

Executive Summary

Are Jewish organizations great places to work? Not yet—but we're striving

This report shares overall findings from the sixth annual Employee Experience Survey conducted by Leading Edge, which gathered responses from more than 12,000 employees of 257 Jewish nonprofit organizations. The survey helps leaders learn about their employees' experiences at work so they can improve them.

Being a great place to work is a job that's never done. Like exercise and healthy eating for a person, maintaining a great place to work is something that organizations need to do every day. This report is a snapshot of how that complex, constant, and important work was going in one set of 257 Jewish nonprofits in May 2022.



Top Headlines

People want to stay in this sector

A strong majority of employees surveyed (70%) want to stay in the Jewish nonprofit sector for two years or more.

[See more under “Stayers” & “Leavers”](#)

People (still) want well-being, trusted leaders, and inclusion

Like last year, the top drivers of Employee Engagement remain feeling that the organization cares for employees' well-being, confidence in leadership, feelings of belonging, and feeling that there is open and honest communication in the organization.

[See more under Engagement Drivers](#)

Some employees are less likely to feel like they belong

There are pronounced inequities in experience, especially around belonging and other Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) experiences, along lines of identity characteristics including gender and sexual identity, race/ethnicity, and disability. LGBTQ employees and People of Color (particularly Black employees) are markedly less likely to feel like they belong in their organizations.

[See more under Demographics: People](#)

Leaders need to communicate better

The most important way for leaders to improve confidence in their leadership is to improve communication with their teams.

[See more under Professional Leadership](#)

There's been a lot of turnover

One-third (33%) of employees surveyed have been with their organizations for less than two years. This substantial share of workers don't remember the pre-COVID status quo. And the proportion of employees who are in their first year with their organizations (21% in 2022) is almost twice as high as it was among the organizations we surveyed in 2021 (12% in 2021).

[See more under Tenure at the Organization](#)

Working with board members is common

Approximately 1 out of every 4 employees surveyed (27%) reports that they work with the board.

[See more under The Board](#)

People feel overstretched

Perceptions of being understaffed (common in the nonprofit sector) are prevalent for the smallest and the largest teams—suggesting a need for stronger leadership in focusing and right-sizing targets and workloads.

[See more under Employee Enablement](#)

Many employees have been promoted

Among employees who have been with their organizations longer than two years, 42% have been promoted at least once. But those who have moved laterally without a promotion are less likely to report favorable experiences.

[See more under Promotions](#)

Most employees don't work remotely

Three-quarters of employees surveyed (76%) reported that they work outside their homes for at least part of each week.

[See more under Workspace Arrangement](#)

People working in person (i.e., not remotely) trust their leaders more if they feel well prepared for physical security threats

For the first time, we asked about preparedness for physical security threats (for employees working outside their homes). Five out of 6 employees surveyed (72%) feel prepared to act in the event of a security threat, but those who don't feel prepared are markedly less likely to have confidence in their organizational leadership.

[See more under Workspace Supplement: Physical Security](#)

Improving employee experience isn't a straight line

Organizations that have taken the Employee Experience Survey five or six times have seen a lot of improvement. But the journey isn't always neat or linear.

[See more under Impact of the Survey](#)

Common Strengths

Employees overwhelmingly agree:



Common Struggles

Most employees do not agree:



Biggest Deviations from the U.S. Benchmark

The following are the questions for which the overall favorability scores are most divergent from Culture Amp's U.S. Benchmark:¹



Top Five Engagement Drivers

These questions are the ones most strongly correlated with Employee Engagement in this year's survey. Improving these facets of employees' experience will make the biggest impact on their levels of engagement.

[See more under Employee Engagement](#)

[See more under Engagement Drivers](#)

- #1** My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees
- #2** I have confidence in our leaders to lead the organization effectively
- #3** I believe employee well-being is a priority at my organization
- #4** At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication
- #5** I feel like I belong at my organization

¹ Culture Amp's U.S. Benchmark is based on surveys of millions of American employees in all sectors, industries, and job functions.

Introduction

“How are things going at work?”

