Satisfaction
V3

For many people, this brings to mind the Rolling Stones track that is apparently ranked as the Number 2 best song of all time. For others, it might be a fine piece of sirloin steak, served rare, and enjoyed with friends over a couple of excellent bottles of Burgundy.

Or it might be a general feeling you have about your work (which, considering how much time you devote to it in your otherwise busy life, has a big impact on how satisfied – or not – you are with your life overall). We decided to measure it at Davidson, putting in place some indicators to gauge morale and find out how satisfied our consultants are with the company and their assignments.

We felt it was important to regularly get a sense of the general state of mind among staff, but without getting heavy about it. There was no way we wanted to make it a systematic point on the management agenda. Why cram another half-hour meeting into everyone's weekly schedule if everything's going fine? Much better to go and play some squash or catch a movie – that'll make things go even better!

So initially we decided to put up a little 'Happy

or not?' form on our extranet where each consultant could rate their mood on four smileys at the same time as they sent in their monthly time tracking stats (which is a requirement in our field). That way, a manager is alerted if there aren't many of those digital smileys coming back, and has a perfect excuse for asking 'How's it going?' (see following chapter)

As time went on, we thought we'd toss a few more questions into the mix. Now staff give targeted answers to:

1. What's annoying you the most right now?
2. How would you assess your work/life balance? (It's fine, It's bearable, or It's out of kilter)
3. Do you think your manager should be more available to you?

There's a notification system so managers are alerted if anyone reports a bad mood or a work/life imbalance. They can deal with issues as soon as they come up, and agree an appropriate plan of action with the staff member.

This system also allows us to pass on a monthly compilation of results to the heads of each subsidiary, so they can:
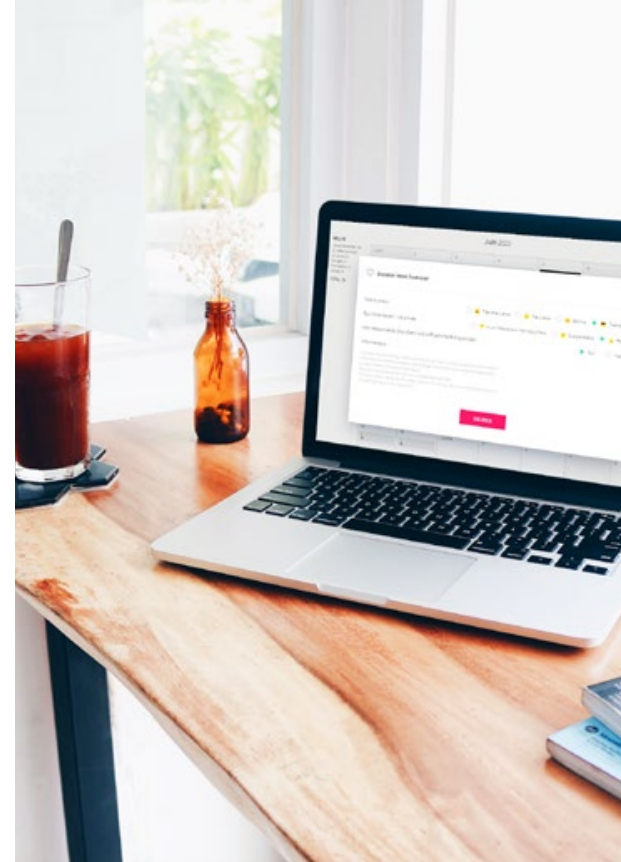
- ongoingly monitor the percentage of people who are satisfied or very satisfied, and observe when collective progress is made
- be proactive in talking to certain managers, if morale is consistently low in their teams despite their measures. The aim is not to reproach them with 'You're a bad manager because you can't resolve the issues in your teams', but to work with them to find more effective ways of tackling the problem. If an unsatisfactory situation has lasted more than three months, it's impossible not to be aware of it!

To sum up:
- if I'm grouchy OR the air con in my office doesn't work OR my daughter says 'Who's that man?' when she sees me OR my manager gives me about as much time as Donald Trump would: monthly notification triggers action by my manager
- I wave a red flag for three months running: the head of my business unit will check with my manager that measures are being taken.

This data is also fed into the teams' individual dashboards, so they can have an overall view of how things progress on an annual basis. This is the kind of scale that makes sense, because obviously Satisfaction – with a capital S – can only be measured over the longer term!

Which suits us down to the ground – we like to take the long view.

Gabriel

Feeling inspired?

Managers
One-minute Management: instant action on low morale.
And rest assured:
- the smileys aren't there to make you feel guilty, they just prompt you to not stick your head in the sand;
- we'll never ask you to monitor dozens of indicators, but these ones are surely worthwhile?

Consultants
Don't be afraid to use the smileys! None of that stiff upper lip or 'I don't want to make a fuss...'!

Did you know?

The classic smiley that we all know and love – that happy, round yellow face – was invented by Harvey Ball in 1963 for an American insurance company that was putting together an in-house communications campaign to boost staff morale.

Good ideas never go out of style...

SATISFACTION & BALANCE

Satisfaction | | Balance
Très Bon
Bon | | It's all good
Mauvais | | I'm gritting my teeth
Très Mauvais | | It's getting me down

05/2019 06/2019 07/2019 08/2019 09/2019 10/2019 11/2019 12/2019 01/2020 02/2020 03/2020 04/2020

■ Satisfaction ■ Balance

98%
Average rate of satisfaction at Davidson in 2019 (Satisfaction ratings and annual GPTW survey).

24
Number of Davidson staff members 'dissatisfied' for over three months in October 2019 (Satisfaction ratings).