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Surveys ♦ *for* ♦ Results!

# Assessing the Level of Employee Job Engagement in Your Organization

Using Quality of Worklife/Job Engagement Surveys  
and Employee Focus Groups to Understand and Remove Barriers  
to Individual and Organizational Performance



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## Why Assess Employee Job Engagement?

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The "human side" of an enterprise offers an organizational leader a wide array of challenges.

- *What motivates our workforce to work hard and do the right thing?*
- *What leads to a truly engaged workforce?*
- *Why do we have a 30% turnover rate among our support staff?*
- *How can we get people excited about our quality improvement initiative?*

Understanding and responding to these questions depends upon good information. Without clear direction, leaders may find it difficult to know how to develop an engaged workforce.

The root causes that underlie these human resource questions can best be discovered by exploring the attitudes and perceptions that employees have towards their work and the organization and the many aspects of organizational life.



### Why Investigate Quality of Worklife and Job Engagement?

Gathering data on how employees view the organization can help chart a direction for addressing a range of human resource challenges. Rather than simply offering a conflict management training program to deal with conflict between teams, rather than adjusting salaries to reduce the turnover of engineers, rather than making assumptions about the causes of organizational function or dysfunction . . . use data from your employees to point you in the right direction.

The research is in: The level of job engagement in an organization is a powerful predictor of such organizational outcomes as job performance, job commitment, job satisfaction, low turnover, customer satisfaction, and company productivity and—importantly—profitability.

### What's Your Alternative?

Without good data, how will you make good human resource decisions? Quality of Worklife (QWL) and Job Engagement assessments are the only way to understand how employees truly perceive their work and the organization. Without assessing the level of employee job engagement, you would only be guessing at what employees need to be fully engaged in their work and how you might respond to these needs.



# Methods of QWL/Job Engagement Assessment

## Gathering Data from Employees

Assessing employee's QWL/Job Engagement perceptions depends upon a careful investigative process that uses a variety of methods. Developing a well-crafted customized employee job engagement survey—or using an existing standardized job engagement survey—can help you discover a universe of clear and concise information about your employees' beliefs, attitudes and perspectives. The employee job engagement survey (online or paper version) can be a powerful instrument, giving you *quantitative* data on a variety of specific topics.

When combined with another form of data collection—such as *focus groups*—the statistical data from a survey is further enhanced by the *qualitative* data from this other form of employee assessment.

Using one or both of these forms of data collection can help you uncover underlying issues and discover different employees' perceptions of the organization.

## Employee QWL/Job Engagement Surveys

Surveys enable an organization to collect quantitative data on employee perspectives about specific organizational dimensions. The survey allows the investigator to easily collect information on these discrete dimensions from the larger employee population.

*Russell Consulting* uses several approaches when using surveys in its organizational assessments:

- ***Job Descriptive Index (JDI)*** — The JDI measures employee perceptions of six facets of organizational life: the *work itself*, *supervision*, *opportunities for promotion*, *pay*, *co-workers*, and *the job in general*. We use the standardized JDI because your employees' JDI responses can be compared to norms from the Midwest. Using the JDI results, you can compare your employee responses to these six dimensions with other employees from midwestern companies.
- ***RCI Quality of Worklife Survey*** — The RCI QWL Survey has been developed by RCI over the last fifteen years. This survey explores thirteen different dimensions of worklife quality in its exploration of employee attitudes and perceptions. The *customized* QWL Survey that



we would build for a client is based upon a selection of specific statements from more than 150 survey item possibilities.

- *RCI Job Engagement Survey* – The RCI Job Engagement Assessment Survey has been developed by RCI over the last five years. This survey explores four different dimensions of job engagement in its exploration of employee attitudes and perceptions towards their work, their co-workers, and the entire organization.
- Our *Customized QWL/Job Engagement Survey* is created specifically for your organization. Based upon the unique outcomes and characteristics you wish to measure, we develop a QWL/Job Engagement assessment instrument that measures only those dimensions that are important to you.

The *JDI*, *QWL Survey*, *Job Engagement Survey*, and our customized surveys include several "open-ended" questions that ask employees to identify issues they are concerned about. Sample customized surveys developed by RCI are available on request.