That’s probably a question you ask and answer fairly often. And no wonder, because work is an enormous part of so many people’s lives. Someone with a full-time job spends the *majority* of their waking hours at work.

In May 2022, more than 12,000 people working in Jewish nonprofit organizations took a few minutes to reflect on how things were going at work by taking the 2022 Employee Experience Survey from Leading Edge.

Employee experience matters because employees are human beings, with infinite value and human dignity, created (according to Jewish tradition) in the image of God. Employee experience also matters because **the work matters**. Research has shown that employees’ sense of engagement—and, by extension, their total workplace experience—is enormously important to whether any given organization will succeed in fulfilling its mission. Jewish nonprofits do a vast array of things, from serving the needs of Jewish communities and broader local communities to serving the needs of all people everywhere. **If and when these organizations truly and sustainably succeed, it is because their people are thriving.**

In a year in which our field and the world face both dynamic growth and persistent problems and inequities, it has never been more important to ask, listen, act, and ask again: “How are things going at work?”

Much rides on the answer.



About the Employee Experience Survey



Empowering Organizations to Improve

To support organizations in creating even better places to work, Leading Edge conducts the Employee Experience Survey, a people analytics tool that gives employees in Jewish nonprofits the opportunity to provide feedback about their experience at work and share those insights with organizational leaders. This information supports leaders in identifying organizational strengths as well as growth areas that can be addressed to improve workplace culture. That's not easy to do, and **Leading Edge encourages organizations to take the survey *only if and when* they are prepared to take meaningful action to improve things based on their results.**

By participating in the Employee Experience Survey, leaders demonstrate their commitment to employees as key stakeholders. Through the process, leaders solicit honest and confidential input and explore with curiosity and intention the changes needed to transform their organizational culture.

Taking the survey is just the first step in an ongoing process of exploration and improvement. Leading Edge presents organizations with their survey results in an in-depth, interactive format. We also engage with organizations one-on-one to help them interpret their results and identify interventions to help improve their employees' experience at work.

Learning about the Jewish nonprofit sector

While the primary purpose of the Employee Experience Survey is to empower organizations to improve their culture, its secondary purpose is to learn about issues, trends, and insights affecting the Jewish nonprofit sector as a whole. We do this by analyzing the aggregate data from all organizations taking the survey.

This report is a distillation of these findings, gleaned from the 2022 survey and six total years of data from the Leading Edge Employee Experience Survey.

History of the Survey

The first Employee Experience Survey was administered in 2016 to 55 pilot organizations. To date, **more than 45,000 people** working at 396 organizations have received the survey at least once, and 135 organizations have taken the survey at least three times.²

Leading Edge has administered the survey annually, in spring, from 2016 to 2022, with the exception of 2020, when we concluded that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic made the survey not suitable to the needs and priorities of organizations dealing with the crisis. (To serve organizations during that difficult year, and to create a more frequent and customizable supplement to the Employee Experience Survey, we created Leading Edge [Pulse Surveys](#), which remain available continuously.)

² In this figure of 396 organizations, one of these units represents 200+ professionally staffed Hillel campuses across the globe, which are treated as one unit for survey administration purposes. If each of these were counted individually, the figure for all years combined would be around 600.



Surveying employees and CEOs—separately

During the first four years of this survey, senior-most organizational leaders (CEOs, Executive Directors, etc.) took the same survey as their employees. Yet the CEO's work, challenges, and concerns differ significantly from those of other employees. Starting in 2021, we created the [CEO Survey](#), to capture the unique experiences of these top executive leaders in our sector. The Employee Experience Survey and CEO Survey are fielded simultaneously. A separate report, also available in our [Resource Library](#), details overall findings from the [2022 CEO Survey](#).

