

## Quantify Survey Research February 2009

### Pensions controversy

The survey of the month in our January issue was a DWP survey which reportedly showed that people were pleased with the government's plans for the National Pension Savings Scheme (NPSS) to be introduced in 2012. Independent commentators aren't so sure, however.

The scheme will introduce automatic enrolment (with the right to opt out) for employees who have no other "adequate pension arrangements" into a pension savings scheme which will invest the fund in the stock market. Employers will be required to contribute 3% and the government will provide 1% tax relief to match the 4% employee contribution.

Commentators have pointed out a number of potential problems:

- Stock market investments can go down as well as up exposing savers to the risk that their fund might have been wiped out just when they are obliged to convert it into an annuity.
- Employers running other more costly pension schemes, including the few remaining final salary schemes, might decide to switch to the cheaper option.
- The very low management costs predicted (under 0.3%, far below the current maximum stakeholder charge of 1.5%) might not be attainable.
- Future governments might interfere with the tax relief allowed.
- Depending on their circumstances, it may be wiser for employees to use any spare cash, say to pay off a mortgage, rather than put it in a pension fund.
- With only one fund management provider and consequently no competition to sharpen things up, the service might not be up to much.
- While an element of compulsion might be required to increase the proportion of people making provision for their pensions, they could use the existing stakeholder pension system, rather than having a complete parallel bureaucracy set up from scratch.

All this calls into question the value of the DWP survey. By wording the question to suit yourself, you can usually get survey informants to provide the answer you first thought of. I don't know how the question was put, but here is an extreme example of a leading question.



### We can help with

Consultancy and bureau support for

[Employee Satisfaction Surveys](#)

[Customer Satisfaction Surveys](#)

[Internal Customer Satisfaction Surveys](#)

[Bespoke 360° Management Feedback](#)

[360° Feedback off the shelf](#)

### We also offer:

A comprehensive [Employee Satisfaction Survey Research Kit](#) for those who just can't instruct a consultant to help. It provides everything you need to develop, administer and reports an employee survey in-house.

### [Training Seminars](#)

You can access *Quantify Survey Research* for previous months [here](#).

Click [here](#) to see what clients say about us.

### Obama free zone

There is an item in most issues of the satirical magazine *Private Eye* these days headed *Obamaballs*, which mocks the sad attempts of various organisations to hitch their latest press release to the Obama bandwagon. We don't want to be accused of that, so this newsletter is an **Obama free zone**.

In a local MP's survey asking for people's attitude to converting two schools to Academy status, the two options were

- Yes, I am in favour of raising standards at Mitcham Vale and Tamworth Manor High Schools by getting Academy status
- No, I am against these changes to Mitcham Vale and Tamworth Manor High Schools designed to improve exam Results

No prizes for guessing which option the survey promoter favoured.

Such survey results in isolation often don't mean much. It is by making comparisons between the responses you get to the same question at different times, or from different groups of informants that you'll get the main value from most surveys.

To follow the debate about the NPSS, try Googling it. Here are a couple of links, though, to get you started.

[Moneyfacts Pensions Age](#)

To get some survey results which represent real management information you can act on, why not call us?



David Lusty  
**Principal Consultant**  
Quantify London

For a free initial consultation,  
please call David Lusty, Quantify London  
on 08452 41 41 60 or 020 8704 1296  
or click to [email](#).

or call Jo Glover, Quantify Yorkshire  
on 0845 241 3450 or click to [email](#).



Jo Glover, Quantify Yorkshire

### The QUANTIFY sample Web Survey

You can visit our sample web survey [here](#). This imaginary employee survey demonstrates the speed and flexibility of our system, provides links to selected outputs illustrations and describes the many aspects which can be configured to suit your preference.

If you know anyone who is considering a web survey, please forward this email to them and suggest they have a poke around in our sample survey.

### Refer a Friend?

Would you please forward this email to anyone you know who might be interested in any of our services? Or if they prefer, pass us their details, and we'll get in touch directly.



