



Understanding staff needs at Scott Wilson



About Scott Wilson Group:

Established in 1954, Scott Wilson Group is an international consultancy offering integrated professional services in the transportation, property, environment and natural resources sectors.

www.scottwilson.com

Scott Wilson, the international professional services consultancy, has conducted its first global employee engagement survey - and used an online exit questionnaire - to gain a greater understanding of its staff needs.

Working with TalentDrain, the Group has collected open and honest feedback on what it's like to work at Scott Wilson, and where improvements could be made, as well as why key employees, including graduates, were leaving. As a result, the Group has introduced new employee retention interventions, instigated consistent practice across its business and cut its attrition rate by more than a fifth (from 19 to 15 per cent), which equates to a recruitment cost saving of almost £2.5 million.

After substantial growth and selective acquisitions, to broaden its expertise and enhance its international presence, Scott Wilson Group's number one HR priority was recruitment. But when it began to face a challenge in resourcing its projects, it changed its focus to employee engagement and retention.

"We were winning work but we were also shedding staff," said David Walters, Resourcing and Development Director at Scott Wilson. *"Our biggest threat was whether we would be able to deliver against the opportunities."*

Gathering exit data

Despite conducting face-to-face exit interviews with leavers, Scott Wilson could not pinpoint exactly why employees were leaving. It decided to try TalentDrain's ExitEye, an online exit questionnaire which leavers complete anonymously.

"We felt that individuals might be more honest about why they were leaving, if they were able to tell us anonymously," said David Walters. *"We liked TalentDrain. Their exit questionnaire is an easy-to-use tool that enables us to gather consistent data."*

TalentDrain analysed the responses. The findings were presented to Scott Wilson's senior management board and then cascaded to each UK business.



Understanding staff needs at Scott Wilson



“The results showed that people valued the ability to work independently and they liked the relationships with their managers,” said David Walters. *“However, we found that we were losing staff, in some parts of the business, primarily because of issues relating to reward and career progression. Good performers didn’t feel properly rewarded for their efforts.”*

As a result, Scott Wilson created a talent management strategy, launched a new talent management programme and introduced new performance-related pay and bonuses as well as internal networking events for its graduate population. These initiatives have helped the Group to cut its attrition rate by four per cent.

“Working with TalentDrain has enabled us to raise the issue of employee retention up the corporate agenda,” said David Walters. *“Now, line managers see it as a shared responsibility, not just an HR concern. We have initiatives in place and we have much more consistent practice across our business.”*

Use of the exit questionnaire is ongoing and TalentDrain provides exit data reports every six months.

Global employee survey

Scott Wilson has an international network of 80 offices, in the UK, China, Hong Kong, India, South East Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. It employs around 6,000 staff.

The Group had previously undertaken employee surveys in-house for its UK staff. When it wanted to extend this, to run its first global employee engagement survey, it decided to use TalentDrain’s TalentPulse online diagnostic tool.

“We wanted to find out what our employees felt about working with us,” said David Walters. *“We also wanted to ensure that our recent acquisitions had been fully integrated and we felt a global employee survey would provide a starting point for this.”*

Over 70 per cent of Scott Wilson employees provided feedback anonymously through the survey. TalentDrain hosted the survey and presented the findings to the Group’s HR managers, who then fed the data back to the business managers.

“We were delighted with the open and honest responses,” said David Walters. *“TalentPulse looks at satisfaction levels in relation to importance ratings. This helps you to make a real difference because you can concentrate your efforts on the key issues that employees rate as important and not waste time and energy changing aspects*



Understanding staff needs at Scott Wilson



that are not particularly significant for your staff. We now have fantastic data on what our employees like and don't like about working at Scott Wilson and on what they think we should do to improve things."

TalentDrain provided reports breaking the responses down by division, job grade, professional community, country and location. The company also provided useful comparative data which allowed Scott Wilson to benchmark its performance against similar organisations and professional services firms.

"We're now developing action plans in response to the data," said David Walters. "We're looking to join-up our functions much more, by pulling together practitioners from across the organisation into single teams. This should give us even better scope for cross-business career development."

According to David Walters, the combination of exit data and a global employee survey has given Scott Wilson a greater understanding of its staff needs.

"In a consulting business, your employees are the most critical factor that will impact on your reputation, your level of innovation and your ability to deliver business results," he said. "We now have very strong data on what we're doing well and where we need to improve. This will not only help us to manage our businesses better but it will also enhance our ability to recruit and retain staff in the future."

For more information, please call TalentDrain on +44 (0)870 760 6598 or e-mail info@talentdrain.com. www.talentdrain.com