

Employee Survey and Analysis

Attracting and retaining the best performers are key elements in achieving success for *any* organization. Organizational decision-makers can facilitate these efforts by being proactive to understand employee needs and work-related attitudes. Based on information employees provide, managers and leaders can best design (or redesign) HR policies and practices to enhance critical issues such as work-life balance, career advancement and development, and benefits programs. These efforts often enhance employee-level outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance.

During times when companies are forced to do more with less, efforts to attract and retain employees become even more important. For example, has your organization recently laid off employees? If so, do you know the “survivors’” reactions? Often, these individuals who remain employed experience more stress and experience negative emotions (e.g., guilt, anxiety), which may have negative effects on productivity. A recent survey of survivors from 318 companies that laid off employees in the second half of last year showed that 77 percent reported a greater number of mistakes and errors, 81 percent reported a decline in customer service, and 87 percent reported they were less likely to recommend their organizations as a good place to work.¹ By understanding these concerns, organizations can work to enhance employee attitudes and behaviors. However, in these tough financial times when every expense is scrutinized, organizations may not be willing or able to invest large sums of money for consultants to collect this information from employees.

The Fuse Duluth “Best Places to Work” Action Team is here to help by providing your organization with a comprehensive employee survey and analysis.

What is going to be measured?

The employee survey contains items to assess a variety of work-related attitudes, including job satisfaction, job security, organizational commitment, turnover intention, pay and benefits satisfaction, organizational justice, and the importance of various work factors. Other questions are included to address potential differences in generational preferences such as diversity climate perceptions, autonomy, task significance, social support, and work-life balance. This survey will take each employee approximately 15 minutes to complete.

A separate survey will be sent to an HR representative to provide information regarding the organization’s HR policies and practices, and a third survey will be completed by an organizational leader with information specific to organizational performance.

What is the organization going to get for participating?

The outcome of the project is a report tailored to each organization. The first part of the report will detail the overall findings from the project: the number of participating organizations, the number of participating employees, related descriptive information (average size of the organizations, average age of employees, etc.), and the overall averages

for the entire sample. Organizational leaders can use this information for benchmarking purposes in comparing the specific company results to the overall sample – an external environmental analysis.

The second part of the report specifies the averages of the employees from the organization only. The data may be broken down further to provide statistics by gender, generation, or other relevant classification variable depending on the composition of the sample (no employee will be able to be identified in the organizational reports and all data will remain confidential). This is the internal organizational analysis.

Additional information will be provided with respect to information the HR contacts provide regarding some of the “best HR practices” in the community. Information will also include recommendations to the company based on the interpretation of the analyses.

How do you know the information will be valid and reliable?

The Best Places to Work Action Team has partnered with Jennifer Mencl to be the Data Collection Coordinator for the Best Places to Work awards project set to kick off this spring (see http://www.fuseduluth.com/teams#work_action for more information on the awards). Jennifer earned her Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and has been a faculty member in the Labovitz School of Business and Economics at UMD for 5 years, teaching and conducting research in areas of Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior. She has the expertise to manage the data collection efforts and provide the valuable employee information for your organization.² The survey questions are from scales established as valid and reliable measures and published in organizational research.

What is this going to cost?

There are no direct costs to the organization or the employees for participating in this survey project (i.e., no fee is paid for the service). To demonstrate to employees that the organization values their input, we encourage managers to allow employees to take the survey during work time. Therefore, there are minor opportunity costs involved in participating.

How will the data be collected?

All three surveys – the employee survey, HR contact survey, and the organizational leader survey – will be taken online. If not all employees have Internet access, Jennifer will work to make arrangements with an organizational contact person for them to have the opportunity to complete the survey online.

What do I need to do for our organization to participate?

After the approval from the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board is granted (this is a mechanism used by academic researchers to ensure that no participant will be harmed in the process of completing such surveys), the primary contact listed in the Duluth

Area Chamber of Commerce database will receive a “Registration Email.” This email will contain a link to the “Registration Web Site” where an organizational contact person may register that organization. Once the company is registered, Jennifer will email or call the organizational contact person to make arrangements to distribute the employee survey and related information. The organizational leader contact and HR contact whose names are provided on the “Registration Page” will be emailed the links to their respective online surveys.

Can any company participate?

Fuse will accept the first 200 organizations that register. To qualify, your organization must be a current Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce member and have at least 25 paid employees (total, full-time and part-time).

Are there any other benefits for organizations that participate?

Yes! The Fuse Duluth Best Places to Work Action Team will use the aggregate information provided by the employees of each participating organization who are 20- to 40-years-old to recognize the “Best Places to Work” in the Duluth area. These award-winning organizations can promote this recognition to help retain its current workforce and to promote its HR policies and organizational climate to potential recruits from younger generations.

Stayed tuned for the Registration information... details to come in March!

¹Gurchiek, K. (2008). Layoffs pack punch to ‘surviving’ employees. *HR News*.
<http://moss07.shrm.org/Publications/HRNEWS/Pages/PunchtoSurvivingEmployees.aspx>.

²You may contact Jennifer directly with any questions: jmencl@d.umn.edu or 218-726-7385.