## Guest Spot

**Karen Drury is a partner in fe3, a specialist consultancy staffed by experienced, established organisational and communication consultants. Founded in early 2002, it was the first consultancy to put the HR and marketing toolkits together to craft stronger relationships between employees, customers and the organisation. If you'd like to know more, please contact Quantify and we will put you in touch with Karen.**

### **Karen Drury writes...**

#### **Successful consultation depends on effective communication**

The howls of protest which greeted the announcement of the decision on Heathrow's third runway demonstrate one of the greatest dangers of consultation – getting the communication wrong.

Poor communication through the process and a badly announced final decision can throw into doubt the transparency and probity of the consultation itself and, from an organisational perspective, may create deep employee cynicism. Employees may feel that they were asked for their views, they contributed to the discussion, but their views and concerns were ignored, and they may feel that the decision was already a done deal.

Of course, not all decisions taken in organisations are as complicated as this. The Heathrow decision involved many stakeholders with many different agendas, from environmentalists to unions, from home owners to financial commentators and MPs.

Deciding whether to build a 2,200m third runway over more than 700 properties and the destruction of an entire village to support a sixth terminal or to potentially damage 170,000 jobs and London's reputation as a global destination is unlikely to have an outcome that will please everyone. But many organisations believe that simply having the consultation is sufficient evidence of a fair and just process – and it isn't.

In this case, 22 local authorities ranged against the Government, not to mention environmentalists, celebrities and local pressure groups. This alone should have been sufficient to indicate that communication throughout and of the final result should have been handled with the utmost care.

What happened was that as early as November, the Government was signalling that it would formally back the Heathrow expansion. This was followed by a decision to delay the decision from Christmas to January, in order to consider the choice "with complete fairness and transparency" – a statement completely undermined by earlier announcements.

To cap it all, in the face of the rebellion of the Labour backbenchers and the opposition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, there was no vote in the House of Commons.

The final announcement, therefore, brought immediate responses from those who were against the airport expansion that their views had been disregarded, and that the process was seriously flawed.

The key lessons from this for organisations thinking of surveying employees or other stakeholders are therefore:

- Don't consult on something where you already know what the decision will be – consult on variations of the decision; rather than the decision itself.
- If the decision is open, make sure the consultation has sufficient time, and sufficient reach to enable everyone to have a say. For organisations, this might include online surveys for those who have email, focus groups or telephone interviews for those who don't. Ensure that it's not simply a Monday to Friday 9 – 5 consultation – shift workers may not work those hours and here, web-based surveys which are available 24/7 are helpful; conduct telephone interviews and focus groups at times to suit your respondents – not just you!

- Communication is key; be sure to maintain communication throughout on the process – but steer clear of any discussion of the decision. If you don't, people become suspicious that there is a set outcome regardless of what they think, and become cynical.
- Keep to timescales – otherwise that most perceptive and cynical of audiences, your employees, will think that you need additional time to get the answer YOU want, rather than the answer they want to give you.

Consultation and surveys take a lot of time and energy from the organisation as well as the responder. A flawed process and poor communication undermine that precious element of organisational life – trust between managers and employees.

## Quantify Press Releases

[April 2008 Quantify launches Employee Satisfaction Survey Research Kit](#)

[January 2008 Quantify launches web-based 360 degree Feedback systems \(off the shelf\)](#)

[November 2007 British Medical Journal seeks second opinion](#)

[September 2007 Gold award to Quantify Principal Consultant for 50 blood donations.](#)

[September 2007 Harrow Council consults about the Way Ahead](#)

[June 2007 Quantify Principal Consultant enrolls as Blood Platelet Donor](#)

[April 2007 Quantify's unique presentation of employee survey results helps prevent a waste of resources](#)

[April 2007 Identifying room for business and individual improvement](#)

[April 2007 Quantify illumines Cara Irish Housing Association's room for improvement](#)

[April 2007 Quantify launches a bespoke 360° feedback system](#)

## Blood Doning

I should be able to resume donations next month when my suspension ends following a visit to India and Sri Lanka last August. You can't give blood for six months after such a trip in case you might be incubating a nasty tropical disease.

*David*

P.S. If you aren't already a blood donor, click the logo below to visit the National Blood Service site to find out more about why it is so important and how easy it is.



David is the proud possessor of a Gold Award for 50 donations (illustrated on the left), and these days, he is a [blood platelet donor](#). The process involves being connected for an hour or more to a machine which draws out blood, separates the platelets, and returns the rest of the blood.

