



Five Top Factors for Staff Engagement in Natural Retailers

Provender, October 3, 2014

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Why is Staff Engagement Important?

- ❶ Get into a small group with other people who don't come from your organization.
- ❷ Come up with a list of reasons.
- ❸ Choose one person to read your list.

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The database: 208 Employee Surveys

- ❶ 1992-2014, (50% conducted since 2010)
- ❶ All surveys had at least 80% participation. All but a few had at least 90% of eligible employees.
- ❶ No self-selection
- ❶ Most retailers in this group are food co-ops, but it does include some independents.

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Natural Retail Staff

-  How would you characterize employees working in natural retails?
-  How do you think they might be different from the rest of the North American workforce?

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Survey Methodology

When people filled out the survey questionnaire, they had a choice of responses:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Value</u>
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Partly agree/partly disagree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1
No opinion	Not included in averaging

The survey program calculates average scores or “means” from these responses.

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What do scores mean?

-  4.00 or more: very high score, high satisfaction
-  3.50 or more: relatively high score, relative satisfaction
-  Below 3.00: low score, dissatisfaction

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Perception vs. Reality

- ❶ Why are employee perceptions important?
- ❷ How can you respond to employee perceptions?

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Top Factor #1: Mission

-  We know what the mission is.
-  We are making a difference in the world every day when we come to work.
-  We are supporting our community
-  Management decisions are framed in terms of the mission.

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Survey Questions about Mission

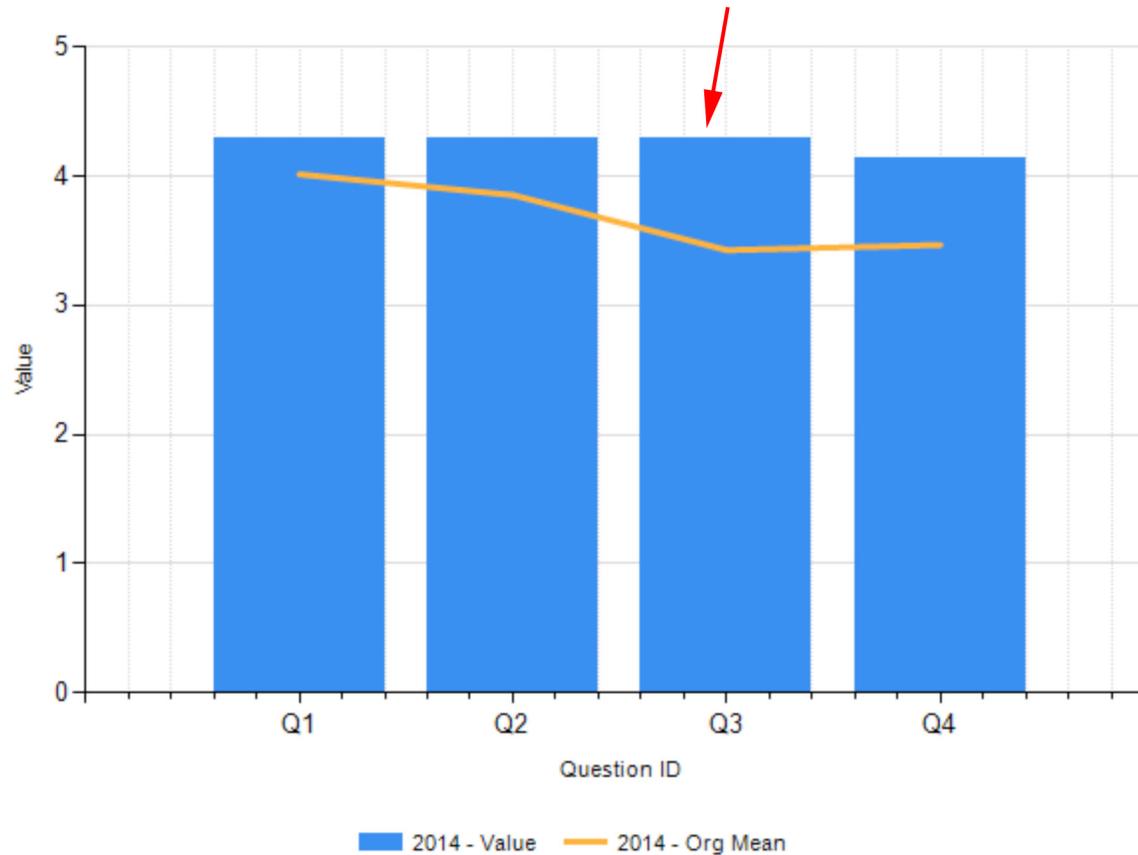
-  I see a clear link between my work and the co-op's mission.
-  I believe _____ operates consistently with its mission statement.
-  I believe _____ operates consistently with the Cooperative Principles.
-  I am proud to work for _____.

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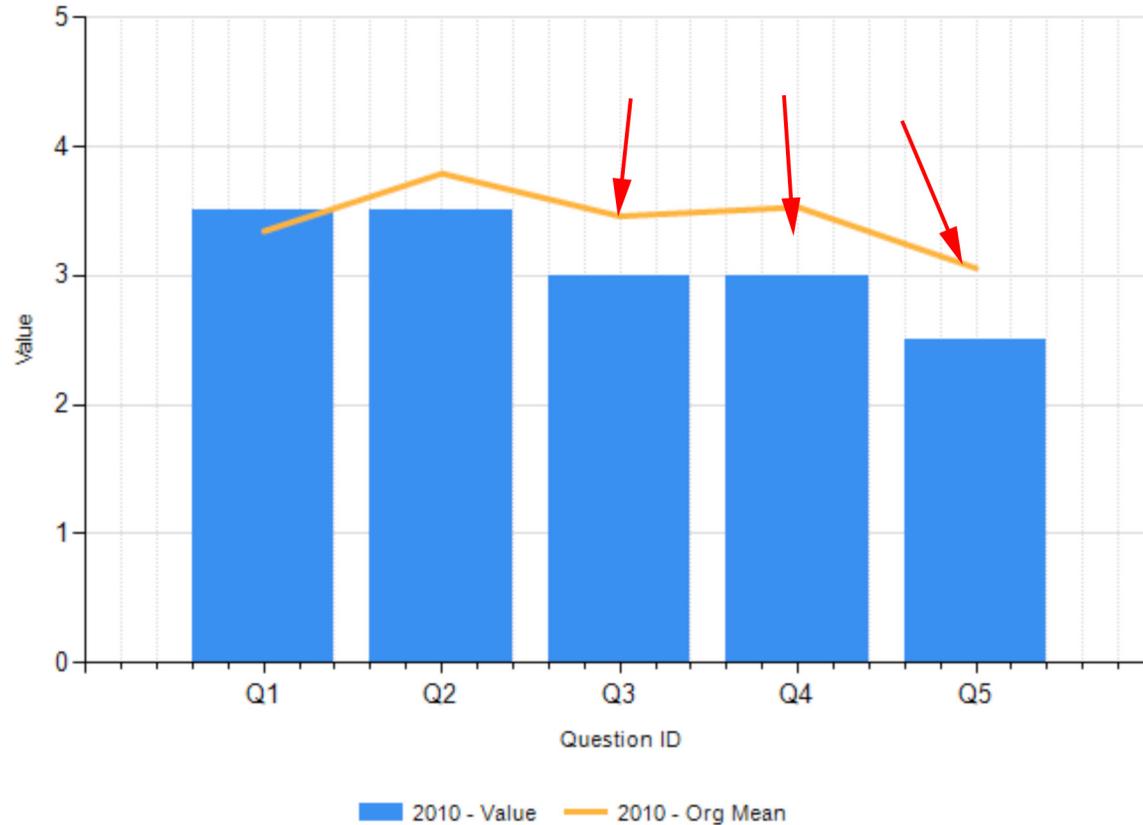
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How those who strongly agreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on the Co-op Overall.



