

The Brand's  
Pocket Guide  
to DIY Employee  
Research

*Skopos.*  
LONDON

[skopos.london](http://skopos.london)

# DIY Employee Research

Tackling the challenge

## 01 Questions - The Magnificent 7

Who, what, why, when, where, how, how much?



## 02 What's in the toolbox?

What tools are at your disposal?



## 03 Effective survey approaches

A survey is a survey, surely?



## 04 Employee research by any other name

Team members or colleagues, not employees or staff!



## 05 Communication, communication, communication

Two-way communication across the whole programme is key.



## 06 So, what do we do with the feedback?

Shaping the colleague response into directional insight.



## 07 Other tips & tricks

Sharing some learnings.



# The Magnificent 7

Effective research amongst the colleague group can be fraught with sensitivities and practical challenges. Here are some considerations and pointers that might help you through the minefield.

The objectives of the research are always a good place to start.

1. What does the business want to achieve from the exercise?
2. How will the information be used and who needs to work with it?
3. What, if any, are the sensitivities involved?
4. Is the research supported at the highest level?
5. Are unions and/or colleague-representative-bodies engaged?
6. Is this an appropriate time to be conducting research?
7. To what extent can we communicate findings and action planning to colleagues?



# What's in the toolbox? 02

Before you reach for the survey design manual it's always worth asking whether existing information might help answer our questions for us. There's nothing worse than asking too many questions – or asking questions to which colleagues believe we should know the answers.

If an original survey is required, then your research toolkit contains all the 'standard' tools:

- Exploratory interviews
- Quantitative surveying
- Appropriate survey analysis and software packages to make it all happen

Take time to consider whether colleagues will respond well to questions asked by their work peers: Will they be inhibited in any way? Will they speak out honestly and fearlessly? If not, now may be the time to consider third party professional research assistance.



# Effective survey approaches

The benefits of well-executed research amongst employee groups extend far beyond the insight acquired. Conversely, the penalties of 'getting it wrong' can be extreme.

A checklist for success that will help to minimise the chance of paying those penalties might look like this:

- Communicate: Why are we doing it? How will findings be used?
- Reassure: ...as to confidentiality and value of colleague input.
- Explore: Dig deep to ensure questions are relevant and questioning concise.
- Incentivise: Offer every reason to participate.
- Understand: Allow time for survey completion - especially in operational environments.
- Contemporise: Yes, repeat key metrics year-on-year, but do address topical issues.
- Facilitate: Provide help-desk features. Make life easy for completers.



# Employee research by any other name

What's in a name? Yes, we know it's an 'employee attitude survey' - well generically it is!

But that is hardly going to seize the imagination of the audience. Why not brand the initiative? Think of an appropriate name that strikes a chord – or, still better, run a competition amongst your colleagues to find a compelling brand identity for the survey.

And on the topic of names and naming, how about using terminology that is inclusive and 'collegiate'? For example, 'Colleague' always sounds better than 'Employee' or 'Staff-member'. This isn't just political correctness, it's making sure that those we ask to complete our survey are made to feel individually important to the initiative.



# Communication, communication, communication

Right from the very outset, communication is central to the success of a survey amongst your colleagues: Participants must be told...

- Why we are doing this and what is involved.
- How confidential (and anonymous) it is.
- The survey details, what's involved.
- Who the internal sponsor is.
- What will be done with the findings in the short, medium and long-term.
- What the response rate is (by Department).
- And finally, after the survey is complete, what actions have taken place because of it.



# So, how do we treat the feedback?

It must be made clear that analysis is by aggregate only – down to the Department level (and not where Departments are so small that it will be possible to identify individual responses).

It will be important to analyse sensitively by - for example - age, gender, length-of-service, location, department, seniority, etc. Consider separate modules of new joiners, recent leavers, union members, consultative committee members, etc...

Think about what your principal metrics will be - overall satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, likelihood to remain in the business? You might also want to consider whether there are any locally relevant or

culturally appropriate metrics that might be evaluated. The old favourite Net-Promoter-Score is sometimes viewed as a blunt instrument, but it has a message to tell and communicates powerfully.

If possible, make use of normative comparisons. How are we doing against:

- UK PLC (consider undertaking a parallel online survey to acquire this data)
- Our sector
- Our chief competitor
- Across departments
- Last year's results

Liaise with the HR team about action planning. How will the results be communicated, then implemented?



# Other tips & tricks

Visible and genuine support from the top of the organisation is critical. This means more than just the CEO's signature on the intro to an online survey, it means high-profile commitment and engagement. Might it be valuable to correlate colleague attitude feedback with customer satisfaction outputs? This can help to demonstrate how strong morale and brand-aligned behaviours can contribute to the bottom line.

Try not to fill your quantitative survey with open-ended questioning. You'll be disappointed with the response. Invariably separate qualitative work will produce a richer response.

Ensure that the operational board is engaged in the process and encourage a sense of healthy rivalry, for instance over departmental response rates and scoring on key dimensions.



# Think about how you would feel

This is the acid test. It's a survey amongst your colleagues. You may well be a respondent yourself. Step back and think about the questions?

- Are they relevant, concise, clear, appropriate, unambiguous?
- Would you be happy and comfortable to answer them yourself?
- How about if it was one of your colleagues questioning you? Are you still as comfortable?

If you feel uncomfortable or anticipate an unfavourable

colleague response, don't hesitate to ask for help. Externally, are there experts amongst your suppliers or agency partners who could provide direction?

Skopos London has been supporting organisations in the delivery of international colleague attitude & engagement research programmes since 2001. We would be very happy to talk things through with you, with no obligation. References and testimonials are, of course, available from our extensive, blue chip, client list.

The Pocket Guide to DIY Employee Research is part of a set created by Skopos London.