

# Are Jewish Organizations Great Places to Work?

**RESULTS FROM  
THE SECOND  
ANNUAL EMPLOYEE  
ENGAGEMENT  
SURVEY**

FALL 2017

**LEADING  EDGE**

 Culture Amp

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# Introduction

In March 2014, Leading Edge and Bridgespan published a report, *Cultivating the Next Generation of Leaders for Jewish Nonprofits*, attempting to understand why many Jewish organizations are struggling to attract and retain talent. The Bridgespan report found that workplace culture is critical for recruiting, cultivating, and retaining stellar staff to fill leadership roles and fulfill the mission of the organization.

In response, **Leading Edge** launched the *Leading Places to Work* initiative to support Jewish organizations in creating “great places to work.”

For the second year in a row, **Leading Edge** conducted a sector wide employee engagement survey. In 2017, **4,470 employees across 68 Jewish organizations** (see **APPENDIX A** for a listing of all participating organizations) responded to questions about their experience at work, specifically relating to workplace culture, the factors that drive their engagement at work, and those elements that contribute most to their desire to stay at their organization and in the Jewish nonprofit sector.

This report summarizes the findings from the 2017 survey.

# Executive Summary

Within the next four to six years, **75-90%** of Jewish nonprofit organizations will be faced with the daunting challenge of replacing their retiring CEOs and executive directors. But the pipeline is running dry: Organizations are struggling to attract and retain talent.

Many Jewish organizations have rigid, bureaucratic workplace cultures and steep hierarchies; provide little autonomy for entry- and mid-level staff to take risks and feel ownership over their work; offer limited career advancement; and struggle to compete on salary. As a result, Jewish organizations find it difficult to attract the next generation of leaders, especially when compared with workplaces in other sectors.

Focusing on employee engagement can be a lever in shifting workplace culture, leading to employees who feel connected and committed to their workplaces, proud of their organizations, and motivated to bring their full selves to the table.

For the second year in a row, Leading Edge conducted an employee engagement survey of the Jewish nonprofit sector.

This year, **4,470** employees at **68** Jewish organizations responded to the survey.

Taken together with the 3,422 employees from last year, Leading Edge has now surveyed roughly 10% of the Jewish nonprofit workforce in the United States.

In 2017, Leading Edge partnered with Culture Amp, a user-friendly employee analytics platform, to host the survey.

Jewish nonprofits are not yet the leading places to work; however, there is an increased recognition of this challenge and the need to address it.

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# Survey Findings

Presented below are overall themes, compared with the General Industry Benchmark.<sup>1</sup>

## STRENGTHS

- Employees are motivated by the mission of their organizations and understand how their specific jobs contribute to the greater organizational mission (▲1% above the General Industry Benchmark).
- Employees know what they need to do to be successful in their roles (▲5%).
- Employees are able to access learning and development opportunities to do their current jobs well (▲1%).

## WEAKNESSES

- Employees do not feel they have the resources (▼9% below the General Industry Benchmark) or autonomy (▼7%) to do their jobs effectively.
- Employees do not believe they have a pathway to advancement at their current organizations (▼7%) AND feel more strongly that workloads are not divided fairly (▼25%).
- Employees do not receive useful performance feedback (▼6%).
- Employees do not receive high-quality support from other parts of the organizations on which they depend (▼8%).
- Less than half of respondents think they will continue working in the Jewish nonprofit sector for five years or more.

## Conclusion

Leading Edge works with Jewish organizations to focus on improving culture, curating resources and best practices, providing training, and offering opportunities for organizations to connect with one another to advance these goals.

The good news is that leadership and talent are a priority in the Jewish community now more than ever. As organizations focus on improving their culture and developing talent, the Jewish nonprofit sector will be better able to attract, retain, and develop talent—our most precious resource.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey questions were constructed to be as useful as possible to organizations taking the survey. As such, comparisons to a General Industry Benchmark are available to many, though not all, questions. The General Industry Benchmark is drawn from the broader Culture Amp sample, which includes over 1.8 million employees across more than 60 industries. Leading Edge compares its data to these other sectors because the Jewish nonprofit sector is competing with other industries for top talent.

## SECTION 1

# Rationale

## Why Culture Matters

Each year, the Jewish nonprofit sector produces a tremendous amount of value for the Jewish world and beyond. We educate youth; provide essential services to millions of people in need; and offer rich Jewish experiences for hundreds of thousands craving depth, community, and meaning in their lives.

Nearly 76,000 professionals spend their days engaged in this holy work, and it is these very people who are the most valuable asset of the Jewish nonprofit sector. Without professionals, there are no programs and services that strengthen our community and enrich our society. If we invest in this asset, it will appreciate. If we fail to cultivate these professionals and ensure that our workplaces are best-in-class, we weaken our impact on the world.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Paul Burstein's 2009 publication, "Jewish Nonprofit Organizations in the U.S.: A Preliminary Survey," identified approximately 9,500 Jewish nonprofits in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 11.4 million people work in the nonprofit sector, and according to the Center for Charitable Statistics, there are 1.5 million nonprofits in the United States, which is an average of eight people per nonprofit. Thus, Leading Edge estimates that there are approximately 76,000 employees working in Jewish nonprofits in the United States.



# A Great Culture Starts with a Strong Leader

In order for organizations to foster a positive culture, senior leaders need to set the tone and lead the way. CEOs are in effect “Chief Culture Officers” of their organizations. Unfortunately, Leading Edge’s conversations with several hundred professional and lay leaders across the Jewish world have made clear that the pipeline is running dry: Organizations are struggling to attract and retain talent.

According to the *Cultivating the Next Generation of Leaders for Jewish Nonprofits* report, many Jewish organizations have rigid, bureaucratic workplace cultures and steep hierarchies; provide little autonomy for entry- and mid-level staff to take risks and feel ownership over their work; offer limited career advancement; and struggle to compete on salary. As a result, Jewish organizations hold minimal attraction for the next generation of leaders, especially when compared with more innovative workplaces outside the field. At a time when the American Jewish community is rapidly changing, it is critical that Jewish organizations function at their highest level. For many organizations, this

means changing the way they operate to adapt to today’s workplace realities. A great organizational culture attracts talented professionals, develops their skills, and enables them to do their best work and get the best results. The business community understands that the cost of losing employees can be substantial, as can hiring the wrong ones. It is time for the non-profit sector to recognize this as well.

**Investing in talent is not a nice-to-have; it’s a must-have.** Investing in talent...

- Strengthens organizational performance by significantly improving morale and productivity.
- Reduces costs associated with rapid employee turnover and the costs associated with sub-par performance.
- Fulfills our moral mandate of treating people with kindness, respect, and dignity.

“As the leader, so the generation; as the generation, so the leader.”

— Talmud Yerushalmi, Arachim 17a

“ A great place to work is one in which you trust the people you work for, have pride in what you do, and enjoy the people you work with. ”

— **Robert Levering**, Co-Founder, Great Place to Work®

### WHAT IS A LEADING PLACE TO WORK?<sup>3</sup>

The main ingredients of a leading place to work are:

**TRUSTED LEADERS:** Becoming a leading place to work starts at the top. It requires buy-in, commitment, and focus from top management and board leaders to create policies, practices, and procedures that empower employees to thrive.

**COMMON PURPOSE:** Leading places to work have a clear vision and core values that are regularly communicated, both internally to staff and externally to the communities they serve. Leaders inspire their employees by finding ways to reconnect them to the greater purpose of their work and help them understand how what they do is pivotal to the organization’s overall mission.

**RESPECTED EMPLOYEES:** Leading places to work treat employees with respect so they feel valued and valuable. That respect begins during the hiring process, continues through onboarding and training, and is woven throughout all the interactions that take place between management and staff.

**INVESTMENT IN TALENT:** Leading places to work recognize that employees crave opportunities to advance their knowledge, skill sets, and abilities. Employees want to feel that their employer invests in them and cares about their future; that there is a plan for their growth and development; and that their advancement is considered truly important to the organization.

**FAIR SALARY AND BENEFITS:** Leading places to work understand that salary and benefits are a foundational element of an employee’s experience in the workplace. They have clear compensation philosophies that articulate the methodology undergirding roles and responsibilities of their teams. Nonprofit organizations often feel constrained in this area due to tight budgets. Leading places to work find ways to equitably, flexibly, and creatively meet their employees’ compensation needs.

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<sup>3</sup> This definition is based on a broad literature review that Leading Edge conducted across industries, disciplines, and sectors to identify the core factors of great workplace culture. Although most of the research has been conducted in the private sector, because businesses have long understood that talent is their most precious asset, much of it is relevant and applicable to Jewish nonprofit organizations.



“The ability to learn  
is the most important  
quality a leader can  
have.”

