

### August 2011 In this issue

- [Guest spot:](#) David Lusty on Benchmarking
- [Survey of the month:](#) Earthquake in UK
- Questionnaire author's [Top Tip:](#) Jargon
- Quantify [sample web survey](#)
- [Blood donation](#)
- Complimentary "How-to" [Guides](#)

## Uncertainty rules

The recent brinkmanship over the US government debt limit and the continuing sovereign debt crisis among EU states provide a level of uncertainty which makes the financial markets very jumpy. As always, the ones who suffer most are those with least opportunity to influence matters. So we can only look on impotently as our savings are eroded by inflation higher than any available interest rate and the value of our pension fund plummets along with the equity market.

There are people who flourish in an uncertain environment. They enjoy the challenge of living on the edge. But most people find certainty more comfortable than uncertainty. At work, people generally like to know, for example, exactly what is expected of them, exactly what authority they have for decision-making and exactly what rewards they will receive. If things are left a bit vague, people don't function as well, perhaps because part of the energy that could be going into their work is being used to fret about the doubts and worries.

Organisations are made up of people, so imprecision is an ever-present feature, requiring a continuous effort to identify and clarify the things left unnervingly ill-defined. A well-constructed Employee Satisfaction Survey will help to find areas where people yearn for greater clarity, helping you to provide a bit more certainty for your people at work, to make them feel better about their working lives.

If only we could bring greater certainty to the international financial system as easily!



David Lusty  
**Principal Consultant**  
**Quantify London**



## We can help with

Consultancy and bureau support for:

- [Employee Satisfaction / Engagement Surveys](#)
- [Customer Satisfaction Surveys](#)
- 360° Feedback
  - [Bespoke](#)
  - [Off the shelf](#)
- [Training Seminars](#)
- Quantify Survey Research [Back-numbers](#)
- [What our clients say about us](#)

## More information

For a complimentary initial consultation, please call David Lusty, Quantify London on 020 8704 1296 or [email him](#). Or call Sue Alderson, Quantify Yorkshire, on 0845 241 3450 or [email her](#).



Sue Alderson, Quantify  
Yorkshire

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Business Transformation | Change Management | Coaching |  
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Leadership & Talent Development | Mediation | Payroll | Recruitment |

## Guest Spot



David Lusty is the Principal Consultant at Quantify.

This month's "guest" spot is another of his articles.

David writes:

### **Benchmarking**

Many employers are anxious to “put their Employee Satisfaction Survey results in context” by benchmarking their results against other employers. Far from being helpful, however, such comparisons are often deeply flawed, and dangerously misleading.

- **Expectation**  
Satisfaction is a function of people’s experience compared with what they expected. Given exactly the same experience, people with lower expectations produce higher satisfaction scores than those whose expectations were higher. We don’t know how other employers’ people expected to be treated, so the satisfaction scores aren’t comparable.
- **Question wording**  
The questions in your survey questionnaire may not be expressed in exactly the same way as in the benchmark surveys. Any change to the wording leads to different responses, so comparisons with “equivalent” questions are unreliable.
- **Question sequence**  
The response to any question is influenced by the conditioning effect of questions which precede it in the questionnaire. Only by using the whole questionnaire in exactly the same form can we be sure that comparisons are meaningful.
- **Response frames**  
Although the same question or statement might be used, employees might have been asked to respond on a different scale. Even assuming a common approach, such as an agreement scale like the one in the last example, there is no standard number of points on the scale, and different employers may have offered four, five, seven, or sometime nine or ten points on the scale.

What will you do with benchmarking data, anyway? If your results appear to be less good than the benchmark, you will presumably make strenuous efforts to improve. But if you operate a policy of continual improvement, you were doing that anyway, without any benchmarking comparisons to prompt it. And if your results are better than the benchmark, will you relax and not attempt to improve? Of course not. So what is the purpose of the benchmarking comparisons? Are they any more than a “Nice to know”?

This is a condensed version of the article. You can download the full version as a .pdf [here](#).

### **Refer a Friend?**

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.

## The QUANTIFY sample Web Survey

Visit our [sample web survey](#). This imaginary employee survey demonstrates the speed and flexibility of our web system and describes the many aspects which can be arranged to suit you. It provides a quick tour of Quantify services you may choose to use, and links to selected outputs illustrations.

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

### Blood Donation



I am currently suspended from donations but **I shall soon be back on the blood donations trail again.**

*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.

### 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.

### Biggest UK earthquake for centuries

On 14 July 2011 the British Geological Survey detected an earthquake of magnitude 3.9 at 06:59 UTC (07:59 BST) located approximately 80 km south-south-east of Portsmouth, Hampshire. Several residents from the Worthing, West Sussex area have reported having felt this event, one describing 'it only lasted a few seconds'.

This is the largest earthquake in this area, within 25 km, since a magnitude 4.5 event in 1734. In the UK we experience an earthquake of this magnitude approximately every two years.

By comparison, the earthquake that caused the Japanese tsunami on 11 March was magnitude 9.0 which is much more intense, considering that a of magnitude 4 quake is ten times as strong as a magnitude 3, so 5 is 100 times more intense, and so on.

Read more about measuring the size of earthquakes [here](#).

[Main story](#) from the British Geological Survey.

### Complimentary "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 copy, at no cost to you, 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*.

Forthcoming open course dates are on the web page.

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

### Don't use specialist jargon in questionnaires aimed at non-specialists

Terminology or acronyms you use regularly around the office and which provides a useful shorthand between colleagues in the know might be completely incomprehensible to the people your questionnaire is aimed at. Our own familiarity with a technical term makes it easy to assume that most people are familiar with it. How many of these would you recognise out of their normal context?

|                | Intended meaning?              | Or was it?          |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| ASBO           | <a href="#">ASBO</a>           |                     |
| Above the line | <a href="#">Above the line</a> |                     |
| ISA            | <a href="#">ISA</a>            | <a href="#">ISA</a> |
| ISO            | <a href="#">ISO</a>            | <a href="#">ISO</a> |



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