

# **Employee Survey Question Guidebook**

---

## ***Survey Item Selection Guide***

***Excerpt and Table of Contents***

***Second Edition***

***Revised and Updated***

**Published by Performance Programs, Inc.**

***Organizational Survey and Human Resource  
Measurement Providers Since 1987***

**(800) 565-4223**

**www.PerformancePrograms.com**

**E-mail: surveys@PerformancePrograms.com**

Publisher: Performance Programs, Inc.

Authors: Paul M. Connolly, Ph.D., and Kathleen Groll Connolly

Text Design & Composition: Maggie Dana

Cover Design: Marta Cone, 1-2-3 Design

Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Performance Programs, Inc.

ISBN 978-0-9724947-6-2

Limited license is granted to the original purchaser to use these items within his/her employer's or own organization for purposes of conducting an employee survey. All other uses of the questionnaire items, including consulting, academic, and educational, are by special arrangement with the Publisher.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the authors.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. Neither the Publisher nor authors assume responsibility for the reader's use of the information contained herein or the outcome of surveys. If customized professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

All inquiries may be addressed to Performance Programs, Inc., P.O. Box 630, Old Saybrook, CT 06475, (800) 565-4223 or (860) 388-9422. E-Mail: [surveys@performanceprograms.com](mailto:surveys@performanceprograms.com).

All Rights Reserved.

## **WHAT'S NEW IN THE SECOND EDITION?**

Like the first edition, this Guidebook offers a method of finding questionnaire items in 18 dimensions and 82 themes. The themes and dimensions are based on areas of organizational function widely recognized as building blocks of effectiveness. This book will greatly reduce the time it takes you to develop a survey.

The second edition has the original 665 questionnaire items, plus 35 new items based on our experience since the first publication in 2003. Most of the new questions inquire about accountability, honesty, and productive communications, reflecting growing interest in strong execution skills and a bias for effective action.

In addition, the Index provides an updated list of organizational symptoms (*Index to "Flash Point" Keywords*) to guide you to questionnaire topics more efficiently.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Paul M. Connolly, Ph.D., has provided organizational measurement services since 1981, including employee surveys, 360 feedback, personality assessment, expatriate assessment, customer surveys, and work-life balance assessments.

Connolly is the founder of Performance Programs, an organizational measurement firm in Old Saybrook, CT. He has worked with organizations of all types, sizes, and locations, using multiple survey delivery and reporting methods. He has a B.A. from the College of the Holy Cross and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Fordham University. This is his fifth book in the human resources field.

Kathleen Groll Connolly has authored many articles and coauthored four books on human resources topics. She has held various marketing, management and research positions in both small and large businesses. She has a B.A. in writing from Pennsylvania State University and an MBA from New York University.

## **ALSO BY THE AUTHORS**

*Employee Surveys: Practical and Proven Methods, Samples, Examples*, Performance Programs, Inc., Second Edition, 2006; ISBN 978-0-9724947-5-5

*Employee Opinion Questionnaires: 20 Ready-to-Use Surveys that Work*, Pfeiffer/Wiley, 2005; ISBN 0-7879-7349-1

Blog: [www.surveyfeedback.blogspot.com](http://www.surveyfeedback.blogspot.com)

Web site: [www.performanceprograms.com](http://www.performanceprograms.com)

# *Contents*

<b>Introduction:</b>	<b>A Guidebook to Questionnaire Items for Employee Satisfaction and Opinion Surveys</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Dimension 1:</b>	<b>Business Culture &amp; Climate</b>	<b>1-1</b>
	Ethical Conduct	1-1
	Performance Standards	1-2
	Workplace Diversity	1-2
	Empowerment	1-2
	Cooperation and Teamwork	1-3
	Fairness	1-4
	Strategic Planning/Thinking	1-4
	Respect, Dignity, and Trust	1-5
	Organizational Values	1-5
	Innovation and Creativity	1-6
	Expression of Views	1-6
	Involvement/Participation	1-7
	Client/Customer Relations	1-7
<b>Dimension 2:</b>	<b>Business Structure</b>	<b>2-1</b>
	Communications and Information Exchange	2-1
	Change Management	2-2
	Market Focus	2-3
	Organizational Structure	2-3
	Organizational Policy and Procedure	2-4
	Organizational Goals and Objectives	2-4
	Organizational Effectiveness	2-5
<b>Dimension 3:</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>3-1</b>
	Advancement Potential and Career Information	3-1
	Growth and Development Opportunities Leading to Promotion	3-2
	Fairness of Career Information and Growth and Development Opportunities	3-3
	Career Satisfaction	3-3

