

## AMERICAN STATE BANK IMPROVES NEW-EMPLOYEE TRAINING – AND CUSTOMER SERVICE!

“We use Key Survey so that we can track our new hires and our trainees’ job performance once they’re finished with their training,” says Shonna Alderson, Training Administrator for Employee Development at American State Bank. “We have a survey asking what’s been the least effective, what’s been the most effective and what suggestions they have. It also serves as a rating tool, to let us know what we’ve done that worked, and what we can do to improve training further.”

*Improve your training by getting feedback from employees – and their managers.*

Turnover amongst American State’s almost six hundred entry-level employees is inherently high because the bank is headquartered in Lubbock, Texas. The home of Texas Tech, a major university, Lubbock is a college town with a high transience rate amongst entry-level employees – students come to town for school, are often away during the summers, and leave when they graduate. As a result, American State has to deal with significantly higher employee turnover than most banks, making effective and streamlined training all the more critical. As part of their continual-improvement process, they use Key Survey to find what both the new employees and their managers think of the training program.

*Key Survey has a short learning curve, so you can get started immediately.*

“Key Survey’s so easy to use – it’s great. Very simple, very basic. Everyone can use it, so we don’t have to really explain anything to them,” Alderson said.

*Flexible – others in the company will find a use for it, too.*

“I was very satisfied with how I was able to manipulate the program,” agreed Communications Director Wayne Moore, who uses it for other internal communications. “I did a newsletter survey; I wanted to get feedback from our entire staff about their interest in the newsletter, and what kind of a newsletter they’d like. I was able to get a nice set of responses that I was able to also place in graph form, and to provide a summary of the results to everyone else.”

*Electronic surveying makes physical distance irrelevant.*

The training-evaluation surveys are distributed through intranet links in emails, which are automatically sent. American State has thirty-four branches in eighteen towns and more than a dozen counties, so it's extremely convenient to move the data electronically and automatically. And with feedback coming from two perspectives – the new employees, who've just had the training, and their managers, who are seeing the results of it – the HR department can make well-informed operating decisions.”

*Accurate feedback leads to better training.*

“It's led to a lot of changes in how we operate,” Alderson said. There were things that people didn't like – for example, a crossword puzzle with all of the terms, that the trainees thought was too simple and unnecessary. Some online courses were removed, while feedback from managers told them that, among other things, new tellers weren't sufficiently familiar with how to handle the procedures for currency transaction returns. That prompted her to add more, and more complex, CTR procedures to the tellers' training. The focus is helpful because, she said, “it's hard to train on everything.”

*And better service. And happier customers.*

“I believe that as a whole, our customer service has shot up,” said Alderson. “The branch managers are assured that their employee is going to be ready to start when they get out there. Employees are happy, managers are happy – and therefore, our customers are happy.”