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Instructions for employee opinion survey

This short survey has been designed to enable you to make an initial employee-based assessment of gender equality in your organisation. Understanding your current culture in relation to gender quality is essential to

- i. identifying your current strengths as well as the major barriers to progress, and
- ii. to enable you to design strategies to focus your efforts to improve gender equality.

Implementing this survey and compiling a report that examines gender differences in views and experiences will also enable you to address the Gender Equality Indicator of Consultation as required by the Workplace Gender Equality (WGE) Act.

The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you want to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the gender equality issues in your workplace, you might consider using the more comprehensive set of questions contained in the Appendix (see below). This extended survey would take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

There are four aspects you need to consider in relation to using this survey:

2. What does the survey cover?
3. What are the options for conducting the survey?
4. How to analyse and interpret the findings?
5. Where to next?

What does the survey cover?

There are ten sections in the survey, covering the following critical topics in relation to gender equality:

- a. General views about the workplace
 - b. Views about immediate manager or supervisor
 - c. Recruitment and promotion
 - d. Training and development
 - e. Flexible work arrangements
 - f. Remuneration
 - g. Sex-based harassment
 - h. Parenting
 - i. Arrangements in relation to work and caring responsibilities
 - j. Background information
- You may want to consider modifying the 'Background Information' section to include questions that are relevant to your particular organisation, eg., include a question on 'Business Unit'; change the occupational categories to ones that are more appropriate to your organisation.
- Survey questions have been designed based on the findings from research into the strongest predictors of gender equality as well as the intent of the WGE Act.

There are three general types of questions in the survey:

1. Questions that ask respondents for their views about the organisation, e.g., “Women and men have the same chance for promotion in this organisation”
2. Questions that ask participants about their particular experiences in the organisation, eg., “I have been actively encouraged to apply for other positions in this organisation”
3. Questions that ask participants about their individual characteristics or circumstances, eg., “Are you a parent or guardian of any child of any age”

What are the options for conducting the survey?

There are three options you could consider:

1. Conduct the survey yourself using a survey instrument hosted on your own intranet, for example Survey Monkey <http://www.surveymonkey.com>.

To adopt this option you will need to consider:

- How you will communicate your intentions (including objectives, reporting and commitment to responding to the findings) and your approach to ensure you achieve a high response rate.
- How you will maintain the confidentiality of respondents.
 - Given the nature of the questions in this survey it is likely that some of your workforce will have concerns about confidentiality and therefore will be less likely to participate, or to answer all of the questions. Clearly responses will depend on the level of trust and how you communicate your intent.
 - A strategy that you might need to adopt is to make all questions optional. This could result in a lower response rate for some of the questions (eg. about immediate supervisor), reducing the value of the survey to your organisation.
- 2. Incorporate either the entire survey, or a sub-set of questions, into your regular employee opinion survey.
 - An increasingly common approach of organisations is to include a set of gender, diversity or flexibility questions in their regular employee opinion survey.
 - Options for sub-sets of questions that you might consider are:
 - Workplace gender equality culture
 - Workplace flexibility/caring responsibilities culture
 - Career development and promotion experiences
 - Sex-based harassment
- 3. Engage a specialist external survey provider.

Analysing and interpreting the findings

Options here include:

- Enter your response data into a recognised spread sheet (eg. Excel) or statistical program (eg. SPSS).
- Determine your response rate, that is, the percentage of staff your total staff that completed the survey. Ideally, you should be aiming for a response rate of 75% or above.
- Examine the characteristics of respondents to see if your sample reflects the known characteristics of your workforce particularly in terms of gender, length of service, and occupational category. This involves checking to see if the respondents are skewed in any particular way, eg. If 20% of your workforce is made up of managers, and only 5% of the respondents are managers, or if you have 100 managers and only 10 participate (a 10% response rate for managers). This would suggest that you need to exercise caution in drawing conclusions about the views of managers.
- Produce frequencies and percentages of responses to all questions for the entire set of respondents, and for males and females separately. For males and females, this should involve computing percentages within each particular question for males and females separately. A sample is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Question: “Women and men have the same chance of promotion in this organisation”

Table 2: [Table title]

