

E-Tool #7 What Do You “Deliver” As An Employer To Your Workers?



It's great to think there are several benefits you offer to your employees. In fact, you might even be delivering what you think you offer. Shouldn't you know for sure? Your employees' opinions are powerful indicators of working conditions and potential in your salon. Good working conditions can make a dramatic difference in improving moral and reducing turnover. Employee surveys and exit interviews can give you much valuable information about your success at providing reasons for people to stay with your company.

EMPLOYEE SURVEYS

If your employees have negative opinions about what they get from employment in your operation, you will not change these opinions (whether it's only perception or whether it's reality) by ignoring their thoughts or trying to intimidate them. You may absolutely disagree with what they feel, but it's important that you never forget that their feelings have a dramatic and direct effect on how well they function and perform for you.

You might think that you talk to them every day, and maybe you do. But the formality of a structured survey forces them to give real thought and organization to their feelings. Surveys usually give you a different set of response from mere casual conversation. Verbal surveys give you the benefit of "face-to-face" conversation but they may not elicit very candid responses.

Truly strong retail managers and owners want to hear their employees' opinions. They take this information as hints or secrets of how to provide a positive desired working environment and, therefore, keep their good employ-

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ees. If you want to know why people stay or go, ask them! This gets your people to feel as though they are part of the decision process, which helps them to take some ownership in your business, and that’s a vital goal for any manager!

For example, a Wisconsin salon retailer wondered why they always had to do everything in the salon and it appeared that his clerks and managers were there “only for the paycheck.” An employee survey revealed that employees felt they got no recognition for their efforts, hours were assigned unfairly, customers found the pricing and refund policies confusing, and staff promotions went to the manager’s “buddies.” The owner made some appropriate changes in his attitudes and conduct because of the survey feedback. In less than six months, these changes produced more sales, profits, and fewer turnovers because good employees actually started to trust and respect their boss.

On the next two pages is an employee survey that you can copy and give to your employees to learn their attitudes toward working for you. Before you conduct your survey, follow these rules:

- 1. Surveys should be kept short** -- less than 35 to 40 questions --and simple. If you want real participation, you must not let the survey be boring.
- 2.** To keep the survey focused, you should **use a survey statement** such as you’ll find on the top of the example. This leaves no doubt about management’s intentions in dealing with survey results.
- 3.** The survey form works best when you give them the option of a **range of response**. In the example, the employee can answer from the extremes of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” In addition to letting them graduate their answers, it gives you the ability to statistically average each question. This will help you determine progress when compared against future survey results.
- 4. Survey all employees.** No one’s opinion is insignificant.
- 5. Don’t conduct a survey too often.** Asking for employee opinions too frequently may send the wrong message: that management has no confidence in itself or is continuing to conduct surveys until they have all positive responses. Employee surveys every six months works well. It gives you a good set of benchmarks by which to judge your progress. Surveys should be done on a consistent calendar schedule, not just when it appears that there is a problem. Try conducting your surveys right after the “peak season” and in early January.
- 6.** Give employees the option to **fill out the survey at home**, where they can have the uninterrupted opportunity to think thoroughly about the questions. But have them return the survey the next day they work. You want to avoid a situation where employees have too many days to compare answers or simply procrastinate.
- 7.** Tell them you **really want their honest opinions**, positive or negative, and that no management repercussions will result. Have them fill the form out anonymously!



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8. Read their responses and react! If you do not have the sincere desire to learn from your employees' opinions, then don't ask! Opinions that have been solicited with no subsequent action by management may send a message to the employee that the boss doesn't care. If and when you make changes, tell employees that these changes are the result of the surveys. This reinforces the idea that you do care.
9. Never feel that you must do everything that the completed surveys ask for. Employees' requests can sometimes miss the mark widely in terms of your company's goals. Also, their requests may simply be impossible to fulfill. It is most important that you listen to their thoughts and show them (verbally or in writing) that you understand their requests but can't do everything of what they asked for at this time for certain specified reasons. People respond well to logic when it is shared with them.

A final comment: Employee surveys work only when management's attitude is positive about wanting the information to use to build the business and its employees.



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EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to let you share your feelings about your job so we can improve your satisfaction with your work.

This is not a “test.” The only “right” answers are the ones that share your true feelings. **You should not put your name on this survey.** There will be no repercussions because of your participation.

In this survey, we have tried to cover those issues about your job that we think are important to you. If we have missed anything you think should have been included, please give us these thoughts in the “comments” section.

Answer all the questions that you feel pertain to you by checking the response you most agree with. Skip only those that have no meaning to you in your job. We thank you for sharing your thoughts.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. This co. /salon is popular with its customers					
2. Customers are treated courteously by Employee's					
3. I enjoy doing the work that I am doing					
4. My work is interesting and fun					
5. The chances for advancement in this company/ salon is good					
6. This company/salon really cares about its Employee's					
7. Management is fair and considers Employees' feelings					
8. Employees are a team and are helpful to each other					
9. I enjoy working for my boss					
10. I feel I have job security working here					
11. I am satisfied with the pay I receive					
12. Employee facilities (rest rooms, lunch or break areas, etc.) are in good condition					
13. I would like to be promoted to a position of greater responsibility					

EMPLOYEE SURVEY (cont.)

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
14. Compared with other companies of this type, this one is one of the best in the community					
15. Salon management gives good direction					
16. My boss cares about my opinions on how to make the company/salon better					
17. I am satisfied with the benefits, other than pay, I receive					
18. Employee morale is good in the co/salon					
19. This company/salon does a better job than similar companies in taking care of its customers					
20. I am given recognition and praise when I do a job well					
21. My boss gives a lot of feedback on my performance					
22. Management runs the company/salon in an organized, efficient manner					
23. I am proud to work for this company/salon					
24. My chances for being promoted in this company/salon are good					
25. I look forward to my job each day					
26. The company/salon reacts well to the requests of its customers					
27. My boss keeps me informed of what is going on around here					
28. Management expects too much from its employees					
29. My boss encourages teamwork and cooperation					
30. This company/salon will grow and do well in the future					
31. My boss treats all employees fairly					
32. Management really cares about the growth and development of its employees					
33. I would definitely recommend this company/salon to friends as a place to work					

EMPLOYEE SURVEY (cont.)

What I like most about working here is:

What I like least about working here is:

Additional comments/suggestions:
