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ThirdSector

Fundraiser feedback

Charity Pulse 2012

Survey report

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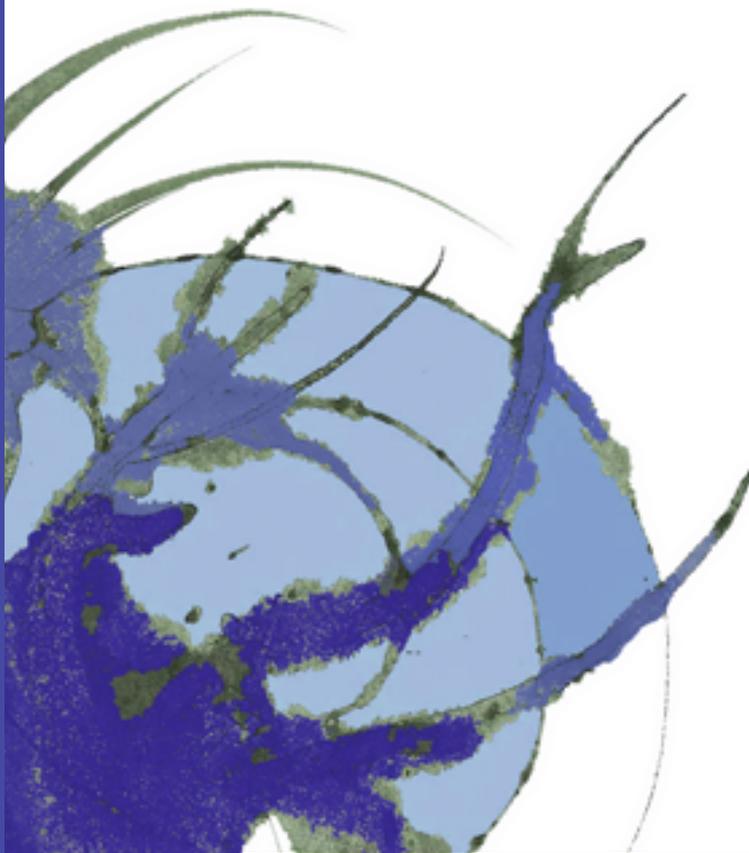
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Headlines

This time last year we were writing encouraging words about UK fundraiser morale. Compared with colleagues in other departments, fundraisers were feeling pretty positive. Indeed, they were happier than other charity employees in every area of the survey.

What a difference a year makes...

The *Charity Pulse 2012* survey results show that although pressure is increasing on all charity staff, fundraisers are now *less* happy than their peers due to a big drop in satisfaction. Everyone is struggling, but fundraiser satisfaction has fallen the most:

- Just 52% would now recommend their charity as an employer - down from 73% last year.
- 47% of fundraisers are planning to be working at their charity in a year's time - down from 59% last year.
- 50% of fundraisers believe that morale in their charity is low - up from 28% in 2011.

These are significant changes, so what is happening here?

Three areas of working life emerge as the focus of fundraiser concerns:

- Their charity's leadership
- The quality of people management
- The effectiveness of processes and procedures

The lack of a pay increase will also be giving many fundraisers cause for complaint, but it is interesting to note that the three areas contributing most to fundraiser dissatisfaction this year do not require a windfall from a generous donor - or additional staff. Indeed, improving charity leadership, people management and the effectiveness of procedures is likely to save a charity money - as well as cheer up the fundraisers. What you might call a win-win.

What fundraisers are telling us

50% of fundraisers believe that morale in their charity is low - up from 28% in 2011. Just 52% would be prepared to recommend their charity as an employer - down from 73% last year.

From analysis of the fundraiser responses to the *Charity Pulse 2012* survey, three areas of working life emerge as the focus of fundraiser concerns:

Charity leadership

There is less confidence in charity leadership in 2012. Only 45% of fundraisers believe that their senior management team is effective, compared to 59% in 2011. Just 34% of fundraisers think their senior management are well informed about what they think and do, compared to 43% last year. In both of these areas fundraisers are now less happy than their peers in other departments.

When asked what they would like to change, fundraisers told us:

"We need more clarity over where we are going and what we are doing."

"We need a senior management team that has the skills, experience and vision to successfully lead a charity in the 21st century."

