



Introduction to

Team Climate Survey
&
Management Questionnaire

Team Climate Survey

Successful organizations all have key characteristic in common - they work together to address problems and create a positive work environment. An employee climate survey enables a successful organization to operate more efficiently through the use of worker input and satisfaction ratings.

What are employee climate surveys?

Employee climate surveys are studies of employees' perceptions and perspectives of an organization. The surveys address attitudes and concerns that help the organization work with employees to instill positive changes.

Why would an organization want an employee climate survey done?

Employee climate surveys increase productivity. This is necessary during periods of decreased productivity, for organizations with a limited budget, or generally anytime management believes organizational output can and should be improved. Furthermore, if there is a specific reason for low productivity, such as high staff turnover or poor communication, an employee climate survey can help identify possible solutions to these problems.

Employee climate surveys are valuable tools when there is a change in the status quo. These changes include a reorganization of the company, an introduction of a new product or service, company relocation, a change in policies, or a period of rapid growth. In these situations, organizations must learn to work and communicate with employees to insure that the results of these changes will be positive. Climate surveys give employees a voice to assist in making these transitions as smooth as possible.

Additionally, climate surveys can set benchmarks for future surveys, which will allow more in-depth and time series analysis.

How does an employee climate survey work to increase an organization's bottom line?

Through these surveys, organizations can become more productive, plus serve as a basis for quality improvements. By identifying areas of inefficiency and acting on performance barriers identified by employees of all levels, an organization gains a fresh and different perspective. Survey analysis identifies areas of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction to facilitate management in the creation of greater workplace harmony and, therefore, increased productivity. Conclusions are drawn from the data, and recommendations are made to the management team.

Furthermore, when an employee climate survey is conducted in conjunction with a customer satisfaction survey, disjoints between employee viewpoints and customer viewpoints can be identified.

Specifically, what aspects does an employee climate survey study?

Although each employee climate study is tailored to meet the needs of an individual organization, in general, they are aimed at all aspects of the employees' jobs. The study analyzes everything from an employee's workload to their relationships with co-workers and superiors to their salary to company policies and anything in between. Studies can range from focused (targeting specific problem areas) to general (overall employee input).

Why shouldn't an organization conduct their own employee climate survey?

External employee climate surveys have several benefits over internal surveys. First, employees will be more candid and open when approached by someone without direct ties to the organization itself. The trepidation of expressing thoughts regarding superiors and co-workers is removed by dealing with an experienced third party. Additionally, employees tend to provide more honest responses and opinions.

Second, personal interests will not create bias within the survey and analysis. An inter-organization study may focus on the problems that management perceives. The survey may start with the outcome already assumed and, therefore, be biased toward this outcome.

Third, the employee climate survey can cover the entire spectrum of workers, from part-time workers to the CEO. Since the research is done from an outside perspective, there is no limit to the achievable level of inquiry.

Keep the following in mind:

- Teamwork improves the working environment.
- Teamwork keeps communication consistent.
- Teamwork relieves stress.
- Teamwork reduces errors.
- Teamwork keeps communication lines open.

Open Communications

- Creates and maintains a climate of trust and open, honest communication.
- Allows team members to talk openly with one another.
- Promotes the exchange of feedback.
- Provide team members to work through misunderstandings and conflicts.

Commitment to a Common Purpose and Performance Goals

- Keeps the purpose in the forefront of decision making and evaluations of team practices.
- Helps one another maintain the focus.

Shared Responsibility

- Allows team members to feel equally responsible for the performance of the team and its outcome.
- Permits individuals to have primary roles for completing team tasks and remain flexible to do what is necessary to accomplish the team's goals and tasks.

Use of Resources and Talents

- Utilizes the resources and talents of all the group members.
- Makes good use of the team's creative talent by openly sharing skills and knowledge, and encourages learning from one another.

Capacity for Self-Evaluation

- Allows teams to stop and look at how well they are doing and what, if anything may be hindering their performance and communication.

