



Employee Satisfaction Surveys

How to Administer, Communicate and
Effectively Respond to Satisfaction Surveys

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Employee Opinion Surveys

How to Administer, Communicate and
Effectively Respond to Opinion Surveys

*“Where an opinion is general, it is usually correct.”
Jane Austen, Mansfield Park*

What You’ll Learn In This Book

- ❑ Why use an employee opinion survey?
- ❑ Tips on designing an effective opinion survey
- ❑ How to administer a survey to overcome potential administration errors
- ❑ How to tabulate your survey information
- ❑ The best ways to communicate survey results to your employees
- ❑ What to do with your survey information once you’ve communicated it to employees
- ❑ Legal issues regarding the conduct of opinion surveys

Why Use an Opinion Survey?

There are three important reasons to use an opinion survey. Surveys provide a road map for problem solving, facilitate communication in companies that do not communicate well and provide a baseline from which a company can benchmark progress.

Road Map: Effectively administered surveys provide critical information about the primary problem areas and map out the most logical path to solutions. Surveys identify problem areas particular to specific groups and those common to the company. This information provides a road map and priority list for dealing with problems in all areas. The order in which problems are dealt with is not always dictated by the

ones employees feel worst about. Nevertheless, ranking the issues first puts some logic into the system of designing a plan for attacking employee relations problems.

Facilitate Communication: It is also critical to initiate communication by asking for employee input and appropriately responding to that input when it is received. The most effective method for gleaning opinions from employees and formulating a response is a formal survey. By conducting an employee opinion survey and communicating the results of the survey, a company is well positioned to formalize a communication process in its workforce.

Benchmark Progress: Finally, the survey results provide a snapshot of employee attitude at a moment in the life of your company. Starting from this point you can later identify, in an objective and scientific way, whether the company is making progress or backsliding. While administering a survey is not the only method of providing this benchmark, the information gained provides a background with which to interpret other necessary data such as turnover statistics and numbers of grievances or complaints filed by employees. Survey information is a critical piece of the puzzle and, if used properly, can pinpoint areas for improvement.

Tips on designing an effective opinion survey

The survey format that you will be using is called “*anonymous forced response.*” An example of our basic survey form can be found in Appendix 1 at the back of this manual. The anonymous forced response survey is a form containing various statements regarding your work environment. Respondents are

forced to mark their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements.

Advantages: One advantage of this type of survey is its anonymity. The survey can be administered in such a way that members of management are precluded from seeing the actual survey questionnaires filled out by employees. This promise of anonymity helps some employees overcome the fear of negative job implications for answering questions honestly. As a result, most employees feel that they can be more candid in this type of survey.

It is important to note that even this type of survey can have skewed results. For example, in a unit where a group of employees conspire to answer all questions negatively or positively, the results obviously will be inaccurate. This problem is not unique to the anonymous forced response survey, but it can be more difficult to detect.

Potential Problems: The primary disadvantage of the anonymous forced response survey is that the information gathered is limited by the specificity of the questions asked. If the questions are not framed properly, employees may not be able to communicate all the problems or concerns they face. Otherwise there is a risk that the wording of a single question might skew responses toward the positive or negative.

Obviously the wording of the statements is very important. Review all the statements in your proposed survey form to ensure that they apply to your company. For example, if a statement asks about emergency medical or training facilities and you work in an office environment, the chances are that this statement will receive a poor rating; more important

you will have missed an opportunity to get feedback on an issue important to your workforce.

You should revise the statements to reflect your work environment. You may want to get supervisors or a small sample of employees to help you review the form for its content and to suggest changes. Another way to deal potential wording problems is to ask several statements about a particular issue. This way you can control somewhat for problems with the wording of a particular statement.

Open-ended questions are another good thing to add to forced response surveys. This provides a method to voice issues not covered in the forced response section, or for clarification of answers to that section. While some employees may not respond to the open-ended questions (fearful that management might see the surveys) it provides a good way to correct for any problems in crafting the forced-response questions. Concerns about anonymity can also be handled during the administration of the survey.

Constructing The Survey

Our survey asks for employee opinion in the following 10 categories:

- Work Conditions
- Job Satisfaction
- Company Pride
- Pay and Benefits
- Advancement
- Training
- Immediate Supervisor
- Communications
- Work Relations
- Top Management

We typically ask seven statements in each category in a “Likert-type” scale (each statement is ranked from 1 to 7, 1 being most disagreement and 7 being most

agreement).¹ In this way we avoid the wording of one statement skewing the survey results. The scores on these seven statements are then combined to get the category score. At the conclusion of this book (See Appendix 1) is a sample basic survey, to give an idea of format.

You can customize the form to include statements or even categories that you think are more appropriate for your work environment. You can also change statement wording where you feel that the suggested statements are not appropriate for your workplace. However, make sure that the changes are thought through carefully; we have thousands of clients who have used the wording in the basic survey—custom statements will not have this kind of track record. This does not necessarily make them wrong (many times a client will change one or two statements on the basic survey that don't seem to fit their workplace). But take care when changing statements.

Statement wording should be carefully considered. Statements should not be vague or subject to varied interpretations. They should cover observable behavior as opposed to thoughts or motives.² Since the Likert-type scale is designed to capture degree of agreement or disagreement, it is better to word questions directly and mildly positive or negative (“My immediate supervisor treats workers

¹ There is some debate in the academic literature regarding the validity of using various numbers of response categories in a Likert-type scale (i.e. 5, 7, 9 or more responses). Cf. PAUL KLINE, *HANDBOOK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING* 189 (2d ed. 2000) (7-point scale is most reliable) *with* LEWIS R. AIKEN, *RATING SCALES & CHECKLISTS* 238 (1996) (5-point scale best, although 7-point scale may be best where range of attitudes are small). We prefer the 7-item scale for employee attitude measurement.

² See Palmer Morrel-Samuels, “Getting the Truth Into Workplace Surveys,” *Harvard Business Review* 111-118 (February 2002).

consistently” is better than “Managers usually treat workers well”).

Survey designers sometimes add even more reliability into the instrument by some of the statements in the positive and some in the negative (*i.e.* “My immediate supervisor treats workers consistently” and “My immediate supervisor does not treat workers consistently”), preventing someone from skewing results by marking the same answer on every statement.³ This is an option on our survey, although most of our clients choose to keep the statement wording consistent due to the reading level of the survey participants. We typically word our survey statements all in the positive, so employees are not confused during the survey.

It can also help to ask a few items that can be independently verified.⁴ For example, you may want to ask a statement that you know is false, expecting a low rating on that statement. You could also ask about items that can be verified through data that is kept by other departments or for other purposes (production records, HR reports or other data).

Most of our clients use the model survey form in Appendix 1 as their format. If you decide to customize your form, use these survey construction principles to guide your changes. Any time you change your survey form you should discuss those changes with your survey consultant.

