

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEYS: KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER

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We have all heard the saying, “The most valuable asset of any business is its people.” In eye care practices, we understand the importance of our employees, because our staff is an extension of our physicians. Patients equate the customer service they receive from employees with the medical treatment they receive from physicians. We also know

that our employees are important, because they are typically our largest expense, especially when considering the cost of salaries plus benefits.

Without a team of trained and engaged employees, practices can experience many negative issues that affect patients’ care, including high turnover, low morale, low efficiency, poor patient satisfaction, and clinical mistakes. To help make the most of their employee investment, practices need to know what is important to their employees and allow them to influence their work environment.

To better understand the needs of employees, practices should consider conducting employee satisfaction surveys. By giving employees an opportunity to share their opinions and concerns, the practice can take steps to improve its culture.

When implementing an employee satisfaction survey, practices should consider the following tips.



No. 1. HIRE A THIRD-PARTY VENDOR

Although a practice could internally conduct an employee satisfaction survey, employees are more likely to provide honest feedback when they can do so anonymously. When selecting a vendor, find a survey program that will allow employees to submit their opinions online and then collate a report for the practice.



No. 2. REVIEW AREAS OF CONCERN

When designing the survey questions with your vendor, make sure that the questions explore these critical areas:

- **Position and responsibilities.** Focus on helping the practice understand how satisfied employees are with their day-to-day work and whether they feel the practice supports their development.
- **Compensation and benefits.** Focus on helping the practice understand employees’ overall satisfaction with the salaries and benefits offered.
- **Work environment.** Focus on staff morale as well as the

working relationships around the practice.

- **Practice operations.** Focus on how operations are positively or negatively affecting employees’ morale.



No. 3. BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK

After receiving feedback from employees, the practice will have a much clearer idea of the employees’ perception of the practice. If the practice scores negatively in a particular area, the practice needs to honestly assess the employees’ opinions. While the first instinct may be defensive, physicians and leadership need to remember that the results are meant to help improve the practice’s relationship with its staff.



No. 4. SHARE THE RESULTS

After reviewing the results of the survey, provide feedback to the leadership team and staff. Discuss key findings, and use the survey as an opportunity to shape staff development and provide insight at strategic planning discussions.



No. 5. CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

Once the results have been reviewed, select two or three areas for the practice to focus on. Develop an action plan with the physicians and leadership to outline the goals for how the practice plans to improve.



No. 6. DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT

Once the action plan has been developed, practice leadership will need to follow through with the goals and provide feedback to employees.

SUMMARY

When approached with honesty and transparency, employee satisfaction surveys can be an excellent tool for practice improvement. By understanding what is important to the staff, physicians and practice leadership can help create a positive culture that allows employees to focus on patients. If a practice has not conducted an employee satisfaction survey in the past 12 months, the practice should commit to the process, develop the plan, and implement it! ■

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