engagement facilitated by the UT Austin Institute for Organizational Excellence, provides the data that informs leadership and the organization on employees’ satisfaction with their employer and their perceptions of the organization’s overall effectiveness.

The survey of Employee Engagement provides an overall score and survey response rate. When reviewing organizational results these two benchmark numbers provide a gauge on the health of the organization.

Overall Scores	Response Rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Scores above 350 are considered desirable Overall Scores above 400 are the product of a highly engaged workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lavigna states that, “without even looking at the survey results, the response rate can be revealing” High response rate 60-75% suggest high level of employee interest Low response rates lower than 30% could suggest a lack of interest that, by itself, can indicate a problem Medium response rates higher than 30% but lower than 60% should also be considered with caution as the results may not be truly representative

In addition to overall scores, responses are categorized into twelve constructs. These constructs capture the concepts most utilized by leadership to drive organizational performance and engagement. If a construct score falls below 350 then that is an area to review.

Survey of Employee Engagement Constructs	
All items measure employees’ perceptions of...	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Workgroup- ...the people they work with on a daily basis and their effectiveness Strategic- ...their role in the organization and the organization’s mission, vision, and strategic plan Supervision- ... the nature of supervisory relationships within the organization Workplace- ... the total work atmosphere, the degree to which they consider it safe, and the overall feel Community- ...the relationships between employees in the workplace, including trust, respect, care, and diversity among colleagues Information Systems-... whether computer and communication systems provide accessible, accurate, and clear information 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Communication-... whether communication in the organization is reasonable, candid and helpful Pay-... how the benefits package compares to packages at similar organizations and how flexible it is Benefits-... how the benefits package compares to packages at similar organizations and how flexible it is Employee Development-... the priority given to their personal and job growth needs Job Satisfaction-... the overall work situation and ability to maintain work-life balance Employee Engagement-the degree to which employees are willing to go above and beyond, feel committed to the organization and are present while working

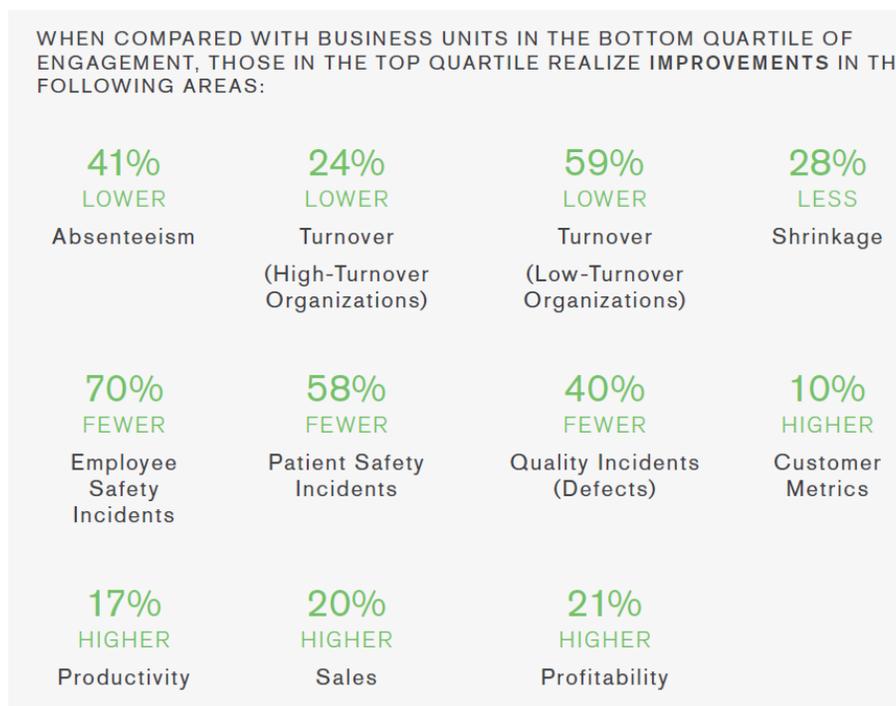
WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Employee engagement has been associated with high organizational performance in a variety of areas such as customer service, safety, innovation and in the corporate landscape, with profitability.

Employee engagement is defined as:

The degree to which a **person commits** to an **organization** and the **impact** that **commitment** has on **how profoundly they perform** and their **length of tenure** (Federman, 2009).

In other words when employees are engaged they put forth more effort at work and stay with the organization longer than those employees who are not engaged. The following statistics from the 2017 Gallup 2017, “State of the American Workplace,” report shows that organizations with high employee engagement scores show organizational improvements in many areas.



Research from other sources show additional areas of improvement:

- Organizations that excel at customer experience have one-and-a-half times as many engaged employees
- Emerging research and practice is linking certain engagement attributes to increased innovation
- Organizations with high employee engagement scores succeed in attracting and retaining skilled employees
- Actively disengaged employees are almost twice as likely as engaged employees to seek new jobs
- Highly engaged employees put forward greater amount of discretionary effort. They try 57% harder and perform 20 percentile points better than disengaged employees (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004, p.XV).

