

Regular staff surveys are valuable and informative

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*My own organisation (a higher education provider) places considerable value on regular staff surveys - usually completed at the end of each teaching/study period. A **regular staff survey** is valuable because it gives an organisation a consistent way to understand how employees are feeling, what is working well, and where improvements are needed.*

The key ingredient is to limit the number of questions (no one wants to spend time working through an extensive set of questions) – I recommend seven (7) to eight (8) quantitative questions (using the Likert scale 1-5) – followed by the option of one (1) or two (2) qualitative opportunities along the lines of ‘what is good about the organisation’ and ‘what could be improved’. Further, surveys are best conducted independently – that is using a third party to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. I suggest staff are given a week to complete the task – this keeps the momentum and response times tighter.

The benefits of regular staff surveys are multiple including -

Improving communication – Staff can share honest feedback, including issues they may not raise directly. This is where the anonymity (and confidentiality is important) and best handled by an independent third party.

Identifying problems early – Regular surveys can highlight concerns about a range of matters including workload, morale, leadership, or workplace culture before they grow and become critical issues. Equally important is to share the survey outcomes and make every effort (where feasible) to make necessary adjustments to the workplace to address any specific concerns. This is not always possible – but should always be considered as critical.

Supporting better decision-making – Leaders can always (and should) use real feedback to guide policies, training, and workplace changes. Again, wherever feasible ‘connect the dots’ – that is always demonstrate that management is listening and acting upon suggestions.

Boosting employee engagement – When staff feel heard, they are more likely to feel valued and committed. There is little doubt in my mind that following up on key suggestions for improvement (in particular) will have significant impact of staff satisfaction levels (and morale). So, if you ask for input – best to act on it.

Tracking progress over time – Repeated (regular) surveys show whether actions taken are improving the workplace. This ongoing monitoring is critical in any organisation. Three or four times a year is ideal – and it never hurts to compare results along the way.

Encouraging accountability – Survey results can help managers/leaders focus on areas that need attention and measure follow-through. If handled appropriately ongoing feedback can be most useful in solving internal problems. This in turn endorses accountability.

Regular staff surveys are valuable because they help organisations listen to employees, strengthen workplace culture, and make informed improvements based on real feedback. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity – in a number of settings – to call on the longitudinal data produced from regular staff surveys and use it to make improvements to both conditions and morale.

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