



OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Stan Sewell, City Auditor

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Tim Kelly
City Council Members
From: Stan Sewell, City Auditor
Date: December 9, 2021
Re: Ethics Survey 2021

Integrity and ethical values are an integral part of the City's process to achieve desired goals. To evaluate the effectiveness of the work environment, the Office of Internal Audit conducted a confidential survey to determine employee opinions of the City's work environment. A similar survey was conducted last year and we intend to perform this survey annually in the future. Forty-percent of full and part time employees responded to the survey (907 individuals). A similar percentage of employees responded last year (2020).¹

The position classifications of respondents this year were consistent with the prior years. Approximately two-thirds classified themselves as staff, and one-third classified as middle management.² The majority of respondents believe their supervisor demonstrates high ethical standards³, believe their job responsibilities and reporting relationships have been clearly established and communicated to them⁴, and they know how to report fraud, waste and abuse⁵.

Except for a few survey questions, there was not an appreciable difference in the perceptions of employees at the staff, middle or upper management level. However, we did note some gaps that are worthy of mention:

¹ A similar survey with fewer respondents (506) was conducted as a component of an audit in 2018. Although we present the 2018 data in our graphs, comparisons to 2018 should be made with caution due to a low response rate.

² Work Environment Survey question 1.

³ Work Environment Survey question 3.

⁴ Work Environment Survey question 7.

⁵ Work Environment Survey question 11.

- With regard to reporting wrongdoing and whether it would stop, fewer staff level employees (53%) thought wrongdoing would stop than middle management (64%) or upper management (75%).
- Fewer staff level employees (48%) believe they would not experience retaliation if reporting wrongdoing than middle management (59%) or upper management (73%).
- In regard to satisfaction with training opportunities, fewer staff level employees (58%) are satisfied than middle management (67%) or upper management (71%).

The only question with a positive change compared to 2020 pertained to respondents feeling that having a well-run City is a top priority for the City's leadership (85% in 2020 vs. 87% in 2021).⁶ Other responses trended slightly negative compared to last year. The most negative change noted was that less individuals are satisfied with the training opportunities made available to them (68% in 2020 vs. 62% in 2021).⁷ Regular training contributes to increased employee engagement and retention. Only 79% of respondents thought their job responsibilities and reporting relationships were clearly established and communicated to them.⁸

There is a continuing concern about employee performance reviews. Only 59% of survey respondents indicated they receive a job evaluation at least every 3 years.⁹ Some employees have concerns about the value of their job evaluation or performance appraisal. Only 45% of respondents think their evaluation is beneficial.¹⁰ Effective and timely feedback clarifies expectations, while constructive criticism provides an avenue for improvement. The importance of a performance review was previously emphasized in our Control Environment audit report (Audit 18-03) issued November 29, 2018.

A summary comparing the results of our work environment survey is attached. Detail data can be obtained in Excel format on the Office of Internal Audit's page of the City's website. We encourage analysis of the raw data to obtain an understanding of perceptions at a granular level by applying filters (such as comparing different departments).

⁶ Work Environment Survey question 12.

⁷ Work Environment Survey question 8.

⁸ Work Environment Survey question 7.

⁹ Work Environment Survey question 9.

¹⁰ Work Environment Survey question 10.

The issues discussed in this memorandum are not the result of an audit performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Had we performed such an audit, additional issues might have been reported.

