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## When it comes to employee happiness, does size matter?

CRAIG SILVERMAN, DECEMBER 5, 2008

A survey commissioned by The Beacon Group, a Canadian HR services firm, claims to offer evidence that “Employees at larger companies are generally happier about their jobs than those at smaller organizations.”

The survey, conducted between 2002 and 2007, used results from more than 31,000 participants at companies in Canada, the U.S and Mexico. That's an impressive sample size. Here are some of the findings:

*Large companies scored 2.67 points in satisfaction compared to 2.64 points for companies below the 1000 employee mark. The Employee Survey measured satisfaction based on 4 key categories, including management support & quality, future career development, compensation and work environment & co-workers.*

*Large companies scored equal or higher in every category of the Employee Survey, particularly in compensation and future career development. “Teamwork & Collaboration” and “Value, Recognition & Appreciation” were cited as the best advantages of large corporations over small companies.*

But the Beacon Group is careful to point out that the survey also had positive results for smaller companies.

“Employees at smaller companies may feel they have greater control over their role in the organization and workplace environment,” said Shannon Couch, the VP of product planning and development at The Beacon Group. “This can translate into more critical scores in employee surveys, where employees at larger companies may have become complacent about their ability to shape their workplace environment.”

So, as with many surveys, the results aren't conclusive. But they're interesting nonetheless. The Winning Workplaces blog also had some quotes to share regarding the advantages of small businesses:

*“A small company controls its destiny. Each employee's impact is seen, felt, heard. Each action has a direct impact on the company and each of their colleagues.” – Zane Safrit, former CEO of Conference Calls Unlimited, on SmallBizSurvival*

*“Small companies act in a personal way, treating people the way they'd like to be treated. Small companies act like people; people who work there get respect and autonomy, and so employees are happy.” – Job Pundit blog*

As much as the size of an organization has an effect on the workplace, I don't think it's possible to say definitively that big is better, or vice versa. There are great organizations both large and small. The satisfaction level of employees has less to do with headcount than with a company's culture, the work it does, and how it treats its employees. Some workers also have a personal preference when it comes to the size of their employer.