

Enjoy Superior Associate Satisfaction Survey Scores Within Six Months - By Naomi Stark

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While the concept of associate opinion surveys is a good one, they often backfire. Why?

Semi-annual associate satisfaction surveys surmise six to twelve months of feelings on work and co-worker experiences: some good, some bad, some stressful and some exhilarating. In any job, no matter what position one holds, there are days that we all want to throw in the towel. As managers, we feel these same emotions and are also held accountable for what our people express on the surveys.

One common reason associate satisfaction surveys result in low scores and often cause undue management frustration, stems from the wrong perception held by many associates: opinion surveys are the forum to have their voices truly heard by upper management. Unfortunately, this is too often true. Too many managers do not have the tools and training to effectively coach, communicate and really listen to team members. Therefore, this perception is often the reality.

This results in the undesirable and reactive cycle, which then backfires on those who use associate satisfaction surveys. Companies who are serious about the satisfaction of their associates and achieving superior associate satisfaction ratings must be proactive by providing their mid-level managers and floor supervisors the training and tools to become more effective coaches to their team members. Then, the survey becomes an affirmation of satisfaction, not the forum of measuring satisfaction.

One of our programs, Formula 10(TM), a coaching skill development program, takes a highly effective approach to associate satisfaction surveys. It removes inefficiency and 'tail chasing' from this process making associate satisfaction surveys a highly beneficial tool. Three primary principles accomplish this desired result by bridging the communication gap between associates and management.

1. **ENGAGE IN COMFORTABLE CONVERSATION:** If you aren't comfortable discussing these topics then your associates won't be either.
2. **EDUCATE:** Familiarity increases comfort level. Increasing the comfort level of an individual will always generate a more positive response in human beings.
3. **UNDERSTAND YOUR ASSOCIATES AS INDIVIDUALS:** This is an important step in achieving superior associate satisfaction. A good coach really understands and knows the thought process of their team members.

About the Author



Naomi L. Stark - President & CEO, Stark Service Solutions - Hospitality specialists bringing people and technology together to maximize market share and profitability. Stark Service Solutions provides unique solutions that work in guest satisfaction and loyalty, maximizing food and beverage profit and much more. Formerly an Area Director of Training & Guest Satisfaction Management for Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Naomi has an extensive background in the hospitality industry working with a wide range of brands and property types throughout the Continental and Pacific United States, from small boutique hotels to large convention hotels, suburban to airport, five-star resorts and casino properties. Combining an operational background in Food & Beverage and Rooms with her training experience, astounding results have been generated for both the internal and external customer.

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