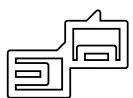
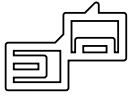


# Organisation Climate Survey Project Manual

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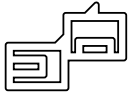
EmployeeSurveyOnline



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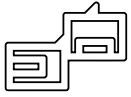
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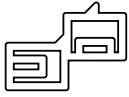
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### The Purpose of this Manual

This manual is designed to assist organisations in understanding the mechanics and issues involved in conducting employee surveys. Throughout the manual you will find that the instrument known as the Organisation Climate Survey is referred to, however the methodology in this manual is generic in its application and you should have no hesitation in using it with your measurement instrument of choice.

If you have questions or issues that you want to raise simply use the Queries button on [www.employeesurveyonline.com](http://www.employeesurveyonline.com) and we will oblige you with a response.

### 01 Confirm Project Management Roles

The more effective project management models for employee surveys include the appointment of internal positions to assist in the facilitation process. The following roles are typical of those that we work with:

#### 01.1 Project Manager

This position is often adopted by a human resources position and acts as the central point of co-ordination for the organisation. There is no compelling reason however to restrict the appointment of the role to human resource practitioners and from a developmental perspective it may be desirable to source individuals from other disciplines.

The scope of the job role is defined by the project phases outlined in this manual.

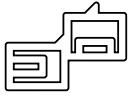
In the case of large studies where employee numbers exceed 1,000 the role is one that may consume significant time and this needs to be factored into the activity mix for the position. For this reason it is appropriate to consider the role as a development opportunity for the incumbent.

In the event that liaison is required with external consultants, this position would manage the relationship and ensure the delivery of project outcomes. Additionally, if liaison positions have been appointed in business divisions this position acts as a central resource.

If you see your organisation being committed to surveying employees as a long term proposition then the creation of a Project Manager means that the individual will become slowly expert over time and quite capable of delivering senior presentations and giving strategic advice to internal clients. The getting of wisdom is a slow process, however we have, over a period of three surveys, developed some very useful expertise for our clients.

If the organisation appoints a Project Manager to work with the consultants the following range of activities is typical in a climate measurement project:

- Consultation with nominated executives
- Identifying code sheet categories
- Changes/additions to the survey
- Agreement to a timetable
- Response follow up
- Liaison with consultants re results
- Scheduling briefing meetings
- Identification of strategy priorities
- Co-ordinating additional data collection
- Co-ordinating executive team workshops
- Managing strategic improvement activities
- Acting as a resource for individual managers



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### 01.2 Business Unit Liaison Roles

When the organisation supports significant business divisions, the appointment of liaison roles to work with the project manager is advisable.

The position co-ordinates issues such as changes to survey wording, additional questions that might be pertinent to a division and the scheduling of briefings, delivery of reports and survey responses.

It is common for these positions to be adopted by Human Resource practitioners, however it can be allocated to any number of roles just as successfully.

## 02 Determine Working Protocols with External Consultancy

The appointment of an external resource is common in this type of exercise and the establishment of project protocols should be done prior to the commencement of the project.

The contract needs to outline those project phases which are the responsibility of the consultant and the agreed timelines for completion.

The protocols can also address operational issues such as an agreed schedule for project management meetings and the specification of deliverables such as reports and other support material to be provided.

The consultant role covers the following range of activities:

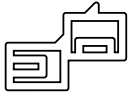
- Liaison with Group HR/Project Manager
- Ratification of employment categories
- Changes/additions to the survey
- Timetable production
- Production of final survey formats
- Managing printing/packaging and distribution of surveys
- Providing response rate data
- Production of comments summaries
- Identification of key feedback themes
- Construction of communication strategy
- Reporting to CEO and senior executive team
- Interpretation of climate results
- Writing and publication of climate results down to agreed levels
- Presentation and reporting to General Managers and management teams
- Conducting strategic improvement exercises with executive teams

## 03 Determine the Use of Long and Short Form Surveys

### 03.1 The Long Form Survey

The Organisation Climate Survey is a survey instrument that is more than 80 items long in its complete form. Client organisations have from time to time expanded the survey significantly in size to cater for specialised needs, but we prefer to keep the total length of the survey contained.

Surveys that measure employee sentiment vary in length because of differences in the range of climate dimensions that they measure and due to differences in the design approach to the structure of the dimensions.



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### 03.1 The Long Form Survey (continued)

There is no ideal length in climate surveys however most climate dimensions such as Communication and Goal Clarity would contain 4 or more statements. The range of statements or items that make up a dimension will be driven by the type and detail of information researchers are seeking.

If a survey has 8 to 10 dimensions and each of these is made up of 4 to 8 statements then the survey will be at least 32 statements long and at the most 80 statements long.

Surveys that grow much beyond 80 items will suffer the problem of employees not being prepared to invest the time.

Longer surveys forms are normally used in office/administrative and managerial environments where length is less of an issue due to environments that encourage desk based activities and the ability of people to find the time.

If your target population perform operational tasks then you are better off adopting shorter form surveys. The next section discusses your options in short survey forms.

### 03.2 Short Form Surveys

Short form surveys are best used in populations where there are limited opportunities and time for people to respond to the survey. Operational populations eg. transport, manufacturing, retail, logistics, community health, have populations that are less inclined to respond and often lack facilities to respond easily.

In these circumstances reducing the length of the survey instrument is advisable to reduce the amount of time needed for the completion of the survey and increase the response rate.

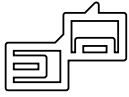
The Organisation Climate Survey which can be downloaded from [employeesurveyonline.com](http://employeesurveyonline.com) gives you both long and short forms of the survey.

The short form of the survey has three forms that cover all the statements that you will find in the long form. The distribution of equal numbers of all three short surveys means that you can still get response to all the statements in the longer survey. These are combined to provide a full climate picture of the environment you are measuring.

Alternately, each of the short versions will provide a climate profile for a work group or business unit and can be used on its own, however the total number of statement responses is limited.

If you wish to use short forms the following steps are required:

1. Download originals of all three short surveys from the website (each is numbered on the bottom left of each page in the PDF files). If you wish to make word changes or add survey items use the customisation button on the Homepage to access survey forms that allow you to make these changes and then download the originals.
2. Make equal copies of each version to make up the total number of surveys needed.
3. Collate the surveys in rotating order (1,2,3 repeated) to ensure even distribution of all three types.
4. Distribute to staff.
5. Send completed surveys for processing.



# Survey Project User Manual

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04

### Negotiate the Structure of Results Reports

At an organisational level there needs to be a core structure in reports that is consistent across business divisions.

It may be that business divisions will look to tailor aspects of results for their own purposes and this is an issue that should be negotiated between the division and the Project Manager. However as a minimum requirement it is advisable to ensure that all divisions adhere to core requirements.

