

Results by Factor

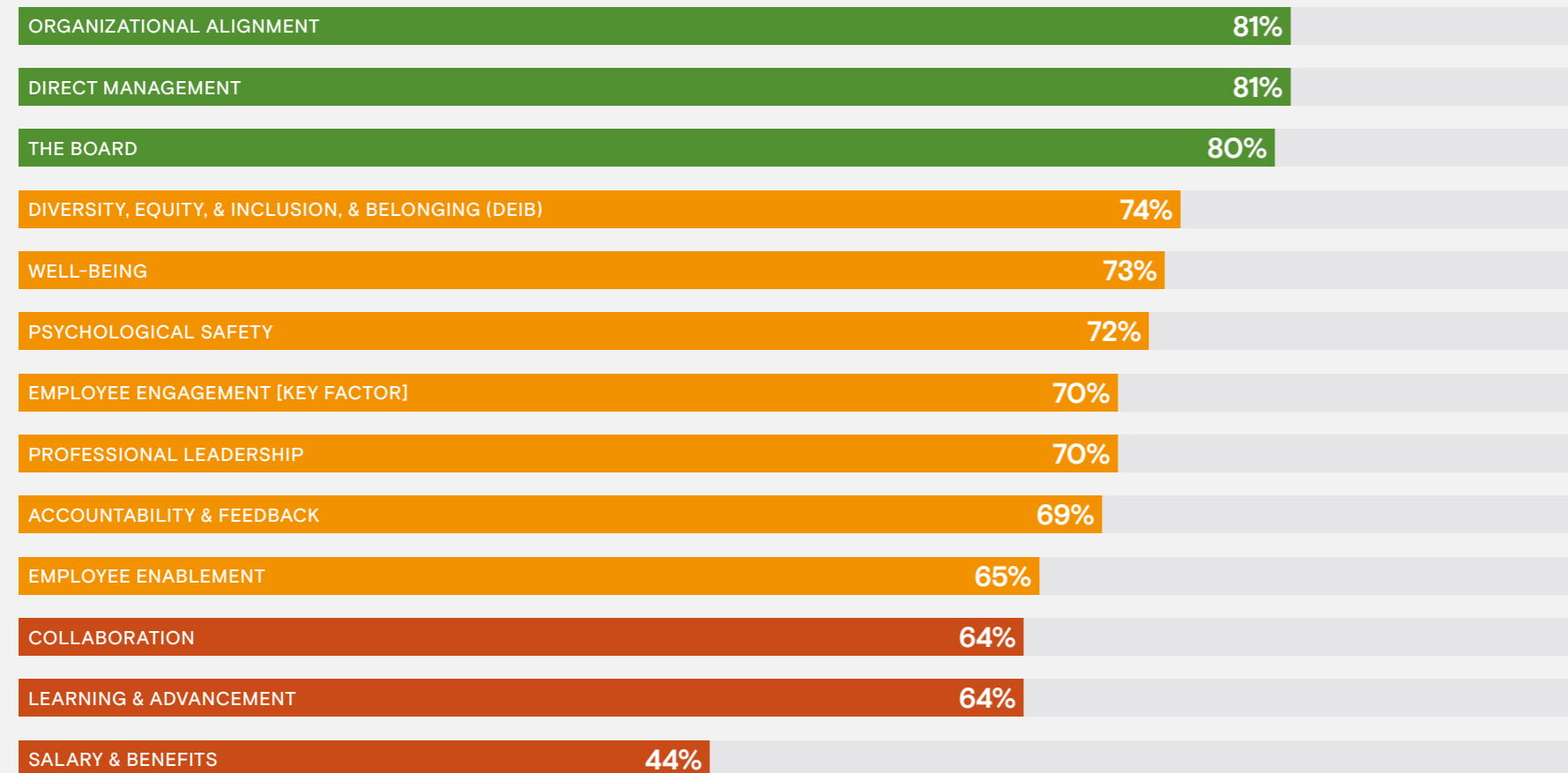
We group survey questions into **13 factors** of employee experience:

22	Employee Engagement (Key Factor)	38	Learning & Advancement
25	Accountability & Feedback	42	Organizational Alignment
27	Collaboration	44	Professional Leadership
30	Direct Management	47	Psychological Safety
32	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEIB)	49	Salary & Benefits
35	Employee Enablement	51	The Board
		53	Well-Being



Overall Favorability by Factor

Here are the factors with their aggregate favorability scores for all employees, in descending order of favorability:⁶



NOTE

In the following sections, most favorability scores (percent of respondents who “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with a statement) will be color-coded as follows:

75-100%

SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

65-74%

SOMETHING TO PAY ATTENTION TO

0-64%

SOMETHING TO WORK ON

⁶ The favorability score for a whole factor is the average of all the favorability scores for the questions within that factor.

KEY FACTOR

Employee Engagement

The factors following Employee Engagement are in alphabetical order, but we present Employee Engagement first because it is the most important of these factors driving organizational success. Copious research supports this conclusion, including [this meta-analysis of studies covering 2.7 million employees](#) in which Gallup found that [Employee Engagement](#) is significantly correlated with the following metrics (among others): productivity, profitability, employee turnover, safety incidents (accidents), absenteeism, and product quality.



Strong Point

A strong majority of employees are proud to work for their organizations.



Growth Area

“I would recommend my organization as a great place to work.” This is the classic [Net Promoter Score](#) question, widely used in every industry to measure customer experience (in the case of this survey, the “customer” is the employee). Favorability for this question has gone down from 2021 to 2022, and remains significantly behind Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark.

I feel proud to work for my organization

87%

I would recommend my organization as a great place to work

TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER

69%

-5% from 2021

-14% from U.S. Benchmark

My organization helps me stay motivated to do my best work

TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER

62%

-9% from 2021

-10% from U.S. Benchmark

I see myself still working at my organization in two years

62%

-6% from U.S. Benchmark



NOTE

Comparisons to 2021 and the U.S. Benchmark

Just over half of the questions in the Employee Experience Survey (56% of the questions) are widely used in many organizations’ surveys. Favorability scores from these questions can be compared to Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark, which represents people who work in the United States and covers all industries and functions. The remaining Employee Experience Survey questions (44% of the questions) were designed specifically for this survey. When survey questions repeat from year to year, we note pronounced changes relative to last year’s survey results. In general, for comparisons to both last year’s Employee Experience Survey and Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark, we note the comparison only when those differences are five percentage points or more in either direction.



Key Insight

Support employees through the “engagement crater”

Charting [Employee Engagement](#) across tenure, we see a striking pattern.⁷ At each end of the tenure line, brand new employees (under one year of tenure) and employees who have been at the organization more than 10 years are both more highly engaged compared with employees with between one and 10 years of tenure, who are significantly less engaged:⁸



This “crater” pattern across tenure appears across multiple factors of employee experience, but is most pronounced for Engagement and Professional Leadership. The phenomenon of a drop-off in engagement after the first year is well known in many industries as a “sophomore slump,” and in 2021, this survey showed that pattern as well. What is striking is that this year the pattern is less a brief dip in the second year and more of a prolonged crater.

Brand new employees are often optimistic and enjoying the novelty of a new workplace. They know all the positive things about the organization that led them to join it, without yet knowing the drawbacks. Engagement drops during the first few years, as the “honeymoon” ends and the employee gets to know the organization’s flaws. At the same time, as new employees are seen less as “exciting new faces” around the organization, managers and colleagues may

not give them as much encouragement and validation as they did when they were brand new. Employees may begin to feel taken for granted. As more time goes by, those less engaged are more likely to find opportunities to leave. Those who were more engaged all along are more likely to stay, and may also develop and refine strategies to make the best of the unique quirks and challenges in their organization.

How to address the “engagement crater?” Support mid-tenure *and* new employees

Clearly, mid-tenure employees could use more support from their organizations. At the same time, newer employees represent key opportunities to break the “engagement crater” pattern in the next “generation” of employees. The analysis of [“Stayers” & “Leavers”](#) indicates that employees with two to five years of tenure at the organization are the tenure group most likely to want to leave. Since we know this pattern in advance, leaders and managers can make a special effort to speak with and listen to new employees *before* their engagement crater begins, and to proactively and explicitly prepare them to navigate challenges as the “honeymoon” period of their employment wears off. Discussing this pattern openly and setting expectations of honest, respectful communication about addressing challenges might set up both employees and their managers to prevent the engagement crater—or, at least, make it a bit less steep.



**Great people and benefits.
Challenging culture.”**

Respondent

⁷ The Employee Engagement being quantified and charted here is the average of employees’ favorability scores for all the survey questions in the Employee Engagement factor.

⁸ This pattern is not merely caused by age. While there is also an age effect on engagement, with older employees more engaged regardless of tenure, the tenure effect still exists *within* age groups.

Engagement Drivers

How can organizations improve their [Employee Engagement](#)? It helps to understand what other elements of employee experience do most to cause it. Each factor in this report concludes with some actions that organizations can take to improve employees' experience of that factor. To improve Employee Engagement—the most important factor, but also the most generalized factor—organizations can take action to improve other metrics that drive engagement.

That's why in each year's Employee Experience Survey analysis, Leading Edge uses [a statistical algorithm within the Culture Amp platform](#) to identify **Engagement Drivers**, the most important drivers of [Employee Engagement](#). They are “drivers” in the sense that they not only *predict* [Employee Engagement](#), but also can be the highest-leverage questions to *increase* engagement. Organizations that see increased favorable experiences regarding these questions will likely see engagement rise as well.

The “Engagement Drivers” in the table to the right are the survey questions most closely correlated with [Employee Engagement](#) questions. That is, when employees responded favorably to these questions, they are more likely to have responded favorably to the Employee Engagement questions as well. In this table we present the top 10, but throughout the report we will draw special attention to the top five.

The top five Engagement Drivers for 2022 are exactly the same questions that topped the list in 2021. That lack of movement is noteworthy. The world, the economy, and (vexingly) levels of [Employee Engagement](#) are all changing. Gallup reports that employee engagement (across industries) has [reversed a previous upward trajectory and begun declining](#). So it's worth noting that the parts of workers' experience that most measurably contribute to their engagement have nonetheless stayed stable. Organizations that demonstrate care and concern for employee well-being, earn employee confidence in leaders, improve communication, and help employees feel they belong will reap benefits in engagement, retention, and, ultimately, effectiveness in achieving their missions.

[See the full list under Appendix C: Engagement Drivers \(Full List\)](#)

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS

ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS	CORRELATION	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT
WELL-BEING My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employee	VERY STRONG	0.72
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP I have confidence in our leaders to lead the organization effectively	VERY STRONG	0.71
WELL-BEING I believe employee well-being is a priority at my organization	VERY STRONG	0.70
ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication	VERY STRONG	0.70
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING I feel like I belong at my organization	VERY STRONG	0.69
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP I believe leaders will support the organization in taking action as a result of this survey	VERY STRONG	0.67
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP The leadership team's actions are consistent with my organization's values	VERY STRONG	0.67
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP Our leaders generally communicate openly and honestly with employees	VERY STRONG	0.66
EMPLOYEE ENABLEMENT Most days I feel that I am making progress with my work	VERY STRONG	0.63
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY When I offer my opinion, I feel that it is heard and respected	VERY STRONG	0.60

Accountability & Feedback



Strong Point

Accountability for results

A strong majority of employees feel their organizations are holding themselves accountable and producing good work, and respondents to this survey report higher overall favorability than Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark.

We hold ourselves accountable for results—e.g., producing high-quality work, meeting deadlines and commitments



I am comfortable providing job-related feedback to my colleagues



Growth Area

Performance reviews continue to be a pain point for a majority of employees

This finding echoes broader data; [Gallup has found](#) that in the broader economy, only 14% of employees strongly agree that the performance reviews they receive inspire them to improve. (In this survey, the 45% favorability score represents 19% “Strongly Agree” and 26% “Agree,” roughly in line with the Gallup figure.)

The feedback I receive from my manager is useful for my growth



I am recognized for good work at my organization



My manager provides me with regular feedback on my performance



Our performance review process helps me grow and improve



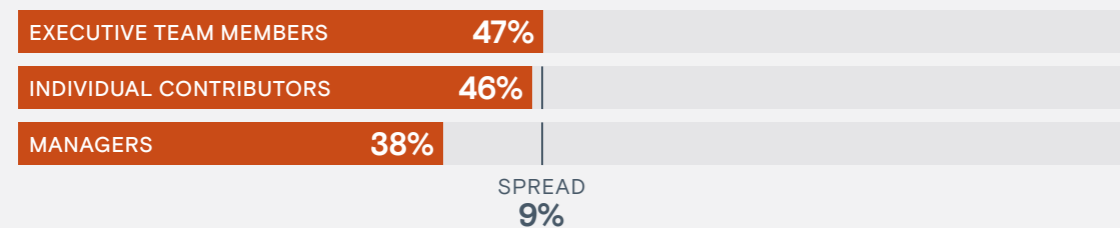


Key Insight

Managers are least likely to find performance reviews useful

For most questions across the survey, the pattern regarding favorability and job level is that executive team employees report more favorable experiences than average, while both managers and individual contributors report lower-than-average favorability. But “Our performance review process helps me grow and improve” is an exception. For all three job levels, a majority of employees do not agree that their organizations’ performance review processes help them grow and improve, but managers seem to have a uniquely unfavorable perspective on them:

Our performance review process helps me grow and improve



Take Action

Browse more ways to take action +

Give employees feedback more frequently

Increase the cadence of feedback for employees. One organization has decided to abandon performance ratings. They have created a more frequent and feedback-focused performance management process. Every quarter, each employee sits down with their manager to give and receive feedback and discuss goals from the quarter prior and the upcoming quarter. They can also discuss career pathing.

Ask for employees’ feedback more frequently

Capture employee feedback more efficiently, such as with [Pulse Surveys](#). One organization implemented quarterly surveys. In the first survey they learned that employees desired more flexibility to be able to tend to work/life/family/hobbies, so they implemented a fully flexible work environment policy. Then in follow-up surveys, they were able to determine how people felt about the new policy.

Conduct better one-on-one meetings

Embedding a consistent practice of one-on-one meetings throughout an organization is a key component of performance management. At one organization, managers and individual contributors are trained on how to run effective one-on-one meetings. This organization formed a team to help develop new content to help managers in their one-on-one meetings, including: what makes a great one-on-one meeting, what types of conversations to have, a manager checklist, dos and don’ts, and a bank of questions to use to stimulate the right conversations. Geographically dispersed organizations may want to ensure there are one-on-one meeting champions in each location to assist managers with new training and tools. Executives should also be encouraged to role-model effective one-on-one practices.



Our review process is still a complete mystery to me. I don’t understand why the organization, team, and personal goals are entirely unrelated. I also don’t understand how they relate to merit increases. It seems like a process in name only that has little value.”

Respondent

RESOURCES

“Effective Feedback: Two Models for Managers”

Leading Edge

READ ARTICLE

“Let’s Not Kill Performance Evaluations Yet”

Lori Goler, Janelle Gale, and Adam Grant, *HBR*

READ ARTICLE

Collaboration



Strong Point

Collaboration *within* departments

A strong majority of employees feel there is good collaboration within their department. (Even for this “strong point,” however, there is room for growth; it is below Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark.)



Growth Area

Collaboration *across* departments

Nearly half of employees respond neutrally or unfavorably to statements about support from, and collaboration with, other departments in their organization. Both questions dropped in favorability score from 2021 to 2022, and favorability for “There is good collaboration between teams/departments in my organization” significantly lags Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark. This growth area is most pronounced among organizations with teams larger than 20 employees.

There is good collaboration within my team/department

82%

-11% from U.S. Benchmark

My team receives high-quality support from other parts of the organization

57%

-9% from U.S. Benchmark

There is good collaboration between teams/departments in my organization

53%

-6% from 2021

-13% from U.S. Benchmark



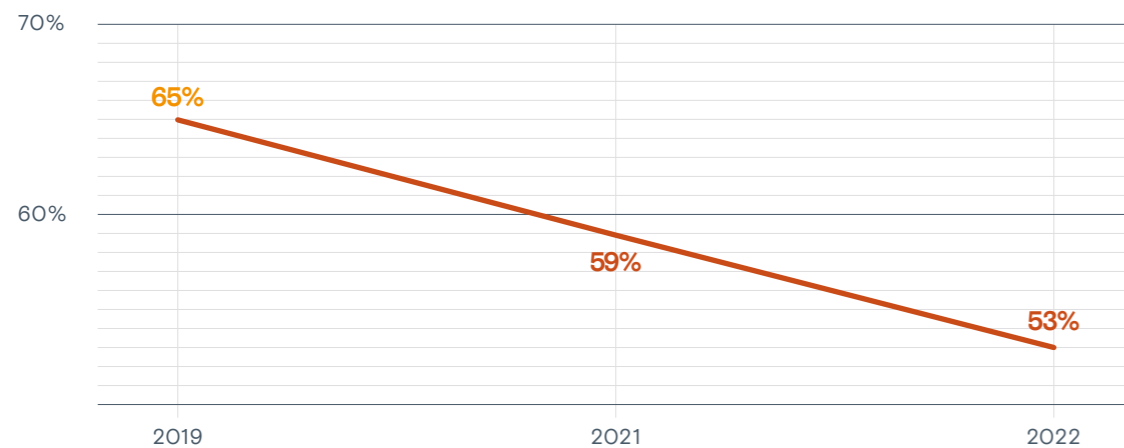
Key Insight

Collaboration across departments is trending downward

Between 2019 and 2022, this question has fallen 12 percentage points:

There is good cooperation between teams in my organization
(question wording in 2019)

There is good collaboration between teams/departments in my organization
(equivalent question wording 2021-22)



The first of these drops is explainable in terms of the initial adjustment to COVID-19 closures; the latter may suggest that many teams are facing new strains two years after the onset of the pandemic in adjusting to new ways of work that often include less face-to-face time than before.

As with all year-over-year comparisons in this survey, it's important to note that our sample changes each year, has grown each year, and is not random. Still, considering external evidence of growing stress throughout the global workforce, along with this survey's aggregate downward trend in [Employee Engagement](#) even controlling for composition, this trajectory is concerning.



Take Action

[Browse more ways to take action](#) +

Collaborate by example

Leaders are a powerful instrument to facilitate change. Ensure that leaders are demonstrating collaborative behaviors among themselves and encouraging collaboration within the organization. This may look like regular leadership meetings to share updates and explicitly discuss opportunities for greater collaboration across the organization. It might also look like two departments/teams meeting to discuss ways to actively support each other. It could also mean that leaders fill in for each other when one is out to demonstrate that they know about multiple components of the organizations and can step in for each other as needed.

Look beyond the team

Encourage team members to find ways of cooperating with other departments and outside agencies in order to discover new perspectives and new ways of doing things. One organization encourages team members to grab coffee with a person from another department or agency to discuss work/team challenges "[havruta](#)-style."

Reward [mensches](#)

Reward employees who go out of their way to help their team members. Those who help others are more likely to receive help from those they help. One organization created a "*Mensch* of the Month" award. Teams vote on the most helpful person that month and place a small plaque on the winner's desk for a month until the next vote.



Our organization feels more siloed than ever."

Respondent

RESOURCE

Beyond Collaboration Overload

Rob Cross, Harvard Business Publishing

[PURCHASE PUBLICATION](#)



Survey Story

Collaboration and Camaraderie at JCC Greater Boston

THE INSIGHT

When JCC Greater Boston began taking the Leading Edge survey in 2019, not all of the feedback was easy for managers to hear. However, the survey data inspired a commitment to action in manageable and prioritized ways on collaboration, among other areas.

THE INVESTMENT

To drive greater cross-agency management alignment and to build management skills, JCC Greater Boston developed Bonim (“builders”), a cross-organizational team of 50 managers and leaders who participate in trainings, who support each other, and who work together to address organization-wide challenges.

