

# Center Solutions

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

Fall 1998



## *Hit the Hot Button!*

*Tell us what you think about your consultants, the good, the bad and the ugly. The Center has added a hot button to its home page that will take you directly to our "consultant survey". We'll keep the hot button activated until September 15 and report on the results in our winter newsletter.*

## Thinking About Conducting An Employee Survey?

*by Diane Hamilton, Partner*

### Some Considerations Before You Pass out the Pencils

Many organizations consider the value of employee opinion surveys at one time or another. They seem like the right thing to do. Getting input. Listening to employees. Creating involvement opportunities. So, what's the concern? While opinion surveys can send a message that management genuinely values employee input, they could cause more harm than good if done incorrectly.

Common mistakes in conducting surveys include:

- Conducting the survey for the wrong reason. Prior to a survey undertaking, your management team should be clear about why they want to conduct a survey. Some questions to consider include:
  - What do you want to measure? Why?
  - Is a survey the best method for gathering information?
  - How will the data be used?
  - Is management prepared to respond to employee concerns?

- Failing to consider timing. Conducting a survey in the middle of or just after a major change effort may not give you a true picture of the organization.
- Ignoring the conditions under which data will be gathered. Create conditions that promote honest responses and minimize employees' fear of exposure.
- Being inadequately prepared to manage the results. Be prepared for a full range of responses – both positive and negative. Respond quickly to employees' issues and communicate findings and next steps.

In determining whether and how to use a survey in your organization, we recommend front-line employees be included in the planning process. Up-front input can help address the questions and concerns previously outlined.

*For more information about employee surveys, see our website, [www.greatorganizations.com](http://www.greatorganizations.com).*



*Diane Hamilton, Partner*

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 partners are:  
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## Is Knowledge Management Just a Fad?

by Margery Sorensen, Associate Partner

### Roundtable Sparks Discussion

This summer the Center facilitated three roundtable discussions with people from three dozen organizations. The first session was Managing Intellectual Capital.

Participants agreed that building and retaining knowledge is key to an organization's success and that it needs to be managed. However, managing knowledge isn't an end in itself; it must be linked to corporate strategy and ultimately to serving customers. Without this link, knowledge management becomes another costly distraction.

Also, participants observed that corporate culture and values about employee retention impact knowledge management. Companies favoring long term employment can build a strong internal knowledge base over time, particularly with tacit knowledge. Companies tolerating more turnover believe they can acquire new knowledge faster by bringing in outside resources.

*More information about managing intellectual capital and our roundtable discussion can be found on our website, [www.greatorganizations.com](http://www.greatorganizations.com).*

*How can organizations increase employee resilience during organizational change? The Center, along with organizations partnering in the Center's Organizational Learning Series (OLS), began studying this question last fall. Now, organizations from around the world are participating in a resilience survey designed by the OLS team. We are measuring the characteristics of resilient individuals and the organizational practices that foster and inhibit resiliency. Interested in learning more or participating in the survey process? Contact us at 608-833-3332 or visit us at our website, [www.greatorganizations.com](http://www.greatorganizations.com).*

*Contact the Center today for more information or a free initial consultation. We offer comprehensive assessment, consulting and educational services.*



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