— **Sheryl Sandberg**, COO, Facebook

# Survey Methodology

## A Focus on Engagement

The Leading Edge survey is focused on employee engagement: **the level of connection, pride, motivation, and commitment people feel for their place of work.** Because engagement leads to personal connections with the organization, it enhances employees' desire to expend discretionary effort in order to meet their individual goals and the goals of the organization. Leading Edge chose to do an employee engagement survey because what better way to diagnose if a workplace is a leading place to work than by asking the people for their feedback? After all, employee engagement is very much about people's attitudes toward, perceptions about, and experiences at work.

Engagement is not only tied to better performance, but also to retention. Minimizing turnover enables organizations to focus on their missions rather than on the costly and timely process of constant hiring.

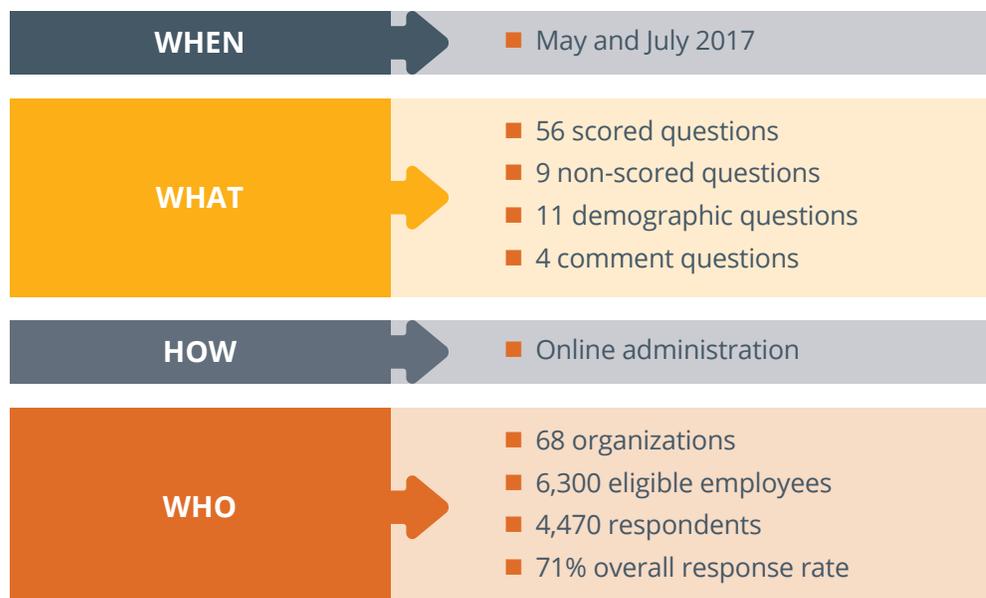


# Lessons Learned

This is the second annual employee engagement survey conducted by Leading Edge. This year's survey included approximately 70% of the questions found in the 2016 survey; 30% of the questions were modified or are new to the survey this year, based on lessons learned from the pilot survey. **Every organization received an overall employee engagement score.** In addition to questions directly related to employee engagement, the survey included questions about benefits, policies, previous work experience, and demographic information.

**FIGURE 1**

## Survey at a Glance



The 56 scored questions were organized into 10 categories, or factors, with **employee engagement** highlighted as the key factor. In addition to the overall employee engagement score, overall scores for the remaining factors were assigned as well (*see page 10 for the full list of factors*).

“It’s all about who.”

— **Morton Mandel**, American Jewish philanthropist

**FIGURE 2**

## Key Drivers of Employee Engagement

The following are the **10 statements** with the greatest impact on employee engagement. They are the most likely to increase or decrease employee engagement.



**My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees.**



**When I speak up, I believe my opinion is valued.**



**The mission of my organization makes me feel like I am making a difference through my work.**



**My position makes good use of my skills and abilities.**



**I have confidence in my organization's local senior leadership team.**



**I have the information I need to do my job well.**



**Senior leaders' actions and behaviors are consistent with my organization's values.**



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



**My position provides me the opportunity to do challenging and interesting work.**



**I receive appropriate recognition for good work at my organization.**



# Factors

The survey questions were categorized into 10 factors that are key ingredients in creating a leading place to work. Categorizing by factor provided organizations with a snapshot of their data to determine if there were particular areas that stood out as strengths or challenges for them.

## 10 FACTORS

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:** How connected do employees feel to their work and organization? To what extent are employees motivated to exert discretionary effort for their organization?

**PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP:** What is the employee experience with professional leadership? Do senior leaders communicate a cogent vision; inspire confidence; and provide direction, protection, and order to their employees?

**ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT:** How connected are employees to the mission of the organization? How aligned are their skills and abilities to their roles and to the needs of the organization?

**COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION:** To what extent do employees feel aware of relevant information? To what extent are they able to work productively across different teams (or departments) of the organization?

**EMPLOYEE ENABLEMENT:** To what extent do employees feel they have the resources, operational systems, and authority they need to perform their jobs? To what extent do employees feel their workload is manageable and fair?

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND FEEDBACK:** To what extent is employee performance evaluated? To what extent are employees held accountable for results?

**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:** To what extent can employees access regular opportunities to learn new skills and grow professionally? To what extent do employees feel there is opportunity for advancement and that their manager is invested in their growth?

**MANAGEMENT:** To what extent do employees feel their immediate manager is effective, supportive, and attentive?

**LAY/VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP:** To what extent do employees feel their lay/volunteer leaders are committed to supporting the needs of the organization, model the values of the organization, and respect their professional counterparts?

**SALARY AND BENEFITS:** How do employees view salary and benefits in their organizations? To what extent do employees understand the compensation philosophies and methodologies undergirding the roles and responsibilities of their work?

# Survey Administration

In 2017, Leading Edge partnered with Culture Amp, a user-friendly employee analytics platform, to host the survey. The survey was administered electronically by sending a unique survey link to every employee email address submitted to Leading Edge by each participating organization.

## WHO PARTICIPATED?

4,470 employees at 68 organizations took the employee engagement survey in 2017. These organizations represent a diverse mix of organizational types, budget sizes, staff sizes, and locations. A full list of organizations is found in **APPENDIX A**. The overall response rate was 71%.



Ninety-two unique organizations have taken the Leading Edge employee engagement survey over the past two years. Thirty-one of these organizations participated in the 2016 and 2017 surveys; 24 took the survey only in 2016 and 37 took the survey only in 2017. Some organizations were encouraged to re-take the survey while others were still implementing changes and not ready to re-take the survey in 2017. In the future, Leading Edge plans to continue offering an employee engagement survey to a select number of Jewish organizations annually.



Leading Edge prepared each organization for the survey through an onboarding process that included two orientation webinars, one for the top executives and one for survey administrators. The webinars introduced the Leading Edge team, the timeline, and the Culture Amp platform, and they set expectations for the survey process.

After the survey, Leading Edge helped organizations make sense of their survey results, providing two types of support:

- All organizations were invited to join a webinar that walked organizations through how to use the Culture Amp platform to view results.

- All organizations were offered a private, one-hour consultation with an organizational development expert to review their results, identify themes, and discuss ways to share results and take actions. Almost all organizations took advantage of this consultation.

Organizations could compare their data to the full Leading Edge dataset as well as a benchmark that represents the average results from organizations of a similar staff size. Organizations could also compare their data to Culture Amp's United States benchmark, which includes 1.8 million respondents.

Among the **6,300** possible respondents of the survey, there were over **2,300** unique job titles. In 2016, among the **4,740** possible respondents of the survey, there were nearly **2,100** unique job titles. Such fragmentation makes it difficult to navigate career opportunities throughout the Jewish nonprofit sector.

# Results & Analysis

## Demographics

The 68 organizations surveyed employ 6,300 individuals, of which 4,470 responded to the survey, a 71% response rate.

Among the respondents, 63% identify as female, 26% identify as male, and 11% answered “other” or “prefer not to answer” (see **Figure 3**).

Forty-five percent of respondents were between ages 20 and 39 at the time of the survey (see **Figure 4**). It is estimated that the Leading Edge group is younger than the estimated average age across the Jewish nonprofit sector because of organizations that tend to employ younger employees, like Hillel and BBYO.

Professional levels of respondents were categorized based on supervisory responsibilities, as seen in **Figure 5**, with management and leadership making up a cumulative 36% of the survey group.

Leading Edge also collected basic salary information from respondents (see **Figure 6**), with the largest salary group in the \$40,000-\$49,999 range.