	Female Frequency	Female Percentage	Male Frequency	Male Percentage
Strongly disagree	100	25%	100	16.7%
Disagree	150	37.5%	100	16.7%
Agree	100	25%	250	41.6%
Strongly agree	50	12.5%	150	25%
Total	400	100%	600	100%

- Investigate whether there are differences in responses between women and men.
 - Examining gender differences will provide important insights into where the key gender issues are in your organisation. For example, an organisation that is very effective in its approach to gender equality would be expected to have few differences between the responses of women and men -- or it might be that differences are confined to a particular area (eg., Promotion). In the example provided above, the pattern of responses indicates that more men than women either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ (66.6% of men; 37.5% of women) that women and men have the same chance of promotion in this organisation. This suggests that women and men perceive their promotion opportunities very differently.
 - Relatively low levels of positive responses in specific areas, particularly by women, eg., careers, promotion, flexibility, remuneration etc, will provide guidance for where additional data might be needed, eg., by conducting a gender pay audit, or where particular actions might be targeted, eg., to review and change policies and decision-making in relation to promotions.
- Investigate whether gender differences are concentrated in particular subgroups. It could be that an overall analysis of gender differences masks critical gender differences within specific demographic groups. To investigate this you could examine possible gender differences as a function of:
 - Age: eg. Sometimes it is found that gender differences are more pronounced for older age categories.
 - Job category
 - Length of service
 - Management level
 - Whether a person is:
 - ✓ employed full or part-time
 - ✓ an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 - ✓ from a non-English speaking background
 - ✓ a manager
 - Whether a person has
 - ✓ a disability
 - ✓ has caring responsibilities
- Investigate whether there are relationships between responses to one part of the survey to responses in another part of the survey. You could do this either by constructing pivot tables in excel or by conducting crosstabs in SPSS. You should also consider conducting these analyses separately for women and men. This could include:
 - Examining whether responses differ according to whether or not a person has indicated that they had experienced sex-based harassment. For example, do people who have experienced sex-based harassment versus those who have not experienced sex-based harassment, have a more negative view of the workplace, or of their immediate supervisor? Or, are they less likely to recommend their organisation to a female friend?
 - Examining relationships between ‘general views of the workplace’ and particular experiences, for example, in relation to careers and promotion. Analyses of this type will enable you to conduct a more detailed review of the potential impact of experiences of gender equality on the views people have about other aspects of workplace. For example, you could examine whether those who disagree

compared to those who agree that they “have had the same promotion opportunities as anyone else of their ability and experience” are less likely to “feel valued as an employee”.

Where to next?

1. After reviewing and summarising the findings using an agreed process (eg. through a Senior Executive review process), communicate the findings and planned actions to address any identified issues to all staff. It is also a good idea to give staff an opportunity to provide additional comments and feedback on the results.
2. What if you identify issues? There are several options you could consider:
 - a. Conduct a more in-depth survey, to obtain greater clarity on the issues identified. Consider including the full set of questions listed in the Appendix. Or, if your issues appear to be in one area, for example, training and development consider conducting a follow-up survey using the extended list of questions in this section.
 - b. Conduct focus groups to explore staff views about: (a) the reasons behind the findings and (b) the actions needed to address the identified issues.
 - c. Review and change your practices in particular areas:
 - i. Supervisor/Manager commitment and skills
 - ii. Recruitment and selection
 - iii. Performance Management
 - iv. Career development and talent identification
 - v. Training and development opportunities
 - vi. Flexible work arrangements
 - vii. Remuneration
 - viii. Sex-based harassment
 - ix. Parenting
 - x. Workers with caring responsibilities

Appendix: Comprehensive List of Survey Questions

Note: these are inclusive of the questions contained in the brief survey.

- The questions cover the same topic areas as those included in the brief survey:
- General views about the workplace
 - Views about immediate manager or supervisor
 - Recruitment and promotion
 - Training and development
 - Flexible work arrangements
 - Remuneration
 - Sex-based harassment
 - Parenting
 - Arrangements in relation to work and caring responsibilities

Acknowledgments

Questions E1 and E2 in the flexibility section are comparable to questions asked by Professor Barbara Pocock in [national studies of work and life issues](#).

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