

Employee Perceptions of Further Education

Prepared for: FERSG

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Prepared by: The Knowledge Partnership

www.theknowledgepartnership.com

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Further Education Reputation and Strategy Group (FERSG)

- The need to enhance the national reputation of FE was identified in the 2006 FE White Paper and 'World Class Skills' (2007).
- FERSG was formed in November 2007
- Independent sector-led group
- Working to raise the national reputation of FE
- Activities include:
 - Developing a national voice for the sector
 - Disseminating and acting on latest research
 - Identifying and managing reputation 'hotspots'
 - Maximising opportunities to celebrate successes in FE

Members

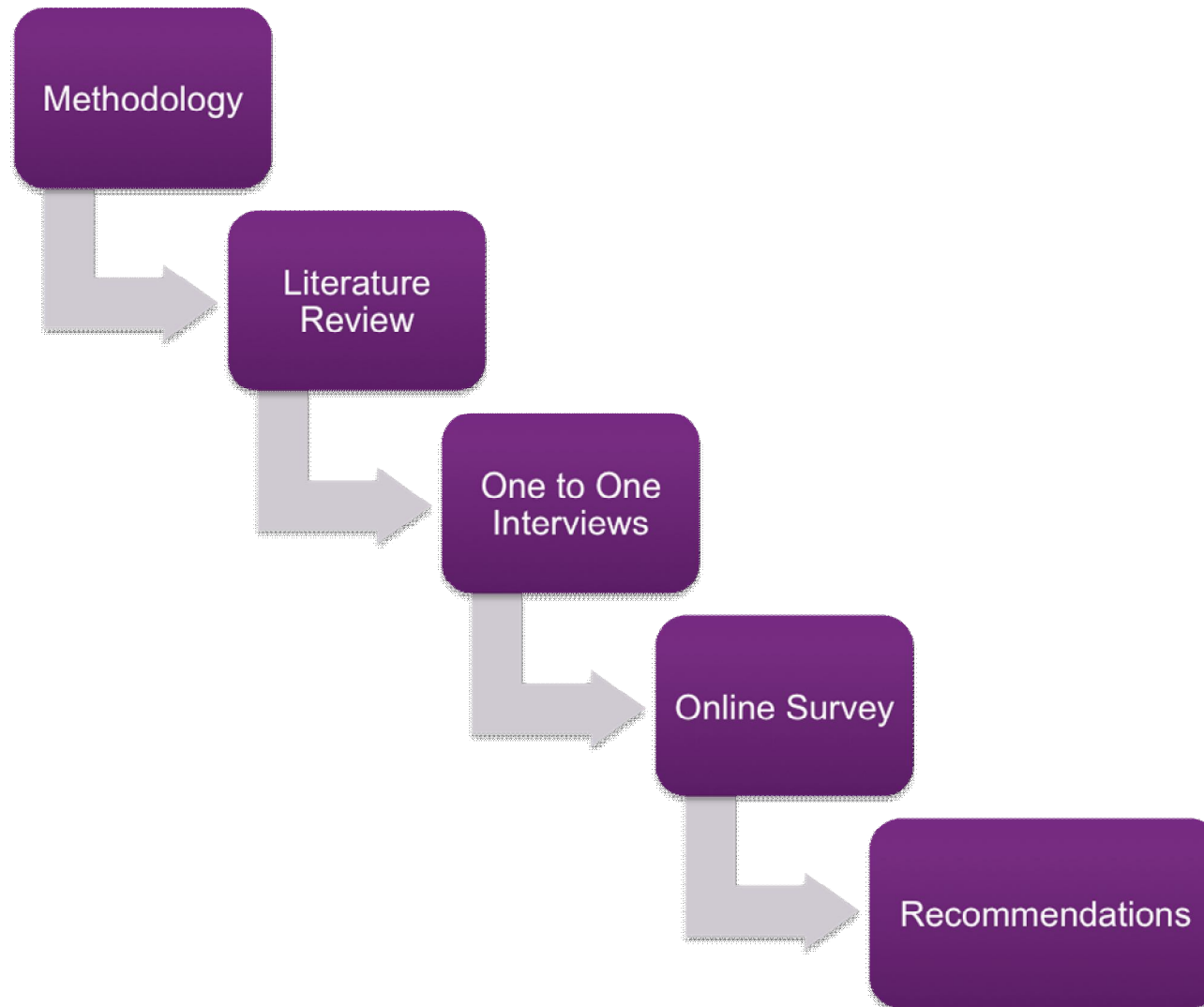
- Association of Colleges
- 157 Group
- LSIS
- AELP
- Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Sixth Form Colleges Forum
- YMCA Training
- Colleges: York College, Warwickshire College, Preston College, Wirral Metropolitan College and the College of North East London (CONEL)
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills
- EFA/DfE
- Skills Funding Agency
- Other Union representation including UCU



