



We have noted over the last several weeks that we are entering a challenging new world of diminishing rewards. New data from national comp surveys confirm that 2009 salary increases will be down, as will benefits offerings and bonus pools. Is flexibility the reward of choice?

That depends on the flex you offer, how well you do it and what your people value most. To design an initiative with impact requires cost-effective research like this:

FlexAudit™ - Do you offer the options people really want? Is your system supportive and user-friendly? Our comprehensive audit uses spot surveys, phone interviews and design groups to explore internal interests and satisfaction, identify process strengths and weaknesses, assess the retention and motivational power of options and enumerate areas for improvement.

Flex Satisfaction Survey - A carefully crafted online survey can capture the value of your current options, weigh the impact of new offerings and suggest trade-offs employees would consider. Quantitative research can help you resolve such questions as whether to offer compressed schedules or how much demand there is for telecommuting and in what form.

Executive Interviews - A robust launch or re-launch of intensified flexibility will be far more successful with informed executive support. Well-designed and professionally conducted design interviews with senior executives can assure the inclusion of their priorities in an initiative and make sure that their concerns and questions are addressed thoroughly and effectively.

Virtual Focus Groups - Virtual, or conference call focus groups, offer a highly cost-effective, quick and precise way to extract valuable information from samples of employees who use FWAs, manage them or want them. If the need is strictly design feedback, these groups can deliver it.

Evidence-based Research - Support for flexibility is often built on a vague business case whose claims don't necessarily counter core concerns or myths. We help clients to sharpen the case for change by testing questionable assumptions. For example, compressed work weeks - as 4/10 or 9/80 - are an option highly valued by employees, but dismissed by many employers as impossible given long hours. Rigorous research can replace this back-and-forth with real data.

We would be happy to discuss any of these approaches, explain them in more detail and consider how they might be useful to you as you look out at the total rewards climate for 2009.

Best regards,
Paul Rupert
President
Rupert & Company
Chevy Chase, MD
301-873-8489

paul@rupert-co.com