MARKON Exits Survey Business, Launches SMART FED in U.S. to Solve Workforce Growth Crisis

With only 3.5 percent labor growth vs 24 percent GPD surge through 2035, 30-year pioneer pivots to productivity

Zurich, Switzerland Sep 23, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - **MARKON Shifting Focus from Surveys to Productivity: Launches SMART FED in the U.S. to Solve 3.5% Workforce Growth Crisis**

As BLS projects just 3.5% labor growth against a 24% GDP surge through 2035, the 30-year organizational diagnostic pioneer replaces annual employee surveys with a platform for organizational intelligence.

MUNICH, Germany and NEW YORK, NY – September 15, 2026 – MARKON, a trusted European partner in organizational diagnostics for more than 30 years, today announced it will transition its U.S. operations entirely to SMART FED in Q4 2026, officially exiting the traditional employee survey market.

The strategic pivot addresses a critical macroeconomic shift. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projections through 2035, recently highlighted in analyst Josh Bersin's September 2026 briefing, the U.S. workforce will grow by a mere 3.5% – adding just 5.9 million workers to reach 176.2 million – while cumulative real GDP is projected to surge 22% to 24%. With 37% of those new jobs absorbed by the healthcare sector, industries like manufacturing, logistics, and corporate operations must deliver double-digit output growth with virtually zero headcount expansion.

"You cannot survey your way to 24 percent more output," said a MARKON spokesperson. "For decades, our benchmark data showed that European and U.S. enterprises waste an average of 22 percent of their productive time on internal friction. The era of merely measuring how employees feel about that waste is over. The era of instantly removing what blocks them has begun."

Three Studies Outline the Collapse of Legacy Corporate Listening

Recent global data underscores why conventional HR feedback models fail to drive operational results:

- **The $10 Trillion Productivity Tax:** Gallup's *State of the Global Workplace 2026* report attributes $10 trillion in lost productivity—accounting for 9% of global GDP—to low engagement. Global engagement dropped to 20%, its lowest level since 2020.
- **The Operational Noise Trap:** Korn Ferry's *Workforce 2026 Global Insights Report*, which surveyed 16,000 professionals, found that 45% of employees are too bogged down by day-to-day operational noise to deliver meaningful results, while 61% are actively covering multiple roles.
- **The Surveillance Backfire:** Academic research from the University of Queensland across 23 industries shows that intensive, automated activity monitoring routinely backfires. It forces employees to rationally deprioritize unmeasured but critical tasks—like helping colleagues or flagging operational risks—accelerating turnover.

Despites these clear failures, the HR tech market continues to automate the wrong problem. While legacy platforms promising "workforce context" command bloated $3.2 billion valuations, they merely digitize static surveys rather than providing operational resolution. An Interact and Ragan 2026 benchmark found that while 62% of employees want to actively participate in company improvements, only 8% of organizations can prove that employee feedback ever leads to a tangible outcome.

From Tracking People to Tracking Friction

SMART FED completely reverses the legacy corporate listening architecture. Instead of forcing employees to fill out rigid, predefined questionnaires, the platform collects concrete and authentic signals from employees regarding friction points within the organization. SMART FED thus accurately and reliably identifies the factors that impact their performance, motivation, and engagement. This enables organizational leadership to take targeted, timely action with the right priorities.

Key platform differentiators include:

- **Zero Survey Fatigue:** Eliminates questionnaire design, external consultancy retainers, and corporate analysis overhead. Employees share operational roadblocks only when they actually occur.
- **Privacy by Design:** The platform tracks systemic operational bottlenecks, not individual employee behavior. This protects psychological safety while unlocking critical discretionary effort.
- **Direct ROI on Output:** Shifts the organizational focus from abstract "satisfaction" scores to operational excellence. Operational data shows that closing 10 systemic friction loops correlates directly to preventing one employee resignation—yielding a direct 1% productivity gain in a zero-headcount-growth environment.

"Millennials, Gen Z, and frontline workers do not want another corporate survey trigger; they want a friction trigger that actually gets fixed," the spokesperson added. "Managers don't need another colorful dashboard showing 20 percent engagement. They need three closed loops they can actively celebrate with their team. That is how organizations move from a $10 trillion loss to a 24 percent economic gain."

Availability

MARKON will complete its U.S. transition to SMART FED in Q4 2026. All existing U.S. enterprise clients will be seamlessly migrated to the new infrastructure. Live platform demonstrations for U.S. enterprises will be available starting September 22, 2026.

About MARKON

Founded in 1983, MARKON has been a premier partner in organizational feedback and diagnostics for over 30 years, optimizing performance for leading industrial and service enterprises across Europe and North America.

About SMART FED

SMART FED is an agile feedback-intelligence platform designed to replace traditional employee surveys. By allowing workforces to communicate operational issues in real time, it enables leadership teams to prioritize resources and take targeted action based on precise temporal, thematic, and organizational context.

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