Employee Perceptions of Further Education

developing our understanding of the reputation
of the further education sector.

This study was commissioned by the Further Education Reputation
Strategy Group and supported by the Institute for Learning.
It was prepared for FERSG by The Knowledge Partnership.



Literature Review

- There is a distinct correlation between organisational reputation and the recruitment of “talent”

Literature Review

- Brand and Reputation synonymous
- Quality (service/performance)
- Attract and retain the top talent
- Mutual investment
- Build quality/stability
- Reduce costs

One to One Interviews



- Passionate, caring, energetic, creative staff

Staff Motivations

- “LOVE” their work
- “Want to give something back”
- “Contribute to society”
- “Make a difference”

Staff Characteristics

- Admire organisations that represent quality and contribution
- Generally altruistic with similar moral code
- Highly positive advocates
- Resilient, determined, stimulated by challenges

Online Survey

- 1400 – majority lecturers/ teachers and females over 35
- 63% from GFEs
- Regions – Yorkshire & Humberside; London; South East; West Midlands
- 81% grade 1 or 2 institutions

Conclusion

- Staff love their work but less so their jobs!

Working in FE

- Loyalty and commitment
- Rated = or better than other sectors
- FE preferred for creativity, stimulation, contribution to society, personal fulfillment.
- Strong prior association with FE (training/education)

Working in FE

Positive Aspects

- Stimulating
- Rewarding
- Challenging
- Life- changing
- Contribution to society
- Passing on skills and knowledge
- Working with students

Negative Aspects

- Pressurised
- Ever changing
- Bureaucratic
- Some poor management/business practice
- Undervalued
- Attitude of some students

Reputation of FE

- Regional rather than national
- Fragmented – institution rather than collective
- 6th form colleges considered best in sector
- Ofsted gradings and other quality marks important (internally)
- Impacted by quality of students, schools, media
- FE leaders influential – need more collaboration
- Best reputations perceived to be Grade 1s

Staff Advocacy

- Positive about recommending studying in the sector (NPS = +20)
- Negative about working in the sector (NPS = -24)

Improving Reputation with Staff

- Align internal and external communications
- Improve branding and positioning for staff recruitment
- Work more collaboratively (FE leaders)
- Raise profile and value attributed to staff contribution/achievement

Improving Staff Advocacy

- Acknowledge and reward - align with altruistic characteristics
- Improve business and management practices – become more efficient and streamlined
- Create an internal engagement strategy - two way and vertical
- Replicate and share industry best practice – learn from the best

Using Staff Advocacy

- Harness the passion and commitment – seek out the stars!
- Feature staff advocates in internal and external communications
- Embed staff advocates in HR and recruitment processes
- Be more overt in celebrating success and featuring staff skills and contributions.

What next?

- Dissemination of report and findings
- Identify key points and encourage discussion about how to bridge the gap
- Develop Staff Advocacy Toolkit
- Commitment to drive change from within (improve the working experience) using FERSG Membership as change agents
- Engage marketing and HR professionals as drivers of change