



Cornell's Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies

***Targeted Benchmarking on
Employee Experience/Engagement***



CAHRS Partners have the opportunity to benchmark with other partner companies on HR topics of interest. The benchmarking is typically conducted with 5-7 other CAHRS Partners selected by the company that initiated the request. The CAHRS office identifies the appropriate connections at selected companies and the benchmarking company then schedules 1:1 phone calls to explore their questions.

Examples of recent requests include: Sponsorship Initiatives, Organization Designs and Structures, Diversity Metrics, Talent Management Practices, Competency Models and a variety of HR Policy Questions (i.e. Relocation, Cost of Living, Airline Mile Usage, etc.).

CAHRS partners find this more qualitative approach to benchmarking very valuable for revealing novel insights and practices, as well as for building their network. At the conclusion of the process, the benchmarking company shares an anonymized summary of their findings with the participating companies and CAHRS, who then makes them available so all partners can benefit from the learning.



CAHRS BENCHMARKING | EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT/EXPERIENCE

1:1 COMPANY INTERVIEWS COMPANY A

Company Profile: Aerospace/Defense Industry

Employee Engagement/ Experience

What are your top methods for improving employee engagement? What communication strategies work well for your employees?

- This year shifted in approach due to new CEO, CHRO & COVID. We took a shift of level of transparency of communication and expectations and shifted to take a stand to topics that matter to employees. This also helped changed what is acceptable as a "workplace" conversation and trying to build more of a trusting conversation between managers and teams to help start talking about real workplace issues (D&I issues, etc.). Shifted to a more continuous approach by asking how people are doing (currently in the early phases of this change and leadership style) Issues that don't seem like workplace issues.
 - We also made bigger approaches to ask how employees are doing and have more regular touchpoints with them. We do some targeted listening to show level of care. We are now able to track this experience and there is a new understanding that remote work is the new way we do business and what flexible work means. We really now have the opportunity to have more grounded conversations on what employees need vs. what company needs.
 - Targeted listening- surveys to remote workers:
 - Survey on your wellbeing as a remote worker is an example
 - Listening strategy – targeted versus continuously (predominately survey based)
 - Pulse survey on remote work
 - Branding to help drive engagement from comms, value proposition for employees, how employees view the purpose, brand, and the presence in the company

Is employee engagement actively managed and measured? If yes, how so?

- Were still working on what action looks like on backend of survey and how to deliver results. Need to educate audience and focus on action items.

What factors do you find drives success/are motivators with employees? How is this identified?

- Survey fatigue is something everyone talks about but is not real. Either you answer or don't answer, its more about if employee is energized by topic or not. In engagement survey we have about an 80% response rate, pulse survey is 50% and on demand surveys is 30%. Big thing that motivates employees is if you take action from previous survey they will keep responding and have higher engagement. Also communication upfront- get leaders buy in, talk upfront etc. We keep surveys short employees are willing to respond.

CAHRS BENCHMARKING | EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT/EXPERIENCE

1:1 COMPANY INTERVIEWS COMPANY A (*Continued*)

Feedback & Reporting

What methods do you find are most effective in gaining employee feedback (i.e surveys, focus groups)? What are effective ways to increase response rates (i.e. comms, ERG's, etc.)?

- From a communication standpoint we the new CEO has a different style than old CEO. New CEO has a candid style so there is a new way of transparency with organization. For example, from a talent perspective- letting people into their talent development (letting employees know where they stand w/ performance etc. and succession).
 - We use on demand tool from Perceptyx (easy way to integrate all surveys) to allow employees to ask their own questions and create their own surveys (don't have to go through organization). After this coming year, hopefully can tap into those surveys as well and see trends. However, there is an approval process before survey is launched and to goes to survey team to evaluate and provide guidance.
 - We have standard corporate surveys (on Safety, D&I, culture etc.). Sometimes locations do that separately, but would normally be at corporate level. Currently we don't have resources to do focus groups, but ER/LR does a lot of that especially where there is a union organization. Survey team will help creates those questions for the ER/LR focus groups. In future we would want to do more mixed methods, but don't have resources now or ability to integrate qualitative info in quantitative.
 - We make sure training is aligned at corporate scale, heavy focus on safety, quality and trust. Lots of efforts with Diversity and inclusion- this is how we are driving culture change. Our organization likes stability, command and control so trying to work around that. From metrics perspective- going through COVID, CEO, implementation of Workday, and CHRO change, there is a lot of change that creates overwhelming attitudes so the "why" gets lost in the chaos and you get resistance. Most employees are great and will embrace change if they understand the why.