<b>Dimension 4:</b>	<b>Co-workers and Teams</b>	<b>4-1</b>
	Co-worker and Team Competence	4-1
	Co-worker Cooperation and Friendliness	4-2
	Cooperation with External Co-workers and Other Departments	4-3
	Co-worker Pride, Mutual Respect, and Quality Orientation	4-4
<b>Dimension 5:</b>	<b>Commitment</b>	<b>5-1</b>
	Organizational Pride	5-1
	Organizational Commitment	5-1
	Allegiance	5-2
	Dedication	5-2
<b>Dimension 6:</b>	<b>Compensation</b>	<b>6-1</b>
	Salary/Wage	6-1
	Benefits	6-3
<b>Dimension 7:</b>	<b>Human Resource Functions</b>	<b>7-1</b>
	Recruitment, Interviewing, Selection, and Hiring	7-1
	New Employee Orientation	7-2
	Turnover/Retention	7-2
<b>Dimension 8:</b>	<b>Job Content</b>	<b>8-1</b>
	Job Involvement	8-1
	Growth and Skill Development	8-1
	Workload	8-2
	Job Information	8-2
	Job Satisfaction	8-2
	Job Autonomy	8-2
	Role Clarity	8-3
	Task Significance and Variety	8-3
	Impact of Organizational Change	8-4
<b>Dimension 9:</b>	<b>Job Security</b>	<b>9-1</b>
	Sense of Security	9-1
	Beliefs About Company's Commitment to Employee	9-1
<b>Dimension 10:</b>	<b>My Manager/Supervisor</b>	<b>10-1</b>
	Clarity of Goals	10-1
	Manager Support	10-2

	Manager Fairness	10-3
	Manager Motivation and Empowerment	10-3
	Career Support from Manager	10-4
	Recognition by Manager	10-4
	Manager Resources	10-5
	Manager Communication and Feedback	10-5
	Manager Decisiveness	10-5
	Manager Functional Competence	10-6
	Manager Team Skills	10-6
	Manager Commitment	10-7
	Manager's Operational Planning	10-7
	Manager Effectiveness	10-7
<b>Dimension 11:</b>	<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>11-1</b>
	(No sub-themes)	
<b>Dimension 12:</b>	<b>Performance Management</b>	<b>12-1</b>
	Performance Feedback and Coaching by Manager	12-1
	General Performance Feedback	12-2
	Performance Evaluation and Appraisal	12-3
	Goal Setting	12-4
<b>Dimension 13:</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>13-1</b>
	(No sub-themes)	
<b>Dimension 14:</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>14-1</b>
	Adequacy and Availability of Resources	14-1
	Resource Allocation	14-2
<b>Dimension 15:</b>	<b>Senior/Top Level Management</b>	<b>15-1</b>
	Management Vision	15-1
	Management Interest and Involvement	15-2
	Management Support and Encouragement	15-2
	Management Communication	15-3
	Management Fairness	15-3
	Confidence in Management	15-4
<b>Dimension 16:</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>16-1</b>
	Adequacy and Availability	16-1
	Content of Training	16-2
	Satisfaction with Delivery of Training	16-2

<b>Dimension 17: Work/Life Balance</b>	<b>17-1</b>
(No sub-themes)	
<b>Dimension 18: Working Environment and Safety</b>	<b>18-1</b>
Facilities and Physical/Environmental Working	
Conditions	18-1
Quality of Equipment and Tools	18-2
Workplace Safety	18-2
<b>Appendix: Summary of Norm Items by Dimensions and Theme</b>	<b>A-1</b>
<b>Index to Flash Point Keywords and Related Themes</b>	<b>Index-1</b>

# *Introduction*

## **A GUIDEBOOK TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS FOR EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND OPINION SURVEYS**

### **Q. Why create my next questionnaire with this Guidebook?**

*The Guidebook will save you time.* This book provides the many dimensions, themes, and questionnaire items you will need to construct your employee survey. These questionnaire items evolved from twenty years of practice with organizational assessments and have been used with all types and sizes of organizations. You benefit from that experience by avoiding the laborious process of writing and rewriting questionnaire items. Organizations of all types, sizes, and locations have used them successfully. We have found them to be most effective when used according to the principles outlined in the companion book, *“Employee Surveys: Practical and Proven Methods, Samples, Examples.”*

*The Guidebook will increase your confidence in the questionnaire.* Successful employee survey questionnaires rest on three requirements. First, they must target the right topics. Second, there must be a sufficient number of the right questions to assess the target issues. Third, the questions must be asked in the right way—that is, the average employee has to understand the intent of the question and feel safe answering honestly. This Guidebook is designed to help you accomplish all three requirements. Together with the companion book, *“Employee Surveys,”* it will help you ask a sufficient quantity of the right questions in the right way.