Attachment

cc: Audit Committee

Joda Thongnopnua, Chief of Staff

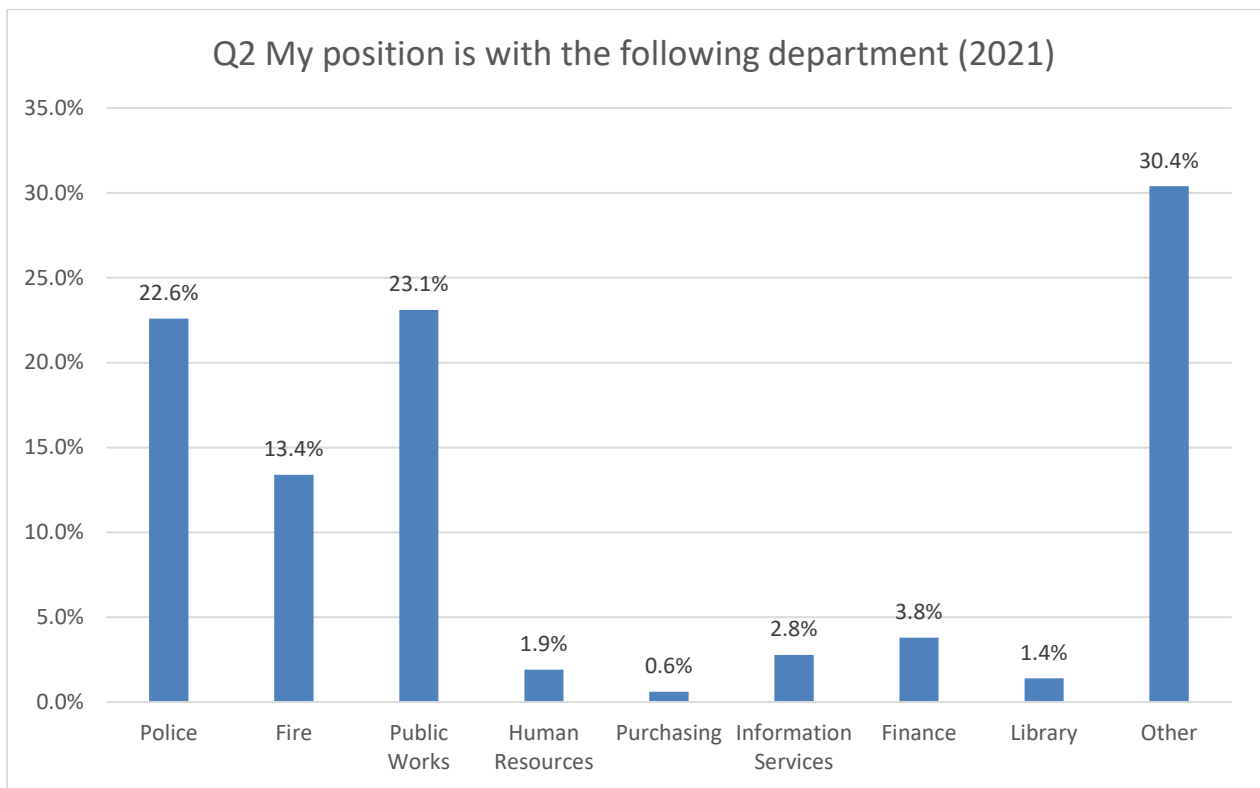
