Are Jewish Organizations Great Places to Work?

RESULTS FROM THE THIRD ANNUAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

2018 SURVEY REPORT
FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, LEADING EDGE HAS PARTNERED with an incredible array of Jewish nonprofit organizations to strengthen the very foundation beneath their important work. For every meal served to someone hungry, for every camper who feels connected to Judaism, and for every college student who finds a spiritual home on campus, there are countless dedicated professionals who make these magical moments happen.

As in previous years, Leading Edge conducted its 2018 Employee Experience Survey to support Jewish organizations on their journeys to strengthen their workplace cultures. By becoming “leading places to work” and ensuring they stay great, these organizations are making a commitment to fully empower their employees as they make the world a better place.

This report summarizes the key themes that emerged from the 2018 survey results. While Leading Edge shares key takeaways and learnings in aggregate throughout this report, the work does not start or end there. Organizational development experts work with organizations to unpack the data they receive from their employees, determine how to build on their true strengths and challenges, and put steps in place to create an action plan moving forward. Leading Edge also includes tangible suggestions in this report around each major finding and hopes all participating organizations will find them useful.

In addition, Leading Edge continues to develop resource guides that organizations can use in the field on topics ranging from hiring best practices to onboarding of new staff. Its CEO Onboarding Program supports leaders at some of the top Jewish nonprofits in the country, while Leading Edge staff members continue to work with lay leaders and funders to help them think about their roles in providing critical direction to the sector. All Leading Edge publications can be found at leadingedge.org.

Every organization that participates in the Leading Edge Employee Experience Survey deserves kudos for prioritizing workplace culture. It is inspiring to see the innovative ways organizations are integrating the survey findings into their day-to-day operations. Leading Edge is proud to partner with these organizations, and to fashion the Jewish nonprofit sector into the most robust engine possible for compassion, connection, and impact.
Executive Summary

In May 2018, Leading Edge conducted its third annual Employee Experience Survey. Participants included 7,300 employees from 105 Jewish nonprofit organizations with different missions, budgets, staff sizes, and geographic locations. Leading Edge's primary purpose is to use the survey to help these willing organizations create even better places to work.

For the 52 organizations that have now taken the Leading Edge survey more than once, the commitment to improving workplace culture can be seen in the results — 73% either improved their scores from year to year, or simply started and remained strong on the whole.

Key highlights from this year’s findings include:

- An overwhelming majority of Jewish nonprofit employees understand how their work contributes to their organizational mission—far more than in other industries.

- Still, a deep connection to mission does not compensate for other workplace challenges. When ascertaining if employees would recommend their organizations as a great place to work, the sector scored 16% below the U.S. benchmark. How employees view and discuss their experience at work has implications related to recruitment, the organization’s reputation in the community, and even fundraising potential.

- Professional leadership is one of the most important factors when comparing those who want to stay at their organizations compared to those who would like to leave. These results show improvement is needed regarding employees’ confidence in their organization’s senior leaders, including board members.
Leading Edge survey respondents overall expressed positive experiences and general confidence in their immediate managers and feel cared for and respected by them. Yet, for the third year in a row, Leading Edge has found that some fundamental management practices are weak in Jewish organizations.

Overall, 52% of respondents would like to advance within their organization; yet only 38% see opportunities for advancement within their organization. There is a 6% gap between the number of women who want to advance to a more senior role (39%) and the number of men (45%).

The greatest difference among all areas studied between male and female respondents is related to compensation. Specifically, men are 12% more likely than women to understand how compensation, salary, and raises are set at their organization—likely due in part because men are more often than women in leadership roles within Jewish organizations.

Overall, women feel less psychologically safe—less comfortable expressing themselves and being themselves—than men, and those who felt the least psychologically safe in their workplace did not respond to demographic questions related to their gender or age.

On the plus side, awareness of sexual harassment policies has increased significantly year over year, with leaders successfully working to ensure that their organizations have solid procedures in place.

As always, the most important factor when it comes to employee engagement is leadership. When Leading Edge looked at the largest gaps between those claiming they want to leave their organization within the next year and those who plan to stay, senior leadership, direct managers, and internal communications (closely tied to leadership) have the greatest impact on this response.
Why Culture Matters

Each year, nearly 73,000 professionals in the Jewish nonprofit sector produce a tremendous amount of value for the Jewish world and beyond.¹ They 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. Without professionals, there are no programs and services that strengthen this community and enrich society. Failing to invest in employees—an organization’s most valuable asset—by cultivating these professionals and ensuring that workplaces are best-in-class will result in the Jewish nonprofit community not fully realizing its potential impact on the world.

¹ Leading Edge calculated this figure based on the following methodology: The latest research by the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2016 indicates there are 12.3 million nonprofit jobs in the U.S. The National Center for Charitable Statistics cites 1.6 million tax-exempt organizations registered in 2016, which accounts for an average of 7.7 employees per organization. According to Paul Burstein’s 2011 study, “Jewish Nonprofit Organizations in the U.S.: A Preliminary Survey,” there are approximately 9,500 Jewish organizations in the U.S. Multiplying the number of Jewish organizations (9,500) by the average number of employees per nonprofit organization (7.7) equals approximately 73,150 employees at Jewish nonprofits in the U.S.
A Great Culture Starts with a Strong Leader

Many Jewish nonprofit organizations are faced with the daunting challenge of replacing their departing CEOs and executive directors. Unfortunately, Leading Edge’s conversations with several hundred professional and lay leaders across the Jewish world have made clear that this sector has not yet done the work necessary to cultivate the next generation of top leaders. Overall, organizations are struggling to attract and retain great talent. There are many reasons for this. The 2014 report, “Cultivating the Next Generation of Leaders for Jewish Nonprofits,” cites two possible reasons:

1. The Jewish community is not doing enough to develop the talent it already has; and

2. The Jewish nonprofit sector doesn’t have the value proposition to attract top talent.

To this latter point, the report cites that many 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 nonprofit sector to appreciate this message as well.

In order for organizations to foster a positive culture—and know they are truly “great places to work”—senior leaders need to set the tone and lead the way. CEOs are in effect “Chief Culture Officers” of their organizations.

Employees are a company’s greatest asset—they’re your competitive advantage. You want to attract and retain the best; provide them with encouragement, stimulus, and make them feel that they are an integral part of the company’s mission.”

— ANNE M. MULCAHY, FORMER CEO, XEROX

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
- Fulfills the moral mandate of treating people with kindness, respect, and dignity.
WHAT IS A LEADING PLACE TO WORK?
The five factors of a leading place to work are:\(^2\)

- **Trusted Leaders**: Becoming a leading place to work 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 ensure that all employees feel valued and valuable. This dynamic begins during the hiring process, continues through onboarding and training, and is woven throughout all the interactions that take place between management and staff.
- **Talent Development**: 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.
- **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.

\(^2\) These factors are based on a broad literature review conducted by Leading Edge 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.
"If you are lucky enough to be someone’s employer, then you have a moral obligation to make sure people do look forward to coming to work in the morning."

— JOHN MACKEY, CEO, WHOLE FOODS MARKET
A Focus on Employee Experience

In May 2018, Leading Edge offered its third annual Employee Experience Survey to Jewish nonprofit organizations across North America. The goal of this survey is to help Jewish organizations assess and improve their workplace culture because a great workplace culture is key to attracting and retaining top talent.

Organizations were invited to participate through an open application process and through individual outreach. Personal invitations were extended to previous participants.3

3 The sample of organizations participating in the 2018 survey was chosen as follows: (1) organizations that participated in the 2016 and/or 2017 surveys were invited to participate again; (2) additional organizations were invited to apply through an open call for applications; and (3) umbrella organizations helped connect Leading Edge with eligible organizations in their networks. To qualify, Jewish organizations were required to have on staff at least six full-time employees.
Survey Design and Administration

By offering the survey, Leading Edge’s primary goal is to maintain a relevant and meaningful tool to help participating organizations create even better places to work.

