Executive Summary of Employee Survey

Key Trends and Action Steps in response to Town Employee Survey about responding to COVID-19

282 Town employees took the survey between July 24 and August 11, 2020.

We collected and analyzed over 2,400 individual comments (qualitative) to identify the trends and action steps.

Results are captured in four ways:

1. Executive Summary with themes and action steps
2. Infographic of data highlights.
3. Charts of qualitative data.
4. Report with coded survey responses and illustrative quotes for qualitative data.

The reports are posted at TheHive.townofchapelhill.org

Trends and Actions

1. Remote Work and Being in Town facilities

Many Town employees are performing some or all their work remotely while others have been performing some or all their work in a Town facility. Of the responses, about 60 are working entirely remotely, about 90 are working entirely in a facility, and about 120 are working a combination of remotely and in a facility.

For those who are doing remote work, some barriers are related to the infrastructure of working remotely (access to supplies needed, e-signatures). Other barriers are issues that existed before the pandemic (communication, workflow) that are exacerbated by remote work.

Actions

Work with departments to identify processes that require "wet" signatures, scans, or printing and streamline as possible.

Identify specific staff needs for equipment (monitors, etc.) and work with Technology Solutions to plan for responding to needs

Regular staff meetings, video calls help with staying connected and feeling like people are accessible."

For those who are working in Town facilities, there appears to be general recognition that masks and sanitizers are available but some concern about the thoroughness of outside cleaning services.

There is a general request that the Town remain cautious about reconfiguring physical spaces and paying close attention to how employees are scheduled to be in facilities. There seems to be a general consensus that the Town should be cautious about bringing all staff into buildings at once and bringing members of the public into our facilities. Employees want clear communications and to understand what the plan is for increasing staff presence.

Actions

Continue to provide cleaning supplies and follow up with cleaning services to make sure buildings and vehicles are being cleaned as expected.

Provide clear communications about expectations for increasing the numbers of staff in the facilities and for bringing members of the public into facilities.

When more staff and public do return to Town facilities, employees would like to see opportunities to continue some remote work, mask wearing, social distancing, and have thorough cleaning.

Stagger schedules, reconfigure spaces, limit capacity, designate areas for public, continue some remote work, post occupancy on meeting rooms.

"All managers, supervisors and crew leads must support and reinforce the importance of social distancing, the use of face masks, and proactive safety measures among all staff."

"There is no amount of personal material, training, or equipment that can make me feel safe at work when I am still being exposed to the public daily."

2. Equity

Employees had questions about remote work, ETO (bonus time) decisions, and alternating-week schedules. Several employees noted an interest in increased/hazard pay based on their roles.

Actions

Managers communicate clearly about how work schedules are determined and what work outcomes are expected.

Focus on an equitable distribution of responsibilities and workload, keeping employee safety as a top priority.

Have clearly documented expectations for remote work

Maintain flexibility for all employees – to the extent possible – around childcare, school, and dependent care needs.

Share clear information about FMLA for childcare.

"Just continue to acknowledge the challenging times we are in and recognize ALL Town employees' roles in keeping the Town running, not just the frontline people."

3. Supervisors and Communications

Concern that communication doesn't always get through the entire organization, or that the type of information is incomplete. Many responses acknowledge the work managers and supervisors do to communicate with them and to stay in touch when they work remotely.

"I just don't know what is happening or will happen. Not knowing is difficult."

Employees also asked for more low-level communications about evolving expectations around COVID and to support one another.

Actions:

Continue the Manager's Message, which is well received.

Create a dashboard with up-to-date information.

Make *The Hive* more widely available and share information about how to access it.

Share information about all mental health benefits available to employees (insurance and elsewhere)

4. Department Follow Up

The survey responses included specific suggestions ranging from safety protocols, drug-testing procedures, physical changes in buildings and procedures that could support remote and on-site workers.

Actions:

Department directors and managers review the coded responses and look for action items that support their operations.

Departments should focus on communicating at all levels of their organization frequently and clearly.

Share survey responses with employees and use them to support continued conversation around safety, work-life balance, equity, and operations.

"Timely, clear, specific information. There's a lot of talking about things. Updates rarely share anything new."

"More transparency about decision making. Even if there aren't answers, I want to know you're looking for them. I want to know what questions are being asked and who is deciding the answers and when they think they might have them."

"The Town's ability to adapt as new challenges have risen has been wonderful to see. I would like to see that continue – we've stepped away from "it's always been done this way" to meet the needs of others, and it's been fantastic."