The core structure should include the following:

#### 04.1 Graphical Results

Representing employee survey results in graph form remains one of the most powerful ways to communicate critical organisation climate information. Survey information of this sort is easily graphed and for those organisations returning surveys to employeesurveyonline.com will receive an Autograph file that allows instant graphing of results. To view the type of graphs that can be generated with the Autograph tool complete the demonstration survey on the website and generate your own graph.

Graphed results for executive teams should reveal results for the following major demographics:

- Total organisation
- Geographic regions
- Major locations eg. major sites of regional locations with significant populations
- Business divisions
- Business divisions within geographic regions
- Major functions
- Job categories
- Managerial grades
- Other organisational job grade groups
- Years of service
- Gender

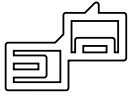
After organisations have conducted more than one survey these graphs can be done as History files that reveal trends between years.

Below executive team level presentations may include any number of permutations on these major demographics. For example a business division may wish to see job categories by years of service or grade groups by years of service. Results down to this level are normally generated when it is suspected there are organisational issues with particular populations.

#### 04.2 Executive Summary

No more than two pages of summary points highlighted with bullet points for those in executive management groups. In our experience it is usual to produce longer results summaries dealing with results on a climate dimension basis for use by those who are required to undertake further investigation and initiation of climate improvement.

The executive summary needs to cover major trends in responses on a major population basis. It is not designed to comment on the detail of climate dimensions. It provides essential highlights that reflect positive results and indicative improvements, noting particular populations that are in need of further attention.



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### 04.3 Business Unit/Division Results Analyses

Some organisations generate larger interpretation documents that focus not only on major population and response trends, but also provide insights into the detail of climate dimensions. These reports can contain an executive summary with a larger climate dimension report that sits behind it. The longer report is for the use of the human resource practitioners and others who have responsibility for designing climate improvement strategies.

### 04.4 Examples of National and Departmental Written Reports

The following reports provide practical examples of reports and the features that have been discussed above. The National report in this case contains a one page Executive Summary followed by a summary of results on a climate dimension basis. The Departmental report is typical for a corporate function in a Head Office setting.

### 04.5 Survey Item Responses

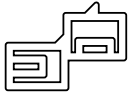
This report gives the detail of survey item responses. Most databases should be able to produce these files across a range of permutations. At employeesurveyonline we produce a range of reports generated from your code sheets that define the populations and all the major combinations such as job categories across job grades and all job grades by business unit/division.

#### Communication

Question	Head Office			Shared Services			Accounting			Planning			Operations			Development		
	No	T,IT	F,IF	No	T,IT	F,IF	No	T,IT	F,IF	No	T,IT	F,IF	No	T,IT	F,IF	No	T,IT	F,IF
The work activities throughout the whole department are well co-ordinated.	238	77%	23%	29	76%	24%	111	73%	27%	21	100%	0%	12	92%	8%	61	72%	28%
Information that I receive is generally accurate and relevant.	237	87%	13%	29	90%	10%	111	83%	17%	20	95%	5%	12	92%	8%	62	90%	10%
I usually receive information at the time I want it.	237	76%	24%	28	68%	32%	111	69%	31%	20	95%	5%	12	100%	0%	62	82%	18%

T,IT = True & Inclined To Be True  
 F,IF = False & Inclined To Be False

This report is not used for general distribution and is normally limited to those who have responsibility for detailed examination of results and the construction of climate improvement strategies.



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04.6

Data Files

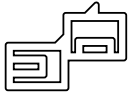
These are extensive results files normally available in spreadsheet form, such as Excel, which give a total breakdown of results for an organisation. In those surveys where results are calculated as climate dimensions the spreadsheets report on results by code sheet category by dimension.

At employeesurveyonline we provide results in Excel that cover all the major permutations generated by the code sheet. The example below shows results on a market position basis, where the accumulated score in a dimension is converted to the market position it attains within the market database.

Title	Number of Responses	Communication	Formal Control	Goal Clarity	Performance/Productivity	Initiative	Recognition	Working Relationships	Team Identification	Client Service	Development Opportunity	Leadership	Organisation Cohesion	Work/Family Life
All Questionnaires	327	63%	32%	57%	62%	66%	64%	66%	55%	75%	61%	67%	50%	57%
Head Office	240	64%	29%	57%	62%	67%	65%	68%	57%	76%	61%	67%	50%	55%
Head Office, Female	125	60%	40%	53%	62%	63%	64%	66%	53%	74%	50%	63%	49%	52%
Head Office, Female, Full Time	119	59%	38%	52%	62%	63%	64%	66%	53%	74%	51%	63%	49%	52%
Head Office, Female, 21-25 years	32	60%	36%	51%	62%	66%	63%	68%	55%	77%	58%	64%	48%	57%
Head Office, Female, 26-30 years	37	50%	49%	47%	59%	58%	60%	60%	47%	68%	48%	59%	49%	52%
Head Office, Female, 31-40 years	35	66%	30%	57%	62%	68%	68%	68%	56%	77%	45%	70%	49%	54%
Head Office, Female, 41-50 years	11	64%	50%	59%	62%	57%	63%	77%	67%	78%	46%	55%	56%	34%
Head Office, Female, Marketing	13	45%	44%	46%	55%	55%	55%	62%	53%	76%	62%	64%	48%	59%
Head Office, Female, Distribution	10	48%	46%	51%	62%	57%	61%	60%	52%	79%	67%	71%	60%	63%
Head Office, Female, Data Process	66	53%	57%	51%	62%	57%	60%	60%	46%	68%	45%	59%	40%	50%
Head Office, Female, Research	13	62%	57%	46%	62%	47%	56%	53%	39%	61%	61%	60%	43%	39%
Head Office, Female, Development	12	60%	46%	68%	79%	80%	79%	71%	59%	80%	74%	84%	52%	71%
Head Office, Female, ISA	13	40%	89%	36%	45%	43%	46%	48%	32%	51%	14%	41%	24%	25%
Head Office, Female, IRD	29	70%	13%	53%	62%	72%	72%	79%	64%	80%	51%	66%	56%	56%
Head Office, Female, Re-engineering	11	79%	4%	68%	62%	84%	82%	85%	71%	86%	60%	75%	50%	71%

After your first experience take a serious retrospective of the reports and presentations and ask what you might do differently next time. There are no points for hanging onto communication formats that never change.

For over twenty years we have experimented with refinements to the structure and content of reports and clients have been instrumental in pushing us to improve the impact of communications materials. In one case we were encouraged to produce an operational form of report for logistics site managers that would be heavily abbreviated but provide essential highlight information. The result was a one and a half page structure that dealt with the highs and lows and gave the managers two or three key issues to focus upon.