³ See KLINE, *supra* note 7, at 188-190 (2000).

⁴ See Morrel-Samuels, *supra* note 8.

Administering Your Survey

Administering Opinion Surveys

Make sure you read the following instructions carefully, prior to administering the first group of surveys. There are a number of administration issues that can skew survey results. For example, where management retaliation is an issue, less candid results are obtained if a management employee administers or gathers the completed surveys. Another important factor is to administer the survey to groups of employees in as similar circumstances as possible. For example, large time gaps between survey administration periods can alter results markedly. We recommend that companies conduct surveys in small blocks of time, no longer than a week.

It is very important for these instructions to be followed exactly. Survey conditions should be as similar for each group taking the survey as is possible. Following these instructions will help to ensure that the results accurately reflect the attitudes of your workforce.

Announce the Survey

About a week before actually administering the survey, announce that your company is going to conduct the survey. Use a memo along the lines of the following:

November 26, 2008

To: All Employees
From: Your Name
Subject: Employee Opinion Survey

I am pleased to announce that during the week of _____ we will be conducting an Employee Opinion Survey at all _____ locations. The purpose of the survey is to get your honest opinion about a wide variety of issues relative to your job here at _____.

The survey will be conducted by an outside company who conducts surveys like this for organizations throughout the United States. No member of management will ever see your completed survey form.

The survey is completely confidential. The survey form does not ask for your name or any other type of personal identification. After all forms have been completed, they are sent to our outside consultants for processing and evaluation.

Our survey consultants will prepare a comprehensive report that summarizes your collective responses. Shortly after they give us this report we will share the results with you. Then, working with you, we will develop a plan to improve our weaknesses and build on our strengths to make _____ an even better place to work.

Organization Identification and Sub-group Selection

Normally your organization's department and sub-group identification information will be printed on page 1. Otherwise, there are blank lines on the

Opinion Survey form asking for this information. The first line asks for the Name of Organization. This is the name of your company or facility. This may be provided by the survey participants or may be pre-printed in advance on the survey form. If the participants are to provide this information, everyone should be instructed to fill in this space exactly the same way. Using abbreviations or initials could cause confusion when the data is processed.

Immediately following Name of Organization, you may find blank spaces numbered 1,2 and 3, or pre-printed designations (like department, shift or plant location). Before administering the survey, you must decide how you want the survey group sub-divided. Your survey report will contain one set of graphs for the entire survey group, plus additional sets of graphs for up to three of the sub-groups you select. This allows you to examine the responses of the sub-groups and compare those responses with the total survey group.

Most organizations select sub-groups according to Shift, Job Classifications, Department, Length of Service, etc. Select any three sub-groups that are most appropriate for your organization; you are encouraged to determine these in conjunction with your LRI Advisor. After selecting your three sub-groups, you must decide how to incorporate that information into the survey form. There are several ways to do this:

You may have this information pre-printed on your survey form and instruct participants to circle the sub-groups which apply. Make sure each group is told

which sub-groups apply to which positions so every participant knows what group they should circle. Also, make sure participants know to designate only one sub-group per category (only one department, only one shift).

You may advise survey participants of the three sub-groups at the time the survey is conducted and instruct them to circle the number representing their individual sub-group. For example, you may tell participants that sub-groups will be determined according to shifts and then instruct them to circle number 1, 2 or 3 according to whether they work the first, second or third shift. It is not mandatory for LRI to know what numbers 1, 2 and 3 represent; but be certain that only one number is circled on each form.

You may ask each survey participant to write in each of the sub-group definitions and then circle the one that represents their sub-group.

Administration

Some organizations believe that participant responses will be more honest if an outside third party administers the survey and mails the completed forms back to LRI without any member of management seeing or even touching the forms. If you feel that your survey would benefit from administration by an outside source, you may contact a local minister, attorney, judge or any other person who the survey group would believe insures total anonymity of the responses. Some clients have a member of the survey group handle the administration and mailing, thereby assuring employees that management will never see their responses.

Please note that the only duty of the administrator is to read the instructions to the participants and collect and mail the completed forms to LRI. The only reason to have an outside administrator is to provide the assurance of total confidentiality.

Administrator's Instructions to Participants

If your survey will be conducted in two or more sessions, it is helpful if the instructions to participants are exactly the same or as close to exactly the same as possible. We suggest that you write out the instructions and have the survey administrator read the instructions to each group of participants. The survey should be administered to each employee group with as little time between as possible to avoid the sharing of responses or changes in conditions which would impact the survey results. Here is an example of survey instructions:

Today, we are asking you to take a few minutes to participate in an opinion survey. The results of this survey will allow us to learn exactly what you as a group think and feel about a number of issues concerning your work environment. This will allow management to consider your collective opinions when making decisions. Your responses to this survey are completely confidential. Please do not sign the survey form. After I give you a few instructions, please complete the survey and place your completed form in the envelope located _____. After everyone has completed the survey, I will seal the envelope and mail it to our outside survey consulting firm for statistical analysis. Remember that the survey forms are anonymous and your answers are totally confidential. No member of management will ever see your completed survey form or know how you respond. This company will compile your responses

and make a report detailing the collective responses of everyone who participates. After we receive this report, we will share the results with you. To begin, please read the first page of the form. Do not turn the page until I tell you.

[Allow enough time for everyone to read page 1, or, if you prefer, read page 1 aloud.]

In the middle of the page you will see an area where you can select your location, department or other information. This is used by the survey consultants to analyze whether particular work groups feel significantly different about work issues than the general population. Remember that your individual identity is completely anonymous and that our survey consultants do not report back information to us on groups with fewer than 10 respondents.

Please find the department in which you work and circle it. If you have a question about your department, or feel you could fit into more than one designation, pick the one which most closely matches your job or in which you spend the most time. Circle any other demographic information that applies (discuss specific demographic designations as appropriate). Again, if you work on more than one area, circle the one on which you've worked the most in the last few months.

Now, read the sample survey statement. Do not turn the page until everyone has finished reading.

[Allow enough time for everyone to read the sample survey statement.]

Does anyone have any questions about how to complete the survey form?

[Answer any questions.]

There are a couple of terms you need to be familiar with. When the survey refers to a supervisor, this means your immediate boss. When the survey refers to upper management, this means (all other managers that a supervisor reports to or another definition suited to your company's circumstances). When you finish the survey, please check to be sure you have identified your employee group and answered all 70 questions. Please do not fold the survey, as this delays processing of the results. Place your completed survey in the envelope located _____ and return to work. All right, begin.

