



# Framing Your Survey

Tactics to get Executives Excited

Employee Well-Being and Strategic Surveys Conference,  
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# The Presenter



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Employees are our most important asset.

Employee engagement is critical to our success.

We are cancelling this year's employee survey.

## A Starting Assumption:

The ways top leadership thinks, charts, supports, and acts on employee survey results matters.

# Any of These Sound Familiar?

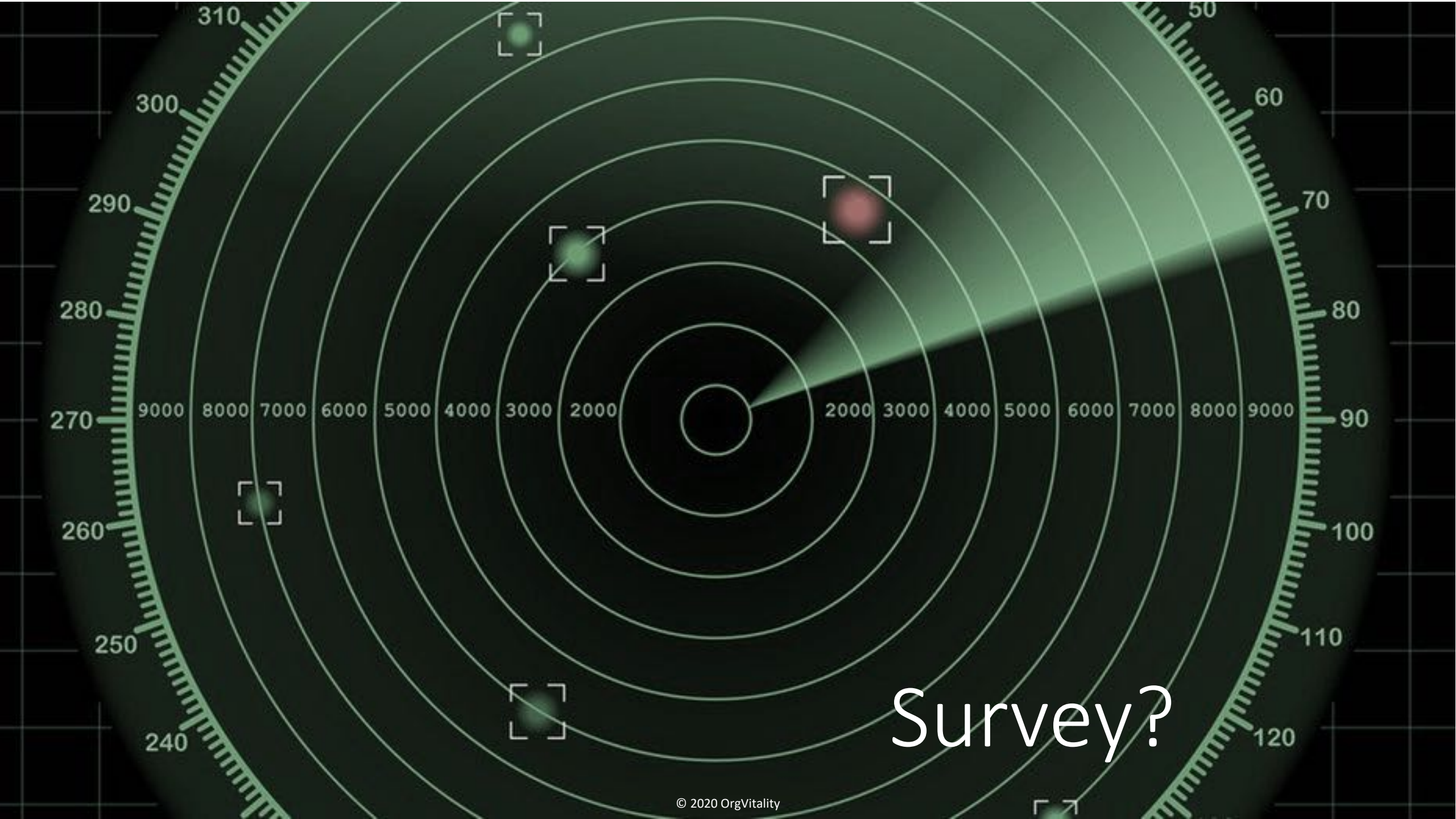
- You worked really hard to get executives to admit that employee engagement is important, but then they either change their mind, forget, or move on to other things.
- The executive team says it needs more frequent survey results in order to act, but when delivered, there is less action than before.
- In the face of survey results that don't improve fast enough, senior leaders seem to grow frustrated with the process rather than enhancing leadership messaging, action, or championship.
- Your organization-wide survey is cancelled abruptly, even shortly after public statements to the value of employee engagement.