Because most of the blood is returned to the donor, platelet donors can donate every four weeks. "Normal" whole blood donors give only three donations a year. The procedure is much simpler and their donation is limited to ten minutes.

Do something amazing today

Save a life

Give blood

## Quantify in the Media

Date	Publication	Item	Link
November 2007	Human Resource Management International Digest Vol 15 No 7	Article by David Lusty "Debunking the Benchmarking Myth".	<a href="#">Link</a>
September 2007	Human Resource Management International Digest Vol 15 No 6	Article by David Lusty "How to avoid the pitfalls of employee satisfaction surveys".	<a href="#">Link</a>
September / October 2007	Human Capital Management	Article by David Lusty "Answers Before Questions"; 12 key points to get useful information form an Employee Satisfaction Survey	<a href="#">Link</a>
12 June	Personnel Today	Article by Kirstie Redford on 360 Feedback with a case study and expert comment from Azure Consulting (Quantify Yorkshire)	NA
May / June 2007	Human Capital Management	Article by David Lusty "Debunking the Benchmarking Myth" pointing out the risks associated with benchmarking comparisons.	<a href="#">Link</a>
May 2007	Training & Coaching Today	"Digest" version of the HCM article above	<a href="#">Link</a>
May 2007	Training Journal On Line	Announcement of bespoke 360 Feedback capability on the web, inventory based on client competencies framework	<a href="#">Link</a>
March 2007	Training Journal On Line	Release of latest Subset Tabulation report providing significance indicators for differences between subset results for individual items, and for clusters of items	<a href="#">Link</a>

### Survey of the month

**The survey of the month is not one of ours.** It might not always be particularly topical, or very important or even serious, but we hope you will find it interesting.

**OUR surveys are more than just interesting.** They provide **management information** about how people **feel** doing business with you or working in your organisation. This allows you to manage your relationship with clients and employees, to retain clients and employees better, to reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction and to compete more successfully.

### Banks and police among most gay-friendly employers

The campaigning group Stonewall publishes an index which tracks the impact of workplace culture on gay, lesbian and bisexual employees. The 2009 index, the fifth annual index published, finds high street and investment banks doing particularly well, with Lloyds TSB in first place (up from 6th last year) and Goldman Sachs in 13th place. Hampshire constabulary were second and Kent police fourth, and 17 forces made the top 100. The metropolitan police is 35th.

Organisations apply for inclusion and Stonewall investigates their diversity policies and the extent to which they encourage job applications from lesbian and gay workers, including a survey among gay employees to check if their experience at work matches their employer's claims.

The biggest UK employer, the NHS, is notably absent from the list of top performers. Only Tower Hamlets PCT and NHS Plymouth made it into the top 100 at 58 and 88 respectively.

There is a report about it at the [Guardian's](#) (where else?) web site or visit [Stonewall](#) for the story from the horse's mouth.

## Free "How to" guides

- Your Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Your Employee Satisfaction Survey
- Your Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Your Management Feedback System (360 Feedback)

These e-books are full of practical advice and checklists for planning every stage of the project. Most people will find something useful in them. To request your FREE copy, please [click here](#).

## Questionnaire authors' Top Tips

These tips are drawn from our popular and successful one-day seminar, [Developing, Authoring and Designing Survey Questionnaires](#).

2008 open course dates are on the [web page](#).

We also offer a seminar about analysing and interpreting the results of surveys.

## Don't ask people how they think other people feel.

We get the best data by asking people to report on **their own** views or experience. Items like *We are all dedicated to meeting customers' needs* or *Most people are content with the quality of the ABC widget* are asking informants to tell us how other people feel. They may have no idea, or be completely mistaken.

In a Court hearing, such hearsay evidence would be inadmissible and it isn't much help to us, either. If we want a generalised view, we will get that when we aggregate the views of all the individual informants.



David Lusty, Quantify London

## More information

For a free initial consultation, please call David Lusty, Quantify London on 08452 41 41 60 or 020 8704 1296 or click to [email](#).

or call Jo Glover, Quantify Yorkshire on 0845 241 3450 or click to [email](#).



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