By the Numbers

Over 6 years, more than 45,000 people have received the survey

[See more under Appendix A: Survey Methodology](#)



Who

257 organizations took the survey
20,223 employees were eligible
12,387 employees responded
61% response rate



What

103 questions:
64 scored
9 multiple choice
3 open-ended
27 demographic



How

Online administration
via Culture Amp

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)



When

May 2022

Limitations

The purpose of the Employee Experience Survey is to help each participating organization improve its team’s experiences—**not to conduct a census of the sector**. Since the people and organizations that took the survey (and the people within each organization who chose to respond) were not randomly selected, and since the group of organizations taking the survey has grown and changed each year, it is worth emphasizing that **we cannot know to what degree this sample may or may not be representative of the field as a whole**—whether regarding demographics, employee experience, what drives engagement and retention, or anything else. The findings in this report apply to the people and organizations that responded to the survey. Regarding the Jewish nonprofit sector more broadly, they provide **general indications, not definitive or precise conclusions**.

Buzzwords

We aim for self-explanatory language, but just in case it is useful, here are the main terms of art we use in this report:

“Favorability Score”

Most questions in the survey present a statement to the respondent and ask them to respond on a “Likert scale” (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).³ A “favorability score” for a question is the percentage of people responding who chose “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”

“Factors”

“Factors” in this survey are groups of survey questions that are about the same topic. Looking at responses to these questions together, and/or the average favorability score for all questions in each factor, can be helpful in analyzing survey results.

- Employee Engagement
- Accountability & Feedback
- Collaboration
- Direct Management
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging
- Employee Enablement
- Learning & Advancement
- Organizational Alignment
- Professional Leadership
- Psychological Safety
- Salary & Benefits
- The Board
- Well-Being

[See more under Results by Factor](#)

“Employee Engagement”

Employee Engagement is a factor. (In fact, it’s the most important of all the factors, for reasons we’ll explain under Employee Engagement.) It means feeling proud to work at the organization, wanting to stay, being likely to recommend it to others as a great place to work, and feeling motivated to do one’s best work.

“Engagement Drivers”

Since Employee Engagement is so important, we want to explore what other kinds of experience cause employees to feel more engaged. So for all questions in the survey that are in factors *other than* Employee Engagement, we calculate their level of correlation to the Employee Engagement questions. We call questions “Engagement Drivers” when they have the strongest correlations to Employee Engagement out of all the questions in the survey. This means that someone who responds favorably to these questions is more likely to respond favorably to the Employee Engagement questions. We emphasize the importance of the top five Engagement Drivers.

[See more under Engagement Drivers](#)

“Retention Drivers”

In our analysis of who wants to stay at or leave their organization, we analyze which questions have the largest gap in favorability score between “stayers” (those who want to remain at their organization for five years or more) and “leavers” (those who want to leave their organization within a year). The questions with the largest gaps between stayers and leavers are “Retention Drivers”—parts of the employee experience that appear particularly important to people’s desire to stay.

[See more under “Stayers” and “Leavers”](#)

Job Level terms:

An “**Individual Contributor**” is an employee who doesn’t directly manage any other employees. A “**Manager**,” in this survey, is an employee who does manage one or more employees but is not part of the executive team. The “**Executive Team**” is the subset of employees reporting directly to the CEO, Executive Director, or equivalent.

³ In fact, since the majority of “questions” in the survey take this form, they are technically not questions at all, but rather statements. However, for the sake of simplicity and ease of understanding, throughout this report we refer to all prompts given to respondents in the survey as “questions,” no matter how they are phrased.

Impact of the Survey

Leading Edge now has data from six years of Employee Experience Surveys, and 135 organizations have taken the survey three times or more. When we look at results from organizations that have taken the survey different numbers of times, **we can see that the survey makes a clear and positive impact.**

A POSITIVE—BUT NOT LINEAR—JOURNEY

Organizations taking the Employee Experience Survey repeatedly tend to take a particular journey. This journey is not universal; each participating organization has its own unique story and trajectory. But looking in the aggregate across many employees at many organizations, one common overall pattern is clear:

The rise: From year 1 to year 2, favorability scores rise.