## Employee Focus Groups

Employee focus groups are another powerful *qualitative* tool for understanding the level of job engagement of employees. They are especially effective because the group process encourages the exploration of *solutions* as well as the identification of challenges. Employees are chosen by *RCI* to participate in the focus groups using a stratified random selection process.

Following the survey portion of the QWL/Job Engagement assessment, employee focus groups can be used as a method for generating employee-centered *solutions* to the issues and challenges identified during the QWL/Job Engagement assessment process.





# Defining Your Objectives

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## Key Questions

Assessing your organization begins with a clear definition of your objectives, needs, history, and organizational climate. *Russell Consulting* meets with your leadership or QWL/Job Engagement planning team to discuss your answers to the following questions:

- What organizational outcomes or characteristics do you want to measure?
- What are the major challenges facing your organization?
- What caused you to consider an assessment of employee attitudes and perceptions?
- How do you plan to use the data from the assessment?
- Have you assessed employee attitudes in the past?
- What is the perceived level of trust between the leadership and employees?
- What is your timeline for completing the assessment?
- How do you envision sharing the results with your employees?
- Do you want to survey 100% or a sample of your employees?
- What demographic data (e.g., work area, office location, years with company, etc.) will be used to analyze the survey data?



The methods, questions, timeline, and strategy for assessing the organization are defined at this meeting.

## A Process and a Plan

Based upon your objectives and under the experienced guidance of *Russell Consulting*, you now have a process and a plan for assessing the quality of worklife and job engagement in your organization.



# The Assessment QWL/Job Engagement Process

## Key Steps of the QWL/Job Engagement Assessment Process

Not every QWL/Job Engagement assessment process will involve each of the steps listed below. Your organization's assessment may involve all or only a few of these steps—depending upon your objectives and the specific *plan* and *process* we define with you.

- RCI* helps communicate the assessment process to your employees. We will draft memos to your employees, present overviews of the process to the organization or to work groups, or use other methods to help employees understand the goals and methods of the assessment.
- Develop a customized survey in concert with a specially created QWL/Job Engagement Design Team from your organization.
- The employees (100% or a stratified random sample) are sent an e-mail invitation to complete an **online** survey or are invited to one of several survey administration times and days to complete the **paper** survey.
- If called for by your organization's QWL/Job Engagement design team, *RCI* pulls a sample of employees, supervisors, and managers to be invited to participate in focus groups.
- RCI* collects the raw data from all collection sources and prepares its analysis.
- RCI* presents its analysis of the data and its recommendations to the leadership team. *RCI* prepares an executive summary for distribution to all employees. Presentations to employee groups may also occur.





## Analyzing and Presenting the Data

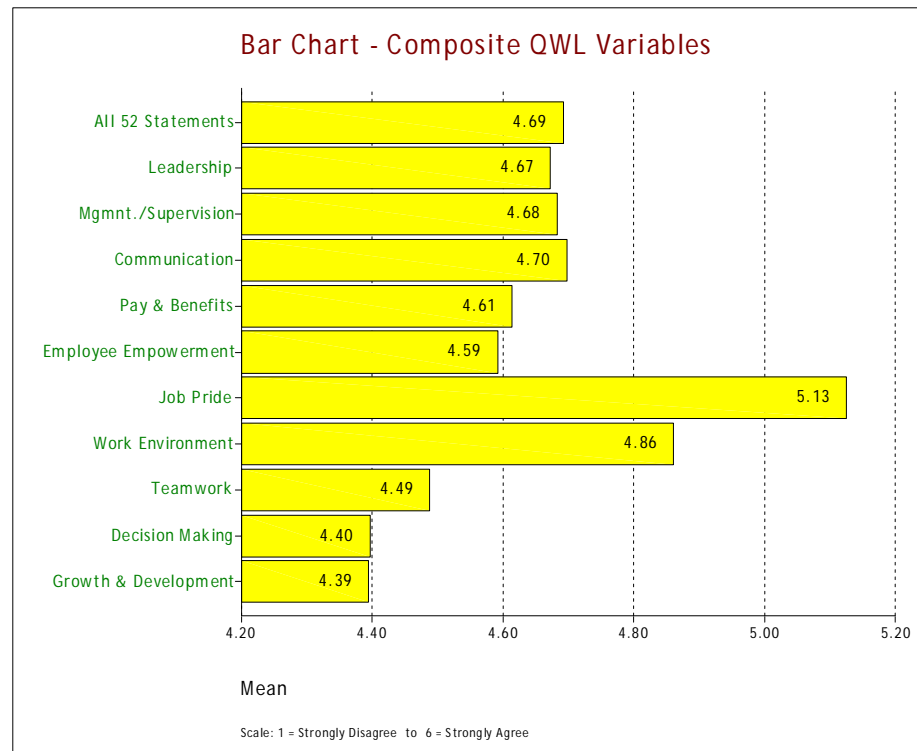
A major challenge of an organizational assessment is the seemingly overwhelming quantity of data that emerges from the process. All of this data from the employee surveys and focus groups can be intimidating. *RCI* provides the analysis that helps you focus on the right issues.

