Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

2009 Employee Survey Action Plan

Information System Services Division
Addressing Employee Concerns

May 2010

**Thank you for responding to our Employee Survey.
We are interested. We are committed. We are making improvements.**

We appreciate the valuable input you provided to us through the 2009 Employee Survey. Your 93% response rate demonstrated your keen interest in helping us identify what's working well and what needs changing. Your survey results showed progress we've made over prior surveys, and also highlighted opportunities for us to make further improvements.

An ISSD Focus Group, which included unit representatives, proposed an Action Plan to serve as a high-level roadmap to guide these improvements. The ISSD Extended Management Team reviewed the Focus Group suggestions and has made a commitment to achieve Action Plan results on our five top priorities.

Top Priorities

- Knowing how my work contributes to the goals of my agency
- Knowing how my agency measures its success
- Having opportunities at work to learn and grow
- Using my time and talents well
- Being encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things

As our work continues, we can expect to face challenges and changes in what we do and how we do it. Yet whatever comes our way, I am confident that we'll continue to innovate and work together to meet these challenges and adapt to our changing environment. With a focus on achieving our Department's vision of safe, healthy individuals, families, and communities, we are committed to making progress together.

I thank you for your dedication, and look forward to working closely with you to build on our earlier successes.

– Rob St. John, Chief Information Officer

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Employee Survey Action Plan
Focus Issues: Knowing how my work contributes to the goals of my agency
Knowing how my agency measures its success

Information System Services Division

May 2010

Question: I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency

Response	Percentage
Always	42%
Usually	38%
Occasionally	15%
Seldom	4%
Never	2%
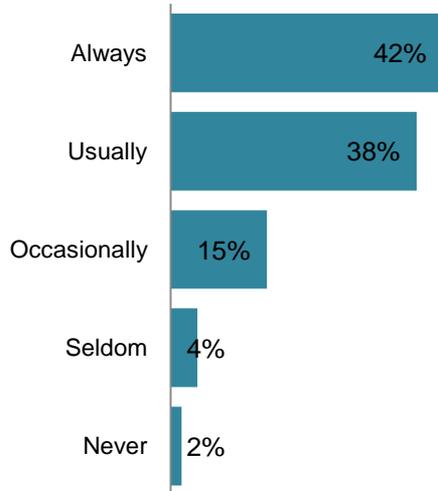
Summary of the issues

We'd like to build a stronger sense of connection between our ongoing work and Department goals and success measures. Our survey results for the question, "**I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency**," came in with 80% responding "Always" or "Usually" in 2009 compared with 84% in 2007, and 74% in 2006.

Our results for the question, "**I know how my agency measures its success**," came in at 46% responding "Always" or "Usually" in 2009, up slightly from 45% in 2007.

So far, we've:

- Promoted the DSHS Framework for the Future ("One Department, One Vision, One Mission, One Core Set of Values), which includes the Department's key priorities and actions, through *InsideISSD* and CIO Corner messages
- Created a tactical initiative dashboard site on *InsideISSD* and a project management dashboard site on iShare to serve as central resources for regular success-measure tracking and reporting
- Continued to post monthly IT Project Dashboard Reports and Government Management and Accountability measures, adding new measures as new projects initiated
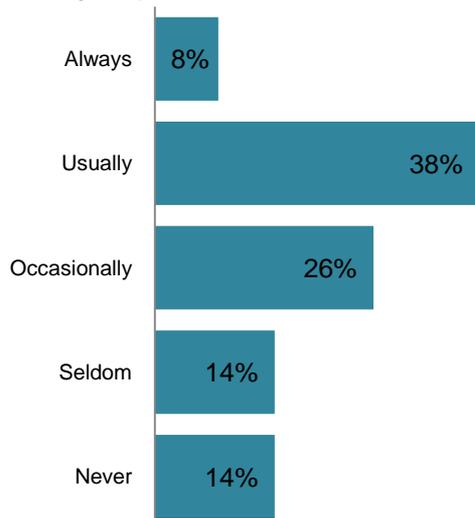
Employee Survey Action Plan
Focus Issues: Knowing how my work contributes to the goals of my agency
Knowing how my agency measures its success

Question: *I know how my agency measures its success*

Response	Percentage
Always	8%
Usually	38%
Occasionally	26%
Seldom	14%
Never	14%

Employees say:

"We'd like to see reduced program/administration 'silo thinking' and more action toward 'One Department, One Vision, One Mission, One Core Set of Values.'"

So far, we've:

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- Involved staff at all levels of the organization in the tactical planning process, and routinely reported progress on tactical initiatives at work unit and all-staff meetings
- Routinely reviewed unit performance measures and metrics
- Linked performance development plans to strategic and tactical plans
- Participated in the development of the Department's Core Performance Measures

Future plans:

- Clearly communicate agency goals and performance measures, and improve understanding of linkages between these goals and measures, ISSD services, and employees' day-to-day work
- Promote employee understanding of DSHS clients and programs, as well as partner administrations' specific business and IT goals, by increasing staff exposure to program news and information
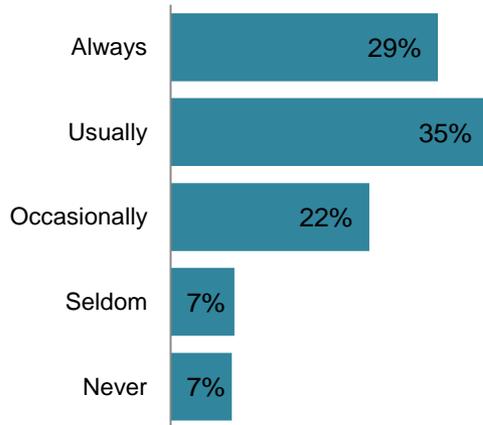
Employee Survey Action Plan
Focus Issues: Having opportunities at work to learn and grow
Using my time and talents well

Information System Services Division

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Summary of the issues

Providing growth opportunities and effectively using time and talent are essential for attracting, developing, and retaining an excellent workforce. With 64% of you responding "Always" or "Usually" to the question, "I have opportunities at work to learn and grow," our results slipped from 68% in 2007, while still showing some improvement over 62% in 2006.

