



# EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEYS

*... and their role in enhancing organizational performance*

***This Quick Insight investigates the essential role of Employee Satisfaction Surveys in boosting organizational performance. It highlights the need for actionable responses and strategic HPO Diagnosis integration for a comprehensive evaluation of organizational health. It confronts the prevalent challenges in executing effective surveys and advocates for a synergistic approach, marrying detailed employee feedback with the broader HPO framework to catalyze targeted, impactful improvements. This analysis is crucial for leaders and HR practitioners committed to harnessing employee insights as a lever for driving excellence and sustainable growth within their organizations.***

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS



### **Revamping Employee Satisfaction Surveys:**

Employee satisfaction correlates with improved organizational outcomes, but many employee satisfaction surveys face challenges like misaligned questions and lack of actionable follow-up. To maximize survey potential, organizations need to ensure management acts on the feedback provided by these surveys, refine survey parameters to measure true employee satisfaction, and expand the survey's scope to obtain a holistic organizational view.



### **High Performance Organization (HPO) Diagnosis:**

Based on extensive research, the HPO Diagnosis highlights the characteristics of high-performing organizations, offering a comprehensive framework covering five core factors, with which an organization can evaluate its performance and improvement opportunities.



### **Synergistic Role of HPO Diagnosis and Employee Satisfaction Surveys:**

The HPO Diagnosis offers a broad organizational perspective, while a tailored employee survey provides detailed feedback on human-centric areas. Together, they ensure targeted and effective interventions.



## INTRODUCTION

Employee satisfaction surveys have become a widely adopted management tool for years now. Many organizations, spanning both the profit and non-profit sectors, conduct annual evaluations to gauge the satisfaction of their employees regarding various organizational aspects. However, there has been growing criticism against this annual ritual. Opponents argue that the outcomes of these surveys often are not acted upon, leading to mounting dissatisfaction amongst the workforce. Interestingly, some organizations, when presented with the idea of undergoing a high performance organization (HPO) diagnosis, might decline giving the reason that their ongoing Employee Satisfaction Surveys is sufficient. This article delves into the intent and benefits of Employee Satisfaction Surveys, highlights some of their real-world challenges, and compares their role vis-à-vis the HPO Diagnosis.

## THE UPSIDE OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEYS

There is a broad consensus in the professional literature that employee satisfaction directly correlates with superior organizational outcomes. Satisfied employees tend to serve customers better, fostering increased loyalty and repeat business. This holds true even for employees without direct customer interactions, as their heightened satisfaction levels lead to increased vigor and superior task execution in helping their colleagues. Such satisfaction is synonymous with engagement: the more content employees are with the organization, the higher their dedication towards it.

To capture information about employee satisfaction, organizations regularly deploy employee satisfaction surveys. With these surveys employees grade their organizational satisfaction across various parameters. The resulting scores, typically processed by HR departments, provide insights into areas requiring managerial attention. Implementing necessary changes based on the survey feedback fosters organizational growth, making this survey a pivotal managerial instrument.

## CHALLENGES WITH EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEYS IN PRACTICE

While Employee Satisfaction Surveys are theoretically powerful tools, they often yield fewer benefits than anticipated due to certain prevalent challenges. Below, we highlight four primary issues that limit the effectiveness of these surveys:



### 1. Lack of Action Post-Survey:

- **The Problem:** Despite significant investments in conducting the surveys, the survey feedback often goes unaddressed by management. Common reasons include dismissing the survey outcomes, insufficient understanding of the causes of the discontent, or the misconception that just measuring satisfaction will lead to its increase. The yearly frequency of these surveys also provides minimal time for genuine issue resolution.
- **The Result:** This problem results in temporary fixes rather than sustainable solutions. Both managers, due to inability to improve survey results, and employees, due to feeling unheard, end up disheartened and frustrated.

### 2. Misaligned Expectations and Reality:

- **The Problem:** Often, the surveys do not evaluate what they purport to. Not all work-related matters can be quantified in satisfaction metrics. Sometimes surveys gauge employee awareness of the presence of certain organizational features rather than the satisfaction with these features. Some questions might focus on areas beyond management's control or purview.
- **The Result:** By seeking opinions on specific matters, employees may anticipate change in these matters. When this does not materialize, it can cause disillusionment and bitterness.

### 3. Survey Length Issues:

- **The Problem:** Surveys can be too concise, concentrating solely on direct satisfaction influencers, or excessively lengthy, making it unfeasible for management to address all concerns within a reasonable timeframe.
- **The Result:** Both extremes diminish the potential value and actionable insights the surveys can provide.



