

# **DSS Annual Employee Survey**

Good Government Benchmark Analysis  
Multnomah County, Oregon



Department of Support Services

**JANUARY 1999**

*[www.co.multnomah.or.us/budget/eru/index.html](http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/budget/eru/index.html)*

Department Of  
Support Services  
Annual Employee  
Survey  
January 1999

## Dear DSS Employee,

Once again, I'm pleased that so many of you took the time to respond to the DSS Employee Survey. Close to two thirds of you did return a survey and that's a strong response rate.

We really tried to listen to your comments about the instrument itself and produce a shorter, more understandable questionnaire. I think our success was reflected in the lack of negative comments on clarity and length and the positive response that the survey is both helpful and a good use of your time and energy.

I want to give special thanks to our survey committee: Theresa Sullivan, April Lewis, Steve Pearson, and Matt Nice. They really improved the product. Matt Nice deserves a special "thank you" for his work in tabulating and analyzing the survey data and then producing a quality report.

I found the responses really encouraging and useful. For example, we wanted to follow-up on the concern about a lack of recognition. Your answers on what meaningful recognition is make it more likely that we will do things that really address the issues. They were also in agreement with what I heard when I visited with many of you on this issue.

The fact that we saw improved scores on management communication and trust issues was exciting to me. I don't expect us to be perfect, but we do want to be moving in the right direction. I look forward to sharing more of the information with you at the all staff and to working with all of you to improve DSS as an organization.

I believe we have tremendous talent in DSS and am continually impressed by your work quality and dedication. I get so much positive feedback from customers and elected leaders which confirms your commitment to quality. We can use this latest survey both to confirm our progress and help establish our next improvement steps.

Sincerely,

***Vickie***

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## *Who Responded?*

TYPE OF STAFF	N*
68% of respondents were Non-management/ Professionals	78
21% of respondents were Management/ Supervisors	24
11% did not answer this question	13
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>115</b>

\* Number of people



- **Generally, managers/ supervisors have a slightly more positive view on most questions than do non-management/ professionals.**

## *How Long Have They Worked for DSS?*

LENGTH OF SERVICE	N*
20% of respondents had less than 2 years	23
14% of respondents had 2-3 years	16
9% of respondents had 4-5 years	10
41% of respondents had 6 or more years	47
16% did not answer this question	19
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>115</b>