THE IMPACT

As part of a strategic effort to cultivate more collaboration, Bonim has helped foster feelings of belonging and pride. It has helped JCC Greater Boston cultivate greater trust across the organization and elevated a feeling that well-being matters and is being prioritized. This infrastructure has provided a catalyst for problem-solving, a sense of partnership among departments, and a feeling of camaraderie that everyone is invested in each other's success and part of the same team. Bonim's spirit of collaboration was critical when JCC Greater Boston faced severe labor shortages around the summer camp season. The Bonim group worked collaboratively to free up staff (including themselves) to step into a variety of camp roles, enabling the JCC to run a highly successful camp in spite of a summer of extreme hiring shortages.



COLLABORATION

There is good collaboration between teams/departments in my organization

+12%

since 2019 (+8% since 2021)

DIRECT MANAGEMENT

My manager keeps me informed

+22%

since 2019 (+4% since 2021)

[VISIT JCC GREATER BOSTON WEBSITE](#)

Direct Management



Strong Point

Employees overwhelmingly feel respected by their managers (although fewer feel that their managers make them better)

Interestingly, the feeling of respect doesn't always translate into effective management or talent development; while 90% of respondents agree that their manager treats them with respect, just 70% agree that the feedback their manager gives them is useful for their growth.

[See more under Accountability & Feedback](#)



Growth Area

Almost a third of employees (31%) don't agree that they have enough input on decisions that affect their work

And the 69% favorability score in this sample is slightly below Culture Amp's U.S. Benchmark.



Every time I have shared concerns with [my manager], [they] responded with empathy and care and handled my concerns appropriately."

Respondent

My manager treats me with respect

90%

My manager is generally available to respond to my concerns

86%

I have clarity around what I am expected to do and by when

81%

My manager keeps me informed

80%

I am appropriately involved in decisions that affect my work

69%



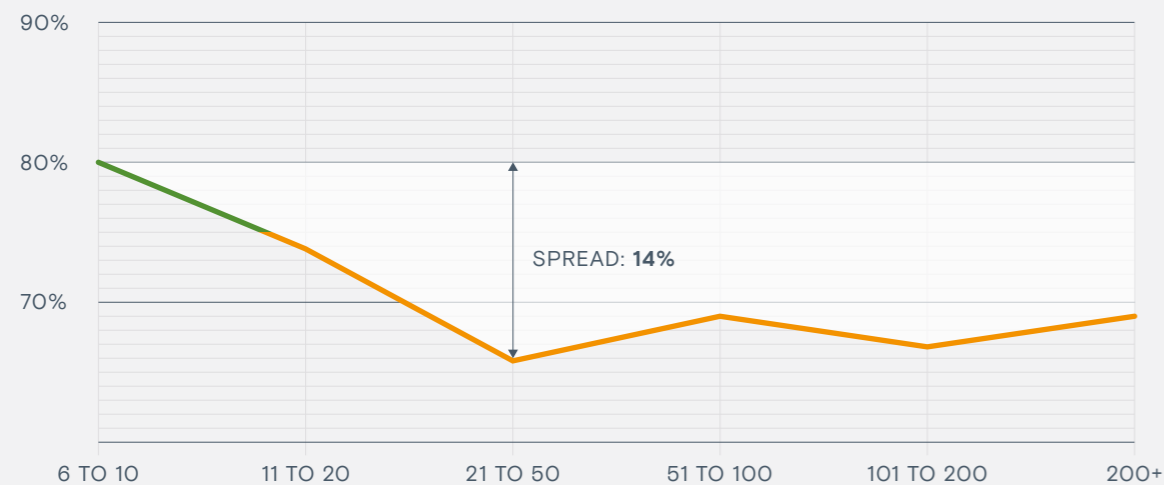
Key Insight

Employees on smaller teams have more favorable experiences of direct management—especially regarding input into decisions that affect them

The same pattern repeats for the other questions in this factor, but with more modest spreads of six or seven points between the top and bottom groups.

A similar pattern plays out in the [Professional Leadership](#) factor, for questions related to leadership communication. The reason for both may be simple: Fewer people mean fewer people per leader to consider, inform, and build strong relationships with. Individual contributors on smaller teams can expect to experience more interactions, and a larger proportion of the interactions, with their leaders.

I am appropriately involved in decisions that affect my work



Take Action

[Browse more ways to take action](#) +

Make opportunities for leaders and managers from different departments to compare notes

One large organization implemented informal “leader network hub” meetings where executives would meet with a cross-section of department heads and managers from across the organization. It was developed to enhance collaboration and information-sharing, and to be an opportunity to collaborate, to hear the impact of decisions on the day-to-day work, and for leaders to contribute their input into the decisions being made in the organization.

Make decision-making more empathetic

As organizations grow, the process and structure around decision-making changes. As a result, an individual who used to make a decision may not be the right person to make the same decision anymore. Empathetic leaders are clear about how decision-making is changing and can address that decision-making should not be made by consensus. Be clear about how decisions are made, and when that needs to change and why. When a new person starts/moves roles, let the team know that person’s decision-making responsibilities in the future along with their role responsibilities. Also let the team know who used to make this decision and why it’s changing. Ensure that prior conversations are had with individuals before team announcements so they understand and are on board with the changes.

Establish an if/then information-sharing rule

It’s hard to remember when you should update your team and which information to share, so having a process pre-prepared will make it easier to manage. Create a simple “if-then” rule for yourself so you know when and how to share important information with your team. Come up with a trigger that reminds you to take action and what that simple action is to take. Examples: **If** I’m invited to a cross-departmental meeting, **then** I will block 30 minutes on my calendar to email a summary of key points to my team, or **if** my manager shares news with me about company strategy, **then** I will immediately add it to our team meeting agenda.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEIB)



Strong Point

Belonging

A strong majority of employees feel that they belong at their organizations. This is an important strength because it is not only a top five [Engagement Driver](#), but also a top five [Retention Driver](#). There are some notable discrepancies by identity (discussed below), and there is certainly room to grow from 77% favorability, but it is a relatively strong place to start, especially for a question so strongly tied to engagement and retention.



Growth Area

The organization's commitment to DEIB

The favorability reported by employees in this survey overall for "My organization values diversity (for purposes of answering this question diversity is defined as the representation of all varied identities and differences)" lags Culture Amp's U.S. Benchmark by nine percentage points at 74%. And the scores are slightly lower for "My organization enables people from all backgrounds to do well" and "My organization demonstrates a genuine commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion." Favorability scores for these questions were lowest for younger employees.

I feel like I belong at my organization
TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER + TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER



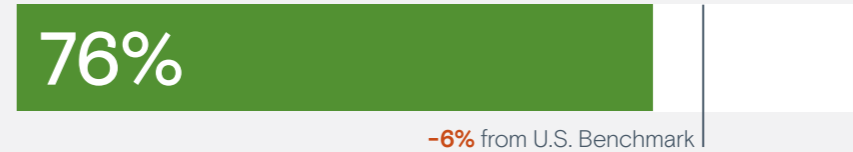
I believe my organization creates a safe and supportive environment for people from all backgrounds



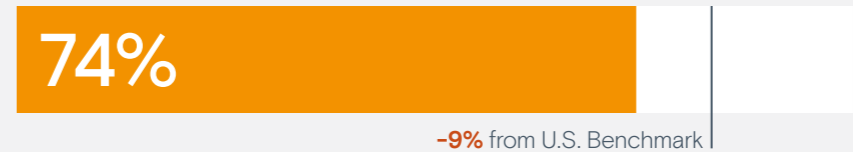
My organization enables people from all backgrounds to do well



I feel comfortable discussing my background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with my co-workers



My organization values diversity
(for purposes of answering this question diversity is defined as the representation of all varied identities and differences)



My organization demonstrates a genuine commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion





Key Insight

Organizations can increase employees' feelings of belonging by paying attention to groups particularly less likely to feel like they belong

The two questions within this factor with the highest favorability scores—"I feel like I belong at my organization" and "I feel comfortable discussing my background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with my co-workers"—are also the questions presenting the best opportunities for organizations to invest effort in improving, even though other questions in the factor have lower favorability. The other four questions explore *general impressions* about the organization, but these two questions are direct measures of the employee's personal feelings of belonging and inclusion, and one of them is a top driver of both engagement and retention.

Inequities related to identity differences are key drivers of who feels less belonging.

- **People of Color** tend to experience less belonging—and especially **Black employees**.
- Among Jews of Color, **Black Jews** are especially less likely to feel like they belong at their organizations.
- **LGBTQ+ employees** are less likely to feel like they belong at their organizations.
- **Non-Jewish employees**, overall, experience less belonging than Jews.

[See more under Demographics: People](#)



Take Action

[Browse more ways to take action](#) +

Focus on “culture add” when hiring

To build a diverse team, change language from “culture fit” to “culture add” when hiring. Looking for a candidate with “culture fit” introduces ambiguity into the recruiting process because it can signal that you are seeking traits and backgrounds that fit into an existing culture, rather than someone who will add to the culture. Shift your focus away from “being like us” to what they can contribute to your culture that is missing and that is beneficial or a bonus to what currently exists.

Check tools and systems for inclusivity

Ensure that internal tools and systems are designed to support everyone equitably. One organization set up a team to evaluate their internal systems to ensure that their tools and processes were fair and accessible to everyone. The organization's compensation and promotion systems were configured to show pay differences and promotion density by ethnicity, gender, and other demographics. The team checks all tools, systems, and internal processes regularly to make sure everyone is included.

Consider emotion-focused training

Train on more than just skills to help employees become more self-aware. One organization sends their emerging leaders to “manager essentials training” to help people with high potential become more emotionally intelligent. This training, which focuses on developing self-awareness and empathy, enables managers to build stronger relationships with their direct reports. To apply this to smaller groups or teams, you could have your entire team have emotional intelligence training. A low-cost option would be to have your team members read a recognized book on the topic (e.g., Dan Goleman's book on Emotional Intelligence) and discuss learnings and takeaways as a team.

