How to get the most out of your organisational pulse checks

What are pulse checks?

Pulse *Checks* or Pulse *Surveys* are an effective way of capturing employee feedback on organisational topics such as – wellbeing, job satisfaction, communication, relationships, leadership, work environment etc. They are short surveys that can be used as an opportunity to measure a concentrated impact of change, or to simply check-in with staff on a regular basis. The output of which can inform subsequent organisational adjustments or identify a need for a larger intervention.

How many questions should my pulse check have?

Pulse checks are designed to be short, and not time consuming to complete. So stick to asking 5-15 questions.

What sort of questions should I ask?

This is dependent on what you are trying to capture. Stick to asking questions that you know you are going to get feedback that you can act on – i.e. feedback that is going to help you adapt or initiate change for improvement/growth.

> ***Hot Tip:***
>
> It is recommended that you use established questions from a reliable resource(s). Check out this resource to make sure the questions you have selected are going to provide you with the best responses possible.
>
> https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/writing-survey-questions/

What is essential to include in a survey?

Your goal when running a survey is to: 1) get the most accurate data possible, and 2) get as many staff as you can to complete the survey. To do this there are several things that are important to include through the survey process to achieve ideally a 70% respondent rate.

Share the purpose & context: adults need to know 'why'. Before you provide the survey questions to staff, explain why you want the feedback, the context (e.g. link to change intervention, COVID-19 etc.), and what it is going to be used for. Share this information transparently, as in the end; you as an organisation want the feedback so you can support staff to thrive at work.

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Share the feedback process: let staff know what will happen after they complete the survey – i.e. timeline for interpretation, leadership digestion of findings, communication of findings to workforce.

Protect staff anonymity: explain at the beginning of the survey how you are maintaining respondent confidentiality. The following are key actions to adopt and to explain to staff:

- Only capture essential demographic data – e.g. business unit. If your LG is large enough, you can drill down to team level (only if there are more than eight people within each team).
- Only have one or two key personnel handle the data and interpretation.

What are some clear things to avoid?

As above, your goal is to provide a safe space for staff to have a voice; therefore, there are a couple nuances to avoid.

- Do not capture information that is not essential (e.g. name, role, age, gender, etc.)
- When sharing the results of the survey, do not share information that can be identified. Share only group summaries that contain more than eight respondents in each.
- Do not provide the survey in only one format, there might be some that need / prefer to complete the survey in a different way – i.e. electronic vs hard copy.
- Avoid not doing anything after you have got feedback from staff. Staff need to see change/action post providing feedback. Even if the results demonstrate that everyone is on track, share this with staff.
- Do not give staff too many response options, stick to a 5point-Likert Scale, see example below:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Should I get feedback on my survey?

A big YES! Getting feedback on the survey you have put together with allow you to establish if the survey language is clear, the response style fits the questions, and if it will capture what you intend it to capture. There are a couple different ways to get feedback:

1. Run the survey past someone else (especially if you have a small organisation). This person can be independent from your organisation, or someone that has not been involved in the design process of the survey.
2. Run a pilot with a small group – i.e. maximum 6 people. Through this process, you will gain potential champions that will encourage others to complete the survey once released.

How often should I do a pulse check?

Pulse checks should be undertaken on a regular basis, ideally, in between your larger culture/engagement surveys. It is important to find the ‘sweet spot’ between measuring too much and not enough. This is sometimes dependant on the context surrounding your need to measure.

What are some key resources to draw on?

- Australian HR Institute: https://www.ahri.com.au/media/4697/ahri_wellbeingsurvey_interactive.pdf
- People at Work (Worksafe Qld) - https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/128286/paw-survey.pdf
- Thrive at Work, Future of Work Institute - https://www.thriveatwork.org.au/resources/collecting-data/

Contact Shauna McQuade, LGIS HR Risk Management Consultant on 0428 430 394, or shauna.mcquade@lgiswa.com.au for more information or assistance with your pulse check / survey.