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### 05 Liaison with Internal Business Units/Departments on Survey Changes

#### 05.1 Standard Word Changes

Survey changes on standardised surveys are usually limited to word changes to improve the organisational flavour of the instrument. The following changes are common:

- Organisation/Division – to the actual name of the organisation or the name of a relevant business unit or division
- Manager – to terms such as “team leader” or “supervisor” in the case of manufacturing or process environments
- Team – to “work group”
- Work Group or Area – to “team”
- Team members – to “staff” or “people”
- Customer – to “client” or in some cases it might be “client groups”
- Client – to “customer”

The Organisation Climate Survey that is available at [employeesurveyonline.com](http://employeesurveyonline.com) allows you to make any of these changes on screen and then to either submit by online email or fax.

#### 05.2 Changing or Adding Survey Statements/Items

The great value in standardised surveys is that responses to them are comparable to a database of results from a wide range of organisations and industries.

This is precisely because the survey statements/items are well tested and comprise different aspects of organisation climate called dimensions (or scales) that have their reliability well established.

For this reason making significant changes to the existing survey statements/items is not advisable because it creates uncertainty about the reliability of the result.

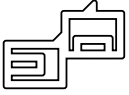
We recommend to clients that if they have a strong interest in particular questions that they be added to the existing survey.

In one worst case scenario we added up to an additional 50 statements. The result was a reduced return rate due to the length of the survey and the client was more interested in the results that could be compared against the database and the additional statement responses attracted precious little attention.

Certainly add additional material if you see the need but our history in testing suggests that you should keep any extra survey statements to a minimum.

The following are examples of organisation events, issues, changes or processes you might want to ask about:

- Major organisation change – restructuring, merger activity, downsizing – did we manage it well?
- Performance management – how well does it work?
- Internal development programs – useful or not?
- Information technology systems – are they delivering?
- External image of the organisation – how do employees believe we are seen?
- The physical environment – does it support a positive working climate?
- Enterprise bargain agreements – are employees happy with the process and the outcome?



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### 05.3 Rules for Writing Survey Statements

1. Ask about one thing only – don't complicate statements by asking about more than one aspect of a topic or by adding qualifiers.
2. Keep the words down to a minimum – economy of word use is important in making statements both quick and easy to read.
3. The statement has to be written in a form that fits with the response scale of the survey. In the case of the Organisation Climate Survey it has to be answerable as True, Inclined To Be True, Inclined To Be False and False.

Using the first two topics above as examples, some statements might be as follows:

"The recent restructure was handled sensitively by our managers."  
(In fact a query about the adequacy of management practices.)

"Staff were kept well informed about the extent of changes in the recent restructure."  
(A communication query which may relate to issued information which might reach staff through print, screen or briefings.) More direct queries might include the following:

"Staff were well briefed by managers about the recent restructure."  
"Information provided on the intranet about the recent restructure was adequate."

"The Performance Management process has been useful for my development."  
(Managers may go through the motions but are there useful outcomes for staff?)

"My manager strongly supports the Performance Management process."  
(Do staff sense a depth in the commitment of managers to the process?)

### 05.4 Adding Written Comments

A wide range of organisations like to add a facility for staff to write comments. This is simply done at the end of the survey by posing specific questions to staff. Two recent examples are:

"List those improvements in the business over the last three years that have added to our performance."

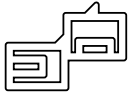
"List those priority improvements you believe we still need to make in the operation of the business."

The wording is entirely at your own discretion but keep it simple.

### 05.5 Themes in Written Comments

For the purposes of improved understanding this written feedback can be broken into major themes to help in developing organisational responses. It is our usual practice to theme comments under the climate headings of the Organisation Climate Survey. Some background in this type of work is usually required to carry it out successfully and it is not difficult to train people in the art.

We had a CEO of a major corporation in recent years who after reading staff comments suddenly realised the survey results were something he could not afford to ignore. They can have impact in a topical sense and can be a very educational experience for managers who have forgotten what life in the frontline is all about.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

06	Decide on the use of External Suppliers for Printing, Packaging and Distribution (Offline surveys)
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06.1	The Standard Survey Pack
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There are three components in the standard survey pack :

1. Cover letter – from the CEO or the another senior manager.
2. Return envelope – addressed either internally or to an external address.
3. A survey.

The most cost-efficient way to produce these packs is through one supplier who can print, collate and package. Most major mailhouses have the technology that allows them to automatically collate and plastic wrap the three components. This has the added advantage of being able to individually address survey packs if that is required.

The choice of a mailhouse to handle the tasks as an integrated project is often the best alternative particularly if you have more than 200 to 300 surveys to print, package and distribute.

06.2	Special Printing Requirements
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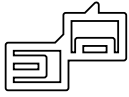
Addressing – the clear plastic wrap option allows organisations to individually address survey packs either on an internal or external basis. We have used both methods in an attempt to ensure that all employees receive surveys. Our experience suggests that mailing directly to employees' homes is not a sound approach as it appears to reduce the response rate to a significant extent.

Using internal mail systems in organisations works with reasonable efficiency and reduces the need for manual distribution either by chosen individuals or line managers.

Print codes to identify multiple locations – a problem faced by a number of organisations in undertaking national surveys is having a large number of locations to identify. We have had cases where the number of national locations varies between 132 and 465. It is of course impossible to create code sheets that can deal with multiple locations on this scale.

To deal with these instances it is possible to employ print technology that will print a location code on every survey. The technology uses a database or spreadsheet to make decisions about the number of surveys required for each location and will print them in sequence.

If you have more than 12 locations that need to be identified then you may need to create a number of code sheets or use an automated identification system.



# Survey Project User Manual

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### 07 Establish the total number of surveys required in each Division/Department

#### 07.1 Sample Sizes and Reliability in Organisation Climate Studies

The size of samples in these types of studies is driven on the one hand by the operational requirements of an organisation and on the other by the statistical reliability of the instrument being used to measure the climate.

Survey reliability is an issue of technical quality in the construct of the survey document, however the stronger the reliability of the instrument the more flexibility the organisation has in limiting sample sizes. Strong reliability in the survey document improves the ability of the organisation to draw conclusions about survey data on the basis that it is reasonably representative of missing populations.

The term reliability is more commonly applied to psychometric testing and used to draw inferences about the results of individual scores. In organisation survey instruments, reliability is more a measure of the consistency of views held by staff about aspects of the working environment and is particularly subject to the influence of contextual factors. For instance a scale that measures the impact of policies and procedures on the working activities of individuals will produce very different scores for department heads than for administrative grades 1–3.

Reliability is normally determined in organisation studies through the identification of survey dimensions that represent different aspects of the working environment; reliability coefficients are calculated on individual dimensions using what is known as Cronbach's alpha. While there are no defined cut off points for reliability, a coefficient of 0.7 or stronger would generally be regarded as acceptable for these types of measures. (The range for dimensions in these types of survey instruments normally lies between 0.55 to 0.85. It is desirable to have the majority of the dimensions sitting above 0.7.)

