

Are you happy in your job? Do you feel supported by your managers and colleagues? When was the last time you were asked these questions by your organisation? Compared to the past, the answer may actually be quite recently – as more and more companies are using employee engagement surveys to measure job satisfaction and employee engagement. The more important question is what did the business do with the survey results?

Annual engagement surveys are fairly commonplace now. Organisations are comparing the results year-on-year and they can massively influence the strategy and direction of the business. But annual surveys don't measure or provide feedback on the more minute changes and discussions that need to happen to keep employees happy and engaged. More frequent and concise pulse surveys allow companies to improve their agility and pivot before small issues become big issues.

The 'Feel Good Factor' pulse survey started life as my response to an annual engagement survey that had been running for several years when I was HR Director at AXA PPP healthcare. Globally, AXA were very good at putting into place well thought-through action plans arising from the survey results but there was no measure, as a team, on how well we were performing against those results on a more regular basis other than via anecdotal feedback. The only thing to do was to wait for the next time that the survey was going to run. I wanted something that was much more immediate and which, if nothing else, would provide a focal point upon which then to have a debate within the team on how we felt we were managing our workloads, how well we thought we were being managed by our line managers and how much support we were able to give our internal customers.

As a result, I created what I called the Feel Good Factor – five very simple questions where team members would compare how they felt last time with the current period and then rate on a scale of one to five if things had got better or worse.

The Feel Good Factor survey

Each of these questions asks the person to score how they feel compared to the last time they took the survey:

1. How much support do you feel has been made available to you from your manager?
2. How much support do you feel has been made available to you from your colleagues?
3. How much support do you feel you have been able to give your internal customers?
4. How would you rate your workload?
5. Overall, taking into account the amount of support you are able to give and receive as well as other factors such as workload, team working and your personal level of engagement at work, how would you rate how you feel?



There is no science to the scoring of the Feel Good Factor – in fact, it is simply a process of averaging the results and ending up with a number that could be anything from between zero to five – the higher the number, the perception was that things were better. Whilst I am sure that there is a more reliable and robust way of statistically producing a set of results like these, that doesn't particularly interest me. The reality was (and still is) that it is not the actual results that are important – it is the team discussion afterwards that really makes all the difference. In actual fact, the scores often hardly move and if they do, it is often by less than 0.5, but the conversation afterwards is always informative, engaging and involving.



For me, engagement is all about winning over the hearts and minds of people and making that emotional connection that makes people feel like – and know that – they are really being listened to. Since 'perception is reality' (apparently!), by having some form of simple scoring system we have been able to tangibly demonstrate that concerns across the team (on an averaged basis) around the amount of work, support and management are getting better or worse.

The added incentive to participate is to include a further dimension – a "bonus" sixth question – which asks people to nominate someone from within the team who has demonstrated a real dedication to the spirit of the team. This might be as simple as lifting the mood when a major piece of work is underway

or stepping in to help a colleague in a difficult project or situation. Celebrating team membership in itself adds to the purpose of the pulse survey and our monthly team meetings always start with the discussion on the results, an agreement on what things we might be able to do differently and the much anticipated team member of the month award.

Make the Feel Good Factor fun

Gamification is an important part of the Feel Good Factor. Particularly for younger people that have a strong interest in gaming, processes and systems that look like a game instil a sense of fun, pride and creative learning.

The "bonus question" falls into the category of gamification – the person that most people nominate for their dedication wins the title of Team Member of the Month. While the tangible prize may be something as simple as a box of chocolate, it is the recognition and feeling of "winning" that truly makes a difference and boosts morale and engagement.

Gamification is further implemented as we look at the numerical survey scores over time. The challenge to increase scores makes people think about the survey throughout the month and it can help put the focus on overcoming the challenges that the team identified in the related discussions.

Introducing the Feel Good Factor to an organisation

I have introduced the Feel Good Factor into two more organisations since leaving AXA PPP healthcare – with my HR team at Mercer UK and again, more recently, with Specsavers. The take-up and the participation has been the same – consistently enthusiastic, highly participative and very engaging. It gives employees a voice, and because we keep it completely anonymous we are able to achieve honest feedback that leads to authentic discussions afterward.

The Feel Good Factor

by Mark Moorton, Director of HR at Specsavers

The people that I tend to focus on prior to the first survey are the managers. Most managers are not used to being measured by their direct or indirect reports, so there is often deep concern about what the survey will uncover. The best way to overcome this concern is by being very clear about the objectives of the survey and letting them know that they will be able to start great conversations with their team that they might not have had otherwise.

Many managers and organisations are relieved when survey results come in. They find that employees are generally happy and that the issues they do have are able to be sorted out in the discussions and follow up resulting from the survey. I find this is true because if there were huge issues in a team or organisation, they would not be a surprise. So rather than beginning with a survey, we would need to take a look at how those issues could begin to be addressed as soon as possible. I often compare this situation to a car. The Feel Good Factor is a tune-up, it's a way to keep things running smoothly and fix anything before it leads to a breakdown. But if there is massive damage to a car, you need to fix the problems before you can even drive.

The Feel Good Factor is just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to improving employee engagement. But it's one of my favourites because it shows the more immediate impact that certain actions have, and it's taught me and the companies I've worked with a lot about our people, our organisation and ourselves.

About the author

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Mark has held a number of senior HR positions within the professional services, financial services, energy and publishing sectors, as well as being involved in major HR consulting initiatives in Europe, the United States and the Far East.

Mark's role in Specsavers is to oversee the provision of HR Business Partnering across the UK, Netherlands and Supply Chain. He has had considerable success in raising the profile of the HR function and significantly increasing employee engagement and is particularly interested in the use of arts within a business environment and how this can make a difference not just to the organisation but to people's lives.