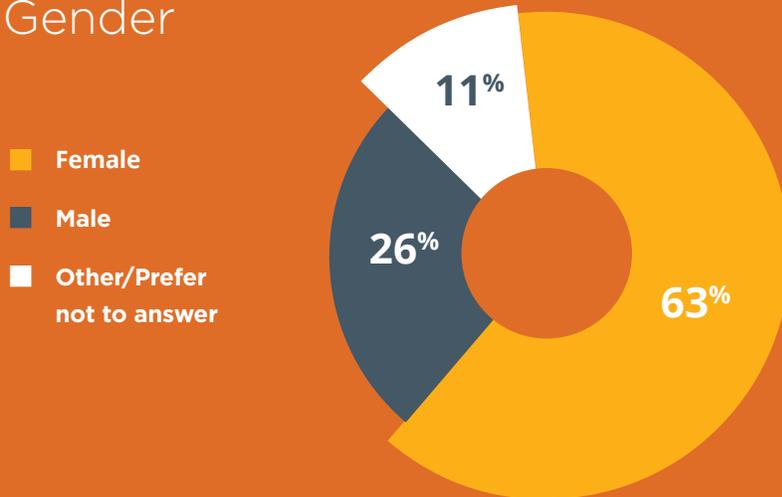
Leading Edge gathered data on prior participation and employment in certain organizations of Jewish life, as a means to study both the talent pipeline and the largest feeders to the workforce of the Jewish nonprofit sector. On both fronts, Jewish summer camp was the largest feeder, with 44% of respondents indicating that they participated in Jewish summer camp and 32% having worked at camp. Thirty percent of respondents had worked at another Jewish nonprofit prior to their current role.

For more demographic data, see **APPENDIX B**.



**FIGURE 3**

## Gender

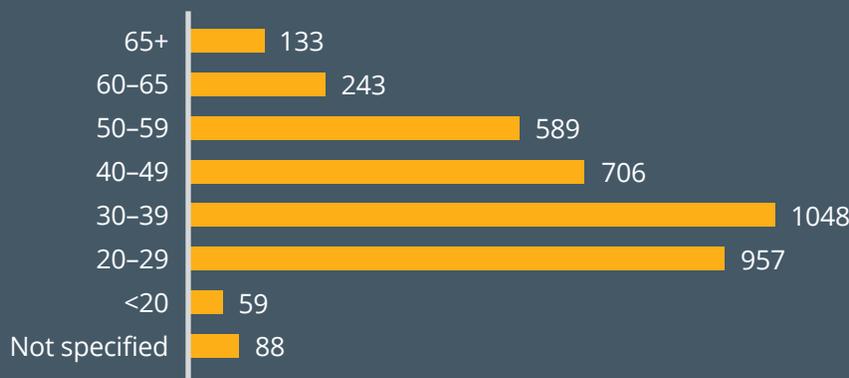


In the 2017 survey, 63% of participants identified as female, 26% as male, and 11% answered “other” or “prefer not to answer.”

Of the 68 surveyed organizations, 47 organizations are led by MALE CEOs, and 21 organizations are led by FEMALE CEOs.

**FIGURE 4**

## Age Distribution



At the time of the survey, 45% of potential respondents were between the ages of 20 and 39. It is estimated that the group skews younger than the estimated average age across the Jewish nonprofit sector because of organizations such as BBYO and Hillel, which tend to employ younger professionals.

*Note: 647 respondents preferred not to answer this question.*

**FIGURE 5**

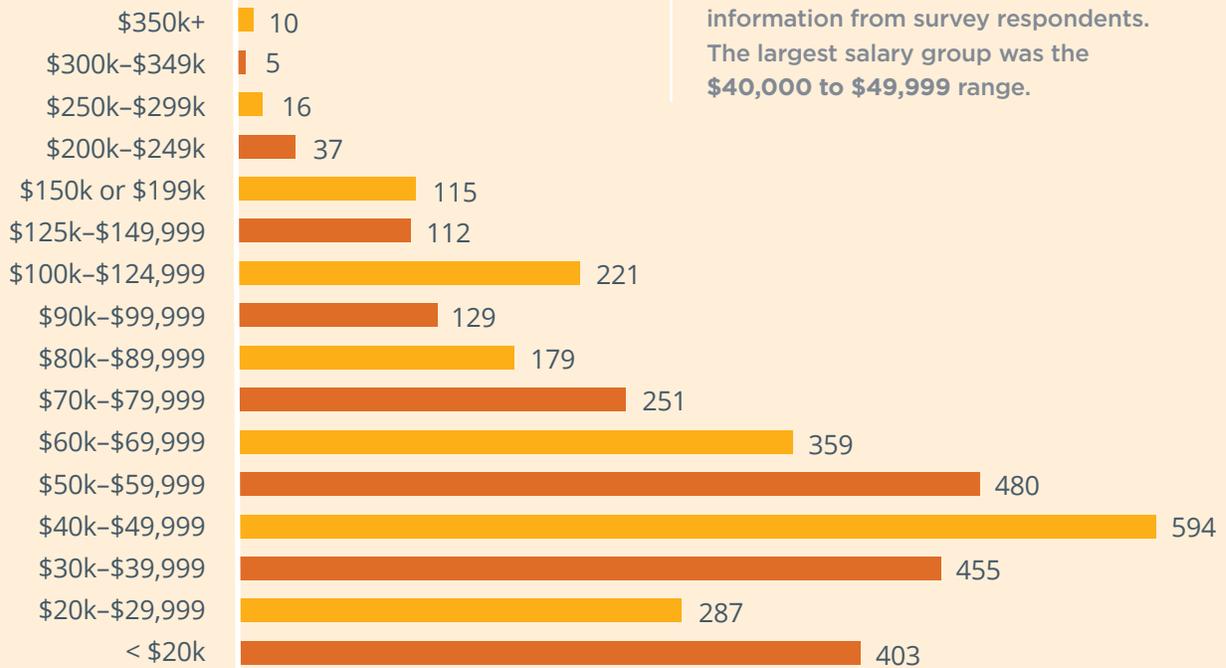
## Professional Levels



The professional levels of respondents were categorized based on supervisory responsibility. Those with management and leadership responsibilities comprised a total of 36% of respondents.

**FIGURE 6**

## Salary Ranges

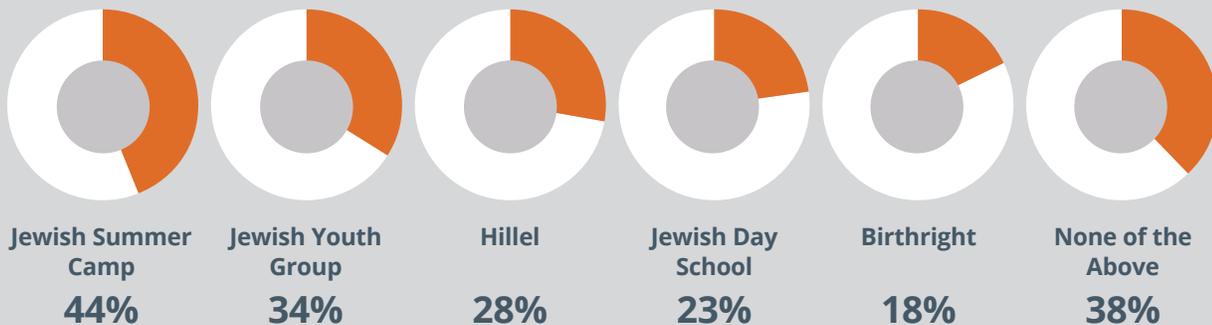


Leading Edge collected salary information from survey respondents. The largest salary group was the \$40,000 to \$49,999 range.

**FIGURE 7**

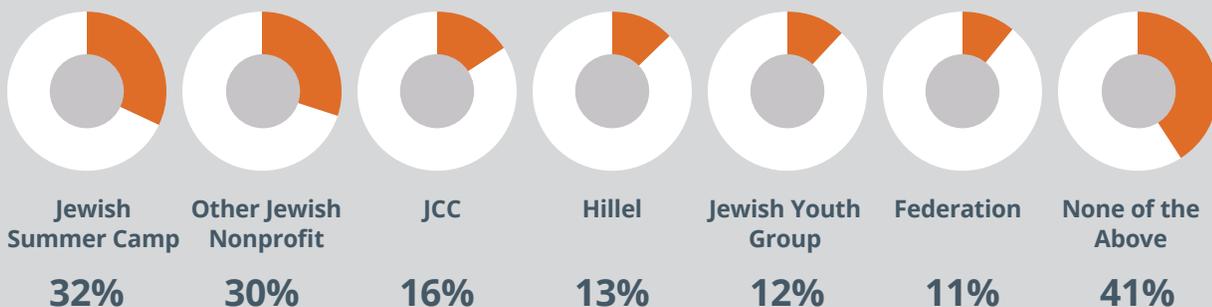
## Building the Pipeline—Previous Participation

Respondents answered as follows when asked, "I was a participant in the following (check all that apply)."



## Building the Pipeline—Previous Work

Respondents answered as follows when asked, "In the past, I worked at the following (check all that apply)."



# Overall Themes

Below are areas where the Leading Edge organizations are either stronger or weaker when compared with the General Industry Benchmark.

## STRENGTHS

- Employees are motivated by the mission of their organizations and understand how their specific job contributes to the greater organizational mission (↑1% above the General Industry Benchmark).
- Employees know what they need to do to be successful in their roles (↑5%).
- Employees are able to access learning and development opportunities to do their current jobs well (↑1%).

