

Employee Engagement Survey Virtual Town Hall (VTH) Questions and Answers (Q&A)

1. **Q: Will there be steps taken to promote new learning and skill development?**

A: Yes - Learning and development is one of the identified priority drivers that we will be focusing on organization wide. Human Resources had already commenced the development of a holistic learning and development program prior to the employee engagement survey and we are interested in hearing your thoughts on how the organization can improve in this area.

2. **Q: Culture was identified in the improve quadrant of the priority matrix, should it be one of the areas of focus?**

A: In general, culture encompasses the values and behaviours that contribute to TRCA's unique environment and is better served to be addressed as part of the other priority areas. The Senior Leadership Team believes that by addressing the five priority drivers, this will result an overall improvement in culture.

3. **Q: To what extent will results be used at the program level to help provide feedback to managers so they can take actions themselves to improve the function/engagement of their teams.**

A: Given the confidential nature of the survey, results could not be aggregated at the program level, as some business units due to their size, could result in identifiable information. As part of the divisional sessions there will be exercises that focus on individual team improvement, so all employees, including managers will be part of this exercise. In addition, the information will be used to support manager learning and development, particularly upcoming *Manager Fundamentals* training.

4. **Q. Will survey results be shared with the Board?**

A: The Board is aware of the survey, as it forms part of TRCA's strategic plan. An important part of employee engagement is the actual insight and action planning, so we will be engaging the Board with information and action planning, for information purposes, in the fall of 2020.

5. **Q: Was there any consideration for how Covid-19 and our resulting shift away from normal work conditions would affect or skew the results of the survey?**

A: COVID-19 has truly been unprecedented and has changed the way we work at TRCA. We knew that there were a number of factors in play at the time of the survey, including potential changes to the Conservation Authorities Act that have caused uncertainty for staff, and impacts on educational programming due to labour disruptions earlier in the year. However, the Senior Leadership Team decided to forge ahead as there is no better time to get employees candid perspectives than at a time of challenge.

6. **Q: What approach might be taken to improve divisional relationships to maximize collaboration?**

A: There are some great examples of collaboration occurring across our organization including the award-winning Meadoway project that involves staff from multiple divisions that recently garnered a Canadian Association of Landscape Architects award along with our interdivisional COVID response. Also, we have had some new additions to our Senior Leadership Team over the last few months including a new Director of Parks and Culture which has improved Senior Leadership Team and interdivisional communication. However, inter-divisional cooperation can always be improved.

Generally, when there are silos it is typically a result of a breakdown in communications which affects interaction and collaboration. This is an area that is very important and one that will be a focus of additional insight gathering to ensure we have effective and efficient communications across all divisions and staff at all levels. We will also work together to have open and respectful conversations about suggestions and solutions.

7. **Q: Will short answer comments from the survey be shared?**

A: Feedback from short answer questions will be consolidated into themes and will be used to support action planning.

8. **Q: Will the results of the survey be made available?**

A: Results are being shared both in an organizational forum through the virtual town halls as well as at the divisional level through divisional information sharing sessions.

9. **Q: Does the survey address how members of SLT work together - or does it speak to how SLT relates and communicates with the rest of the organization?**

A: The survey questions that employees responded to spoke to all the areas outlined above.

10. **Q: How are the low SLT scores being addressed, people might not feel comfortable sharing at the divisional sessions?**

A: All priority drivers will be addressed in the same way; we will be looking at a few different mechanisms to obtain insight which includes divisional discussions as well as HR focus groups. The HR focus groups will be coordinated and facilitated by Human Resources and will be broken out by individual contributors and supervisors to ensure all that employees feel comfortable sharing their insights.

11. **Q: How were the survey responses confidential?**

A: TRCA hired McLean & Company, an independent Human Resources research firm, to administer our Employee Engagement Survey to gather your insights and feedback. As a third-party provider, McLean & Company ensured the confidentiality of your responses and objectivity of the process. McLean & Company only shared aggregate results of the survey. No TRCA staff have access to any individual employee responses. It is very important to TRCA's Senior Leadership Team that our employees can respond to the survey in a candid and honest manner, we know that this is the only way that we will be able to improve as an organization.

12. **Q: How will the HR focus groups work?**

A: The focus groups will be facilitated virtually by the HR team, focusing on the five priorities drivers that were determined from the engagement priority matrix.

1. **Learning & Development**
2. **Relationships – SLT, Divisional, Manager**
3. **Rewards and Recognition**
4. **Work life Balance**
5. **Benefits**

Information gathered from the focus groups will be aggregated and presented to the Senior Leadership Team to address the priorities. This will ensure that there is no identifiable information about any individuals/groups.

13. **Q: How will individuals be selected for the HR focus groups?**

A: All employees that want to participate will have an opportunity to do so. HR will send a call out request for participants and we encourage all employees to take part in this valuable process.

14. Q: One of the priority drivers that the organization will be working on is work life balance, will remote work be part of this focus?

A: Yes, remote work will be considered as we review work life balance as a priority driver. For an organization that has historically required staff to be in the office, the Senior Leadership Team has been encouraged that during this pandemic, staff have been making great use of the resources provided by the ITRM to maintain their productivity. Going forward, the team is looking forward to using this information from the surveys/focus groups to assess TRCA's administrative office space and other accommodation needs, in accordance with the needs of our employees.

