

Quest

THE
PETER
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FOR WORKPLACE
EXCELLENCE

INSIDE:

AWARD WINNING
LEADERS

GREAT LEADERS
CARE ABOUT
THEIR PEOPLE

PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES

The Best-of-the-Best Share Tips for Success

It has been our privilege over the past 16 years to conduct hundreds of Employee Opinion Surveys. By analyzing the data and interacting with our clients, we have learned a lot about what great companies do differently to become so successful. More specifically, we have pinpointed what employees like about their work environment and where they feel their company could be stronger.

CHOOSING THE BEST-OF-THE-BEST

After completing a survey, our clients often ask us, "How do we stack up against the really good companies?" Our first response is that all our clients are "really good" companies because less-than-great companies aren't concerned with their employees' opinions and don't ask us to do surveys. Our second response is that by using two separate benchmarks to compare survey data, we are able to distinguish between the overall PBS benchmark and what we call the "Best-of-the-Best." Our overall benchmark contains the opinions of nearly 75,000 employees. By isolating clients in the top 25

Our belief is that if you want loyal, satisfied customers, you need loyal, satisfied employees.

—Mike Maslak

percent—based on favorable responses to the survey—we create the PBS Best-of-the-Best benchmark. The companies with high levels of employee satisfaction receive our annual Award for Workplace Excellence. Then when clients ask, "What can we do to create an award-winning environment," we



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go to the source. We recently interviewed some of the CEOs and/or senior-level executives from the award-winning companies. Read on to learn how their philosophies are reflected in the survey data. (All survey data referenced in this article report the percent-

ages of favorable responses, meaning the percent of people who selected the "agree" or "strongly agree" option in response to a question.)

TIPS FROM THE TOP

When asked why he felt it was important to conduct an annual Employee Opinion Survey (EOS), Jim McPheters, CEO of California Coast Credit Union, responded, "Employees on the frontline have firsthand knowledge of how effective we are in serving our members. The EOS sends a message to staff members that we care about them and want to know what they think. We know that employees have a choice about whether to stay or not."

Our survey data validate the importance of asking for employees' opinions—and demonstrate the impact this has on their retention.

Best-of-the-Best from page 1

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
Management is receptive to the opinions and thoughts of employees.	67.7%	85.3%
My company offers me the kind of job I will want 3 years from now.	66.1%	84.8%

Jim also emphasized that he uses the EOS during the recruitment process to demonstrate that California Coast Credit Union is an “Employer of Choice.”

Mark Weston, general manager of Helix Water District, discussed the correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction: “The survey tells us how employees feel the entire organization is doing in serving our customers. Creating the right environment for employees maximizes their potential for providing excellent customer service.”

Our survey data clearly show that the Best-of-the-Best companies do a better job of supporting employees’ efforts to serve customers.



WD-40 Company Accepts the Award for Workplace Excellence
 Left to right: Neal Schmale, Chairman BOD, WD-40; Garry Ridge, President/CEO, WD-40; Steve Schwab, VP Strategic Sales, WD-40; Giles Bateman, Board Member, WD-40; Peter Stark, President, Peter Barron Stark & Associates

2004 Award for Workplace Excellence™ Winners

- >>> 1st Pacific Bank (San Diego, CA)
- >>> California Coast Credit Union (San Diego, CA)
- >>> Columbia Credit Union (Vancouver, WA)
- >>> First Future Credit Union (San Diego, CA)
- >>> Helix Water District (La Mesa, CA)
- >>> North Island Credit Union (San Diego, CA)
- >>> San Diego Metropolitan Credit Union (San Diego, CA)
- >>> WD-40 Company (San Diego, CA)



QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
Necessary information to do my job and respond to customers’ needs is communicated on a timely basis.	73.2%	83.8%
I am empowered to make decisions that allow me to provide quality customer/member service.	78.8%	86.4%

Mark also shared this: “I trust my employees to do their jobs. I really listen to what they say, and act on it.” He credited his team with pride, saying, “We serve over 250,000 people water every day of the year. We have outstanding customer satisfaction. When a problem arises, front line employees are empowered to solve customer problems maintaining a healthy relationship with our customer.”

