



Getting the measure of

Attracting, developing and retaining talented employees

PART SIX

Manufacturers and dealers quite rightly believe that customer satisfaction is the single biggest driver of their businesses. Prefix that with employee satisfaction, says IAN WOODWARD, and you have the simple formula: Employee satisfaction = customer satisfaction = customer retention = customer referral = profit = business security.

It is universally recognised that a satisfied employee is more loyal, more productive and will deliver that extra bit when you need it most.

Managers will create this satisfaction through leadership and communication. But the recent survey published by Rts (Employee Retention in the Retail Motor Industry 2008) concludes that about a third of staff who left a role did so as a result of management style. It confirms other studies that people tend to leave their managers, not the job. This is further confirmed by 'exit interviews' when variations of non-communication or miscommunication are cited as reasons for quitting.

Good managers 'know' their people, and can probably tell you with some degree of insight the current levels of satisfaction. They will have an ear to the ground and will glean information from a variety of sources – performance reviews, for example. However, some may forget that they themselves are the 'barometer' for employee satisfaction and there is the added risk that informal assessment could be manipulated to show managers in a

more favourable light.

If a more scientific study is required, especially in larger organisations or those spread over more than one site, then consider an employee satisfaction survey.

But this will only be effective by:

- **Commitment**

Without support and commitment from senior management, the whole exercise will be a waste of time. In fact, it will have the effect of worsening employee satisfaction if staff see no change. They will adopt the view that they don't count, don't have a voice, so why bother. This, in turn, will lower productivity and increase staff turnover. The business will have failed in its mission to be an "Employer of Choice", as detailed in the first article of this series.

- **Managing Expectations**

Pre-survey communication detailing what is going to happen will allow you to manage the expectations of staff. Clearly, you are not going to double holiday entitlement, halve the working week, or give extraordinary pay rises. So, as part of the survey roll out, explain what the limitations are. If this

communication comes from the MD, or CEO, staff will know that they have taken a personal responsibility to support and follow through on the results.

- **Content**

The survey will require investment in time and resources to maximise return – a case of "speculate to accumulate". Questions will need to identify your strengths and weaknesses as an employer, but crucially give you important information as to what would make your staff satisfied.

You also need to decide how you wish to use the data. To compare the satisfaction of sales staff to aftersales? To compare sales staff at one site with another site? To compare management versus team members?

- **Sharing Results**

Staff will expect to see the results of the survey, so no matter how poor the findings, share them. Release the results and your intentions simultaneously.

This will go a long way towards validating employee efforts in completing the survey.



employee satisfaction

- **Delivering on Change**

Now you have told your staff what you intend to do, in the words of Nike, "just do it". After all, it's what they expect.

- **Re-surveying**

Having done one survey, it makes sense to see if the changes you have

made have made a difference. Keep the second survey as similar as possible to the original to allow for meaningful comparisons. The more it's changed, the less there is to compare

As we said at the beginning, employee satisfaction studies are all part of the formula to aid business success. **MIM**



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