



Chapter 1

Introduction

As a diagnostic tool, an employee survey allows government to assess the effectiveness of the work environment and its ability to engage and motivate employees and support a client-focused culture. This is accomplished by measuring employee opinions, perceptions, and beliefs in 10 areas: teamwork, communications, employee involvement, quality of work life, leadership, compensation and recognition, personal growth, diversity, safety and security, and recruitment and retention. Employees are provided with opportunities to share candid input in the survey and in response to survey results. Strengths and opportunities for improvement are identified with the results, in order to support continuous improvement.

Service quality excellence and assuring a skilled, dedicated, motivated, and responsive public service are priorities for the Government of Nova Scotia. Meeting or exceeding client expectations relies on employees who are engaged, highly motivated, skilled, and focused. Employees who are engaged intend to stay with the organization, feel connected to the organization's goals and objectives, and are motivated in their jobs.¹ Employees feel supported and valued in an engaging work environment.

Why conduct an employee survey?

The Government of Nova Scotia conducted an employee survey in February 2004 in order to address several key questions related to the work environment:

- Are employees in the Government of Nova Scotia engaged—do they know how their work contributes to their department, are they motivated to help the organization succeed, and do they intend to stay with the organization? Are there differences among employee groups based on gender, age groups, or other demographic factors?
- What are areas of strength and where does government need to focus in order to make improvements to the work environment?
- What can government learn from this survey to help attract, retain, and motivate employees, in order to provide the highest quality of service possible for Nova Scotians?

¹ Parker, Owen, and Liz Wright. "Pay and Employee Commitment: The Missing Link." *Ivey Business Journal* 65, no. 3 (January/February 2001).

How can the results of the employee survey be used in government?

Results from the survey should be integrated into the strategic planning process and into the design of new, or redesign of existing, human resources management strategies, policies, programs, and services. With regards to strategic planning, results from an employee survey support an internal assessment, as well as establishment, monitoring, and tracking of performance measures.

Where are we now?	Internal/External Assessment	Survey
Where do we want to be?	Mission/Vision	
How do we get there?	Goals/Objectives Action Plans	
How do we measure our progress?	Performance Measures Monitoring and Tracking	Survey

As this is the first survey of employee opinion, belief, and perceptions, the results serve as a baseline to be used to measure progress over time. A commitment to action, regular reporting of progress, and reassessment of employee opinions are an essential continued response to the findings.