## WEAKNESSES

- Employees do not feel they have the resources (↓9% below the General Industry Benchmark) or autonomy (↓7%) to do their jobs effectively.
- Employees do not believe they have a pathway to advancement at their current organizations (↓7%) AND feel more strongly that workloads are not divided fairly (↓25%).
- Employees do not receive useful performance feedback (↓6%).
- Employees do not receive high-quality support from other parts of the organizations on which they depend (↓8%).
- Less than half of respondents think they will continue working in the Jewish nonprofit sector for five years or more.

# Strengths Identified in the Survey

After conducting two years of an employee engagement survey for Jewish nonprofits, the strengths that stand out from analyzing the data from both years are:

- 1 CONNECTION TO THE MISSION
- 2 AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT
- 3 COLLABORATION WITHIN DEPARTMENTS
- 4 ORGANIZATIONAL PRIDE

# 1

## CONNECTION TO THE MISSION

“The senior leadership goes out of their way to include staff in visioning and strategy. They succeeded in articulating a leadership model that is deeply inspiring, and they were inclusive of staff voices every step of the way.”

—Survey Respondent

Like last year, the most significant strength of our sector is the strong connection that employees feel to the mission of their organizations. Overall, employees have a good understanding of their organization’s mission, strategy, and goals, and believe they are making a difference through their work. They understand how their jobs relate to the mission and how they fit into the bigger picture of the organization.

91%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“I have a good understanding of my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals.”**

92%

of respondents also had a favorable response to the statement, **“I know how my work contributes to my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals.”**

84%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“The mission of my organization makes me feel like I am making a difference through my work.”**

85%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“My organization’s values are aligned with Jewish values as I understand them.”**

Employees understand how their jobs relate to the mission and how they fit into the bigger picture of the organization.



## 2

### AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT

“I have never felt so respected by my superior in any job prior. It makes such a difference and makes me continuously want to work better and harder.”

—Survey Respondent

Similar to what was discovered in the 2016 data, this year, employees feel that they are respected as individuals and know what they need to do to be successful in their roles. Employees feel that their input is heard and taken into consideration.

86%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statements, **“I am treated with respect by my immediate manager”** and **“My immediate manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing.”**

89%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“I know what I need to do to be successful in my role.”**

79%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“We are encouraged to share ideas even though some of our ideas may not be adopted or put into use.”**

## 3

### COLLABORATION WITHIN DEPARTMENTS

“The cooperation within my department is like nothing I’ve ever experienced. Each member of the team works together and our output is second to none.”

—Survey Respondent

This year, a new strength in the sector was discovered: the relatively strong collaboration that exists within individual teams or organizational units. Overall, respondents felt a deep sense of loyalty and trust within their teams, a factor that contributes to greater outputs and connection to the organization.

83%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“There is good cooperation within my team.”** Overall, survey respondents expressed a sense of trust, loyalty, and commitment to their departments or teams, yet these same feelings did not apply to the organization as a whole.

82%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“I am comfortable asking others on our team for help when I need it.”**

4

**ORGANIZATIONAL PRIDE**

“I am very proud to work for this organization; they have taken care of me personally and professionally since day one.” –Survey Respondent

Just like last year, employees expressed a strong sense of pride for the organization and the work they do. They cited this core purpose as a key motivator to go above and beyond in their work.

85%

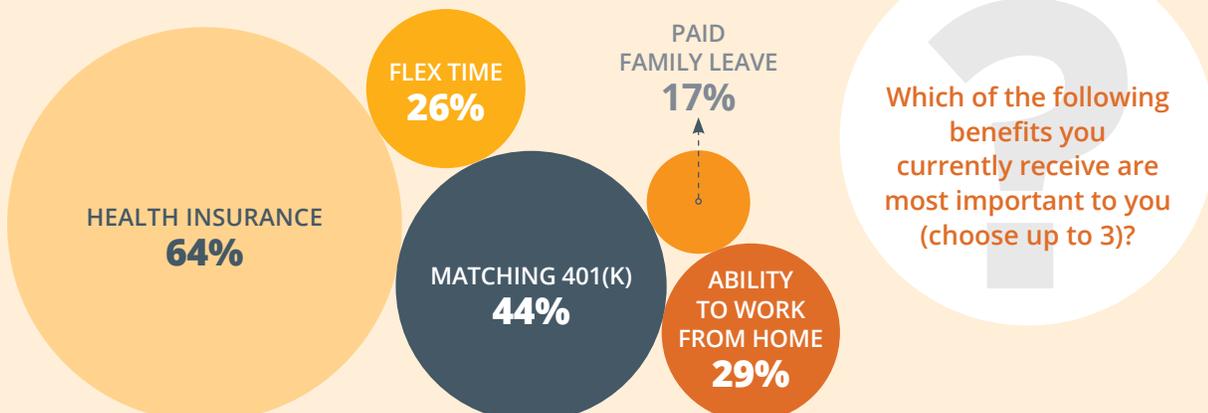
of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“I feel proud to work for my organization.”**

73%

of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, **“The organization motivates me to contribute more than is required.”**

## The Power of Benefits

Top five responses are shown here.



# Opportunities for Improvement Identified in the Survey

The survey results revealed five areas where major improvements are possible:

- ① MANAGING PERFORMANCE
- ② HAVING ADEQUATE PEOPLE RESOURCES
- ③ ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION
- ④ COLLABORATION ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION
- ⑤ CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY

1

## MANAGING PERFORMANCE

“I wish I had an opportunity to get feedback more often, instead of just during my annual performance review. It seems like things get bottled up.”

—Survey Respondent

Similar to 2016, this year’s survey revealed that participating organizations fall short in holding employees accountable for poor performance, both formally through performance reviews and informally through fostering a culture of healthy dialogue and feedback.

54%

of respondents said **they had a meaningful performance review in the past year** (see **Figure 8**); 25% said they had not had a performance review; 17% had a performance review but it was perfunctory; and 3% did not remember.

46%

responded favorably to the statement, **“When it is clear someone is not delivering in their role, the organization takes appropriate action.”** In 2016, this figure was at 47%.

58%

responded favorably to the statement, **“I am comfortable providing performance feedback to my colleagues.”**

① *Managing Performance (Continued)*

61%

responded favorably to the statement, **“I receive regular feedback on how well I am performing,”** and 68% responded favorably to the statement, **“I receive useful feedback on how well I am performing”** (↓6% below the General Industry Benchmark).

74%

responded favorably to the statement, **“Employees are held accountable for results”** (e.g., meeting their commitments, producing high-quality work, meeting deadlines) (↓4%).

**Why does this matter?**

The survey results reveal that as a sector, we are not helping our employees grow and maximize their potential through effective performance management. Not only does this reduce productivity and inhibit career growth, it also fosters a lack of trust between individuals across the organization because people do not share feedback directly with one another.

**What can you do?**

- Hold regular conversations with staff members about their performance and professional development.
- Provide clear feedback on performance relative to expectations; offer coaching to staff to support their professional development; discuss barriers to success in the work environment; and enhance staff understanding of pay and promotion practices to increase awareness between contribution and reward.
- Foster a culture of healthy feedback. Some helpful resources:
  - ▶ ***Give Your Team More-Effective Positive Feedback*** <http://bit.ly/2x91Jly>
  - ▶ COMING SOON: A performance management handbook from Leading Edge tailored to Jewish nonprofits.

**FIGURE 8**

## Performance Review



## 2

### HAVING ADEQUATE PEOPLE RESOURCES

“There are not enough people to complete the work that is required, and more work is added on without thinking about what is still on the organizational plate.”

—Survey Respondent

Employees across the sector perceive their organizations to be under-resourced, at least from a human capital perspective.

**41%** of respondents believe **“there are enough people to do the work we need to do.”**

**50%** indicated that **“workloads are divided fairly among people where I work”** (↓12%).

**67%** indicated that **“I have the resources to do my job effectively”** (↓9%).

At the same time, respondents expressed a sense of under-recognition for good work they are doing, with 65% indicating that they receive appropriate recognition for good work. Furthermore, only 48% of employees responded favorably to the statement, **“I believe I am compensated fairly for the work I do,”** which is 5% below the General Industry Benchmark.

#### Why does this matter?

People may consider leaving their jobs because they feel stretched thin and overworked. Rapid turnover of employees is costly to an organization. In addition, a deficiency in people resources means that people are unable to do their best work in these stretched conditions. It also may hinder effective training of new employees and effective management of employees in general.

“Feedback is a function of respect: when you don’t have honest conversations about strengths and opportunities for growth, employees question their contributions and the leader’s commitment.”

