

# Assessing The Workplace For a Climate Change

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PRESENTED BY  
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ORLANDO, FLORIDA

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## Overview

### Workplace Climate Assessments:

- What are they?
- Why do we need them?
- Acquiring the tools to conduct assessments
- How to conduct effective climate assessments
- Other considerations

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## Workplace Climate Assessments: What Are They?

- Climate Assessment - process to evaluate the general perceptions and satisfaction levels of employees in regard to their organization and workplace environments
- Multiple tools can be used
  - Surveys
  - Individual interviews or focus groups
  - Data, trends

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### Employee Surveys

- Administration of surveys – sell purpose to employees!
- Anonymous
- Voluntary
- Demographics
- Number and types of questions – standard & customized
- Providing leadership with option to select questions
- On-line or hard copy surveys (pros and cons)
- Sensitive handling of completed surveys
- Responses - the value of computer-generated analysis

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### Individual Employee Interviews

- Value of conducting interviews
- Participating employees – random sampling or everyone?
- Demographics of employees – diversity
- Standardized and spontaneous questions
- Confidentiality of responses, and exceptions
- Assistance with note-taking
- Reading body language

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### Focus Groups

- Value of conducting focus groups
- Facilitators and participants
- Confidentiality of responses, and exceptions
- Environment and room layout
- Open-ended questions
- Documenting responses
- Handout -- "How to Conduct Focus Groups"

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**Data & Trends**

- Include current data and trends in climate analysis
- Complaints and issues generated by employees
- Retention /turnover of employees
- Productivity
- Absenteeism
- Volunteerism, employee initiative

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**Why Do We Need Workplace  
Climate Assessments?**

- Preventative health & maintenance of organization's climate – shows employees that leadership cares if they respond to the findings
- Provides optional response to various types of issues or complaints before they fester & grow

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**Preventative health & maintenance of organization**

- Multiple benefits to managing a workforce with a positive human relations environment
  - ✦ Retain best human capital
  - ✦ Higher productivity, creativity, effectiveness, efficiency
  - ✦ Increased morale
  - ✦ Lower absenteeism
  - ✦ Increased employee initiative
  - ✦ Less time committed to complaint process

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Climate assessments in response to employee concerns or issues –

- Informal issues, or early stages of negative human relations environment
- Non-discrimination types of issues are present
- Complaints that are undetermined, anonymous
- May not be as effective if used with a formal EEO complaint in process – skewed feedback. Responses should not be used in the complaint process (anonymous opinions versus sworn testimony).

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Acquiring the Tools to Conduct  
Workplace Climate Assessments

- Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS)
- Federal Organizational Climate Survey (FEOCS)
- Commercial products & services
- Create own surveys, interview questions

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How to Conduct Effective  
Climate Assessments

- Marketing/selling the program
- Credibility and professionalism
- Productive experience for leadership and employees – from administering surveys to data analysis

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### Marketing and Selling the Program

- Addressing common leadership concerns
  - Providing explanation of process and written examples:
    - ✦ Leadership introductory letter to employees
    - ✦ Survey questions; possible questions for leadership to select
    - ✦ Sample analysis report
    - ✦ Sample slideshow for leadership to share with employees on the top favorable and unfavorable survey results – and how the negative may be remedied

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### Marketing and Selling the Program (continued)

- Provide standard briefing to all employees
  - Purpose and process
  - How leadership will handle results (known commitment)
- Addressing common employee concerns
  - Anonymity; fear of identification (handwriting, demographics)
  - Belief that nothing will be done because surveys never changed anything in the past
  - Employee is too new to the organization to give feedback

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### Credibility and Professionalism

#### Assessment administrators should –

- be a neutral party to the unit being assessed
- keep results confidential /safeguard information
- take time to consider all information and provide an in-depth report
- be prepared to offer recommendations for improving the workplace climate

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**Providing a Productive Experience for  
Leadership and Employees**

- Once program is "sold" to leadership, administrator must follow through on assessment
- Provide analysis report in a timely manner
- Assist leadership with providing assessment results to employees – help them be an "honest broker" to employees if future assessments are to be productive

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**Other Considerations**

- Frequency of conducting climate assessments
- Availability of resources – alternate methods in current economic environment

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**Review**

- Climate assessments may include an analysis of employee opinions as well as factual data
- Results of assessment analysis can empower leadership to know what is working and what needs improvement in the workplace
- Effective assessments are reviewed with employees and acted upon

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