"The ability to make key decisions faster and more bravely."

"Unrealistic expectations of fundraising."

"To have a clear, consistent strategy for fundraising that is well planned and coordinated".

People management

When it comes to people management, there are a number of areas where fundraisers are not feeling happy. Just 51% feel that their views are listened to and valued, down from 70% last year. To put this figure into context, the lowest fundraiser response to this question over the previous five years of the survey was 64%. This decline is typical of the pattern we are seeing across the survey this year.

Worryingly, 38% of fundraisers do not feel that it is safe to challenge the way things are done at their charity. This figure is up from just 18% in 2011. And yet there is clearly increased pressure being applied to fundraisers when it comes to getting results. Only 54% of fundraisers now feel that the results expected of them are realistic, compared to 60% of charity staff as a whole.

Fundraisers are also more concerned about how poor performance is dealt with than other staff. 57% feel that it is handled badly, compared to 49% of all survey respondents.

When it comes to what could be done better at their charity, fundraisers told us:

"Our ineffectiveness in dealing with poor performers - especially if they are bosses."

"Better support and understanding from senior management."

"That I was as trusted, valued and respected as I used to be."

"More valuing of different skill sets and allowing people to do the jobs they were employed to do."

Processes and procedures

Finally, the survey results point to growing fundraiser frustration with their charity's processes and procedures. This year, 45% of the fundraisers responding to the survey said that they believe their charity's processes are getting in the way of them doing a good job. This compares to just 30% last year and 26% in 2010. Analysis also shows that fundraisers are more concerned about this than other charity staff.

What is going on here?

Well, we might get some insight from the other main area of fundraiser concern - cross-departmental working and communications. 50% of fundraisers believe that communication between different departments is ineffective – up from 32% last year. Just 23% think it is effective, compared to the all charity staff figure of 28%.

Specifically on these topics, fundraisers told us:

“The management structure and the policies and procedures should be more robust and adhered to.”

“KPI's and targets - people aim to meet those and forget WHY they are key to our work. They become the end in themselves rather than the measure.”

“I would want better communication between teams. The current structure isn't necessarily best suited to our work. Current teams can clash rather than work cohesively.”

“We have some extremely bureaucratic processes that hold us back. Using a new supplier is almost impossible, even if they are cheaper or highly respected.”

Overall, just 47% of fundraisers are planning to be working at their charity in a year's time - down from 59% last year.

Charity Pulse

Charity Pulse is an annual voluntary sector-wide staff satisfaction survey conducted by Birdsong Charity Consulting and *Third Sector* magazine. This year's survey ran during March and April 2012. This is the sixth year that we have run the survey.

Charity Pulse is a unique approach to measuring staff satisfaction in the sector, because it enables individuals working for any UK charity to take part. The aim of the research is to build up a picture of working life in charities and help to raise the standard of people management in the sector.

The survey asks charity workers 46 questions about working life at their charity exploring:

- the effectiveness of their management
- the quality of internal communications in their organisation
- their views on development, reward and loyalty
- their morale and work/life balance

It also provides the opportunity for charities to receive cost-effective benchmarked staff satisfaction data, by promoting the survey to their staff.

579 charity people took part this year from over 170 different charities. These respondents included 246 fundraisers. This fundraiser feedback report is drawn from the fundraiser responses to the survey.

For a free download of the full *Charity Pulse 2012* survey report go to: www.bird-song.co.uk and click on Resources

Look out for Charity Pulse 2013!

The next survey will open in March 2013 with *Third Sector* magazine. The more charity people who take part, the more impact and relevance the results will have - so please join in!

If you would like to find out more about running a benchmarked *Charity Pulse* staff satisfaction survey for your charity, visit: www.bird-song.co.uk or contact: **Frances Hurst or Sam Attenborough at info@bird-song.co.uk**.

Birdsong Charity Consulting

People work best when they feel good about themselves - when they are enjoying their work, feeling motivated and appreciated. They don't work best when they feel over-stressed, over-worked and over-looked.

Healthy people create healthy organisations and Birdsong exists to help charities work more effectively with their people. We help charities to become thriving, vibrant organisations where people love to work.

To find out more about Birdsong's work or to download *Charity Pulse* survey reports from previous years visit: www.bird-song.co.uk