PMES 2020 METHODOLOGY GUIDE

Using this guide

This guide is for human resources (HR) practitioners, people managers and employees who want to know more about the inner workings of the People Matter Employee Survey (PMES).

Survey design

The PMES is a comprehensive employee experience questionnaire. Its practical, action-oriented questions draw upon many well-established models of employee experience. Each year, the Public Service Commission (PSC) tests new and existing questions with public sector employees to ensure the survey is contemporary and measuring all the things it needs to measure.

The core attitudinal questions are grouped into topics (e.g. Employee engagement, Inclusion and diversity) to help people better digest the results. Looking at a whole topic, instead of a single question, is also more robust from a data quality perspective.

Analysis methods

Most questions in the People Matter survey involve a five-point Likert scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with a neutral neither agree nor disagree option. Some questions use other types of answer options (e.g. yes, no and prefer not to say).

Most responses are grouped into % favourable (sum of 'strongly agree' and 'agree'), % neutral, and % unfavourable (sum of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'). The % favourable score is used to calculate a total score for a topic, which is a grouping of related questions.

% favourable, neutral, and unfavourable – questions and topics

Most responses are grouped into % favourable (sum of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses divided by total number of responses), % neutral, and % unfavourable (sum of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree ' responses divided by total number of responses). The % favourable score for individual questions can be grouped together to obtain a % favourable score for a topic. The % favourable score for a topic is the sum of all 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses for questions in the topic divided by the total number of responses for the topic.

Employee engagement index calculation

Each person who answered all five employee engagement questions gets an employee engagement score. Each answer is assigned a score as follows:

- 100 to 'strongly agree'
- 75 to 'agree'
- 50 to 'neither agree nor disagree'
- 25 to 'disagree'
- 0 to 'strongly disagree'

The employee's engagement score is calculated as the average of the five question scores. Employees' scores are then averaged to calculate a team or organisation's engagement score.

Rounding

Results are presented as whole numbers (or, sometimes, to one decimal place) for ease of reading. Results will not always add up to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5 are rounded down. Values equal to or greater than 0.5 are rounded up. Here's an example of how rounding can impact the scoring:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Number of responses	151	166	176	96	24	613
Percentage	24.63%	27.08%	28.71%	15.66%	3.92%	100%
Rounded percentage	25%	27%	29%	16%	4%	101%

Trend

The same five-point answer scale was used in the 2019, 2018, 2017 and 2016 surveys, allowing a comparison of scores between years. New questions in 2020 do not have any trend data.

Key drivers of employee engagement

The key drivers of employee engagement are the survey questions most strongly related to (or correlated with) engagement in your team or organisation. Improving these areas together with focussing on improving topic group scores could help boost employee engagement.

Privacy

Survey responses are collected on an anonymous basis. The responses remain confidential unless disclosure of the information is required or authorised by or under an Australian law or a court/tribunal order.

The PSC uses the anonymous data to produce reports that summarise responses from employees of public sector organisations. It provides the reports to public sector organisations to help inform internal management decisions and organisational improvements.

The data provided in the reports includes, in de-identified and aggregated form, question results, a respondent profile (e.g. demographics, employment status), and cluster and agency comparisons. Free text comments made by respondents, and which are de-identified, are provided to public sector organisations.

There is a strict lower limit of 10 for reporting workgroup and demographic group results to help protect against identification of individuals. An even stricter lower limit of 30 applies to the free text comments.

The PSC also uses the anonymous, individual level data for internal research purposes, such as exploring the relationship between tenure and employee engagement.

More information about the survey process

The PMES frequently asked questions page answers some common questions about the survey. You can also email the PSC at employeesurvey@psc.nsw.gov.au.