RESOURCES

Beyond the Count: Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Jews of Color

Jews of Color Initiative

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

“Non-Jews in Jewish communal workplaces”

Deirdre Munley, *eJewish Philanthropy*

[READ ARTICLE](#)

Community Inclusion Guides

Keshet

[VISIT WEBPAGE](#)

Improving Workplace Culture Through Evidence-Based Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Practices

Wharton

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)



Survey Story

Focusing on Follow-Through at Sixth & I

THE INSIGHT

Sixth & I's 2021 survey results pointed to a clear need to focus more on DEI, among other things, to ensure that the organization's commitments were not just theoretical, but felt by the team and community. Building on a culture of strong management and organizational alignment, the leadership team mapped out a strategic plan to address multiple growth areas, including actualizing their value of justice in a lived way.

THE INVESTMENT

By adding new dedicated staff roles and budgeted dollars to address these areas of growth, the leadership team at Sixth & I evaluated and enhanced equity in their compensation. With the goal of having a team and board more reflective of the city they serve, they reviewed hiring processes and board requirements for proposed interventions to make them more equitable and inclusive. Working with an outside consultant, they convened a DEI working group, as well as facilitated full-staff discussions, to make conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion a mainstreamed and prioritized discussion topic and work area.

THE IMPACT

Both during and after these initiatives, Sixth & I leaders earned their team's trust regarding their values, as demonstrated by a 100% favorable score around 3 of the 5 questions in the organizational alignment factor for two straight years. But after implementing a values-aligned set of concrete DEI changes, Sixth & I also saw a significant improvement in favorability for "My organization values diversity"—showing that the team now sees those values becoming reality more than ever before.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING

My organization values diversity

+19%

for Sixth & I since 2019 (+10% since 2021)

VISIT SIXTH & I WEBSITE

Employee Enablement



Strong Point

Daily progress

Over three-quarters of employees (79%) feel that most days they make progress with their work. This question is moderately correlated with Employee Engagement. It is also a Retention Driver, being number six on the list of questions most correlated with wanting to leave the organization.



Growth Area

Matching the amount of people with the amount of work

This question has long been a pain point for a majority of respondents in past surveys, and historically in our field. Only 38% of employees feel that there are enough people to do the work they need to do. It's unsurprising that this should be true at the smallest organizations, and indeed, for employees at organizations of 6 to 10 employees, the favorability score is just 30%. Yet in no team size group do employees report a majority favorable score; **even for organizations of 200+ team members, the favorability score for this question is just 39%. This suggests that the best solutions may have to do with leaders and managers keeping goals, activities, and workloads focused and right-sized for their teams, rather than necessarily adding more team members.**

Most days I feel that I am making progress with my work



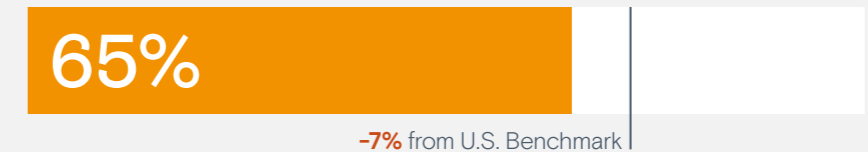
I have access to the information that I need to do my job effectively



I have the resources I need to do my job effectively



I believe my workload is reasonable for my role



Our systems and processes generally support us in getting our work done effectively

(feel free to leave specific examples and suggestions in the comments)



Workloads are divided fairly within my team/department



There are enough people to do the work we need to do



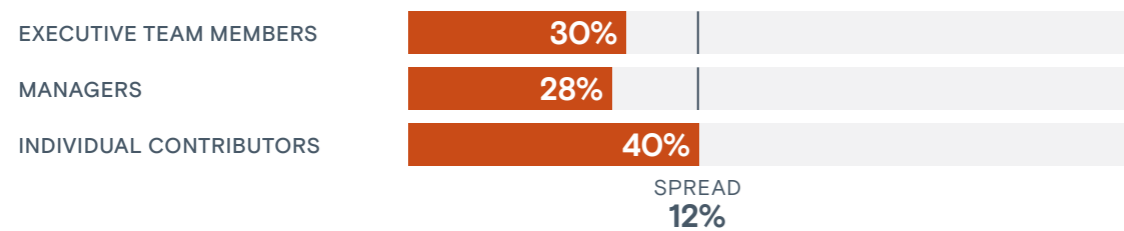


Key Insight

Executives and managers perceive staffing problems

Aligning work plans and expectations with available resources can help mitigate them. For an overwhelming majority of the survey questions, the pattern regarding job levels is that executive team members respond more favorably than average; individual contributors respond less favorably than average; and managers are in between, or sometimes on one side or the other of that divide, depending on the question. However, for “There are enough people to do the work we need to do,” this pattern is reversed.

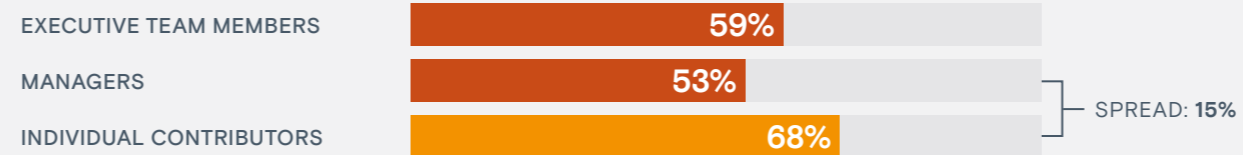
There are enough people to do the work we need to do



The fact that managers and executives respond with such low favorability suggests that whatever the barriers are to addressing this persistent feeling of understaffing, awareness among professional leaders is not the problem.

Probably relatedly, two other questions in the Employee Enablement factor also break the usual job-level pattern:

I believe my workload is reasonable for my role



I have the resources I need to do my job effectively



Professional leaders (particularly managers) feel squeezed around staffing and resources

To some degree, this may be a structural feature of the nonprofit field, where even successful organizations might struggle to fund sufficient staffing to accomplish their missions. Nonprofits have long been rewarded for minimizing “overhead.” Boards and funders have a role to play in addressing what many professional leaders and managers seem to be experiencing as a persistent challenge around adequate staffing by ensuring that the overall goals they set or fund have adequate staffing and resources to achieve them.

But leaders and managers, whose job it is to work within resource constraints, can also do much to address these challenges

They can set clearer priorities, adjust workloads, and sunset projects that do not advance the mission as well as others. They can also build in some amount of redundancy in staffing so that there is resilience in their team’s capacity.


RESOURCE

“How to Manage Time and Systems Effectively”
The Management Center

[READ ARTICLE](#)



Take Action

Browse more ways to take action 

Set priorities

Prioritize workload by assessing your team's day-to-day priorities. One organization had managers begin the week with a check-in about that week's agenda. This way the team was able to know exactly what was the absolute priority for that week and what may have to be shifted.

Conduct a work cycle audit

Take a look at your annual work cycle. One organization took stock of all departmental work cycles to determine times when additional support was needed and when cross-departmental collaboration could provide the necessary support. They hired temps, interns, and virtual assistants to help during busy times.

See what's in the toolshed

Take inventory of the tools and resources people use, to identify those that are most valuable. One organization documents all the systems being used, and each department gives a rating on each tool. Based on the rating, they decide which tools to start, stop, and continue using. This could be rolled out to frequently used resources and vendors as well.



We are running lean with no redundancies. We can get the work done if no one is ever sick or out of town or has car trouble. If someone does, we scramble to keep up. If two people are out sick, forget it.”

Respondent

Learning & Advancement



Strong Point

Most employees feel they have opportunities for challenging and interesting work



Growth Area

Professional development and advancement

Between 2021 and 2022, the overall favorability score for “My organization provides me with sufficient opportunities for professional development—e.g., training, conferences, community of practice, etc.” has dropped from 64% to 59%. The trend is in the other direction for “I have opportunities for advancement at my organization” (a three percentage point rise since last year), but it remains the case that a majority of employees do not respond favorably. For this question, the favorability score is starkly below Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark.

My role provides me with opportunities to do challenging and interesting work



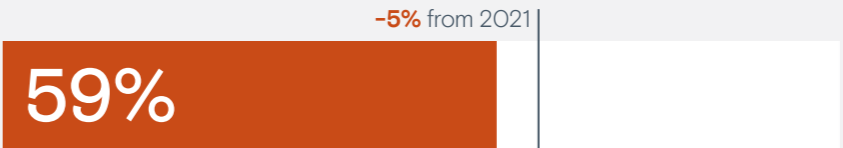
My manager helps me gain skills and knowledge that support my growth



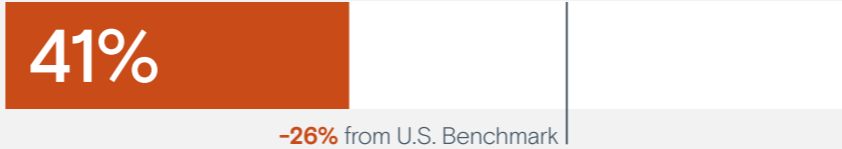
I have opportunities to develop new skills at my organization



My organization provides me with sufficient opportunities for professional development —e.g., training, conferences, community of practice, etc.



