

Priorities Committee Meeting_Jan30_2018

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**Strathcona County 2017 Employee Engagement Survey Results****Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with an overview of the 2017 Corporate Employee Engagement Survey results.

Council History

January 27, 2015 – Priorities Committee received an overview of the November 2014 Employee Engagement Survey results.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: n/a

Governance: n/a

Social: n/a

Culture: Engaged employees go beyond doing a good job through their discretionary effort and loyalty to actively contribute to the success of Strathcona County. Engaged employees take pride in their work and believe strongly that their work makes a difference in their community.

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: n/a

Summary

Strathcona County is committed to supporting a positive work culture that enables employees to be engaged and contribute additional discretionary effort to enhance service to our citizens. Employee surveys are one way for us to identify levels of employee satisfaction and engagement at a specific moment in time. The information obtained enables us to celebrate successes, and identify specific actions to become an even better workplace with highly engaged employees.

Following the 2009 and 2014 surveys, Strathcona County conducted a third comprehensive employee survey in April 2017. The next survey is planned for 2019.

The 2017 employee engagement survey was developed in conjunction with an external consultant, McLean & Company. The consultant administered the online survey, consolidated and themed the verbatim comments, and developed the reports to ensure employee confidentiality and anonymity. The survey measured employee experience relating to the themes of leadership, corporate values, service excellence, and work environment – as well as providing information on our overall levels of employee satisfaction and employee engagement.

In total, 1,201 employees (60% of all permanent, temporary, and hourly) responded to the survey in April 2017. This reflects a significant increase in participation (34% in 2009, and 52% in 2014). Corporate results were shared with employees in June 2017 and Directors shared their department results through initial conversations with their department staff in

July 2017. With the participation of staff, department action plans are being developed to build upon what's working well and to address areas for improvement.

Employee satisfaction is strong with over 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they like their job, working in their department and working at Strathcona County. According to the Conference Board of Canada's Employee Engagement report of July 2016, "job satisfaction is largely focused on employee's contentedness with their workplace experiences". It is typically based in factors such as compensation/pay, benefits, safety and job security. So although important, it is not the only measure that is needed.

In that same report, the Conference Board of Canada indicates that employee engagement is "more focused on what employees are willing to give back to the organization through discretionary effort and loyalty". They identify seven key factors that impact employee engagement: confidence in senior leadership; relationship with manager; interesting and challenging work; professional and personal growth; acknowledgement and recognition; relationships with co-workers and autonomy. They also indicate that overall engagement in Canadian organizations (public and private sector) has remained relatively unchanged between 53% and 55%. Organizations continue to focus significant effort on employee engagement.

Like many organizations, Strathcona County's survey is based on our own set of questions and themes, many of which relate to the Conference Board of Canada's model. Results are not directly comparable but provide a general comparable context. The survey results for Strathcona County are very positive, with an overall engagement score of 74% with 51% of employees being highly engaged. In comparison the Conference Board of Canada indicates that based on their model, typically about 27% of employees are highly engaged.

Of the four survey themes, the most positive response was in the area of Service Excellence ("the ability and willingness to provide customer satisfaction through timely, proactive, and knowledgeable actions") with an overall result of 81%. Specifically within this theme area, 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they go the extra mile for their clients, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to provide knowledgeable service to their clients and 83% agreed or strongly agreed that the work they do for Strathcona County makes a difference in the community. When asked "what is done well in your department?" an overarching theme that emerged from comments was, "Excellent service to residents and clients. Employees are dedicated and committed; they have excellent relationships with stakeholders and provide the highest level of customer service."

Other areas on the survey important for overall employee engagement include:

- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they are proud of the work they do
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that they have positive working relationships with their coworkers

Results for the leadership themes were also strong with trust in executive team members at 68% and our overall leadership theme at 63%. For organizations similar in size to Strathcona County the Conference Board of Canada reports 33% result for trust in senior leadership.

Survey questions that had low agreement on the survey were:

- 37% agreed or strongly agreed that our organization's culture has improved in the last year
- 46% agreed or strongly agreed that they have opportunities for career growth

- 46% agreed to strongly agreed that departments work well together
- And 51% agreed or strongly agreed that they receive recognition for their work

Although these areas were the lowest of the results, they still show a strong foundation from which to build on.

There is a commitment at the corporate and department levels to take action on the engagement survey results and to build on the work that has been underway for the past three years around our corporate values and leadership. In order to sustain long term commitment to action we have begun development of a People Plan. This plan will link the employee engagement survey results to a long term sustainable plan that speaks from the perspective of our staff in articulating the elements of an ideal workplace culture. Since November 2017, over 1000 employees have been directly involved with one or more interactive events (World Café; small group meetings and Graffiti Walls) to help inform the themes and key supports for the plan.

The plan will be finalized in the spring of 2018 and implementation will begin on identified priorities after that. These priorities will be based on the themes and supports identified and will also consider the feedback employees provided through the employee engagement survey.

As we look to a more favourable economic picture emerging in Alberta, with increased competition for skilled and marketable employees, Strathcona County is putting deliberate and sustainable actions into place to ensure we foster a strong and healthy workplace where employees can grow, thrive, and contribute to Canada's most livable community.

Enclosure

1 Strathcona County 2017 Employee Engagement Survey Results Presentation