

Increasing Engagement & Gaining Understanding Through Collaborative Surveys

Simmons & Simmons is a prestigious UK top 20 law firm with a global presence and nearly 300 partners. It focuses on serving financial institutions, asset management and investment funds, life sciences and the technology, media, and telecom sector.

The Challenge

The beginning of 2020 ushered in a myriad of challenges for the legal sector. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many found that they needed to quickly adapt and evolve to endure the upheaval.

Simmons & Simmons recognized that the firm needed new strategies to navigate these formidable and unprecedented challenges – and the sentiment of those at the firm should form the backbone of this. They understood their people had their own thoughts, feelings, and frustrations – and understanding this would be key to developing a sustainable strategy.

Insight around commuting habits, home responsibilities and levels of comfortability with returning to the office was desperately needed, and current HR records had no reliable data on this. The firm needed to find a way to gain a greater understanding of people's situations and sentiment quickly and effectively and gather the necessary insight to develop strategies that were empathetic to the needs of the workforce.

The Solution

Simmons & Simmons launched a series of employee surveys to gather the insights needed to develop strategies that catered for the varying needs of the workforce. The firm banished all assumptions and asked the questions that really mattered.

Using Objective Manager, the firm crafted surveys where individuals were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings on several topics, including remote and hybrid working, reduced working time proposals, and returning to the office.

Over a one-year period, Simmons & Simmons received thousands of survey responses, with their typical response rate being higher than average, in the region of 80% to 95%

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The results gave Simmons & Simmons the ability to tackle the issues head-on, with empathetic and innovative approaches that incorporated this feedback letting those at the firm know that they had been heard, and their opinions matter.

Objective Manager allowed for the surveys to be run anonymously giving security to individuals to share their thoughts and feelings openly without fear of reprisal. And the ability for the Objective Manager system to segment geographical locations meant that surveys could be tailored, and relevant for different global locations. The quick and easy setup process allowed Simmons & Simmons to be agile and deploy surveys at the right time, and the familiar interface and functionality resulted in increased engagement and higher response rates.

Business Benefits

The insight gained was a powerful tool for Simmons & Simmons. By listening to their people, they created strategies that reflected personal circumstances across the firm. Simmons & Simmons made the difficult decision to reduce working hours and pay by

20% to avoid redundancies and secure the firm's financial future, a decision that was supported by all.

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This honest and transparent process resulted in a team that was more engaged, aligned and, overall satisfied that their contributions had been acknowledged. Dan Flint, HR Director at Simmons & Simmons, believes "Objective Manager was the key tool we used to gather feedback, and support some very sensitive business decisions during the pandemic. It was very easy to set up and the environment was familiar to people, which undoubtedly contributed to the high response rate."

This approach continues to shape strategy at Simmons & Simmons, allowing them to deliver more insightful strategies for the firm and its people. Results from the survey on hybrid working have influenced and shaped the hybrid working model the firm intends to implement, making it a model focused on employee involvement.