In 2018, Leading Edge once again partnered with Culture Amp to host the survey. Culture Amp is a user-friendly employee feedback platform that offers different types of employee surveys to organizations across the globe. Leading Edge designed the survey specifically for the Jewish nonprofit sector and partnered with Culture Amp by leveraging its database of 1.8 million points of employee feedback. The survey was administered electronically by sending a unique survey link to every employee submitted to Leading Edge by each organizations’ survey administrator.

The Leading Edge survey focused on the overall employee experience. Most of the questions were on a five-point Likert scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” as respondents gave feedback on all aspects of their work experience. Between 2017 and 2018, 90% of the survey questions remained the same. Any modifications were based on insights from previous surveys and from working closely with partners and organizational behavior experts.

FIGURE 1
Survey at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>May 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>59 scored questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 multiple choice questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 demographic questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 open-ended questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Online administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>105 organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,000 eligible employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,300 respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73% overall response rate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Factors

The survey questions were categorized into 10 factors that are key components to a great workplace culture. By categorizing the questions into factors, organizations are provided with a high-level method to digest their data.

THE 10 FACTORS ARE:

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:** How connected do employees feel to their work and organization?

**PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP:** What is the employee experience with the professional leadership?

**ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT:** How connected are employees to the mission of the organization?

**COLLABORATION:** To what extent do employees feel that they are able to work productively with others across the organization?

**EMPLOYEE ENABLEMENT:** To what extent do employees feel they have the resources and authority they need to perform their jobs?

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND FEEDBACK:** To what extent are employees given meaningful feedback on their work and 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 management is invested in their growth?

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

**VOLUNTEER/LAY LEADERS:** Do employees feel their lay/volunteer leaders are committed to supporting the needs of the organization and respect their professional counterparts?

**SALARY AND BENEFITS:** How do employees experience salary and benefits in their organizations? To what extent do employees understand the compensation philosophy of their organization?

Helping Organizations Use the Data

Each organization was invited to join a webinar that showed how to use the Culture Amp platform to view results. Each organization was also offered a private, one-hour consultation with an organizational development expert to review their results, identify themes, and discuss ways to communicate their results and take actions. Most organizations—85%—took advantage of this consultation.
Who Took the Survey?

10,000 employees at 105 organizations were invited to take the survey in 2018. 7,300 employees responded to the survey.

Participating organizations represent a diverse mix of organizational types, budget sizes, staff sizes, and locations. All organizations are based in North America and have at least six full-time employees to encourage confidentiality.

A full list of participating organizations can be found in Appendix A.

Over the past three years, 145 unique organizations have taken a Leading Edge employee survey. Of the 105 organizations taking the survey in 2018:

- 52 organizations have taken a previous Leading Edge survey
- 53 organizations were new participants in 2018

Some organizations benefit from taking the survey every year, and others prefer to participate every other year. The frequency depends on many factors, including an organization’s post-survey action steps and unique circumstances at play within the organization.
Demographics

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS
The 105 organizations that participated in 2018 offer a diverse snapshot of the Jewish nonprofit sector. Organizations that took the survey ranged in size of budget, size of team, and type of organization. Half of the organizations (52) that participated in 2018 had taken at least one previous Leading Edge survey.

None of the questions on the survey are required, and participants can choose not to disclose their demographic information. This is often the case when people are feeling least positive about their workplace, and are concerned with being linked to their responses. (Please see the next page for more demographic information.)

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4 One participating organization represents 177 professionally staffed Hillel campuses across the globe.
In the 2018 survey, 60% of participants identified as female, 22% as male, and 18% answered “Not listed” or “Prefer not to answer.” Of the 105 organizations, 64 are led by MALE CEOs, and 40 are led by FEMALE CEOs.

