

Appendix D

Comparisons with Other Norms

Many employee attitude surveys are conducted, but the data from them are almost always proprietary. We have access, from time to time, to the results of surveys conducted by others, and while we cannot publish those, we can attest to the great similarity between their results and ours. A fortunate exception to the proprietary nature of normative data is found in the 2012 The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FedView survey) the successor to the Federal Human Capital Survey, which reports the results of a 2012 survey of the attitudes of more than 687,000 government employees. This survey attempts to survey every government employee, full- or part-time. Data are available since 2004.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the organization conducting the survey, was provided with “a set of private-industry norms drawn from an average of survey data from large, primarily U.S. corporations.” We are familiar with those norms and can vouch for the care with which those data have been collected and compiled. Shown in Table D-1 below are the results for nine questions that are similar enough in wording to allow reasonable comparison. We point out, however, that even slight differences in wording can result in significant swings in the data, as we explain in the discussion that follows the table.

We focused on 2012 results.

Table D-1

*Comparisons of Sirota Normative Data with Federal Public and Private Sector Norms on Similarly Worded Questions**

	Sirota Norm	Federal Study Norms	
		Public Sector	Private Sector
Rating of immediate leader	80%	68%	76%
Job itself	79%	68%	74%
Teamwork within unit	78%	73%	82%
Information to do job	78%	72%	79%
Personal accomplishment	78%	72%	77%
Overall satisfaction with company	76%	59%	70%
Encouraged to come up with new ways	74%	58%	71%
Company communications on important matters	70%	48%	65%
Opportunity to improve skills	67%	63%	65%
Recognition	67%	48%	57%
Involvement in decisions	66%	52%	58%
Training	64%	54%	63%
Advancement opportunity	52%	36%	50%

* Results from the 2012 The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. Published by the US Office of Personnel Management (www.opm.gov).

Considering the differences in a number of question wordings and in the types of organizations included (e.g., the exclusively large, well-known companies in the federal survey's private sector norms), the data are remarkably similar with some notable differences. We have ordered the questions by the percentage favorable in our norms and the orderings are close.

Some language is in fact different. The wording used for the survey items Overall Company Satisfaction, Company Communications and Advancement in the federal public sector survey target "organization," rather than "company" as is done in the private sector. This may help to explain the lower ratings – or at a minimum, confounds them.

However, in other items where the federal public sector scores are lower, like Ratings of Immediate Job itself, Leader, Innovation, Recognition, and Involvement the wording is quite similar and we believe the differences to be real.

Teamwork, Personal Accomplishment, Information to do Job, Opportunity to Improve Skills, and Training which all had quite similar wording also received similar ratings.

The Pearson correlations between the sets of norms are as follows: between our norms and the federal private sector norms, .92; between our norms and the federal public sector norms, .88; between the federal public and private sector norms, .94. The norms we have seen from elsewhere – often using identical questions and with populations similar in composition to ours – are even closer to ours.