



Adding Meaning to Employee Climate Survey Results

by Reg Smith and Hilary Sayers on 14th September 2012

Employee surveys focused on satisfaction, engagement and climate are a common feature of life in many organisations. Typically, these surveys provide insight into what staff think about life at work and what is working or not working in the deal between employer and employee.

In many companies, these surveys provide feedback broken down by organisational unit and quite frequently survey results are factored in to the remuneration of managers and executives. The big question this raises for managers presiding over units reporting less than desired results is “So... what can I do about the issues identified in the survey?”

Many organisations follow up surveys to determine their response to the results. Approaches we have seen include:

- Focus groups that ask employees to clarify specific issues they are concerned about
- 360 degree surveys that give managers and executives a clear view of what employees want to see more or less of from them.

A good example to illustrate the value of further diagnosis is a situation where the staff members in a unit believe they do not receive adequate information to perform their work. This could mean their manager does not effectively pass on critical information or news. Or, it may mean that team members do not speak with each other much and are unaware of the relevance of information they have to their colleagues. Managers need the clarification that comes from deeper probing and discussion with employees.

Organisations that are implementing talent management and retention strategies are likely to be very interested in another aspect of survey analysis. Research has revealed that high-potential employees are engaged somewhat differently to other employees. Whilst both groups value many workplace characteristics in the same way, high potentials are particularly sensitive to four engagement drivers and these largely determine their intent to stay or leave the organisation.

In summary, organisations must ensure they maximise their return on investment in employee surveys. The payoff comes in increased productivity, profitability, quality and customer satisfaction. Understanding the root causes of any problem areas is the foundation for establishing a solid action plan to create an environment where employees take personal stakeholder responsibility for these outcomes.