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Current topics in employee opinion surveys



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Summary

This document describes how to ensure that managers take business improvement actions based on the employee survey. The answer lies in cascading the ownership of actions to all levels in the business and empowering line managers to identify and own issues and build action plans.

The issues discussed here are those considered to be the most important and topical by the people responsible in their organisations for engagement, performance and talent management and communications.

Helping managers to act on feedback from employee research

The first step involves identifying those questions (the key drivers) which have the most impact on employee engagement at an organisation and business unit level. Some of our clients, however, are now asking to link in other metrics including sales and attrition to get a richer picture. It might be that some of the key driver areas can be only be addressed centrally, while some can best be dealt with locally, especially if they only affect isolated business units. The answer is to cascade actions down through the organisation, clearly signalling which issues will be addressed at a higher organisational level.

Purely addressing issues centrally leads to unwieldy and ineffective action plans that unnecessarily affect effective business units, yet also tend to lack the detail needed to aid the specific areas that are in trouble. Conversely, empowering managers to act locally tends to lead to duplication and therefore needs stringent supervision.

One of our clients, a major international services company, avoids duplication of effort by building up a best practice library, identifying 'issue champions' who look at how local issues were resolved and measuring and recording the effect of the actions taken. The same company also action plans at an individual manager level, making action planning a KPI within performance management. The key to success in their system is for managers only to be accountable for things they can influence e.g. the way they treat their staff rather than company pay scales.

Another client created inter-departmental work streams, each taking one issue and implementing it across the business. Another client action plans at geographical region level; they use their HR partners to lead the action planning.

Whatever the approach, the key lies in effective planning and implementation of the cascading action plan. This will enable the survey team to support the business and monitor progress.

Monitoring action progress at an organisational level

ETS has developed an online action planning tool that can be tailored to suit your particular needs. It draws on the wealth of experience and processes ETS Consultants have developed over the years to help focus and support your action planning process from beginning to end.

Using ETS' selection criteria, users are shown the issues that, statistically, are most closely linked to their selected measure of well-being (e.g. engagement or satisfaction). Users then decide, using embedded, intelligent decision criteria and their knowledge of the business, which of the issues to act on. Users are then prompted to consider whether they can act on the priority issues and, if so, to record what is causing the issue and what they would like to do about it.

Managers use the framework and the various resources the tool provides – for example its library of action plans – to detail their own plans, and monitor and control their implementation. They complete the process by measuring and publishing the effectiveness of actions taken as shown by the results of future surveys.

At an organisational level, survey owners and senior executives can see how action plans are being implemented across the company. They can drill down into individual plans, understand how far the plans have been implemented, what the target improvement is as a result of the actions and review how successfully targets are being met.

Conclusion

Organisations which invest in successfully cascading responsibility for action planning down through their company – so that appropriate actions are taken at appropriate levels – will make the most effective use of their survey results, streamline their company's overall effectiveness and will also improve engagement at all employee levels.

About ETS

ETS (Expert Training Systems plc) is a talent management company that services UK and international companies. It is a leading provider of tailor-made, web-based systems and services. Each ETS solution is developed to meet exactly the client's requirements. Our aim is to delight our customers through creating their ideal solution and through excellent customer service.

Our principal areas of expertise are in the design, development and hosting of solutions for performance management, 360-degree feedback and employee research.

Expert Training Systems plc
123 New Zealand Avenue
Walton on Thames
Surrey KT12 1QA

Tel: +44 (0) 1932 222 700
Fax: +44 (0) 1932 222 808

www.etsplc.com

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