GLC INCORPORATED
GENERAL LEARNING CLIMATES, INC.

STEPS IN DESIGNING, ADMINISTERING, AND REPORTING ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEYS

General Learning Climates, Inc., (GLC, Inc.) has been designing and administering organizational surveys for more than twenty-five years with a wide variety of government and business organizations. While each survey is uniquely tailored to fit the requirements and situation of each client system, a series of steps are usually followed which are outlined below.

1. Interview organizational leaders to learn about the need and purposes for an organizational survey and special requirements or circumstances in the client system situation.

2. Establish an agreement with the organization concerning the general design of the survey instrument, timing and administration of the survey, and distribution and use of the survey results.

3. Interview selected members of the organization to discover relevant issues that should be included in the survey instrument. Representatives of the organization's leadership are usually included in the interview process; a representative focus group of organizational members is often also included.

4. Develop a first draft of the survey instrument based on interview findings and pre-tested survey items on file with GLC, Inc., which relate to general organization performance areas including clarity of mission and goals, general work processes, communication, organizational climate and structure, customer service and quality, leadership and staff performance, training, technology, etc. It has become the recent practice of GLC, Inc., to structure survey instruments using positive statements for each item and asking respondents to rate the degree to which they disagree or agree with the item using a ten-point rating scale. Experience has shown that this approach is both quick to administer and permits a statistical analysis to show a five point range of disagreement or agreement below and above the scale mid-point (5.5).

5. Review the first draft of the survey instrument with the organizational leaders and with the focus group, to assure appropriateness of language, titles and designations, and other relevant details. Also ask the focus group to take the survey as a pilot test of the instrument to assure clarity and timing of administration.

6. Revise the instrument into final form. Work out the details of survey administration. The procedure must incorporate sufficient mechanisms of confidentiality and/or anonymity to assure that respondents feel comfortable in giving their honest responses to survey items without fear of reprisal for sharing their feedback. A few different options include:
   - Distribute surveys via the organization's management structure and have employees complete the survey on their own then place them in sealed survey collection boxes provided by GLC, Inc., or mail directly to GLC, Inc., offices.
   - Have employees gather in a room to complete the survey and turn them in directly to a representative of GLC, Inc., as they finish.

- Make the survey available electronically for participants to complete either as an email attachment or on a web site associated with GLC, Inc.

7. Develop cover letters for the survey instrument from the organization's leadership and the survey's independent research administrator at GLC, Inc.
8. Administer the survey and collect the completed survey instruments according to the agreed upon procedure.
9. Aggregate survey responses into sets that correspond to the survey design elements agreed upon previously. Compute statistical results and create appropriate arrangements of findings which are usually shown in tables and charts for ease of comparison. Graphic displays of findings are also used when they help to clarify the survey results.
10. Create survey reports for presentation in forms appropriate to the requirements of the client system as previously agreed. Different clients systems require different report formats; sometimes several formats for the same system, depending on how the reports are to be used. Different reports may include general findings for general distribution, comparative findings according to demographic sets included in the survey instrument, and sets of findings derived according to different demographic sets such as departments, employee category, etc.
11. Create cover letters to accompany the distribution of the reports as necessary.
12. Distribute the survey reports. All who have been asked to complete a survey instrument should receive some kind of report of survey results, usually a summary of all responses to all items.
13. Work with the organization's leadership to develop a procedure for explaining the survey reports to leaders to assist in their understanding the survey results and how they were derived. Interpretation of the survey findings to assess meaning, importance, and appropriateness of action is usually done in partnership with leaders and members of the client system.

It is important to encourage as much participation in the survey process as possible. As a general rule, the higher the percentage of respondents, the more representative the results.

The time required for the completion of an organizational survey process, steps 1 through 13 above, ranges from five to ten weeks or more depending on complexity of the survey and the responsiveness of the client system members.

The shelf-life of an organizational survey is typically two to three years. A repeat survey is encouraged, first to help measure any changes that have occurred based on the initial survey, and, second, to reinforce the principle of regularly studying the system for the purpose of continuous improvement.