Summary

The unbridled optimism from the last anonymous survey contrasts with the challenge of building a new, and innovative movie studio. To an extent, there was only one way for the scores to go in a subsequent wave. While employees in general feel that Solstice is a positive environment, with clear mutual admiration for the talent we all bring to the table, clear communication and transparency, with an innate ability to get things done, we are now facing growing pains, coming to terms with our roles, responsibilities, limitations, and sense of freedom to work in a way we see fit.

On the positive side, there's a general recognition that Solstice will do whatever it takes to survive; we are scrappy and able to adapt quickly. At this point, many of us would like us to do a better job of also maintaining our core values of psychological safety, trust, and employee empowerment.

There were two clear and related ideas within the open-end questions that we should consider addressing. The first is the hours physically spent in the office, where people say they believe they can perform better if they have more flexibility to recharge, connect with and care for our children, family, friends, and pets. The second is they feel they can be more productive if they were empowered to act more independently. These two ideas are related more generally to the notion that we want the freedom to perform \*when\* it we feel we can be at our best, and also \*how\* we feel it’s best to carry out our respective roles.

ENPS

ENPS is somewhat of a volatile measure, because scores can move from one category to another to produce a 2-point swing in either direction. So, in that sense it is quite sensitive to a change in sentiment.

While our ENPS scores is still in a healthy range, relative to known norms, the challenges and stresses we have faced working together in the first year did result in a significant drop in our ENPS score. Promoter ratings of 9 + 10 on the scale have shifted down to either neutral (7 + 8) or detractor levels (1 thru 6). Whereas in the past survey we had fewer than 7% of our ratings below neutral, now we have 22% of our scores there.

Five-point questions

The results from the 82 individual questions mirrors (and reveals) the change in the ENPS score, with an overall downward shift in the distribution of scores. Across the board there was a decrease in the number of top scores (fives and fours), and sharp increase in negative ratings (ones, twos), as well as neutral ratings (threes).

Areas of Company Focus

When we examine the areas that decreased the most, our assessment of what it’s like to work at Solstice is that it’s harder to Trust management, that we don’t feel as psychologically safe to take risks and operate independently. Many therefore feel they are not as productive as they could be. And we see a corresponding drop in the feeling that Solstice is a good place to work.

Distribution of Average Scores

Given the decreasing scores across the board, and especially in specific areas, we wanted to check the disparity of scores for individuals. We can see that while there’s a general downward shift from the very high scores from the last wave, we don’t see signs of bimodality (extremely low scores and extremely high scores).

Open Ends

Turning to the open ends to gain insight into what is working well and what can improve, we see that the company is great at communication, collaboration, and then speed, transparency, and providing a positive environment for employees.

However, areas where we can improve mention stop the persistent micromanaging, they want more flexible work hours, and there were several people mentioning wanting to bring their dogs to work.

For managers, people appreciate being included as much as possible, in decisions, brain- storming sessions, in understanding department and company challenges, possible strategies, and allowing them to contribute solutions. Next to that we love being authentically praised and recognized for our contributions. As much as people want inclusion, they dislike being micromanaged, and they dislike feeling like they or others are disrespected by their managers.

The best things we can do to make employees feel more valued is to trust them with more responsibility, while encouraging them through positive feedback and constructive criticism.

Going Forward

At this point Senior Management will focus on paying more attention to the issues raised here, and is already thinking of solutions to address them.

One concrete step is that we’ve identified a management consulting company who will be coming in to train anyone in management to do a better job.

Actual steps will be taken.