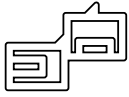
From a statistical viewpoint sample sizes can be as small as 15% of the total population provided that the reliability coefficients for survey dimensions fall above 0.7. The difficulty in small samples is the possibility of a skew being introduced by the disproportionate representation of a population. In short, smaller samples with strong reliability are a viable proposition provided that the populations are free of representative bias. An example would be in the retail sector where there are full time, part time and casual populations. Casual populations tend to produce more positive views of an organisation's climate and limited sampling for a group of retail stores would have to ensure a representative mix of the three groups, otherwise the total result can suggest a more positive view if there is a disproportionate number of casual staff.

Of greater concern in limited samples is the possibility of managers discounting the results based on the view that the sample cannot possibly be large enough. If an organisation is only able to report on the results for 150 staff in a population of a 1,000, it will always be difficult for managers, despite the best assurances of the statistical spin-doctors, to accept that the result is the "real" picture. This will almost certainly be the case if the climate profile is a poor one.

#### 07.2 How many Employees do you Sample?

The issue of sampling strategy is one which may be partly driven by the objectives that are established at the outset of the survey.

There are cases where organisations have a policy of offering all employees the opportunity of responding to a survey. Census sampling is not uncommon and does convey to staff the idea that the organisation is concerned about equity.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

### 07.2 How many Employees do you Sample? (continued)

Sampling large populations is an option and we have undertaken surveys for organisations where 50% of all staff receive surveys. The difficulty in sampling is in attaining a sufficient response rate from the reduced population. If response rates are not strong organisations can find themselves with insufficient numbers of returns at departmental level to publish a credible result.

One particular problem associated with reduced returns is the credibility of the data for managers. Even if the number of returns is sufficient in absolute terms for a reliable result, individual managers may have trouble accepting the result if only 30% of the total staff complement returned surveys.

The additional cost of census samples is usually marginal, even when very large numbers running to thousands are involved.

However, if there is sensitivity about cost then sampling is a viable way to reduce costs, even if the end result is only marginal. In these cases the general rule is to ensure that the samples are sufficient enough to ensure a credible result both statistically and from a managerial perspective.

Once you have received estimates from business units/divisions add at least 10% to 15% to it. We can assure you that their best estimates will result in people ringing the Project Manager and complaining bitterly that they have run short of surveys. More is better than less and the costs of producing short runs of surveys is unacceptably high.

### 08 Determine All the Code Fields for the Coding Sheet

#### 08.1 You May Need More than One Code Sheet

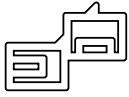
If your organisation has multiple business units, some with unique structures, then you may require several code sheets. In these cases each business unit will need a unique code sheet and as a result a separate print run. It is usual to have the name of the business unit/division printed on the front of the survey in conjunction with the corporate logo.

#### 08.2 Less is Now Better than More

The range of code sheet headings can be limitless however, the wider the range the more complex the results scenarios. When results are processed code headings are paired off, creating permutations. For example: Female/Grade 6/Marketing/Years of Service > 3yrs. When code sheets grow too large the number of permutations becomes daunting.

We have had a case where a code sheet for just one division created in excess of 10,000 rows of results. Definitely too much information that didn't add much to the understanding of the climate issues than was available with the use of far fewer code classifications.

The golden rule of thumb in helping clients to decide what codes are most relevant for them is to ask the question, "When you get the results what are all the demographic groups you will want to be able to identify?" They may need help in thinking this through, so be prepared.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

### 08.2 Less is Now Better than More (continued)

Generic headings for code sheets include the following:

1. Geographic Location.  
(If there are more than 8 locations think about automatic coding in the print process.)
2. Department.  
(Sub-categories may get listed under major headings such as Marketing etc.)
3. Type of Employment.  
(Only test for this if you have significant Casual, Part Time and Full Time numbers.)
4. Type of Job.
5. Job grade.
6. Length of Service.  
(Ensure that these are consistent periods of time eg. 1–2 years, 3–4 years, 5–6 years. Isolating the 1–2 year group is a good idea as they tend to have a positive skew in their views of working climate. Employees with more than 10 years can be regarded as a single group as it is most likely that those with fewer years of service will be the groups with climate issues.)
7. Gender.

We have clients who also ask for age ranges and length of service in a department as well as a range of other data including categories such as training courses attended. Our advice is to stick with the core categories before considering any of these additional categories.

### 08.3 Confidentiality

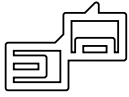
The greater the number of code categories the fewer guarantees you can offer employees about their privacy. In corporate environments combinations of codes such as gender, job type, age range and length of service can lead individuals to believe that they can be individually identified. While this may be true in some isolated cases, all results are aggregated into specific populations and as a safeguard the release of results can limit sample sizes to minimums such as groups of 10 or 15.

The code sheet needs to clearly display a guarantee that results will never be published in a way that would allow the identification of individual results. Presentations should always emphasise that the minimum sample size rule guarantees protection and stress that files provided to the organisation are designed to protect individual identity.

### 08.4 Always do a Final Check with Business Units/Divisions

As a standard procedure get each of your internal clients to sign off their final code sheets. This is a necessary self-protection measure from internal clients who come back at you after the results have been processed and ask why they can't identify certain populations. When the answer is "because you didn't code for them and you signed off the code sheet", you can do so in a 'holier than thou' tone of voice.

Rule of thumb – don't become a scapegoat for no good reason.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

09

Composition of Cover Letter From MD or GM etc

Included below are real examples of covering letters.

The governing rules in composing covering letters are:

1. as few words as possible;
2. a few key messages; and
3. an encouragement to respond.

The samples below are not presented as ideal, however the third sample is in our view the best of the three.

The letter really needs to say "This is important", "We're keen to know what you think", and "We really do things with this information, please fill it out".

We have had occasions in the past when CEOs and General Managers have applied their own creative genius to these pieces of communication and our advice is to avoid this outcome if you can. There is a reason most political leaders and CEOs have speech writers – they don't do it well. Vetting the final product is one thing, and creative writing is another. Most of these people will want to vet the final product and this is entirely understandable.

09.1

Cover Letter Sample 1

Dear Staff Member,

X recognises that as an employee, you are one of our most valuable assets. We want to know how we can improve our business for both you and our customers so we are seeking your feedback on how you feel about working with us.

The attached Employee Survey is being distributed to all our businesses. We would like you to complete the survey, as it will provide us with an accurate picture of our business as seen by you.

We would appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey and answer all questions openly and honestly. Your response is strictly confidential and completely anonymous, so you don't have to write your name on it. Your completed survey needs to be returned in the attached envelope by 31 May 1999.

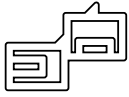
We will communicate the results of the survey to all staff by the end of August.

Your feedback will help us make us a better organisation to work for and you will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you can make a difference.

Thank you in anticipation for your input.

