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WEEKLY INSIGHT FOR TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS



### HDS honors APAC CIOs

CIOs of well-known APAC organizations were awarded for groundbreaking technology implementations Page 18



## Netbooks are a niche item

Netbooks are secondary computing devices and will not replace traditional notebooks, writes **Vinita Gupta Page 9**



### Technology-driven clinical trials

Clinical Research Organizations are using IT in every step of clinical trials, as it helps in reducing the cost of taking a drug to market.

By **Nivedan Prakash Page 21**

### e-Waste: a mounting concern

In India, e-Waste management assumes critical significance as the country is also a dumping ground of e-Waste, particularly computer waste from developed countries **Page 12**



### CA Labs: Innovation drives business



CA is involved in product R&D for its customers to help them achieve better business results

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### Effectiveness of employee surveys

Employee satisfaction surveys let you capture the voice of employees.

**Renuka Vembu** looks at how it can be an effective tool for tracking employee mood **Page 35**





### Managing Logica-Ily

For Logica, employees are the ones responsible for their growth and success. They make employees a part of everything that they do

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### Personality profile

Srikanth Sundararajan,  
COO,  
Persistent Systems

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FEATURE

## Effectiveness of employee surveys

Employee satisfaction surveys are one of the methodologies for capturing the voices of employees.

**Renuka Vembu** looks at how to make it an effective tool for tracking the employee mood



**E**mployee satisfaction surveys are one of the means of endorsing employee engagement, involvement and active participation. It gauges the mood of the workforce and works towards the betterment of the company. Earlier a periodical phenomenon, mostly a yearly ritual, it has now moved beyond employee appeasement. There are now various other approaches that companies employ to garner timely feedback—skip level meetings, one-on-one meetings with immediate supervisor and the top management, blogs, and various other forums, that facilitate employee expression and incorporate their suggestion.

Whether the satisfaction surveys are aimed at gauging the day-to-day operational functions or at assessing the policies covering the larger framework or at the amenities and facilities provided to the workforce, it depends on the needs of the company at that specific time. Surveys can target various aspects like communication, conflicts, leadership, efficiency, etc. They are meant to mirror the mood of the workforce over a period of time. This in turn will determine the target audience to be included, the timeframe to be allotted, the resources allocated and the questions that need to be formulated.

Shantanu Banerjee, Director, Human Resources, Steria India, said, "Optimizing employee satisfaction is the key to the success of any business. Any sound, insightful employee satisfaction research is to understand how to achieve that optimization. Employee satisfaction surveys help employers measure and understand their employees' attitude, opinions, motivation, and satisfaction. It is intended to understand and "hear" the "voice" of the employee when they give their feedback on how the organization is interacting with them."

### Requisites for the survey

Arun Rao, VP, HR, AppLabs, said, "I think in today's globally spread workforce, the primary requisites are technology enablement, internal marketing to ensure that employees are aware, an environment of transparency and a visibly committed leadership."

Apart from the resources, manpower and technology, a well-defined strategy, a clear channel of communication, transparent execution, analysis and reporting, and maintaining confidentiality of employee ratings and feedbacks are the basics to get the survey right.

Bhavin Turakhia, Founder and CEO, Directi, gave a detailed

account of the important areas that are needed to be dealt with:

- Objectives of the survey:
  - You need to be clear of the objective of the employee satisfaction survey. Do you want to focus on the macro problems or the micro issues?
  - Rationale for the survey.
  - How the results will be fed back.
  - Questions should be based on the objectives and should be reviewed by the focus group formed out of representatives from each department.
- Methodology to be used:
  - Open ended or closed.
  - Objective or subjective.
- Number of questions:
  - Not more than 25 questions. People have a short attention span. After a while, they tend to just read the question and respond on a 'Central Tendency' syndrome.
  - Irrelevant questions should be eliminated.
  - Questions should be short, easy to understand and avoid use of jargons.

Some believe that the survey should clearly highlight the resources, manpower and infrastructure at the company's disposal, their constraints, the need encompassing all the employees, departments and their demands, market position and the company's business strategy, etc., to get a practical viewpoint and increase feasibility.

But there are some HR specialists who have a different take on this. Rao said, "Surveys are not meant to get a balanced opinion. It is meant to be a frank feedback that would enable future action planning. So it is not important for an employee to appreciate all the stated aspects while responding to a survey. It is however important from an overall engagement perspective that an employee understands the commitment of his organization to tap employee feedback in terms of the costs, etc."

### Showing the way to conduct

Criticality of the issues that have

► been considered for opinion should be clearly understood by the employees. The questions should not be leading; instead they need to be open-ended, and employees should be given an opportunity to write their feedbacks and comments—for every single questions or overall. The rating scale should be appropriate.

Iti Kumar, AVP, People Development and Employee Services, GlobalLogic, explained in length about the key focus areas while initializing such surveys:

- **Deciding on the need of the study:** Wherever employees are working, it becomes important for the organization to understand their feedback about their jobs, and work environment, including various other dimensions like compensation, pride in company association, work culture, etc.

