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WHAT MIGHT A FLY ON THE WALL  
BE WORTH TO YOU IN  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING?**

ORGANISATIONAL **SURVEY TRENDS**

**AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP**

VALUE OF  
**BOOMERS**

Human Capital Management: The Heart of Smart Business Management

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# ORGANISATIONAL SURVEY TRENDS

Linking existing data to organisational surveys throughout employees' life cycles will ensure that your money is well spent.

THE PLACE TO OBTAIN THE LATEST INFORMATION AND METHODOLOGY ON ORGANISATIONAL SURVEYS IS THE ANNUAL SIOP CONFERENCE IN THE USA. THE 20TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE FROM 15 TO 17 APRIL 2005 IN LOS ANGELES. THE CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY 3301 INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN TOTAL 1000 PRESENTATIONS CONSISTING OF 275 SESSIONS AND 40 THEMES WERE PRESENTED DURING THE TWO AND A HALF DAYS.

It is not easy to select cutting edge information from so many presentations. We were, however, very interested in a presentation of Al Colquitt and W H Macey from Eli Lilly, which they called 'Survey throughout the employment lifecycle: What matters, when'. The reason for our interest is the tendency of organisations in South Africa to use organisational surveys as a once off or annual assessment which is not necessarily integrated with other organisational data. We will briefly discuss the most important learning points.

## MEASUREMENT DOMAINS

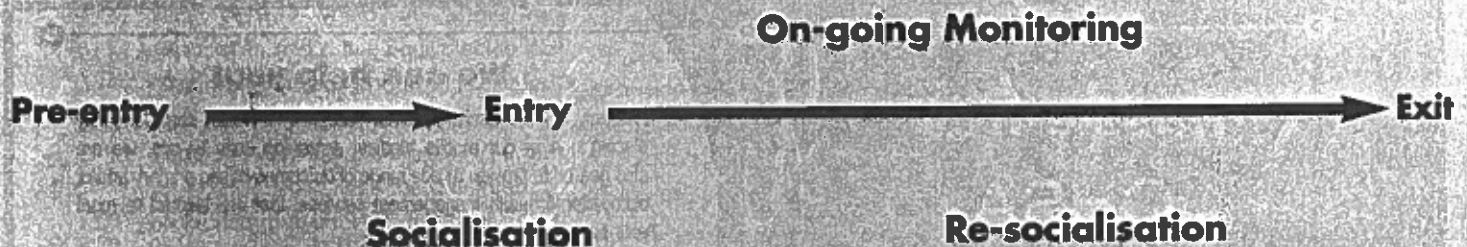
The first important aspect of any organisational survey is to understand what should be measured and why. Also very important is to provide or develop an integrative framework of the concepts to be measured. Being able to do this, the next step is to clarify the different reference points from an organisational perspective. Lilly developed the following adapted model which includes all the measurement stages

during the life cycle of an employee.

## PROPOSED PROCESS FOR ORGANISATIONAL SURVEYS

- > **Pre-entry** During this phase the organisation goes into a partnership with schools and universities. The organisation then conducts surveys at the schools and universities regarding the organisation's image, brand, students career goals, preferred organisations to work for, and so forth. Typical questions are:
  - > Which of the following companies are you familiar with?
  - > Which of the following companies would you consider working for?
- > **Entry** The purpose of assessments during this phase is to obtain an understanding of how well employees are adjusting, any issues they might have and how they are integrating into the culture and climate. Typical statements are:
  - > I believe I fit well into the culture of this company; and
  - > My supervisor has discussed with me how things get done in my department.
- > **On-going monitoring** This is the typical employees' satisfaction or climate survey most of us are familiar with. The themes that are measured focus on topics such as:
  - > job satisfaction;

## Reference points from an organisational perspective



- career development;
  - performance evaluation;
  - communication; and
  - company satisfaction.
- **Exit** This is a phase not many organisations enjoy embarking on. The purpose of this phase is to get feedback on why people leave the company. The methodology which Lilly uses is to send out a monthly survey to all people who have left the organisation. These cover things such as:
- Reasons for leaving; and
  - Typical attitude survey questions linked to the previous survey.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

What has Lilly learned from these life-long measurements?

- It is better to focus on life-long measurements than on dipsticks which are not integrated;
- Relationships and organisational perceptions develop early on. It is usually better to spend money during the engagement phase to keep employees committed to an organisation; and
- It makes sense to link survey results from the pre-entry phase up to the exit phase. This highlights specific trends, issues and areas to focus on.

In South Africa we have the tendency to request an organisational survey when things are going well, if we intend future changes or when things are not going well. In most organisations, the results of organisational surveys are not linked to existing data or pre-entry information of the organisation. By linking this data to surveys throughout employees' life cycles, organisations will highlight critical issues timeously and spend their money wisely. **HR: Prof Nico Martins is with the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology Unisa ([www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)).**

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