

Beyond Engagement Surveys

5 Ways to Leverage Engagement Surveys – Organizations, Leaders & Employees

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90% of companies are doing engagement surveys but is that really enough?

Too often I see organisations invest time, money and the hope of their employees in engagement surveys. Don't get me wrong, I am a huge advocate but that comes with a caveat. If you don't have the organisational capacity, time or desire to do something with your survey results then don't bother as running a survey and then doing nothing with the results is far worse than doing nothing at all!

What stops us from really leveraging engagement survey results?

- **Organisational capacity to process and communicate data.**

I have often been called in to take over the data insights and analysis stage of survey projects when organisations realise 1-2 weeks after the survey has closed that they will not have the capacity to analyze the results and compile the required reporting within a reasonable timeframe.

- **The results and data are too macro (i.e. organisational or function wide), which makes it easy for leaders to say that the organisational results are not true for their team.**

Proximity is crucial to making results relevant to leaders and drives responsibility. The more relevant you can make results to leaders whilst maintaining confidentiality the more they will be able to connect their efforts and ability to impact change.

- **Actions and initiatives get lost when things gets busy.**

There is no question that organisational agendas are fully booked if not overflowing. Often, despite the best of intentions, initiatives for change get lost when other priorities take over.

- **Engagement changes over time – there is no fixed destination.**

The attributes that determines a highly engaged employee today will look different in 12 months' time. This moving nature both of the employee experience and the organisation makes sustainable employee engagement over the course of many years a challenge.

- **Engagement is personal.**

Employees must be involved in understanding what needs to change and making that happen.

Employee Engagement or lack thereof is a real problem. It impacts the performance of individuals, the team and their leaders and of course the organisation. Detailed below are 5 suggestions for each area; the organization, leaders and individual employees on how to leverage an engagement survey in your organization

Leveraging Your Engagement Survey Results - Organisations

1. Compile a top-line snapshot report that briefly talks about the top-line results and communicates next steps with regards to analysis and insights.
2. Take the time to analyze results in detail. Understand key messages that are being communicated consistently throughout survey results.
3. Share results with staff and within a reasonable timeframe – transparency is important.
4. Review the next 12-18 months and the organisation's capacity to implement any initiatives and select 1-3 core areas or initiatives to implement. Be clear about how what you are wanting to achieve as an outcome and how you will measure success.

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5. There will always be a few quick win initiatives that come out of survey results and employee suggestions. Be sure to implement a handful of these in the first 100 days post survey results remembering to link their implementation to the survey to prove that things are being done.

Leveraging Your Engagement Survey Results - Leaders

1. Where possible, provide leaders with results relevant to their sphere of influence and responsibilities.
2. Conduct leader briefing sessions where results are communicated and leader action plans established in line with the organisational wide initiatives.
3. Link the engagement experience to core metrics to help leaders understand the impact of engagement on the day-to-day performance of their people i.e. explicitly communicate the WIFM (what's in it for me) to leaders.
4. Schedule follow-up working group sessions (we recommend every 90 days) for leaders to review and share and progress and reset the focus for the coming 90 days.
5. Be clear about how as an organisation leaders are expected to deal with disengaged employees. A clear process or policy provides permission for leaders to take action promptly when they notice behaviour that looks like it is moving towards a disengaged staff member.

Leveraging Your Engagement Survey Results – Individual Employees

1. Communicate – both results and updates with regards to progress being made on committed initiatives.
2. Define what engagement means in your organisation in simple language. Provide some examples about the sorts of behaviours that reflect a highly engaged employee.
3. Set the explicit expectation that we want highly engaged employee with the organisation and share stories of people who are living that workplace experience.
4. Encourage conversations – encourage your employees to be proactive in exploring and talking about their current work place experience. Simple conversations around what they like, don't like, are good at and what's important to them can help frame up these types of conversations.
5. Follow-up – incorporate a conversation around engagement as part of the performance development process to build trust, demonstrate commitment and ensure regular proactive conversations.

If you need some support in leveraging the engagement survey in your organization or want to learn how to drive sustainable Employee Led Engagement in your organisation please contact the Employerability Team.