

Checked Your Pulse Lately?

I don't know about your doctor, but every time I visit mine, as I'm explaining why I am there, she's immediately checking my blood pressure. Yes, she wants to diagnose my current situation, but she also likes to keep up to speed with my overall health. Organizations are no different.

As we go about our daily work routines we get totally absorbed in solving the daily "ills" – the problems of the day, losing sight of the overall health of our business. It is rare that business owners take the opportunity to seek structured feedback from its employees about "How things are going around here". Taking a regular "pulse" check of your business will help you make important, unbiased strategic decisions that will benefit employee morale and performance.

Most organizations are very good at measuring their financial pulse, but very poor at asking for, and collecting, information from their biggest asset: their people. This process is usually left until a major decision or disaster needs to be confronted.

I don't think any manager or business owner would argue with me for the need to seek feedback from their people. It's just most managers never get around to it. It needs to be a planned regular process.

Feedback is the highest form of extrinsic motivation. People love to give their opinions; they also need to get feedback on how they are doing and what the organization plans on doing in the future which may impact its employees. However, some employees and managers get stuck in the "I don't want to rock the boat" mould.

Setting up a systemized process to collect views and opinions about the way your organization operates, or perhaps, seek opinions about a proposed change – for example, moving location, or putting in a new computer system – information that can be invaluable.

With today's technology, collecting anonymous opinions and feedback from employees is a piece of cake no matter if you are a group of 10 or 1000. Questions can be customized. Responses can be a simple 1 to 5 rating or text responses. Responses can be analyzed via departments, functional levels etc.

I have seen some great information coming back to management from a simple 10 minute survey. Usually these surveys are conducted 6 monthly or annually. Several questions are standard so a benchmark can be established with additional questions added to address current issues.

Setting up and conducting a survey is quick and simple and report generation is automatic, allowing quick reaction to data received. Employees are given a website to log onto. All responses are anonymous; this is critical to honest

feedback. Costs depend on organization size and levels of customization, but most clients do a quick Pulse Survey for around \$850 to \$1500.

Getting an unbiased pulse on your organization is money well spent. Whether you are interested in understanding your employees' job satisfaction, opinions on your leadership, feedback on new company policies, programs etc, the information received will give you a strong base for future decision making instead of relying on hearsay or emotional, gut-feel judgments.

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