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10 Tips for Retail Employee Surveys: (November 2013)

Employee surveys are used in many industries as a valuable tool to keep an organization on-track for long-term success and growth. In the retail sector, attention to a few special rules can ensure the success of these initiatives and help a company maximize the benefit to all involved.

- ★ Conduct surveys upon a change in leadership, ownership or major shifts in policies. Repeat surveys on an annual or some other regular basis.
- ★ Avoid administering employee surveys during holiday or other seasonal busy periods. Consider whether completing a survey will add a burden to an already busy time for your employees. In retail, begin planning in December or January for a Spring or Summer survey administration.
- ★ Connect the survey to other initiatives. Is it part of other quality management efforts? Where possible, use a central tag line linking these efforts.
- ★ Keep it simple. Be sure to ask the right questions in an unbiased and direct manner.
- ★ Promote the survey internally. Be sure to communicate how results will be used to take specific actions and how all employees, from general management to front-line customer service, are stakeholders in the process.
- ★ Provide easy access to employees at all levels. Breakroom workstations or kiosks can be setup specifically for this purpose at each location. Where appropriate, be sure to make the survey available to non-English speaking employees in their native language.
- ★ Promote and honor a commitment to confidentiality. You want your employees to be honest in their responses; to provide candid, forthright opinions about store management, policies and company direction. Take appropriate measures to protect the identities of individual employees and small groups. Always use a third-party to handle the actual survey implementation.
- ★ Provide your own benchmark when reporting results. A retail organization with multiple locations can compare each location to overall or regional results. Past results make an especially valuable comparison to measure progress on specific issues.
- ★ Act on the results to ensure the success of future surveys. Resist the urge to only communicate positive results. Making changes is not always easy, but gives credibility to the entire survey process.
- ★ Most importantly, define a goal and keep this goal in mind throughout the process. Involve employees at various levels, in diverse departments and across locations to help define the objectives, construct the questions, review the results and make recommendations for change.

Following these best practices will ensure the success of your next employee survey effort. DataStar is a leading provider of employee satisfaction and engagement surveys, as well as leadership assessments, 360 and other employee feedback programs.