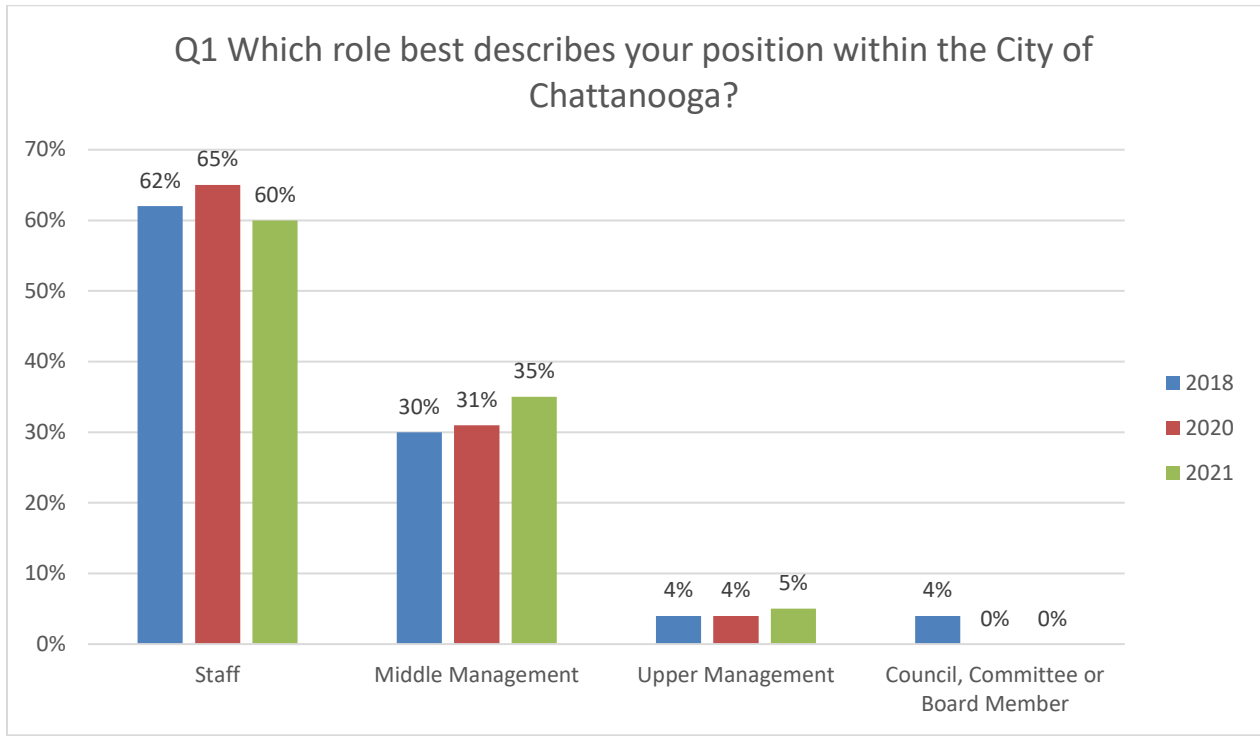
Brent Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer

Chris Anderson, Director of Innovation, Delivery & Performance

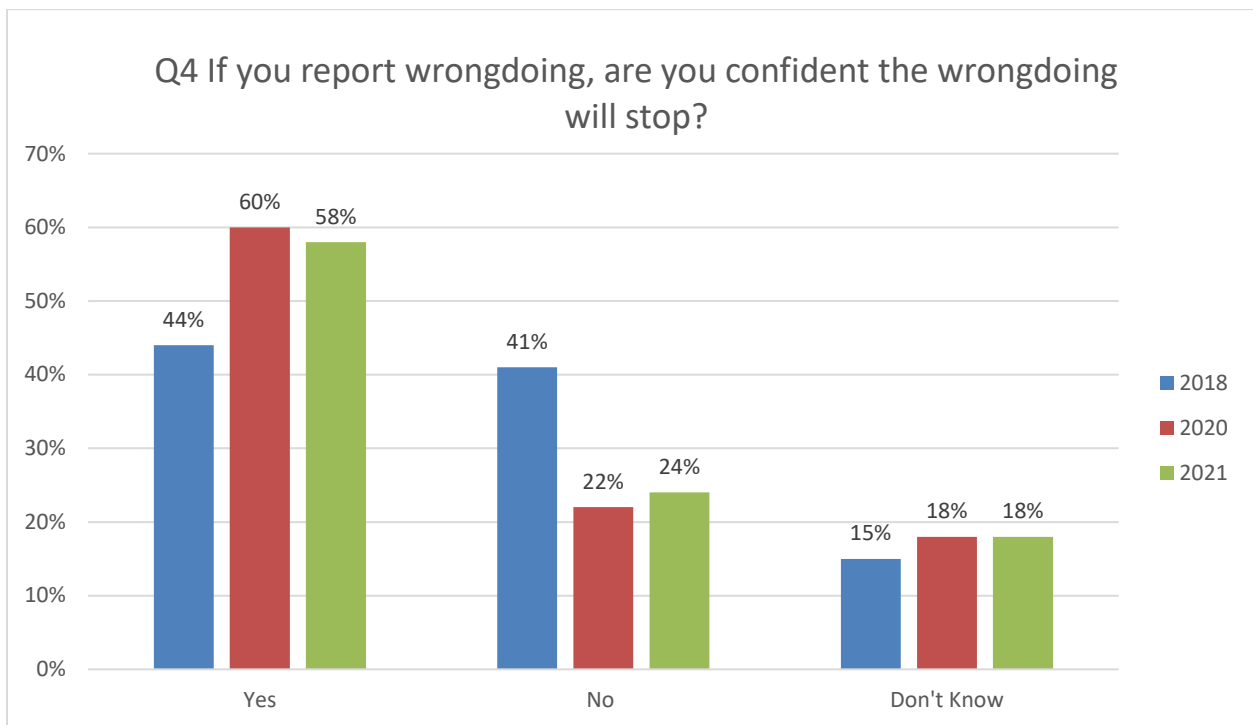
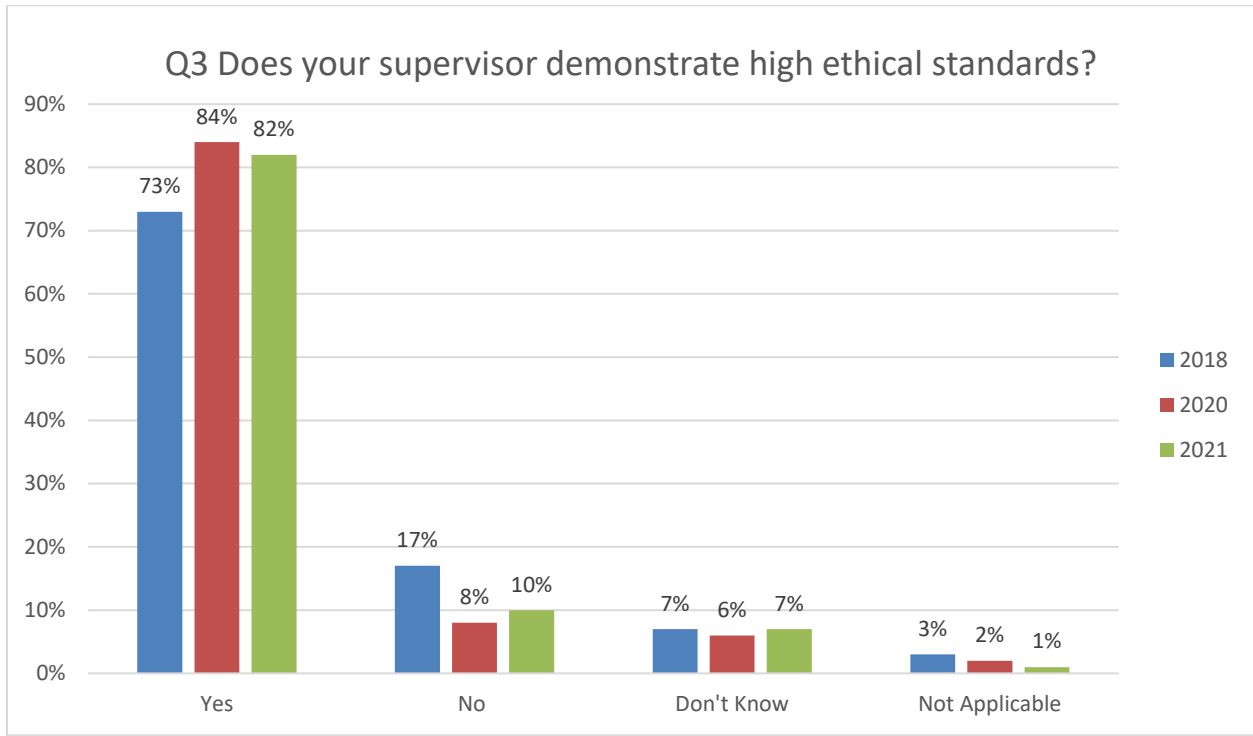
Julia Bursch, Deputy Chief of Staff

