

2018 NASPE Award Nomination for the
Eva N. Santos Communication Award
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Applying Multilayer Communication Strategies to Statewide Employee Engagement Planning

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1 Please provide a brief description of the submission:

Summary

In 2017, when the State of Arizona Human Resources Division (HRD) administered the annual Employee Engagement Survey to the state's 120 agencies, boards and commissions, it executed a multilayer communication strategy that provided just-in-time communications, information, analytics, tools and resources to employees and agency leaders -- before, during and after the survey. The intent: to improve the overall survey experience, to better prepare leaders to lead, and to help agencies change behavior toward "action taking" best practices as they address survey results.

Background

The State of Arizona has administered an annual statewide employee engagement survey since 2012 because State leaders recognize a need to create a more engaging and rewarding workplace, and the annual engagement survey provides an excellent vehicle for informing continuous improvement and transformation.

A review of the *current state* of the engagement survey process and tools led us to these conclusions:

1. Existing survey communications, tools and resources provided only minimal support to agency leaders.
2. There were missed opportunities to leverage the engagement survey as a tool for transformation.

State human resources officers believed improved communications, support tools for leaders, and redesigned analytics, tools and resources could improve participation and action planning.

Solution: Applying Multilayer Communication Strategies

Implementing long-lasting change across state government requires a strategic plan and people who can champion the change in every agency and at every level. The goal: to influence agency leaders to change/improve how they take action based on survey results.

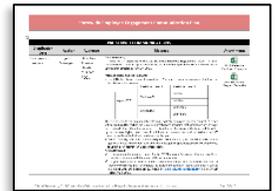
This project leveraged multilayered communication elements to drive its success. The plan tied every element of the project together, anticipating the overall survey experience across the survey timeline. The plan linked each piece of collateral to key email messages, comprehending how each piece of collateral would touch the customer to influence action.

Multilayer Communication Strategies Applied

In preparation for the 2017 engagement survey, which was conducted in April 2017, Arizona Human Resources Division (HRD) implemented the following multilayered communication elements:

1 Statewide Communication Plan and Messaging

A statewide communications plan was developed to provide a spectrum of prescribed, intentionally crafted messages across the survey experience. The plan outlined presentations and email messages (13) targeting employees and agency leaders with timely information before, during and after survey administration. The plan included messages from the Governor's chief operating officer inviting and encouraging every state employee to take the survey, a presentation to the Governor's Cabinet (35 agencies) by the State's human resources director citing the benefits of an engaged workforce, timely emails to update leaders on participation rates, and data analytics training.



2 Customized Survey Analytics Package

Survey results needed an upgrade and redesign to provide each agency/division a more graphically intuitive experience so that leaders could easily interpret data, extract insight for action planning and clearly communicate results.



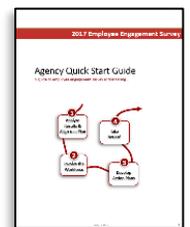
3 Customized Executive Summary Poster

Each agency would receive an 11"x17" color poster (in both digital and print formats) to display in public locations to communicate survey results to employees and external stakeholders. The posters featured heat map technology and easy-to-read infographics.



4 Leader's Quick Start Guide

After recognizing agency leaders needed more guidance, direction and best practices, HRD designed a Quick Start Guide to provide simple step-by-step guidance for leaders to successfully navigate the survey experience.



5 Leader Training

HRD also provided leaders with additional guidance on how to use the full set of survey tools, templates and resources.



2 How long has the submission been in existence?

HRD initiated these communication improvements in January 2017 for the employee engagement survey that was conducted in April.

3 Why was this submission created?

State human resources officers believed that improving communications, tools and resources supporting the engagement survey, would increase employee and agency participation and provide a formalized approach for action taking.

4 How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

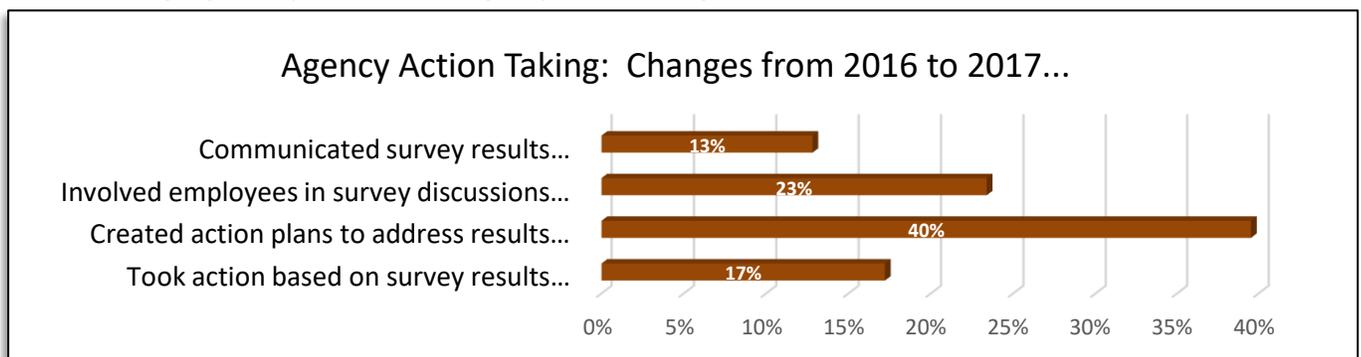
Governor Doug Ducey is committed to transforming how Arizona’s government thinks and does business so that we operate at the “speed of business.” For this reason, he has introduced the Arizona Management System (AMS), an intentional, results-driven approach that asks every state employee to reflect on performance, reduce waste and commit to continuous improvement with sustainable progress. As stewards of the state workforce, HRD is uniquely positioned to drive the transformation with velocity and strategic action by helping to ensure the work environment and people-related processes support the desired behaviors and align with AMS requirements. Standardizing and improving communication around the state’s ongoing efforts to increase employee engagement is critical to achieving our goal of world-class engagement in all our agencies.

5 Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

Key measures of success for this project focused on whether solutions met agency needs, improved employee/agency participation and whether agencies took best practice actions. The enhanced communication efforts led to a significant increase in agency (20% increase) and employee (25% increase) survey participation, as outlined in the table below.

Target Improvement	Result
Employee participation...	25% increase
Agency participation...	20% increase
HR tools and resources met or exceeded agency needs...	95% agreement

The table below highlights improvements in agency action taking from 2016 to 2017:



In addition to the improvements outlined above, it is worth noting that employee engagement is increasing modestly statewide, with significant improvement among 17 cabinet agencies that are successfully deploying AMS. We eagerly await the 2018 survey engagement results, which will provide additional indicators of success.