— **Brene Brown**, Endowed Chair, The Graduate College of Social Work, University of Houston

## ② Having Adequate People Resources (Continued)

### What can you do?

- Ensure adequate levels of authority by reducing bureaucracy whenever possible. Provide employees the flexibility they need to carry out their jobs efficiently and in a way that leverages their skills and abilities.
- Encourage managers and organizational leaders to help direct reports prioritize their work.
- Address feelings of being overworked. When employees feel stretched thin, it is often not just about the headcount. Evaluate whether they need to accomplish the tasks at hand, whether absences are appropriately planned and managed, and whether vacant positions are filled as rapidly and effectively as possible.
- Enable CEOs and Boards to strategize in a way that focuses on the entire workforce.
- Funders can fund overhead (see *Harvard Business Review*, “***What Foundations are Missing About Capacity Building***” <http://bit.ly/2yU4thA>)

## 3

### ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION

“There is no upward mobility for me. I genuinely enjoy my work, but I am concerned about the longevity of my position.” —Survey Respondent

This year’s survey data revealed a fascinating finding: Employees are generally given opportunities to learn and develop in their CURRENT roles, but have fewer opportunities for learning that would enable ADVANCEMENT within their organization or beyond.

It appears that in our effort to focus on the work right in front of us, we are failing to sufficiently invest in the future growth of our best professionals.

# 39%

of respondents felt **they have opportunities for advancement at their organizations.**

It is clear that people want to advance and grow but are not finding opportunities to do so, nor do they find their managers supportive of their career growth.

# 60%

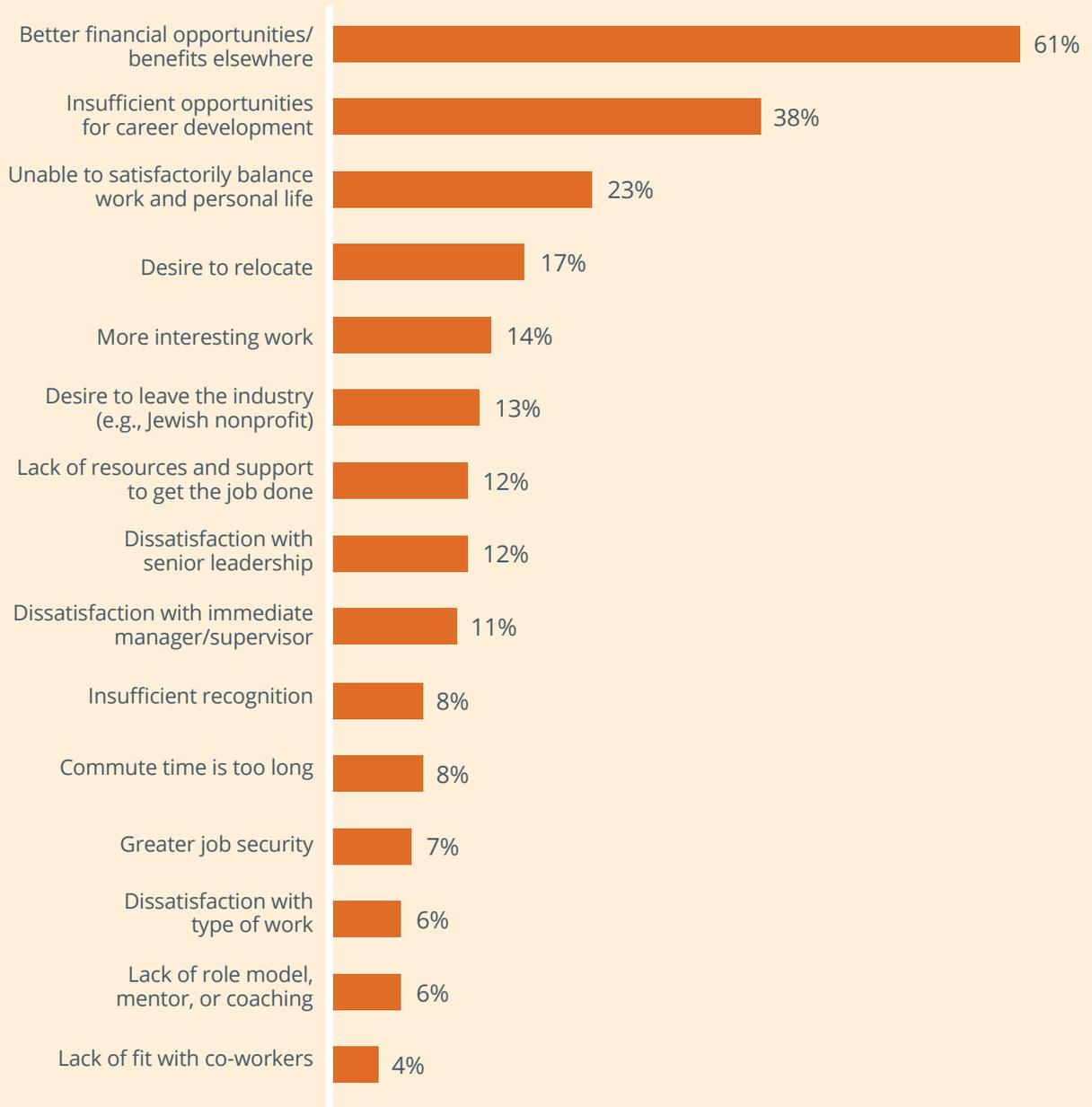
of respondents found that their immediate manager (or someone in management) has **shown a genuine interest in their career aspirations** (↓12%).



**FIGURE 9**

## Reasons for Leaving

Respondents who indicated an intent to remain with their current organization for less than two years were asked to select the top three reasons they might consider leaving. They were able to select up to three responses, but did not always do so, so the numbers do not add to 100%. The top three reasons in this year's survey mirror the top three reasons given last year.



# Why Do People Leave?

The biggest gaps between those who plan to leave and those who plan to stay are related to organizational leadership, demonstrating care and concern for employees, having open and honest communication, and receiving clear and regular feedback on performance.

**FIGURE 10**

## Gap Analysis between Stayers and Leavers



**Leavers:** planned to leave their organizations in the next year (N = 310)

**Stayers:** intended to remain for 5 or more years (N = 1,626)

### PHYSICAL WORKSPACE MATTERS



Many employers underestimate the power of the physical workspace in shaping the overall employee experience. In fact, feelings about a physical workspace can often be proxies for employee enablement, engagement, and satisfaction in general. **Seventy-three percent of respon-**

**dents to this survey indicated that their physical workspaces are enjoyable to work in.** In recent years, many organizations have moved to open-plan workspaces, with dozens of Jewish nonprofits also relocating to shared workspaces such as WeWork. No matter your choice of workspace, the research shows that employees perform best when they are able to exert some measure of control and choice over their workspace: *Employees Perform Better When They Can Control Their Space*. <http://bit.ly/2hQFtNI>



### 3 Advancement and Retention (Continued)

This plays directly into the ability of organizations to retain their solid performers. When asked to select the top three reasons why employees might consider leaving their organizations, the “lack of opportunity for career development” was the second most common reason, selected after “better financial opportunities or benefits elsewhere,” as seen in **Figure 9**.

Thirty-seven percent of survey respondents expect to stay with their **organization** for “5 or more years or until retirement,” and 45% of respondents expect to stay within the **sector** for “5 or more years or until retirement.” When asked to “**select the top 3 reasons you might consider leaving your organization,**” the results showed **compensation, career development, and work-life balance** as the top reasons for leaving.

#### Why does this matter?

The largest segment of staff surveyed are those who are in entry-level to mid-level positions. These are also the least engaged of respondents. If organizations continue to lose staff from this category, they are spending money on hiring new staff over and over, not building a leadership pipeline, and not achieving the kind of staff that provides muscle and continuity to achieve goals.

Career advancement is a real issue in our sector. Among the 6,300 possible respondents of the survey, there were nearly 2,300 unique job titles. Such fragmentation makes it difficult to navigate career opportunities throughout the Jewish nonprofit sector.

#### What can you do?

- Managers can invest more in the growth and development of their high-potential professionals. They can build on their strengths and provide opportunities, beyond the daily responsibilities of their roles, in a way that is enriching and not overwhelming.
- Organizations can focus on investing in middle managers, by elevating their abilities and preparing them for more senior roles. Consider providing middle managers with senior-level mentors and encouraging them to shadow people in senior-level roles.
- Organizations need to understand and prepare their employees for the changing nature of work. Today there are multiple pathways for professional growth and development, such that we speak more of a career lattice than a career ladder.

# 4

## COLLABORATION ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

“We are on an island. We have to resolve most problems that have come about on our own and receive very little support.” —Survey Respondent

# 83%

of survey respondents feel that **there is good communication within their team.** Organizations may have a strong team dynamic within departments; however...

# 56%

of respondents feel that their **team receives high-quality support from other parts of the organization** on which they depend (↓8%).

**In a related trend, survey respondents felt a strong sense of loyalty and confidence in their individual manager (79%) and significantly less confident in the senior leader of the organization (64%).** This lack of confidence stems from staff perception around transparency and an alignment of leader behavior with organizational values.

As employees start out their careers in the Jewish nonprofit sector, they tend to experience their organizations as open and honest in their communications, which then diminishes over time spent in the sector.

# 70%

of respondents answered favorably to the statement, **“Senior leaders’ actions and behaviors are consistent with my organization’s values.”**

Senior leaders who are female scored more favorably than senior leaders who are male on a number of factors, including confidence in the senior leadership team and transparency on the part of the senior leadership (see **Figures 11 and 12**).

