

WW UK Work Engagement survey

Background

Response rate: 26 (out of 120 women mailed), which although above average response rate for a survey, is lower than hoped for, despite prompting, and considerably lower than for the Celebration Survey where 37 women (of the total 44 respondents) had volunteered in some capacity. 70 responded to the Jan/Feb 2015 survey (160 'live' addresses, 440 total database).

It is possible that women who completed the Celebration Survey felt they did not want to talk further about their staffing/volunteering experiences as the two surveys were close in time. Findings from the Celebration survey are included where relevant.

Overall findings

In general respondents to this survey, who are committed to and highly involved in WW UK, appear more negative in their attitudes than the wider community. This is a worrying, but not unexpected finding as there were strong indications of burn out, low/negative energy amongst interviewees in early 2015 (qualitative findings amongst mainly committed women - part of the process in preparing recommendations to the Steering Circle on the future of Transitions Europe).

This is against a background of a possible growing 'malaise' amongst the most engaged women in WW UK: the Celebration Survey shows the NPS (net promoter score) has dropped considerably since early 2015 from 64 to 50.

WW UK mission

Amongst women who (in theory, as volunteers, staff, FiT/FAC and TL leadership track) would be expected to know more about the mission and be more committed to the mission:

23% do not know what the mission is and less than half: 38%, strongly agree with the mission.

This compares with 10% do not know the mission, 50% strongly agree with the mission in the Celebration survey.

Survey: work engagement findings

As the sample is small, it is probably more useful to show differences in responses.

71% agree they are **surrounded by women with shared values** (8% disagree) though this is mainly women 'agreeing' (63%) rather than strongly agreeing

70% agree that whatever role they take on **they are always challenged to grow** (13% disagree)

66% agree they are **inspired to give of their best** in the work they do for WW UK (17% disagree)

65% agree that they **clearly understand what is expected of me BUT 19% disagree**

65% agree that they have **opportunities to apply my talents and expertise in the work I do** (11% disagree). 23% strongly agree, the highest score in this category, indicating some women have a good 'fit' in their roles.

41% disagree they can **access the support they need** (53% agree)

27% disagree that they **know they will be recognised for excellent work** (44% agree)

Future confidence is muted: 52% agree they have **confidence in the future of WW UK** (35% neutral, 13% disagree)

Similarly, 56% agree to feeling **empowered by their involvement with WW UK** (22% neutral, 19% disagree)

This is considerably lower than the Celebration survey where 91% felt their involvement (staffing, volunteering, FiT track etc) was either very/quite empowering.

With a mission of 'empower women, empower the world, it is vital that the organisation delivers and 'walks its talk' with those women who step up and volunteer in whatever capacity. Working in/with/for Woman Within UK should **BE empowering**. This survey helps identify where work needs to be done: especially acknowledgement, support, understanding what is expected in the role.

Positive Comments

The work I do on weekends specifically (as a staff member) has a positive impact on my relationships and the rest of my life. I am empowered because I feel confident in my ability and like a valuable member of a powerful community.

I love staffing weekends and I feel a sense of achievement and always get good feedback about my role. I also enjoy being a member of a long established empowerment circle

My involvement with WWI has changed my life for the better. The community of women I am now part of is supporting and strengthening, especially my involvement with my e-circle. The opportunities I have had while staffing have pushed me to do things I never dreamed I would be able to do, and being able to do them is very empowering. The trainings have given me insights into myself that I did not find in books or anywhere else in life, and my circle have enabled me to look at myself without being judged and supported me throughout.

....there is commitment and support from the women in this community at all levels

and from the Celebration survey:

I find staffing a wonderfully empowering experience. Working with women towards a common goal without competition is a unique experience in my life and very empowering.

...being an example for other women, having gone the path before them and testifying this which is the most empowering

Critical comments

As a purely voluntary organisation, I feel that there is often grey area around (what is expected of me)... and that the 'goal posts' can move.

I think (what is expected of me) is one of the weak points of the organisation. Efforts have been made to make each position clearer and I think it is a challenge to create this clarity and I think progress is being made but we are not there yet

The communication between myself and the Steering Committee (...) is not always clear and I find out about changes when they appear on the website rather than in advance.

I think I would like to see some acknowledgement that everyone has their own idea of how something is done best but at the end of the day the person who has stepped up to lead must make the final decision - that this is not a negation of the validity of other ideas but that we can only follow one path at a time; I really do think that communication skills in the leadership could transform the organisation - maybe looking at a mix of formal and informal communications to help keep people in the loop and feeling part of things even though their suggestions were not taken up ?

Transparency and written/spoken communication.

Lack of feedback. E mails when volunteering are not answered. That makes me feel stupid, unwanted and wondering if I mis-interpreted the request. I question my abilities. I then become 'triggered' feeling unwanted and yet again 'not good enough' or just unworthy. Then I decide not to offer my limited services next time a request is put on WWUK.

By responding to my Emails when I have volunteered to take on a task. Clearer information on places.

I am not always clear about who to contact when I need support; I think not being able to staff weekends does put me at a disadvantage as this is currently the heart of the community and when women talk and bond the most

The support on the weekends is definitely in place, however doing the roles outside of this can feel unsupported and it not always obvious who to go to for support. (...). Maybe all roles should have the woman who has stood up to do it, and a secondary woman with either experience to mentor, or enthusiasm to share ideas?

Too few women are stepping up to roles and leaving the work to a small number of us who are now struggling. This is not empowering.