### **Q. How do I choose topics?**

The major goal of any employee survey is to make the need for it go away. This happens when you remove the barriers to communication and high-level performance. As reviewed in Chapter 1 of *“Employee Surveys,”* the characteristics of a high-performance organization include:

1. People know what has to be done (outcome of clear goals).
2. They know why it must be done (outcome of clear vision).

3. They can develop an effective plan to carry it out, an outcome of their training and expertise.
4. They have access to the resources to execute the plan.
5. They are alert to cues and feedback that show them the effectiveness of their efforts—and are able to make adjustments.
6. They maintain energy and enthusiasm despite difficulties.
7. They feel recognized for their contributions.<sup>(1)</sup>

These characteristics and this sequence have proven links with above-average business results. Managers with high skill mastery in these areas have better sub-unit performance and better employee morale than managers with low mastery of these skills.<sup>(2)</sup>

If you scan the characteristics listed above, you may find that your organization has some room to improve. Where you sense this, you have probably identified an issue for your survey.

At the end of the Guidebook, you may find the “Index to Flash Point Keywords” helpful. This identifies the themes that contain appropriate items.

The companion book, *Employee Surveys*,<sup>3</sup> provides much guidance on how to select the topics. Common practices include focus groups, review groups, and creation of a survey steering team.

## **Q. How do I get started?**

First you need to understand definitions of dimensions, themes, scales, and items, four terms used repeatedly here. The Guidebook contains the following:

- Eighteen dimensions: Dimensions are broad topic categories, such as My Manager, Job Security, and Training.
- Over 80 themes: Themes are the subtopics that further refine the dimensions. Each of them is listed under its parent dimension.
- 700 items, including 85 items for which norms are available. “Items” are the questionnaire statements to which respondents answer. The following is an example:

*“My job is challenging and interesting.”*

---

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Clark, Ph.D. *Meaningful Measures*, Clark Wilson Group, Boulder, CO

<sup>2</sup> Kreitner, R. & Angelo, K. *Organizational Behavior*, McGraw Hill, NY: 2001

- *Scales* are the rating selections that the survey offers respondents. For instance: “1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree”. We recommend presenting scales as follows:

Strongly Disagree  <b>1</b>	Disagree  <b>2</b>	Neutral  <b>3</b>	Agree  <b>4</b>	Strongly Agree  <b>5</b>
--------------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------------

### **SAMPLE DIMENSION: MY MANAGER/SUPERVISOR**

#### ***Themes:***

*Clarity of Goals*  
*Manager Support*  
*Manager Fairness*  
*Manager Motivation and Empowerment*  
*Career Support from Manager*  
*Recognition by Manager*  
*Manager Resources*  
*Manager Communication and Feedback*  
*Manager Decisiveness*  
*Manager Functional Competence*  
*Manager Team Skills*  
*Manager Commitment*  
*Manager’s Workload Coordination*  
*Manager Effectiveness*

#### **Q. Why do some dimensions not include a theme?**

The dimension may be sufficiently self-descriptive. For instance, instance, Work/Life Balance is a major topic in today’s workplace. For survey purposes, we treat it as a single topic with no subcategories.

#### **Q. How were the dimensions assigned?**

They are based on well-researched and widely accepted factors that influence all organizational life. These factors emerge from study after study. They have not changed substantially since they were first described in the early 1900s. The themes are simply a logical way to cluster similar items within a dimension.

**Q. Why do norm items appear at random positions in the question lists?**

This is only because of where they appear in our internal database. If you request a norm by number, we will be able to find the data readily.

**Q. Many of the questions are very similar. How do I choose the best one?**

Choose questions that are most likely to be understood by your workgroup. Choose the ones that are the most directly stated. Having said this, you may still have several options.

**Q. Is there any advantage to using the organization name in the question?**

Many of the items include a space for [Organization Name]. This is a matter of preference usually. Depending on what you decide, choose sample items that conform.

***Good luck with your survey!***