With 64% of you responding "Always" or "Usually" to the question, "My agency uses my time and talents well," our results slipped from 68% in 2007, while showing significant improvement over 54% in 2006.

Question: I have opportunities at work to learn and grow

Always	29%
Usually	35%
Occasionally	22%
Seldom	7%
Never	7%

So far, we've:

- Implemented employee training plans to maintain/advance skills and education
- Created more cross-training and in-training opportunities within the division, most notably through developmental job assignments
- Encouraged and supported technical certification for designated positions
- Offered self-paced online training resources through lynda.com, the Microsoft E-Learning Library, and the Department of Personnel eLearning Network
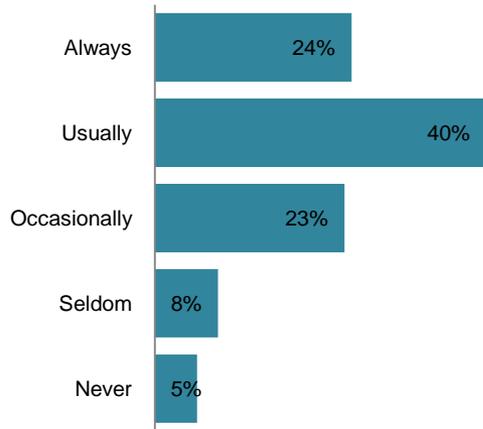
Employee Survey Action Plan
Focus Issues: Having opportunities at work to learn and grow
Using my time and talents well

Future plans:

- Closely link employee training to the agency roadmap/strategic and tactical plans
- Provide creative training opportunities and find ways to showcase employee talents and skills
- Continue to promote career development opportunities for staff in support of the succession plan

Question: *My agency uses my time and talents well*

Always	24%
Usually	40%
Occasionally	23%
Seldom	8%
Never	5%

Employees say:

"We'd like more cross-training and a better career path with opportunities for advancement."

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Employee Survey Action Plan
Focus Issue: Being encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things

Question: I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things

Response	Percentage
Always	30%
Usually	36%
Occasionally	18%
Seldom	8%
Never	8%

Employees say:

"We like working with customers to find ways to improve processes."

Summary of the issue

In light of the current demands of our challenging fiscal environment, it is more important than ever to improve efficiencies. With 66% of you responding "Always" or "Usually" to the question, "I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things," our results slipped from 72% in 2007, while still showing improvement over 59% in 2006.
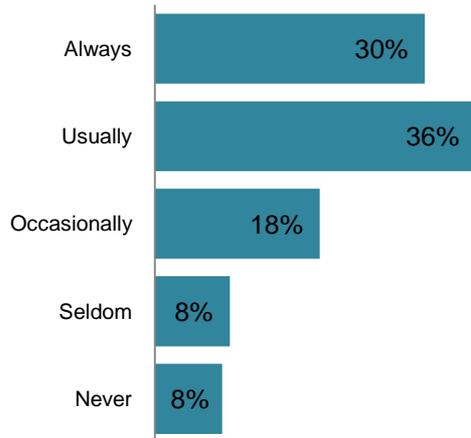
So far, we've:

- Initiated and begun work on ISSD's Pro-Ops (Progressive Operations) Project to identify and build on best practices and apply best practices from other high-performing IT organizations to build processes and implement supporting tools that will provide high quality and highly available services to our customers
- Encouraged staff at all levels of the organization to propose Tactical Plan initiatives to streamline/improve work processes
- Through CIO Corner messages and team meetings, regularly invited employee ideas for increasing our efficiency and effectiveness

Future plans:

- Promote avenues to share and utilize cost-saving, barrier-busting, and process-improvement ideas within ISSD
- Recognize and share effective service and staff management practices

Employee Survey Action Plan
Other Important Issues: Communications

Information System Services Division

May 2010

Resources and workload do not allow us to include every issue raised by the survey or identified by the ISSD Focus Group within this Action Plan.

This by no means diminishes the importance of those issues. We will address additional issues as time and resources become available.

Employees say:

"We'd like to see better communication between managers and workers."

Summary

Effective communications strengthen our organization, improve our service delivery, and contribute to positive Employee Survey results. Some Focus Group suggestions for improving communications built on work we've already begun through our strategic and tactical plans. Other suggestions focused specifically on building more effective communications between managers and their teams. Bottom line: the better we communicate, the better we perform.

So far, we've:

- Increased volume and frequency of news postings on *InsideISSD*
- Posted monthly CIO Corner messages, held quarterly ISSD all-staff meetings
- Held "brown bag" events to provide frequent updates on Shared Services and planning for the new state data center (The Wheeler Project)

Future plans:

- Create an expectation that managers hold routine (at least monthly) one-on-one and unit staff meetings to promote communication within and between units; give priority to sharing appropriate conversations from management discussions
- Challenge managers/supervisors to actively work on identifying and resolving information gaps within and between their teams
- Provide mechanisms to support recognition of successes and achievements by individuals and by teams