



News Release

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SBA Staff Sees Agency Rapidly Improving *Employee Survey shows across-the-board gains*

WASHINGTON, DC — The U.S. Small Business Administration today released the results of its annual employee survey, showing dramatic improvement in employee satisfaction across many areas including senior leadership, skills development and internal communications.

The survey showed double-digit improvement from the agency's 2006 results on 10 of 37 questions. Moreover, on 28 of 37 questions employees gave the agency its highest scores since the federal government began surveying employees in 2002.

The survey was conducted by the federal Office of Personnel Management and completed by 85 percent of SBA employees. OPM conducts the government-wide employee survey in even-numbered years. The questions asked in 2007 were a subset of the questions asked in previous government-wide surveys. The Partnership for Public Service, which publishes the biannual "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" helped SBA analyze the survey results. Employee responses are confidential.

Three general areas of improved satisfaction were most-often cited by employees in the results: with senior leadership, training and development, and internal communications.

"These results show employees believe in the agency's strategic direction and are dedicated to supporting all customers – small business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs and disaster victims – passionately and effectively every day," SBA Administrator Steve Preston said. "The reforms we've instituted to streamline operations, and better serve our customers have been embraced by our dedicated staff."

Highlights from the survey results included:

- Job skills and training showed marked improvement. "The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals" rose more than 13 percent. And satisfaction with training provided increased nearly 13 percent in the last year.
- Internal communications improved substantially. Satisfaction with communication around goals and priorities rose 11 percent. In addition, satisfaction with "the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization" jumped more than 15 percent.

- The question rising the most from 2006 to 2007 was “I have a high level of respect for my organization’s senior leaders,” which increased more than 21 percent.
- Similarly, the question “In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce” rose 17 percent.

To give context, comparisons between these 2007 survey results and the most recent government-wide survey in 2006 are useful. SBA’s 2007 results were notably higher than the government’s results on several questions. These included:

- “Creativity and innovation are rewarded”;
- “Differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way”;
- “Managers review and evaluate the organization’s progress toward meeting its goals and objectives”;
- “Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization”; and
- “Physical conditions allow employees to perform their jobs well.”

Survey results also showed that agency employees have a continuing desire for skills development, and creation of a robust culture of performance in the agency.

“While we’re pleased with the tremendous progress we’ve made on many fronts this year,” Preston said, “we know there is still a lot to do as we reform the agency, making it more responsive, customer-focused, accountable and transparent.”

Preston noted that while the agency’s biggest gains were in skills development and training, these categories still were below the federal government average. “Our field employees received extensive training through SBA University this year, and we will extend that initiative to headquarters in 2008. We are working to build an effective development program for all employees. This will continue to enhance employee skills in serving entrepreneurs and disaster victims nationwide. It’s just one of the ways we’ll continue to improve agency operations in FY 2008.”

Preston also noted that employee surveys were just one of the tools SBA is using to improve performance. “Ultimately, what matters is how well we are serving the disaster victims, entrepreneurs and small businesses who count on us.”

The survey is available at:

http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_homepage/serv_2007employee_surveyresult.pdf

Survey trend data is at:

http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_homepage/serv_sbaemployee_surveytrend.pdf

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