- **Deciding on the questionnaire and dimensions:** Questions should be aligned to various dimensions like work culture, policies and processes, pride in company association, management, managerial effectiveness, compensation, career growth and development, etc. A dimensions-wise questionnaire helps the company to understand the engagement level at each dimension/parameter level.

- **Selecting the methodology:** There are two primary methodologies for conducting employee satisfaction surveys—Internet-based questionnaire and paper and pencil-based questionnaire. The choice should be based on what is the best for the respondents, in terms of convenience, ease of use and trust in the process. The focus should be given more on the objective feedback. The total number of questions should not be too high to discourage respondents from participating in



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AVP, PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE SERVICES, GLOBALLOGIC

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the study.

- **Frequency of the study:** Frequency could be once or twice in a year or sometimes every quarter too depending upon the requirement of such studies.

- **Keeping the study anonymous:** The success of this purely depends on keeping it anonymous. In case the respondent's identity is open in the study, it would not bring fair results.

- **Creating awareness:** HR should create awareness about the survey to encourage more and more people to participate. Maximum participation helps to understand the real pulse of the company.

- **Action planning:** Once the survey study is over, it is important for the company to come up with the action plan based on the feedback received from the study. In the absence of action plan for improvement, employees will lose the trust and may not participate to share their feedback in future studies.

### Getting the desired impact

The employee satisfaction surveys have become a mission critical and business impacting process. It is not merely undertaking a survey, but proper compilation, assessment and of the same. Balaji Chandrakumar, Associate Vice-President, Expertus, said that many companies have made some remarkable and meaningful amendments due to the insights provided by employees through this medium. He gave some examples of the same:

- A survey on a group of new joiners at a client site suggested that the current induction does not gear up the employee to perform to the fullest—induction programs were corrected to address this.
- A 360 degree survey at a client

site suggested that the employees do not get periodic feedback about their performance. To this effect, the review mechanisms were redesigned and the leadership team was trained to be able to provide objective feedback.

- An exit survey at a client site showed that the employees left organizations due to high degree of competition between employees in a team and lack of cohesion. To address this, the performance management system was redesigned and a high performance team culture building intervention was designed.

Punkaj Shankar, Global Head HR and RMG, Infogain, listed the areas where his company has benefited from embarking on such employee satisfaction surveys.

- Through the survey, they realized the need for strengthening the career development planning for each individual. An online Career Planning System to track the same was developed, wherein each employee's career and growth is reflected. Additionally, the role planned ahead for employee is defined along with training and development plan associated with the higher role.

- A slight gap in communication between Practice Directors and Managers was also one of the findings on which an immediate solution was worked out. A monthly informal dinner between Practice Director and his managers has been made a part of HR practice. This has given a platform to both the sides to discuss and understand each other's side.

### The added advantages

Surveys tap various elements like company resources and infrastructure, ethics and ambience, employee ►



**Rajeeva Gupta**  
VP, ENGINEERING, IMPETUS TECHNOLOGIES

These surveys enable the organization to identify cost saving opportunities, productivity improvements, assessing training needs and gauging employees' understanding of the company mission

► career path and needs, etc.

Rajeeva Gupta, VP, Engineering, Impetus Technologies, added, "Other benefits come in the form of enhanced interactions leading to openness and trust and increased accountability. These surveys enable the organization to identify cost-saving opportunities, productivity improvements, assessing training needs and gauging employees' understanding of the company mission. The problem areas can be detected at early stages before they escalate into issues of greater proportions."

The biggest benefit is that the minute you spot a weakness through the survey, you can go down and attack it at the root.

### Optimizing effectiveness

Vikram V Kallianpur, Director, HR, Virtusa (India), summarized, "The key to the success of the employee satisfaction survey is to take action. Survey results being communicated and actioned upon is crucial for employee involvement and its success. Acting on the survey results without any delay, prioritizing on key improvement areas, ensuring the survey leads to real improvements and celebrating success, will create the right environment for employee participation, involvement and trust in the program."



**Shantanu Banerjee**

DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES, STERIA INDIA

Employee satisfaction surveys help employers measure and understand their employees' attitude, opinions, motivation, and satisfaction. It is intended to understand and "hear" the "voice" of the employee when they give their feedback on how the organization is interacting with them.

For some organizations that look at 'surveys as a ritual,' the message on the wall in terms of people metrics makes them change the way they address the 'ritual.'

Employee satisfaction surveys can throw up interesting improvement areas or innovative ideas, all if handled with precision. The



**Vikram V Kallianpur**

DIRECTOR, HR, VIRTUSA (INDIA)

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objective to undertake a survey, a proper outline to accomplish the task, corrective measures of problem quarters, must be chartered out and all the loopholes covered to make it work and worth the time and resources invested. ■

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