After all of the surveys have been completed, the administrator should seal the envelope containing the completed survey forms and mail it to LRI via your preferred mailing service. Sealing the envelope in front of the survey participants can reassure employees that their responses will remain confidential. Sometimes companies will have an hourly employee survey participant put the survey forms in the envelope and mail them. Again, the key is to make sure employees are certain that the survey forms are kept confidential. LRI will provide return mailing labels upon request.

Tabulating Survey Results

One of the most important aspects of conducting an employee opinion survey is tabulating the results appropriately. A scientific, statistical approach must be used to tabulate this information in order to achieve optimal results. Collecting groups of random comments without proper categorizing is a sure recipe for disorganization and, ultimately, failure. Issues must be coordinated among logical employee work groups in order to clearly plan how to attack problems that are identified (and even which problems to attack). No matter which method of gathering opinion is utilized, it is necessary to organize the data in a way that is useful for strategy and planning purposes.

The first principle of organizing opinion survey data is to group comments into categories of opinion. For example, comments regarding pay and benefits should be separated from comments regarding policies, procedures and other matters. The table below lists the categories of behavior LRI Management Services assesses during employee opinion surveys. Of course, categories can be added or subtracted based on the specific needs and issues of the company.

Work Conditions	Training
Job Satisfaction	Immediate Supervisor
Company Pride	Communications
Pay and Benefits	Work Relations
Advancement	Top Management

In addition to categorizing opinion according to question category, the results are also tabulated according to other applicable categories, i.e.:

Department	Length of Service
Shift	Work Cell
Supervisor	Plant Location
Job Classification	Product Line

By breaking survey results down according to these areas, we can pinpoint exactly where problems are occurring in the workforce and where they are not. Failure to break results down into work group categories like these can often hide significant problems in the company. Some groups may be more positive and mask the scores of groups that are more negative. Pivoting the data in these various ways provides the clearest picture of the company and creates opportunities to attack issues that may have remained hidden under other methods.

There can be problems with breaking down data too narrowly. If the size of the work unit is small, or if the number of breakdowns is too numerous, there is the real possibility that only a few employees will fit into any one category. This creates two major problems. First, it can reduce the reliability of data, due to the fact that employees may fear that management will be able to identify individual employees who made a comment. This may result in employees answering untruthfully to statements about their supervisor or management.

There are also legal issues raised by the National Labor Relations Board regarding surveys that identify

the individual making comments (see pages 38-45 for more information). Therefore, it is vital to reach a good balance between enough data to make strong recommendations and too much data, which can negatively impact the results of the survey. Most of this planning should occur in the initial survey design. Work with your LRI advisor to determine the most important categories to use for your organization.

Care should also be taken in determining how opinion is evaluated among the categories and work groupings because there are several different ways to look at issues. For example, one might look at the overall average score in a particular work grouping. Another angle is to compare the percentage of employees who responded favorably to those who responded unfavorably. The results can also reveal specific numbers of employees who have rated statements at various levels of agreement or disagreement along the spectrum. There are advantages and disadvantages to each type of rating, and all three should be used to best analyze issues in a company.

Overall Scores

Overall scores are good for gauging, in general terms, how a group feels about a particular statement or category. These overall scores are misleading at times because extremely high ratings can sometimes mask a significant negative opinion on a question or issue. For example, a department consisting of three shifts may have very strong favorable opinions on first and second shifts but extremely negative opinions on third shift. While a significant problem exists on the third shift, it is not evident in the overall score. As a result, a company may be unaware of a significant employee relations issue.

Percent Favorable to Percent Unfavorable

This method is effective for determining significant pockets of favorable or unfavorable opinion. It allows a company to pinpoint where extremes have pulled a score up or down. However, percent favorable to unfavorable does not give as accurate a view of the overall feeling of a work grouping as the overall average score. This is because the favorable and unfavorable ratings can be spread across various degrees of agreement or disagreement. For example, a company may have an evenly distributed number of favorable and unfavorable responses, as a percentage, but those responses may be unevenly distributed within the favorable and unfavorable categories. See Appendix 2 for an example. In other words, two companies with the same percent favorable to percent unfavorable groupings could have significantly different overall scores on the same issue.

Actual Response Distribution

The advantage of this method is that a picture is formed of how employees feel on particular issues across the entire spectrum of responses. This method takes out the “averaging effect” of using overall favorable to unfavorable responses. The possible disadvantage of this method is that it creates information overload in some respects. In other words, negative opinion is expressed to many questions. Without some sense of the overall score of a particular group, it becomes increasingly difficult to prioritize action areas.

Therefore, it is easy to see the importance of using all available information, broken down in a variety of ways, to determine exactly which areas deserve the most consideration in a particular company. The

charts and graphs in Appendix 2 show how your data will be presented.

Communicating Survey Results

The most important part of the process of administering and tabulating an effective employee opinion survey is communicating the results. If a company fails to communicate its survey results effectively, the survey can do more harm than good. Again, there are a variety of methods for communicating survey results to a work group. A few of those strategies are discussed here.

LRI Conducts the Meetings

Some clients ask LRI to conduct the survey feedback meetings on-site. The advantage of this method is that it shows employees that the company takes the survey seriously, it lets employees ask questions to survey experts (if a manager gets confused in a survey feedback meeting it can reduce confidence in the survey results) and it lets an employee relations expert explore some of the key issues highlighted in the survey results. It also gives an LRI consultant an opportunity to address the management group and to assist with action planning.

There are two primary disadvantages to this method. First is the expense – it is obviously much more expensive to have outside consultants present the data than to have on-site managers do it. This is particularly true in large organizations. Second, it takes supervisors and managers out of the “feedback loop” and can lead some managers to disengage from the process. This can be managed, but it is a concern

in some organizations. If managers are charged with presenting the survey results they are much more likely to become familiar with the results and to take responsibility for responding to the information in the survey.

On-site Managers Conduct the Sessions

This is the ideal way to present the survey information. It is less expensive and forces managers to take responsibility for the survey information. Managers who present the results are more likely to become intimately familiar with them, increasing the likelihood that they will respond to them. They also have a stake in the outcome of the survey feedback meetings. It prevents managers from ignoring the survey as another corporate “flavor of the month.”

At the same time, it is important that the managers who conduct the survey feedback meetings be skilled in doing so. Poorly handled survey meetings (especially if a manager is overly defensive or even dismissive of the concerns raised in the survey) can create more problems for the organization. For this reason it is important that managers charged with communicating survey results be thoroughly trained on how to conduct an effective survey feedback meeting. This training can be handled by on-site managers, or LRI is available to train the managers.

Small Group Sessions

It is our view that the best method to communicate results is in small groups (i.e. departments, work cells, etc.) There are several reasons small groups are ideal. First the small group is more manageable in most companies. Between 10 and 20 employees in a group helps to prevent disruptions but is still a large enough

group that people do not feel like they are being singled out.