Speaking of trust, our survey data show that in award-winning companies, there is a strong correlation between managers’ expressed trust and confidence in their employees and employees’ trust in the management team.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
I trust the management team.	71.8%	88.2%

Mike Maslak, president and CEO of North Island Credit Union, also affirmed the correlation between customer/member satisfaction and employee satisfaction. He uses a variety of corporate matrixes to measure levels of satisfaction because, he says, “Our belief is if you want loyal, satisfied customers, you need loyal, satisfied employees.”

Our survey data highlight this correlation between satisfied employees and satisfied customers.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
My company places a high value on customer/member satisfaction.	82.3%	93.8%
People at my company enjoy what they do.	74.1%	87.7%
I would recommend my company to my friends as a good place to work.	79.5%	91.0%

When we asked Chuck Anderson, acting CEO and president of Columbia Credit Union, what specifically the senior leadership team at Columbia does to create an environment in which employees willingly go beyond the call of duty, he responded, “Get out and engage with every level of the company. At Columbia, our leadership team is sincerely interested in our staff, who they are and, specifically, what they need in order to exceed the needs of our members. Our people need to know how significant they are to our success.”



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—Chuck Anderson

Our survey data support the importance of caring for employees. The responses to the survey questions below demonstrate the difference between the two benchmarks when it comes to employees’ perceptions about how much management values their input and supports their needs.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
I have the tools (resources) and information I need to a good job.	71.1%	92.0%
Managers and supervisors at my company seek the opinions and thoughts of the employees who work here.	60.2%	77.2%

When asked why the San Diego Metropolitan Credit Union chose to conduct an EOS, Stuart Camblin, CEO, responded, “Metropolitan uses the survey to capitalize on strengths and address areas that, if improved, would make our organization even stronger. The EOS is a road map of what we should concentrate on.” Stuart attributes Metropolitan’s success to his staff, saying, “They have embraced the whole idea of improving and moving the organization forward.”

Our benchmark data demonstrate the importance of actively soliciting employee feedback and then using the feedback to lead organizational change.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
I believe the results of this opinion poll will be used to help create positive changes at my company.	75.3%	87.6%

Responding to why 1st Pacific Bank conducts a survey, Vince Siciliano, CEO, commented, “The survey gives us an objective, outside evaluation of how we are doing. We feel that being a great place to work is what we are really about, and the EOS provides an avenue to talk about the issue in a constructive way.” He went on to say, “The EOS is a great tool for holding managers accountable for creating a culture that is in alignment with the organization’s vision and values and building even stronger relationships with employees.”

One way to build stronger relationships is for managers to value and recognize the contributions of their employees. Our survey data support Vince’s theory on building relationships.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
I receive credit and recognition when I do a good job.	69.0%	83.2%
I feel I am a valued member of the company team.	78.0%	90.2%

Garry Ridge, CEO of the WD-40 Company, talked with us about the importance of communicating with employees on a regular basis. Garry was straightforward when he stated, “It is absolutely critical for employees to know what I am thinking.” Garry’s enthusiasm for taking WD-40 from a one-product company with a “brand fortress” to a multiproduct company with a “fortress of brands” is contagious. Garry said that each week he sends a personal e-mail to every employee in the company. In the e-mail, he talks about new sales, exciting new products in development, what he is learning, company challenges, and actions that are being taken to address concerns. The questions below demonstrate the important correlation between communication from upper management and high levels of employee satisfaction.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
When changes are made at my company, I hear about them in a timely manner.	56.1%	74.1%
My company is open and honest with employees.	68.3%	86.6%
Communication flows effectively from upper management to employees.	47.6%	63.1%

Garry also said, “I care about employees. This is the number one thing I communicate. I want them to improve—and improve their lives. I am not here to grade your paper. I’m here to help you get an A.”

The data below on employees’ perceptions of how much they are valued show a nearly 20-point difference between the two benchmarks.

QUESTION	OVERALL BENCHMARK	BEST-OF-THE-BEST BENCHMARK
My company places a high value on their employees.	66.4%	85.9%

HOW TO JOIN THE ELITE

All companies measure the bottom line. Good companies understand the significant relationship between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. Great companies are committed to measuring employee satisfaction and taking action in areas where employees have identified opportunities to make the company even stronger. Now you know why our award winners are in a league of their own . . . the Best-of-the-Best.