Department Heads

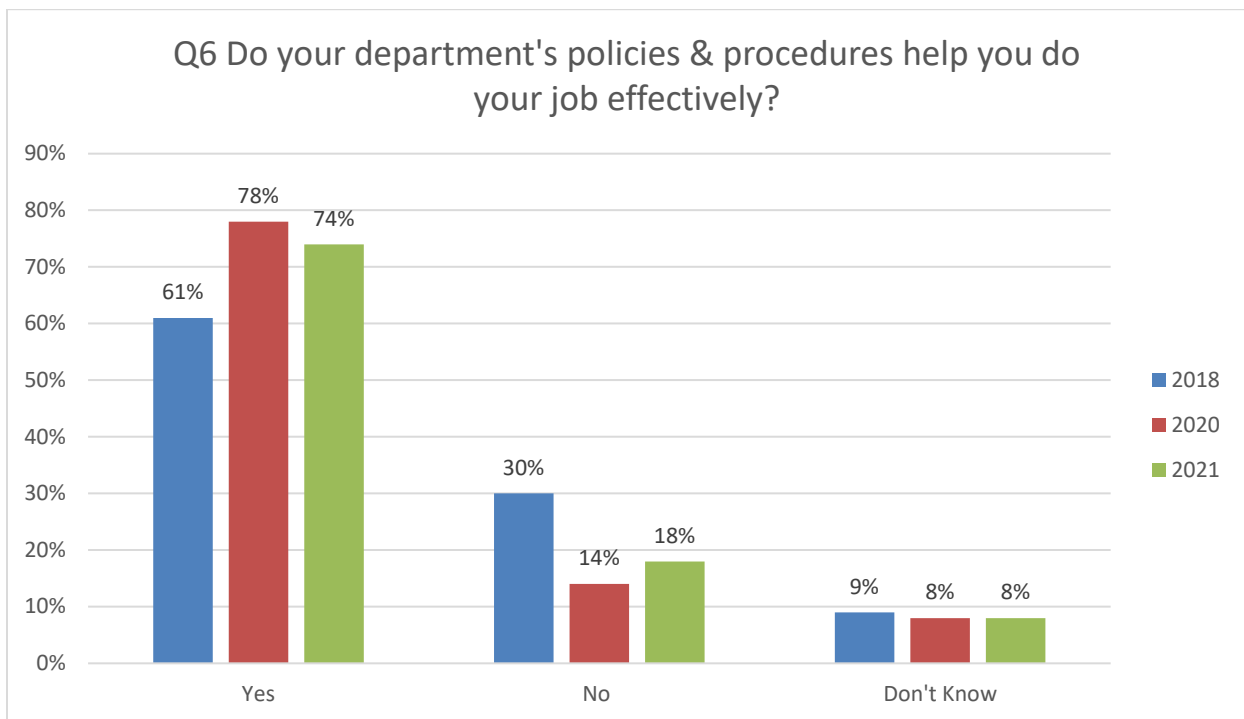
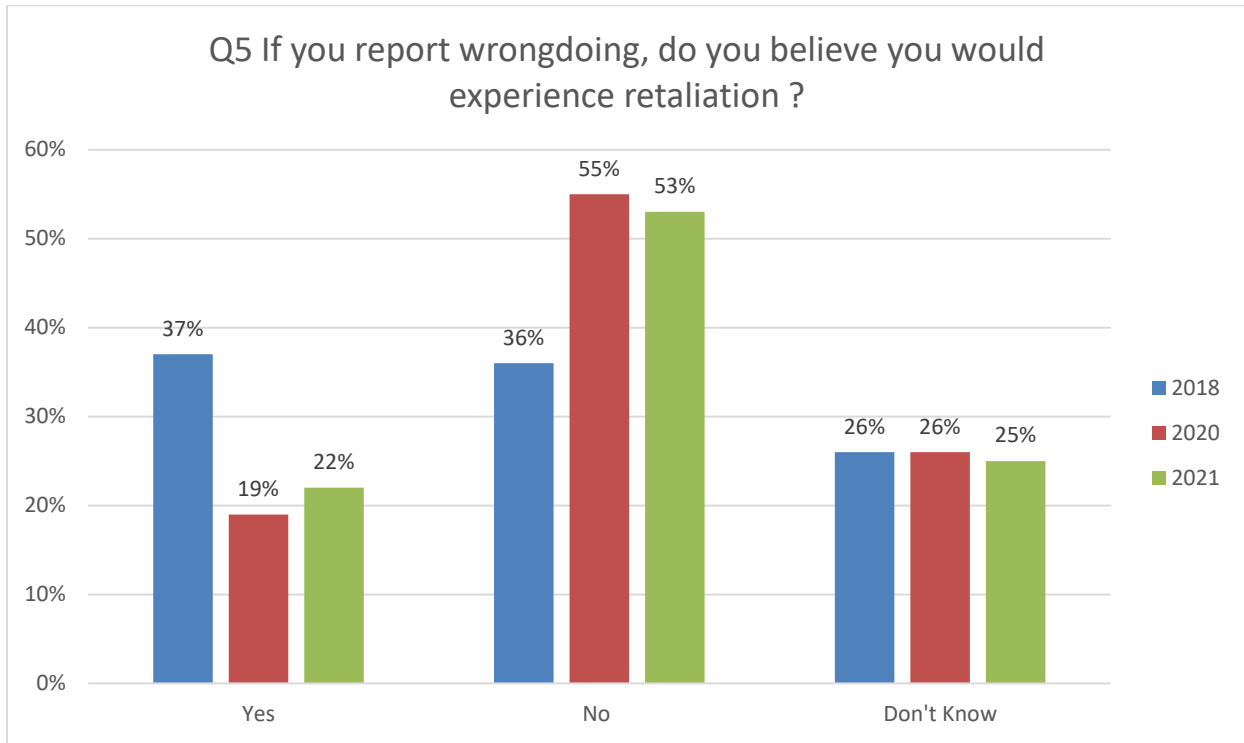