Second, the small group session is more likely to get people talking. Smaller work groups typically include people who are very familiar with each other and who work closely together. These employees are less likely to be intimidated or embarrassed to speak up in the meeting. This is not always the case (a good facilitator can help to encourage participation, but some people just will not speak up in any group meeting). However, the larger the group, the less likely that anyone other than the most vocal employees (most people already know how these people feel) will give honest and helpful feedback.

Finally, it is in these small groups that most problem-solving will occur. Once these employees see and comment on the survey results, they will be asked to help management work on fixing them. For that reason it is best to start the feedback process with the same small group.

What If We Can't Do Small Group Meetings? Tips for Other Kinds of Feedback

Some organizations can't do small, department-level feedback. While these other communication methods are less than ideal, the most important thing is to make sure employees receive some communication regarding the survey. It is highly recommended that if you attempt one of these methods that you consult with an LRI Advisor to prepare your communication sessions. Other methods available to conduct feedback sessions include:

Individual meetings or very small groups: For some businesses, especially small companies or ones in which large numbers of employees are not available at any particular time, this is the only effective method of delivering survey results in a meeting environment. The advantage of an intimate group is that the communication sessions can be custom tailored for the audience.

The disadvantage to this method is that it takes a significantly larger commitment of time to deliver results in this fashion. Small group sessions can be intimidating for the employees involved. Some workers might feel uncomfortable sitting alone with their supervisor discussing survey results— they may even think the supervisor knows how they responded to the survey. This scenario also raises concerns under the National Labor Relation Act, as discussed below. This is not our recommended method of delivering survey results.

Handouts Without a Meeting: This method is better suited for very large companies or companies where employee meetings are virtually impossible. These companies will create a handout that describes many of the same things described during a communication meeting. The advantage of this method is that it ensures consistent communication across all groups of employees. The disadvantage is that it is impersonal and requires a significant amount of effort in crafting the document.

In addition, employers should be aware that such a document could be used as a tool during future organizing attempts or in litigation against the company. Complaints raised in the survey might be used to prove later that an employer failed to take

action to mitigate, for example, discrimination complaints. Union supporters could use the negative scores as evidence the company should be organized. These are not, by the way, reasons to avoid communicating survey results—they instead are reasons to take extra care in communicating the results and reacting to complaints raised.

Large Group Meetings: The large group meeting format is often the only method available for some companies. The sessions are very similar to the small group sessions outlined above. The disadvantage of large group meetings is that they can be unwieldy and hard to control. Some employees are intimidated when speaking in very large groups.

In addition, particularly for companies that have recently undergone organizing activities, the possibility exists that overly negative employees will showboat or take over the meeting. These problems can ruin an otherwise excellent opportunity to begin the healing process in a company. For these reasons, meetings should be facilitated by an experienced individual, normally a top manager, HR representative or perhaps even a representative of LRI.

Who Should Conduct the Feedback Session?

The feedback session is best conducted by the immediate supervisor of the survey group. There are two reasons for this. First, this is the individual the employees are (usually) most comfortable with. They are more likely to “open up” with this individual than most other managers. Second, this is the manager who will be responsible for resolving issues in this work group – it is better if this person takes

responsibility for the survey results and the action planning at the same time. It reduces “finger-pointing” and encourages taking ownership of the results and the response to the survey.

There are sometimes concerns about having department level supervisors and managers conducting the feedback meetings. Companies are often concerned that these managers may not be comfortable with the data in the survey or may not be very skilled in presenting the results. We find that these concerns are often overblown, especially if the company does a good job of preparing the department manager for conducting the meetings. At the same time, if a particular manager is very poorly skilled at communication (begging the question of whether this individual should be a manager in the first place) a company may want to either provide assistance to the manager or have another more skilled manager present the results.

In some cases the immediate manager or supervisor turns out to be a problem in the survey. In some cases this is further reason to have that supervisor present the survey results – it gives the manager the chance to give a “mea culpa” message to employees and commit to improve in the future. However, if this manager is a significant employee relations problem (particularly if employees are scared of retaliation for the survey feedback) it is a good idea to either provide assistance to the manager or have another more skilled manager present the results.

This does not mean that higher-level management has no role to play in the survey communication process. There are several ways top management can be involved. They can help the immediate supervisor

introduce the survey results, explaining top management's commitment to respond to the survey results. Top managers should definitely refer to the survey results any time they speak to employees, and it should become a key point of reference in all top management presentations (for more on this see the section on action planning at page XX). If you have questions about whether someone should present survey results, ask your LRI Advisor.

What to Say

The small group sessions should be delivered in a consistent manner. We typically recommend for companies to have a formal 15-minute presentation regarding the employee opinion survey results and then a minimum of another 30-45-minute block of time for questions and answers. Depending on the results of the survey, more time may be necessary. A model for this meeting is outlined in the table below.

MEETING AGENDA

RECAP OF SURVEY

PRESENT SURVEY RESULTS

COMPARISONS WITH LAST YEAR

CONCLUSIONS FROM SURVEY

ACTION PLAN

Use of Graphics

We highly recommend the use of some type of graphic presentation when communicating survey results. A variety of different representations of statistical information are available. There are also a variety of different ways to use the information. In the table shown in Appendix 2 you will see three examples of graphical representations of statistical information we

gather on surveys. These demonstrate the three types of responses, overall scores, distribution between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and distribution among each response.

While graphs and charts of this nature can be overused in a presentation, it is a good idea to use them at various times when particularly complicated ideas are being expressed. These graphics can be used in overhead slides, PowerPoint presentations and handouts to employees. Again, the key concept is to use the graphs and charts to supplement the information being communicated as opposed to relying on them to communicate the information.

Action Planning

Since many are not experts on project planning, I include a few words on how to plan a project as massive as your Fifty-Two Week plan. Fortunately, you do not have to be an expert in project planning to be successful, although there are a few pointers that you should keep in mind.

Step 1: Identify Your Employee Relations Objectives

A goal that is in your head is not a goal, it is a dream. While there is nothing wrong with dreams, they make a poor substitute for a project plan on an issue as important as the employee relations environment in your organization. Writing down your goals is the beginning of a plan of action that can be accomplished.

The most important thing that you must do is to identify your objective. This should include as clear a description of your vision of the objective as you can write down. Take some time to literally envision what the work environment will be like once the goal is reached. Try to describe it as vividly as possible.

Next, write down your reason for wanting the objective. Like we did for your overall vision for the organization, identify what it will mean to you personally if this objective is reached. Once again, concentrate on making it as real as you possibly can in your mind. Finally, identify the consequences of failure. What will it mean to you if you fail to accomplish this objective. Once again, envision this

as clearly as you can in your mind. Write down what would happen should you fail to accomplish your objective.

