

Employee value alignment and career shock study

There is an unprecedented opportunity to gain significant insight into county staff's values, perceptions, and intention to stay employed with the county. Through a survey designed to measure "career shock," an emerging field of research studying employee retention through mission, value, and goal alignment, we will gain insight into value alignment and rates of voluntary turnover intention.

A career shock is defined as a disruptive event that triggers a deliberate thought process concerning one's job, career, or organizational fit. Career shocks can be positive or negative, and expected or unexpected, personal, or work-related, e.g., the birth of a child or a sudden promotion or layoff.

While the county does collect general demographic data on its employees, this is an opportunity to gain a more robust understanding of employees' attitudes toward county employment by demographic and department affiliation. With this data, the county will be able to make more informed and intentional decisions around increasing representation within the county workforce and enacting more inclusive practices and policies.

Benefits

Improved data collection on employee perceptions

This data will advance the county's commitment to representation, internal equity, and inclusive practices through a greater understanding of career shock and its relationship with employees' intention to exit county employment.

Feedback to impact turnover

This study will equip leadership and managers with deeper insights into the significance, prevalence, and types of career shock, levels of voluntary turnover intention, and self-efficacy employees are experiencing. This will provide the county with visibility to potential equity and inclusion concerns among different employee populations, identities, and county departments. By engaging with this study, the county will be better positioned to respond to and mitigate factors that may exacerbate turnover rates during incidents of career shock. Once completed, the county will have a report detailed with explanations of the data along with tables and graphs. This will grant leadership improved visibility of the longevity of their staff, and insight into the current levels of voluntary turnover intention and factors that may be correlated with higher levels of voluntary turnover intention.

Identifying strengths and opportunities

The survey questions communicate concern and investment in employee wellbeing. These questions are designed to highlight value alignment and refine the county's understanding of employee's external obligations. Department specific insights will be generated and will help surface areas where greater alignment can be achieved. Important in this opportunity is that the researcher and the DEI manager will support departments in identifying action steps that follow up the survey and demonstrate to employees the respect and care held for them and their future with Lancaster County. The commitment throughout this process is to ensure that each employee's voice is valued.

The Process

1. The researcher, Charlena Miller, will participate in a learning session to explain the study, familiarize groups with the survey, and generate interest prior to rollout of the survey.
2. An email will be provided to the county with an informed consent letter, a survey link, and QR code to the survey; reminder emails will also be provided.
3. A printout of the informed consent and QR code will also be posted to employee breakrooms and other areas for access by employees without regular email access.
4. Survey data will be collected using SurveyMonkey and statistical analysis will be conducted using SPSS. In order to protect employee confidentiality, identifying information is not collected and no raw data will be provided to the county.
5. The completed data will be presented to cabinet with an opportunity for a Q&A session.
6. Facilitated discussions with departments will take place to generate action steps relevant to survey responses.

The Survey

The survey will be anonymous, will take between 5 and 8 minutes to complete, and can be accessed through a weblink or by scanning a QR code using a mobile device. The survey will be open for 2-3 weeks or until an agreed percentage of surveys have been completed.

Timeline & Steps

- Learning session with Q&A prior to survey rollout.
- Participation in survey by all staff encouraged by each department.
- Survey delivery is to be started no later than the end of March.
- Analysis and data preparation will be completed within 30-45 days of survey close.
- Survey data to be presented to cabinet with opportunity for Q&A.
- Facilitated discussion and action planning with departments.
- DEI manager provides ongoing support and guidance for action plan implementation.
- Opportunity for survey reassessment one year later to identify changes and trends in the data.