15. Q: There are several policies being introduced by the Clerk's Office, can you explain why?

A: TRCA's Board of Directors, external auditors, internal staff have all raised policies as an area requiring development. There are many reasons why policies and procedures are being introduced:

- Legislative Compliance
- Health and Safety
- Ensuring Consistent Application Amongst Divisions
- Implementation of Best Practices from Comparator Organizations
- Creating Reperformance Standards
- Creating a Consistent Look and Feel
- Reducing Risk to the Organization

Policies are being brought forward by TRCA's policy committee which includes representation from multiple divisions and consultation involving business units across the organization specific to the policy in question. These policies, once in draft form, are considered and approved by the Senior Leadership Team, prior to being rolled out to staff. Certain policies require Board of Directors approval after Senior Leadership Team approval. TRCA has made great advancements on updating and advancing new policies to help ensure our organization is legislatively compliant and is moving towards being in line with the policy frameworks in place within our government and agency partner organizations.

16. Q: Will SLT put a priority on updating the human rights and diversity strategy and could you comment on how TRCA will "create programmes for internal staff and external clients that support diversity?

A: Our team is currently reviewing our policies and programs as they related to diversity and inclusion to look for opportunities to expand in these areas and ensure our employees receive the appropriate information and training to support diversity and inclusion in all areas of our work.

17. Q: Is there any conversation among SLT to reinstate benefits after 960 hours to try and retain important experience of contract staff?

A: The Senior Leadership Team is very much focused on hearing what staff have to say relating to all five of the priority drivers through the insight gathering exercises. We have not come to any predetermined outcomes as we want action plans to reflect the recommendations of our staff.

18. Q: How will the Senior Leadership Team be committed and accountable to the changes needed in the organization, as a result of the survey?

A: The Senior Leadership Team is committed to improving employee engagement through the identified five Priority Drivers. Action plans will be established to support improvement in these areas with specific measurements of success and levels of accountability.

19. Q: How will the findings of the focus groups remain confidential?

A: The Human Resources team will be leading the focus group sessions and will be breaking the groups out by individual contributors and supervisors. The information gathered will not identify a specific individual and will be consolidated with all other focus groups by themes so that information does not identify any one person.

20. Q: I think we should have anti-racism training.

A: The Workplace Violence, Discrimination and Harassment policy was recently updated and released to all staff, and all staff training mandatory training will be launching in the coming months to ensure everyone is trained in this policy and the related procedures. In addition, the Senior Leadership Team is committed to reviewing our ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts with training being a key component, as we want to ensure all staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to support diversity and inclusion.

21. Q: Does SLT believe that systemic racism exists and if so, how do they feel it affects TRCA and what is being done to address it?

A: As a leadership team we are aware that systematic racism exists in the world at large and is a global issue. Gender equity and other types of equity issues are also important global issues that must be addressed. At TRCA there are several initiatives that we have focused on that support diversity and inclusion including our work with indigenous peoples, the Newcomer Program lead by our Education and Training division to name a few. TRCA's Board of Directors endorsed the Inclusion Charter of York Region as part of TRCA's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and as a framework for ensuring programs, services, facilities and workplaces are inclusive of all people.

We are always looking for opportunities to move the marker on diversity and inclusion and are undertaking a review of our current policies and processes to ensure we are promoting diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the word systemic implies something is engrained which means we may not easily be aware of an issue because we've become used to it. We very much encourage anyone who identifies an equity or inclusion issue to bring it to the attention of their supervisor or manager and to HR so that we can look at the issue and take appropriate action to ensure we improve and provide an equal opportunity.

22. Q: What steps in terms of learning and development are SLT looking into when it comes to grooming contract staff into permanent staff and further building their careers at TRCA?

A: Learning and development is important for all staff regardless of being full time or contract. We want to make sure all staff have the tools and knowledge to perform well in their work. It is also important that all staff can advance their skills through learning and development so that they can advance their careers. Converting contract positions to full time positions is not necessarily tied to learning and development and is contingent on many factors including budget, service level agreements with our funding partners, etc. Furthermore, Senior Leadership Team members have raised TRCA's interest in turning short-term capital projects into longer-term operating programs in our budget discussions with municipal partners, but it is a challenging issue for our funders. However, we want to invest in all our staff and we will continue to review our projects and programs to determine opportunities to advance business cases for long-term operating funds so that we can potentially create more long term full-time permanent positions and so that our staff can be successful when full-time permanent position opportunities at TRCA arise.

23. Q: Are there plans to hire an indigenous consultant or staff person to help inform the work we do?

A: There are no immediate plans to hire an indigenous staff person or consultant but TRCA through our work for partners may from time to time hire indigenous consultants. Indigenous engagement is very important to TRCA and TRCA is proud to celebrate the history of the indigenous history within our jurisdiction. TRCA regularly engages indigenous communities with a cultural affiliation with the lands in our jurisdiction when conducting significant field work and to further broader education for our stakeholders. For example, TRCA has done some work in partnership with York University to celebrate indigenous history in an upcoming exhibit at Black Creek Pioneer Village and we are continuing to work on more opportunities to celebrate and provide learning about important places that have historical significance to Indigenous people. Indigenous people have a long history that needs to be told and strive to honour and help integrate interpretation and learning opportunities into our projects. A great example of this creative storytelling is the Carrying Place Trail, when the City of Toronto and indigenous representatives worked with TRCA to develop the trail on the lower Humber River. This trail has stations along it that explain the historical significance of sites along the river that were important to indigenous people.

TRCA has taken steps over the last year to better coordinate consultation and engagement taking place across the organization. We have also created several meaningful learning opportunities for indigenous youth in our fee for service advisory work for government partners. TRCA's Archaeology team within the Professional Services unit in the Restoration and Infrastructure division applies TRCA's Engagement Guidelines to our projects to ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to indigenous engagement.

24. Q: Will the opportunity to participate in focus groups also be extended to team members that are currently on DEL?

A: All employees will be afforded the opportunity to participate on a voluntary basis in the focus groups.

25. Q: Do we have any understanding if we had a good response from our contract staff?

A: Given the 84% response rate, there was a very positive response organization wide, that would be inclusive of contract employees.