

Top 10 Comment Themes Found In Employee Surveys



HR Solutions, Inc., a Chicago-based management consulting firm specializing in Employee Engagement Surveys, recently analyzed recurring themes in employee surveys and compiled the following top 10 list:

1. Higher salaries – pay is the number one area in which employees seek change.
2. Internal pay equity, particularly having concerns with “pay compression” (the differential in pay between new and more tenured employees).
3. Benefits programs, particularly health/dental, retirement, and Paid Time Off/vacation days. Specifically, many employees feel that their health insurance costs too much, especially prescription drug programs.
4. “Over-management” (A common phrase seen in employee comments is “Too many chiefs, not enough Indians”).
5. Pay increase guidelines should place greater emphasis on merit.
6. The Human Resource department needs to be more responsive to their questions and/or concerns.
7. Favoritism.
8. Improved communication and availability (both from their supervisors and upper management).
9. Workloads are too heavy and/or departments are understaffed.
10. Facility cleanliness.

Jennifer Rand, Principal Consultant with HR Solutions, explained how the written comments can be slightly different than the feedback gathered during feedback sessions with employees. “Most of what the consultants hear during the feedback sessions supports in great detail the themes of the written comments. The comments most prevalent are usually those things that have changed, whether negative or positive, i.e. benefits, since it is human nature to resist change.”

Organizations should not overlook the write-in comment section of their employee survey as Quick Wins oftentimes originate from it. In fact, Quick Wins are the more easily implemented, actionable improvements to the workplace setting or environment that involve little resource investment and produce immediate improvements in employee engagement. These small, quickly made improvements further reinforce to employees that management is acting on the findings from the survey.

The job satisfaction study included over 2.2 million respondents with 2,100 organizations representing various industries, all surveyed during the past three years by HR Solutions, Inc.