



A joint initiative of the OECD and the European
Union, principally financed by the EU.

Consulting with your staff on the draft charter

Elke Löffler
Governance International

Citizen Charter, Second Training Seminar
Prague, 19-20 June 2006



Why you should consult on the draft charter with your staff

- The charter has to be owned by front-line staff - they are the ones who will have to make the charter real for users
- Middle managers have to buy into the charter project as well and support changes which will be necessary to meet the targets and commitments of the charter
- Top managers have to understand how the charter project contributes to the strategic objectives of your organisation (therefore the importance of a clearly defined hierarchy of objectives)
- Change management always brings about fear and anxiety, therefore staff (and unions) have to understand what the charter project is about

Approaches of staff consultation

Depending on the objective of the consultation and the organisational culture of an organisation the consultation may be

- Informal, e.g. presentation of the project and discussion with staff in a staff meeting
- Formal, e.g. organisation of a written survey

Given the hierarchical culture in many public agencies we recommend a written staff survey

The benefits of written surveys

1. It is possible to include all members of staff and to give them the chance to voice their views
2. A written survey assures full anonymity and honest feedback of staff

What makes a good survey

1. The response rate should not be below 50 % (if surveys are to create trust and ownership the response rate should be 70%). Even with a return rate of +50% it is necessary to check the statistical representativeness of the sample (e.g. the profile of the respondents according to gender, age, rank)
2. The questionnaire has to be “fit for purpose” as far as the length, wording of the questions and contents of the questions is concerned (see policy brief on the design of surveys)
3. The survey has to be prepared and organised properly

Recommendations for the organisation of a written staff survey

- **Awareness raising within your agency:**

- Letter of announcement (alternative: announcement in the staff journal) should be disseminated approximately 14 days before the questionnaire is distributed
- Organisation of a staff meeting as a kick-off event immediately before the questionnaire is distributed

- **Visible and credible commitment of the leadership:**

- Endorsement of the letter of announcement/announcement in the staff journal
- Attendance and a supporting introductory statement at the staff meeting

- **Clear support from the middle-management:**

- Middle managers should explicitly state their expectation of a high participation rate in the staff survey at staff meetings following the circulation of the announcement
- Explanation of the survey whenever necessary and underscoring of its importance
- The middle-management should show concern regarding the completion of the questionnaires:
- Exercise gentle pressure (ask about progress, etc.)
- Shelter employees from external pressures while they fill out the questionnaires
- Arrange a time/date for everyone to fill out the questionnaires simultaneously (this is highly recommended: it reduces friction to a minimum and guarantees maximum participation).

Recommendations for the organisation of a written staff survey

- **Raising of employee expectations regarding the impartial undertaking of the survey and the implementation of staff suggestions arising from it:**
 - Set up an Employee Survey Project Team for preparing and conducting the survey and for the announcement of the survey results
 - Introduce the Project Team at the staff meeting
 - Disseminate a clear and strong assurance from the leadership in the letter of announcement and at the staff meeting that the results of the survey will lead to changes
- **Clear, and if possible, active support from the staff council(s) and trade unions:**
 - Co-endorsement of the letter of announcement
 - Clear commitment to the survey at the staff meeting, an emphatic call for participation, and stress on the importance of the survey and the guarantee of anonymity (see below)
- **Credible guarantee of anonymity:**
 - Involvement of a neutral third party (whenever possible with a competency in all phases of the employee survey) e.g. an academic institution
 - Mention the involvement of the third party in the letter of announcement/announcement in staff journal
 - Presentation by the third party at the staff meeting, to demonstrate their standing and their ability to achieve neutrality in the process
 - Clear presentation of measures taken to secure anonymity when announcing the survey

Recommendations for the organisation of a written staff survey

- Guarantee a “water-tight” set of anonymity measures :
 - No names on the questionnaire, no numbering or hidden coding of the questionnaires
 - Ensure an unobserved location for the completion of the questionnaire
- In the data processing, limited “breaking-down” of the answers (as a rule: limit the scope to include one socio-demographic characteristic each, such as sex, age, salary or career profile group, or the division of all the material along the lines of the organization's departments, divisions, etc.)
- Destruction of the questionnaires after completion of the analysis
- Flexibility in the decision-making process of the project team concerning the selection of the best way to follow-up in the case of an insufficient response rate (e.g., a letter of reminder or oral request to all employees or to the middle-management; formal request in the staff newspaper)
- When necessary, decisions need to be made about extensions of dates/times. It must be ensured that changes are communicated to all employees.