MISSION ENGAGEMENT: A Nonprofit Employee Survey

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Employee turnover and burnout affect the social sector and private sector alike.

There is a cottage industry in the private sector to measure and address employee engagement.

Nonprofits also need accessible tools for assessing their workforce, but the tools should be tailored to their purpose-driven work.
OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

- Create a practical tool that will be easy for nonprofits to use.
- Help organizations make people healthier and happier at work.
- Increase the impact of social sector organizations through workforce development.
METHODS AND APPROACHES

- Review literature on employee engagement, discover validated survey questions.
- Through expert interviews discover how surveys can be adapted for purpose-driven organizations.
- Design and deploy a pilot survey. Test survey for internal validity and examine practical takeaways.
Based on Sacks (2016) and Kahn (1990) define employee engagement has a physical, emotional and cognitive process.

**Employee Engagement**

- **Job Engagement**: Employee’s affinity for the functional aspects of their job.
- **Org Engagement**: Employee’s affinity for the organization as a member in its group.
SURVEY DESIGN

- Adapted for purpose-driven organizations with Bell (2019) and Akingbola (2019).

Employee Engagement
- Job Engagement: Employee’s affinity for the functional aspects of their job.
- Mission Engagement: Employee’s affinity with organization’s purpose.
- Org Engagement: Employee’s affinity for the organization as a member in its group.
JOB ENGAGEMENT

My job fits how I see myself.

I can handle the physical demands of my role.

I feel overwhelmed by the things going on at my organization.

I feel emotionally used up at the end of the workday.

My job is essential to the organization.

I like the identity my job gives me.
ORGANIZATION ENGAGEMENT

My interactions with my co-workers are rewarding.

I worry about how others perceive me at work.

I trust my supervisor.

My supervisor considers my goals and values.

The organization's internal rules and procedures uphold high ethical and moral standards.

Rules within the organization are applied consistently.
MISSION ENGAGEMENT

What this organization stands for is important to me.

I am proud to tell others that I am a part of this organization.

If the values of this organization were different, I would not be as attached to this organization.

My work is a part of the outcomes my organization seeks to create.

The mission of my organization, as it is written, is relevant today.

I feel a sense of "ownership" for this organization rather than being just an employee.
RESULTS

- Test indicates internal validity.
- Anticipated correlations are statistically significant: \( p < .001 \)
  - “My job is essential to the organization” is positively correlated with “My work is a part of the outcomes my organization seeks to create.”
  - “I trust my supervisor” is positively correlated to “I feel a sense of "ownership" for this organization rather than being just an employee.”
SURVEY INTERPRETATION

1. Survey questions can be interpreted by response frequencies.
2. Survey responses can be scored and averaged. In pilot study, one organization averaged 4.26.

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strong Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Moderate Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low Engagement</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Moderate Disengagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strong Disengagement</td>
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SURVEY INTERPRETATION

3. Individual responses, and the aggregate survey, can be scored by engagement category.

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Engagement Scores

- **Score 5**: Strong Engagement
- **Score 4**: Moderate Engagement
- **Score 3**: Low Engagement
- **Score 2**: Moderate Disengagement
- **Score 1**: Strong Disengagement
CONCLUSIONS & LIMITATIONS

- A short, simple, actionable employee engagement survey for nonprofits is possible.
- Survey presented here needs to be validated with a large random sample of organizations.
- “Mission engagement” is new, although similar to other concepts like value congruence.
REFERENCES


Bell, J. (2019, March 13). Phone interview.