Note: One organization represents 177 global Hillel campuses and was not counted in this analysis.

The 18% denoted as “Not listed/Prefer not to answer” represents respondents who selected the “Not listed” option, stating that their gender was not represented as an answer choice.

In the 2018 survey, 58% of the respondents self-identified as Jewish, 22% self-identified as other, and 20% chose not to respond to this question.

At the time of the survey, 41% of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 39. It is estimated that this group skews younger than the estimated average age across the Jewish nonprofit sector because of organizations such as BBYO, NCSY, and Hillel, which tend to employ younger professionals.

Note: 1,694 respondents preferred not to answer this question.
For the third year in a row, the largest salary group was the $40,000 to $49,999 range.

The professional levels of respondents were categorized based on supervisory responsibility. Those with management and leadership responsibilities comprised a total of 40% of respondents.
Culture is like the wind. It is invisible, yet its effect can be seen and felt.”

— BRYAN WALKER, PARTNER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, IDEO
Overall Themes

The 82 survey questions collected information on a range of issues that impact an employee’s experience at work. Although the survey covers many topics, one of its most important measures is employee engagement.

Engaged employees are motivated to do their best work. They feel connected to the organization and are willing to go above and beyond to deliver high-quality results. An organization with an engaged workforce experiences less turnover, which allows it to focus on its mission rather than the constant churn of hiring and training new employees.
### MISSION:
This is the sector’s greatest strength and the reason why people show up and work hard.

### WORKLOAD:
Nonprofit professionals usually feel stretched, but resentment arises when people feel that workloads are uneven, and that systems and processes hinder rather than support their work.

### LEADERSHIP:
The experiences staff have with organizational leaders—both professional and lay—deeply impact employee engagement and retention.

### TEAM AND CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION:
People tend to have a more positive experience with their immediate team than they do with other departments.

### OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION:
Communication from the top down and bottom up is an ongoing challenge for most organizations.

### DIFFERENCES BY GENDER:
The greatest differences in the way women and men feel about aspects of work are around compensation and psychological safety.

### DIRECT MANAGEMENT:
People are confident in their managers and feel respected by them, but managers are not always supporting employees to do their best work.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT:
There is a gap between employees who want to advance and actual opportunities to advance, especially for women.

### SALARY AND BENEFITS:
Setting compensation and communicating about it is a common pain point for managers. Male employees have a clearer understanding of how their compensation is set.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:
Overall, women feel less psychologically safe—less comfortable expressing themselves and being themselves—than men.

### POLICY AWARENESS:
Awareness of sexual harassment policies have increased significantly year over year.
Employee Engagement

The survey included four statements that directly measure employee engagement in the workplace; they address an employee’s enthusiasm, pride, motivation, and desire to stay at the organization.\(^5\)

**Employee engagement is measured by the following statements:**

- **84%** of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I feel proud to work for my organization.”
- **69%** of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “My organization motivates me to contribute more than is required.”
- **69%** of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I would recommend my organization as a great place to work.”

-16% below U.S. benchmark

“Given your choice, how long would you plan to continue working for your organization?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Want to Stay 2+ Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The “I would recommend my organization as a great place to work” statement has implications related to recruitment, the organization’s reputation, and even fundraising potential, all based on the way employees discuss their experience at work. The youngest respondents (under 29 years old) were the least likely to answer this question favorably, which is to be expected considering this demographic is less able to compare their current workplace experience with others. That said, even without this age group, results for this question would still be 10% below the U.S. benchmark.

