



An investment that works.

EMPLOYEE SURVEY TOOLKIT

DEVELOPED FOR: REDF
Flying Whale Strategies
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this resource is to support employment social enterprises (ESEs) through the process of designing and implementing a survey of participant employees that evaluates participants' experience, perception, and engagement. This toolkit offers ESEs sample questions, best practices for launching a survey, and next steps for analyzing findings.

GLOSSARY

Survey: A monitoring and evaluation tool that consists of a list of questions used to collect feedback about a certain topic.

Employee engagement: The level of enthusiasm and connection employees feel toward their work in the enterprise, as well as their active participation in their personal development through their involvement with the ESE. Employee engagement is often something that ESEs wish to measure through a survey.

Perceptual feedback: The perspectives, feelings, and opinions individuals have about their experiences with the ESE, its support program, and work environment, that are used to inform and improve the practice and decision-making of that organization. Includes both what the participant did at the ESE and how they felt about it.

Likert scale: A measurement method that uses a rating scale to assess respondents' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions.

Employee voice strategy: The process an organization follows for employees to express ideas, opinions, and concerns with the leadership team and in turn, how leadership uses that feedback. It fosters a sense of involvement in decision-making to enhance employee engagement and organizational transparency.

Feedback loop: A system by which participants share their opinions, ideas, and concerns with leadership and the way that leadership responds and shares back next steps

INTRODUCTION

A robust program evaluation protocol includes collecting data on participant experience. It helps leaders understand whether their programs are having the impact they intend. Within an ESE, feedback is a key tool for uplifting employees' voices, promoting equity in the workplace, and redistributing power in the decision making process. To truly distribute power, ESEs must also have a protocol for responding to this feedback. This toolkit will help you collect data on the participant experience and respond to it.

This toolkit provides sample survey questions to help you better understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and levels of engagement with your ESE. We've included questions on topics like job satisfaction, employee engagement, feelings of support and belonging, relationship with staff, career development, and self-efficacy. We believe these are some of the key factors for participant workers who feel holistically equipped, empowered, and supported toward their goals. Select the questions that best fit with what you would like to learn and customize them according to the context of your ESE.

We've chosen to use a survey as the key tool for collecting data. Other more in-depth research options include focus groups or key informant interviews. Yet a survey is a simple method of obtaining feedback quickly. Surveys can be administered to a large number of people in a relatively short period of time.

We have written survey questions using a likert scale. A Likert scale is a measurement method that uses a rating scale to assess respondents' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. Likert scales are beneficial because they are easy for your audience to understand, which increases the likelihood that they will participate in the survey. In addition, Likert scales don't force specific responses (like a multiple choice question) but instead give flexibility without asking too much (like a survey made up entirely of open-ended questions).

Perceptual Feedback Toolkit – Survey Development Guide

Type of Feedback	If You're Looking to Learn About	Potential Questions
Community or Individual Needs	- Participant employee needs - Barriers to accessing your	- What additional services could [organization] offer to

	<p>programs and/or services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How individuals would prefer to receive services 	<p>support your employment and training needs and goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important are the services provided by [organization] to you?
Experience & Quality of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individuals' perceptions regarding services received - Assessment of the quality of a service or whether it met their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall, how well has [organization] met your needs? - I believe [organization] is going to help me find the right training program or job. - My job coach's support is helping me better navigate the job search or explore educational opportunities
Relationship with ESE staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feedback regarding the quality of their interactions with you or other members of your team - Perceptions of how impactful a service is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I feel respected in this program/job - My job coach listens to me - There's at least one staff member at this organization who knows what it is like to stand in my shoes - [Specific staff] really try to understand how I feel about things as a participant of this organization
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback regarding how services made participant employees feel and whether they would recommend them to someone else 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How satisfied are you with the job preparation services provided by [organization]? - How likely are you to recommend [organization] to a friend or family member?
Initial Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individuals' input regarding how services received will impact their future behavior - Individuals' self-reported mindset, attitudes, and behaviors as they relate to program objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -After completing [program], I feel confident in my ability to secure a job or participate in educational and training opportunities - I am proud of the qualifications I have to offer. - Because of [program], I feel like I can tackle life better

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

We would like your feedback about your experience with [this ESE]. This is an opportunity for you to honestly tell us how we are doing as an organization and how we might do better.

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Nothing you say in this survey will affect your ability to participate in the [program at ESE] in any way.

Thank you for your feedback!

