

## Successful retailers listen to their employees and then take action.

# 4

Consultation with employees is critical to:

- enable new and innovative ideas to be introduced
- find out what the good and bad things are about working in the business
- discover what factors impact on the organisation's ability to attract and retain good staff
- communicate to staff what can and can't be done, and why, and
- measure the impact of existing practices and strategies.

Consultation and listening can be done formally and informally – including through staff surveys, meetings, feedback sessions, daily 'walk throughs', and newsletters.

*To properly tailor their people strategies to the needs of their particular business, leading retailers consult with, and listen to, their staff.*

### Employee survey

You can download a sample employee survey and analysis tool from the EOWA website. Visit them at: [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)

## Benchmarking data

In our survey 67 per cent of Australian retailers reported that they use staff morale and satisfaction to measure the impact of their initiatives to retain staff.

According to AWIRS 95 (Morehead), retail employees were the least likely of any industry, except for 'electricity, gas, and water supply', to believe that they were given a fair chance to have a say at work (43%).

## Australian stories

**Eurest** has introduced surveys for employees that cover all staffing issues. The survey is completed anonymously, placed in a sealed envelope and analysed overseas. Honesty is impressed upon staff. Eurest says the objective of its staff survey is to decrease turnover.

**McDonald's** has 'communication days' every 4-6 weeks, where managers sit with staff and area managers to discuss any problems that may have arisen.

**Spotlight** has a 'talk back to the boss' scheme where staff are encouraged to openly discuss issues and concerns with their managers and supervisors.

**The Body Shop** has a suggestion box in the staff canteen. It also carries out a comprehensive staff survey each year.

**Bakers Delight** emails staff, and holds meetings which are telecast to different areas. Financial information and growth plans are disseminated to all staff, as well as information about who is joining/leaving the company.

## Taking action

Leading companies express accountability for, and commitment to, good people management practices through company policy statements and, perhaps most effectively, through inclusion in performance agreements.

A commitment to invest in people must stem from the CEO and extend to managers and supervisors. This means using effective people management practices to achieve business goals.

## International comparisons

A recent USA survey of 1400 retail workers found that the biggest deterrent to successful recruitment of graduates is negative perceptions gained from their part-time retail job experiences.

This research identified that managers at the shop level were not sufficiently accountable for providing employees with a good working environment.

## Australian stories

**Lone Star Steakhouse and Saloon** has a designated Human Resource Manager in every restaurant.

“ They have accountability – if someone needs hiring, they do it. If someone needs firing, they do it. ”

*Senior Executive, Lone Star Steakhouse and Saloon*

“ It is our responsibility to get good staff and it is what we should be measured on. ”

*Manager, Calstores*

“ It would never get to the state where a manager is sacked for not being good enough. Our communication and accountability requirements mean that area management and head office would know about any potential problems straight away. ”

*Manager, McDonald's*

## Benchmarking data

Our survey found:

- 63 per cent of retailers hold their store managers accountable for implementing recruitment and retention strategies.
- 76 per cent of retail stores conduct regular performance appraisals of managers.
- 57 per cent of performance agreements include the requirement to demonstrate that they are providing equal employment opportunity.