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\(^5\) Throughout the report, comparisons may give more meaning to the data. Some of the survey questions are typical employee survey questions; therefore, they can be compared to Culture Amp’s U.S. benchmark, which is the average of all respondents in Culture Amp’s database (over 1.8 million respondents). Other questions were designed specifically for the Jewish nonprofit sector and, therefore, have no broader comparison beyond the group of organizations that took the Leading Edge survey. Comparisons are included for questions where a comparison exists or is valuable. To determine whether a deviation from a comparison is significant, Leading Edge uses the rule of 5%. Any comparison that is less than a 5% difference (+/- 5%) is not considered significant.
One hypothesis is that people who work in the Jewish nonprofit sector have higher expectations of their organization. A more likely hypothesis is that as these organizations are actively working toward becoming better places to work, employees are increasingly cognizant of the growing pains that are out in the open, and they are impatient for change to happen. (Of course, fundamentally shifting culture beyond the easy “fix” is a process that takes time.)

Although the survey asks about a number of topics, the following four statements most directly impact employee engagement. If leaders want to improve employee engagement overall, these are the statements to focus on:

- **69%** of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees.”
  - 4% below U.S. benchmark

- **69%** of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I have confidence in my organization’s senior leaders.”
  - 6% below U.S. benchmark

- **82%** 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.”
  - 12% above U.S. benchmark

- **53%** of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication.”
  - 12% below U.S. benchmark

**HOW WAS IT DETERMINED THAT THESE QUESTIONS HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?**

Leading Edge and Culture Amp reviewed data from the employees **who are most engaged overall** and identified which other questions they ranked more positively than other respondents.

Employees **who are least engaged overall**, and the statements they ranked more negatively than other respondents, were also part of the analysis.

Considering these data points together unveils the top drivers most likely to impact employee engagement.

See [HERE](#) for more information about how these “highest impact” questions were determined.
One of the greatest advantages as a sector is that—regardless of role, level, age, religious identity, or seniority—an overwhelming majority of Jewish nonprofit employees understand how their work contributes to their organizational mission. This is excellent news because organizations that embody their mission and show employees how their roles contribute to the company’s goals are more likely to have staff who feel like they are making a difference in the world. This, in turn, drives creativity and improves engagement.

While this is incredibly important and an area that should bring pride to the sector as a whole, it cannot be an organization’s sole competitive advantage. Simply put, connection to mission does not compensate for other workplace challenges.

91% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I know how my work contributes to my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals.”

89% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I have a good understanding of my organization’s mission, strategy, and goals.”

82% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “My organization is generally successful in the pursuit of its mission.”

82% 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.”

12% above U.S. benchmark

“"I am proud to work for [organization] and wake up every day feeling like I am a small part of making the world a better place because of the work I do.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT
LEADERSHIP:
The experiences staff have with organizational leaders—both professional and lay—deeply impact employee engagement and retention.

Leaders not only set the strategy and course for the organization, but they also create the culture of an organization through their actions, behaviors, and values. Professional leadership is one of the most important factors when looking at those who want to stay at their organizations compared to those who would like to leave. People who report feeling confident in their organization's professional senior leaders are much more likely to feel engaged and enabled to do their best work.

69% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I have confidence in my organization’s senior leaders.”

6% below U.S. benchmark

69% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “Senior leaders display actions and behaviors that are consistent with my organization’s values.”

“Our senior leadership believes in and mentors the next generation of Jewish leadership and that is a rarity in the Jewish world and an incredible part of what makes me so proud to be here!”

– SURVEY RESPONDENT
An employee’s experience with and observation of volunteer/lay leaders’ actions has a moderate impact on how they feel about work. The impact often depends on how closely staff interact with volunteers/lay leaders. In some cases where there is a greater firewall between staff and the board, each group may lack a complete perspective on how the other functions and feels. For instance, when the wishes of the board are conveyed indirectly (i.e., senior leadership tells staff “the board won’t like this”), the message from this invisible voice might lack a nuance better conveyed through direct communication. And when staff don’t have a firsthand opportunity to hear how board members are stewarding the organization, the board’s contributions and leadership may be undervalued.

