



Questionmark Case Study

Surveys Help Sheriff's Office Educate Employees About Harassment Policy

Background

The sheriff's office in Washington County, Oregon, has about 550 employees, 350 of whom are sheriff's deputies. The office provides law enforcement and other related services to about a half million people. The Professional Standards Unit for Washington County performs several tasks to maintain the standards of the office. It conducts and oversees all internal affairs investigations, performs testing for promotions, and recruits and tests new hires. In 2006, the unit began using Questionmark™ Perception™ to survey employees about a specific internal priority: sexual harassment complaints.

Zero Tolerance

Perception has become an integral part of the unit's efforts to educate employees about the sexual harassment policy and to find out whether employees are complying with it.

The department conducts an annual harassment survey and asks things like, "Have you ever been harassed? If so, did you report it, and if not, why not? Was anything done, did your supervisor follow through on your complaint?"

The survey allows the unit to determine whether there are any supervisors who are not sufficiently enforcing the policy, and whether employees feel that they can report harassment. The survey has helped ensure that everyone understands the office's definition of harassment. T

he survey also includes some education about the harassment policy. It tells employees what the policy says, then describes some hypothetical situations and asks the participant whether each situation constitutes harassment. The educational piece helps to make sure that when employees say that they've been harassed, they're accurately reporting the situation. Some questions about workplace harassment (such as bullying) are also included.

Other Surveys

Sergeant Shawn Dunn, who leads the Professional Standards unit, says that the survey is only the tip of the iceberg for what the sheriff's office wants to do with Perception. Employees are also being surveyed after training to find out whether they liked the training or might like different topics to be covered. For example, a survey asks participants in defensive tactics training about the instructors: what they're doing well or badly, and what they could do to improve.

Post-Training Assessments

Trainers are also beginning to use Perception to test new deputies in their initial eight-week training course. Tests for this course usually have 25 to 30 multiple-choice and true/false questions. Dunn is working on a repository of items that can be used for these tests. The tests used to be handwritten, so Dunn says that using Perception will save a lot of time. Dunn uses the reporting function to quickly view overall results for the harassment survey, and he says it's a relief not to have to use spreadsheets to view the data. "Perception's reporting, not to mention the survey itself, is making it much easier to know where we are on compliance with the sexual harassment policy," he says.

More information

Questionmark Contact:

Email: info@questionmark.com

Phone: (800) 863-3950 • (203) 855-4500

Web: <http://www.questionmark.com/>