Q1	Our Co-op provides high quality customer service.
Q2	I see a clear link between my work and the Our Co-op mission.
Q3	I believe Our Co-op operates consistently with its mission statement.
Q4	I've been given training so that I can talk knowledgeably about cooperatives with customers.

How those who disagreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on the Co-op Overall.



Q1	Our Co-op provides high quality customer service.
Q2	I see a clear link between my work and Our Co-op's ends, mission and goals.
Q3	Our Co-op's mission and goals have been clearly explained to staff.
Q4	I've been given training so that I can talk knowledgeably about cooperatives with customers.
Q5	I believe Our Co-op operates consistently with its values, ends, mission and goals.

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For discussion

- ❏ Are all your staff familiar with your organization's mission?
- ❏ How do you know?

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Top Factor# 2: Opportunity for Input

-  Our opinion is actively sought.
-  We hear back from management about our suggestions, with reasons why or why not.
-  Established channels, e.g. daily huddles, Open Book Management, Employee Forum.

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Survey questions about staff input

-  I have opportunities for input into decisions that affect how my work is done.
-  Employee ideas and suggestions make a difference.
-  There are channels for staff involvement in improving store operations.
-  My supervisor encourages us to share our ideas, suggestions and concerns.

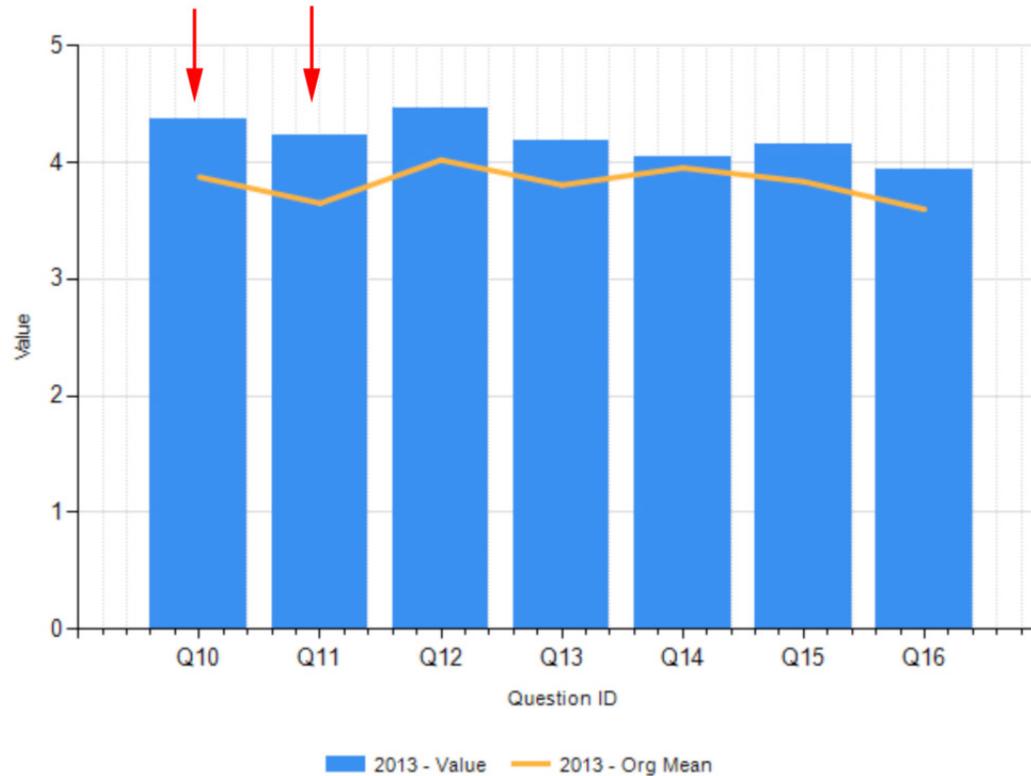
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How those who strongly agreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Workplace Communications.



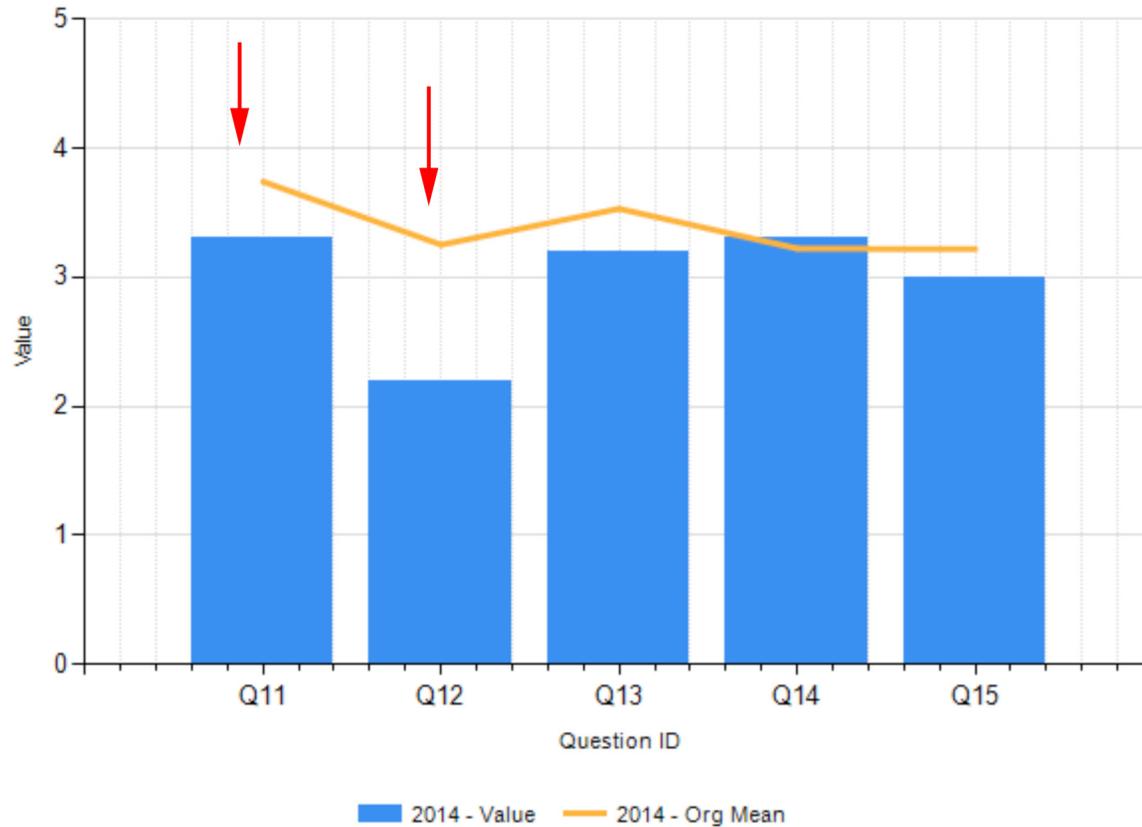
Q10	I have opportunities for input into decisions that affect how my work is done.
Q11	Employee ideas and suggestions make a difference at the co-op.
Q12	I have access to information I need to do my job.
Q13	In general, I feel like I know what is going on at the Co-op.
Q14	I understand how Open Book Management works.
Q15	Open Book Management helps me understand the business of the Co-op.
Q16	Due to Open Book Management, I know what I can do to help the co-op succeed.

