



Eleven Top Tips for Employee Surveys

Follow these quick tips while creating your survey to get the most insight into shaping a great workplace.

1

Set clear objectives.

What do you really want to measure or know from employees?

Clearly articulate your survey objectives and critical metrics. You do not want to ask questions merely for curiosity or interest sake.

2

Only include questions that are actionable.

You should be prepared to respond to what you hear from your employees. If you are not prepared to respond, you should not ask the question.

3

Use well-crafted questions.

Writing a question that gets the response you want, without misinterpretation or “leading”, can be surprisingly difficult. Questions should be written in plain language, and phrased in the positive where possible. Be clear and ask about only one item – no double-barreled questions!

Using the services of an experienced service provider will ensure questions capture the information you want and need.

4

Use structured response categories where possible – open-ended where needed.

Structured response categories – such as strongly agree, agree, disagree etc. – provide easily comparable **quantitative** information.

Open-ended (textual response) questions on the other hand are **qualitative** in nature, and inherently more difficult to analyse.

Employees will appreciate the opportunity to provide written explanations or opinions on complex subjects that are important to them. It’s important that they be given the opportunity to do so though limited open-ended questions or comment boxes.

5

Protect employees' privacy / anonymity — and make this obvious and transparent.

Employees will obviously be reluctant to respond in a meaningful way if they fear that the shield of anonymity can be breached.

Using an external “arm’s length” provider with a secure (encrypted) online connection may help reassure employees that management will not be privy to their individual responses.

6

Make sure any category breakdowns are not so small as to risk identification.

If you are reporting “breakdowns” by category, such as department, location, gender, etc., make sure that the resulting groups are not so small that there’s a danger of figuring out who’s who.

7

Prepare employees for the survey.

Let employees know ahead of time why you are conducting a survey, what you will do with the responses, and how you are protecting their privacy and individual confidentiality.

8

Encourage participation.

An employees' time is valuable. Make sure you let employees know that you need and value their feedback and participation.

Send one or more reminders during the survey period, as even the best intentioned will forget to respond when a task has disappeared "off the bottom of the screen".

9

Thank employees for their participation and feedback.

Filling out a survey takes work, and so thank all employees for participating. (Thanking everyone also avoids any potential "How do they know I participated?" issues.)

10

Close the loop.

Tell employees what the survey revealed and what your plans are for responding to the results.

If there are ideas or suggestions that can't be actioned, be sure to tell employees why. After all they went to "all the effort"—they'll want to see you do the same.

11

Keep the channels open.

As you implement action plans in response to the survey results be sure to communicate this to employees.

Your workforce will be far more willing to participate in future surveys if they feel their feedback is being heard and acted on.

Creating a clear, efficient, actionable employee survey that your employees will be comfortable responding to isn't quite rocket science, but there are a number of traps and pitfalls that the above will help alleviate.

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