I have opportunities for advancement at my organization





Key Insight

People's history of promotion (or not) strongly contributes to their perceptions of future opportunities

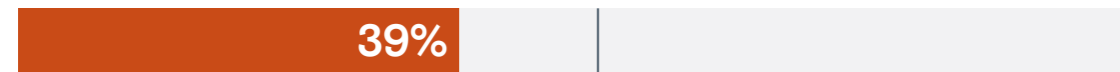
For many questions in the survey, employees who indicated that "I have been promoted to a new role at least once" rate questions more favorably than employees who indicate that "I have been in the same role the entire time" or that "I have moved laterally (to a new role, same level) at least once." The lateral movers are the least likely to respond favorably to many questions, with small gaps, but for one question in this factor, the gap is large:

I have opportunities for advancement at my organization

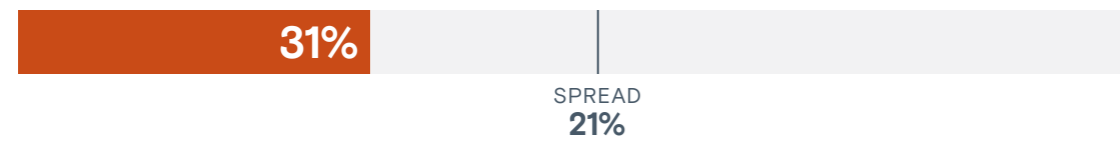
I have been promoted to a new role at least once



I have been in the same role the entire time

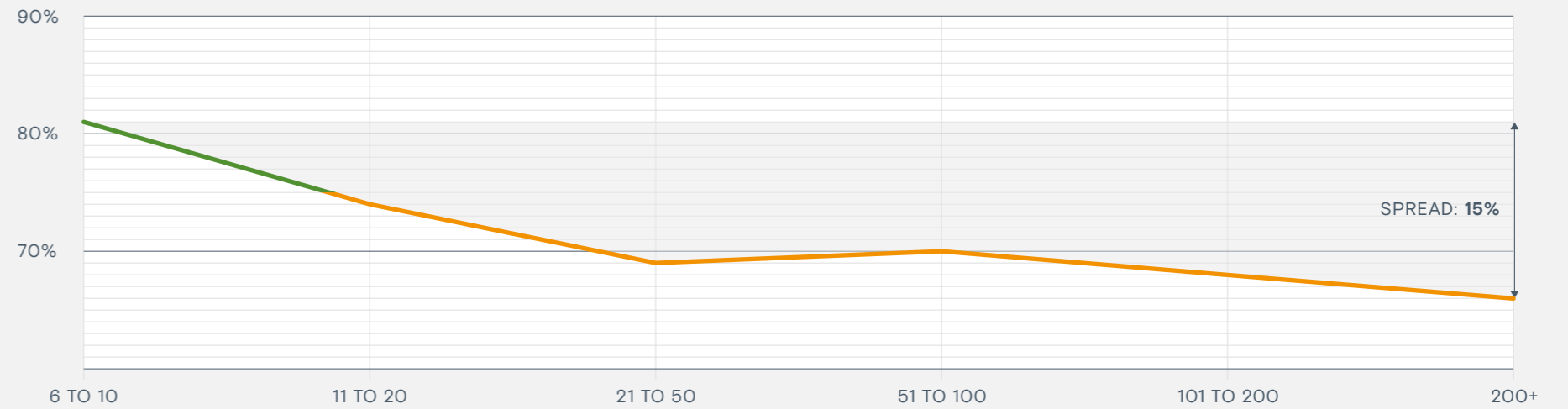


I have moved laterally (to a new role, same level) at least once



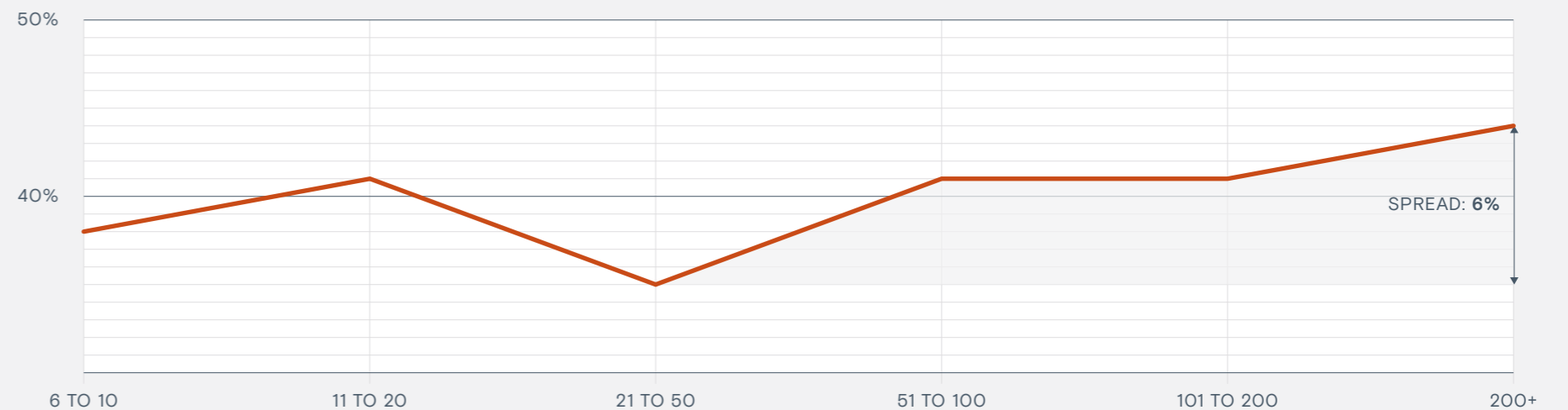
Team size also plays a role in employees' perception of opportunities. For most questions in the Learning & Advancement factor, employees at small organizations are more likely to respond favorably:

I have opportunities to develop new skills at my organization



But regarding opportunities to advance in the organization, the pattern reverses, albeit with a modest gap:

I have opportunities for advancement at my organization





Take Action

Browse more ways to take action

Expand career conversations

Hold more regular career-focused conversations with employees. One organization has mid-year career conversations that focus solely on development and career planning. These conversations are led by the employee so that they are encouraged to take ownership of their development. They are provided with a simple template to complete as a guide for the conversation. The employees are encouraged to include a discussion of their personal and job-related goals so the manager can give recommendations for individual skills development opportunities.

Conduct growth-oriented “stay interviews”

Learn before employees churn. One organization uses stay interviews as a way for the organization to re-engage with employees and their long-term goals. Stay interviews can be held at specific times in the employee lifecycle where employees are encouraged to discuss their career development needs as well as any blockers to their long-term success at the organization. In departments where there are higher rates of turnover, it can be helpful to have a skip-level meeting (i.e., meet with your manager’s manager) intermittently throughout the employee lifecycle.

Use an internal job board (This works well for larger organizations)

Ensure all employees are given a fair chance to move into new roles within the organization. After receiving feedback that opportunities were not being made available to employees on merit, one organization set up a jobs board. All open jobs are posted internally, enabling employees to apply based on perceived skill fit. All applicants are considered before external recruitment is commenced.



While I do think there are opportunities to advance, it is unclear what they are and what the process might look like. If I knew I was working towards advancement, that would make me work harder in my role to achieve that.”

Respondent



Survey Story

Advancing as a Learning Community at Shalom Austin

THE INSIGHT

When Shalom Austin first began taking the Leading Edge survey, their Learning & Advancement scores were consistently lower than they would have liked. Coming out of the 2019 survey season, they made a commitment to address this area of growth.

THE INVESTMENT

With the support of a Chief Learning and Engagement Officer and dedicated funding, Shalom Austin took on the strategic work of investing in staff learning and advancement in a robust way. They developed a model called Training Tuesdays, a bimonthly learning series that provides training around topics that will interest staff across departments, roles, and tenure. This model ensures that all staff benefit from learning and development opportunities, not just those in management or senior leadership roles. Shalom Austin recently presented on this learning model at “JPro22: Going Places Together, In Partnership with The Jewish Federations of North America.”

THE IMPACT

With a strategic focus on the topics and skill areas that are most valuable to the collective rather than an individual department or role, Training Tuesdays allows everyone to grow and advance, and fosters a culture of learning more broadly. Staff members now make requests or recommendations for Training Tuesdays topics, and even when they aren't best for the all-staff model, it is an indication of a growing commitment to and partnership around learning and advancement as a strategic priority, and an appetite for development that benefits the entire organization.



LEARNING & ADVANCEMENT

I have opportunities to develop new skills at my organization

+26%

for Shalom Austin since 2019

VISIT SHALOM AUSTIN WEBSITE

Organizational Alignment



Strong Point

People know their work makes a difference

An overwhelming majority of employees responded favorably to “I know how my work contributes to my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals.” This 89% favorability score remains just under the Culture Amp U.S. Benchmark of 91%, which was also the favorability score for this question in the Employee Experience Survey of 2021. Even in what appears to have been a difficult year, most people can see the value of their work.



Growth Area

Many employees feel a lack of open and honest communication

Nearly half (43%) of employees did not agree that “At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication.” This 57% favorability score is markedly below Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark of 70% for this question. **Since this is a top five Engagement Driver with low favorability, it represents a high-leverage opportunity for the field to improve.** (See also the [Collaboration](#) and [Professional Leadership](#) factors, in which communication is also a major theme.)

I know how my work contributes to my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals

89%

I have a good understanding of my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals

86%

My organization provides high-quality programs and services to our constituents

86%

+10% from U.S. Benchmark

I feel like I am making a difference through my work

85%

My organization is generally successful in the pursuit of its mission

82%

At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER

57%

-13% from U.S. Benchmark



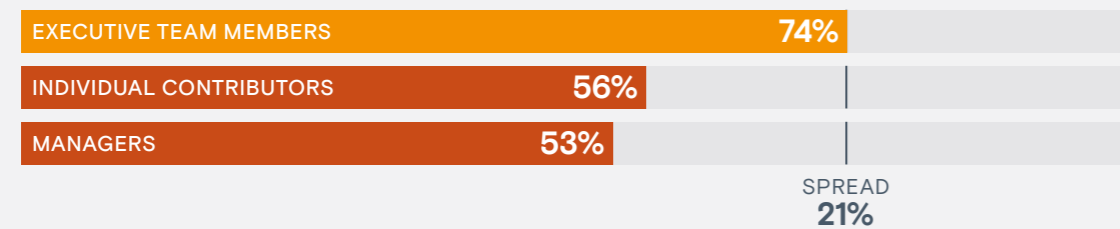
Key Insight

There is a leadership disconnect regarding open and honest communication

Executive team members are 21 percentage points more likely than managers to respond favorably to “At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication.” (Individual contributors and managers respond favorably at nearly the same rates.)

