



The Best Places to Work

IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT®



WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

How Leaders Can Use the FEVS to Improve the Employee Experience

In the next few months, the Office of Personnel Management will release the results of the 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The FEVS, administered annually in May and June and used by the Partnership for Public Service and Deloitte to generate the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings, sheds light on how federal employees perceive their workplaces—from the quality of their supervision, to the opportunities for training and development, to whether managers encourage a healthy work-life balance.

While the FEVS is a valuable resource for leaders—from Cabinet secretaries to front-line supervisors—it is only the beginning of the conversation. The annual survey and the Best Places to Work data highlight areas where employee engagement is waning, but often do not provide insight into the root causes of dissatisfaction, or the preferences and motivations of different segments of a diverse, multi-generational workforce.

To improve the work experience and strengthen employee engagement, leaders should probe deeper during

frequent conversations with employees held throughout the year. Employees should have the opportunity to provide feedback through multiple forums, including electronic pulse surveys, digital apps, routine in-person check-ins, “stay interviews” and focus groups. By probing deeper, leaders can gain insight into employee pain points, determine whether dissatisfaction is isolated or shared across employee segments, and develop well-informed, customized solutions.

This guide is intended to help leaders who receive their FEVS and subsequent Best Places to Work data, want to maintain momentum around what’s working well and improve what’s not, but might ask themselves, “Where do I go from here?”

To help leaders get started, we have identified aspects of the employee experience that are ripe for additional attention, and offer some follow-up questions that leaders can pose to their employees to better understand the employee data and keep the conversation going.

For more information visit our website at bestplacestowork.org or contact bptw@ourpublicservice.org.

The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings, produced by the Partnership for Public Service and Deloitte, offer the most comprehensive assessment of how federal public servants view their jobs and workplaces, providing employee perspectives on leadership, pay, innovation, work-life balance and other issues.

DIMENSIONS OF THE FEVS THAT LEADERS SHOULD PROBE FURTHER

In its 2017 report on human capital trends, Deloitte describes a rapidly changing workplace marked by technological advancement and heightened employee expectations (<http://bit.ly/1BDGmhg>).

No longer content to “put in their time” before receiving a leadership role, today’s employees expect the opportunity to lead on day one. Performance management, once characterized by annual appraisals, increasingly consists of regular formal and informal feedback. Diversity and inclusion are expected to be top of mind in the C-suite, robust learning and development opportunities are demanded, and employees whose personal lives have been made easier by advances in technology expect the same in the workplace. Increasingly, employees view their work experience in a holistic and integrated manner, shaped as early as the application and interview experience and continuing to evolve until retirement.

With these human capital trends in mind, a probing leader should seek to better understand frustrations with workplace processes, technology, or norms. Leaders should solicit recommendations to improve the employee experience and understand what motivates employees to join, perform at a high level and remain with their organization. These follow-up questions to the FEVS are a good place to start.



IMPROVING WORKPLACE PROCESSES, TECHNOLOGY AND NORMS

FEVS Question 1

I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization

- Do you believe you have access to a sufficiently broad range of learning and development opportunities?
- Do you feel you have the support of your supervisor to take time away from the job to participate in a learning and development opportunity?
- What type of learning and development opportunity are you most interested in pursuing and what has kept you from doing so?

FEVS Question 14

Physical conditions (for example, noise level, temperature, lighting, cleanliness in the workplace) allow employees to perform their jobs well

- What in particular would you change about your workspace? How would you do it?
- Is your workspace designed in a way that allows you to collaborate with your colleagues?
- How would you assess the quality of the technology in your office? Is it sufficient for you to perform your job at a high level? What technology would make it easier for you to do your job?

FEVS Question 34

Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring)

- Is a diverse and inclusive workplace a top priority of your agency’s senior leaders?
- At your agency/in your work unit/on your team, do people feel comfortable being themselves?
- Can you be honest with your colleagues?

FEVS Question 42

My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues

- Are your agency’s work-life programs adequate to meet your needs? How could they be improved?

FEVS Question 64

How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization?

- Does management utilize a range of forums to communicate with employees—from print, online, in-person or through town halls?
- How do you prefer to receive information about what's going on in your agency?
- Does management communicate frequently enough?
- Does management appear to be forthcoming in its communication?

FEVS Question 65

How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?

- Does management offer an appropriate mix of verbal, financial and non-financial forms of recognition? When you receive recognition, are you usually satisfied with its form?
- Does management consider the personal preferences of employees receiving recognition?



INCREASING EMPLOYEES' INVOLVEMENT IN IMPROVING THE WORK EXPERIENCE

FEVS Question 44

Discussions with my supervisor about my performance are worthwhile

- Would you prefer to have more frequent discussions about your performance?
- Do you have as strong of a sense about what you do well as what you could do to improve?
- Do you feel comfortable talking to your supervisor about challenges you are experiencing with your work?
- What are one or two things you would keep the same about your performance discussions? What are one or two things you would like to change?

FEVS Question 63

How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?

- While decisions about your work may not always reflect your preferences, are you given the opportunity to voice your opinion and do you feel heard?



TENDING TO THE HOLISTIC EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE - FROM RECRUITMENT TO RETIREMENT

FEVS Question 21

My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills

- What attracts applicants to your agency?
- What initially attracted you to your agency?
- Is your agency's "brand" as strong today as when you applied for your job?
- How would you assess your onboarding experience? Was your role in the organization communicated effectively? How could your onboarding experience have been improved?
- What was your perception of the hiring process—from submission of your application to the moment you accepted an offer? What could be improved?

FEVS Question 69

Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?

- Are there quick, practical steps management could take to increase your job satisfaction? What are they?
- Are older workers respected and are their skills and experience valued and properly utilized?
- What would cause you to leave your agency?