The reason for this process is to get you associated with the objective as much as possible. You should go back to these objectives on a regular basis so that you can remember the vision that you identified as well as the reasons you want the vision and the consequences for not achieving it. You may go back and revise these as you think of more information or circumstances change; that is fine. The idea is to try to get as great of a vision as you possibly can in your mind.

Step 2: Prioritize Your Objectives

The next step in the process is to prioritize your objectives. This helps you to identify the highest impact areas for your program and will point out where you should invest your time and energy. This is a critical step to ensure that your limited resources (in terms of time, money and manpower) are focused in a way to deliver maximum results.

The easiest way to explain the process is to first ask you to take a piece of paper and to draw a giant plus symbol in the middle. Next, draw two lines, a vertical line on the left side of the plus symbol and a horizontal line across the bottom. Next to the vertical line write the words “impact to organization.” Under the horizontal line write the words “ease to accomplish.”

Now you have four quadrants. The bottom quadrants represent low impact objectives while the top quadrants represent high impact objectives. The quadrants on the left represent more difficult to accomplish objectives while the quadrants on the

right represent easy to accomplish objectives. Take a look at the chart below for an example:

High Impact Most Difficult	High Impact Least Difficult
Low Impact Most Difficult	Low Impact Least Difficult

Next you want to begin placing your objectives on this chart in one of the four quadrants. It is actually most effective if you can create the chart on a large piece of butcher block paper or on a large white board. Then you can take each objective and put it on a large post-it note, so you can begin to build a picture of where each objective fits in relation to the others. (I have also done this on Powerpoint slides, which is a little less messy but not as much fun).

Once all your objectives are plotted it becomes clear where you should be investing your energy and resources. Obviously you begin with the “High Impact, Least Difficult” quadrant first – this is your low hanging fruit. As you begin to pick off these issues you will most likely then want to focus on your “High Impact, Most Difficult” and your “Low Impact, Least Difficult” quadrants. If you are lucky enough to get through these issues then you turn your attention to the “Low Impact, Most Difficult” quadrant last.

After completing this process you will have an excellent conception of which issues are most important and most achievable. You will also have

developed some momentum for the next step in the planning process.

Step 3: Action Plan and Schedule Your Objectives

Once you have prioritized your objectives, the next step is to break each objective out into specific outcome areas that must be accomplished. Once again, under each of these outcome areas list the reasons, purposes, and consequences for failure for each of the objectives. Many outcome areas will be projects in and of themselves.

Beneath these outcome areas make a listing of milestone achievements that will help to show progress on that area. Do not list every little action that must occur but simply the major milestones that will let you know that you are making progress. As a rule of thumb, if an outcome area has more than 5 milestones, consider whether that outcome area should be split into more than one outcome.

Finally, schedule completion dates for the milestones and assign team members to work on each milestone. Take a look at the sample guide below to get an idea of a project planning guide for one possible objective area.

This list of objectives, outcomes and milestones will guide all your actions during the Fifty-Two Week period. You may want to set up your calendar as a flowchart or timeline. Programs like Project are also good tools for project planning. Some set it up on a special calendar for that particular purpose. Still others keep the project planning portions in a separate binder. Whatever system helps keep you organized is the one you should use.

I have also had success using a daily action planning guide that I look at in the morning and the evening of each day. For example, imagine that you are working on five key objectives based on your survey data and visioning. Say those five areas are:

- ❑ Dramatically improve employee take-home pay by reducing employee insurance premiums, co-pays and/or deductible amounts.
- ❑ Significantly reduce feelings of favoritism by implementing a peer review or dispute resolution process.
- ❑ Create an environment where all employees feel “in the loop” by improving communication between supervisors and employees.
- ❑ Nurture a trusting and high performance environment by giving employees regular and consistent coaching through a performance appraisal and development system.
- ❑ Build and train the high-skilled workforce we need to be a best-in-class organization by developing a cross-training program for employees.

Now that is a list of some great goals that can really transform an organization. Next, create a document that has each of the five areas listed twice. The first list of five items is entitled “What I will do in each of my five key areas today.” The second list is “What I did in each of my key areas today.”

Next to each item in the list include a couple of blank lines on which you can write your plans or accomplishments. Begin each day by looking at your list and writing your goals in each of the five areas – they can be very small items, such as making a phone

call or researching a web site. Try to come up with some small step you can take each day. At the end of each day review your list and see how you did.

What I have found is that this simple exercise increases my productivity dramatically. It is easy to get in a rut and forget about a key action area for a while – this system doesn't let you do that. Even if you do just one little thing, you are that much closer to your objective. Even if you don't do anything about your objective that day, you are forced to think about it even if just for a second or two. Eventually it becomes a habit that becomes a part of your daily routine – the first vital step to any lasting change.

As completion dates from milestones are hit or objective areas have been completed, it is important to celebrate these successes. For interim milestones, this may be just celebrated among the HR department. For larger project completions the celebrations should be firm wide. These celebrations will help keep attention focused on the organization's commitment to improve the employee relations environment and also to help generate momentum toward the completion of still further projects and objectives.

Include Employees or Fail

As you plan activities to help accomplish objectives, always consider how you could include employees. Not every change effort will include employee involvement. However, any activity that requires a change on the part of employees that does not also include those employees in the planning of that change will succeed only by luck.

Let me repeat that because it is so important.

Asking employees to change without including them in the decision and planning for the change will fail unless you just get lucky. You might be able to change management procedures or policies without including others (although even this risks failure) but if you are asking someone to change for your reasons you are wasting your time. Go bang your head against a wall instead – at least the wall won't get mad at you.

This is not saying that all problems can be solved with teams – as we learned earlier, teams are not great at solving many problems. Nevertheless, whether using a team or not, employee input (including the opportunity to object or criticize openly) is essential for a project to succeed on the long term. Forced change can be effective for a short period, but eventually employees will manage a way around the change. Lasting change occurs through the participation and consent of those doing the changing.

Using the survey

Most of our clients utilize the Employee Opinion Survey as the backbone of their planning process. They use the results of the survey to help them prioritize action areas for their Fifty-Two Week program. Most will take the three or four weakest category areas or items from the survey and establish project plans to attack those areas during the first three to four months of their Fifty-Two Week plan. This is a very effective method of planning your year, although not by any means the only method that can be used.

The obvious strengths of using the survey in this way are that it allows you to attack the weakest areas first

and gives you a clear road map of projects. The disadvantages of the survey method have been noted before, but are worth repeating here. Surveying can be a negative intervention in the sense that it focuses attention on the problems with an organization and not the possibilities.

Appreciative Inquiry is one method to avoid this difficulty. In addition, the lowest rated items on the survey may not be the items on which the organization is prepared or capable of achieving success in the short term. Therefore, some organizations may choose to concentrate on areas that were not necessarily the weakest rated areas on the opinion survey.