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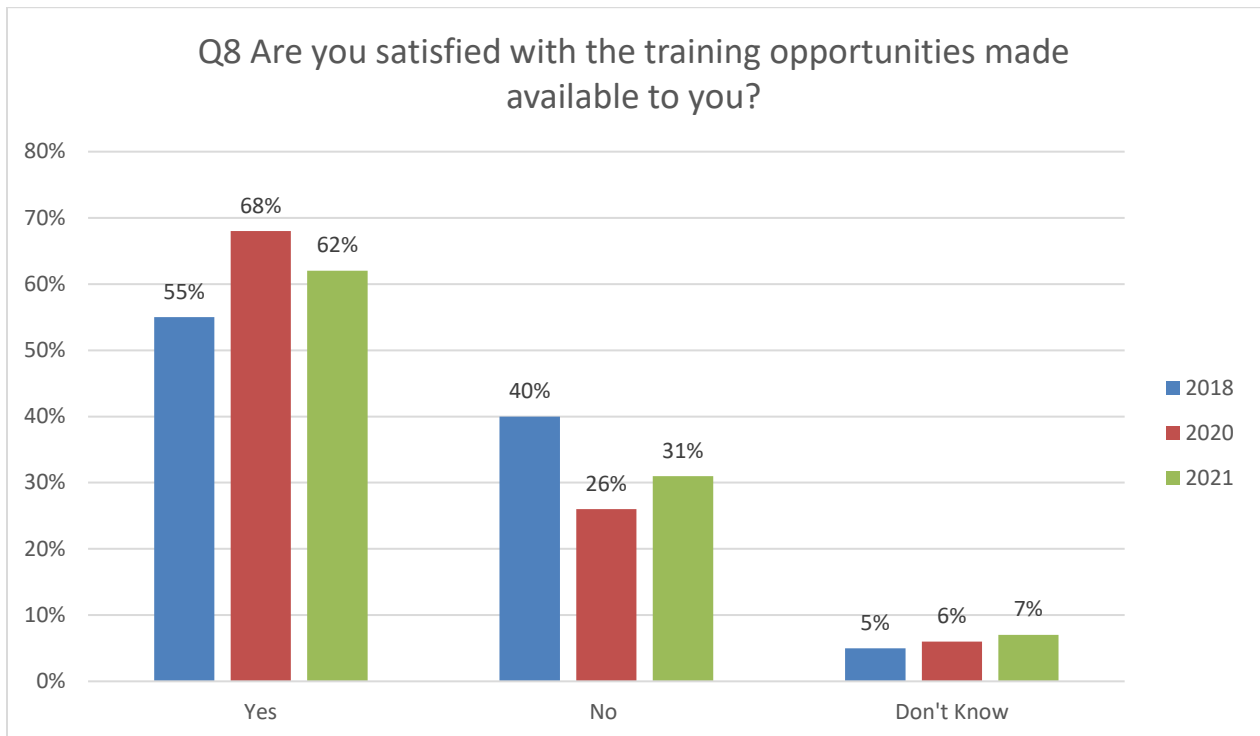