At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER



The picture of leadership disconnect is reinforced by data from the [2022 CEO Survey](#). Of the 222 CEOs who took the CEO survey—these are the topmost professional leaders of most of the same organizations that took the 2022 Employee Experience Survey—84% agreed that “Our organization prioritizes transparent communication.” Members of executive teams are less likely to perceive communication problems than other employees, and CEOs are the least likely of all to be aware of them.



Take Action

Browse more ways to take action

Listen first

Employees will listen better when they also feel heard. Leaders should seek employees’ ideas and ask their feelings and concerns throughout the decision-making cycle. This doesn’t mean that each employee gets a vote on each decision, but rather that the organization recognizes and hears how people are feeling. The process of listening to employees will differ based on the organization’s size, operations, and needs, but the important point is that gathering input should be proactive. Managers should engage individual employees, ideally one-on-one or in small groups, to draw them out. This is as much about building trust and engagement as it is about getting honest and detailed feedback. Both are vital, and both require real conversation.

Use internal communication channels better

Use internal communication channels to align on team decisions. Create channels and tools specific to your organization that:

- Allows teams to understand where communication will come from.
- Gives them notice on when a decision will be posted.
- Gives them opportunities to debate and discuss potential outcomes.
- Sets a deadline on when a response is required.
- Gives guidance on the final decision being made (e.g., highest/lowest votes, polls, post-analysis of the commentary by the leaders, etc.).
- Shares the decision once it is made and any changes to process, procedures, and policies.

Use information-flow exercises

Identify the blockers to information flow through a series of questions the teams agree are holding them back. Publish summaries to both share learnings and create accountability. When company teams get together regularly and look at their daily operations and opportunities for greater efficiency, they identify specific information blockers in the process. Assign the teams to contribute to the exercise. Each team then assesses and identifies responses to these questions:

- When was our own team the blocker for another team, via information withheld or taking too long to complete a task?
- How can we do things differently to ensure this is prevented in the future?
- What can we commit to now—one action to ensure change?

Professional Leadership



Strong Point

Most employees believe their organizations will appropriately address sexual harassment and discrimination

While these favorability scores (84% and 80%) could certainly be higher, a strong majority of employees perceive their organizations as appropriately accountable in this regard.

[See more under Appendix D: Organizational Policies](#)



Growth Area

Confidence in leadership

70% of employees agree that “I have confidence in our leaders to lead the organization effectively.” That’s a clear majority, but it’s seven percentage points lower than the favorability score for the same question in 2021, and eight percentage points lower than Culture Amp’s U.S. Benchmark. Since this question is a top five Engagement Driver, it represents a clear opportunity for growth.

I am confident that my organization will take appropriate action if sexual harassment is reported

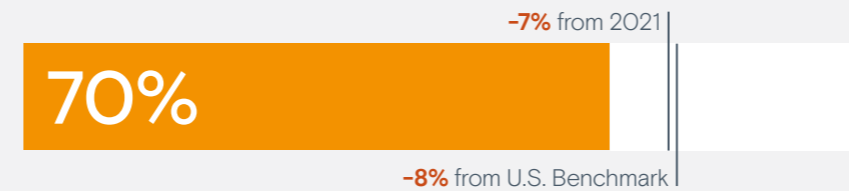


I am confident that my organization will take appropriate action if discrimination is reported



I have confidence in our leaders to lead the organization effectively

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER + TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER



The leadership team’s actions are consistent with my organization’s values



Our leaders generally communicate openly and honestly with employees



I believe leaders will support the organization in taking action as a result of this survey



I am kept appropriately informed about major decisions and events happening at my organization





Key Insight

Improving leadership means improving communication

How can leaders improve their teams' levels of confidence in their leadership? The other questions in this factor provide at least part of the answer. Almost 1 in 3 employees (31%) do not agree that "The leadership team's actions are consistent with my organization's values." More than 1 in 3 employees do not agree that "Our leaders generally communicate openly and honestly with employees;" that "I believe leaders will support the organization in taking action as a result of this survey;" or that "I am kept appropriately informed about major decisions and events happening at my organization." All of these questions are about communication between leaders and their teams—listening, responding, and keeping people informed. **Strong communication skills are a core competency of effective leadership.**

For most of the questions in this factor, smaller organizations have much more favorable experiences, and the same pattern strongly holds for the Collaboration factor. Whether between departments or between leaders and their teams, it's inherently easier to have stronger communication within a small group than within a large one.



Take Action

Browse more ways to take action +

Schedule open forums

Hold regular open forum meetings with senior leaders. This gives the entire staff a way to hear from the CEO and pose questions about the state of the organization, when they normally don't have that access.

Allow for anonymous questions

Make space for feedback and questions from all employees. To facilitate questions at all-hands meetings, one organization created an anonymous communications channel (using its internal communication software). Employees ask questions anonymously prior to all-hands meetings. The questions are then answered by leadership at these meetings. Employees feel that their voices are heard, and they can express their opinions without connecting their name to the question. This could also be done at the team level prior to team meetings.

Host lunch drop-ins

Increase visibility and accessibility of leaders by holding regular lunches (in-person or virtual) hosted by executives. At one organization, executives have one lunch a month with a team that is randomly selected. Leaders have an opportunity to meet and get to know employees from different departments. Leaders connect with employees outside of day-to-day activities, and employees have a chance to get to know leaders on a more personal level.



Our leaders generally communicate openly and honestly with me. I know that this experience is not felt to be true for others on the team. Different leadership team members have different management styles and share different information with their teams, which sometimes leads to tension, confusion, or discomfort."

Respondent

RESOURCE

"It's Not Nagging: Why Persistent, Redundant Communication Works"
Kim Girard, *HBS Working Knowledge*

READ ARTICLE



Survey Story

Growth Mindset at 70 Faces Media

THE INSIGHT

In previous years, 70 Faces Media didn't widely share survey insights or action plans to address those insights with the team. This past year, 70 Faces Media shared with their team an honest assessment of where they were on their organizational culture journey and invested in the people and systems necessary to improve.

THE INVESTMENT

70 Faces Media elevated the portfolio of a senior team member to include dedicated attention to Employee Engagement, talent development, and organizational culture. They have worked hard to elevate underrepresented voices across departments, and doubled down on internal communications by leveraging Slack in a more robust way. They have also begun to roll out more robust systems for project management and are actively focused on building momentum around cross-department collaboration. And in recognition that culture is owned by everyone at an organization, a cross-team staff task force will support idea generation and accountability to take action around this year's survey data.

THE IMPACT

With more open and honest two-way communication and visible efforts to address topics most important to staff, 70 Faces Media has seen growth in their staff's confidence in the organization's leadership, and a more open culture of feedback and collaboration. More of the staff now feel that diversity of opinion and experience are valued and believe there is commitment to fostering a culture where that diversity is centered and celebrated. There is a collaborative spirit of growth and partnership around 70 Faces Media's journey to being a great place to work.



PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Our leaders generally communicate openly and honestly with employees

+27%

for 70 Faces Media since 2021

VISIT 70 FACES MEDIA WEBSITE

Psychological Safety



Strong Point

Most people feel safe taking risks in their work

This is a rare area in which the sample of Jewish nonprofit teams taking the Employee Experience Survey significantly outperforms Culture Amp's U.S. Benchmark. Leaders and managers should celebrate this strength and build on it.



Growth Area

Comfort sharing dissent about the organization's work and feeling heard and respected

Last year, we asked employees whether they were "comfortable sharing potentially unpopular opinions at work." Only 51% of employees responded favorably. Based on feedback from some stakeholders, however, we slightly changed the wording of the question this year to clarify that we're only talking about opinions directly related to work. The new phrasing reads: "I'm comfortable sharing potentially unpopular opinions **about how to do our work.**" (Emphasis added.) This year, with the new phrasing, the favorability score is 65%. A clear majority feels comfortable sharing potentially unpopular ideas about the work. Still, with more than a third of employees (35%) not agreeing, this is an area worth addressing further.

Perhaps relatedly, almost a third of employees (31%) also did not agree that "When I offer my opinion, I feel that it is heard and respected." This question's overall favorability score dropped 6% from 2021 to 2022, and, at 69%, is now 9% below Culture Amp's U.S. Benchmark.

It is safe to take risks on my team

—e.g., try new things, share new or different perspectives, ask tough questions, etc.

78%

+12% from the U.S. Benchmark

I feel comfortable speaking up if my values were/are ever compromised

76%

When I offer my opinion, I feel that it is heard and respected

69%

-6% from 2021

-9% from the U.S. Benchmark

I'm comfortable sharing potentially unpopular opinions about how to do our work

65%

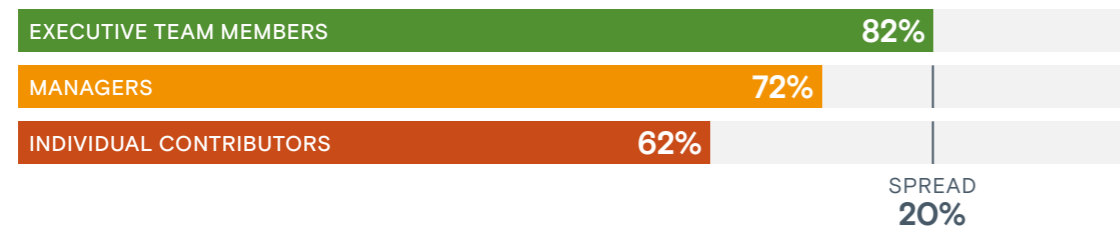


Key Insight

The higher you rank, the safer you feel

The relationship between job level and favorability scores for Psychological Safety questions is clear. Here is one example, but all other questions in this factor show broadly similar patterns:

I'm comfortable sharing potentially unpopular opinions about how to do our work



When I offer my opinion, I feel that it is heard and respected



Interestingly, for “When I offer my opinion, I feel that it is heard and respected,” there is no gap between managers and individual contributors—but a disconnect between executive team members and everyone else.

For those in powerful positions in their organizations, it can be difficult to understand what it’s like for someone who has less power in the organization. But being aware of this asymmetry can help them take action to improve it. Broadly speaking, leaders can look for opportunities to support and celebrate appropriate risk-taking among individual contributors, actively solicit lower-ranked employees’ ideas and critical feedback about the work, and make people feel valued for sharing their perspectives, regardless of which perspective becomes realized in the final work product.



