



SURVEY SENSE

articles by The Center For Survey Research

Hospitality - Entertainment - Gaming - Travel - Luxury Culture

COMMUNICATING: And We're Not Talking Just Cell Phones

Grunting, drums, smoke signals, the Pony Express, telegraph, telephone, fax and cell phones have all been cutting edge tools of their time for communicating. Each, however, in their own way had and have limitations. In order to understand grunts and drums, people needed to have really good rhythm. Smoke signals just aren't convenient to use when in a high-rise hotel, and the Pony Express, well—you get the picture.

While almost everyone seems to have a cell phone these days, and many seem to use them while driving, eating, in movie theaters and while grocery shopping, cell phones are still not the answer when we need to communicate within the company. For success in communicating within the work environment, there is nothing that beats talking face to face. And to enhance the spoken word, emails, newsletters, surveys and more can and should be used on a continual basis.

Management's Role

Good, timely information flow is a key to having employees understand the business issues that management deals with on a daily basis. When employees are provided with this information, they can certainly add value to the process and are able to contribute positive feedback towards satisfactory solutions of problems. Conversely, when information is not conveyed to employees by management, employees become part of the problem. The result is low productivity, high absenteeism, inefficiencies, missed goals, disgruntled opinions and more.

In short, management must encourage and ensure that communication flows both ways. Managers should first be trained to communicate with staff, both in person and in writing, out on the floor as well as in meetings. Evaluation of this communication and how often it is performed should be incorporated into each manager's critique at review time as well.

Whether it is an immediate supervisor or the CEO, a little time taken out each week to walk around and visit with employees from different departments is a great way to learn about the real problems and opportunities faced by the staff. Ask questions of the staff. What is needed to get the job done more efficiently? Where do bottlenecks occur? Is enough training being provided?

And just as importantly, become familiar with employee's personal lives. How is the family? When are you going to close on your new house? How is your son doing at college? All are questions that will enable management to better manage staff for a variety of reasons. It's much better to know that an employee's recent poor performance is due to the stress of having a sick family member than to believe it's due to job dissatisfaction. Supporting and communicating with the employee may be all that is needed to help alleviate problems of this sort.

Employee satisfaction surveys are a useful tool that management can use in communicating and listening to their employees. Gene Ference, PhD, and Ference Leadership and Strategy have developed surveys and report results in a format that indicates to

YOUR OPINIONS

Employee Satisfaction Surveys
Customer Satisfaction Surveys
Management 360 Surveys

OUR CONFIDENTIALITY

Professional Neutral Party
Reliable Feedback
Efficient, Timely Reports

REAL RESULTS

Reach Strategic Goals
Return on Individuals
Develop Trust and Loyalty



Gene Ference, Ph.D. is a service-industry insider. His degrees in management and organizational development from Cornell University are backed by over 30 years of industry experience. He is an accomplished speaker and group facilitator, routinely conducting management workshops, leadership retreats and strategy meetings. He has developed and implemented research surveys internationally, worked with Fortune 100 companies, contributed to client national quality awards, and designed appropriate strategies for optimizing human capital and growing organizational profits.

Contact Information:

Ference Leadership and Strategy, Inc.
262 Lyons Plain Road
Weston, CT 06883 U.S.A.
Phone: (203)226-6000
Fax: (203)221-0068

Gene.Ference@FerenceInc.com



SURVEY SENSE

articles by The Center For Survey Research

Hospitality - Entertainment - Gaming - Travel - Luxury Culture

Page 2 of 3

management where the organization stands on communication. Because of the confidential nature of these surveys, many times employees feel more at ease telling about their job, how they feel about work, their employer and their fellow workers. It's a great way to find what the underlying problems are at work. Is there favoritism within the department? How is the pay and benefit structure? Is there too much work to be done by too few people to give excellence in service? Are executives and managers perceived to be approachable and informed about the front-line?

Allowing comments from the surveys gives good feedback to management and is a great first step into learning more about the "real world" feelings of employees. Here they will write about themselves, their fellow workers, their supervisors and make suggestions to improve the company. However, success with surveys is short-lived if management is not prepared to act on the results and implement some of the suggestions. If no progress is seen by employees that at least some suggestions are used, subsequent surveys will be of less and less value as employees will not take the time and effort to inform management about what they see and feel. Management will then be left in the same situation as prior to the survey, guessing as to the effectiveness of communication within the organization.

Feedback works when employees see that management embraces, recognizes and acts on suggestions. Management must implement some of these ideas so everyone can see progress. A reward system for employee feedback may be monetary, through employee newsletter recognition or simply through praise. Rewards for the employer may be staggering!

Employee's Role

Employee's must be willing to offer their thoughts and suggestions, whether in person or in a survey format. Speaking on a one on one basis, the employee can go right to the source and be heard immediately. But one of the beauties in a survey is that they allow everyone to become involved. And everyone can comment on ALL that they deal with each day: job climate, security, job satisfaction, communication opportunities, management, compensation, benefits, etc. The areas that can be measured in a survey can be tailored to fit a particular organization's needs and goals.

At Ference Leadership and Strategy, three principles support the use of employee surveys. Firstly, the respondent's anonymity and confidentiality is maintained. Secondly, systematic and continuous feedback of survey results is ensured, and thirdly, the analysis of findings are followed up by action planning.

Both employees and management can further encourage positive feedback from all sources by showcasing employee role models as success stories. Success can and should be built on success. When employees are rewarded for doing an exemplary job, all employees should note that it too could happen to them, with a little work and communication.

So beat the drums and build the fire for a smoke signal. Saddle the horse and deliver the mail or just get on your cell phone. If all else fails, speak to an employee in person! Any way you can communicate effectively so there is a two-way flow of information is a good way to go. Open the lines of communication and open the flow of information.

Contact Information:

Ference Leadership and Strategy, Inc.
262 Lyons Plain Road
Weston, CT 06883 U.S.A.
Phone: (203)226-6000
Fax: (203)221-0068

Gene.Ference@FerenceInc.com



SURVEY SENSE

articles by The Center For Survey Research

Hospitality - Entertainment - Gaming - Travel - Luxury Culture

Page 3 of 3

Invariably, the employee will prosper as will the employer, as many more staff members enjoy offering input into making your company more comfortable within which to work and more profitable for everyone. In fact, the customer might even enjoy a better experience as well.

Go For It, Make It Happen, and Enjoy The Best of ROI3
Return-On Individuals, Integrations, and Investments

For more information, contact:
Gene Ference, President, Ference Leadership and Strategy, Inc.
Gene.Ference@FerenceLeadershipAndStrategy.com

Contact Information:
Ference Leadership and Strategy, Inc.
262 Lyons Plain Road
Weston, CT 06883 U.S.A.
Phone: (203)226-6000
Fax: (203)221-0068
Gene.Ference@FerenceInc.com