Yours faithfully,

Comments: this passes the economy of words test and pushes home the essential messages of its importance and encouraging staff to respond. One small point – don't tell staff they are one of your most valuable assets unless you are reasonably confident that their general treatment matches their declared value. There is also a school of thought that says to describe employees as assets is to demean their value as human beings by attributing object status to them.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

09.2

Cover Letter Sample 2

Dear Colleague,

The Department is conducting its fourth Employee Climate Survey.

Three visible changes have been made to this fourth survey. It is now an annual census survey of all staff. The survey will ask your views about the impact of the Department's values in your workplace. The survey is being delivered through a regular meeting of your work unit.

For those completing the survey for the first time, you will find that the questionnaire covers a range of topics including: communication, decision-making, professional development, client service, teamwork and equal opportunity. These are all areas I believe are important in making the Department a better place to work and enable us to provide a quality service to our clients.

Your response to the survey can make a difference to your workplace. In Y we have discussed the results from the previous surveys at the Y Executive, and we have used the feedback as part of the process in developing the Y Regional Action Agenda for 2000/2001. The Executive have had various workshops, including with senior regional staff, and the Action Agenda we are about to release contains among other things some strategies around making Y a better workplace. One of these action items is to set up a Staff Consultative Forum in the Region and I would propose that we discuss the results of the forth survey at that Forum.

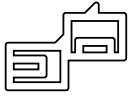
Clearly the findings from this forth survey will build on the information obtained from the earlier surveys, so your views and opinions are important. I encourage you to take 10–15 minutes to complete the survey and return it by Friday 27 October 2000.

Confidentiality of your responses is a high priority. External contractors have been engaged to assist with the survey and will receive all questionnaires in sealed envelopes. It will not be possible to identify respondents.

If you have any questions about the survey please contact X, Survey Project Manager, on 3456. Thank you for your participation in the survey.

Yours faithfully,

Comments: this has all the essential information, however is too wordy and as a result convoluted in its presentation. Staff will look for concrete changes as a result of these exercises and the letter reveals an abundance of process with a commitment to engage in further process via the creation of a Consultative Committee. Evidence of concrete outcomes would be more reassuring to staff.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

09.3

Cover Letter Sample 3

Dear Colleague,

One of our major objectives at the Y Group is to encourage an environment where people want to come to work. With that in mind, the attached Employee Survey is being distributed to all businesses, seeking your feedback on how you feel about working with us. We want to know what changes have occurred in the last twelve months and how we can continue to improve our business for both you and our customers.

The survey asks a number of questions. I would appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey and answer the questions openly and honestly. Your response is strictly confidential and completely anonymous. Please return your completed survey in the attached envelope by 4th June.

The survey results will be communicated to all staff from August onwards.

Your feedback will help us to continue to make the Y Group a better organisation and you will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you helped make a difference.

Thank you in anticipation for your input. I really appreciate it.

Yours faithfully,

Comments: this is our preferred choice of the three. The first sentence states the primary objective which contains an inferred commitment to an environment where people want to come to work. The language is straightforward and involving – “How you feel about working with us”. It delivers clear messages with an absolute minimum of words.

10

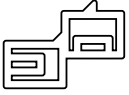
## Confirm Use of Return Envelopes and Relevant Address Details

There are two alternatives for the use of return envelopes:

1. Returned through internal mail for processing; and
2. Returned for processing via reply paid mail.

The sample below is a real example of how the returns can be addressed. Proformas for these can be downloaded from [employeesurveyonline.com](http://employeesurveyonline.com). The use of the “Private and Confidential” label attempts to reinforce the idea of providing safeguards for staff. Another form of safeguard is to address the envelope to the consultant even in the case of the internal mail being used.

Internal Mail Only
Private and Confidential Employee Satisfaction Survey Employee Surveys Online C/O Internal Mail



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

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### Confirm the Distribution Process

There are two alternatives available to organisations in the distribution process:

1. Use the internal mail system – most organisations utilise the internal mail system to distribute. In these instances the printing house needs to be clearly instructed on packaging requirements for your mailroom. The advantage of using large integrated mailhouse operations is that they can package a survey into hundreds of individually addressed packages in relatively little time and at reasonable cost.
2. Using the mailhouse to distribute direct – if you are pressed for time and have a limited number of drop points then the mailhouse will be able to do your distribution for you. Competent mailhouses will have preferential arrangements with nationally based courier companies and can distribute packages with impressive efficiency.

11.1

#### Follow Up and Then Some

A warning for large organisations about distribution channels – follow up to ensure that survey packages have reached their destination. Emails to recipients to inform them that they should have received packages is basic procedure. For large national organisations it is not uncommon for packages to go missing. We have instances where they have been received and left sitting around or actually put away in cupboards, so be ready for surprises.

Depending on the size of the country it is usual to find in the case of national distribution that it can take up to a week for surveys to reach their intended target audiences. This time has to be factored into the time calculations for the total project.

We have experienced difficulty in meeting agreed timelines because of unexpectedly slow distribution channels.

12

### Set a Return Date to be Printed on the Survey Cover

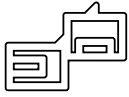
Completing employee surveys would rarely take the average person much more than twenty minutes. However most organisations give staff between two to three weeks from the date of distribution to have surveys returned.

Time delays will occur in distribution, at the point of arrival and with individual employees who will take some time to complete surveys. It all has to be factored into the return date.

The advice is simple – don't leave yourself short. Go for enough time to absorb the delays and to allow at least one follow up from local managers.

We have found that three weeks is standard, however we have had clients set two week deadlines and with rigorous follow up deliver very respectable returns by the due date – it requires the capacity to follow up on line managers tenaciously.

The return date is printed on the cover of the survey and reinforced on the cover letter.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

### 13 Confirm the Return Process and Recording System – Managing Returns

#### 13.1 The Return Process

There are two alternatives:

Individual employees return surveys either through internal or reply paid mail.

1. Reply Paid – is an option that we have used less of over more recent years. It is expensive, but there are cases where clients want to demonstrate to staff that it is being handled entirely by a third party and confidentiality is completely assured. It has the added advantage of placing no internal requirements on the organisation which some are prepared to pay for.

2. Internal Collection – collection points are established for staff to deposit surveys. These are emptied every two to three days and the contents sent to the central mailroom, then forwarded to the consultants for processing.

The centralised system of return has in our experience been the most consistently successful. It is necessary however to ensure that surveys are not allowed to collect for days on end which limits the ability of the data process people to meet their timelines.

Some clients are keen on the use of external mail to provide an assurance to staff that it is a 'hands off' process. The only real penalty in these cases is the mail cost.

#### 13.2 The Returns Recording Process

One of the features of the work we have conducted over the last twenty years of conducting major surveys is the desire of clients to kept informed about the rate of return.

Detailed auditing of returns allows you to do targeted follow-up with those business units/departments whose return rate indicates a lack of sufficient response.

We normally provide feedback every two days and depending on the coding position, the status report can be very detailed identifying returns down to departments within specific locations if that is required.