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How those who disagreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Workplace Communications.



Q11	I have opportunities for input into decisions that affect how my work is done.
Q12	Employee ideas and suggestions make a difference at the co-op.
Q13	I have access to information I need to do my job.
Q14	I get adequate notice of changes affecting my job.
Q15	In general, I feel like I know what is going on at the Co-op.

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For discussion

- ❶ How do you seek staff input in your organization?
- ❷ How are employees informed about the outcome of their input?

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Top Factor #3 : Opportunity for advancement

-  We keep learning new things.
-  We see the path from where we are now to where we could go.
-  Clear basis for pay increases.
-  Frequent promotions from within.

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Survey questions about opportunity

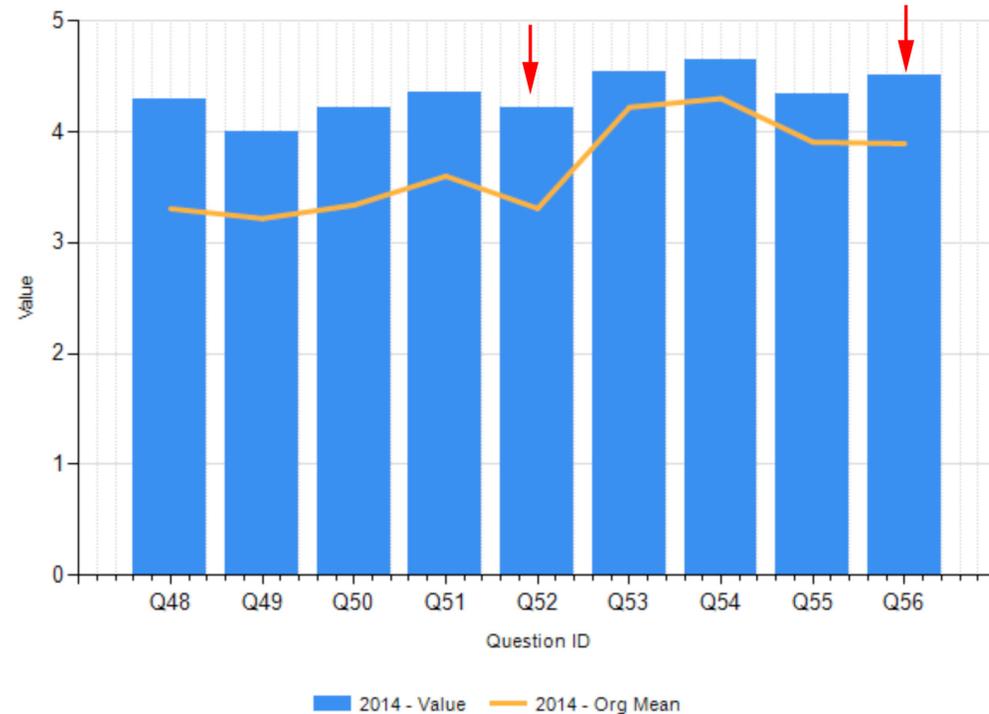
-  Opportunities are available to develop my skills and knowledge.
-  As a result of my evaluation, I have clear goals to work toward.
-  There is reasonable potential to advance my level of responsibility and compensation.

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How those who strongly agreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Training and Development.



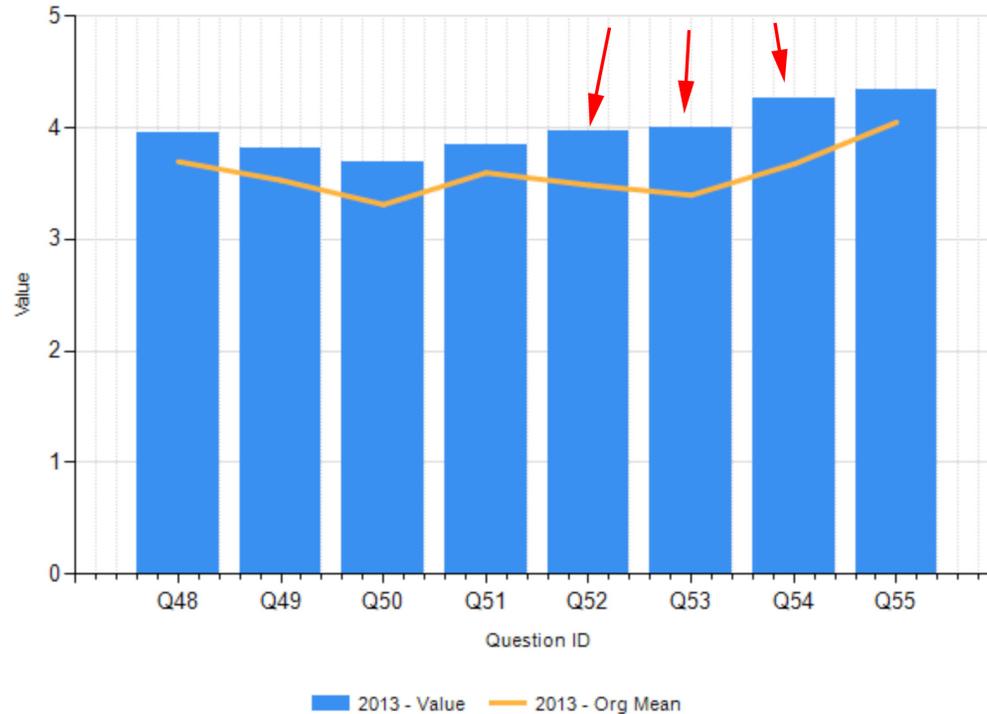
Q48	Orientations are effective in giving new workers the information they need to understand how the co-op functions.
Q49	I received well-planned and useful on-the-job training.
Q50	I have a job description that clearly outlines my responsibilities.
Q51	The expectations laid out in my job description are clear and reasonable.
Q52	Opportunities are available to develop my skills and knowledge.
Q53	Job openings are posted so that all staff can apply.
Q54	I have been evaluated at least once in the past year.
Q55	I am clear on the criteria used to evaluate my job performance.
Q56	As a result of my evaluation, I have clear performance goals that I can work toward.

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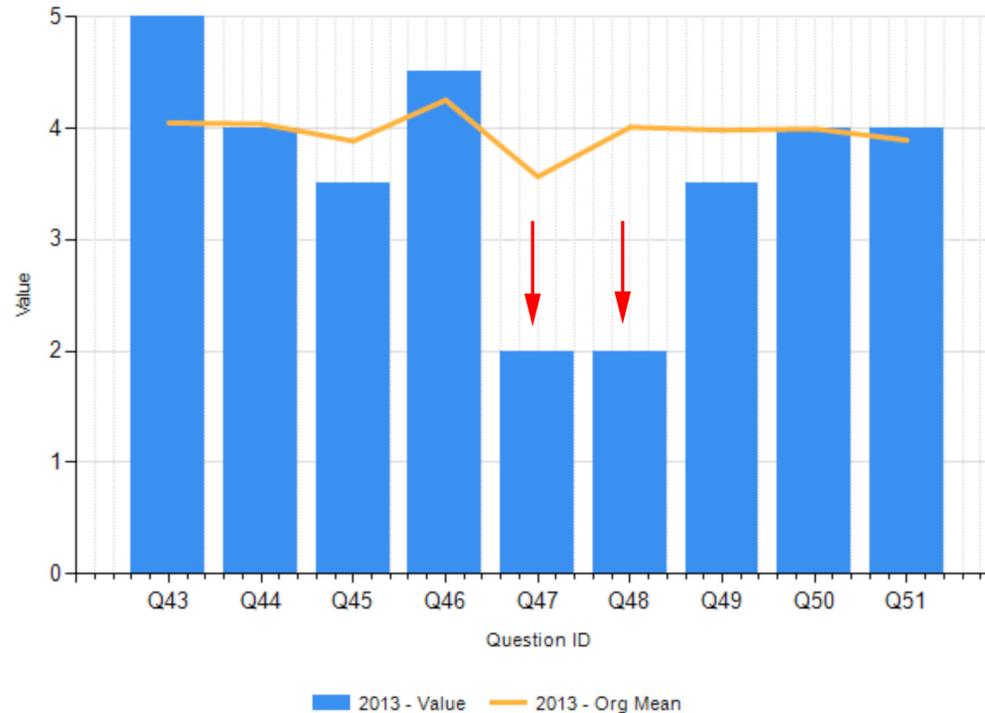
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How those who strongly agreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Training and Development.



