

Communication Strategies to Ensure Your Employee Survey is a Success

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Once the decision has been made to conduct an employee survey, it is important for the organization to begin building momentum. A well-done employee survey will rely on participation from the members of the organization on its design, administration, participation and follow-through. Therefore, it becomes essential to ensure that communication supports the entire process from development to execution of related organizational development objectives.

Communication

One message should stay the same and be communicated frequently and consistently throughout the organization: The survey process is a priority of top leadership and it is aimed at helping the organization take care of its most important asset—its people.

Now, simply putting that phrase on a few bulletin boards rides a bit shy on being thorough, but there are many options for communication vehicles for your message. Of course using posters to disseminate your information is a great way to provide visual options for promoting the upcoming employee survey. Another way to spread the word about the survey process is to place a prominent article in your employee newsletter. Additionally, developing an intranet website to present all the relevant information about the employee survey is an excellent vehicle of communication. It is also important to include a section on the intranet for Frequently Asked Questions about Employee Surveys (FAQs).

Other ways to increase employee awareness of an employee survey effort include a payroll stuffer, tacking up posters in meeting places and high traffic areas, and putting table tents in the break rooms. It might be effective to have a “Survey Kick-off Event.”

There should also be one-on-one communication with employees, such as a survey participation letter or email. In addition, there may also be situations when specialized employee populations receive a focused message such as “Notification to Supervisors of Employees without Email” or a “Reminder to Supervisors of Employees without Email.”

Another must-do is to have a clear and consistent message coming from top leadership. In order to accomplish this, it is imperative that the message come from the top in several ways. For starters, have a “CEO Launch Message” that is shared with all employees through whatever manner is used for mass internal communication. As a follow-up, it would be advantageous to have a “CEO Message to Managers,” encouraging them to support their employees’ participation in the survey. Send an additional email to the senior management team (or to all VPs and above) detailing expectations for acting as champions during this process and for presenting an overview of the survey process and what the timeline will entail. A final follow-up such as an “Executive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)” may be helpful if the CEO tends to receive many responses with questions.

Branding

Branding can provide an opportunity to create an identity for your organizational effort. In addition, it can be a lot of fun and an opportunity to express some organizational creativity, but the branding effort should also be done with current organizational lingo in mind. Branding is most successful if it encompasses a holistic view of the organization, both internally and externally. Some “survey brands” seem great, but don’t capture the essence of the organization’s values, and the survey effort is lost among mixed messages.

Whether you're branding your first survey or you're working on your twelfth and want to build momentum, some of the basic communication and branding techniques presented here should provide guidance.

Remember, the bottom line is to encourage your employees to participate and provide their honest feedback. Additionally, you'll want to get your employees on board with working through the survey follow-up and organizational change efforts. Happy Branding. ■

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Anne E. Herman, Ph.D., serves as a research consultant for the Kenexa Research Institute. Dr. Herman worked previously for two years as a research consultant for Kenexa's survey team. She has extensive consulting experience in performance management, organizational assessment and change, creativity and innovation, employee selection and promotion, organizational strategy, program evaluation and statistical methodology. Her research interests include problem solving and decision making, creativity and innovation, leadership, organizational motivation, survey design and program effectiveness. Dr. Herman has spoken at many conferences and her research has appeared in several publications. She has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in leadership, business strategy, organizational behavior and behavioral statistics.

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Mohanka has previously worked in Paris, Vienna, India and London and speaks six European and Asian languages. Her background and lingual skills are extremely beneficial in her contact with global Kenexa clients, such as ING, Deutsche Post World Net, PwC and Philips and with operations throughout Europe, North America, Africa, Australasia and Asia. Mohanka holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Paris, a Master degree in marketing from Aston Business School and a degree in English.

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