Great Leaders Care About Their People

Our lead article this month provides insights from the leaders at the Best-of-the-Best companies. The research clearly shows that great organizations are led by passionate leaders who care about their employees.

The word “care” makes some leaders uncomfortable. “Does a manager really have to care about employees to get them to do the job?” these leaders ask. The answer is no. You can use a variety of approaches to get people to do what they are paid to do. For example, you can threaten employees with bad reviews and no raises. The problem is that although using intimidation may get you a workforce that does the minimum that has to be done, it won’t get you an engaged workforce that does whatever it takes to excel. Why? Because you’re telling employees that you don’t care about them and if they can’t deliver, you’ll find other warm bodies to do the job. What’s really scary is that if you don’t care about your employees, they won’t care about your success as their manager.

If you think about it, the greatest leaders you ever worked for most likely cared deeply about you and your success. When working for these leaders, you were probably more motivated and dedicated than at any other time in your career. There’s nothing like that feeling, is there? Here’s your opportunity to pass it on to your employees by following these seven principles:

1 Listen to and Understand Employees’ Concerns

Every time you do a good job listening to and understanding your employees’ concerns, you let them know that you value their opinions. Set aside time every week for a “one-on-one” with each employee who reports to you. Instead of telling the employee anything, ask questions—and truly listen to the responses. Take time to hear and fully understand what the employee is trying to convey.

2 Support Employees’ Growth and Development

When you really care about people, you want the very best for them. This means providing every employee with an opportunity to grow, even if that means losing your star performer to another department in your organization, if that’s where his or her best opportunity lies.

3 Provide Constructive Feedback

Give employees constructive feedback—including both positive and negative comments—to ensure their success. This is the compassionate thing to do. Withholding feedback indirectly undermines the success of employees. Providing feedback actively states that you care.

4 Look for Positive Intentions

Most people do not maliciously go out of their way to make mistakes or propose ideas that will not work. People usually have positive intentions behind their actions. Managers who care about their people look for positive intentions rather than focusing on things that go wrong. When an employee makes a mistake, ask, “What did you learn from this experience? What would you do differently next time?” When you dwell on positive intentions and solutions rather than on the problem, you send out a huge message that you really do care.

5 When You Disagree With Employees, Do Not Make Them “Wrong”

Individual opinions are what make people unique. You are entitled to disagree with employees, but when you really care about their feelings, you disagree in a way that does not make them feel “wrong” for holding an opinion that differs from yours.

6 Challenge Your Employees

We have worked with several managers who, under the guise of care and concern, allow some employees to perform at unacceptable levels. This lowers morale in the department and sends out signals of “unfair play” to other employees. When you really care about individuals, you want them to perform to their full potential. To hold people accountable to their highest ability demonstrates your concern for them and their success.

7 Acknowledge the Greatness Within

Everyone is capable of accomplishing extraordinary tasks. Part of a leader’s role is believing that her or his people are capable of doing great things. Whether you think your people can accomplish great things or you think they can’t, you are right. The key is your belief. When you believe in people, they will most likely go out of their way to prove you are right.

If you manage from the heart and follow these seven principles to demonstrate to your employees that you sincerely care about them, we are convinced you will experience the benefits of a workforce that cares about your success as a leader. Your employees will be willing to “go to the wall” to get things done for you and your department.

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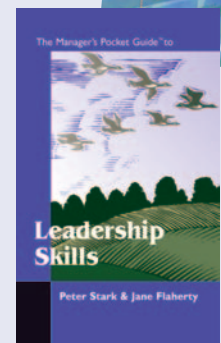
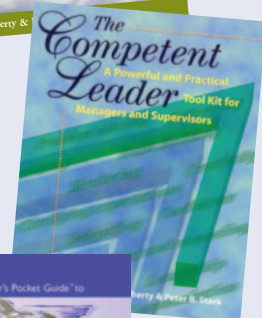
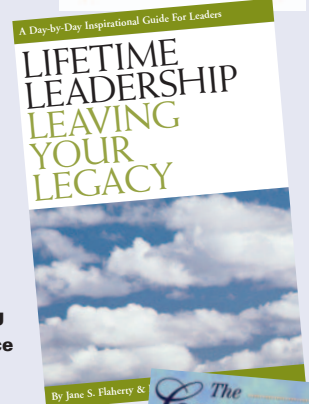
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