Q48	I have a job description that clearly outlines my responsibilities.
Q49	Orientations are effective in giving new workers the information they need to understand how the co-op functions.
Q50	I received well-planned and useful on-the-job training.
Q51	I have received information about food safety in general, as well as specifically for my department.
Q52	Opportunities are available to develop my skills and knowledge.
Q53	There is reasonable potential to advance my level of responsibility and compensation.
Q54	Internal candidates are given fair consideration for job openings.
Q55	I have been evaluated at least once in the past year.

How those who disagreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Training and Development.



Q43	Orientations are effective in giving new workers the information they need to understand how the Co-op functions.
Q44	The expectations laid out in my job description are clear and reasonable.
Q45	I received well-planned and useful on-the-job training.
Q46	Job openings are posted so that all staff can apply.
Q47	There is reasonable potential to advance my level of responsibility and compensation.
Q48	Internal candidates are given fair consideration for job openings.
Q49	I am clear on the criteria used to evaluate my job performance.
Q50	As a result of my evaluation, I have clear performance goals that I can work toward.
Q51	The process by which I am evaluated is fair.

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Top Factor #4: Accountability

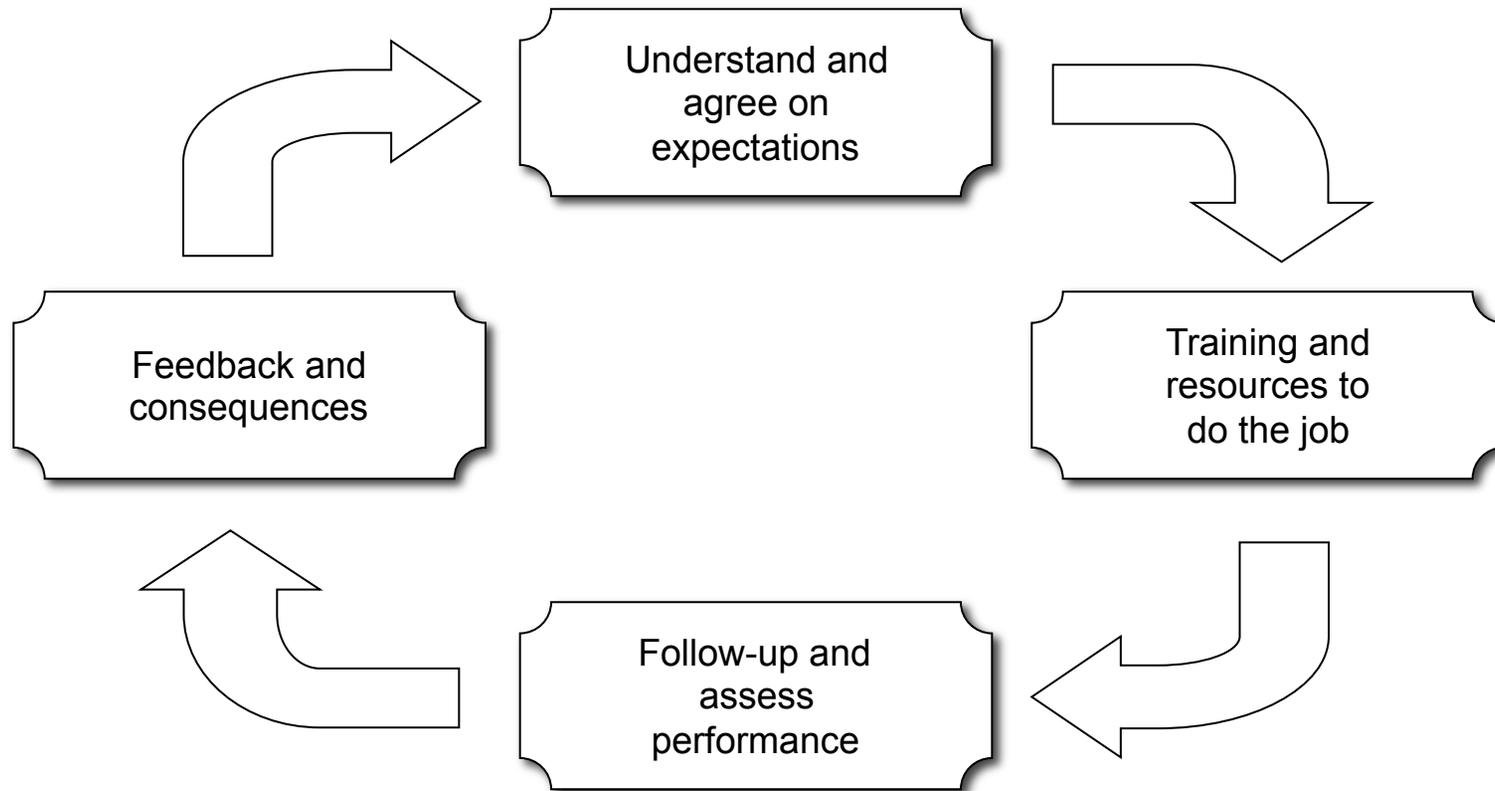
- ❶ Clear performance expectations.
- ❷ Managers are paying attention.
- ❸ Good performers are noticed and rewarded.
- ❹ Poor performers are noticed, corrected, and if necessary terminated.

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The Accountability Loop



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Survey questions about accountability

