

# Introducing an Employee Survey into RWE Power

**R**WE Power, a company of the RWE Group, is one of Europe's leading power extraction and generation groups. As Germany's biggest power generator, RWE Power has the full range of energy sources and can therefore draw on its own raw materials. The company employs approximately 17,000 qualified and committed staff who achieve external sales of EUR 6.6 billion a year.

Balance sheet figures are important to RWE Power; however, the company realizes that long-term success is only possible if appropriate account is taken of "soft" factors in addition to "hard" performance parameters. RWE Power recognizes that people make a company. Therefore, it devotes as much respect and care to its staff as to any other resources that may contribute to corporate success.

When the RWE Group initiated its first group-wide employee survey in 2005, it was not enough for the company to only meet the defined minimum requirements (i.e. to ascertain the group-wide motivation index and inform the group of it). Armin Arens, Head of Strategic Personnel Management at RWE Power, and his team have used the employee survey as a tool for making tangible added value. "Our aim is to align our work around corporate strategy and make a significant contribution. It is very important to quantify the contribution of HR and generate reliable data. The employee survey is an ideal tool for doing this."

## Developing the Questionnaire

With Kenexa's support, RWE Power developed an effective questionnaire that represents important factors influencing commitment and enthusiasm in addition to the group-wide

motivation index. Because the RWE motivation index has many different facets that cannot be directly influenced, Kenexa, even in 2005, investigated the key factors that might be used to influence, and therefore, manage the index. Kenexa was successful in its search; special statistical methods made it possible to display a significant link between leadership and motivation. According to Christina Johannig, Employee Survey Project Manager in 2007, "The close link between leadership and motivation attracted a great deal of attention in the company and cast new light on leadership. We were able to experience this during management training, showing a closer link, for example, in terms of power data. As a result, this substantially increased interest in working with the results. Leadership, therefore, not only demonstrates a fair-weather parameter, but a true lever of productivity."

## Linkage Study

This approach was further enhanced by a linkage study carried out by Kenexa in 2007. The analysis displayed a link between leadership behavior and state of health. "By making soft factors quantifiable through the employee survey, we now have a tool that we can use to show that soft facts affect our company results. This has created acceptance of the tool and its results."

The willingness of managers to take the results of the employee survey seriously—to view the results as relevant control data and to discuss the results—has significantly risen since the first survey in 2005. One example of this is the high rate of applications for voluntary managers' training that was offered after the surveys in 2005 and 2007. The training courses, developed with Kenexa, should bring the results of the employee survey closer to managers, making them confident in handling their own data and giving

them an opportunity for discussion with advisors and colleagues. Armin Arens sees the dialogue initiated by the employee survey as a significant benefit. "The survey results are primarily intended to encourage people to talk to one another and discover the reasons for the findings. The goal is actually the path. It is not simply the quality of the derived measures, but also structured discussions in management groups and teams. Most tools aim for a bilateral exchange of views, whereas the employee survey from Kenexa encourages discussion within and between teams."

### Part of the Management Culture

Today, two years after the first survey, the employee survey at RWE Power is already a permanent part of the feedback and management culture. With consistently high participation rates and a willingness to discuss the results, the employee survey enjoys wide acceptance among staff and managers. RWE Power has deliberately chosen a two-year cycle in order to give the managers sufficient time to discuss their own results, work out appropriate measures and promote their implementation since many measures require time to be reflected in behavior.

### Survey Success

This process has been worth it because nearly all the criteria measured in the employee survey have improved since 2005. Existing strengths, such as the above-average commitment to the company, have been further increased and positive developments have clearly arisen from areas for action determined from 2007.

What are the factors that have made this success possible in only two years?

- Company management that clearly supports the employee survey and actively discusses its results
- A competent external partner to support the project in all phases and initiate and implement further developments
- Professional communication before, during and after the survey
- Immediate data analyses to show the potential benefits of the survey
- Compulsory follow-up processes to give managers sufficient support and promote working with the results

Since 2005, Kenexa and RWE Power have worked continuously on further developing the tool. In 2007, the assessment rules, for example, were optimized to enable more managers to obtain feedback about their own management behavior. Deriving recommended target values created an opportunity to incorporate the results from the employee survey in target agreements. Linking instruments and creating synergies to increase the benefits of the survey is the ultimate purpose. Armin Arens is convinced that the employee survey is not just another program that entails work for managers without bringing any direct benefits. It offers true added value for companies by means of linkage with other systems in particular.

The employee survey will remain a living instrument in the future and its ongoing development will continue.

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## About RWE Power AG

RWE Power AG is the power generator in the RWE Group for Continental Europe and is one of the largest European power producers. The company employs approximately 17,000 people and makes a major contribution to the income and strength of the RWE Group. Website: [www.rwe.com](http://www.rwe.com)