Bob Ward's uses VoiceSifter to enhance their Employee experience and drive engagement

Using Feedback to Enhance Employee Experience

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"VoiceSifter's employee communication portal has opened the door to anonymous and confidential feedback that normally may not make it to my desk. Having that option has been well received as a whole. Both as a pathway to convey positive feedback and potentially troubling feedback requiring immediate attention."
- Mark Anderson Operations Manager

Executive Summary

Bob Ward's, a regional retail chain, wanted to send a message to employees that it cared about their experience and that management was accessible, two beliefs that they thought were already clear. By deploying VoiceSifter's unique HR text-line, which enables participants to remain anonymous and for management to be able to respond to comments, the executive team was able to uncover a number of actionable items that employees had not previously surfaced, creating the opportunity for some easy wins.

The Challenges

With over 300 employees, broad hours of operation, and hundreds of miles between locations, it was difficult to ensure that employees could feel comfortable bringing issues to HR. For the most part, the brand rarely heard of any issues, but they recognized that, "no matter how friendly or approachable you think you are, it is intimidating to walk into a person's office or pick up the phone and share something sensitive." Obviously, the leaders at any company want their people to feel great coming to work and to know that their concerns are important, but the fear of retaliation and the stigma associated with "telling on someone" are quite high. The chasm between management's belief that they are approachable and operate a culture that wouldn't tolerate retaliation and the employee's fear of the unknown, is what needed to be overcome.

How VoiceSifter Helped

Implementing VoiceSifter is easy and set up only takes a couple of hours. Once a poster was designed and distributed around the various employment sites, a memo was sent out to staff regarding the new tool. Bob Ward's decided they wanted this platform to be a digital representation of the open door philosophy, encouraging any positive or negative experience to be noted.

Within days, a couple of comments came in regarding a systematic gap in a process with which employees were not satisfied. Additionally, employees were also naming managers and co-workers who were being especially helpful, creating opportunities for recognition. "From a management standpoint, this tool helped enormously because of the dialogue it created." VoiceSifter reduces the employee's anxiety to surfacing issues and management receives and is able to respond to these comments in real time.

Results, Return on Investment and Future Plans

Initially, Bob Ward's seemed intrigued by the concept and decided to implement the service more for the message it would convey to employees regarding the importance of their experience to leadership rather than for the expected value derived from the platform. In the end, it opened up a new, safe, and accessible conduit to communicate with the team that allowed Bob Ward's to reinforce their cultural belief of the work environment they fostered and solve some unanticipated issues in the process.

By understanding what is frustrating employees and creating opportunities for leadership to recognize staff, Bob Ward's is able to use VoiceSifter to drive continuous operational improvement and potentially prevent employee turnover.

Implementation

The text-based system needs a couple of things from their clients: a desired response that they want an employee to receive when they submit a comment and an image with a logo that goes above the autogenerated response, so employees feel confident that they are communicating directly with the company.