

Implementation Guidelines:
Using Your Work Unit FEVS Results to Improve Employee Engagement

Review Your Results

Examine work unit EEI results - the EEI is made up of three sub-factors:

1. Leaders Lead (Q. 53, 54, 56, 60, and 61)
2. Supervisors (Q. 47, 48, 49, 51, and 52) and
3. Intrinsic Work Experience (Q. 3, 4, 6, 11, and 12)

The results provide specific information on strengths in your organization and on opportunities for improvement. There are four ways you can look at the item results: 1) an absolute standard, 2) a relative standard, 3) patterns, and 4) managerial judgment. Each method is described in more detail below. Most organizations involved in employee surveys use at least the absolute standard method, but any combination of methods is appropriate.

- *The absolute standard:* At the item level, if 65% or more of the employees answered favorably, then that item indicates a strength. If 35% or more of the employees answered unfavorably, then that is an area that needs improvement. This way of interpreting the data is the most common way. Many organizations involved in the survey feedback process, both public and private, interpret their survey data using these guidelines.
- *The relative standard:* Along with the absolute standard, you may want to compare your data to the Government overall, or to any other comparison line provided. A rule of thumb to use is if responses to an item are more than 5% different between groups, then it may be worth investigating; the larger the difference, the more noteworthy. That is, if your organization has an item that is lower than the Government overall, and it is an area that needs improving, you may want to focus attention on it in the feedback and action planning meeting.
- *Patterns:* You may also find that there are patterns across content categories. Many of the items across the categories are related and you may find patterns in the responses. You may also find patterns of responses within a category.
- *Managerial judgment:* A fourth way to look at the survey results and decide what to target for further action is to have management decide on which areas they want to work. What does management think are the most important areas that need improvement? What items are related to your strategic goals? Or, what is unclear to you, and what needs clarification? Your organization may want to refer to the organization's mission, values, and goals, and other strategic planning documents in making these judgments.

Finally, probe for what lies behind the survey results. FEVS results are vital because they provide statistically valid information about what employees think. However, the results do not explain why employees respond to questions as they do, and the reasons will not always be clear as you analyze the results. Consider using other tools, such as focus groups to fully understand what is going on.

Identify Areas of Strength(s) and Improvement(s)

- Examine where your agency has made great strides and the areas in which it experienced challenge and identify/utilize best practices.
- Determine the specific challenges that are negatively impacting the identified work units.
- Determine if your agency's strategies sufficiently focus on both current agency strengths and areas that need improvement.
- Create effective strategies and actions by prioritizing what is most relevant and important for your agency at the current time.
- Determine if your agency's strategies sufficiently focus on both current agency strengths and areas that need improvement.
- Thoughtfully consider vital factors, such as budget, resources, and relevancy to strategic mission to maximize successful implementation of your agency's strategies for improvement.

Create a Successful Plan of Action

Categorize potential actions:

- *“Low hanging fruit”* – Actions that can be undertaken quickly and easily to solve a problem, with minimal effort.
- *Short Term* – Actions that can be completed within two to three months.
- *Long Term* – Actions that may require greater effort, understanding and/or resources.

After actions are categorized, consider the following:

- Create meaningful action plans and goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART).
- Ensure your plan of action is connected to, and complements, the agency's mission. Ensure that your proposed actions align with organizational culture and strategy.
- Identify and define clear measures of success.
- Determine what resources or support are needed to address identified issues.
- Establish and communicate a vision of the proposed actions, including potential impact, to gain leadership and organization buy-in.
- Communicate with your workforce the strategy behind the plan and your steps for implementation.
- Address action items that can be solved simply and quickly. Quick successes will help people stay committed to implementing those actions that need more time.
- Customize your engagement strategies and actions to meet the specific needs of individual components.
- Communicate progress regularly to all levels of the workforce. Tie actions taken back to feedback received through the FEVS.
- **Track and monitor the plan's impact continuously** to ensure that the intended results are being experienced. Consider using facilitated focus groups, pulse surveys, or other means to connect with employees.