#### 4. Too Narrow Focus on Internal Satisfaction:

- **The Problem:** Concentrating exclusively on internal employee satisfaction, like work conditions or personal development realization, excludes potentially significant issues. By not connecting employee sentiments to the organization's broader strategy or capturing insights on areas like management quality, supplier relationships, or internal cooperation, the survey provides an incomplete picture of the status of the organization.
- **The Result:** This narrow perspective restricts management's ability to institute comprehensive improvements and create a truly high-performing organization.

## REVAMPING THE EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY

While the merits of Employee Satisfaction Surveys are clear, so are the drawbacks. Recent trends suggest growing disenchantment towards these surveys, compelling the need for a comprehensive revamp. Let's address the outlined problems and their potential solutions:

### 1. Lack of Proper Action on Feedback:

- **Issue:** The predominant challenge is not with the survey but management's response. A recurring issue is the lack of commitment to act on survey feedback.
- **Solution:** The act of initiating an employee survey communicates a commitment of management to value and act on feedback. To follow through, management must foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. The key is discipline: if you promise to address concerns, ensure that these are duly handled.

### 2. Misalignment Between Survey Intent and Results:

- **Issue:** The mismatch between what is measured and what can be acted upon.
- **Solution:** Ensure that the survey truly gauges satisfaction and focuses on areas under management's influence. Review and refine questions to align with these criteria, eliminating or revising those that do not meet the mark.



### 3. Limited Survey Scope:

- **Issue:** The survey's narrow focus fails to capture a comprehensive understanding of the organization.
- **Solution:** Achieving a holistic view goes beyond merely refining the survey. While it is essential to incorporate a broader range of organizational aspects in the survey, expecting the survey alone to provide a complete picture is unrealistic. The survey cannot be the only tool to identify all challenges.

### 4. Need for a Holistic Approach:

- **Issue:** An employee survey in isolation lacks the breadth to identify all elements essential for creating and maintaining a high performance organisation.
- **Solution:** There is strong evidence that combining an HPO Diagnosis with employee satisfaction surveys offers a more rounded perspective on organizational status and health. The combined approach is instrumental in identifying the areas requiring attention to transform an organization into an HPO. As such, organizations should consider regularly conducting an HPO Diagnosis to gain insights on vital organizational characteristics, complementing the insights from the employee survey.

In summary, the path to maximizing the potential of Employee Satisfaction Surveys lies in addressing the aforementioned key challenges, fostering a commitment to continuous improvement, and adopting a holistic approach to organizational evaluations.



## THE HPO DIAGNOSIS: A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION APPROACH

### The HPO Framework Research:

We, after a meticulous examination of 290 scholarly and managerial publications on high performance and excellence, identified the defining characteristics of an HPO. An extensive survey was distributed globally and completed by roughly 2,500 participants from diverse organizational backgrounds. The findings pinpointed 35 key characteristics, grouped into five essential HPO factors, that directly correlate with superior competitive performance. The universality of these factors was confirmed, as they were found in various industries, company sizes, and countries.

### The HPO Factors:

- 1. Management Quality:** HPOs have exemplary leadership across all levels. Managers in such organizations prioritize trust-based relationships with their teams, embodying values like integrity, respect, consistency, decisiveness, and enthusiasm. They are seen as role models and are never complacent.
- 2. Openness & Action Orientation:** HPOs thrive on transparency and proactivity. The management regularly conducts dialogues with employees, seeking their insights and involving them in pivotal organizational decisions. Embracing change, they perceive mistakes as learning opportunities.
- 3. Long-term Orientation:** Profit is not the sole driver for HPOs; they especially value enduring success. These organizations therefore focus on understanding and fulfilling customer needs and nurturing long-lasting relationships with stakeholders, emphasizing mutual benefits and societal contributions.
- 4. Continuous Improvement & Renewal:** HPOs always look for ways to stand out. They perpetually refine their strategies, ensuring agility and responsiveness. Simplifying and streamlining processes, they aim to eliminate redundancies and improve efficiency.
- 5. Employee Quality:** In HPOs, human capital is seen as a treasure trove of diversity and potential. They prioritize hiring flexible individuals capable of creativity and problem-solving. Moreover, HPOs invest in staff development, cultivating resilience, adaptability, and continuous learning.



**The HPO Diagnosis Process:**

Organizations aspiring to attain or maintain the HPO status regularly undertake an HPO Diagnosis. This involves management and employees assessing the organization's performance on the 35 HPO characteristics, using the HPO Questionnaire. Based on the aggregated scores for each HPO factor, a visual representation is constructed to evaluate the organization's HPO status. If the results indicate an HPO score of 8.5 or higher across all factors, the organization is recognized as an HPO. Dips in the graph indicate areas that need enhancement. A collaborative workshop is then conducted to discuss the diagnosis results and chart out a concrete action plan for the subsequent one to two years, focusing on bolstering HPO scores and boosting the non-financial and financial organizational results.

