



the monthly croak

It is almost May and we can agree with the sentiment that time flies when you are having fun! Thank you for the huge response to our request for survey horror stories. We mention a couple of the common ones on the last page of this months edition. We are hearing more stories every month about surveys that have actually caused a reduction in motivation or engagement levels within organisations. If you have any queries or comments on a research practice you have heard about please feel free to contact us to discuss it or for any ideas/insights we might have, we are happy to help!

In this months issue, due to popular demand, we are focusing on money – the thing that some say makes the world go round, others see it as the root of all evil. Either way there is less of it around at the moment and everyone is trying to make the most of what they have and to be purposeful with their spending. In this months issue we also review a classic management book [The Peter Principle](#), and we share an alternative way to attract more money!

survival tips from donald trump

I recently read this article written by Donald Trump. Love him or hate him he makes some interesting points!

What's happened to the economy has been likened to a tsunami as well as an implosion. When the undersea earthquake and subsequent tsunami hit in Indonesia in 2004, the world was stunned by the devastation that took place. It triggered earthquakes around the globe as far away as Alaska. It happened in a very short amount of time. This kind of event takes shape over a period of time and then erupts with incredible force. What happened this past year is similar in that respect — it'd been brewing for some time. When it hit, it was like a tsunami which caused other economies to start crumbling as well. We are all familiar with that scenario. What we need to do now is deal with it. The aftermath of a tsunami requires surveying the damage, picking up the pieces and moving on. Some people have bigger losses than others, but everyone has to keep going. When it comes to implosion, it's more of a cave-in than a wipe-out, but equally potent. We saw the effects of an implosion watching the towers fall on 9/11. It's a domino effect. We won't sink because we can swim, but let's not go the way of dominos. Let's be smart and learn to think for ourselves in positioning ourselves for what comes next. Here are a few survival tips:

1. **Pay attention** to national and international news and finance coverage at least several times a day, preferably hourly. In volatile times, vigilance is necessary.
2. **Absorb, assess, and then act.** Knowledge without action is impotence.
3. **When a tsunami hits, there's no time for procrastination.** Keep your momentum in tune with the times.
4. **Avoid your comfort zone** — it's probably outdated anyway.
5. **If you're honest, you should know the questions that should be asked**, as well as the answers. That's probably why there's so much confusion out there today.
6. **Remember The Blitz.** That can put things into perspective. Things may be tough and getting tougher, but we're not being bombed day in and day out either. If you don't know what The Blitz is, use your time wisely to study WWII to find out.
7. Is your life half empty or half full? Half is better than zip. **Count your blessings.**
8. Realize that **fear is the exact opposite of faith.**
9. **Resolve to be bigger than your problems.**
10. Who's the boss? **Don't negate your own power.** Whatever you've been dealt, know you can deal with it.

- Donald J. Trump, author of *Think Like a Champion: An Informal Education In Business and Life*

5 ways to keep employees engaged and productive in a downturn

- 1. Capitalise on "engageable moments."** An engageable moment is a critical juncture for maintaining and building engagement. It might occur during such programs as new hires' on boarding, performance management and remuneration reviews or when the organisation goes through particularly challenging economic times. Data shows that engagement starts off high among new employees, but tapers through careers -- average employee engagement drops by 9 percent in the first year alone. Almost three-quarters (71 percent) of employees on the job for less than six months said that they are motivated to do their best work every day. This number drops to 57 percent after six months. Companies need to identify and take action around engageable moments to minimise or potentially even reverse this decline.
- 2. Demonstrate strong leadership and clear direction.** When times are difficult, employees want to know about their organisation's specific plans and progress. Decisive action backed by clearly articulated rationale can build support for corporate initiatives, particularly when individual performance objectives and rewards are tied to corporate objectives.
- 3. Emphasise customer focus.** In difficult times, employees are aware that job security is strengthened by satisfied customers. Emphasising customer satisfaction keeps employees from being too internally focused and provides a common direction to move the organisation forward.
- 4. Institute and communicate a system of equitable rewards.** While it may be necessary to cut back on rewards, organisations need to understand which reward programs are most important to engage their critical employee segments. Changes to rewards need to be communicated in a way that is consistent with delivering on the employment deal. Employees who indicate their organisation effectively delivers on the employment deal are 20 times as likely to be highly engaged and 50 percent more likely to be top performers.
- 5. Invest in the core.** The key to driving productivity gains is increasing engagement among core contributors, who represent 60 percent of the typical workforce. Highly engaged employees are already working at or near their peak but are often limited by their less engaged co-workers. Focusing on engaging core contributors can improve both groups' productivity.

perceptions of job security and engagement

Many would assume that recently-heightened fears of job loss have translated directly into employees exerting extra discretionary effort at work, in the hopes of creating job security. However, recent research has shown, just the opposite is occurring with disengaged employees, a group defined as showing little loyalty, lackluster commitment, and the bare motivation to provide great customer service.

