redgate
ingeniously simple

Since 1999, Red Gate Software has produced ingeniously simple tools for over 500,000 technology professionals worldwide, specializing in MS SQL Server, .NET, and Oracle. Based in the university town of Cambridge, UK, Red Gate's philosophy is to design highly usable, reliable tools that solve the problems of DBAs and developers.

Background

Employing staff in Cambridge (UK), Pasadena (US) and Singapore, Red Gate has been in the Sunday Times 'Best Companies to Work For' listings for seven years in a row. They place great emphasis on the well-being of their staff, and it is extremely important to them to ensure that all staff understand and support the company mission statement and direction, something which is reiterated and discussed at regular company-wide meetings.

Until the advent of Thymometrics, Red Gate had been holding two surveys per year: the "Best Companies" survey in October (with results available in December) and a Gallup survey in May.

The Issues

Traditional surveys provide a snapshot of the company at a single point in time, once a year. While undeniably useful, this survey format cannot hope to reflect the ebb and flow of business and the changing attitudes and opinions of staff on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, many participants and managers were finding these surveys to be cumbersome and increasingly unsuitable for a fast-moving company like Red Gate.

Similarly, Red Gate's conventional method of communicating with staff (an email newsletter) suffered from perceived inefficiencies, with no easy way to adapt the message to different user segments or to collect feedback.

THYMO metrics
Always-On Employee Engagement Surveys

The Thymometrics Solution

Red Gate underwent a major restructuring in 2013. Their "Best Companies" survey would have effectively straddled the restructure with data gathering before the changes and then the analysis available afterwards. To solve this issue Red Gate chose to trial Thymometrics. The Thymo survey allows users to anonymously provide their views (as ratings and comments) at any time, and to change these views as often as they see fit, and the company immediately saw the potential benefits of getting more immediate real-time results, rather than two different biannual snapshots.

When employees raise potential issues or ask specific questions, Red Gate is able to deal with them immediately, and can easily follow up on any further points. Before Thymometrics, Red Gate would have to send out email communications to all staff, which were just seen as irrelevant background noise by many.

Now, Red Gate can use the Thymo to segment the employee audience for targeted communications, and to monitor how any segment's views change over time, thereby providing a means of assessing the success of any engagement interventions.

Introduction of Thymometrics to Red Gate

Just prior to the launch of Thymometrics, Red Gate ran an internal awareness program to alert staff of the new survey approach, explaining the importance and benefits of gathering this information in real-time. It was considered crucial to stress Red Gate's desire to listen to their workforce and act on the findings.

The Thymo survey uptake grew rapidly once employees recognized that their voice was being heard and that real action was being taken by the Red Gate on the feedback they received.

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Two-Way Communications at Red Gate

At first, a general response was sent out via email when an emerging theme was noticed in employee comments or similar responses were received via the Thymo's anonymous Communicate function.

Since then, Red Gate improved their processes and now make a point of responding to every suggestion, comment or question received. Even if a solution or immediate answer is not possible, Red Gate managers will reply with an acknowledgement to ensure staff understand that they are being heard.

To ensure everyone at Red Gate regularly update their Thymo, Red Gate employ a collaborative approach of demonstrating the benefits of doing so and the real-time nature of any feedback. Prodding users to fill in their Thymo is not the best approach, according to **Helen Joyce**, Head of People Team at Red Gate Software, as compulsion just turns it into a chore, particularly if employees do not understand or see the benefits of doing so.

However, to catch any stragglers, Helen sees as a great help the automatic reminder service provided by Thymometrics, which sends gentle email reminders that the Thymo is there for them to those who have not updated their views in a defined period of time.

Final Thoughts from Red Gate

"The benefits of getting more immediate real-time results, rather than biannual snap shots, is enormous" said Helen. "If potential issues or specific questions are raised via the Thymo, and particularly the anonymous Communicate module, it is easy to segment that group of people to follow up with an immediate response" she continued.

"Before Thymometrics, Red Gate would have to send out another communication or survey to all staff, regardless of relevance to most recipients. This had the effect of information overload and, as such, messages were starting to be ignored. Now we can look back over any period to see how opinions on any factors shift and, importantly, by any segment of staff allowing us to ask why and what can be done to improve the situation."

Helen concludes: "This is a level of two-way communication that was not possible before Thymometrics was introduced".

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