**FIGURE 11**

## Perceived Openness of Communication by Gender of CEO

My organization is open and honest in communications to employees.

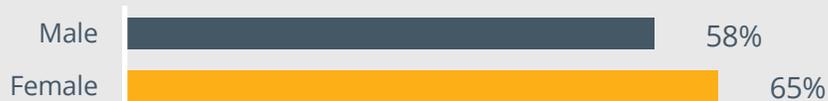


FIGURE 12

## Confidence in Leadership by Gender of CEO

I have confidence in my organization's local senior leadership team.



### Why does this matter?

The lack of trust in other departments can foster a sense of competition, instead of a feeling of shared purpose for the whole organization. This has tremendous impact on both employee engagement and retention.

### What can you do?

- Senior leaders should model and encourage cross-organizational collaboration that makes sense for their organization.
- Senior leaders should over-communicate instead of under-communicate with their staffs, sharing as much context and vision as possible.
- Organizations should think about how to craft formal and informal ways for different teams to connect around a shared purpose.

## 5

### CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY

“The word transparency is used a lot, but the focus seems to be more on how to spin something to avoid liability, rather than actually being transparent.”

—Survey Respondent

In a constantly changing work context, the flow of information and perspectives can be a key factor in employee engagement.

Overall, respondents expressed having the information they need to do their jobs well (75%) and that their opinions are valued when they speak up (73%). At the same time, only ...

5 Culture of Transparency (Continued)

59% of respondents felt that **their organizations were open and honest in their communications to them.**

60% felt that **“senior leaders at my organization keep people informed about what is happening”** (↓10%).

Most employees (60%) feel that they do not understand basic policies of the organization, such as how compensation (salaries, performance incentives, raises) is set.

62% of respondents expressed that **there was open and honest communication at their organization** (↓5%).

Why does this matter?

In many ways, this is a similar trend to what we saw with learning and development. Employees are given a decent amount of information and training to **do their current jobs**, but not to stretch themselves, grow, understand broader organizational context—and thus to also imagine for themselves professional realities beyond the status quo. Once again, this betrays a focus on the present at the expense of the future. It also inhibits the employee’s ability to see and feel invested in the broader context of the work.

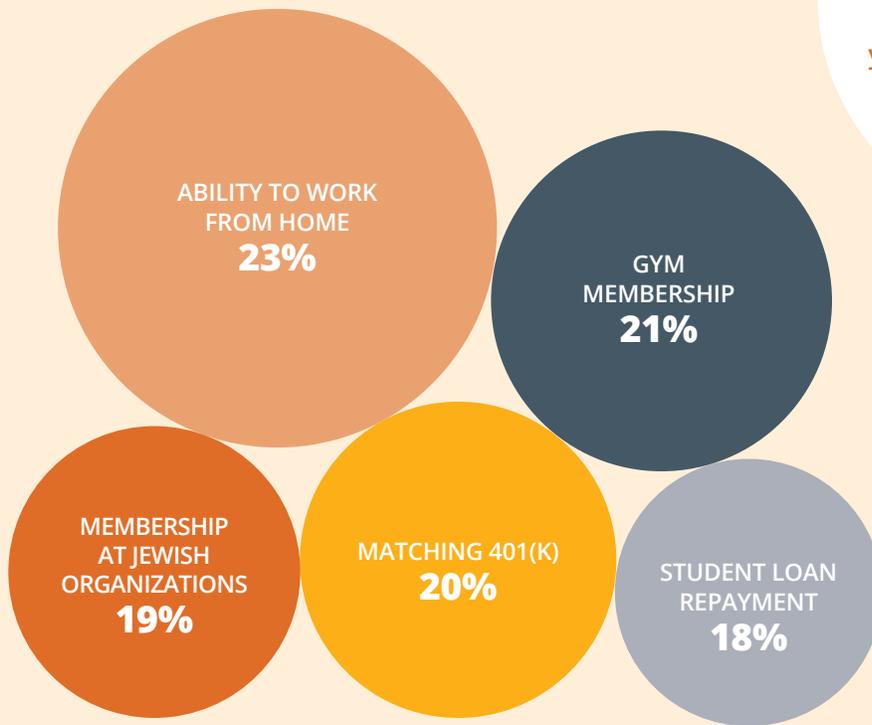
What can you do?

- Increase structured and unstructured mechanisms to share both information and perspectives across the organization. This can include:
  - ▶ Department Heads reporting back to their staffs immediately after senior staff meetings;
  - ▶ Leaders circulating among the staff for informal conversations; and
  - ▶ Periodic “Town Halls.”
- In a rapidly changing environment, communication between leadership and staff has to be a two-way street. Leaders should not only share information regularly, but they should also set as a “house rule” that employees are encouraged to ask questions.



## The Power of Benefits

Top five responses are shown here.



Which of the following benefits, beyond the ones you currently receive, would be most valuable to you (choose up to 3)?

### Fascinating Finding:

Respondents ages 39 and younger ranked student loan repayment as the number one benefit they would like to receive.

## Next Steps

The second annual Leading Edge survey included 68 organizations and 4,470 employees from across the Jewish nonprofit sector in the United States. Over the last two years, Leading Edge has surveyed nearly 10% of the total workforce of the American Jewish nonprofit sector.

Leading Edge continues to work to help Jewish organizations improve their culture, curating resources and best practices, providing training, and offering opportunities for organizations to connect with one another to advance these goals.

The good news is that leadership and talent are on the map in the Jewish community in a way that they haven't been previously. As organizations focus on improving their culture and talent development, the Jewish nonprofit sector will be able to better attract, retain, and develop talent — our most precious resource.

# Appendices

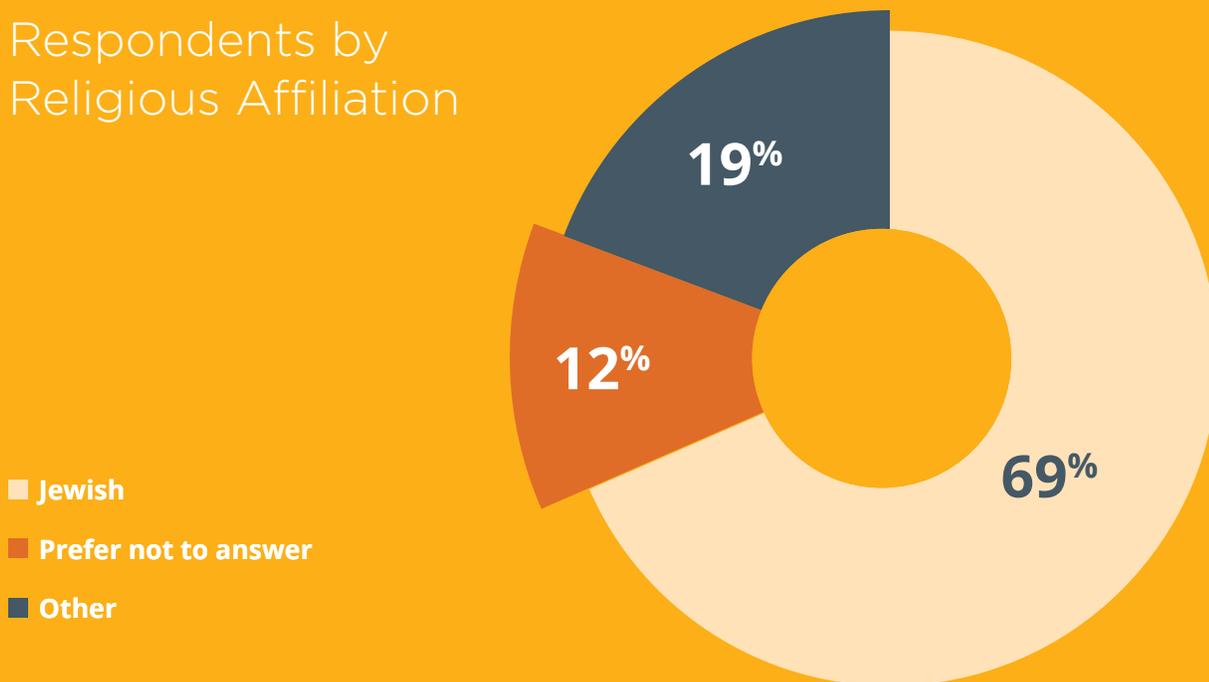
# APPENDIX A: Employee Engagement Survey 2017

## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

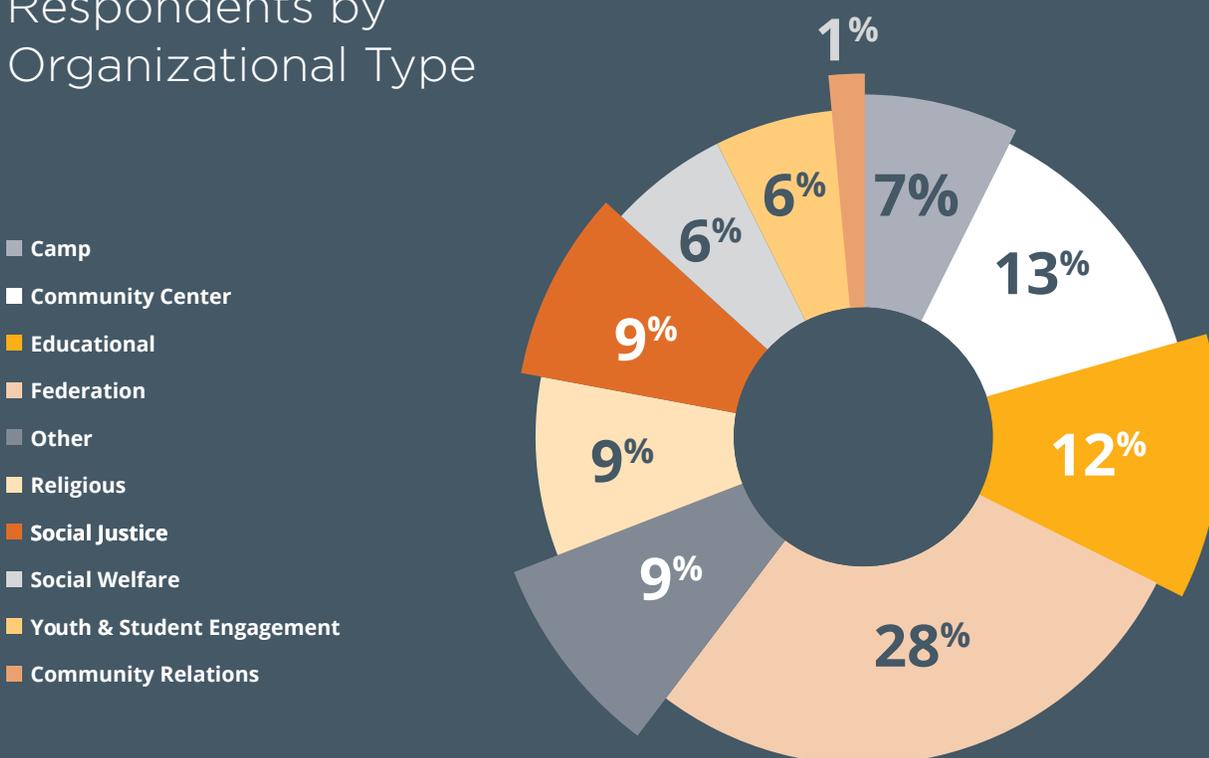
Aaron Family Jewish Community Center of Dallas  
AVODAH  
BBYO  
Beber + Perlman Camps  
Bend the Arc  
Bender Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington  
Camp Yavneh  
Camp Young Judaea  
Camps Airy and Louise  
Capital Camps and Retreat Center  
Congregation B'nai Jeshurun  
Footsteps  
Foundation for Jewish Camp  
Gann Academy  
Greater Miami Jewish Federation  
Greensboro Jewish Federation  
Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center  
Hazon  
Hillel International  
IKAR  
InterfaithFamily  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh  
Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston  
Jewish Family Services of Houston  
Jewish Federation and Family Services, Orange County  
Jewish Federation of Cleveland  
Jewish Federation of Columbus  
Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas  
Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis  
Jewish Federation of Greater Metrowest NJ  
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia  
Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh  
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland  
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit  
Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County  
Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley  
Jewish Federations of North America  
Jewish Funders Network  
Jewish Social Service Agency  
Jewish Women's Renaissance Project  
Jews United for Justice  
Kadima  
Keshet  
Mayyim Hayyim  
Mazon  
Mechon Hadar  
Mishkan Chicago  
Moishe House  
OneTable  
Orthodox Union  
Oshman Family Jewish Community Center  
Prizmah  
Repair the World  
Sefaria  
Shalom Austin  
Shalom Hartman Institute of North America  
Sharsheret  
Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center  
Siegel Jewish Community Center  
Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning & Leadership  
Temple Beth Am  
The Associated  
The Bronfman Fellowship  
The Jewish Education Project  
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto  
United Jewish Community of Broward County

## APPENDIX B: More Demographic Data

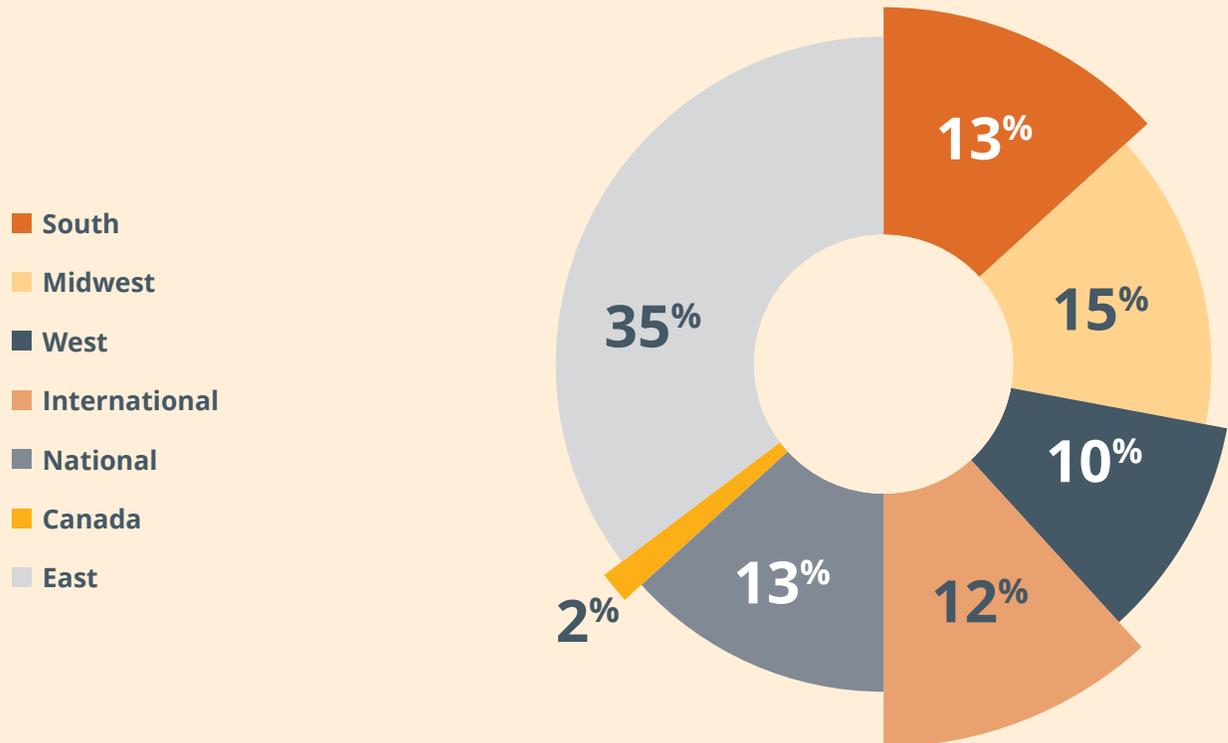
### Respondents by Religious Affiliation