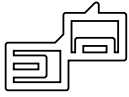
Again the mailhouses have the capacity to do this on your behalf for very reasonable cost. The process is entirely manual apart from the automated opening of individual envelopes, so the costs relate to semi-skilled labour not expensive machinery.

#### 13.3 Managing Return Rates

The effectiveness of this process will be driven by the clarity of internal roles in the project management structure, the extent of pre-survey information and the thoroughness of follow up.

It is preferable that liaison roles within business units/divisions drive the returns follow up activity. As the returns reports become available the liaison roles act accordingly, targeting line managers who have poor return rates.

In the case of one client the return rates for all business divisions was made available to all the General Managers to add an interesting level of transparency. It did have impact and raised the visibility of the survey at the executive management level and General Managers did some personal follow-up on line managers. The tactic was deliberate to create public pressure over the need to improve return rates.



# Survey Project User Manual

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### 13.3 Managing Return Rates (continued)

Managers need to be reminded that if they appear interested in the survey staff will generally respond positively and complete the surveys. The stronger return rates inevitably come from rigorous follow up and genuine line management interest and encouragement.

The key message for staff is: "We use this as management information, it is discussed at the most senior level and it is your opportunity to have impact on significant decisions."

### 13.4 Familiarity Breeds a Lack of Interest

If your organisation sticks to the idea of long term measurement of employee sentiment then it is likely you will suffer the fate of a number of our clients, which is that some staff adopt an ambivalent approach to its arrival. Once you hit the third or fourth survey you will have to work harder at driving response rates along.

We recently had a client who, as a part of a very significant size group, had never managed to raise the response rate above 30% of the total population. Now the total return was more than enough to provide useful data on the working climate, but in many cases it meant that specific locations lacked sufficient figures for anyone to take the result seriously. (See the glossary of terms in the Organisation Climate Guide to Interpretation for further information on reliable response rates.)

On the fourth survey they created special climate project management positions across the business in operational areas and appointed non-managerial staff to the positions and set them a general target of 50% return for the total business. It worked like a charm and the return rate exceeded the target.

A little interest goes a long way.

## 14 Structure Pre-Survey Communications

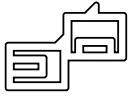
There is a range of possibilities which most of our clients have tried in a number of combinations. They are as follows:

- Communication to all staff, either as a special bulletin or through the timely release of the internal magazine prior to the survey.
- Targeted communication with all line managers advising them of the survey and their likely role.
- Memo to executive management team alerting them to the survey and the role of line managers.
- Management briefings are also used as a medium for informing managers in addition to print media. (This can often be done by utilising established management forums and in those instances when our clients have done this return rates and management support is generally more positive.)

Actions prior to the distribution of the survey include:

- General advice to staff via internal memo delivered as hard copy where appropriate and electronically.
- Advice to all line managers advising them of the expected delivery date of survey packs and what they need to do to distribute surveys and the project timetable deadlines for reporting results.

The following are examples of advice to staff and operational management:



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## EmployeeSurveyOnline

14.1

General Staff Memo

Memorandum

To: All Employees  
From: Chief Officer Human Resources  
Copy: General Managers  
Date: 22nd May 2001  
Subject: Organisation Climate Survey

For the last five years the organisation has conducted an annual Organisation Climate Survey.

The survey examines a variety of organisational dimensions that describe in detail the quality of our working environment.

As a result of the feedback from previous surveys, initiatives have been implemented which address of the needs of individuals and the organisation. In the next two weeks you will be receiving a copy of the Organisation Climate Survey to provide you with the opportunity to participate in the 2001 Survey.

All results will be combined to form an overall and Divisional picture of the Organisation.

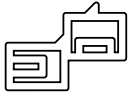
Feedback from these surveys helps to keep Senior Managers informed of organisational conditions and allows them to plan strategies and initiatives for the future.

Following this year's survey, information kits will be provided to Managers so that Divisional results may be fed back to staff. You are encouraged to take this opportunity to provide feedback on your work area.

Once completed, your survey should be placed in the sealed envelope and returned through the internal mail to the Human Resources Department where responses will be forwarded unopened to the consultant.

All responses will be held in the strictest confidence and no employee will have access to completed survey forms.

Thank you for your participation.



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## EmployeeSurveyOnline

14.2

Manager Memo

22nd April 2001

To: Site Managers

From: GM Human Resources

Subject: Employee Attitude Survey – Explanatory notes and staff briefing

Ajax is again conducting an Employee Satisfaction Survey to gain feedback from our employees on how they feel about working for us. The survey is due to be rolled out from Thursday 12th May.

Boxes of surveys will be delivered to your Centres via Special Post, marked to your attention week commencing 12th May.

A staff bulletin communicating the importance of the Satisfaction Survey will be issued to you on 5th May. Another bulletin will be issued to remind staff to return their completed survey by Friday 30th May.

A covering letter from GM Operations included with the survey explains the reason why we are conducting the survey and what we will do with the results.

Could you please ensure the surveys are distributed to all employees (including yourself and other management) within your Site. Please encourage all staff to participate and return their response quickly to ensure it is included in the final results. Staff simply need to complete the survey and return it in the envelope provided by 30th May.

Reasonable time should be made available to employees to complete the survey. The survey is completely anonymous and individual survey responses cannot be identified.

Guidelines for discussion with staff are attached. Please ensure you or your management communicate the attached to staff in the near future.

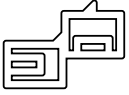
The results of the survey will be communicated to employees in September.

If you have any queries please contact me on 698 2587.

Regards,

GM Human Resources

A similar note should be distributed to the executive management team.



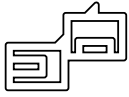
# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

14.3 The Attachment to Assist Managers Discussions with Employees

### Team Talk – Employee Survey

Introduction	The logistics function is currently conducting an employee attitude survey in conjunction with Ajax. All Ajax divisions will be participating in the same survey.
What is an attitude survey?	The attitude survey is a questionnaire the company is requesting all staff from Sites to complete.
Why are we running an attitude survey?	<p>The company wants to find out how you feel about working for Ajax. It wants to know how good we are at a whole range of things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising a job well done</li> <li>• Listening to your ideas and suggestions</li> <li>• Training you properly for your job</li> <li>• Working as a team</li> <li>• Communicating about our business</li> <li>• Assisting you to provide excellent customer service.</li> </ul>
Analysis	External consultants have been contracted to analyse the results of the survey for all Ajax divisions.
How it works	<p>I will be asking all employees, including management, to complete the survey. Once you receive the survey it is up to you if you want to complete it.</p> <p>However, this is a very important exercise. The organisation is looking for your feedback on how to make Sites better places to work. The more information we receive the more we can understand what we do well and what we do not do as well. Based on the results of the survey the organisation will be able to determine the areas where we need to improve. Your responses are absolutely confidential. The questionnaires are anonymous and the only people who will see the completed surveys are the external consultants hired to analyse the results.</p> <p>Once you have completed the survey, simply seal it in the envelope provided and return it to Head Office via the internal mail. Nothing on the survey itself will identify you individually.</p>
Results	Once the consultant has completed all the analysis, feedback will be provided to all Sites in September. The feedback will also explain what the organisation will plan to do based on the outcomes.
Summary	<p>I encourage you to complete the survey, and take the opportunity to give us some valuable feedback. You can be completely confident your responses will be confidential.</p> <p>Please note that all surveys need to be returned to National Office by Friday 30th May.</p> <p>If you are unsure about any part of the survey do not hesitate to speak to myself or any member of the management team.</p>
Ask Questions	Ask the group if they have any questions about the survey.



