

10 tips for a better online employee survey

Pest control companies looking to continually improve can, and should, solicit feedback and incorporate ideas from their most valuable asset: their employees. Roundtables, focus groups and town hall meetings can have a place in this information-gathering process. But the most cost-effective approach to hear from each and every employee is to conduct an online employee survey.

Environmental Pest Service (EPS) conducts such surveys regularly. Topics range from employee engagement to health and wellness ideas to internal communications preferences. These survey results have helped drive important business decisions and positive changes throughout our organization. Based on our experience, here are 10 tips for optimizing your online employee surveys:

1 Set reasonable expectations. In a perfect world, every employee would complete the company survey. In reality, this will not be the case. The higher the response rate, the better; however, keep in mind that even a 50 percent participation rate — if the respondents accurately represent your organization — can be acceptable.

2 Consider an incentive. Asking your team to complete a survey is asking them to take time away from other job responsibilities. Make sure to communicate why their feedback is important. Also, consider offering to enter those who respond into a drawing for a gift card, a paid day off, or other prize that could increase participation.

3 Make it mobile-friendly. The majority of your employees are in the field most, if not all, of the day. Make sure your online survey can be easily accessed and completed on mobile devices.

4 Set a realistic due date. It's important to set a deadline for employees to complete the survey. The survey timeline should take into account any holidays or company events that may take people out of the office or make extra requests more difficult to manage. Generally, two weeks is plenty of time. You want to provide enough time for people to get around to responding, but not so much time that they forget about the request.

5 Assure anonymity. Surveys are only as helpful as the responses are honest. Set up the survey so that responses are anonymous, and make sure respondents know that's the case. This will help encourage honest, more valuable feedback.

6 Stay short and sweet. Aim for a survey that takes no longer than five minutes to complete, if possible. Make questions short, to the point, and focused on getting the type of feedback that is truly important.

Provide clear-cut answer options to make responding quick and easy. In your request email, let employees know how long the survey should take to complete. This will set a more manageable expectation and allow them to plan accordingly.

7 Provide a "neutral" option. Keep in mind that not every employee has an opinion about every question. Provide a "neutral" or similar

option, such as "This does not apply to me," or "I've never attended such-and-such event." This will ensure you get more accurate responses.

8 Leave room for comments. Include comment boxes for specific questions and/or at the end of the survey. This will allow your team to provide input that may not have been included in the provided answer choices.

9 Send regular reminders. Some team members may complete the survey as soon as they get it, whereas others may see the due date in the distance and opt to take it later. Send a couple of reminders during the survey period. For example, send the first reminder one week out from the survey due date, and then a second reminder the day before the survey due date.

10 Share results. After the survey is completed, share results with the team and thank them for their input. If positive changes will be made based on survey results, share that with the team, as well. And if you've offered a prize for responding, consider doing something fun around that, like sharing a video of the drawing or a photo of the winner with the prize. PMP

ROLMAN is vice president of sales and operations for Environmental Pest Service (EPS), which operates six brands: Arrow Environmental Services, Bug Out Service, Skyline

Pest Solutions, State Pest Control, Smith Exterminating Company, and Wood Termite & Pest Control. He can be reached at mrolman@environmentalpestservice.com or 727-318-0578.