Do employees feel empowered to speak up when they spot an urgent problem? If so, how do they effectively share this feedback?

- If there is an urgent problem, there is a few different mechanism. There is cultural expectation and corporate initiative going on right now. There is a "speak up" portal and representatives that are easy to contact and they track metrics and report out to board of directors through dashboards etc. Lots of intentional cultural change initiatives. We ask questions around peoples comfort level and speaking up in our surveys as well.
 - Speak up portal- is more on the ethics side vs. anything else. Other things like sourcing for ideas is mostly in surveys. There are innovation awards we give out (internal and external).

Do you have a repository for documenting improvement efforts and capturing feedback? Are there systems or programs that work best to house and report on various types of feedback (surveys, focus groups)?

- Currently use Perceptyx and can pull all surveys into one.

Do employees feel empowered to speak up when they spot an urgent problem? If so, how do they effectively share this feedback?

- It sits in the ethics organization but there is a corporate wide initiative about speaking up (cultural expectation. From a reporting perspective- speak up portal (to share ethics).

CAHRS BENCHMARKING | EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT/EXPERIENCE

1:1 COMPANY INTERVIEWS COMPANY B

Company Profile: Beverage Industry

Employee Engagement/ Experience

What are your top methods for improving employee engagement? What communication strategies work well for your employees?

- We have a org health survey to build action plans- We do the survey once a year, early Sept to Oct. The link gets sent out to employees to fill out. The survey has generalized questions on safety, engagement, leadership behaviors etc. Once taken, that data feeds into a portal where you can see your ranking vs. broader organization. In the portal you can check and pull what you want as it relates to the survey. The expectation is to use to action plan, but there is no real rigor around it.
 - In addition, HR has 1:1s with building managers and help them understand data. They align a lot of their next year priorities to feedback. To gather feedback, they do a lot of roundtables on a cadence to share results of survey and give action items.
 - They have "100 days of summer (memorial to labor day)" to focus on employee engagement. In October there is employee appreciation week. The is a week long event (food games, gift cards, anniversaries). Week is built out in local buildings and leaders drive it- there is something everyday and employees look forward to it.

Is employee engagement actively managed and measured? If yes, how so?

- The measurement is usually dependent on relationships. All union locations are different. Unionized locations seem to be more reactive.

Feedback & Reporting

What methods do you find are most effective in gaining employee feedback (i.e surveys, focus groups)? What are effective ways to increase response rates (i.e. comms, ERG's, etc.)?

- Hardest is the administration of the survey (older individuals not tech savvy). Used to do paper surveys, but don't have computers everywhere and used to have managers put everyone in a conference room to take it (QR codes and links)- became burdensome. We do raffles too and people need to understand what is done with the feedback to drive people to take surveys, we can do better job and showing the data.

Do employees feel empowered to speak up when they spot an urgent problem? If so, how do they effectively share this feedback?

- We have an entire union population so they are open to speak up if there are issues and gaps (either hearing from employees or shop stewards). What has worked well is if we have a bulletin up in office and data is always updated it (i.e. "we fixed vending machines" & showing you did something with the feedback). We constantly move the place of the board so people don't just walk by it (keep it refreshed).

How are you currently tracking employee insights & feedback? Is there a centralized dashboard that you use to assess insights and data?

- We don't do much tracking or measuring improvement beyond the org health survey. We also have something called "Speak Up"- it's an anonymous hotline and get practical calls (i.e. pay is messed up). Usually seen as HR service center number. All office doors have picture, phone number etc. so we make it very approachable to get feedback.