Take Action

[Browse more ways to take action](#) +

Institute the platinum rule

The “golden rule” says to treat others as you want them to treat you. To create a culture where employees feel safe and comfortable sharing unpopular opinions, one organization updated the “golden rule” to make it the “platinum rule”—to treat others the way they want to be treated. All managers were tasked with taking the time to find out their team’s preferences for frequency of check-ins, style of communication, type of feedback, etc.

Welcome healthy conflict

Ask questions in a way that does not shut down creativity. One organization trained their managers to ask questions in a different way. Instead of “Why did you do this?” ask “What was your thought process?” They further encouraged their teams to ask questions of managers and leaders. The dialogue created a culture where healthy conflict was welcomed. This led to employees feeling empowered to come to their managers with those wacky ideas, which sometimes prove to be invaluable.

Hold a process hackathon

Bring together diverse perspectives to improve organizational processes. One organization holds an annual hackathon to improve processes. Each department chooses their least-favorite process (large departments can choose more than one). Cross-functional teams are formed with people from different departments and each team discusses how to improve one process. In addition to helping to improve efficiency, this also leads to greater empathy with colleagues.



It can be tough to share, depending on the person I am speaking to. There are some members of my team, as well as managers and others I work with, who shut down unpopular opinions as soon as I bring them up. It’s really disheartening to not even have my opinions considered.”

Respondent

RESOURCE

“How a Lack of Negative Criticism Can Make NGO Employees Feel Unsafe”

Gali Cooks, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*

[READ ARTICLE](#)

Salary & Benefits



Strong Point

No question in this factor is strong, but it's good that at least a majority of employees agree that "My employee benefits generally meet my needs." Even here, however, this question had a favorability score that was seven percentage points higher in 2021.



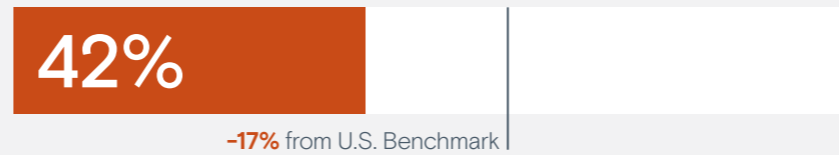
Growth Area

Every question in this factor is a growth area, but it is particularly clear that **many employees feel they need more information about how compensation works at their organizations**—both regarding how salaries and raises are currently determined and regarding what steps the organization is taking to review and improve this process for the future. **Every employee wants to earn more money, but evidence suggests that it matters even more for employees to feel that the compensation process is fair and rational**—rather than how much money, on an absolute level, they earn. Salary issues may be particularly important at this time, with inflation being both high and highly salient in media and discourse. Employees may be more likely than at other times to feel insecure about their personal and family finances and their financial futures. More information about compensation procedures and trajectories could help people feel at least somewhat more secure.

My employee benefits generally meet my needs



I believe my salary is fair relative to similar roles at my organization



I understand how salaries and raises are determined at my organization



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.



I understand the salary bands. I don't understand how the compensation ranges assigned to each band were determined, or why some roles are valued at a much higher compensation than others. The income gaps are significant."

Respondent

RESOURCE

Salary Bands: Valuing Talent with Intention and Transparency

Leading Edge

DOWNLOAD PDF



Key Insight

Departments and salary transparency

Employees working in human resources departments report favorability scores for Salary & Benefits questions 20 to 30 percentage points higher than the favorability scores of employees in many other department types. Finance departments also yield higher-than-average favorability scores. This is easy to understand because these departments work with and have visibility into compensation at the organization.

The lowest favorability scores for this factor come from Marketing/Communications and—lowest of all—Teaching. Only 46% of teachers agree that their employee benefits generally meet their needs; only 39% agree that their salary is fair relative to similar roles; and only 30%–31% agree that they understand how compensation is determined at their organization or that their organization is working on improving its compensation practices.

Unsurprisingly, there is also a large difference in favorability within the Salary & Benefits factor by job level, with higher-ranked employees much more likely to respond favorably.



Take Action

Browse more ways to take action

Implement Salary Bands with these six steps

In [Salary Bands: Valuing Talent with Intention and Transparency](#), we lay out six steps to more transparent, rational, and equitable compensation. Most employees don't understand how pay decisions are made at their organizations. That's a big problem because research suggests that employees care more about whether they feel pay is fair than they do about the absolute amount they are paid. Read the guide for full explanations and examples. The six steps are:

1. Create a compensation philosophy.
2. Complete a job analysis.
3. Benchmark with market data.
4. Build salary bands.
5. Determine salaries and raises.
6. Share the bands with your team.

Conduct frequent pay calibrations

Instead of yearly pay calibrations, consider more frequent check-ins. This approach of more frequent salary checks is based on the thinking that the moment you realize an employee deserves a raise, they should receive it. The longer between that realization and the raise, the more time the employee has to feel that their contributions are not being fairly compensated. In a highly competitive job market this can lead to regrettable turnover that could have otherwise been addressed.

Say what you pay

Be clear on the salary range when advertising new roles to promote fair pay across the organization. Candidates shouldn't have to feel their current earning is a criteria in whether or not they get the job. By being clear on what someone can expect in the role, candidates can self-select whether they wish to be part of the process and ensure no one is unduly wasting their time.

- This practice allows people to decide to apply for a role with all the necessary information. Someone with deep passion for what you do who is less motivated by salary will not be overlooked. It also ensures equity of pay from the outset. Simply matching or boosting current pay can perpetuate gender or ethnicity pay gaps over time.
- Being transparent with equal pay for equal work demonstrates a culture of equality from the point of entry into the business and helps embed that as a value throughout the employee lifecycle.

The Board



Strong Point

A very strong majority of employees who interact with their organization’s board feel respected by board members.



Growth Area

A quarter of employees who interact with the board do not agree that board members and professional leaders work together effectively. A 75% favorability score is not an indicator of a big problem, but it is notable.

I feel respected as a professional by board members at my organization



At my organization board members and professional leaders work together effectively



NOTE

The two questions in this factor were only presented to employees who indicated that they interact with the board. **Over 1 in 4 (27%) respondents indicated that they interact with the board**, and were therefore presented with these questions.

RESOURCES

Board-Staff Interactions FAQ
BoardSource

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

13 Tips For Facilitating Teamwork With A Nonprofit Board of Directors
Forbes

[READ ONLINE ARTICLE](#)

I really feel that the board members I interact with are genuine colleagues and thought partners, and really care about the work that we do at [my organization]. They are actively invested (financially, professionally, emotionally) in the success of our work and in the empowerment of the staff to do their best work, and that is something I see, and am grateful for, every time I interact with members of our board.”

Respondent



Key Insight

Executive team members are slightly more likely to respond favorably to both board questions than managers or individual contributors

All three job levels are included among employees who said they interact with the board, and while executive team members and managers are a higher proportion of these board-interacting employees than they are of the whole sample, they are still a minority of the employees who interact with the board; 52% of employees who interact with the board are individual contributors.

I feel respected as a professional by board members at my organization



At my organization board members and professional leaders work together effectively



Employees in Marketing/Communications departments are least likely to say they feel respected as a professional by board members. When it comes to perceptions of the board-professional partnership, employees in Lobbying/Public Affairs, Teaching, Marketing/Communications, and Programming/Direct Service Provider departments are least likely to agree that their board and professionals work effectively together.



Take Action

[Browse more ways to take action](#) +

Encourage board members to show up to the organization's programming, or volunteer for the organization, if and when appropriate⁹

This provides an authentic, natural way to show board members some of the work of the team in action, and to build more points of connection among the board, the team, and the work. Moreover, when the board has the opportunity to see the work up close, it often helps in their strategic decision-making and setting of organizational priorities. Some boards may want to create a committee or task force to boost board member attendance and engagement with the organization's programming.

Encourage the board to show gratitude to the team

Create opportunities to raise staff visibility to the board, and opportunities for board members to show appreciation to the team. In the case of smaller organizations, it could be in the form of handwritten notes or in-person thank you meetings or calls. For larger organizations, it could take the form of sending gifts or throwing gratitude lunches or other events and celebrations recognizing the work and dedication of the staff. Depending on the type of organization, some boards may want to create committees or task forces on staff appreciation. This can be especially helpful for larger and remote organizations, where team members have fewer opportunities to interact with the board.

Align the board and professionals regarding values

CEOs and boards can periodically review organizational values and ensure that professionals and boards are aligned about what the values are and how the mission and work serve those values. Conversations that reground the work in values and vision can be a useful jumping-off point for conversations between the CEO and the board about long-term strategy and organizational priorities. These conversations can also set up interactions between board members and team members to be conducted on the basis of the explicitly shared values. Articulating organizational values and translating them into the way the organization works is also an excellent way to onboard new board members into multiple levels of their work as board members.

⁹ When this is not an option, informal meetings between board members and staff can also help.

Well-Being

TOP FIVE DRIVERS

Employee well-being is one of the most important factors for engagement, retention, and quality work. Two of the 5 questions in this factor are in the top five Engagement Drivers.

[See more under Engagement Drivers](#)



Strong Point

People feel supported by their colleagues and managers

Strong majorities of employees respond favorably to “I have colleagues who I can turn to for support” and “My manager genuinely cares about my well-being—e.g., my satisfaction, workload, and/or overall health.” While the favorability score for the latter question in this sample is slightly below the U.S. Benchmark, favorability scores in the 80s for both of these questions show that for the most part, interpersonal relations are doing well.

