

Asking the Right Questions on Employee Opinion Surveys



While credit unions today may have the luxury (or the challenge, depending on your viewpoint) of choosing among dozens of candidates for most openings, expect that to change within the coming decade. Even without the prospect that improvements in the economy will eventually create jobs, the impending exit of millions of Baby Boomers from the work force will surely create increased competition for qualified employees in a number of fields in the next few years. This generational shift will have wide-ranging effects for almost every aspect of work organizations. Consequently, credit unions may need to pay more attention to whether and how various demographic characteristics influence employee satisfaction. While this may be difficult for those with low headcounts, larger organizations—especially those with workforces of 100 or more—may find important clues to the

components of employee satisfaction in demographic analysis.

Characteristics such as age and gender do influence what employees value in an employer. Life stage factors (e.g., presence of children in the home, care-taking for elderly parents) can also influence employees' evaluation of job satisfaction.

Recent research by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) points out that demographically based differences in satisfaction are sometimes dramatic. For example, women consider work/life balance and communication far more important to creating a satisfying work environment than men do. SHRM notes evidence provided by interest in flexible work schedules among Generation X and Y men already in the workforce. However, younger men may be more likely to share the female view. In addition, younger men are more likely to be

The times they are a changin'- Bob Dylan

involved in caretaker roles than men of older generations were because women's changed roles no longer make it feasible for women to carry these traditionally female responsibilities alone.

Assessing brand awareness among employees has merit for credit unions on multiple levels. Most significantly, employees serve as the personification of the credit union's brand. Unless they clearly understand what this image is and agree that credit union leadership acts consistently with brand values, they are unlikely to fill this role effectively.

Research has found that brand image can be a factor in both attracting and retaining employees. Maritz Research discovered that in the hospitality industry, for example, 75% of respondents working for companies with strong brand images said they would like to spend their entire career with those firms, compared to just 58% of respondents who worked for companies lacking such images.

Forward-thinking credit unions should begin now to position themselves for success in tomorrow's more competitive labor market. Retooling employee surveys can be one step. To use the employee survey as a planning tool rather than a retrospective evaluation, it should accomplish one or more of the following:

- 1 Identify the preferences of particular employee groups that you wish to target in order to ensure the organization meets their needs.
- 2 Identify common elements of satisfaction that spread across all groups in the workforce and focus on those.
- 3 Assess employees' understanding of the credit union's brand.
- 4 Assess employee perceptions of how credit union policies and procedures carry out the brand image.

Sample Employee Survey Questions

1 = Strongly agree with/encourage
5 = Strongly disagree with/discourage

If an employee in your department talks openly about problems facing it, such as disagreements between staff members or personality conflicts, other department employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee in your department were to criticize a co-worker who is trying to make improvements in the job, other employees in the department would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee at your credit union makes an effort to get to know the people he or she works with, the majority of other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If a credit union employee expresses concern for the well-being of other employees, most of his or her co-workers would:

1 2 3 4 5

If a credit union employee expresses concern for the well-being of members, most of his or her co-workers would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee at your credit union takes advantage of a fellow employee, the majority of other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee in your credit union began to experiment with changes in procedure in order to do something more efficiently, most other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee in your credit union suggests a new idea or a new way of doing a task, most other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee at your credit union talks openly about the organization and its problems, the majority of other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee in your department were to suggest going to the boss with an idea or recommendation, most other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee in your department were to suggest confronting the manager about a mistake or about some aspect of his or her management style that is creating problems in the department, most other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

If an employee in your credit union provides perfectly honest answers to this questionnaire, the majority of other employees would:

1 2 3 4 5

For more information about DHA's employee opinion surveys, contact Brian Kidwell at 800.367.0433 ext. 125.