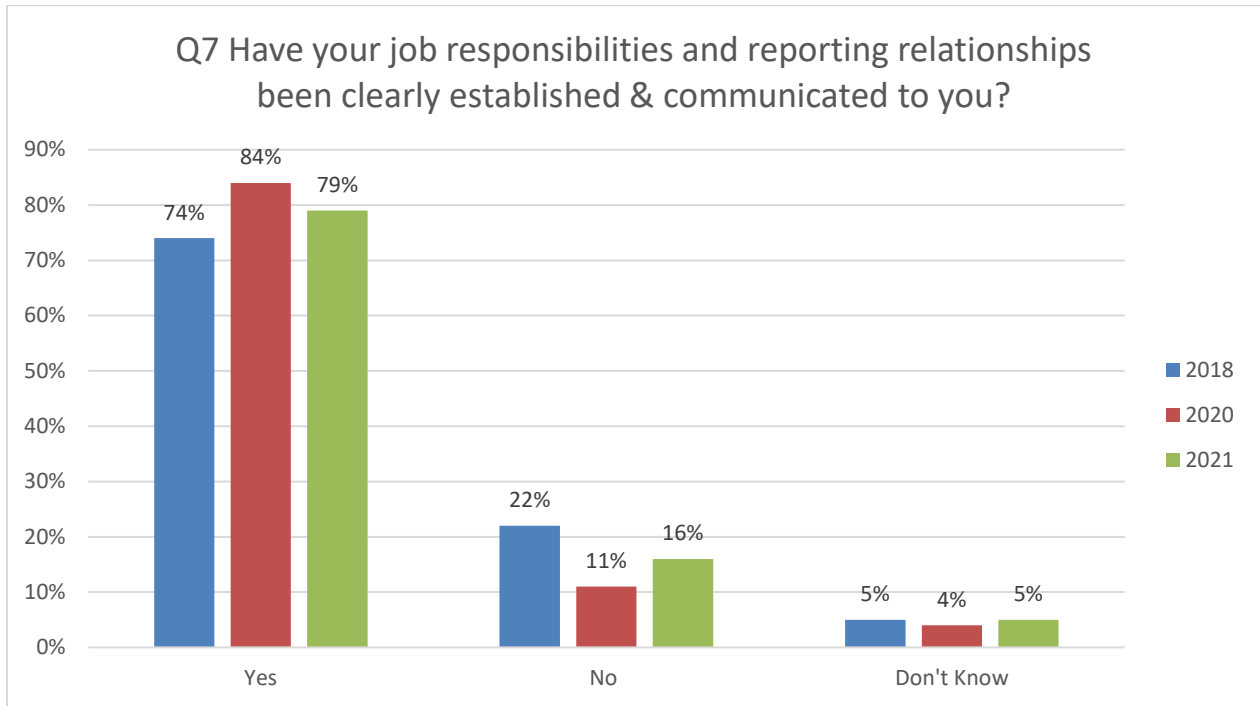
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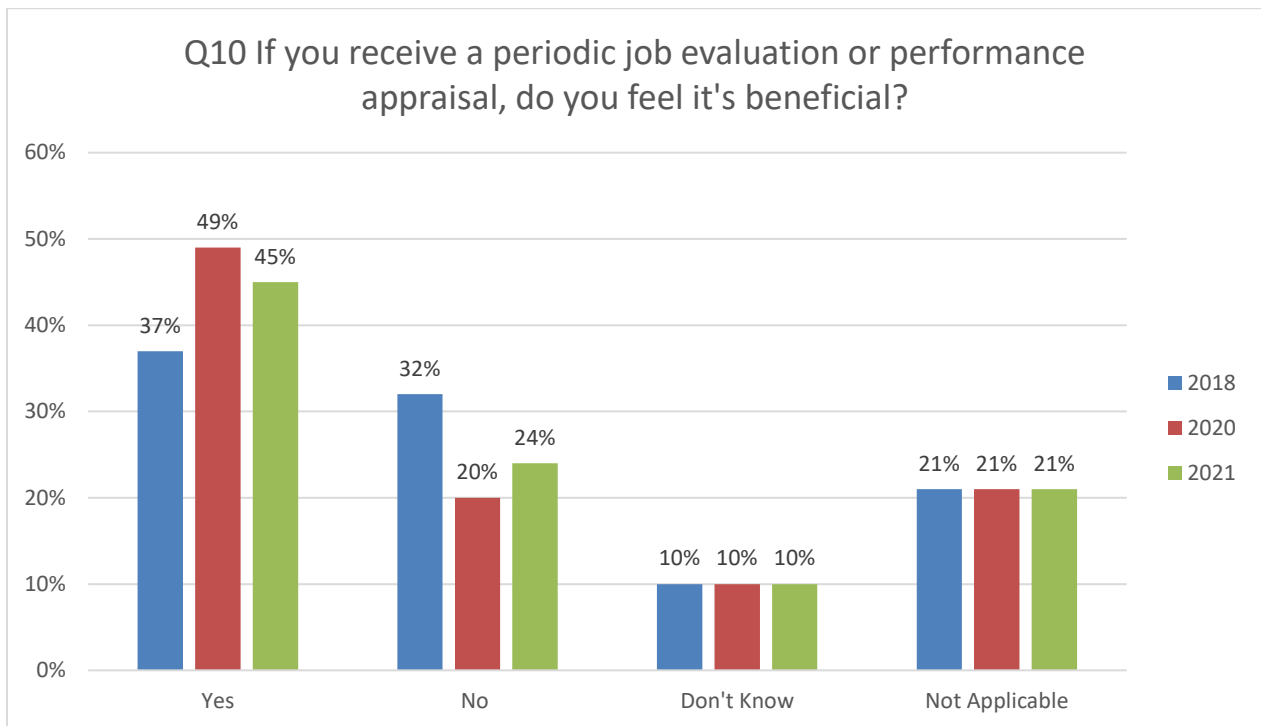
