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Performance Management Perspectives

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Using Surveys to Evaluate Performance Initiatives at Experian Americas

Ben Warden

While providing analytics, decision-making solutions and processing services to diverse clients around the business world, Experian Americas uses Inquisite HR survey systems to maximize performance management.

Experian has more than 5,000 employees across the country. With annual sales of more than \$1 billion and clients in such assorted fields as finance, telecommunications, health-care insurance, retail, automotive and many more, a knowledgeable and motivated workforce is a must for the company's success.

This pushed Cathleen Tomas, performance analytics specialist senior, to investigate how sophisticated survey tools could be used for so many HR functions. At the top of the list is figuring out what programs work or don't work, as well as getting a feel for new employees.

"We survey new hires on their satisfaction with our recruiting, onboarding and new-hire orientation processes," Tomas said. "We survey hiring managers, asking them about the effectiveness of our recruiters and recruiting process. We survey employees who have utilized our employee relations (ER) specialists and ask them to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of our ER specialists, and we evaluate these results on a monthly basis."

In addition, Tomas said Experian uses surveys to measure satisfaction with its HR online applications.

For example, when the company implemented a compensation application, it asked managers to rate their overall satisfaction with the application, what they liked most (and least) about it and how they felt about communications during the rollout.

As important as managerial opinions are, Tomas said other employees can provide the trench-level perspective needed to really make a difference.

"We ask how we could improve the process or the system in the future," she said. "Spot surveys on employee engagement in various business units are used, as well as talent inventory, to collect detailed information on education, certifications and current or prior experience."

Tomas said the system's benefits offset any negative preconceived notions about taking surveys.

"Through our findings, we are able to reinforce the need for certain HR programs, for instance, if our employees are leaving for career growth and career development," she said. "This reinforces our need to develop a companywide employee-development program."

Additionally, the members of Experian's HR department not only administer the surveys — they are subject to them. Tomas said the results of the surveys (no matter who takes them) are valuable to the bottom line.

"We all know that it is very important to monitor our employees' performance," she said. "Through our performance management process, not only is it important to assess how efficient and effective we are, it is also important to assess how our employees are affecting our overall business goals."

Engagement is the underlying concern throughout the company — if an employee is disengaged and unproductive, not only can the survey unearth these sentiments but find a solution, as well.

"The overall engagement of our employees affects their performance, which affects our clients' experience and loyalty and, ultimately, drives our business results," Tomas said. **TM**

Ben Warden is an associate editor for Talent Management magazine.

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