

CASE STUDY

THE CHALLENGE

Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc. (BWSC) discovered that employee dissatisfaction stemmed largely from an inadequate benefits program. The complications with the program were causing distractions and a lack of productivity, as well as engagement and retention problems.

THE SOLUTION

- The Work Institute created an incumbent survey with probing “why” questions to determine exact reasons for dissatisfaction with the benefits program
- The survey provided opportunities to indicate all reasons for discontent, as well as the chance to specify the most important.

IMPACT

- Revealed cost sharing opportunities of immediate savings of \$80,000
- Resulted in a revamp of the benefits program with options to better meet the needs of individual employees
- Employee dissatisfaction fell to less than 8%

The Work Institute is a leader in workforce intelligence combining workforce research, human capital analytics and financial metrics to help companies attract, hire and retain talent, improve performance, diminish risk and manage human capital cost.

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A DIG DEEPER REVEALS PRECISE REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION

THE BEST WAY TO LEARN WHAT YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE THINKING IS TO ASK THEM. CONDUCT STAY INTERVIEWS TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR EMPLOYEES’ MAIN POINTS OF DISCONTENTION ARE AND HOW TO ADDRESS THEM.

In 2003, Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc. (BWSC) asserted itself as a forward thinking company that strives to understand its workforce and protect its employees. After 50 successful years, they recognized that for another 50 years of success, they would need deep analysis to pinpoint areas of concern for their employees and provide actionable data. Therefore, BWSC brought in The Work Institute (TWI) to facilitate an initiative focused around employee satisfaction.

This effort commenced by establishing baseline information on the entire population and then to attaining pulse intelligence every month. The initial engagement survey revealed that the focus should be on the benefits program. It was clear that the current program was not meeting the needs of the BWSC employees. When asked to rate the benefit package using Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, or Poor, 36.8% percent of their employees rated the healthcare program as “fair” or “poor” and only 9% percent rated the healthcare program as “excellent.” This level of dissatisfaction was distracting employees and affecting the organization’s overall productivity and profitability.

In order to obtain the actionable data needed to make positive changes, TWI and BWSC designed a new survey around the benefits program, including open ended questions. Using the survey responses, Blackwelder identified major issues and began to address them. First, the benefit program represented

a major cost to BWSC because of utilization patterns and poor cost-sharing protocols. Second, communication between the insurance carriers, BWSC Human Resources and the employees was not effective. Finally, an unusually high number of customer service issues were distracting employees and causing problems with productivity. The dissatisfaction level was affecting employee satisfaction, retention and engagement.

After analyzing the quantitative data along with verbatim comments, BWSC began developing its current benefit program concentrated on resolving these three areas of discontent. BWSC responded by switching carriers, implementing cost sharing with employees, and offering three healthcare plans. To increase communication, BWSC conducted benefit meetings in each location, bringing in representatives who walked employees through the plan options. The new healthcare plans and the communications program BWSC used to introduce them yielded results. Employee responses indicated an immediate decrease in distractions due to the benefits program and a positive increase in employee engagement. By 2005, employee dissatisfaction had fallen to less than 8%.

Today, BWSC continues to partner with TWI using ongoing interviews and surveys to guide the company to powerful, cost-effective decisions that impact employee productivity and retention. This strategy has kept dissatisfaction low and engagement high.