# Survey Project User Manual

EmployeeSurveyOnline

Team Talk – Employee Survey (continued)

Check understanding Ask the group the following questions to check their understanding of the information you have covered:

Questions Suggested Answers

Why is the Survey Important? So the Company can use our feedback to make Distribution Centres a better place to work.

Name some of the things that the organisation will find out how well it is doing as a result of the survey  
Recognising a job well done  
Listening to ideas  
Training  
Working as a team  
Communicating about the business  
Assisting staff to provide excellent customer service

Why is Ajax Conducting this Survey? Because it recognises the need to understand how people feel about working for Ajax and the issues they face.

From the perspective of the Project Manager and Human Resources Division, any opportunity to address managers and inform people about the survey should be maximised. Face to face communication inevitably creates a higher level of comfort, although it needs to be said that managers are rarely very comfortable about employee surveys on the first time around.

## 15 Pre-Release Discussions with the Project Committee

It is normal to conduct the first results briefing with the members of the central project committee. These bodies are usually senior human resources people who work with General Managers in business divisions and have an obvious need to develop a detailed understanding of the results.

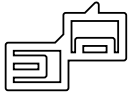
These are useful sessions for confirming the structure of senior briefings in particular and for having final negotiations over the structure of all reports.

### 15.1 Getting it in Context

This is also an opportunity to talk about the nature of results and the extent to which they might be revealing information about the response of employees to current issues, historic characteristics, operational processes and other factors.

As consistency of interpretation is important, there is a need to ensure that anyone who is to be involved in working with senior managers will be uttering similar messages about the conclusions to the study and the improvement needs.

There is further information in the Organisation Climate Guide to Interpretation about issues of context in results.



# Survey Project User Manual

## EmployeeSurveyOnline

### 16 CEO/GM Briefing

#### 16.1 Setting Protocol

It is usual to brief the CEOs of organisations before anyone else. On the first time around GMs might want separate briefings before the meeting with their own executive management teams. After the first experience most of them are happy to go straight into the wider executive briefing, although from time to time we may seek a prior audience if we think there is sensitive material to be discussed. This allows the GM to take a position and undertake one on one discussions with managers if necessary.

#### 16.2 Schedule Well in Advance

Always try and get into the diaries of these people well in advance and schedule a minimum of an hour and preferably longer. On the first time around an hour and a half is sensible.

#### 16.3 Classic Questions

The following are standard questions senior managers will ask about results on the first time around:

1. Can I rely on the results?
2. What determines the position of our result in the marketplace?
3. What is this really saying to us?
4. How do we respond to the information?
5. What do we tell staff?

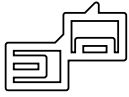
Inevitably there will be other questions and you should refer to the Organisation Climate Guide to Analysis to acquaint yourself with the more detailed information in respect to issues like correlations between dimensions and factors that drive specific types of responses in the survey.

#### 16.4 Be Remembered for Clarity of Delivery

With senior managers, and particularly CEOs, stick to core information and provide an analysis that is relevant to the business strategy.

As we've suggested in the report structure section of this manual, a two page point summary for these people is what you really want, with a brief analysis of each dimension as an appendix.

Be ready on the day with all the detail to cover the 'just in case' scenario. We have had CEOs read our reports cover to cover and then all the summaries of staff comments. There was one occasion when a CEO grilled us for up to two hours on the detail of results in every business division. We're happy to say this is a bit rare among the majority of cases and in some senses startling in the level of information some of these people carry around in their heads about their organisations.



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## 17 Agree Senior Management Briefings with Business Units

### 17.1 Do it Well in Advance

The same rule applies with these groups as with their senior managers. Get in early. You will find that you get scheduled as a part of the monthly meeting or whatever regular meeting is held and put on the agenda.

### 17.2 Negotiate Sufficient Time

There is often a problem with the convenience of all this, which is that they will attempt to hold down the amount of time you're allocated. Hold out for as much as you can get and make it clear that you're not interested in finding out on the day that they are running behind and want to reduce you to 20 minutes. Believe us, it happens.

### 17.3 Offer Additional Time to Team Members

It's well to remember that the members of teams reporting to General or Divisional Managers are the managers most directly impacted on by results. These are the people who will have the highest need in terms of additional time for explanations and assistance in formulating operational response. The more time spent with this level the greater the chance that you will have impact.

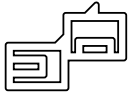
Offer time and assistance whenever possible in the form of additional presentations, staff briefings and working with climate improvement project groups in an advisory capacity.

## 18.0 Agree Briefing Strategy for Management Teams

In conjunction with the climate survey liaison people in each business unit/division, map out the key outcomes for the briefing and structure the agenda accordingly. The core activity of presenting the graphical results will remain consistent, however you might need to tailor presentations around specific changes in the business, interventions that could have taken place, which necessitate constructing results around affected populations. Statistics like turnover and absenteeism might send you looking for the results of particular groups in a business unit.

Decide beforehand how you want deal with the communication strategy for staff and improvement strategies ie. Do you give them proforma approaches, do you offer to work with them in developing options?

Some management teams will be more inclined than others to accept help and to attack organisation climate issues.



This is one of the great dilemmas for those organisations that decide to undertake an employee survey. Having collected all the data, interpreted and communicated results to the organisation, what do you do next?

19.1

Some Simple Rules

There are some general rules that apply to this phase that you might find useful before making any decisions:

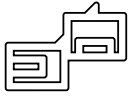
1. Don't waste what you have already invested in development processes. Examine the current range of development activities already underway in the organisation. Ask yourself to what extent do these processes address the climate issues? Do they address general issues apparent in the results, do they appropriately target specific populations? Some of the solutions to your problems may lie in redirecting the focus of current activities or in restructuring development processes to better treat underlying needs.
2. Keep it operationally relevant. We had a client once who said that the most effective way of killing off an organisation initiative is to give it a label and appoint a manager in charge of it. Most of the solutions to organisation climate issues lie within the grasp of managers and management teams. They may lack understanding or competence, so work with them to develop what is missing. Resist the urge to do it for them – it's an expensive habit that often fails to resolve the issue.
3. Doing more of the same thing might be the right solution. There are times when we have advised clients to continue organisation development activities already underway precisely because it hasn't had enough time to have impact. Managers commonly invest too much hope in specific initiatives in the belief that the choice, focus and resource commitment is right to produce a turnaround in the attitudes of staff to the organisation. Making lasting change in organisation climate always takes time and persistence is often an essential element. If the original solution has been carefully crafted stick to it long enough to make it work. When we say long enough we may mean up to two years.
4. Stick to limited choices and target strategic priorities. When we say target strategic priorities we really mean spend your money where is has the biggest impact on the performance of the organisation. If you have issues with a key population with high impact on performance, then direct your energies accordingly. We have advised organisations in the past to target specific groups of managers because of high turnover problems and the high cost of lost training and replacement. Unless you have unlimited resources don't over-stretch in making choices about where you expend effort.