# Leadership Is Hard





Survey?



# What We'll Cover

*Growth Mindset*

*Prevention vs. Promotion*

*Loss Aversion*



# Growth Mindset

Fundamental belief that qualities and abilities can be improved (or are fixed)

	Fixed	Growth
Goal	Look Smart	Learn & Improve
View of Effort	Negative	Positive
Challenge-Seeking	Avoid	Seek
Change	Threat	Opportunity
Response to Criticism	Defensive	Learning-Oriented
Response to Setbacks	Helpless	Resilient
Persistence in Face of Failure	Move On	Learn, Try Again

# Growth Mindset & Surveys

Fundamental beliefs that:

- a. Organizational climate, culture, leadership can be improved
- b. Surveys are valid indicators
- c. Efforts to improve can be reflected in future survey results
- d. Lack of movement in scores is related to ineffective efforts, not ineffective survey programs

You might be wondering...

Is a Growth Mindset always valid?



# Prevention vs. Promotion

## Prevention: Focused on not losing

- Concentrate on staying safe
- Worry about what goes wrong if don't work hard, careful enough
- Vigilant, play to not lose, maintain the status quo
- While often more risk-averse, more thorough, accurate
- Slow, meticulous

## Promotion: Focused on winning

- Goals are path to gain or advancement
- Focus on rewards
- Comfortable taking chances
- Work quickly, dream big, think creatively
- More prone to error, less likely to think things through, unprepared with Plan B
- Worst thing is chance not taken



# Prevention vs. Promotion & Surveys

## Prevention: Focused on not losing

- Survey is for diagnosing problems
- Reporting should find “hot spots”
- Action focuses on low scoring items, below average groups

## Promotion: Focused on winning

- Survey is for conversation, action
- Reporting should highlight how to improve
- Action focuses on any items, groups that advance the cause of the organization



# Loss Aversion

People prefer avoiding losses to acquiring equivalent gains

Better to not lose \$5 than to find \$5

In fact, threat of a loss can have 2x impact of gain



# Loss Aversion & Surveys



## **Fixed or Prevention Mindset**

Gain or loss defined by scores

## **Growth or Promotion Mindset**

Gain or loss defined by ability to learn or improve

Which would you rather chase?



# Summary

## Embrace Survey Challenge

- Growth Mindset
- Promotion Mindset
- See more chance for Gain

## Avoid Survey Challenge

- Fixed Mindset
- Prevention Mindset
- See more chance for Loss

Of course:

- No executive is cleanly or always on one side or other
- Individuals can be one mindset for Finance, another for HR
- Tendencies can be mixed across top leadership group
- CEO and CHRO mindsets are most pivotal

There are two kinds of people in this world...  
those who think there are two kinds of people  
and those who do not.

# What's Your Scene?

Factors you may be able to rate, identified by OV consultants as differentiating success from failure.