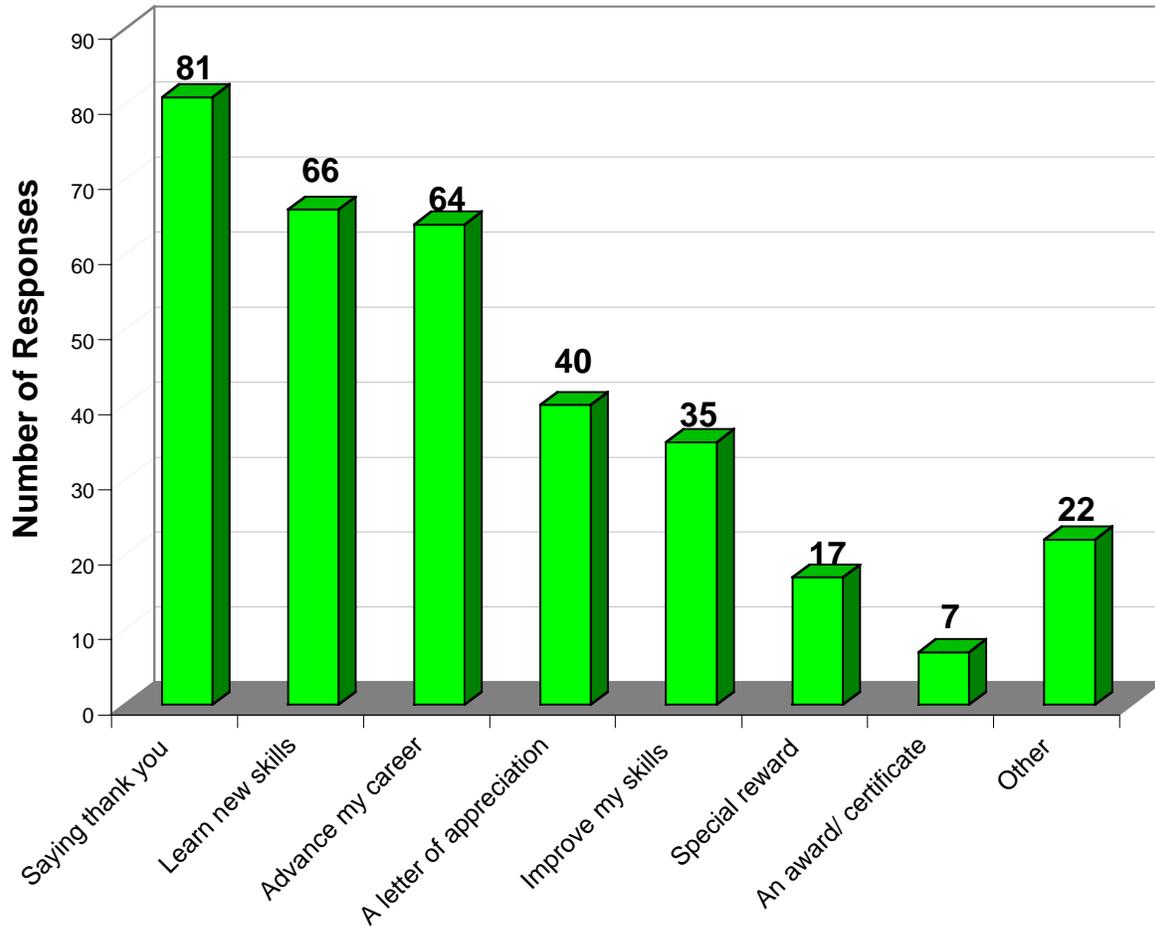
\* Number of people



- **Nearly 17% of the staff at DSS reported that they are new (have been here less than 1 year)**

# MAJOR FINDINGS

## *Question 53. To Me, Meaningful Recognition Is:*



Detailed Breakdown of “Other” Category	Number of Responses
Cash bonuses or perks (time off, parking spots, etc.)	8
Better treatment & recognition by supervisor (respect, opinions sought)	5
Public Recognition (news letter, upper management, etc.)	4
Verbal affirmations	2
Other (could not be coded)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

- **Most employees (70%) indicated that verbal affirmations and learning new skills were their ideas of meaningful recognition, however 31% of employees say they are not receiving it.**

## Several Questions Examined Management and Non-management Communication & Trust Issues

<b>Management Communication Questions<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Non-management (N=76)</b>	<b>Management (N=23)</b>	<b>Overall* (N=112)</b>
2. My supervisor communicates goals clearly	2.29	2.43	2.29
3. My supervisor communicates values clearly	2.18	2.18	2.14
4. My supervisor is willing to address my work related issues	2.11	1.78	1.98
<b>Management Communication Factor</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>2.14</b>

\* Includes all employees that responded to the question, therefore the number responding is slightly higher

- **All 1998 scores regarding management communication, are more positive than scores from 1997 (see appendix)**



<b>Management Trust Questions<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Non-management (N=76)</b>	<b>Management (N=24)</b>	<b>Overall* (N=113)</b>
23. My supervisor and I speak openly with each other	2.09	1.65	1.97
24. I believe that my supervisor is honest with me	1.88	1.71	1.83
25. I trust my supervisor with confidential topics	2.20	1.70	2.11
26. I am able to speak with my supervisor without fear of reprisal or retribution	2.11	1.64	2.02
<b>Management Trust Factor</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>1.69</b>	<b>2.00</b>