Participative Leadership

- Provides opportunities for team members to participate in decision making.
- Allows team members to help set goals and develop strategies for achieving these goals.
- Allows team members to help identify tasks and decide how to approach and evaluate them.

Characteristics of Effective Team Members

- Team members are supportive to achieve the results.
- Team members avoid "winning" or looking good at the expense of others.
- Team members keep the goal and the mission in mind.
- Team members are open to the ideas of others.
- Team members share information and ideas.
- Team members support the contribution of others.

Guidelines for Effective Team Membership

- Contribute ideas and solutions
 - The willingness of all team members to draw on their own expertise and experience to contribute ideas and solutions is what makes an effective team. You should feel comfortable enough in the team setting to express yourself, and know that your ideas have value. Creative input from a variety of member perspectives is the basis of effective problem solving. Team "norms must encourage contributions, not inhibit them."

- Recognize and respect differences in others.
 - Creative, effective teams bring together individuals with widely divergent skills and backgrounds who must work closely together to execute the tasks assigned to them. This can only be accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect and willingness to listen. You won't always agree with the ideas other team members bring to a discussion, but you should always be willing to listen without prejudice and contribute positively to the problem-solving process.
- Value the ideas and contributions of others
 - A willingness to respect ideas and opinions that differ from your own is the cornerstone of positive and interactive teamwork. Input from every member of the groups should be carefully weighed and evaluated, never disparaged.
- Listen and share information
 - Really listening to what other team members have to say is one of the most vital skills you can contribute to a productive team atmosphere. You should always be willing to give an attentive ear to the views of other team members and expect them to do the same for you.
- Ask questions and get clarification
 - If an idea isn't clear to you, it is your responsibility to the team to ask questions until the matter is clarified. The field of education often has a language all their own; asking questions to cut through the jargon will benefit all participants.
- Participate fully and keep your commitments
 - To fully participate, you have to contribute ideas, challenge conventional ways of doing things, ask questions, and complete the tasks assigned to you in a timely and professional manner. These are your responsibilities. Without the enthusiastic participation of all its members, a group is just a collection of individuals. The unique skills and viewpoints you bring to the team are crucial to the successful completion of tasks.

Team Climate Survey

Take the following team climate survey, to see where your team stands as a team.

Descriptor	Reflection	Guideline	Your Comments
Purpose	Do members of your team share a sense of why the team exists and are invested in accomplishing the mission?	In a successful team: Members proudly share a sense of why the team exists and are invested in accomplishing its mission and goals.	
Priorities	Do members know what needs to be done next, by whom, and by when to achieve team goals?	In a successful team: Members know what needs to be done next, by whom, and by when to achieve team goals.	
Roles	Do members know their roles in getting tasks done and when to allow a more skilful member to do a contain task?	Members know their roles in getting tasks done and when to allow more skilful members to do a certain task.	
Decisions	Are authority and decision-making lines clearly understood?	In a successful team: Authority and decision-making lines are clearly understood.	

Descriptor	Reflection	Guideline	Your Comments
Conflict	Is conflict dealt with openly and considered important to decision-making and personal growth?	In a successful team: Conflict is dealt with openly and is considered important to decision-making and personal growth.	
Personal Traits	Do team members feel their unique personalities are appreciated and well utilized?	In a successful team: Members feel their unique personalities are appreciated and well utilized.	
Norms	Are group norms set for working together and are they seen as standards for everyone in the group?	In a successful team: Group norms for working together are set and seen as standards for every one in the groups.	
Effectiveness	Do members find team meetings efficient and productive and look forward to this time together?	In a successful team: Members find team meetings efficient and productive and look forward to this time together.	

Descriptor	Reflection	Guideline	Your Comments
Success	Do team members clearly know when the team has met with success and share in this equally and proudly?	In a successful team: Members know clearly when the team has met with success and share in this equally and proudly.	
Training	Are opportunities for feedback and updating skills provided and taken advantage of by team members?	In a successful team: Opportunities for feedback and updating skills are provided and taken advantage of by team members.	