

VOICE

VOICES OF INFLUENTIAL CARE EMPLOYEES

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Problem: Previous survey response rate is less than 20%

Idea: Fundamentally different approach

V O I C E

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A “Panel Approach to Voice”

- Sub-sample of random 150 sites, stratified by Region, Urban/Rural, and Size
- Micro-survey monthly, ~3-10 questions
- Respondents involved in developing questions
- Rapid communication of results to leadership and back to the field

Some Overarching Aims

Get Input from Field:

- Conduct focus groups with potential participants at sites to seek ideas about how they would like to be involved

Survey Administration:

- Item flexibility – items can repeat annually, but we will be able to rapidly include areas of operational interest

Provide Feedback to Field:

- Disseminate short info-graphic style reports summarizing responses and showing that responses are acknowledged by leadership

What is Employee Voice

- “Discretionary communication by an employee of ideas, suggestions, concerns, information about problems, or opinions about work-related issues to persons who might be able to take appropriate action” (Morrison, 2014)
 - Discretionary: voluntary (not part of job requirements)
 - People weigh costs / benefits of voicing
 - Not speaking up is unobservable
 - May challenge / threaten managers



Why Care about Voice?

- Sparks increased learning, creativity, teamwork, and effectiveness
 - Improves financial / operational performance by 20% (financial services)
 - Improves sales between 2-10% (restaurants)
 - Reduces turnover by 32% (Fortune 500 company)



Responses to Job Dissatisfaction



Barriers to Voice

- Think about your own experience and when you might have held back and not spoken up with improvement-oriented feedback



Barriers to Voice

- Think about your own experience and when you might have held back and not spoken up with improvement-oriented feedback
 - Common barriers to voice
 - Image (Dutton & Ashford, 1993)
 - Psychological safety (Sherf, Parke, & Isaakyan, 2021)
 - Futility (Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008)
 - Personality (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001)



Motivators of Voice (Personal)



- Extraversion
- Personal Initiative
- Felt Responsibility

Motivators of Voice (Environment)



- Extraversion
- Personal Initiative
- Felt Responsibility
- Psychological Safety
- Leader Openness
- HR Practices

Framing Input as Idea vs Problem



- Recipients tend not to enjoy hearing problems
 - They see voicers as worse performers with a diminished reputation, and themselves feel burned out, particularly if they feel powerless to solve the problem (Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2017; McClean, Martin, Emich, & Woodruff, 2018; Sessions, Nahrgang, Newton, & Chamberlin, 2020)

Hard to Speak up with Problems

- Voicers themselves feel anxious and withdraw more, reducing supportive behaviors to coworkers (Welsh, Outlaw, Newton, & Baer, in press)



Framing Input as Idea vs Problem



- Why use a problem framing? It motivates urgency and lights a fire that attracts managers' attention
- Link arms with others (group voice) to diffuse perceived risks

Framing Input as Idea vs Problem



- Try to share a solution or at least be part of the solution
- Remember psychological safety and leader openness—these are critical in creating a culture of speaking up
- For managers, encourage employees to share problems; put ego aside and resolve together

Toss the Problem Back to the Voicer?

- Don't just delegate the issue back to the employee with little oversight and guidance
 - "Go run with that" is a demotivating response that causes regret and silence. Interestingly, voice itself may act like volunteering



Advocacy

- Advocacy: Latin, *ad-vocare*, connotes one who voices and pleads for another person
- Speak up on behalf of others in a way that represents their opinions, perspectives, and welfare (Harquail, 1996; Mallik, 1997)



Advocacy

- Although advocacy benefits others
 - Greater labor efficiency (Kim, MacDuffie, & Pil, 2010)
 - Improves targets' well-being (Sabo, Ingram, Reinschmidt, Schachter, Jacobs, Zapien, Robinson, & Carvajal, 2013)
- Speaking up for another person and walking in their shoes can weigh on advocates as they help carry another's burdens (Maier, 2008; McCann and Pearlman, 1990; McDermott and Garofalo, 2004; Powell-Williams et al., 2013)





