How Do You Know If You Do Not Ask?



8 steps to initiating brief workforce surveys to gain engagement and support change

Why do we ask questions? Sometimes we ask questions just to start a dialogue or sustain a conversation with other people. Sometimes we ask because want to learn something for ourselves. Other times we ask questions to obtain information what another person needs, wants, or knows.

Why do you ask your employees questions?

Asking questions in the workplace is a vital part of communications, identifying needs, and building morale. Asking questions of your employees is a good way to learn what they know and to understand what they think and feel. We recently asked HR Insider readers a question about workforce surveys and this is what you told us.

Poll Question: How frequently do you conduct formal surveys of your workforce?

1. Rarely, 1 or less per year
2. At least 1 per quarter
3. 2 – 3 per quarter
4. Regularly, at least once per month
5. All the time on everything

1 Time Or Less Per Year Gets Win

The response we heard from readers was overwhelmingly one sided. Over three quarters, 77% of readers, told us they have never surveyed their staff at all, or at most, 1 time per year. 23% indicated that they had conducted at least one survey per quarter.

A formal survey of your employees once a year is enough to gain big picture data regarding your organization’s overall performance. The problem with an annual survey, however, is it can miss subtle and important details about employee’s ongoing needs.

While you may only want to conduct a formal employee engagement survey once per year, be sure to conduct pointed surveys to identify trends or potential issues as they occur.

Inform Your Monthly Q & A

Engage your employees monthly with a brief Question and Answer survey on a specific topic such as health and wellness, workplace concerns, or perceptions of job leadership. Post a five to six question survey on your internal website. Other options include using email or using Survey Monkey to conduct an anonymous survey.

8 Quick Steps For Regular Employee Surveys Results and Actions

1. Keep your goal in mind. Identify the purpose of these brief surveys.
2. Run your survey purpose by leadership/management to gain buy in from the top.
3. Select an appropriate survey population – you do not need to survey everyone each time.
4. Select an opening and closing time for the survey.
5. Determine the type of survey questions: multiple choice, Likert scale, open-ended, or personal interview.
6. Determine how you will conduct and distribute the survey.
7. Write 5-6 pointed questions.
8. Conduct the survey.
9. Gather and process the results.
10. Share the results widely. Build momentum, participation, and engagement by showing your commitment to hear from your workforce.
11. Follow-up with actions. The advantage of brief, pointed, and simple surveys is they can often be easily actionable and can facilitate changes or items you already wanted to initiate. A survey on health and wellness or morale could lead to an organization wide fitness challenge day. Referencing survey results is a great way to demonstrate that you are listening to your employees.

Don’t wait once per year to capture a bunch of information from your employees. Take a few minutes at least once a quarter or more frequently and use the opportunity to ask some questions of your employees.