Still others will not have completed a survey or Appreciative Inquiry method at all, but will list their objectives using some other criteria. No matter which method is used, it is important to remember that a survey or other method of discovery is a beginning and not an end. It should be a foundation of your project planning but not a substitute for project planning.

It is important to set quarterly and one year goals in your biggest challenge areas and to regularly review your progress in each of those areas. As mentioned above, you should keep employees informed about your progress in these areas and on the Fifty-Two Week plan itself. Finally, it is an excellent idea to conduct follow-up surveys to help gauge the progress and to identify further areas for action.

Your Fifty-Two Week calendar serves as your guide through your own personal transformation into an employee relations leader. As your daily habits

change, so changes the daily interactions you have with your coworkers. The change in those interactions sets off a chain reaction that can ultimately transform an organization. Be clear about your objectives and do something each day to get you a step closer to those objectives. Before long you will be amazed at what you have accomplished.

Legal Issues

There are a number of legal considerations when planning an opinion survey. These fall into one of two categories. First, there are a number of National Labor Relations Board (“the Board” or “NLRB” hereafter) decisions regarding the use of opinion surveys. The second area of concern is in responding to complaints of discrimination or safety violations that come up on the survey. Failure to respond to these issues can lead to potential liability under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

The NLRB has held in some circumstances that employee opinion surveys can violate the National Labor Relations Act (“the Act” or “NLRA” hereafter). These decisions center on the Board’s interpretation of Section 8(a)(1) of the Act, which has been interpreted over the years as prohibiting the solicitation of grievances by management during union organizing activity.

Section 8(a)(1) of the NLRA provides that “it shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer to interfere with, restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of rights guaranteed in section 7.” This section (as interpreted through Board decisions) prohibits employers from soliciting grievances where a purpose of such solicitation is to induce employees to reject a union as their collective bargaining agent.⁵

⁵ See *Clark Equipment Company*, 278 NLRB 498, 516 (1986); *Ben Franklin Division of City Products Corporation*, 251 NLRB 1512, 1518 (1971).

The Board will inquire into both the wording of the survey instrument as well as related comments made by representatives of management to determine whether either an express or implied promise of benefit is made to employees.⁶ Perhaps the best expression of this doctrine was made in the Board's decision in *Uarco Incorporated*, 216 NLRB 1, 1-2 (1974) where it stated:

... it is not the solicitation of grievances itself that is coercive and violative of Section 8(a)(1), but the promise to correct grievances or a concurrent interrogation or polling about union sympathies that is unlawful; the solicitation of grievances merely raises an inference that the employer is making such a promise, which inference is rebuttable by the employer.

Depending on the factual circumstances, the NLRB has held that some employee opinion surveys violate section 8(a)(1) as solicitations of grievances, while others do not.⁷ The Board relies on a number of

⁶ See *Clark Equipment*, 278 NLRB at 517.

⁷ Cf. *Grove Valve and Regulator Company*, 262 NLRB 285 (1982) (opinion survey lawful where prior survey conducted in same unit absent union activity and questionnaire stated three times that survey does not imply changes in wages, benefits or work conditions) and *Leland Stanford Jr. University*, 240 NLRB 1138 (1978) (survey lawful where, although administered in pre-election context, no active campaigning occurred during the period before or after the survey and no election was scheduled or imminent) and *Clark Equipment*, 278 NLRB 498 (1986) (survey lawful where conducted 11 months after election and during time where there was no special union activity) with *Mid-State Distributing Company*, 276 NLRB 1511 (1985) (survey unlawful where no surveys were ever conducted prior to union organizing activity, and where employees were told during meetings that the problems that came up during the survey would be addressed by the company) and *Ben Franklin*, 251 NLRB 1512 (1971) (opinion survey unlawful where first formal survey conducted during midst of very active organizing campaign and where employer quickly made changes in wages, benefits and work conditions in response to survey) and *Tom Wood Pontiac, Inc.*, 179 NLRB 581 (1969), *enfd.* 447 F.2d 383 (7th Cir. 1971) (survey unlawful where conducted one week after stipulated election agreement and survey organizer repeatedly discussed correcting issues that came out of survey).

factors when determining whether a survey violates the prohibition on soliciting grievances, including the existence of union activity, the types of questions asked, whether participants are anonymous, whether the company has conducted surveys in the past, whether issues brought up in the survey are corrected and the timing of the survey.⁸

In *Clark Equipment Company* a union election was first held in February of 1978, in which the union lost. The union objected to the first election and the NLRB, agreeing with the union objections, set aside the election and directed a second election. A second election was conducted in July of 1979, and the union lost again. Once again the union filed objections to the election. In May of 1980, while the NLRB considered the objections to the second election, the company announced and conducted a survey by distributing a questionnaire to all employees in its manufacturing operation.

The survey questionnaire was not the first survey conducted by the employer, who had earlier surveyed randomly selected groups of employees and on a separate occasion surveyed its supervisors. However, these earlier surveys were substantially different than the survey distributed in 1980.

The survey asked about policies and procedures, whether the company was a good place to work and whether employee complaints received attention. It also contained an open-ended question asking what employees would change about the company. The

⁸ See e.g. *Clark Equipment Company*, 278 NLRB 498, 516 (1986); *Ben Franklin*, 251 NLRB 1512, 1518 (1971).

employer asserted that the survey was confidential, but employees were asked to reveal their department, work shift, sex and length of employment. The union filed an unfair labor practice charge alleging that the survey violated section 8(a)(1) of the Act.

The NLRB ruled that the survey did not violate the Act. The Board found that the survey, conducted 11 months after the second election and at a time when no “special union activity” was under way, did not unlawfully solicit grievances.⁹ They ruled the survey lawful in spite of the conclusion that the survey could identify individual employee opinions on questions that could readily disclose employees’ union sentiments.¹⁰

In *Ben Franklin*, the employer opened a distribution center in 1978 and union activity began almost immediately after the facility opened. In April of 1979, the union filed a petition to represent the employees of the facility, with an election scheduled for July 13. On June 6, the employer announced an employee opinion survey and asked employees to complete a survey form. One employee asked whether the surveys were being conducted because of the union activity and was told no and that surveys were common. The employer testified that, while informal surveys of a sampling of employees were common at other facilities, they decided to conduct a more formal survey using a questionnaire at this facility.

Follow-up meetings were conducted later in June, where the survey results were communicated to employees. The employer representative explained

⁹ *Clark Equipment*, 278 NLRB at 517.

¹⁰ *Id.*

that the survey showed that communication between employees and supervisors needed improvement, and that there were questions about benefits and about wages. Employees were told during the meeting that the company would train the supervisors and that they would learn about wages in July. In early July the company announced pay increases to go into effect over the next year. Insurance plans were also explained.