### Identifying Major Themes

*Russell Consulting* sorts through the raw data that emerges from your assessment to uncover and identify the most critical *themes, trends, and patterns* that develop within each assessment method and across all methods.

We will focus your attention on these critical areas. While we will share with you literally all responses from all data sources, our report will be structured such that you can easily see the major issues that emerge. We will also present the data graphically so that you can compare responses across work areas, months in the organization, job status, and other demographic characteristics.

This sample bar chart displays the overall employee attitudes towards each of a variety of quality of worklife dimensions.





## Our Recommendations

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The summary data we present to you can guide you towards making the right decisions and taking appropriate action.

### Describing the Ideal: The Way It Could Be

When our summary of the data is combined with a description of the organizational ideals (the way things could be), an even clearer direction for action emerges. The organizational ideal is the condition that an organization could achieve if it consciously applies what research tells us about organizations, motivation, group process, and performance.

Our description of the organizational ideal evolves from the key issues identified by your data and is based in our understanding of group dynamics, organizational behavior, stages of team growth, theories of organizational change, psychology, industrial relations, and other approaches to understanding human behavior in the workplace.

### The Recommendations

Based upon the organization's *current state* described by the data and the state the organization is capable of attaining (the organizational ideal), our report to the organization offers recommendations that address long term as well as immediate issues:



- Immediate/Quick Action:** actions that leaders, managers, and employees at every level can take quickly and easily to enhance QWL/Job Engagement in response to the data.
- Intermediate:** actions that deal with issues requiring more study and planning. These recommendations might involve employee task or project groups to explore longer-term strategies and solutions.
- Long-Range:** recommendations that seek to change a major policy or influence the organization's culture. These recommendations may require additional research within or outside of the organization.

Russell Consulting believes that making progress at addressing QWL/Job Engagement issues is everyone's responsibility. While organizational leaders have a special duty to provide direction to those on the frontline, making progress at enhancing QWL and building an engaged workforce is as much the responsibility of those on the frontline as it is the leaders' and managers'.



## Surveys • for • Results!

**Surveys • for • Results!** *Russell Consulting* offers you the most extensive survey development and quality of worklife assessment experience that you can find anywhere. Our clients include large corporations, state agencies, non-profits, and small, family-run businesses. Some of the types of organizations with which we have worked include a:

- Credit union
- Multi-national information technology company
- Corporation providing credit card services to financial institutions throughout the nation
- Insurance company
- Injection molding company
- Skill nursing facility
- National association providing support services to member organizations around the country
- State agency
- Bio-chemical manufacturing firm
- University department
- Manufacturer of luxury built-in appliances
- Locally-owned bank
- Family-owned business
- Home construction firm



*Russell Consulting* is directed by Jeffrey and Linda Russell. Jeff and Linda have authored six books, most recently *Change Basics* from ASTD Press (2006) and *Strategic Planning 101* (ASTD Press, 2006).

**Surveys • for • Results!** is a strategic business subsidiary of Russell Consulting, Inc.

Call **Surveys • for • Results!** today to discuss a QWL/Job Engagement assessment for your organization!

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