More support to create a powerful team

the Woman Within organisation don't know all about my experiences and could possibly make better use of me

I am empowered already, if anything I find my involvement disempowering as the more I rake beneath the surface, the more concerned I become that the organisation does not walk its talk

I feel empowered by using the premises of WWUK but I often find authority figures within the movement are emotionally disconnected and slightly haughty - this might be my stuff but I don't think so

I'm not very clear on why I don't always enjoy the work I do for WWUK. I feel constantly guilty that I haven't delivered what I said I would. Then frustrated that others don't do what they say they will. Then resentful that so few are doing so much. I enjoy collaborating. More opportunity to do this would work well for me. Now that we are a sort of Circle Team it feels that some progress is happening on that front. And I do feel supported in this area. Conference calls - great, As just sharing where I'm up to saying I'm stuck and being able to be nudged forward is helpful. Because I know some women in the community personally I find it easy to talk to them about my frustrations. I think for women who don't know anyone else it could be particularly daunting and difficult. I try to support Liz in her new role in Finance ~ and I see how difficult it is to know who to ask for information. She asks me often and because I'm a busy body who knows lots I'm able to help her, but if I wasn't here I sense she wouldn't feel supported. I'm a bit concerned that the responsibility and authority is not clearly defined. I'm guilty here of not writing a job description, so perhaps that would be helpful. I'm nervous of expressing my thoughts about things in case I'm then expected to do something. It's not as much fun as it could be! Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share my feelings. I'm not entirely sure that I've been constructive enough. To be clear I'm not complaining about the work I'm doing, just wish I could be doing it better and longing to be better able to inspire others.

and from the Celebration Survey:

communication could be better all round; there is a sense of dictatorial leadership style whoever the leader is that I think is the result of hurried communication - I am probably the worst for this!; there is also a lack of accountability when women sign up for a role and then don't follow through; for me there is also a hiatus between the steering circle and the women in the community; I actually think carefully chosen vocabulary could shift this dramatically - I don't think the structure is terrible or needs a huge amount of overhauling... perhaps just a slightly more open attitude towards explaining why a great idea is not feasible or the best solution at this moment in time followed by a positive comment/ statement or invitation to get involved in other ways etc... Not sure if this makes sense but hopefully it helps

Speak to me if you have an issue with how I'm working. Be human.

I sometimes feel a little overwhelmed and intimidated by the v experienced women - my issues though (because) mostly quite friendly

Although most of the women in the community handle themselves with the highest integrity, particular leaders in the community could "walk the talk" a bit more. The ethos of the whole organisation is women empowering & supporting women however there have been times when a particular leader has been very unempowering and unsupportive. I have experienced this myself, witnessed it happening to others and had several discussions with women in the community who feel the same. This prevents me from taking part in the steering circle/ workshops and celebrations.

Emailed comments

I would like to have answered the final question (future confidence) in a positive manner but that would be (for me) untruthful. Sad.

I heard very recently about 2 women first time staffers who received the 'the Treatment' from x and I filled in my questionnaire on the back of that which was not very positive to say the least

I staffed once and then couldn't get childcare to staff again for a while and then when I could was refused and went totally into victim. I also had an issue with a WW facilitator which made me slightly less impressed by WW as a whole. But mainly after the experience of WiP where I felt I really belonged there was less incentive to reconnect with WW. I have looked at the mail-outs and been impressed by the intent and the care that has been taken.....It's made me question my decision not to apply to staff again (I probably would if I had less commitments). What you are doing and setting up now will help the women coming through in the future especially. It is foundation building: very valuable; but you may not see the results immediately.

Telephoned comments

Staffing WW I feel like a skivvy. The team is so hierarchical, the Weekend scripted and the check-ins from the Facilitator team can seem unreal. There is less integrity than the leadership of WiP, where women let it all hang out and are held in whatever space they are in so that everyone can step into their authentic truth and vulnerability, which creates a different ethos for the participants, which is no less safe and perhaps more safe. The leadership, especially ALisa, speak and lead from the heart.

I don't read the WW mailings anymore. The language is too flowery and imprecise and I feel manipulated. Get to the point. Frequency is not an issue if the mailings are direct and real.

WW Circles are too cosy. I want something real and authentic where women want to grow. I am looking to find a WiP Circle or Red Tent near me.

There is an issue in that the WW Weekend focuses on lover/child archetype/s and does not leave women in their sovereign. I feel this could lead to WW community wanting more nurturing, direction and encouragement rather than being empowered after the workshop.

It has been difficult to find sufficient staff for YEARS and women only usually get turned down when we drop to a one team Weekend. I would not have staffed 40+ times if I didn't have the buzz of working on the carpet. I worry that the facilitation team can be aloof on the Weekend, for staff and participants, and can't work out how they could find time to interact more...I am very conscious of this and make an effort to find time in the staff room and say 'hello' at the very least! Not everyone does.

Staffing (away from south of England) is a problem: I have heard women saying (Derbyshire) is 'too far'.

For the Yorkshire Weekend I had to do individual invitations to get staff and expect we shall need to do that for the next Weekend near York. And tease them a bit: bring oxygen!

Email from Marg on energy/recruitment

I only wish I had the answers for you! I just got off a call with women in HI trying to figure out how to recruit women to attend. I know that the TX region has had success filling the 'other' workshops when they personally contact women in their community by phone and chat with them directly to invite them to enroll for a Skills, or Wholeness, or whatever It seems like personal contact is the most effective method. Simply sending out email

announcements and putting up posters is just not enough. Women want to see and hear from actual women who have attended these programs ... women want to see and hear about the successes experienced. and Char Tosi is a firm believer that people need to see something at least 3 times before they respond to it ... and that totally frustrates me because I want them to enrol the first time I send out the announcement ... I don't want to pester!!!!

It is no consolation, but, we are all struggling to find the answer to recruitment!!!

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