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH REVIEW

The following review outlines findings from different research studies on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. These resources can be useful to employee engagement committees as they prioritize and develop action plans.

GALLUP 2017

The 2017 Gallup, “State of the American Workplace,” study emphasizes that, “employees today view their work differently...they come into a role wanting frequent communication with their manager, development opportunities, flexibility and autonomy, coaching and a sense of stability and security.” Additionally the study outlines most common reasons employees leave their jobs as well as what employees value most at work.

Most common reasons for voluntary exits	What workers value in their roles and organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of career growth opportunities• Uncompetitive pay and benefits• Ineffective manager or management• Detachment from organizational culture• Poor job fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ability to do what they do best• Greater work-life balance and better personal well-being• Greater stability and job security• The opportunity to work for an organization with a great brand or reputation• Benefits and perks that offer employees greater flexibility, autonomy and the ability to lead a better life.

SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 2016

In the 2016 “Employee Satisfaction and Engagement” study by the Society for Human Resource Management the following organizational attributes were rated as very important for job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction Attributes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels(2) Compensation/pay, overall(3) Benefits, overall(4) Job security(5) Trust between employees and senior management(6) Opportunities to use your skills and abilities in your work(7) Organization’s financial stability(8) Relationship with immediate supervisor(9) Feeling safe in your work environment(10) Immediate supervisor’s respect for your ideas

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL 2004

The 2004 Corporate Leadership Council study on employee engagement is still cited in employee engagement literature. The extensive study surveyed 50,000 employees in 59 organizations from 27 countries. The study identified five traits of organizational culture that drive employee effort. Additionally the study produced a list of organizational attributes that increase discretionary effort and intent to stay within an organization.

Big 5 Organizational Cultural Traits	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication between peers • Managers are willing to share all relevant information, and whether communication flows mainly downward from managers to employees • The organization has a clear mission or purpose • Information provided by management effectively alters employee behavior
Integrity	The organization is recognized as an organization of high integrity
Innovation	The organization encourages employees to find new ways around old problems, develop their own ideas, and improve upon the organization's methods
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees believe their organization is flexible, continually adapting to change, and always moving toward improved ways of doing things • Employee perception on whether top managers are set in their ways
Customer Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction is a high priority in the organization • Whether employees believe their organization places a high priority on the quality of goods/services it provides

Organization attributes that increase discretionary effort (top ten of 50 attributes)	Organizational attributes that increase employee intent to stay (top ten of 50 attributes)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job is connected to the organizational strategy 2. Importance of job to organizational success 3. Understand how to complete work projects 4. Organizational internal communication 5. Manager demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity 6. Manager demonstrates honesty and integrity 7. Organization has a reputation of integrity 8. Manager adapts to changing circumstances 9. Manager clearly articulates organizational goals 10. Manager possesses job skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational internal communication 2. Effective career advisor 3. Manager puts people in the right roles at the right time 4. Manager demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity 5. Employee understands the connection between work and organizational strategy 6. Manager accurately evaluates employee potential 7. Manager adapts to changing circumstances 8. Manager encourages innovation 9. Manager possesses job skills 10. Manager articulates organizational goals

CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 2016

Modern Think and the Chronicle of Higher Education conducted the Great Colleges to Work For® study in 2016. The study identified 4 organizational attributes that showed substantial gaps between honor roll institutions from not recognized institutions.

Differentiating Qualities of Great Colleges to Work For®

1. Strong leadership that provides longer term vision and inspire confidence in times of uncertainty or change.
2. Teamwork - A sense that all faculty and staff are on the same team
3. Communicate freely- Foster a culture of soliciting and listening to ideas and suggestions
4. Inclusion and equity- The institution emphasizes having a diverse faculty and staff concurrent with recruiting a diverse student body

Additionally Modern Think and Chronicle of Higher Education have identified six survey items they anecdotally believe to drive a culture of innovation. Their future research will track these six items overtime to more definitively assess association with increased innovation.

Six items that drive a culture of innovation

- (1) New ideas are considered
- (2) Opportunities to contribute to important departmental decisions
- (3) Employees can speak up or challenge a traditional way of doing something without fear of harming career
- (4) Supervisor actively solicits suggestions and ideas
- (5) Changes are discussed with employees prior to being implemented
- (6) Staff are meaningfully involved in institutional planning

ADVANCED WORKPLACE ASSOCIATES 2015

A literature review by Advanced Workplace Associates (AWA) and the Centre for Evidence Based Management (CEBMA) reviewed over 800 academic research papers to better understand knowledge worker productivity. Knowledge workers are defined as those who are paid to “think for a living.” The research emerged six factors that have the most impact on knowledge worker productivity.

