



Listening to employees at Punch Taverns

About Punch Taverns:

Established in 1997, Punch Taverns has grown through a number of acquisitions, including that of Spirit Group for £2.7bn in 2006. It now effectively runs two operations: the Punch Taverns side involves around 7,500 leased and tenanted pubs, while the Spirit side comprises over 850 managed pubs.

www.punchtaverns.com



Punch Taverns, Britain's biggest pub company, has made employee-driven improvements after surveying around 3,000 head office & field support staff and the licensees of its managed pubs.

TalentDrain developed an opinion and attitude survey which enabled Punch to listen to its employees and focus its action planning. As a result, Punch has revamped its HR strategy and introduced new schemes and initiatives to improve the company and enhance employee commitment, particularly in the areas of reward, recognition and career progression, teamwork, communication and senior management engagement.

Punch Taverns is the UK's largest pub landlord, with over 8,400 leased, tenanted and managed pubs across England, Scotland and Wales. In response to tough trading conditions, following the economic slowdown and the smoking bans in England and Wales, Punch wanted to understand where it could proactively make improvements. It decided to survey its

central and field support staff as well as the licensees of the 850 pubs it owns and manages.

"We contacted TalentDrain as we wanted to better understand what our employees felt we were doing well and what they wanted us to improve," said Jackie Burn, Head of Central HR at Punch Taverns.

TalentDrain customised its Talent Pulse survey, which asks employees to rank 12 work-related areas, that are known to influence organisational commitment, and then rate how satisfied they are with each area. The survey also asked for suggestions for improvement from employees and questions for the management team.

The central and field support staff undertook the survey online and the pub managers completed a paper-based version.



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“We’ve run employee surveys before but we’ve never had the level of response we achieved with TalentDrain,” said Jackie Burn. *“Within four weeks of the closing date of the survey, TalentDrain had given us the headline findings, which helped us to maintain momentum.”*

For the central support staff, TalentDrain broke down the findings and developed specific reports for the finance, commercial and HR departments and, where numbers allowed, for separate teams within these departments. It also provided reports for each area manager, highlighting the responses of the pub managers in their region.

Findings

The survey showed that 84% of staff are satisfied with their job and have a positive relationship with their manager; 81% feel their role is interesting, enjoyable and meaningful; 76% believe Punch Taverns has a prosperous future and 70% would recommend Punch as an employer.

“We found that people are proud to work for Punch and that they believe in the business,” said Jackie Burn. *“TalentDrain’s ability to compare the ‘importance’ against the ‘satisfaction’ of work factors proved extremely useful. If employees are not particularly happy with a certain aspect of their job, but they don’t rate it as important, then it’s not really worth the effort to change it. You’re better off focussing your*

energy on those areas that employees rate as more important.”

Action planning

Using the information gained from the reports, each central support department developed its own action plan and each area manager developed his/her own local area action plan. Punch Taverns also developed an overall company plan.

“The survey gave us good quality data on which to base interventions and this really helped us to focus our action planning,” said Jackie Burn.

A booklet highlighting the findings from the survey, and the commitments the company has made as a result, was produced and distributed.

“The most important part of any opinion survey is to act on the feedback received,” said Jackie Burn. *“We’ve been honest and transparent in communicating what people said they liked and what they felt could be done better. We’ve also openly announced the actions that we have committed to and the timescales within which these actions will be addressed. Now, we need to communicate our progress and share our successes.”*



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Achievements

As a result of TalentDrain's analysis, Punch has taken steps to improve employee commitment, align reward to performance, improve prospects for career progression and enhance teamwork, communication and senior management engagement.

The company has reviewed its salary and bonus structure after benchmarking all salaries externally; changed its performance review process; created an employee recognition scheme, to incentivise strong performance and high levels of customer service; enhanced its training and development opportunities and introduced a senior leadership development programme.

Building on the sense of pride that exists internally, Punch has endeavoured to create a greater sense of involvement and ownership amongst employees. It has re-launched its corporate values; introduced a group-wide Share Incentive Plan; established forums where employees can discuss areas of concern or ideas for improvement with senior managers; set up career coaching forums and improved the internal communication of career opportunities and job changes across the group.

As part of fostering a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for its customers, Punch believes in building a considerate and supportive internal working environment.

To further facilitate this, it has set up a 'buddying' system and introduced departmental open days and new social activities.

Impact

According to Jackie Burn, undertaking the survey has had a very positive impact on Punch Taverns.

"People feel we've listened to them and they can see that we've implemented a number of initiatives, to improve the company, as a result of their views," she said. "This is important because the success of our business depends on the morale and motivation of our employees. We now feel we're in a strong position to build on the opportunities available to us."

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