Job Satisfaction

1. I would recommend [this ESE] to a friend or family member as a great place to [work/learn/receive support].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. How satisfied are you with your current role and responsibilities?
Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very Satisfied
3. I think about looking for another job (more relevant for a permanent ESE employer).
Always | Very Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never
4. It would take a lot for me to leave this job (more relevant for a permanent ESE employer).
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
5. My work here contributes to my personal and professional goals.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
6. I am motivated to come to work at [this ESE] each day.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
7. How would you rate the overall work environment at [the ESE]?
Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent

Individual Needs

1. The workplace culture at [this ESE] is supportive and inclusive.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. I can access the things I need to do my job well.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. Working at this [ESE] allows for flexibility between work and personal life.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
4. I am paid fairly.

Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

5. My workload is manageable.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
6. I have a clear understanding of my responsibilities and expectations at work.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Engagement with Management

1. I feel comfortable talking with my supervisor about work-related issues.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. My supervisor gives me appropriate recognition when I do good work.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me improve the way I do my job.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Team Dynamics

1. I feel accepted and valued by my immediate coworkers.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. My coworkers are committed to quality work.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. There is effective collaboration between the members of my team.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
4. I feel safe making mistakes and taking risks on my team.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Job Readiness and Career Development

1. The [job readiness program/new hire orientation/program] prepared me to do my job well.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. I have learned new skills [in industry] since I started working [at this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. I understand how to apply for a job outside of [ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
4. There are people outside of my immediate family that I can call to help me get connected to a job.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

5. There are opportunities for me to grow or learn new skills at this [ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Self-efficacy

1. My role at [ESE] allows me to use my strengths and skills.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. I will succeed in a job environment outside of [this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. I have developed skills to tackle life's challenges.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
4. I have gained the resources and knowledge I need to address unexpected challenges in life.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
5. My experience at [this ESE] has enhanced my confidence in myself and my abilities.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Program Support & Work Environment

1. My [case manager/manager/job readiness coach] has shown a genuine interest in my career development by helping me learn a new skill, improve, or take steps toward a professional goal.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. When challenges arise that impact my work, there is at least one person at [ESE] that I can talk to.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. When a challenge arises that impacts my work, someone at [ESE] can help me solve the problem.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
4. The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me improve the way I do my job.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
5. The staff at [this ESE] understand me.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
6. My supervisor believes in my potential.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
6. I have the opportunity to share feedback about things that affect me at [this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

7. I feel respected by the staff of [this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
8. I feel psychologically/emotionally safe at [this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
9. I feel physically safe at [this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Program Outcomes

These questions are designed to get feedback on how participant employees perceive their capacity related to earning power, autonomy, and social capital—three sample outcomes based on the Urban Institute's [Measuring Mobility from Poverty](#). If your ESE measures different outcomes, this section should be customized accordingly.

1. I have achieved a [goal that increases my earning power: earned my GED, earned an industry recognized credential, was promoted [*anything the ESE creates as relevant to their focus population*]].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
2. I have a network that will last after I complete the program at [this ESE].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
3. There are people outside of my friends and family that I can call to help me find a job.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
4. There are people outside of my friends and family that I can call to help me respond to unexpected setbacks.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
5. I can set and achieve my goals [for life, work, education].
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree
6. I have autonomy over my future career plans.
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

Open-Ended Questions

While quantitative questions will help you reveal patterns across the organization, qualitative feedback can offer insight on employees' motivation or the drivers behind key trends. Here are some sample qualitative feedback questions:

1. Is there something that would have made you feel more prepared to [start working at this job/your job placement]?
2. Is there something that made you feel supported by [program staff]? If so, what was it?
3. What would you change about [our job readiness program/ESE/your position]?
4. What do you enjoy the most about working here?
5. What do you enjoy the least about working here?

6. What is something the program team did that helped you feel supported during your enrollment?

ANALYZING FINDINGS

There are two key types of learning to be gleaned from the results of these surveys.

First, the results reveal basic data about how supported, motivated, and engaged your employees are. The data can help an ESE identify whether a participant employee needs additional support. For example, if a participant isn't reporting a positive experience, this may be an early indicator. If you are interested in this type of data, you would need to collect identifying information and thus, it would no longer be anonymous.

Second, they reveal correlations between employee perceptions and employee outcomes.

In particular, understanding the way that participants perceive their experiences with the ESE could give ESEs key insights on their eventual employment outcomes.

