



## Case Study: Unilever Code of Business Principles

Multi-national food and consumer goods giant Unilever employs over 200,000 people worldwide. Employees are distributed in 300 operating units across every continent, with separate divisions responsible for hundreds of different brands, from SlimFast to Vaseline.

In April 2002 Unilever launched their Unilever Code of Business Principles – a set of principles and values designed to embed good business practice within the organization.

The Code was rolled-out during 2002 in all regions and Operating Companies through a series of workshops with videos, posters and leaflets. In 2005 the decision was taken to conduct a series of worldwide Pulse surveys to check the effectiveness of the implementation and evaluate eventual additional support required by employees.

### The Challenge

Unilever asked Pulse Check to meet several key objectives:

1. Gauge the understanding of and attitudes towards the Code of employees in a multitude of divisions, business groups and geographical locations.
2. Conduct the Pulses in 26 different languages.
3. Design survey interfaces and survey content that would itself play a part in communicating and embedding the Code.
4. Design survey interfaces that would engage respondents in order to maximise response rates.
5. Deliver results and analysis rapidly, allowing actions to be implemented swiftly.

The first Pulse was launched in January 2005. Subsequent runs were launched in July and October. At the end of 2005 the results of each of the three Pulses were consolidated in a single analysis package which allowed Unilever to conduct comparative analysis on data gathered from over 60 countries and to build reports instantaneously.

In 2007 a series of follow up Pulses will begin, starting in Latin America and North America.

### Languages

The Code of Business Principles Pulse Check is currently conducted in 26 different languages. Language choice and country sign-in are separated in order to account for the multinational nature of the business i.e. a Swiss national working in Hong Kong can answer the Pulse in French.

Languages include Hebrew, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, Sinhalese, Japanese, Russian and a host of other 'complex' scripts.



## The questions

Pulse Check worked with Unilever to design a series of questions which tested respondents' awareness of the Code and attempted to discover what measures they thought would help embed the Code further. In 2007 – for the Americas Pulse – free text questions will be added to elicit an even deeper understanding of what the Code means to Unilever's people.

## Reporting

The results of the Business Principles Pulse Check are made available to administrators in real-time through a password protected online reports module. This provides key decision makers with instant access to the data.

The reports, which can be filtered by all relevant sign-in fields, are broken up into 4 main areas:

1. Total response rates and percentages - Per question, across survey sets and survey set combinations (common questions).
2. Average response and standard deviation - The mean response for each question, survey set or survey set combination.
3. Sample Size - Total response broken down by all relevant sign in fields

As well as online reports, Pulse Check provided Unilever with an offline analysis too which allows them to build PowerPoint presentations and Word document reports as and when required.

As the process starts again in 2007, reports will include a 'tracking' module, allowing administrators to conduct trend analysis for common questions, for relevant groups, between 2005 and now.

## Key Results

- The data provided Unilever with a clear picture of levels of Code awareness (and of the awareness of specific Code issues) worldwide. Demographic analysis (by country, operating unit, gender, work-level and a variety of other demographics) allowed them to understand these issues at a number of levels within the organization. Internal benchmarking allowed them to compare awareness across these units.
- The company now has a firm measurement scale in place allowing them to see how awareness, understanding and attitudes towards the Code change over time.
- The Code of Business Principles Pulse Check itself plays a part in raising awareness of the Code across the worldwide business.
- Response rates were above target, with some countries reporting rates as high as 90%.