Four years ago, 41 percent of disengaged employees surveyed worried about job security. Despite the tough economic outlook experienced in 2008 the percentage of disengaged employees maintaining this concern for job security dropped by nearly half (to 21 percent).

Results for engaged employees, on the other hand, showed the effects of those worried about job loss; the number of engaged employees feeling most insecure about their jobs doubled from six percent to 14 percent during the timeframe. Engaged Employees demonstrate commitment to an organization, along with loyalty and a willingness to go above what is required, in order to ensure a better outcome for customers and the organization.

The irony of this research cannot be overstated; the employees who should be most concerned about job security are the disengaged employees, who actually have less fear in that regard. On the other hand, the very people who should have the least concern for job loss are the Engaged Employees. This differentiation gets to the heart of the character of Engaged versus Disengaged Employees; the Engaged are more conscientious about, and connected to, their job.

the peter principle - why things always go wrong - Laurence Peter & Raymond Hull

This book caused a storm when first published in 1969, battering up the best-seller list to #1, charming readers and giving the world an answer to a question that nags us all: Why is incompetence so maddeningly rampant? The book and the phrase it defined are now considered comedic-yet-classic cornerstones of organisational thought, and in honour of the book's fortieth anniversary, Robert I. Sutton has written a foreword introducing the book to a new generation of readers.

The Peter Principle explains that "in a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence." Everyone—from the office intern to the CEO, from the low-level civil servant to a nation's Prime Minister—will inevitably rise to his or her level of incompetence, if it hasn't happened already. Dr. Peter's explains why incompetence is at the root of everything we endeavour to do—why schools bestow ignorance, why governments condone anarchy, why courts dispense injustice, why prosperity causes unhappiness, and why utopian plans never generate utopia. The book explains how incompetence and its accompanying symptoms, syndromes, and remedies define the world and the work we do in it. The book is full of case histories and cartoons showing how the corporate career track drives employees relentlessly upward -- until they get promoted into jobs they just can't do and wind up desperately treading water, driving their colleagues crazy, and dragging down productivity and profit. It is a amusing read that will make you wonder....have I reached my level of incompetence yet....

survey nightmares

We were able to fit the survey stories we received four key categories:

1. Survey Fatigue – We received an email about an organisation that was surveying its employees every 2 months to assess what changes had taken place after the introduction of an initiative. Survey Fatigue is a real problem with all types of surveys. Just consider how fed up you may get with tele-surveys or online polls. We are all for measuring the success of initiatives but you really need to give them the opportunity to work and to reveal all the impacts on the organisation over time.
2. Falsifying Results – An email we received outlined what is essentially cheating on a workplace survey. High ranking staff members in an organisation sat with staff as they completed the online assessment, the organisation received accolades for their high scores, but really they were meaningless.
3. Overly complex surveys – We received a couple of emails about the complexity of surveys, one that was over 85 questions long which is just over the top for the vast majority of organisations and one that was 60 questions. While is is not so bad it was administered to a large number of staff in English, when English was not their first language, many spoke none at all.....it is very important to pitch your survey for your organisation and for your purposes.
4. Lack of confidentiality – We were horrified to hear of an organisation that was able to identify individuals from a survey labelled as confidential. This is one way to ensure a low response rate the following year!!

Thanks again for all the feedback – rest assured if you used the [Kissing Frogs team](#) for your next workplace survey you would not find any of these practices occurring!

money frog

With all this money talk we thought we should provide you with a way of getting some more. According to Feng Shui a money frog will attract abundance and wealth and can help prevent bad luck that might lead to monetary problems. The money frog must be placed in one's living room or the main business room, specifically at the diagonally opposite corner of the door of entrance. Follow the link and find out how to make your very own [origami frog](#).

Hope it works for you all!!! Have a great month!