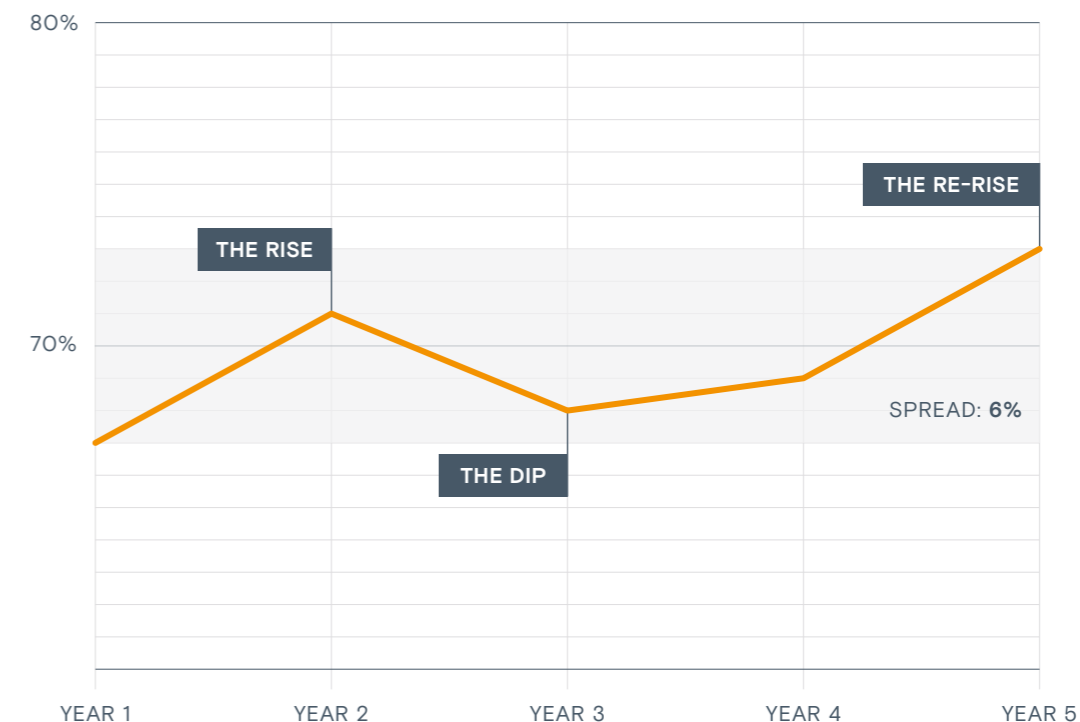
The dip: From year 2 to year 3, and persisting through year 4, favorability scores dip back down again.

The re-rise: In year 5 and beyond, favorability scores rise again to new heights.

Depending on the question and the factor, this pattern is sometimes weak and sometimes strong, but it is almost always there.

We interpret this pattern as a picture of the difficulty and nonlinear nature of changing organizational cultures. After seeing the year 1 results, the organization's leadership has lots of new information and input they probably didn't have before. They then quickly make changes to "pick the low-hanging fruit"—addressing those of their team's concerns that are the easiest and fastest to fix. The rise in year 2 reflects the fact that employees have seen their leadership listen to their concerns and make changes. Their hopes—and expectations—are high in a way they have never been before. But for the organizational leadership, most of the low-hanging fruit was probably already picked last year. The issues that remain can and should be addressed, but more difficult concerns take more time and complexity to address. This kind of culture work may also involve asking employees to leave their comfort zones and old habits in certain ways. With expectations high, progress less instant, and some of the work actually increasing the difficulties, employee experience dips during years 3 and 4. Yet on the other side of that trough, progress returns; the work bears fruit, and in years 5 and 6, favorability scores break out of their dip and reach new highs. (In analyzing this trend, we assume that employee expectation levels are a part of organizational culture that match the same journey described here, even as different individual employees come and go over time.)

Average favorability score for all factors



BIGGEST AREAS OF SURVEY IMPACT

Here are the areas in which we see the biggest aggregate advantages in favorability scores for organizations that have taken the survey six times, compared with organizations taking it for the first time.

