



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Office of Inspector General

September 30, 2020

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Andrew Katsaros
Inspector General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Katsaros".

TO: David B Robbins
Executive Director

SUBJECT: OIG Survey on FTC Metrics and Challenges (Report No. OIG-20-10)

Introduction and Background

The FTC Office of Inspector General (OIG) is required annually to provide a statement on the top management and performance challenges facing the agency.¹ As part of the process for considering challenges to be included in our fiscal year 2020 report, the OIG reached out to FTC employees between August 4, 2020 and August 14, 2020 through a short agency-wide survey to gather views on potential challenges as well as the FTC's strategic plan metrics.² The survey consisted of seven questions: six questions on the agency's strategic plan metrics and one on employee views on the top management challenges the FTC faces. This report compiles the results of that survey. The survey shared with FTC employees is included as Appendix I.

¹ The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 requires each agency's inspector general to prepare a statement in annual agency financial reports that summarizes what the Inspector General considers to be the most serious management and performance challenges facing the agency, and briefly assesses the agency's progress in addressing those challenges. The Inspector General shall provide such statement to the agency head at least 30 days before the due date of the agency financial report.

² See the FTC's most recent strategic plan at <https://www.ftc.gov/reports/2018-2022-strategic-plan>.

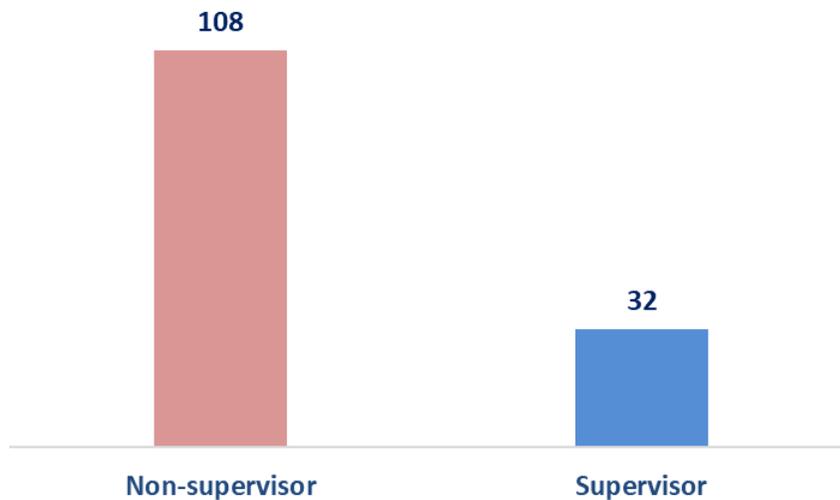
Results

As shown in Chart 1, the OIG received 142 survey responses³ (approximately 13% of all agency employees) from across most of the agency's components and regions. Thirty-two respondents (23% of the total) identified as supervisors (Chart 2).

Chart 1: Responses by Bureau or Office



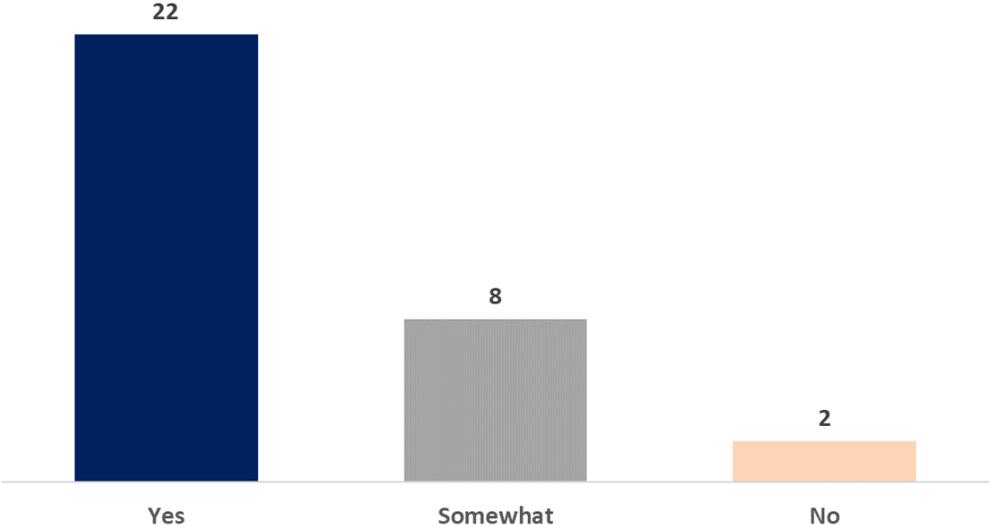
Chart 2: Number of Respondents Identified as Non-Supervisors vs. Supervisors



³ Some respondents did not answer every question.