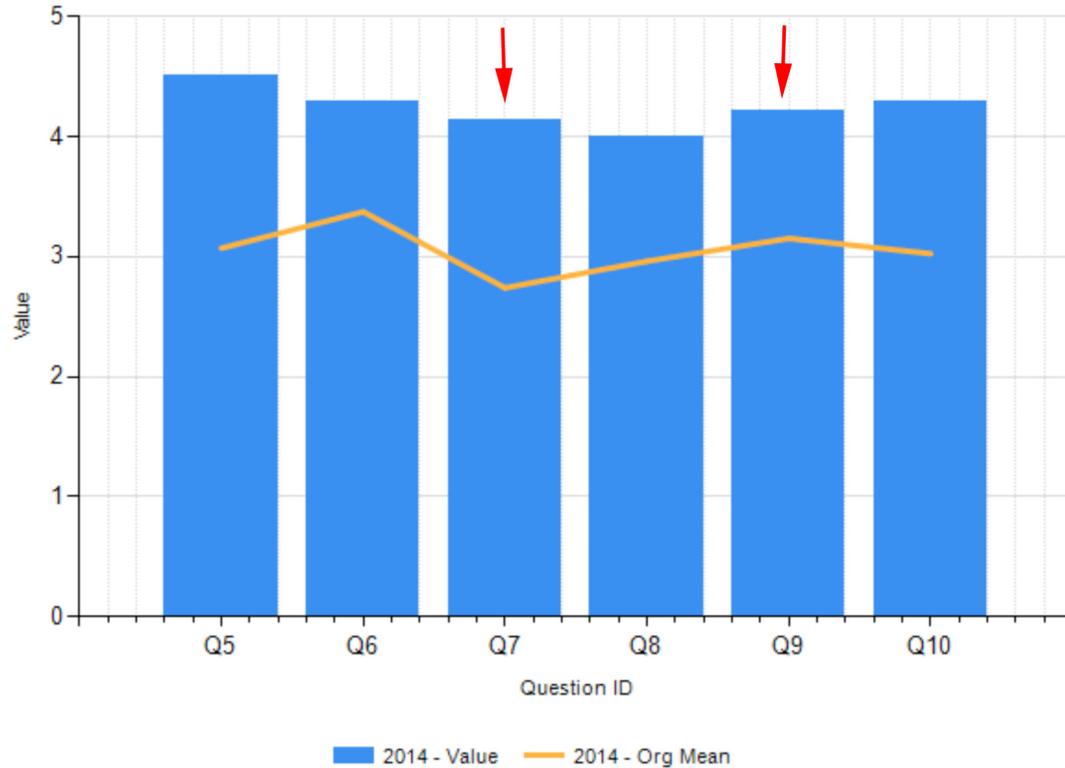
-  Management follows established policy when taking corrective action.
-  Corrective action is handled fairly and consistently throughout the store.
-  Department expectations are upheld in a fair and consistent way for all department staff.
-  My supervisor lets me know what is expected of me.
-  My supervisor promptly addresses performance problems.

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How those who strongly agreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Overall Management Practices.



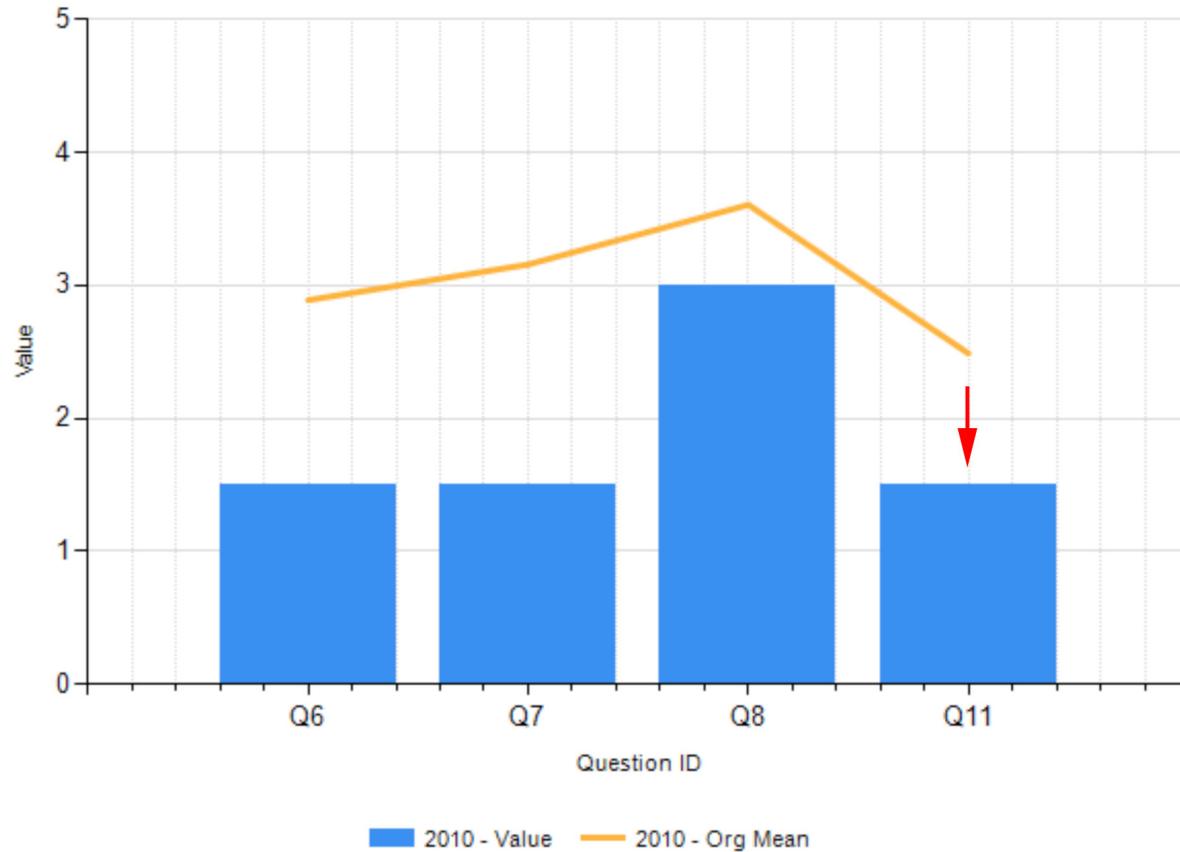
Q5	Co-op management is sincerely interested in the needs and welfare of the employees.
Q6	I know what to do if I disagree with, or have a dispute with or grievance about, a management decision.
Q7	To the best of my knowledge, corrective action is handled fairly and consistently throughout the co-op.
Q8	The dispute resolution procedure provides a safe method for airing and resolving staff grievances.
Q9	To the best of my knowledge, management follows established policy when taking corrective action.
Q10	I feel safe bringing my ideas, problems or criticisms to management with no fear of retaliation.

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How those who disagreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Storewide Management Practices.



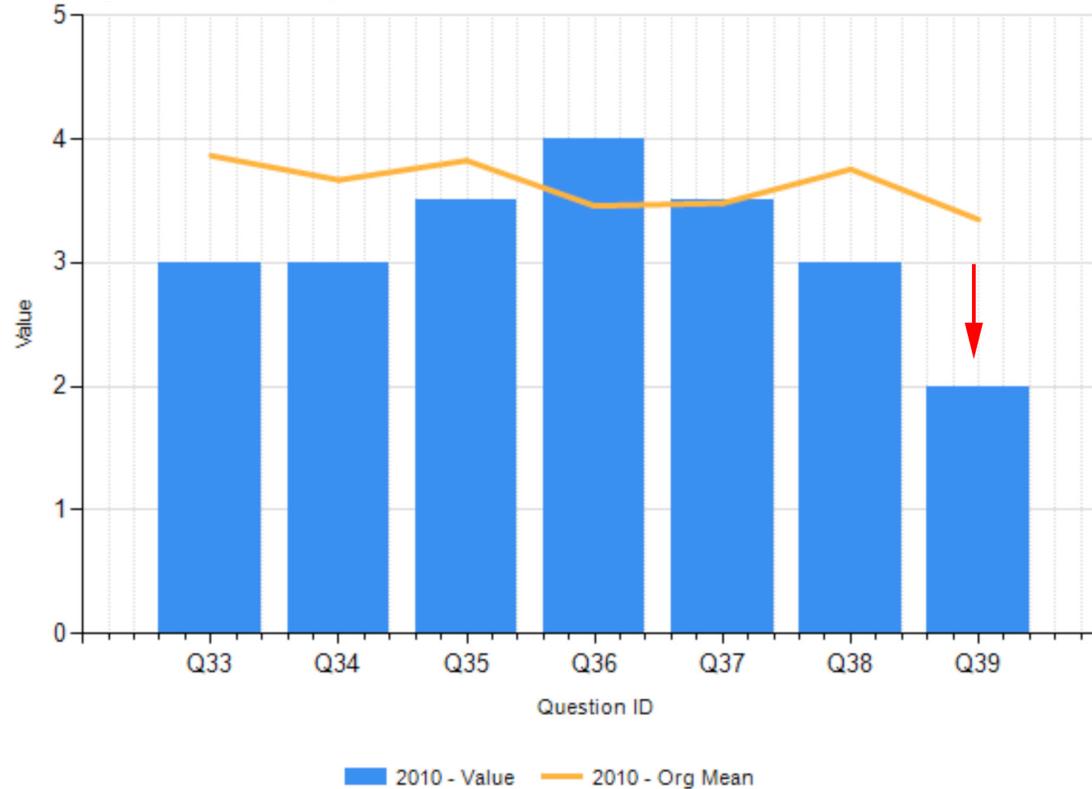
Q6	The managers work together well as a team.
Q7	I feel safe bringing my ideas, problems or criticisms to management with no fear of retaliation.
Q8	I know what to do if I have a grievance or complaint about a management decision.
Q11	To the best of my knowledge corrective action is handled fairly and consistently throughout the co-op.