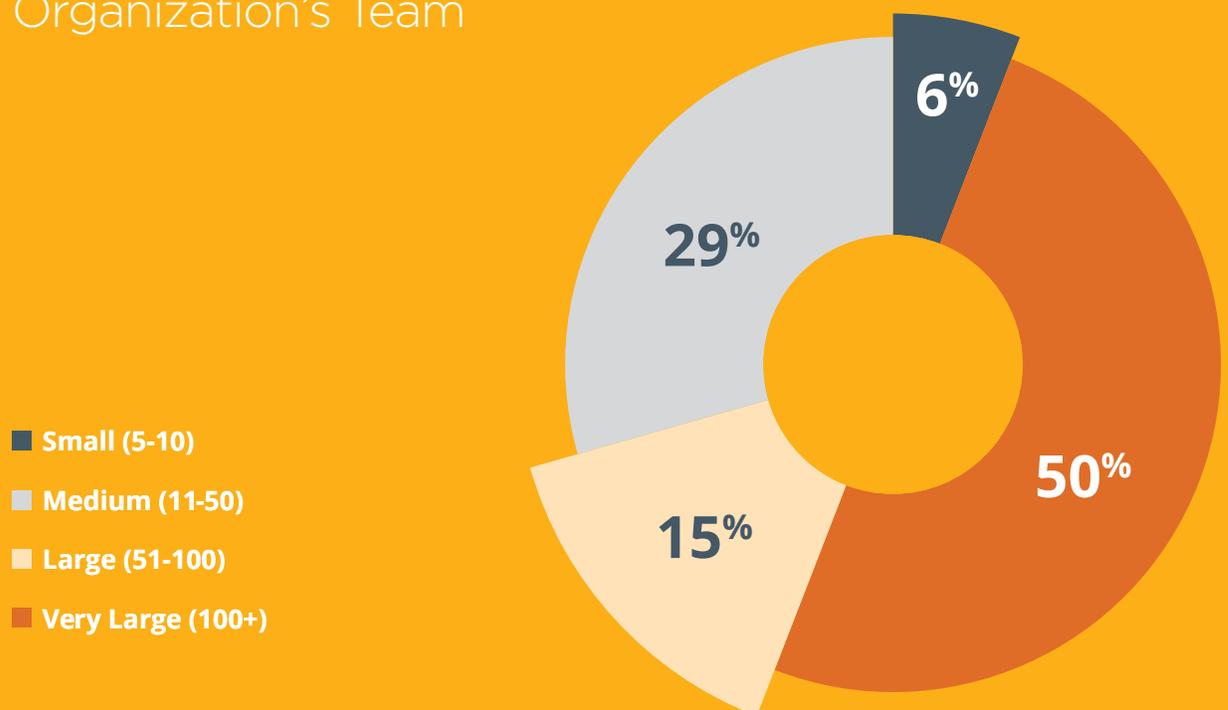
### Respondents by Organizational Type



## Respondents by Organizational Geographic Reach



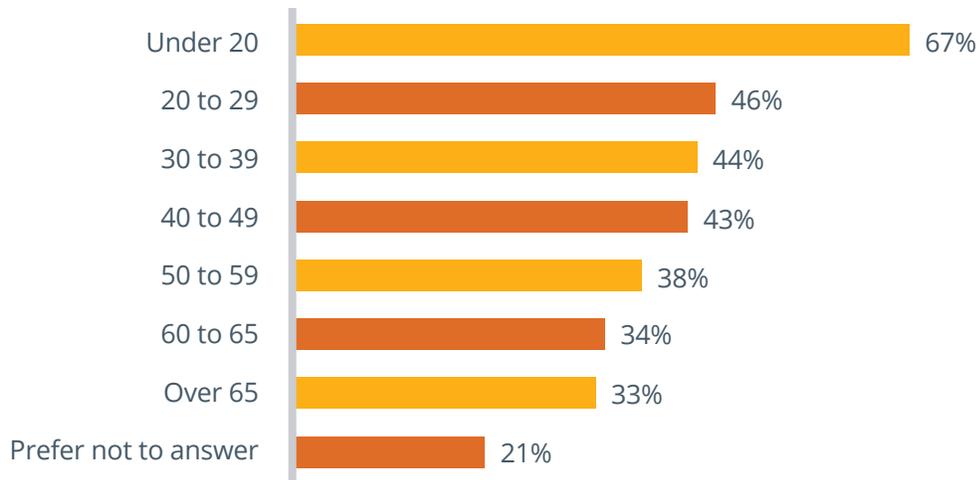
## Respondents by Size of Organization's Team



## APPENDIX C: More Survey Data

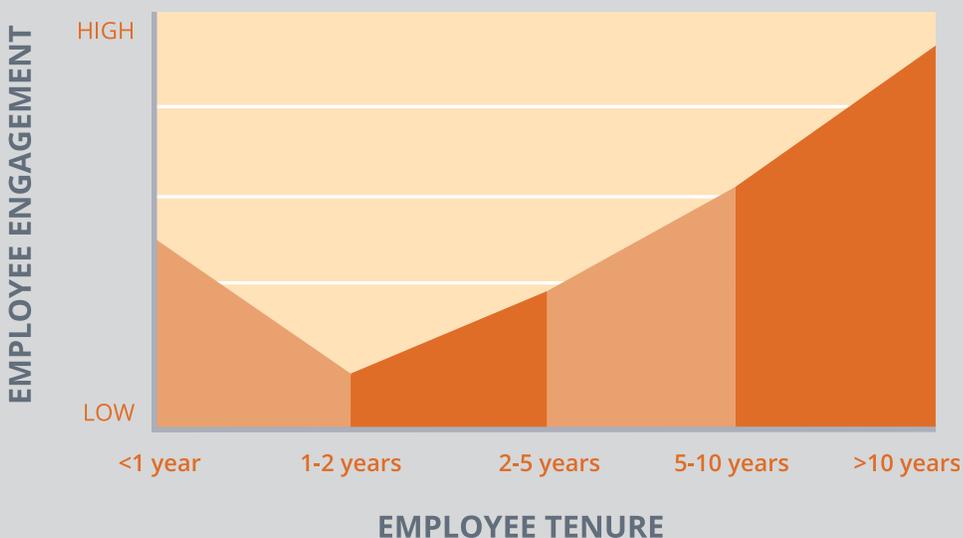
### Opportunities for Advancement by Age

Participants were asked if they felt they had opportunities for advancement in their organization. The percentages of favorable responses were as follows for the different age groups:



### Employee Engagement Dip by Tenure at Organization

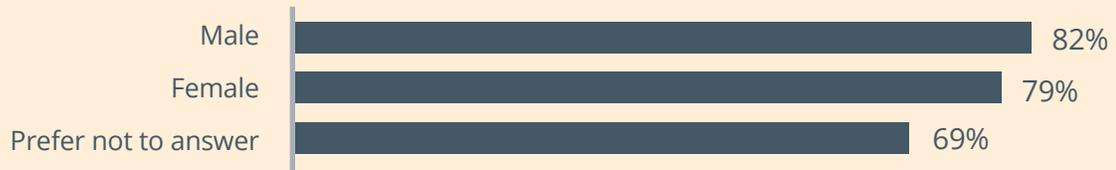
Similar to the trend we saw in the 2016 survey results, this year's results point to a dip in engagement after only one year at the organization.



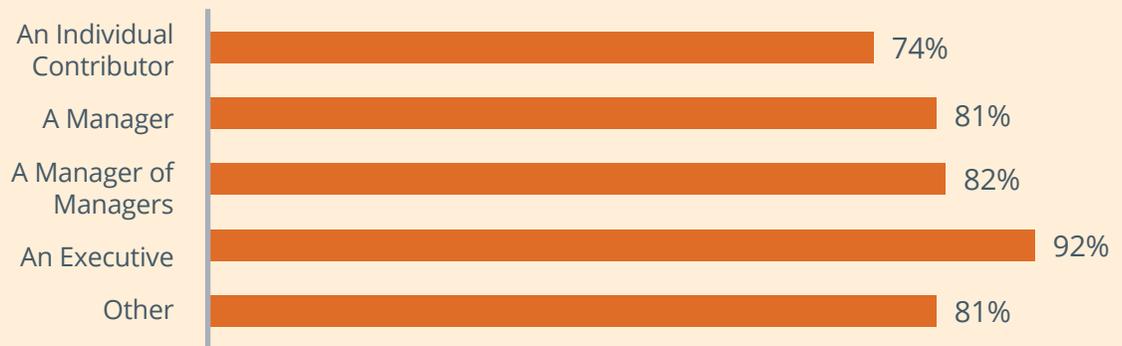
## Employee Engagement Trends

The following are employee engagement trends for a select few demographic groups. The graphs depict the overall engagement score based in percentages of favorable responses within these groups.

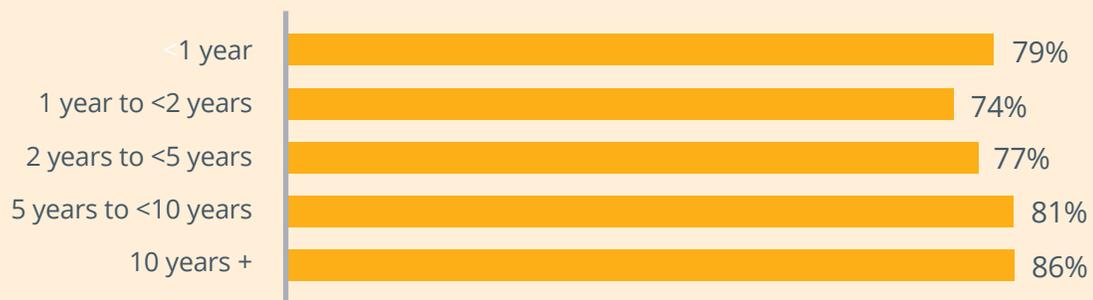
### Employee Engagement by Gender



### Employee Engagement by Job Level



### Employee Engagement by Years Working at Organization



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## ABOUT LEADING EDGE

Founded in 2014, Leading Edge seeks to influence, inspire, and enable dramatic change in attracting, developing, and retaining top talent for Jewish organizations so that the Jewish nonprofit sector may thrive.

[www.LeadingEdge.org](http://www.LeadingEdge.org)

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Culture Amp helps organizations make their company a better place to work. By making it easy to collect, understand, and act on employee feedback, Culture Amp enables HR leaders to make better decisions, demonstrate why this matters, and turn company culture into a competitive edge. Culture Amp's on-demand platform is designed and supported by psychologists and data scientists to help organizations build an employee feedback program that works for organizations. Working with Culture Amp allows organizations to tap into the creativity and experience of over 1,200 innovative companies using Culture Amp to put culture first today.

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Alliance for Excellence in Jewish Leadership

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