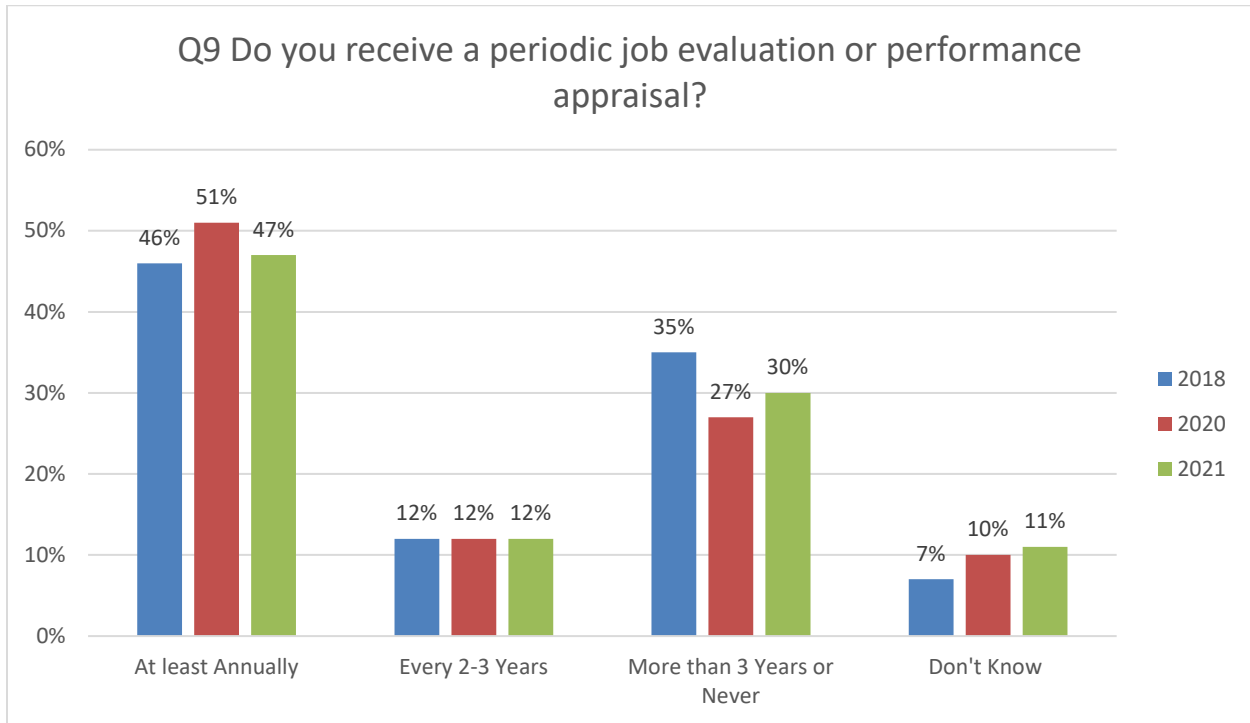
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