

CHAPTER D – DEI Surveys

What this is:

How to implement effective DEI feedback surveys.

Why is matters:

The benefits of measuring diversity and inclusion with feedback surveys include identifying opportunities for more effective employee engagement, benchmarking success in building DEI over time, and strategically focusing efforts on the areas of most need. Research from Gartner shows that organizations that “confidently measure DEI, create accountability, and embed inclusion into talent decisions and processes” report up to 20% more organizational inclusion compared to their peers.

Use Cases

Surveys are useful tools to strategically deploy at different points in an organization’s DEI journey. Along the way, the purpose of surveys will shift to suit the changing needs of the organization as it progresses towards its vision for success in the DEI arena. For example:

→ **Baseline surveys:**

The first survey is an opportunity for your organization to collect comprehensive baseline data which will inform your goals and metrics of success. Questions can be designed to empower employees to self-identify diversity demographics. This first survey can also be exploratory and provide insight about the perception of DEI within the organization and about which aspects of DEI employees most value. Other questions can be tied to specific metrics that the organization will use to gauge its progress toward its vision for DEI.

A baseline survey must have clear questions that will remain constant and be repeated in future surveys so that you can accurately compare data over time. This baseline survey will then enable you to benchmark the success of your DEI initiatives and help you modify shorter- and longer-term goals to advance your DEI journey.

- **Longitudinal surveys:** In subsequent surveys, organizations can collect longitudinal data to assess progress towards the established metrics. These can be stand-alone surveys or be a subset of your company's annual employee engagement survey (where appropriate). Framing the key questions consistently from one survey to another will ensure that the data may be compared over time. As your organization progresses along its DEI journey, you may want to revisit a subset of the metrics if your DEI vision evolves. At that point, it will be necessary to establish a new baseline.

Surveys are most effective at creating a comprehensive overview of employee perceptions of DEI when combined with other benchmarking methods. Surveys are a framework to understand the status of DEI, but they rarely provide all the information necessary to truly reflect DEI within the organization. One way to supplement a feedback survey is to create DEI focus groups and conduct one-on-one interviews with employees. These methods can deepen the organization's understanding of the day-to-day dynamics around specific issues - especially as those dynamics differ from one group to another. The detail and richness that emerge from these conversations can provide more compelling drivers for – and positive effects of – change within the organization.

Tips on Survey Development and Delivery

Organizations can leverage proven practices from other disciplines to craft effective surveys that reduce bias and solicit useful information. A few proven practices include the following:

- **Use a variety of qualitative and quantitative questions.**
This will allow your organization to track progress and get specific feedback. Examples of questions to ask are included in the next section.
- **Randomize the order in which the questions on the same topic are presented.**
This has been shown to reduce bias.

→ **Use Likert Scale questions to assess the status of core metrics.**

Likert Scale questions allow participants to rate their agreement with a statement using a 5-, 7-, or 9-point scale. This style of questions allows for ease of analysis and results in higher employee participation.

→ **Provide employees with an overview of what you learned from the survey and identify short term initiatives in response to survey results.**

This will help with community culture and trust and will clarify priorities for your human resources department and the best use of resources to advance your DEI vision. This employee communication tends to be a first step after receiving and processing feedback so changes can be made accordingly.

Example Questions are a starting point for consideration and are intended to be tailored and adjusted to your organization's specific needs.

7-point Likert Scale Questions

→ **Diversity**

- Workforce diversity is valued at our organization.
- [Company name] values diverse opinions and ideas.
- I feel comfortable talking about issues of discrimination on my team.

→ **Equity**

- All people have an opportunity to advance in their careers and succeed at [Company name].
- The process for career advancement/promotion is transparent to all employees.
- I trust this organization to be fair to all employees.

→ **Inclusion**

- I feel my unique background and identity are valued at [Company name].
- There are leaders here that I can relate to.
- The people I work with treat each other with respect.

→ **Psychological Safety Survey Questions**

- I can bring my whole self to work.
- I would feel comfortable reporting something wrong to a supervisor.
- [Company name] values diverse opinions and ideas.
- I am able to have discussions on difficult/uncomfortable topics with my team.
- Mistakes are not unfairly held against me.

Free-Response Questions

- How can we ensure every team member feels heard?
- How could we improve diversity and inclusion at [Company Name]?
- What is [Company name] doing well in terms of building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization?

Links to Other Resources

[Survey Monkey: Diversity and Inclusion survey templates](#)

[Culture Amp: Diversity and Inclusion survey: Building a more inclusive future](#)

[Quantum Workplace: Diversity and Inclusion Survey Questions to Improve D&I at Work](#)

[Work Tango: 22 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey Questions to Get You off the Mark](#)

[Lattice: 7 Tips for Conducting Your Next DE&I Survey](#)

[HBR: Getting the Truth into Workplace Surveys](#)