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How those who disagreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Department Operations.



Q33	There is cooperation among people in my department.
Q34	My department looks for ways to improve productivity.
Q35	My department looks for ways to improve customer service.
Q36	Department meetings are useful to me.
Q37	The work within my department is well coordinated and organized.
Q38	My department’s goals have been clearly explained to me.
Q39	Department expectations are upheld in a fair and consistent way for all department employees.

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For discussion

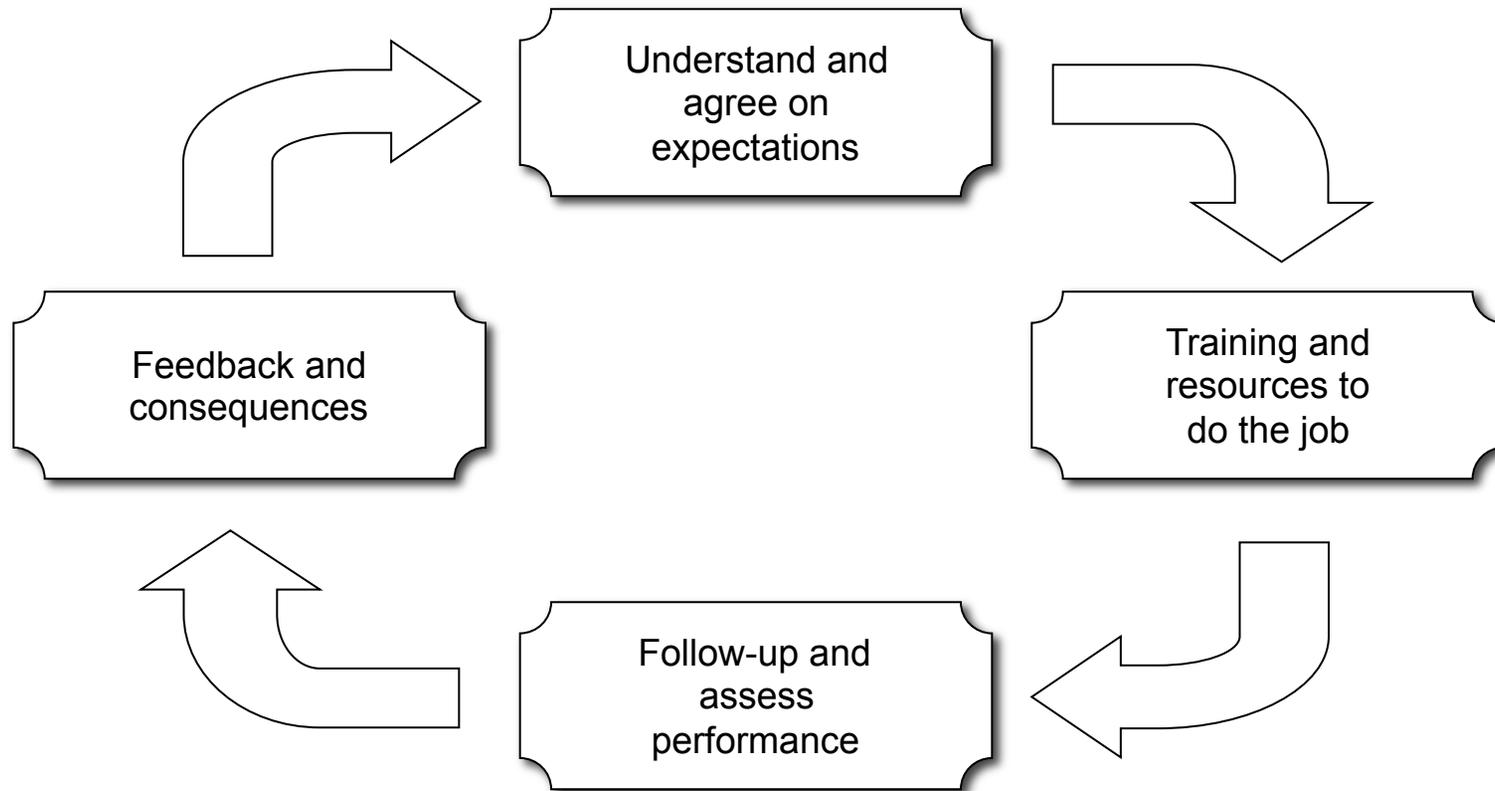
- ❏ Is there accountability at every level of your organization?
- ❏ If not, where in the Accountability Loop do things break down?

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The Accountability Loop



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Top Factor #5: Personal connection to management

-  Leaders are visible on the floor.
-  Leaders know people's names and say hello.
-  Leaders aren't perceived as "hiding out" in the office.
-  If there's bad news, leaders tell it in person.

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Survey questions that reflect personal connection with upper management

-  Management is sincerely interested in the needs and welfare of the employees.
-  I feel comfortable approaching management with concerns. OR
-  I feel safe bringing my ideas, problems or criticisms to management with no fear of retaliation.

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Beyond scores on questions, comments like these also reflect on that connection