- ☐ Executives feel point of surveys is to find/fix problems more than improve
- ☐ Executives feel results are grades of leadership styles more than challenges to learn
- ☐ With bad results, first reactions are about how to spin/explain to organization or board
- ☐ Improvements are “because we are good”, but declines are “because of that one specific thing”
- ☐ Reaction in face of no change/declines is to change the survey system
- ☐ Lot of careful upward management about leadership or HR-related issues
- ☐ Executives do not reference survey results unless prompted
- ☐ Survey inaction always has reason or excuse
- ☐ Executives need to know how to fix an issue before committing to it as a challenge to address
- ☐ Even without survey, executives *demonstrate* efforts to improve the work environment (reverse scored)
- ☐ Executives talk about surveys with own words, don't simply restate “standard HR lines (reverse scored)



# What To Do?

## Focus on Changing Mindsets

- Do not just tell leaders to have a growth mindset – everyone thinks they have one
- Provide learning about mindsets/frames – address beliefs head-on
- Celebrate mistakes, productive struggle – make them public
- Assess, recognize learning, not just performance
- Press through it... ask for tolerance as they get experience, learning, feedback
- Remember: Mindset about survey  $\neq$  mindset overall – invoke other domains of expertise

# What To Do?

## Focus on Working with What You've Got

- Do not depend on versions of “just try harder”, or even just logic
- Learn executives’ mindsets, sense of gains or loss risk
- Frame survey as extension of executive vision, voice
- Create gain/loss narratives that work with, not against mindsets
  - Inspirational stories of success work better with Growth or Promotion Mindsets
  - Cautionary tales work better with Fixed or Prevention Mindsets
- Ask for tolerance for feelings of frustration and lack of efficiency
- Remember: Not all executives will be in same frame – find ally with Growth Mindset regarding surveys

# Sidebar: Problem with Mindset or problem with reality?

Sometimes, loss aversion is the right choice

Sometimes, throwing more effort at growth challenges is not the right thing to do

Some clues you may want to change up survey program:

- ☐ No topics in survey that naturally keep execs awake at night (only topics they feel *should* be there)
- ☐ You can't "hear" the CEO's voice in survey questions being asked
- ☐ Scores most scrutinized by the organization (e.g., Engagement Index) are among highest scores in survey
- ☐ Survey results have not changed *despite* good effort
- ☐ Executives' org transformation aspirations are unreasonable or disconnected from strategy (e.g., East Coast bank might never act like Silicon Valley tech)

# What To Do?

## Focus on Changing the Survey Program

- Acknowledge the chance that Fixed or Prevention Mindsets, Loss Aversion might be valid for the situation – change is hard
- Evaluate the survey program
  - Uniquely captures executive interests, not simply “traditional” topics
  - Story of results connected to business
  - Executive focus is directed at scores plausible to change, room to grow
  - Earnest effort, properly supported, is maintained by executives
  - Program meets executive mindset needs

# What To Do?

Focus on Changing Mindsets

Focus on Working with What You've Got

Focus on Changing the Survey Program

# How Will You Frame Surveys with Executives?



To submit a question or your top take-aways,  
enter in Zoom's Q&A box



# Employee Well-Being and Business Resilience Survey

- Free Pulse survey to connect organizations and employees during these challenging times
- Available in 13 languages
- Helps leadership understand what specific challenges their employees are facing, whether they have what they need to work effectively while operating remotely, and if critical messages are getting through
- This survey, which will always be free, will be updated and adapted to take the pulse of your employees as this global pandemic and quarantine evolves



# Connecting Employees and Organizations

At OrgVitality, we are experts in designing projects that are linked to **strategy**, generate useful **insight**, and drive positive **action**. Now, more than ever, organizations need to listen to and learn from their employees.

We can help.



## Surveys

- Strategic Employee Surveys
- Pulse/Continuous Listening
- Lifecycle
- 180 and 360 assessments
- Internal Customer Experience

## AI-Driven Action Tools

- Action Prioritization
- Nudges
- Comment Analysis

