

Liam O'Connell - case study

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Expert opinion



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Take a deep breath and ask your employees what they think of your organisation

People often say that customers are your greatest asset. Well, yes, they are. But equally as important are your employees and the way they feel about working for you. Without dedicated and motivated

staff you won't be able to deliver fantastic customer service.

I know it can be frightening and worrying to actually ask staff what they think of an organisation. Some people think of any excuse to put off the dreaded morale survey. But it should not be delayed.

The employee morale survey is a vital benchmark for any culture change or service excellence programme. Without it you cannot concentrate on the factors that will improve morale and motivation

and have a direct positive effect on service delivery and the success of your business.

My bible for positively engaging with employees for many years has been the Sunday Times best 100 companies to work for. It is not just about the reputation and success that you get from achieving top-100 status, it is the invaluable information you get about your business.

Their criteria cover eight critical factors, ranging from leadership to well-being, that show how people value their company, how proud they are to

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work there and whether they feel they can make a difference.

By simply concentrating on the weaker result areas you can make a massive difference to the way your people engage with your business and actively focus them on delivering legendary customer service.

People often criticise change programmes for being just fluffy hearts and minds stuff. It is anything but. Hard statistics show that there is a direct and measurable impact on customer service

levels, general performance and reputation afterwards. Organisations that constantly remind employees that they do make a difference, and fully involve them on the ground in community or charitable activities, find that their reputation grows, their employees are proud to work for them, and customer satisfaction goes through the roof.

This is incredibly relevant to housing, where making a difference to communities and peoples lives is central to our whole purpose. So:

- don't delay;
- ensure the questions you ask are relevant and useful;
- ask yourself how you will use the employee feedback to positively change your business;
- devise an action plan to improve your weak areas; and
- carry out a survey annually to provide a benchmark for continuous improvement.

Liam O'Connell is a business and culture change consultant