I have colleagues who I can turn to for support

85%

My manager genuinely cares about my well-being—e.g., my satisfaction, workload, and/or overall health

83%

-6% from U.S. Benchmark

My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER

71%

I believe employee well-being is a priority at my organization

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER + TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER

66%

-9% from U.S. Benchmark

I have enough opportunities to disconnect from work

+5% from 2021

60%



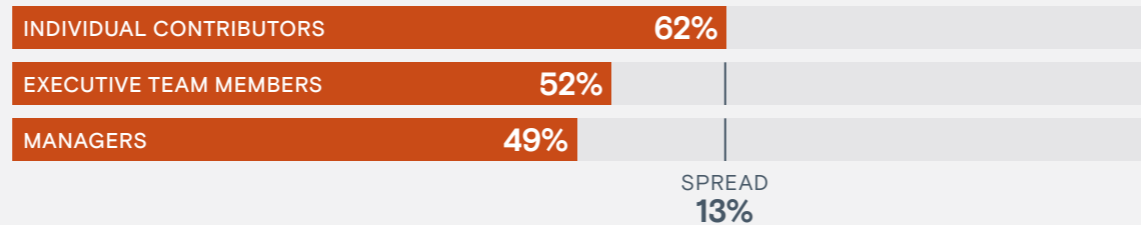
Growth Area

Disconnecting from work—especially for leaders and managers

More than 1 in 3 employees (40%) did not agree that “I have enough opportunities to disconnect from work.” And while the favorability score for this question has moved up since 2021, there is room to grow.

Unlike many questions in the survey, when higher job levels in organizations tend to go along with higher favorability scores, this question is especially a pain point for managers and executives.

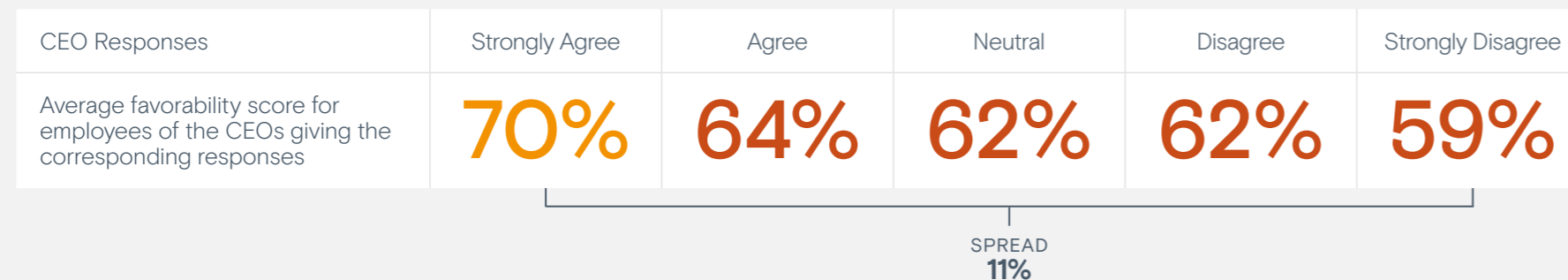
I have enough opportunities to disconnect from work



This relationship to job level is also evident in the [2022 CEO Survey](#), which was fielded simultaneously with the Employee Experience Survey. **Only 33% of CEOs agreed that “I have enough opportunities to disconnect from work.”**

Just as leaders are especially likely to struggle with disconnecting from work, they can also play a strong role in solving the problem. **Leaders can help their employees feel that they can disconnect from work by disconnecting from work themselves** (and doing what needs to be done to allow the organization to succeed on that basis). Comparing this question in both the Employee Experience Survey and the CEO Survey, we can see that among organizations whose CEOs indicated on the CEO Survey that they have opportunities to disconnect from work, their employees were also more likely to indicate the same:

I have enough opportunities to disconnect from work



My supervisors have time and time again expressed how my own health and well-being should come before work, and while that’s something I still personally need to take to heart, I’m endlessly grateful that they are adamant about it as a policy and that I don’t need to worry about my job when I am struggling otherwise.”

Respondent



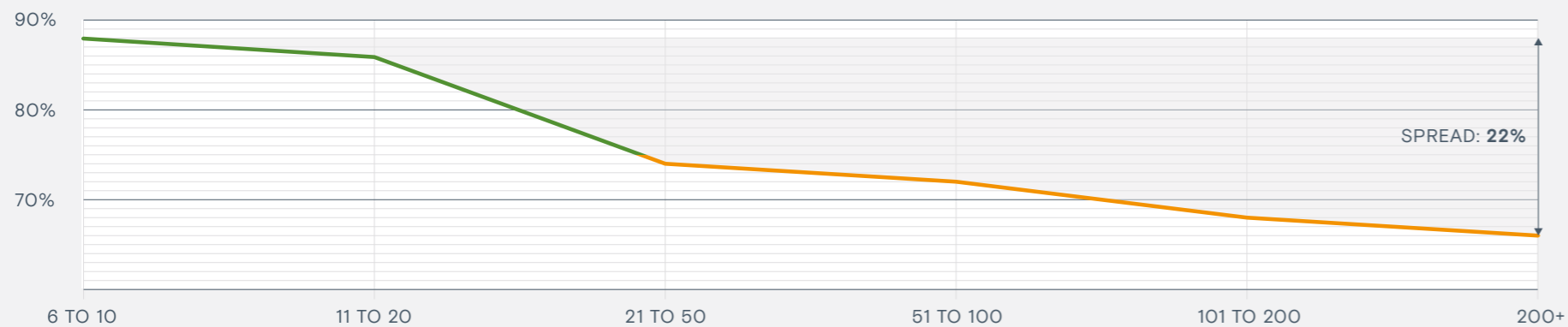
Key Insight

Employees at smaller organizations are more likely to report favorable well-being experiences

Here are favorability scores, broken out by team size, for the two well-being questions that are top five Engagement Drivers:

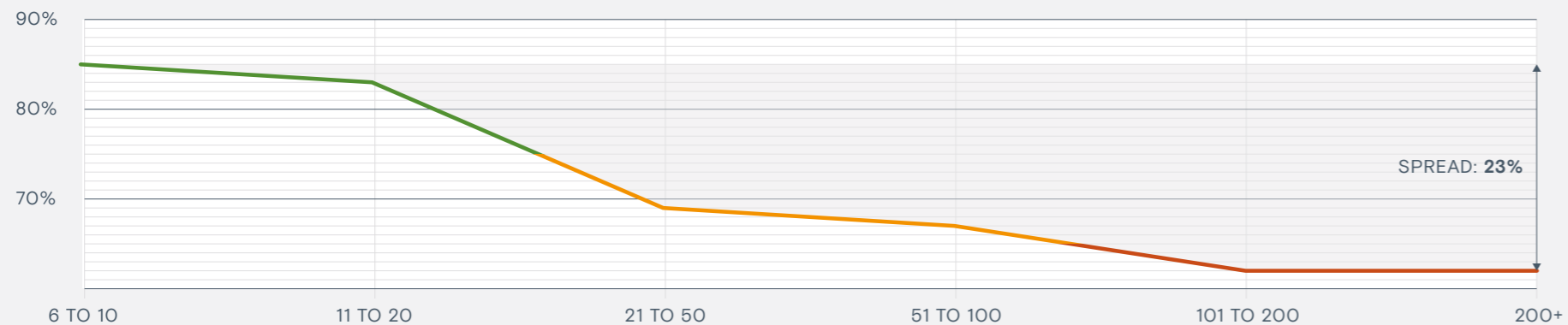
My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER



I believe employee well-being is a priority at my organization

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER + TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER



One possible reason for these differences based on team size is that in larger organizations, each employee gets a smaller percentage of the leadership's overall attention. When there are fewer people, each gets more chances to be heard and see their views influence leadership decisions, as well as more chances to build meaningful relationships with organizational leaders in ways that make them feel cared for.



Take Action

[Browse more ways to take action](#) +

Create email response policies

Provide clear expectations on when work activity is appropriate after standard work hours. Instead of instituting a ban on emails after work hours, one organization developed clear policies around when someone is expected to respond to an email (or other communication). Having policies around response expectations ensures everyone is on the same page. It also doesn't inhibit employees from sending ideas outside of normal hours—there is just no expectation that a response will occur until the following work day.

Provide managers with work-life policy training

Help managers role-model effective work-life choices. One organization developed a training program for managers to understand how they can encourage good work-life choices. The training educates managers on current policies and encourages them to make full use of vacation days and telecommuting options. Managers can model a positive work-life blend by making full use of vacation days and flexible work options. Ensure that people understand the options available and encourage their use. Another organization implemented a work-life blend accountability buddy system where team members checked in on each other to make sure they were making time for self-care and were keeping off-hours emails to a minimum.

Institute recharge days

Create "recharge days," which are distinct from other paid time off and are intended to be used when an employee has worked exceptionally hard on a project, had significant time traveling for work, or feels generally at risk of burnout. This is a low-cost way to offer appreciation for employees' most intense efforts and to ensure that the team builds in recovery time after a sprint. Set a policy that managers can appoint a recharge day at their discretion. Let the team know when someone is out of the office on a recharge day and why this day was offered to them.



Survey Story

A Culture of Nourishment at IKAR

THE INSIGHT

The work of sustaining a spiritual community especially in a pandemic was taking a toll on the staff at IKAR. People expressed a need for more people to help with the workload and better systems and infrastructure to help staff feel supported and cared for.

THE INVESTMENT

With support from an outside consultant, IKAR employees created individualized professional development plans, to meet the needs and goals of each employee. They built more intentional team time into meetings and retreats, and each department received resources to cultivate relationships within smaller groups. In addition to existing office closures, IKAR added in a summer break and self-care days throughout the year, and created standard language for out-of-office email signatures to share with the wider community the importance of time away. They also created greater clarity around paid-time-off policies and more explicitly encouraged team members to take advantage of it. To address workload concerns, senior leaders brought on more staff, and also focused on creating stronger systems, clearer roles, and more transparency and communication to help ensure more reasonable and evenly distributed workloads across departments.

THE IMPACT

This more holistic approach to well-being and management has employees feeling less overworked, more connected with each other, more able to take time away, more empowered to take advantage of growth opportunities, and more supported.



WELL-BEING

I believe employee well-being is a priority at my organization

TOP-5 ENGAGEMENT DRIVER + TOP-5 RETENTION DRIVER

+33%

for IKAR since 2019 (+22% since 2021)

VISIT IKAR WEBSITE