A 2021 [study](#) by REDF and RTI International of four ESEs found that individuals who had positive perceptions of their time at the ESE were more likely to have short and long term employment successes:

- Participants who felt respected by staff were more likely to be employed 18 months after intake.
- Higher general satisfaction with the ESE program was most strongly linked to participants working at least 30 hours per week.
- Frequent interactions with the ESE were associated with higher wages.

These findings underscore how collecting perceptual feedback can contribute to your program's impact and provide early insights about it.

Because of this relationship, ESEs can compare survey responses with measurable employment outcomes such as job placement and retention after exiting the ESE and current wages. For example, did respondents who reported a positive experience, feelings of respect and belonging, and a strong sense of self-efficacy actually have better rates of job retention, higher wages, and more consistent work than those who had a negative experience? These conclusions can help to inform decisions about what aspects of the ESE are most effective in fostering participant success and where changes may need to be made in the ESE's operations.

Survey Scoring Instructions

Choose the questions from the survey you would like to use. For each question in the survey, responses are scored on a scale from 1-5 points:

- Strongly Disagree / Very Dissatisfied / Always = 1 point
- Disagree / Dissatisfied / Very Often = 2 points
- Neutral / Sometimes / Fair = 3 points
- Agree / Satisfied / Rarely / Good = 4 points
- Strongly Agree / Very Satisfied / Never / Excellent = 5 points

To find the maximum score for your survey, multiply the number of questions by 5 points. For example, 25 questions x 5 points = 125 possible points.

High scores (close to the maximum number of points) suggest that employees are highly engaged, satisfied with their work, and have positive perceptions of their experience with the ESE.

Low scores (closer to the minimum score) indicate disengagement, dissatisfaction, or negative experiences at the ESE.

You can also add section-specific results. You can weight each section and compare them to one another. Use the following instructions to weight your sections:

1. **Calculate Raw Scores for Each Section**

For each respondent, sum the scores in each section.

2. **Determine the Maximum Possible Score for Each Section**

Multiply the number of questions in the section by the highest possible score per question.

3. **Convert to a Percentage or Standardized Score**

Use this formula for each section:

Standardized Score = $(\text{Raw Score} / \text{Max Score}) \times 100$

This gives you a score out of 100 for each section, making them directly comparable.

4. **Apply Additional Weights**

If you want some sections to be more influential than others (e.g., outcomes matter more than inputs), you can multiply each standardized score by a weight:

Weighted Score = $\text{Standardized Score} \times \text{Weight}$

Note: Ensure weights add up to 1 or 100%, depending on how you're scaling.

Reflection questions during analysis:

1. What key trends or patterns emerged from the survey data?
2. Do we see any correlation between cohorts' experience data and employment outcomes? Note: consider testing a group of ESE participant employees by having them complete the survey and then looking at their outcomes once they all have been promoted or transitioned.
3. In what areas are employees expressing the highest levels of satisfaction, and how can we build on these strengths to further improve engagement across the organization?
4. How can we use the feedback provided to address specific barriers to engagement, such as feelings of exclusion or lack of support for professional development?
5. What qualitative feedback helps explain the drivers behind lower engagement scores, and what actionable steps can we take to address these concerns?

6. What areas of the ESE's operations seem most effective in fostering positive participant outcomes, based on both feedback and employment data?

SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

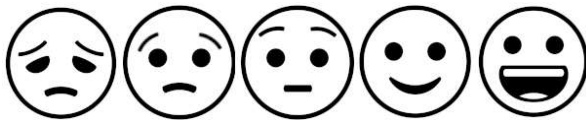
1. **Consider your audience:** Before you can begin drafting a survey for your ESE, you have to answer two important questions about your audience. First, who are we surveying? Current participants or alumni? Recent graduates or folks who are year into their job placement? And second, what do we want to know about them? Engagement covers a large range of topics: mission alignment, career development opportunity, communication, feelings of support, and more. Clarifying what you're hoping to learn can help you choose the questions that matter most.
2. **Choose your medium:** Now that you have survey questions, it's time to determine how employees will complete the survey. Common options include email, pen and paper, or tablets. Be sure to consider the digital literacy level of your audience when choosing a format. The choice of medium impacts your ability to automate the scoring and recording process. It's also important to tailor your survey to the needs of your focus population. Language, literacy, education, and cognitive or physical abilities can all impact whether or not someone can read and respond to a survey. Relevant accommodations or thoughtfully designed surveys that include translation, use plain language, or offer alternative formats can help increase response rates. We've included an appendix with resources about formatting alternative questions.
3. **Think through delivery:** How will you get your survey in front of your employees? While many of us might consider email the traditional option for this kind of content, it might not be a good fit for work environments that aren't in an office or folks with low digital literacy. Will you make time for employees to complete the survey on shift? If so, what steps will you take to ensure respondents feel safe answering honestly? Some organizations use an external consultant to collect feedback from employees and function as a third party. Some use incentives such as raffles or gift cards for completed surveys.
4. **Know how you'll segment your data:** Prior to launch, determine how you want to segment your data for analysis. Common choices include department, team, or length of tenure at the ESE. Segmenting your data can give you a better understanding of the issues that affect various groups or identify patterns. For smaller ESEs, segmenting your data might not be necessary.
5. **Set a timeline:** Determine how long employees will have to respond to your survey. Strike a balance between giving people sufficient time to respond while still maintaining some level of urgency so it doesn't get lost. Consider issuing reminders at various increments during the timeframe that the survey is live.
7. **Share results with leaders and managers:** It is important that you analyze and interpret your findings quickly once your survey ends. This can help demonstrate that you are committed to listening and responding to your employees' voices. After analyzing your survey results, inform leaders across the ESE of the findings. Discuss with them the role they'll play in action planning and the support they'll have along the

way. Consider publishing the most critical results of the survey on a dashboard that managers can hone in on.

8. **Action plan and implement:** A feedback loop means not only collecting input from employees but using it to inform future actions. Leadership should prioritize 2-3 high impact issues and focus their action planning around them. Work with managers to break items down into practical steps and create realistic timelines for each phase. Be sure to act on quick wins to show employees you're committed to following through.
9. **Communicate:** Close the feedback loop by sharing with employees the results, what you learned and how you're responding. Keep them up to date as you take action and implement changes and inform them on your future plans to listen to employees. If you have an [employee voice strategy](#), remind employees how they can communicate their concerns, feedback, and ideas to leadership when needed.
10. **Repeat the process:** In addition to creating opportunities for employees to share feedback regularly through your employee voice strategy, determine how often you will implement an official survey. Ideally, you'll strike a balance between helping employees to feel heard and not soliciting feedback so much that people feel overwhelmed and participation declines. A [study](#) of 100 organizations found that those who surveyed employees annually saw improvements in their engagement scores compared to those who surveyed every other year. ESEs could also opt to ask a smaller sample of questions related to employee perception to participants exiting the program in order to make comparisons to their employment outcomes. Whatever you decide, be sure to follow through so you can identify patterns and trends.

APPENDIX: Alternative Survey Formats

- If your ESE serves a multilingual workforce, **consider offering the survey in employees' primary languages**. Be sure to use a reputable translator who can ensure that what you were hoping to learn isn't lost in translation. Two of our favorite language consultants are social enterprises [Communication Essentials](#) or [Global Wordsmiths](#). Ensure that your survey formatting works across cultures too. For example, Western cultures interpret the color red, which might be found on a likert scale for “strongly disagree” as bad, but in some Asian cultures, red is seen as positive and signifies good luck.
- For individuals living with visual impairments or those who find reading written text difficult, consider offering an **audio option**. This [tool](#) not only helps you convert your questions to audio files but also records audio responses.
- [Colored overlays](#) can make reading a survey more accessible for people with visual processing disorders or individuals who struggle with eye contact or visual stress. These thin, tinted sheets are placed over white paper that emphasize text and help the brain to interpret signals from the eyes more effectively—leading to improved comprehension, less fatigue, and faster reading.
- Think through the **layout of your survey** and how participants will most easily understand it. If members of your focus population struggle with short attention spans or find it overwhelming to take in a page of data, consider each question on a small notecard or using Google Forms to show one question on the screen at a time.
- While we've chosen to use a likert scale, you know the focus population you serve best. Don't be afraid to choose **another answer format, such as multiple choice or open ended** if you think it would solicit better feedback from participants. For example, some neurodiverse individuals find the nuance of rating scales overwhelming. An ESE serving this focus population might have better success with more specific response choices.
- Add **emojis** to the Likert scale above or replace the words entirely. This [approach](#) still allows for ease of response and quick scoring but might be friendlier for respondents who struggle to read or comprehend a written format, such as English language learners or individuals with dyslexia.



[Image Source](#)