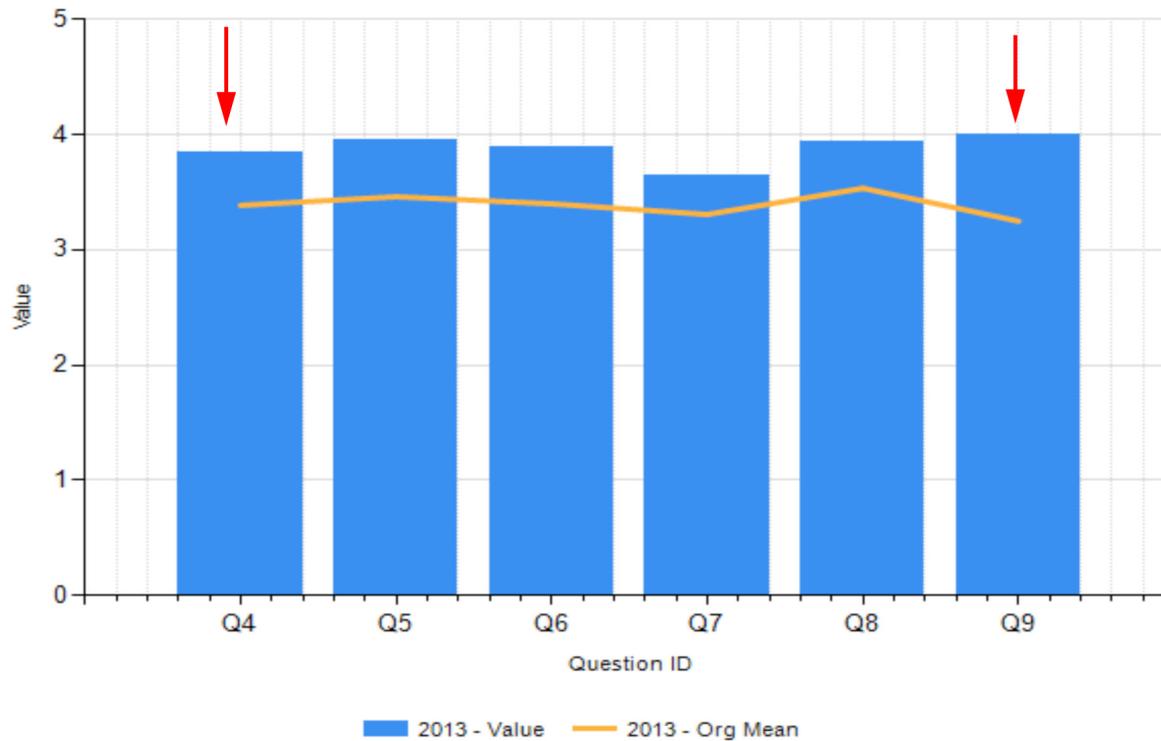
- ❏ “My manager is one of the few who work on the floor with us, leading by example. The other managers only sit in the office all day long. We don’t know what they’re doing.”
- ❏ “There’s a disconnect between the sales floor and the office. Thus when decisions are made they do not always reflect the needs of everyday operations.”
- ❏ “When it's Member Appreciation Day or the lunch rush, and the store is rocking, it makes us feel supported when our managers are out there with us.”
- ❏ “Upper management is never on the floor so they don’t even know who is doing good work. So why are they deciding our pay raises?”

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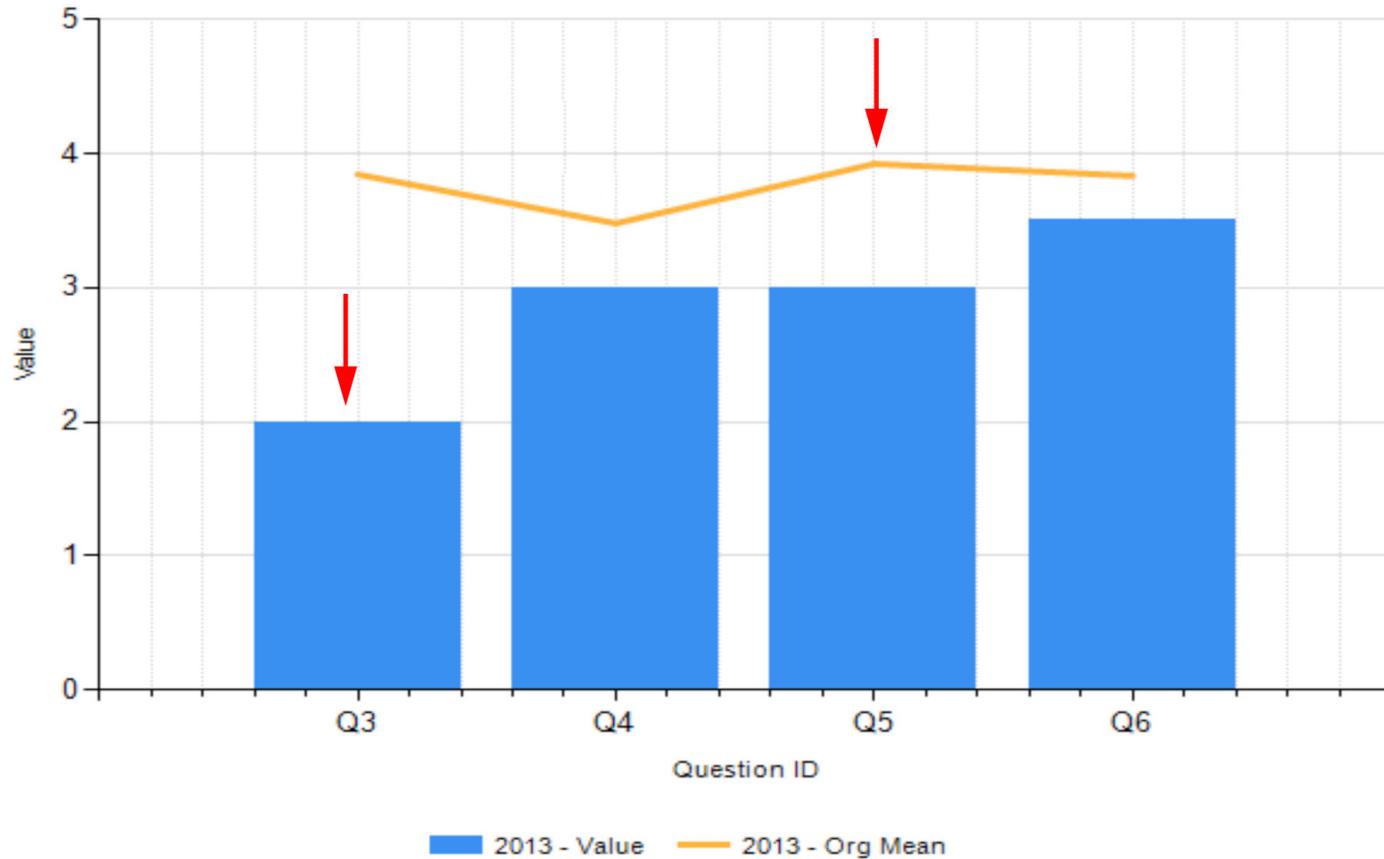
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How those who strongly agreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Overall Management Practices.



Q4	Co-op management is sincerely interested in the needs and welfare of the employees.
Q5	When conflicts can't be resolved between coworkers, they are effectively resolved with management involvement.
Q6	I know what to do if I have a dispute or grievance about a management decision.
Q7	To the best of my knowledge, corrective action is handled fairly and consistently throughout the co-op.
Q8	To the best of my knowledge, management follows established policy when taking corrective action.
Q9	I feel safe bringing my ideas, problems or criticisms to management with no fear of retaliation.

How those who disagreed with “I would recommend the co-op as a good place to work,” answered questions on Overall Management Practices.



Q3	Co-op management is sincerely interested in the needs and welfare of the employees.
Q4	To the best of my knowledge, corrective action is handled fairly and consistently throughout the Co-op.
Q5	I am comfortable approaching management with my concerns.
Q6	The managers work well together as a team.

GMs speak

Feeling that the GM knows that you exist is important to line staff. They want to feel that the GM has a common experience with them. It's hard to create that if you're not down there on the floor every now and then.

--CE Pugh

CEO of NCG Development Co-op

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GMs speak

I love to meet folks; I love sharing moments and learning about what they're doing. I am interested in them as individuals.

Our co-op is successful because employees bring their best self and energy to work. By "managing by walking around," I acknowledge and honor that.

--Steve Nance, General Manager

Oryana Natural Foods Market, Traverse City, MI

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GMs speak

It's very helpful to me to work regular shifts on the floor. We have 195 employees, and I know about all of their names. It breaks down the barriers between upper management and the rest of the staff. It's great for morale.

*--Kelly Wiseman, General Manager
Community Food Co-op, Bozeman, MT*

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What about Compensation?