6 Factors of Knowledge Worker Productivity

1. **Social cohesion:** A shared liking or team attraction that includes bonds of friendship, caring closeness and enjoyment of each other’s company
2. **Perceived supervisory support:** How employees feel the supervisor helps them in times of need, praises them for a job well done, or recognizes them for extra effort
3. **Information sharing:** How teams pool and access their knowledge and expertise-which positively affects decision making and team processes.
4. **Vision and goal clarity:** The extent to which team members have a common understanding of objectives and display high commitment to those team goals.
5. **External communication:** The ability of teams to span boundaries (team and organizational) to seek information and resources from others
6. **Trust:** The firm belief in the reliability, truth or ability of others.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the employee engagement research review was to outline recent employee engagement studies and their findings in order to assist organizations in prioritizing survey results and action planning. As your organization begins to prioritize and action plan, these lists can provide guidance to help you meet your productivity goals. Keep in mind though, that every organization is different and you need to ask your employees what is most meaningful to them.

POST ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Now that the university has released the employee engagement survey results, it is time to review your organization's results with your leadership team and employees. The following outlines post survey activities that ensure your organization leverages the data to maintain or grow an engaged organizational culture.

1. Deliver

It is important that all employees within your organization know that the leadership team has viewed the results and are committed to use the feedback to improve the organization. It is best to first share results with your leadership team to give them time to process the information. Once leadership has reviewed, results should be shared with all staff. In these reviews, communication should focus on highlighting your organizational strengths and as well as weak or low areas.

2. Analyze and Prioritize

Once results have been shared and discussed, the organization should prioritize areas of focus and then develop an action plan. It is best to include both employees and managers in prioritizing and action planning. Establishing an employee engagement committee is a standard method to ensure an employee engagement action plan is developed and includes input from both employees and supervisors. This committee can review, analyze, and prioritize employee engagement data to address. The committee guide below offers additional considerations for establishing the committee

3. Collect Additional Data

The survey results provide a snapshot of your organization at one point in time. The survey should be treated as a benchmark and starting point to understanding where to focus employee engagement efforts. It is recommended that the employee engagement committee conduct focus groups to better understand the context of the data. Employee focus groups are an effective way to open up discussions on results that will help in planning future employee engagement strategies. The employee engagement group facilitation guide below provides tips on setting up and facilitating employee engagement focus groups.

4. Action Plan

Once additional data has been collected and analyzed the employee engagement committee can develop and proposed action plan. This plan should be submitted to the leadership team for review and approval.

5. Implement

Once the plan is finalized the leadership team should implement the plan and adjust plan as organizational strategies and goals change.



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE GUIDE

PHASE	TASKS	RESOURCE
Form Committee	Identify a mix of 5-8 employees and supervisors. Committee members should be well respected and trusted members of the organization.	<p>For assistance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a focus group protocol • Facilitating focus groups • Prioritizing survey items • Consulting leadership • Consulting employee engagement committees <p>Call HR Organization Effectiveness at 512-232-2325 or email elida.lee@austin.utexas.edu</p>
	The first committee meeting should first introduce the committee charge of conducting focus groups and developing a proposed action plan to submit to senior management. The department head should open the meeting and outline the charge. Emphasize how this work will help the organization.	
	An email from the department head to all staff should announce the formation of the committee and the committee charge. The email should introduce committee members	
Forming Focus Groups	Committee should decide the purpose of the focus group and develop a questioning protocol to meet the desired goals. For example: Will the purpose of the focus group be to clarify survey results maybe due to low response rate? or Will the focus group be more oriented to providing recommendations for action items?	
	Decide how many focus groups will be conducted and who will be invited. For large organizations, a random sample works well. Just be sure that the sample is representative of all types of workers in your organization. For smaller organizations you may consider inviting all employees to provide feedback. Focus groups should not have supervisors in the meeting. You can have a separate focus group that is only comprised of supervisors to get their perspective.	
	The head of the department should send the invitations. This message should outline the purpose of the focus group and emphasize that employee comments will remain anonymous.	
Facilitating Focus Groups	The focus group can be scheduled for up to an hour and a half.	
	The focus group agenda should be reviewed with participants and include: (1) a brief review of organizational data, (2) overview of questions and focus group ground rules, and (3) facilitated discussion	
	Notes should be captured from the discussion. This can be done by typing responses on a laptop or taking hand written notes during the session. It is important to take notes that ensure responses are anonymous.	

Summarizing Focus Group Data	The focus group data should provide additional information that can help inform the action plan. To assist with this, it is helpful to write up a focus group summary report that shows themes discussed and highlights ideas for improvement that can be included in the action plan.	
Action Plan	Use the action plan template to develop organizational goals that will positively impact employee engagement. Goals should be written in the S.M.A.R.T. format: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Related.	
	Submit action plan to leadership for approval and implementation.	
Continuous Review	Employee engagement programming should not be an event rather it should be an ongoing effort to assess and plan for. Keeping employee engagement high increases your organization's effectiveness and productivity.	

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

Department Name	
Date	
Committee Members	
Employee Engagement Survey Area of Focus	
Describe why this area was selected	

ACTION PLAN		
Action Item	Desired Outcome	Completion Date

END NOTES

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