Factor averages (top three):



Individual Questions (top 10):

+21%	My organization has worked or is actively working on our approach to compensation—e.g., creating salary bands, communicating an approach to compensation, defining how raises happen, etc	+13%	At my organization board members and professional leaders work together effectively
+19%	My employee benefits generally meet my needs	+13%	I am kept appropriately informed about major decisions and events happening at my organization
+15%	I believe employee well-being is a priority at my organization TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER + TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER See more under “Engagement Drivers” and “Retention Drivers”	+13%	My organization provides me with sufficient opportunities for professional development—e.g., training, conferences, community of practice, etc
+14%	My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER	+12%	Our systems and processes generally support us in getting our work done effectively
+13%	At my organization board members and professional leaders work together effectively	+12%	My organization is generally successful in the pursuit of its mission
+13%	I understand how salaries and raises are determined at my organization	+12%	The leadership team’s actions are consistent with my organization’s values
		+11%	My team receives high-quality support from other parts of the organization

IMPACTS ON THE CEO EXPERIENCE

For most of the organizations that took this survey, their leaders also took the [2022 CEO Survey](#). Data in the CEO Survey suggests that an organization participating in the Employee Experience Survey (EES) leads to better experiences for the CEO as well:

- Leaders of organizations that have participated in the EES in the past are more likely to report favorable experiences with their **board partnerships**.
- CEOs from returning EES organizations are more likely to feel favorable about their organizations' **long-term fundraising prospects**.
- CEOs from returning EES organizations are more likely to feel **that their work is interesting and challenging**.
- A larger proportion of CEOs who have previously taken the EES **experience effective working relationships with their senior teams**.

Since participation in these surveys is opt-in, this doesn't necessarily prove that Employee Experience Survey participation enhances the leadership experience; it could be, at least to some degree, that the leaders who choose to invest time and effort in learning about their employees' experience are also leaders who invest more time and effort in improving their own leadership experience. Still, the correlation is positive.

The bottom line: The survey helps organizations improve their employees' experience. That's why each year, a strong majority of organizations that take the survey return to take it again. (This year, 69% of organizations that took the survey in 2021 took it again in 2022.)



The results of the survey
have been **transformative**
to our organization.”

CEO of a participating organization (2021)

Leading Places to Work

Since our founding in 2014, Leading Edge has developed and continually refined a working definition of the core elements that make an organization a “Leading Place to Work.” This definition comes from extensive engagement with the latest academic and professional research, our partnership with Culture Amp (we use their platform to conduct this survey, and they have millions of data points from across many industries), aggregate data from six years of the Employee Experience Survey, and annual consultations with organizations striving to improve their workplace culture.

There are other elements that impact workplace culture and employee experience. However, these are the highest-leverage areas on which the Employee Experience Survey focuses.

THE CORE ELEMENTS ARE:

Common Purpose

Leading places to work have clear missions, visions, and values. They regularly communicate them, both internally and to the communities they serve. Leaders inspire their employees by keeping them connected to the greater purpose and impact of their work.

Trusted Leaders

Leading places to work have executive leaders who prioritize organizational culture. They model behaviors and create policies and practices that allow all employees, regardless of identity or position, to thrive.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEIB)

Leading places to work fully integrate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) into how they do their work. They understand the potential for organizations to perpetuate systems and behaviors that reinforce injustice, and they devote time, effort, and resources to prevent and mitigate these harms. They develop teams that reflect the communities they serve and strive to be culturally responsive and deeply understanding of their employees and constituencies.

Respected Employees

Leading places to work ensure that all employees feel valued, valuable, and empowered to participate fully. Employees trust that they won't be punished or criticized for making a mistake or speaking their minds. This dynamic of respect, trust, and psychological safety begins during the hiring process, continues through onboarding and training, and is woven throughout daily interactions between management and staff.

Talent Development

Leading places to work recognize that employees value opportunities to advance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Employees at these organizations know and feel that their employer invests in them and cares about their future, there is a plan for their growth and development, and their advancement is important to the organization.

Clear Salary & Benefits

Leading places to work understand that salary and benefits are foundational elements of an employee's experience at work. They have, and communicate, clear compensation philosophies and strategies that are applied fairly throughout the organization. While nonprofit organizations often feel constrained in this area due to tight budgets, leading places to work find ways to equitably, flexibly, and creatively compensate their employees.