

# Center Solutions

Ideas for Today's Workplace from the Center for Organization Effectiveness, Inc.

Volume 9

## Why Conduct an Employee Opinion Survey?

*A well-designed survey can help your organization:*

- *Understand system-wide and unit-specific issues*
- *Gauge the impact of corporate values*
- *Establish benchmarks*
- *Provide input to business plans*

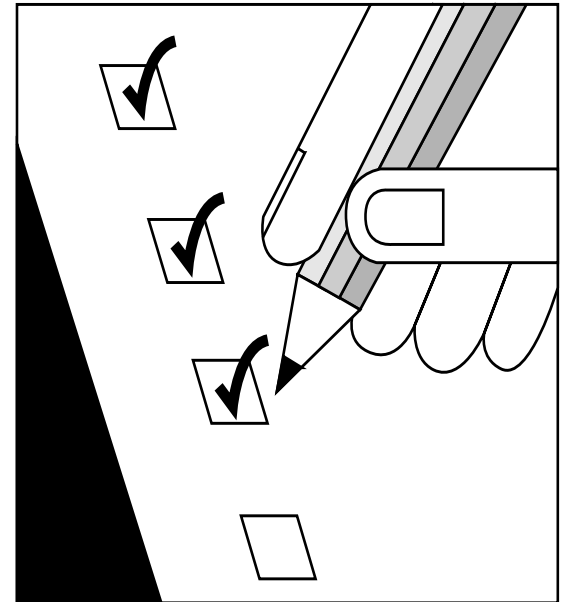
Does your management team have its finger on the pulse of your organization? Do you know what employees think of it? Are they looking elsewhere? Do you know what it takes to keep them satisfied with and loyal to your organization? An employee opinion survey might help you answer these and other critical questions.

In the last issue of *Center Solutions* we talked about the importance of understanding corporate culture when implementing organizational change. We also compared culture assessments and employee opinion surveys to show how their focus and uses differ. Culture studies can inform an organization's *strategy* by defining its characteristics and deeply held beliefs. Employee opinion surveys are tools for improving organizational *practice*. They focus on individual attitudes about policies and procedures in areas such as communication, managerial behavior, career opportunities, and pay and benefits.

In this issue we'll expand on the topic of employee opinion surveys. With four client examples, we'll show some of the many ways you can use survey results in your organization.

### Focus on One Division's Issues

The results of an insurance firm's company-wide survey pointed to some problems in one of its major divisions. However, they didn't give the new division vice president specific enough information to create appropriate solutions. So he asked us to design a survey that specifically



focused on this division's issues such as training, availability of support resources, and direct supervision. Those results enabled the division management team to implement specific changes to improve division performance and employee morale.

### Compare System-wide and Unit Issues

A division leadership team within a national transportation company wanted to hear employees' perceptions of what was working and what areas needed improvement, both system-wide and at their specific unit level. An initial survey enabled them to identify specific issues, establish benchmark measurements, and set priorities for improvement. A follow-up survey enabled them to see improvements both at the system level and the unit level that have resulted in sharing best practices internally, strengthening individual unit performance, and improving system-wide results.

Center for Organization Effectiveness, Inc.

*Our purpose is to help foster and build effective organizations. Organizations that are enduring and great.*

*This newsletter is a part of that effort. If you know others who should be on our mailing list, please write or email their name and address.*

*The Center for Organization Effectiveness staff includes:  
Diane Hamilton  
Wayne Reschke  
Lori Gibson  
Margery Sorensen  
Richard Cederholm  
Shawn Kruckman*

## Confirm Employees' Commitment to Company Values

For some organizations, the values statement is little more than weighty words on paper. Others want their products, service, and work environment to embody those values. We conducted a survey for just such a company in the high-tech industry to gauge the vigor of its vision on the job. We quoted from its documents in the survey questions and asked employees if they felt the statements reflected the reality they encountered at work. The company received an unambiguous "yes" in response, affirming that their corporate values are at work.

## Establish a Benchmark and Direction for a Growing Company

A small and steadily growing public utility did its first opinion survey to learn what employees thought of the emerging organization and their place in it. Since they had no specific areas of concern, we created the survey using questions from our own database. The results confirmed several ways in which management could strengthen communication with employees. The senior management team prepared a detailed action plan to present to employees along with survey results.

As these four examples show, there are many different reasons to conduct an employee opinion survey. A well-designed survey can help an organization understand system-wide and unit-specific issues, gauge the impact of values at work, establish benchmarks, and provide input to plans that will affect employee retention and business results.

We've recently added sample surveys to our website! Visit our site at [www.greatorganizations.com](http://www.greatorganizations.com). You'll find sample instruments and reports for employee opinion surveys as well as 360-Degree Feedback and Executive Development. For more information, contact us:  
E-mail: [info@greatorganizations.com](mailto:info@greatorganizations.com)  
Phone: 1-800-209-5241  
or 608-833-3332  
Fax: 608-833-3363