19.2

Management Counselling

As a response to survey findings the treatment of issues at a local manager level is one of the most powerful actions organisations can take. If underlying issues are spread across groups of managers then a broader strategy may be required in conjunction with one on one activities.

Poor climate results for a population can be the result of a range of factors that include restructuring, changes in job roles, increased work pressure, alterations to procedures and operating rules, team dynamics and inadequate attention to some management practices. There are instances where the behaviour of managers is the primary cause of poor climate results. The nature of causal factors will clearly affect decisions about the strategy and type of management response, however local managers must carry responsibility in shaping and delivering the response.



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19.2

Management Counselling (continued)

It is not uncommon for managers to respond to poor results by citing a range of factors that they regard as unusual, as a way of explaining staff perceptions of the environment. At the risk of upsetting managers, it is reasonable to point out that the job of managers is to manage the impact of change on staff. There are managers who are quicker to recognise organisational issues that may have an adverse impact on employee climate and take actions to minimise the climate fallout. Typically these people will have a higher level of insight into their own management practices and a greater sensitivity towards the needs of staff.

Some managers however will require assistance in understanding those issues in the workplace that are driving poor responses in the survey. In some cases this will be due to the managers own inability to acknowledge that aspects of management style, evident in management behaviours, are the cause of the problem. It can also be the case that managers do not fully appreciate the impact of changes in the work environment on employees.

Some standard steps to follow for one on one discussions:

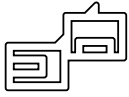
- Ensure the manager understands what the results are measuring in the work environment;
- Ask what it is the manager thinks is driving staff responses and producing a poorer climate profile;
- Be prepared to respond to questions about the reliability of the result ie. "How do we know it's right?";
- Ask about any changes that may have taken place in the workplace over the past few years;
- Ask about the quality of working relationships both in a general and team sense;
- Check out how information flows through the group;
- Establish the frequency of meetings, their content and how they're conducted;
- Confirm on what basis performance discussions are taking place;
- Check that staff are able to access development activities;
- Attempt to establish the extent of the manager's visibility for staff and the circumstances under which contact takes place; and
- If the manager has a management/supervisory structure underneath ask about the extent of experience and quality in the management team.

These are obviously designed to collate information that will provide the basis for an action plan. The unique circumstances of each case will really determine the specifics of the improvement plan, however if you are careful enough in the data collection the solutions should be evident. Look to have impact on those factors that will have the most immediate positive climate improvement result. The longer term solutions will be in respect to the competency of individual managers, however identifying processes and practices that managers can easily modify should yield some shorter term results.

19.3

Topical Intervention

There are cases where the severity of results for a population suggest the need for active intervention. We would only pursue this option if it is apparent that a group is dysfunctional in its performance. In extreme cases we may recommend the relocation of individual managers if it is evident that this will provide immediate climate relief. This is a difficult judgement call and the evidence needs to be irrefutable.



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### 19.3 Topical Intervention (continued)

Other interventions will hopefully be less ominous and can consist of human resource practitioners working with entire teams and their managers to resolve issues. Poor climate results are not necessarily a function of breakdown in relationships in these cases, it may also be attributable to process and systems difficulties that impact on how people work and lead to disaffection with the working environment. The use of an external resource to assist teams and groups in redesigning systems and processes is not unusual and can often be the fastest way to reach a resolution of issues.

The approach to these interventions would normally take place through the management team and the same investigative process should take place as the one described in the Management Counselling section of this manual.

### 19.4 Management Models

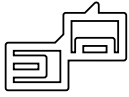
The first question you need to ask is "Do we operate a particular model of management?". Some of the management theory about organisation culture in more recent years is that management models should reflect organisational values. In some senses the promotion of values is an attempt to define idealised concepts of the way we ought to be. They are elusive elements in measurement work such as organisation climate studies. Values largely infer the exercise of particular behaviours on behalf of employees and making commitments about organisational values is really an attempt to define core behaviours.

The issue in employee surveys is whether the results indicate there are problems with core behaviours. This assumes that the organisation has sought to define a set of core values and therefore behaviours that are regarded as essential in the performance of all management roles. One of the acid tests for organisations is whether the performance review system places an emphasis on the behaviours which managers are expected to display – is there significant reward for demonstrating them?

The issue was well stated by an organisation development client of ours some years ago, who said "We have to decide how we want our people managed.". Thinking about what constitutes good management since those days has added complexity to the concept of management models. The definition of behaviours reflecting accepted values is a component of a broader need that organisations have to describe all the elements that constitute competent performance in managers.

In the context of organisation climate surveys there are three perspectives that require attention.

1. Is there an adequate model of management performance against which the climate results can be compared?
2. Do the climate results confirm in conjunction with other performance data that managers are performing within the bounds of the model?
3. Are climate results indicating a need to review the viability of the model?



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19.5

### Management Development

The most important response to climate results is to check out the appropriateness and emphasis of current management development activities.

Results can often be useful for customising existing programs and placing greater focus around specific skills for example in areas such as performance feedback and team dynamics.

Our generic guidelines are particularly relevant in the management development context. Keep what seems to be working well for you and look for operationally relevant activities that will have high impact.

19.6

### Things You Might Want to Do and Ask About

1. Examine results that relate to the range of management groups and particularly those who have undertaken management development activities.
2. Attempt to establish the relative performance of populations who are impacted on by those management groups in the climate study.
3. Are there confirming indications of better climate performance in the case of those managers who have undergone development?
4. Do these differences remain consistent over time?
5. Are there other programs such as team-based activities that should have impact in defined areas and can you identify the climate indicators confirming impact?

We have a client who regularly measured their climate profile over a period of years, who made major investments in team building and over time realised some general improvements in the overall climate results. The gains were fairly marginal however and the performance in the Working Relationships and Team Identification dimensions hit plateaus. After two years senior management re-examined the emphasis on teams in the context of the business structure and operational framework and started to question the value of continued efforts. The outcome may not be what everyone would hope but without the climate information the question may not have been asked for another two years.

It was not a question of the original decision being incorrect, but an issue of a more tactically fruitful development activities for the business. The business had made stronger climate gains out of operational changes that the employees thought were the right decisions.