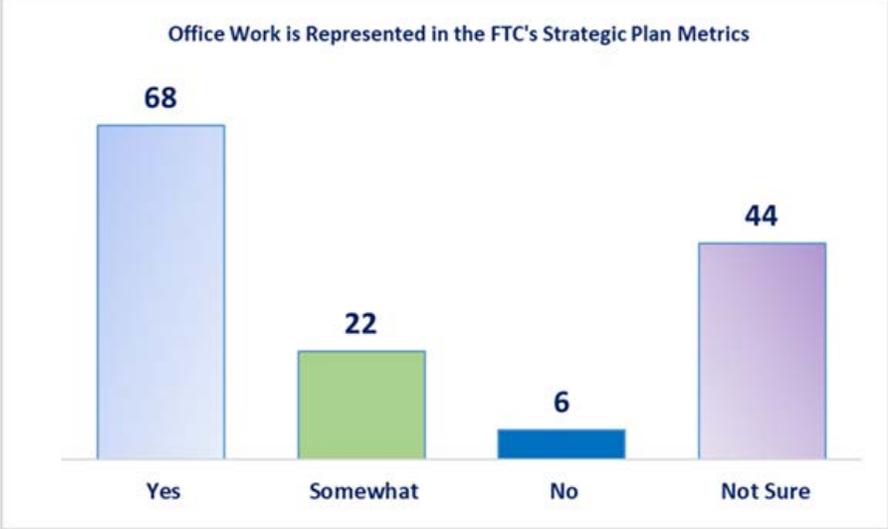
With respect to awareness of the metrics in the FTC’s strategic plan, 94 employees responded that they were aware at least somewhat aware of the metrics, including 30 of 32 respondents who identified as supervisors (Chart 3). Thirty employees involved in developing metrics for the FTC strategic plan responded to the survey.

Chart 3: Supervisor Familiarity with FTC Strategic Metrics



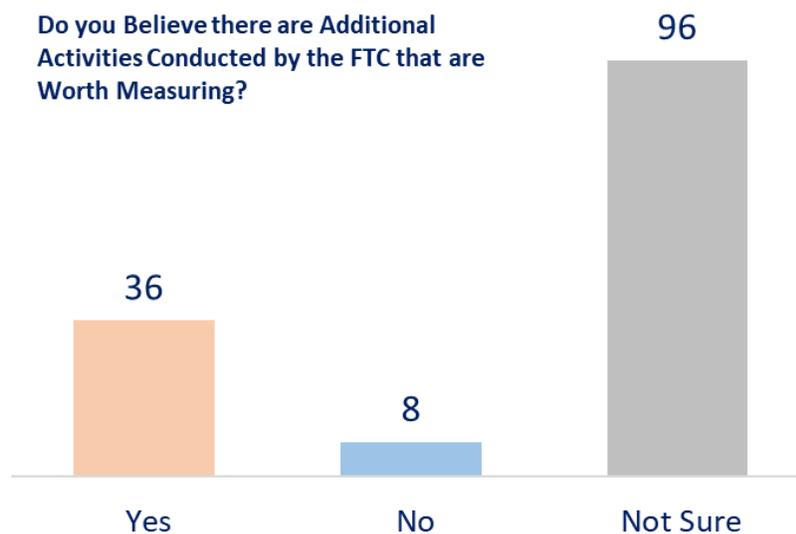
Showing the metrics in the body of our survey, we asked whether employees believe their office’s work is represented in any of the FTC Strategic Plan metrics. Ninety of 140 respondents represented that they believe their work was at least somewhat represented in the metrics (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Office Work Represented in FTC’s Strategic Plan Metrics



