

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: THE SECRET TO POST-PANDEMIC REVIVAL

While still recovering from a whirlwind year, how can we best plan for the future in a way that motivates our employees to help propel our organisations through the economic recovery ahead? As the situation continues to change, an agile organisational response is required on both an operational and a strategic level. Having an accurate understanding of the past year and our current position is essential for getting our future right. Whether your future is a return to the office, a completely virtual workplace, or somewhere in between, understanding the things that make a tangible impact on your employees will be necessary for business stability going forward.

An eventful year means a survey may uncover new and valuable information for your organisation. One silver-lining of the last 12 months has been the mass opportunity for self-reflection. Unexpected events, such as a pandemic, jolt us out of our comfort zones and force us to reflect. During the pandemic, many people have been rethinking their careers with certain demographics being shown to be at an increased risk of feeling isolated if remote working. A third of British workers feel less connected to their workplace culture and colleagues due to the ongoing situation and 1 in 4 women are considering a new career path as a result of the pandemic. If there is an at-risk group or widespread disconnection among your workforce knowing about this can allow you to better support employees and protect your organisation from unnecessary disruption in an already turbulent time.

This is not to say the results of an employee survey will be negative- large-scale surveys have shown that 69% of employees feel generally positive about their employers' pandemic response. Over the last 12 months, employers have listened and responded fast to introduce new ways of working, communicating, and performing... finding out what has worked and what has not highlights what we should keep and what we need to reinvent. The critical learning here is not simply what employees like but what has created a tangible difference in their engagement levels.

Gathering feedback on employee wellbeing during a time of uncertainty is also a symbol of employer commitment to employees and can help generate a reciprocal response. If your employees are among the many who feel their employer's pandemic response has been appropriate, this is an opportunity to build on that trust and signal your continued support. Conducting an engagement survey and acting on its results can increase engagement in itself. Regardless of how positive your survey results are, your employees have likely identified certain ways you could improve operations that may be simple to implement. Additionally, being able to use data to report on engagement, such as the percentage of staff who believe your company has had an "exceptional response to the remote workplace" could be extremely beneficial for your reputation and organisational confidence, while constructive responses can be used to better the organisation.



WHAT SHOULD IT LOOK LIKE?

Your survey doesn't need to be lengthy, fancy, or resource-intensive, it just needs to provide you with meaningful results. Every company will have different requirements when it comes to measuring employee engagement however there are some general rules you should use to shape your survey:

- The anonymity offered by employee surveys can increase the likelihood that people will share their true feelings. Larger organisations may collect demographic data while keeping their survey anonymous, but smaller organisations must be careful to balance this or to emphasise confidentiality.
- Change is constant. The challenges and opportunities of one week may be forgotten the next- implementing a pulse survey may be a way for you to monitor engagement and act on it quickly enough to remain relevant and reactive.
- It should be easy for employees to complete. Those who feel least engaged unfortunately are the least likely to participate. You can help to mitigate this by promoting your survey well in advance, promising action from its results, and keeping it short and relevant.
- A segmented survey- which gathers essential demographic data while allowing respondents to remain anonymous- can provide valuable information to allow you to target your employee initiatives in a meaningful way.
- Focus on areas that are interesting to your employees such as safety, security, professional relationships, and personal purpose. This means that they are a) more likely to complete the survey and b) you are more likely to be able to introduce meaningful initiatives from the results and reinforce mutual trust and commitment with your employees.

PANEL DISCUSSION: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT POST-PANDEMIC

with Think People Consulting, Norbrook & the Office of Government Procurement

In this session our guests shared their different experiences of understanding and retaining employee engagement through the last year and their plans for maintaining a listening culture to inform decisions about post-COVID working environments that build thriving work cultures and optimise engagement and wellbeing as we move forward.

We were joined by:

- Kathryn Whyte, Head of People and Culture, Office of Government Procurement
- Denise Collins, Human Resources Director, Norbrook
- Emer Hinphey, Managing Partner, Think People Consulting

**ON-DEMAND ONLINE EVENT.
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