**THE SYNERGY BETWEEN HPO DIAGNOSIS AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY**

The HPO Diagnosis serves as a strategic tool for organizations to hone in on areas that demand enhancement, positioning them on the path to excellence. The employee survey complements this diagnostic tool, especially in delving deeper into the human-centric HPO factors like management quality, employee quality, and the organization's openness and action orientation.

**Harmonious Interplay:**

The HPO Diagnosis offers a macro-level perspective, shedding light on broader organizational realms necessitating attention. Conversely, when areas related to human interactions and internal dynamics emerge as points of concern or emphasis, the employee survey acts as a magnifying glass, furnishing detailed insights into specific human-centric challenges.

For instance, if the HPO Diagnosis pinpoints 'Management Quality' as an area of focus, the employee survey can be tailored to gather detailed feedback about leadership styles, decision-making processes, and manager-employee relations. Such precision ensures that interventions are data-driven, targeted, and effective.

**Real-World Applications:**

Many organizations have successfully embraced this combined approach. Upon completing the HPO Diagnosis and identifying certain human interaction-related aspects as areas of



potential improvement, they proceeded with an employee survey. This subsequent in-depth investigation equipped them with actionable insights, empowering management to tailor interventions that truly resonated with the employees.

**Revitalizing the Employee Survey:**

The combined use of the HPO Diagnosis and the employee satisfaction survey has addressed the previously noted shortcomings of the latter, mainly its restricted scope. By situating the employee survey within the expansive frame of the HPO Diagnosis, it not only gains renewed significance but also metamorphoses into a strategic management instrument. The synergistic combination ensures the survey is not just a perfunctory exercise but a vital catalyst in an organization's transformative journey towards becoming a High Performance Organization. In essence, the combination is greater than the sum of its parts, reaffirming the value and relevance of both tools in modern organizational development.



# ARE YOU READY TO TRANSFORM YOUR ORGANIZATION INTO AN HPO?

Then insight is essential. Our [HPO diagnosis](#) (short validated questionnaire and in-depth interviews) provides you with this insight. You will get a clear picture of the current situation within your organization or department and receive practical improvement themes that managers and employees can tackle together. The HPO diagnosis is not just a mirror; it is a compass that guides you in taking crucial steps to achieve your strategic goals and become an HPO. Do you want to elevate your organization to a higher level? The HPO Center can support you in this. We combine over fifteen years of practical experience with hundreds of organizations worldwide with scientific research to provide you with the knowledge and focus that result in demonstrably better performance. HPO is not a project, but a mentality that makes your organization more resilient, flexible, and future-proof. It helps you identify the 'hard nuts' and provides a basis for measuring the effectiveness of the HPO transition. It also strengthens the solidarity within your organization (or part of it) by identifying and addressing shared, supported improvement themes.

 **Customer Focus:** An HPO is invaluable to its customers. The primary goal is to boost customer value and satisfaction.

 **Employee Engagement:** Aiming for high performance re-energizes your team. It leads to increased job satisfaction as HPOs concentrate on what genuinely drives organizational success. It's not a new project; it's a new mindset and approach to work.

 **Adaptability:** An HPO is designed to evolve. It thrives in our ever-changing, competitive world, making your organization more resilient and future-proof. This is achieved through ongoing adjustments, learning, and improvements.

## Our Offer

- ✓ Customized [HPO Diagnoses](#)
- ✓ Interactive [Lectures and Workshops](#) on the HPO Framework
- ✓ Comprehensive Interviews, [Articles](#), [Books](#), and Networking Opportunities
- ✓ Guidance in Implementation Led by our [HPO Experts](#)



## Why choose the HPO Center?



### Experience & Credibility

With over 15 years of practical experience combined with rigorous scientific research, the HPO Center is at the global forefront of organizational improvement advice.



### Global Knowledge Center

Based in the Netherlands, the HPO Center collaborates with partners, including in emerging markets, with the aim of fulfilling its mission to improve organizations worldwide.



### Unmatched Expertise

HPO doesn't stop at diagnosing organizations. We also explore, investigate, and delve deeply into related topics such as High Performance Leadership, Silo-busting, Futurizing, Social Value Creation, and High Performance Business Ecosystems—evidence of our commitment to continually expand the HPO universe.



### More than Just an Organization

With a passion for inspiring, stimulating, and networking, the HPO Center is not just an organization; it's a movement. Through scientific and professional publications (all freely available at [hpocenter.com](http://hpocenter.com) and [www.hpocenter.nl](http://www.hpocenter.nl)), books, seminars, and roundtables, we continually disseminate the knowledge of the HPO Framework and unite professionals interested in continuous improvement and excellence.

## Considering an HPO transformation?

The HPO Center is ready to support and guide you on your journey toward high performance. Contact us today for an inspiring conversation or to experience an HPO workshop. Together, we'll redefine your performance.



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