We further inquired whether employees believe there are additional FTC activities worth measuring. Thirty-six employees (25% of all respondents) responded “Yes” (Chart 5). Of those 36 responses, the OIG counted 24 responses within various free-form comments on some additional activities worth measuring. Sixteen of these responses were in the following four broad categories: measuring (1) FTC outreach efforts (5 responses);⁴ (2) measuring the number of offending companies identified in FTC actions by type, including those found to be targeting vulnerable consumers (4 responses);⁵ (3) providing more specificity on existing measures (4 responses);⁶ and (4) measuring the FTC’s internal progress on Diversity and Inclusion (3 responses).⁷

Chart 5: Additional FTC Activities Worth Measuring



The survey also included a question asking respondents to choose which, from a list of potential agency challenges, were actually top management challenges for the FTC. The question also allowed respondents to add additional challenges. In total, 88 survey respondents (62%) answered this question with a total of 140 challenges identified. The top challenges that respondents identified were: (1) Managing the challenges of a remote workplace (38 responses); (2) Maintaining effective IT security (19 responses); and (3) Litigation of consumer protection matters (16 responses) (see summary results in Appendix II).

⁴ Comments on outreach metrics included measuring the FTC’s (1) outreach through traditional media, social media and the web; (2) contributions to the public and enforcement community, and (3) local outreach conducted in Regional Offices.

⁵ Comments on measuring consumer offenders included (1) focusing on industries that historically have committed fraud against consumers; (2) measuring FTC actions against defendants targeting vulnerable consumers, ethnic minorities, or lower-income consumers; and (3) demographically measuring the FTC’s effectiveness in protecting consumers.

⁶ Comments on greater specificity in FTC metrics included measuring: opening investigations; serving compulsory process; results of past vertical mergers; activities specifically for the Bureau of Economics; and merger transactions by investigative phase.

⁷ Comments on Diversity and Inclusion measures included measuring (1) the agency’s overall effectiveness; (2) the movement of underrepresented groups into managerial positions; and (3) training of staff.

In addition, the OIG counted 19 suggestions for challenges not listed as options. Among the 19 additional suggestions, the top challenges that respondents identified predominantly related to staffing, workload, and retention challenges (9 responses), and employee morale (4 responses).

Conclusion

We are providing these independent survey results to assist FTC leadership in developing and/or reviewing future strategic measures and understanding employee views on top challenges. If you would like additional information on this survey, please contact me at (202) 326-3527.

APPENDIX I: SURVEY QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: WHICH BUREAU OR OFFICE DO YOU WORK IN?

QUESTION 2: DO YOU SUPERVISE ANY EMPLOYEES?

A. YES B. NO

QUESTION 3: ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE METRICS IN THE FTC'S CURRENT STRATEGIC PLAN?

QUESTION 4: ARE YOU INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING METRICS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN?

A. YES B. SOMEWHAT C. NO

A. YES B. SOMEWHAT C. NO D. NOT SURE

QUESTION 5: DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR OFFICE'S WORK IS REPRESENTED IN ANY OF THE FTC STRATEGIC PLAN METRICS?

Question 6: Do You Believe There Are Additional Activities Conducted By The FTC That Are Worth Measuring?

A. YES B. SOMEWHAT C. NO D. NOT SURE

A. YES B. NO C. Not Sure

QUESTION 7: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU BELIEVE WILL BE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FOR THE FTC IN FY 2021 (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?

MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE IT SECURITY
 CONTROLLING THE COST OF EXPERT WITNESSES
 MEDIA RELEASES OF NONPUBLIC INFORMATION
 MANAGING ALL OTHER COMPLAINTS IN SENTINEL
 LITIGATION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION MATTERS
 CONDUCTING DEPOSITIONS IN THE COURSE OF INVESTIGATIONS
 CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE NON MERGER INVESTIGATIONS
 OTHER

PROVIDING ACQUISITION SUPPORT TO THE BUREAUS
 MANAGING THE CHALLENGES OF A REMOTE WORKPLACE
 MANAGING IDENTITY THEFT COMPLAINTS IN SENTINEL
 CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE FRAUD AND CONSUMER PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS
 MANAGING HSR FILINGS
 CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MERGER INVESTIGATIONS
 PART 3 ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDINGS

APPENDIX II: THE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FOR THE FTC