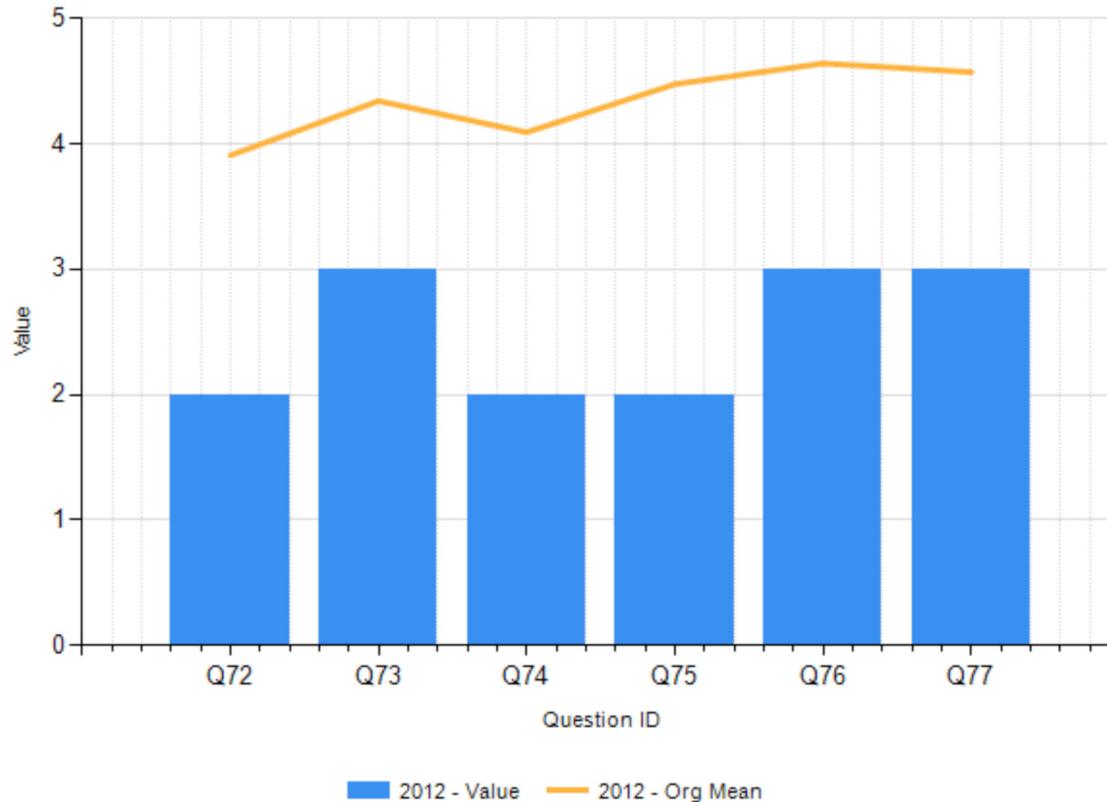
- ❶ Pay is a “dissatisfier,” but not a “satisfier.”
- ❷ “Hygiene factors”
- ❸ Everyone loves their benefits, even if they don’t like anything else about working for the store

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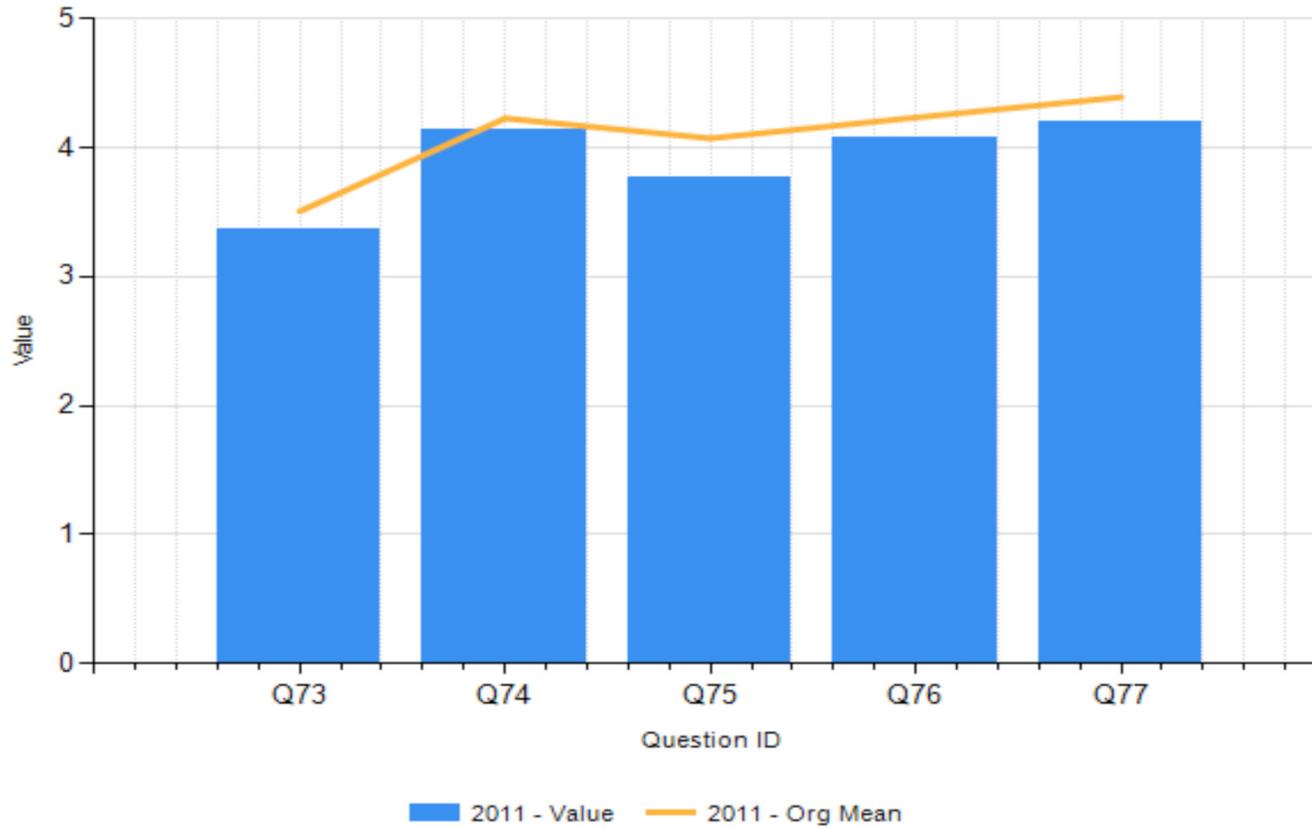
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How those who disagreed with “I am fairly paid for the work I do relative to similar opportunities in the area,” answered questions on Job Satisfaction for Co-op A



Q72	I feel recognized for my contributions to the co-op.
Q73	At Our Co-op we are always striving for continuous improvement.
Q74	I am interested in working at the co-op for a long time.
Q75	I would recommend Our Co-op as a good place to work.
Q76	I would recommend Our Co-op as a good place to shop.
Q77	I am proud to work for Our Co-op.

How those who disagreed with “I am fairly paid for the work I do relative to similar opportunities in the area,” answered questions on Job Satisfaction for Co-op B



Q73	Staff members are recognized for their contributions to the co-op.
Q74	Compared to the other jobs I've held, my job at The Co-op is satisfactory to me.
Q75	I am interested in working at The Co-op for a long time.
Q76	I would recommend The Co-op as a good place to work.
Q77	I am proud to work for The Co-op.

What about supervisors?

What about coworkers?

- ❶ Employees in high-scoring and low-scoring surveys alike, appreciate their coworkers.
- ❶ Most employees in high-scoring surveys like their supervisors.

However,

- ❶ When trust in upper management goes down, loyalty to one's own department and supervisor may go up.

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Our department against the world