The Board held that the conduct of the opinion survey violated section 8(a)(1) of the Act. Among the critical factors noted in the decision were that the survey did not follow the same pattern as other surveys, the survey occurred during the middle of a very active organizing effort and that the employer made improvements in wages and work conditions as a result of the survey.¹¹

Holding individual or very small group meetings with employees can, under certain circumstances, also run afoul of the Act's protections. A number of Board decisions have found that, when an employee meeting occurs at a time, place or with personnel such that the employee may feel threatened or intimidated, the employer has engaged in unlawful interrogation under the Act.¹² The Board will examine all the surrounding circumstances when determining whether an employer's meeting was conducted in such a manner as to be threatening to the employee.¹³

¹¹ *Ben Franklin*, 251 NLRB at 1519.

¹² See e.g. *Huntsville Mfg. Co.* 211 NLRB 54 (1974), *enforcement denied*, 514 F.2d 723 (5th Cir. 1972) (threat interfered election even though only one percent of employees threatened; enforcement denied due to union losing election by large majority); *Super Thrift Markets*, 233 NLRB 409 (1977).

¹³ See *Blue Flash Express*, 109 NLRB 591 (1954).

In order to avoid problems with individual meetings, it is suggested that employer's begin these meetings by reassuring employees under the guidelines established in the Board's *Johnnie's Poultry* decision.¹⁴ These safeguards were articulated in the context of questioning an employee regarding the investigation of an unfair labor practice charge. Nevertheless they are considered persuasive by the NLRB.¹⁵

The *Johnnie's Poultry* safeguards are as follows: (1) The purpose of the questioning must be communicated to the employee. (2) An assurance of no reprisal must be given. (3) The employee's participation must be obtained on a voluntary basis. (4) The questioning must take place in an atmosphere free from union animus. (5) The questioning itself must not be coercive in nature. (6) The questions must be relevant to the issues involved in the complaint. (7) The employee's subjective state of mind must not be probed. (8) The questions must not "otherwise interfere with the statutory rights of employees."¹⁶ Explaining these issues to an employee prior to an individual meeting should provide a significant measure of protection to any potential unfair labor practice charge.

Another legal consideration regards complaints of discrimination. Employers have an obligation under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to avoid

¹⁴ *Johnnie's Poultry Co.*, 146 NLRB 770 (1964), *enforcement denied*, 344 F.2d 617 (8th Cir. 1965) (denied on the basis that factual determinations not based on substantial evidence, did not express disagreement with the legal standards identified).

¹⁵ The Board will quickly find an employer has violated 8(a)(1) if the safeguards are not followed in the context of questioning an employee regarding an unfair labor practice trial. *See e.g.* *Kyle & Stephen, Inc.* 259 NLRB 731 (1981).

¹⁶ *Id.*

discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.¹⁷ Other statutes prohibit discrimination based on age and disability.¹⁸

An employer who is made aware of discrimination or harassment based on a protected characteristic has an affirmative obligation to investigate and deal with those concerns.¹⁹ Therefore, an employer who learns of discrimination based on a protected characteristic during an employee opinion survey must promptly conduct a thorough investigation of that claim and carefully document its investigation and any action taken.

Another potential issue regards complaints of safety problems. Employers are obligated under the “general duty clause” of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to provide a workplace “free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm” to employees.²⁰ An employer who has knowledge of a preventable hazard and fails to correct it violates this obligation and is liable under the Act.²¹ Therefore an employer who learns of a dangerous condition through an employee opinion survey is obligated under the general duty clause to make the workplace free from that condition.

¹⁷ 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.*

¹⁸ See *e.g.* 42 U.S.C. §621 *et seq.* (Age Discrimination in Employment Act); 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* (Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990).

¹⁹ See *e.g. Burlington Industries v. Ellerth*, 524 U.S. 742 (1998)(one factor considered in employer affirmative defense to sex harassment cases is prompt investigation of claims); *Farragher v. City of Boca Raton*, 524 U.S. 775 (1998)(prompt investigation of claims is one factor considered in employer affirmative defense to sex harassment cases); *Montero v. AGCO Corp.*, 80 FEP Cases 1658 (9th Cir. 1999)(no claim for sex harassment under Title VII due to fact that employer promptly investigated and took action within 11 days of initial complaint).

²⁰ 29 U.S.C. § 654.

²¹ See *e.g. Pratt & Whitney Aircraft v. Secretary of Labor*, 649 F.2d 96 (2nd Cir. 1981)(dangerous potential of condition must be actually known or generally recognized before employer is liable for violation of general duty obligation).

Employee opinion surveys are not a panacea. Like any other employee relations tool, the survey must be part of a comprehensive employee relations strategy. Nevertheless, opinion surveys can form the backbone of a highly effective employee relations program. Surveys publicly demonstrate management's commitment to employee communication. They help pinpoint problem areas for attack, and they give companies an effective means of objectively judging the progress (or lack of progress) made on employee relations issues.

Appendix 1 – Sample Opinion Survey Questionnaire

Statement	strongly disagree	strongly agree
1. My work area is always neat and clean.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
2. I have the opportunity to do what I do best each day.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
3. I am proud to be an employee here.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
4. The benefits offered here are fair and reasonable when compared to similar employers in this area	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
5. The most capable employees are always the ones selected for promotions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
6. When assigned work I've never done before, I get the necessary instructions to do a good job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
7. Generally speaking, my immediate supervisor is doing a good job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
8. Communications from top management are adequate for me to know what is going on in the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
9. I have one or more good friends here at work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
10. Today this organization is headed in the right direction to be successful.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
11. My work area is safe and accidents are infrequent.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
12. The mission of my company makes me feel my job is important.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
13. If I had a friend looking for work, I would recommend they apply here	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
14. The benefit plan provides good protection for me and my family in case of accident or illness.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
15. For a person with my abilities, there are many opportunities for advancement.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
16. I feel I receive the training necessary to keep me productive in my present job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
17. My supervisor listens to my ideas and suggestions when I make them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
18. I know what is expected of me at work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
19. Someone in management cares about me as a person.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
20. Top management uses praise and constructive feedback to motivate employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
21. I have the proper materials and equipment to do my job right.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
22. I find my present job challenging and interesting.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
23. Morale here is high.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
24. The best way to get a raise here is to do a good job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
25. Around here, "what" you know is more important than "who" you know.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

