

# Criticism of the SMART FED Feedback Approach

## Misconceptions, Misunderstandings, and the Break with Traditional Approaches

The agile employee survey approach of SMART FED repeatedly leads to misunderstandings and criticism. These are primarily based on a lack of understanding of how SMART FED works, as well as adherence to outdated views regarding the goals and purpose of employee surveys. This document aims to clarify some of the central misconceptions about the SMART FED feedback approach and its departure from traditional survey methods.

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### Point of Criticism 1:

#### The SMART FED approach is not based on a scientific survey methodology

##### Partially true!

At first glance, this criticism may appear justified. SMART FED does not use scientifically formulated questionnaires or finely structured Likert rating scales. Likewise, its topic categories are not based on socio-scientific models.

However, this departure from traditional methods is intentional. SMART FED does not aim to conduct scientific studies within organizations; rather, it seeks to provide concrete and practice-oriented feedback from within the organization. The purpose of this approach is to provide management with reliable and authentic information about the organization — i.e., where its strengths and weaknesses lie and where developments and changes have a substantial impact on performance, image, and reputation.

The approach is action-oriented while simultaneously meeting scientific requirements regarding clarity, verifiability of results, and statistically sound analyses.

**Important:** All criteria commonly found in scientifically oriented employee surveys are also present in SMART FED's object-oriented feedback model — except for those that are purely of scientific interest.

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### Point of Criticism 2:

#### Feedback within SMART FED is voluntary

##### True!

However, this applies to every form of employee survey and employee feedback unless participation is mandatory. The most important success factor for any feedback tool or survey is that management responds to feedback coming from the organization.

This is no different with the SMART FED feedback portal. If management fails to respond, any survey approach, feedback tool, or feedback method will ultimately fail sooner or later.

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### Point of Criticism 3:

#### SMART FED does not provide KPIs for reporting

##### Partially true!

SMART FED does not generate traditional KPIs (average values) relating to individual aspects of employee satisfaction, employee engagement, or employee retention, as is common in traditional employee surveys.

Instead, it provides statistical evaluations (charts and diagrams) that make it possible to identify and assess the significance and relevance of organizational developments and changes within temporal, thematic, and organizational contexts.

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## Point of Criticism 4:

### Lack of comparability of feedback over time

**False!**

SMART FED captures, analyzes, and visualizes employee feedback within a temporal context. This means it is always possible to identify whether feedback regarding specific topics and criteria is increasing, remaining constant, or decreasing — including organizational allocation.

Feedback can also be compared across different periods and thematic areas.

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## Point of Criticism 5:

### Limited contextual depth / Lack of thematic completeness

**False!**

On the contrary. Due to its unique object-oriented feedback structure, SMART FED provides highly precise feedback on every organization-relevant topic.

Instead of offering only a few ratings on very general questions without clearly identifying the feedback target or distinguishing between criteria — as is often the case with traditional surveys — SMART FED always enables a clear allocation of feedback.

A typical example: Traditional surveys often provide only a very general indicator regarding the topic of “appreciation” within the company. SMART FED, by contrast, delivers precise information about which specific type of appreciation is valued by whom and for what purpose, or where improvements are needed.

In addition, SMART FED provides precise information about the organizational unit and hierarchical level from which the feedback originates — provided anonymity requirements are met.

Furthermore, employees have the option to add open comments or remarks to any feedback entry in order to further specify their criticism or appreciation regarding something or someone.

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## Point of Criticism 6:

### SMART FED overemphasizes the “loud voices” of active individuals (bias)

**False!**

This is typical of instant-feedback tools, where every single piece of feedback is considered relevant and implies that managers must react immediately.

SMART FED, however, makes it visible whether feedback represents isolated opinions or perceptions and observations shared by many employees. In other words, feedback only gains relevance for management when a significant number of responses from an organizational unit are present.

**Important:** Multiple feedback submissions by the same individual regarding a specific topic and criterion are not possible within SMART FED.

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## Point of Criticism 7:

### Dependence on spontaneous feedback

#### True!

Intrinsic motivation to provide feedback is the fundamental prerequisite for authentic feedback. This is precisely what SMART FED aims to achieve with its approach.

Employees should have the opportunity to provide feedback exactly when a topic has a significant impact on their motivation, engagement, or performance capability.

Unlike instant feedback tools — which are also based on spontaneous feedback — SMART FED offers employees the following benefits:

- Protection of their anonymity.
- Clarity regarding the topics on which feedback can be provided.
- Clarity that both positive and critical feedback are welcome.
- Defined structures that specify feedback addressees, topics, and criteria, helping employees provide targeted feedback quickly and easily without having to spend a lot of time thinking about how to phrase their comments correctly and clearly.