What we've learned thus far

FINDINGS FROM SURVEY
ENGAGEMENT FOCUS
GROUPS

Poll Question #1

- What prevents you from completing VA surveys (Please mark all that apply)?
 - Not enough time in my work-day
 - Worries about identifying information
 - Insufficient action to implement feedback
 - Insufficient communication to share how feedback was incorporated

Purpose

- Low Participation (less than 20%) on previous surveys
- Feedback from previous surveys
- Goal: To make surveys more meaningful for participants and useful for development of future surveys

Methods

Recruitment based on being a member of a PACT team

- Including extended team members (pharmacists, dieticians, social workers)

Every week 3 focus groups were held for each role

- One morning, one lunchtime, one late afternoon

Focus groups were recorded and transcribed for accuracy

- One group declined to be recorded so notes were taken

Results analyzed by 2 qualitative analysts

Initial Findings—Survey Alignment

- How closely do you think the content of VA surveys aligns with the actual issues you face in your work?

Initial Findings—Survey Alignment

- How closely do you think the content of VA surveys aligns with the actual issues you face in your work?
 - Facility-level issues not addressed
 - Questions align more with clinical roles than support staff
 - *“I just think that they are vague, and I don’t think they pinpoint the actual issues”*

Initial Findings—Expanded Questions

- What suggestions do you have for information that might be asked for in VA surveys but generally is not?

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- What suggestions do you have for information that might be asked for in VA surveys but generally is not?
 - Questions reflecting workload, work environment, and team/patient interactions
 - Ask more about job satisfaction and morale
 - Important to include more general diversity questions
 - “I think workload...because I work in primary care. (W)e get things thrown at us...everything lands on primary care, so I don't know if it would change anything, but I think employees feeling that their voices are being heard”

Initial Findings—Usefulness

- What could be done to make VA surveys more useful to you?

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- What could be done to make VA surveys more useful to you?
 - Being able to review survey results and understand how they apply to work life
 - Ensure surveys do not contain identifying questions allowing employees to be open and honest
 - Provide opportunities to respond to open-ended questions to address specific issues experienced or to give additional details
 - “There's a lot of people who are very skeptical...that the surveys are anonymous. ... People are often very hesitant to share because there is a concern about repercussions from being able to share. To me that's very sad, because if we don't, if people don't know what the problem is, truly being able to fix it to make things better, that's impossible”

Initial Findings—Responsiveness

- What could be done that might make you more likely to respond to VA surveys?

Initial Findings—Responsiveness

- What could be done that might make you more likely to respond to VA surveys?
 - Positive change from previous surveys
 - Having the opportunity to address the results
 - Incentives to participate
 - Feelings that the survey is private, confidential, and non-identifiable
 - Time
 - “It’s difficult trying to motivate people to be able to do surveys when they’re so busy”

Initial Findings—Sharing Results

- What would be the most helpful way for us to share the results of the survey with you?

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- What would be the most helpful way for us to share the results of the survey with you?
 - Share results in a variety of ways and platforms
 - Email
 - Meetings/Townhalls
 - VA Home Screen/Sharepoint
 - Have leadership, neutral 3rd party, or group conducting survey disseminate results
 - Share results as a summary and/or with detailed statistics
 - “Maybe in a meeting...send it to all of us in a in an email so we can review it and it should be a meeting or a series of meetings to develop plans to change things based on those based on those responses. ... I have no idea if something negative was found because I'm just relying on the information that was told to me”

Next Steps



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1

This week: Primary care survey (5-7 questions; 3 minutes)

Anonymous surveys not linked to individuals

Data analysis in October

2

Compile results in November

Feedback sent November 23 (goal is to send feedback within one month)

3

Sharepoint with more details

Leadership response included

4

Surveys will be administered 4-6x per year to address current issues

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