\* Includes all employees that responded to the question, therefore the number responding is slightly higher

- **Many employees (management and non-management) felt they had open and honest communication with their supervisor**



<sup>1</sup> Response Key:      1=Strongly Agree      3=Mildly Agree      5=Disagree  
                                  2=Agree                      4=Mildly Disagree      6=Strongly Disagree

## Four Questions About Training



<b>Training Questions<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>less than 2 years (N=23)</b>	<b>2 or more years (N=73)</b>	<b>Overall* (N=115)</b>
7. My supervisor and I have discussed how best to meet my training needs	2.30	2.79	2.75
13. I receive education/training to do my job effectively	1.95	2.23	2.25
14. I receive education/training to help me achieve my career goals	2.00	2.44	2.39
15. I receive enough on-the-job training to do my job effectively	2.26	2.46	2.45
<b>Training FACTOR</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>2.46</b>

\* Includes all employees that responded to the question, therefore the number responding is slightly higher



## Nine Related Work Environment Questions

<b>Work Environment Questions<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>“Those who chose to identify themselves as” ** (N=22)</b>	<b>“All Others” (N=85)</b>	<b>Overall* (N=115)</b>
27. Regardless of individual differences people work collaboratively in my division	2.14	2.44	2.38
28. In my work unit, I feel free to express alternative viewpoints	2.18	2.29	2.30
47. I do not have to do more than others in order to be recognized in DSS	1.95***	2.70***	2.59
50. In my view, my work unit is an excellent place to work	1.86	2.20	2.15
51. My input is actively sought in my work unit	1.86	2.22	2.18
54. I feel safe/secure in my emotional work environment	2.29	2.39	2.36
55. I feel safe/secure in the job security of my work environment	2.27	2.20	2.22
56. I do not feel intimidated by my supervisor	1.59	1.96	1.90
57. I do not feel intimidated by my co-workers	1.95	1.84	1.86
<b>Work Environment FACTOR</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2.22</b>

\* Includes all employees that responded to the question, therefore the number responding is slightly higher

\*\* Persons with disabilities, and/or persons of color, and/or gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual persons (approx. 21% of those that chose to respond). The “All Others” group didn’t select any of these demographics.

\*\*\* Difference is statistically significant at .05 (the difference would occur by chance only 5% of the time)

<sup>1</sup> Response Key:      1=Strongly Agree      3=Mildly Agree      5=Disagree  
                                  2=Agree                      4=Mildly Disagree      6=Strongly Disagree

## WHAT DID WE LEARN



1. **DSS employees responded that...**
  - a. **We honor diversity, and view it as positive to our working environment.**
  - b. **New employees indicated that they receive adequate training to perform their jobs effectively.**
  - c. **We work in a safe and secure environment.**
  - d. **We have increasingly open and honest communication with our supervisors.**

*But more than a third of employees don't receive performance reviews, nor do employees feel that their satisfaction is assessed on a regular basis.*

2. **Decision-makers now have information of what employees mean by meaningful recognition, however little change in recognition scores were observed from 1997.**
3. **Does everyone at DSS feel the same way?**
  - a. **No. A third of DSS employees did not respond to the survey, therefore we don't know how they feel.**
  - b. **There a few employees (16) that disagreed with more than a third of the questions. Nine of these identified themselves as "All Others" (see footnote on proceeding page) and are non-management/professional employees with more than 5 years of experience at DSS.**
4. **There were many comments, however they added little information to the question responses.**

# APPENDIX: Survey Questions

Rank Ordered Beginning with Most Positive Response<sup>1</sup>

\* Number of responses from 1998 survey

\*\* In some cases questions from 1997 are not exactly the same, verbatim.

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<sup>1</sup> Response Key:	1=Strongly Agree	3=Mildly Agree	5=Disagree
	2=Agree	4=Mildly Disagree	6=Strongly Disagree