



## **What do Tic Tacs and Employee Surveys Have in Common?**

You might wonder what do Tic Tacs and employee surveys have in common? Well, I'm sure you will agree that Tic Tacs taste better than surveys, are easier to fit in your pocket and don't cost as much, however, they do have one thing in common.

The next time you buy a box of Tic Tacs, take a look at the back label. There, you will find an expiration date. Being a frequent Tic Tac consumer, I've on occasion purchased and opened a box only to realize that the Tic Tacs expired a few months ago, are a lot harder to chew and don't taste as great (these unlucky few boxes usually end up in the garbage).

Now, you are still wondering, how does this relate to surveys? While surveys can't be purchased at a newsstand don't come in cool new flavors like Citrus Twist and Bold Fruit, like Tic Tacs, survey results do have an expiration date.

The next time you conduct a survey, make sure you are ready to communicate and act on the findings as soon as the results are available. The longer you wait, the higher the risk of inaction, distraction and the results going "stale".

But wait, you are probably thinking that the surveys don't come with an actual expiration date like the box of aforementioned candies. Well, here are some guidelines: The time period described below is from the last day of survey administration to when the first key message is communicated to the organization.

**Fresh:** Less than 2 months from the last day of survey administration

**Somewhat Fresh:** 2 to less than 3 months from last day of survey administration

**Close to Expiration:** 3 months to less than 4 months

**Expired:** 4 months to less than 6 months

**Spoiled:** 6 months or more

These are general guidelines for large scale all-employee surveys. The goal is to make sure you balance enough resources and time so that once the survey is closed, you'll be able to roll up your sleeves and develop a few key messages to communicate to management and employees. For special topic surveys that are administered to a sample of the employee population, your expiration dates may be much sooner after administration.

Please contact us for permission to re-print or re-distribute this article.

© 2012 Critical Metrics, LLC

Seattle, WA 98101

[www.critical-metrics.com](http://www.critical-metrics.com)