Appendix 1 – Sample Opinion Survey Questionnaire

Statement	strongly disagree	strongly agree
26. In the past six months someone at work has talked to me about my progress and development.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
27. My supervisor gives me the attention and support I need to do a good job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
28. The channels of communication between employees and management are working satisfactorily	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
29. No one here is ever discriminated against.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
30. I have great confidence in top management.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
31. The physical environment (such as temperature, lighting and noise) in my immediate work area is satisfactory	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
32. I have no problem keeping up with my workload.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
33. The products or services we provide are high quality and worth their price.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
34. I believe that pay increases are based on performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
35. Whenever possible, promotions are made from within.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
36. People here are given the chance to cross train for other jobs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
37. In the last week I have been praised for doing good work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
38. When changes are made that affect how to do my job, the reasons are explained to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
39. I am not aware of any instances of sexual harassment.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
40. Top management is available to listen to employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
41. Our emergency medical training and facilities are satisfactory.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
42. I am very satisfied with my job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
43. We have a lot of good people here working hard to make us successful.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
44. The way raises are determined here is fair.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
45. People here get terminated only for good reasons.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
46. New employees receive adequate training as soon as they start to work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
47. I am able to talk openly and honestly with my supervisor about my work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
48. I feel comfortable talking with my supervisor or someone else in management about my personal problems or complaints.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

Appendix 1 – Sample Opinion Survey Questionnaire

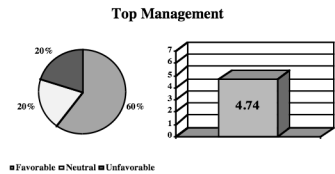
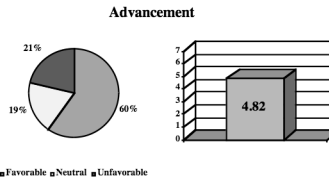
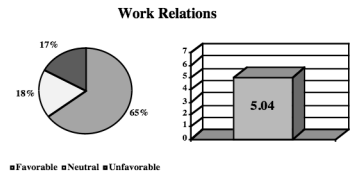
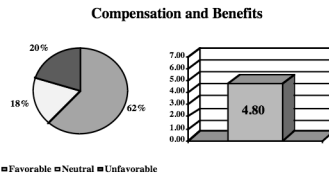
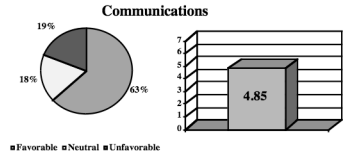
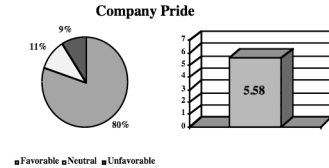
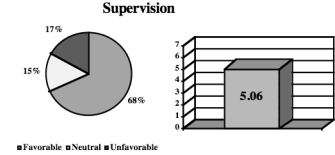
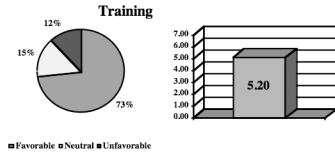
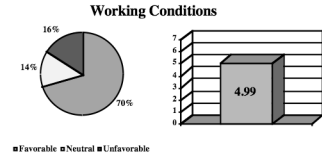
Statement	strongly disagree	strongly agree
49. Our rules and regulations are uniformly administered.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
50. Top management keeps its promises.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
51. When suggestions are made to improve things at work, those suggestions are given careful consideration.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
52. If I had to do it over again, I would still go to work here.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
53. We have an excellent reputation in the community.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
54. I feel like I completely understand our benefit program.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
55. My plans are to remain here for many years.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
56. This year I have had opportunities to learn and grow.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
57. My immediate supervisor is fair and consistent in the treatment of employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
58. I believe top management knows what employees think about most issues.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
59. My co-workers are committed to doing high quality work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
60. I believe management measures performance fairly.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
61. Overall, the working conditions here are good.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
62. The amount of work expected of me is fair and realistic.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
63. When I tell others about where I work, my comments are always positive.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
64. Considering the type of work I do, I feel my pay is fair for this area.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
65. Someone at work encourages my development.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
66. Everyone here seems to be well trained for their present job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
67. My supervisor judges me based on facts, rather than opinions, rumors and personality judgments.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
68. When management gives out information, I can always believe it.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
69. Everyone here does their fair share of the work assigned to them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
70. When top management becomes aware of a problem it is quickly corrected.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

The thing I like most about my job is:

If I could change something about my job it would be:

Appendix 2 – Sample Survey Charts & Graphs

Company Name 2003 Opinion Survey - Overall Results



Appendix 3 – Sample 52 Weeks Plan/Presentation

<p>Next 52 Weeks Organizational Plan</p> <p>Company Name</p>	<p>Company Name as Leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company Name often leads the corporation in the implementation of new and innovative processes<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process Safety• ISO-9002• Skill Based Pay• Product development and the ability to quickly react to customer needs
<p>The Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To create an environment in which each employee feels appreciated and can perform at the highest level possible.• To lead the company by being a model for improving our organization.• To build trust between management and employees.	<p>Organizational Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee Opinion Survey• Review of plant performance• Review of company policies and procedures• Wage and benefit survey of local competitors for talent and top performing plants in industry
<p>Next 52 Weeks Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to improve communication• Improve supervisor's and manager's role in performance management• Implement 3 year compensation plan based on productivity of plant• Improve working conditions and reduce physical workload where needed and possible	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct communication survey• Hold monthly training meetings for each shift• Plant manager to hold individual meetings with employees• Monthly "Breakfast with the Manager" for cross-functional communication

Performance Management

- Train managers and supervisors on coaching skills
- Include performance and development discussions as part of regular review
- Hold managers accountable for the development of their direct reports

3 Year Compensation Plan

- Reward employees for performance, dedication and response to change
- Exceptional work ethic
- Expect each employee will contribute to facility productivity in future
- Evaluated each job for:
 - Complexity
 - Level of self-direction required
 - Compared to our employment market and industry

Wage Survey

Job Title	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Avg
Operator	21.21	21.46	19.80	19.71	17.39	16.67	NA	NA	NA	NA	19.59
Operator II	NA	20.00	18.12	20.00	18.00	16.67	15.51	12.26	16.17	13.19	16.26
OP	15.16	17.14	18.12	17.50	14.66	13.34	16.29	11.26	17.62	NA	16.78
Helper	18.29	17.00	16.19	16.99	14.26	16.67	16.31	18.27	18.11	17.12	16.72
Production	20.48	22.72	19.75	19.91	14.48	17.12	17.41	18.26	14.72	16.67	17.64
I & S	21.21	22.72	12.88	18.91	14.77	17.11	20.46	20.17	13.72	20.27	18.34

Annual Increase

- Beginning in November overall average hourly rate of pay increase by 3.5% each year for next 3 years.
- Yearly increase plus rate adjustment puts Company Name at or near the top of our industry.
- Maintain superior benefits in the industry.
- Dependent on the facility's continued level of productivity

Improve Work Conditions

- Review physical requirements of all job tasks
- Prioritize capital expenditures in areas that increase productivity while reducing physical workload

Thanks ... and our challenge

- This program recognizes of our hard work and our place as one of the top performing plants in our industry.
- We can't rest on our past accomplishments. We have to continue to improve, work hard and exceed expectations.