



## OVERVIEW ON COMPLIANCE SURVEYS

Surveys are a cost-effective way to gather information, opinions, suggestions and insight from large numbers of employees. Employee surveys are one of the most efficient and cost effective ways to measure compliance program effectiveness. When designed properly, conducted regularly, and acted upon promptly, employee surveys are an effective means of gauging the state of a company while ensuring employee loyalty and productivity. By conducting surveys, employers show they care about employees opinions, and high participation is an indicator that employees are interested in sharing their views. A good survey can bring management and staff together, helping them focus on the task of moving a company forward.

### OBJECTIVES

Employers should establish a clear objective for a survey. Employees are more likely to buy into the surveys purpose when it is clearly articulated. Moreover, employers should make clear that they are committed to taking action based on the survey's results. If employees can see that their opinions drive change, they are more likely to participate enthusiastically in future surveys.

### ANONYMITY

It is absolutely imperative that employers preserve anonymity when conducting employee surveys. If employee identities are tied to their responses, they may feel threatened, especially if their opinions differ from the company line. As a consequence, they may choose not to participate, or their responses may not reflect their true opinions. To guarantee anonymity, employers should avoid demographic questions that deal with age, race, or position. Employees may feel that such information makes it too easy to identify

### SURVEY TOPICS

To be competitive in today's economy, you must create a "learning organization." Part of that process requires you to ask employees questions and then encourage them to speak up. The Compliance Resource Center's (CRC) Compliance Knowledge Survey was designed to tap valuable knowledge at all levels of an organization. This process always produces significant benefits - guaranteed. Subject areas covered in the Survey include:

- a. Job Duties and Job Description
- b. Hiring, Orientation and Training
- c. Wage, Hour and Benefit Issues
- d. Management Procedures
- e. Communication Issues
- f. Complaint Process
- g. Performance and Job Satisfaction Issues
- h. Incentive and Recognition Issues
- i. Equipment and Safety Concerns
- j. Physical Environment Concerns
- k. Customer and Vendor Relations
- l. Health and Outside Interests
- m. Leadership, Mission and Company Direction

## TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Don't make the survey too long. A good survey will take less than twenty minutes to complete and ask no more than 40 questions. Surveys can include different types of questions to effectively gauge employees' knowledge and perceptions of compliance.

- a. **Attitudes:** Respondents' views, perceptions, or feelings; usually judgmental
- b. **Beliefs:** What respondents' think is true and their perception of reality; assessment oriented, taps into what they know
- c. **Behaviors:** What respondents' do present, past, and future
- d. **Attributes:** Personal or demographic characteristics, such as age, income, occupation

Survey categories reflect key issue area that demands its own action plan to address weaknesses and deficiencies. The following six categories combine to create a complete picture of the ethical culture of the organization.

- a. **Beliefs:** Embedded cultural standards and norms of behavior. Questions address employees' attitudes regarding the company's values and how they relate to day to day work. Employees who feel that their values are consistent and compatible with the company's are more likely to take an active role in ensuring that they, and the people around them, act with integrity. Nobody works in isolation from the people and the culture around them. Even employees with strong personal values are less inclined to take action to 'do the right thing' if that is not part of the culture of the company.
- b. **Communication:** Unrestricted and fear free, downward, upward, and lateral communications. Questions address employees' perceptions of how well managers create an environment that encourages open discussion of issues, as well as how well they respond to issues when they arise. Most integrity troubles can be linked to two types of causes: 1. Employees don't report unethical conduct that they see; or 2. They don't feel comfortable bringing bad news about mistakes or missed objectives to their boss. In either instance, critical information is not communicated that perhaps could allow management to resolve the issue before it becomes a problem.
- c. **Leadership:** Belief that leaders can always be trusted to do the right thing. Questions address employees' perceptions of how well managers set the right tone at the top and act consistent with the company's values and policies. It is not enough that a company's leadership is comprised of people with high degrees of personal integrity. Leaders must actively demonstrate that integrity matters through their words and actions. Employees look to their leaders to see how they handle tough business decisions with integrity. They also look to their leaders to see which values are truly important and which are given only lip service. Employees recognize the importance of the ethics message is more determined by how the leadership integrates integrity into day to day business activity than it is by issuing broad statements without active follow through.
- d. **Equity:** Perceptions of justice, fairness, and consistency. Questions addressing the participants' perceptions of how well the company treats all of its stakeholders, both internal and external. Every day your employees form impressions about how fairly they are treated. Was the process used to evaluate my performance just? Does

Jenna have the same opportunities as John? Are there one set of rules for the executives, and another for the rank-and-file? Beyond the importance of addressing the basic standards of fair-play, these issues are important to the bottom-line of your business.

- e. **Awareness:** Education that goes beyond merely informing people of the rules. Questions address employees' perception of how well employees understand what is expected of them and how ethical behavior relates to their job and the company's business goals. In years past, simply recording employee attendance at mandatory ethics training could provide employers with an affirmative defense. Based on recent proclamations by the Security Exchange Commission, U.S. Sentencing Commission, and the Department of Justice. However, training has become a necessary but insufficient aspect of your ethics and integrity strategy. The new standard has become a true inculcation of the rules and regulations into the core of the company. Reducing the risks of fraud and criminal activity requires coordinated compliance and ethics training. Compliance training to inform employees on expected standards of behavior and ethics training on how to create a positive environment as a preventative measure and how to address ethical issues when they arise.
- f. **Rules and Regulations:** Governance, formal systems and processes that support ethical conduct. Questions address the employees' attitudes towards the rules and regulations and whether they are effective in guiding behavior.

## RESULTS

Survey Validation implies a relationship to another variable that is generally accepted as a valid indicator of what you are trying to measure. One logical correlate of satisfaction is length of service. The standard statistic for expressing this relationship is the Pearson Product Moment correlation (usually called a correlation coefficient). Any good basic statistics text will describe what it means. Microsoft Excel can compute it for you. You'll have to run the add-on function for the Analysis Pack which is a standard feature of Excel. Most survey development software also can run correlations.