In the Leading Edge survey, there were many neutral responses to these questions, which is likely due to the limited interactions many employees have with board members and volunteer/lay leaders.

58% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “The actions of our board members are consistent with my organization’s values.”

66% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I feel respected as a professional by the volunteer/lay leaders in my organization.”

**LEADERSHIP QUICK TIPS**

**PROVIDE FACE-TO-FACE DIALOGUE.** Increase the visibility and accessibility of leaders by hosting regular lunches, coffees, or drop-ins, possibly with a randomly selected team. This connects leaders to employees outside of day-to-day activities and allows employees to get to know leaders on a more personal level. This model can also be used with board members.

**CRAFT TEAM VISIONS.** Ask each member of the leadership team to craft a statement about the specific vision their team is pursuing and how it contributes to the organizational vision. The statement could address future team goals and how they align with the organizational mission. This process is meant not to address current business metrics or projects but rather to convey how the organization will have a sectorwide impact in a few years’ time.

**HOLD OPEN FORUMS.** Well-planned, predictably timed gatherings with employees are a wonderful way to share information about the current state of the organization. The All Hands Model is an example used by companies like Google, Twitter, and Zappos. The common thread is that all the employees and stakeholders meet with the leadership team to share updates, celebrate people and accomplishments, create alignment around strategy and goals, and address employees’ questions. There is a set agenda with strict timelines, including well-prepared presentations, and a moderator. In some cases, anonymous questions are accepted online. A quick online search for “all hands meetings” will provide sample meeting templates that can be tailored to each organization.
OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION:
Communication from the top down and bottom up is an ongoing challenge for most organizations.

Employees feel more engaged when there is open communication and a safe space to share their perspectives. The Leading Edge survey found that employees would like to feel more confident with two-way communication, more informed, and more comfortable sharing unpopular views.

Organizations that think about their employees as a key stakeholder group and create internal communication strategies and standard operating procedures for two-way feedback are much more likely to have employees who feel included, heard, and valued. Smaller organizations do not tend to struggle as much with communication, but most organizations would benefit from increasing their focus on open and honest two-way internal communication.

53% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication.”
Japanese Benchmark: 12% below U.S. benchmark

50% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I am comfortable sharing potentially unpopular opinions at my organization.”

58% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “The senior leaders at my organization keep people informed.”
Japanese Benchmark: 10% below U.S. benchmark

“Poor communication is generally not a matter of miscommunication. More often, it involves taking away people’s feeling of control. Change works only when people believe it is happening for them, not to them.”

— DANNY MEYER, RESTAURANTEUR AND AUTHOR
DEVELOP AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN. Determine the types of information that need to be shared with employees from the top down and bottom up, and across the organization. Identify the ideal schedule and most effective methods (e.g., email, internal platforms, newsletters, one-on-one conversations, staff meetings, suggestion boxes, all hands meetings, weekly email staff updates, etc.) to communicate the types of knowledge-sharing and dialogue that should flow throughout the organization.

USE ONLINE PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND MESSAGING TOOLS. There are several online and mobile tools—like Slack, Hipchat, Asana, and Weekdone—that organizations use to facilitate communication and/or track a project’s progress. While face-to-face communication is critical, online tools can save time, connect busy staff and employees to one another, and help track and document work more effectively than emails. Some of these platforms allow for topic grouping, controlled notifications, and the ability to make conversations public when needed.

TREAT EMPLOYEES LIKE AN AUDIENCE. If staff are not reading memos, forgetting the point of emails, and not changing undesirable behavior, craft content in a more interesting way. Engage them with a story, reinforcing a lesson with customer testimonials, and delivering smaller bits of information over time through different channels. Consider the use of humor, riddles, emotion, and thoughtfulness.

ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS. When meeting as a team, or for one-on-one supervision, use open-ended questions to give employees an opportunity to speak up. Then, give them ample space to respond without interjecting. Ask employees what keeps them up at night, what they’re working on, what they’re excited about, what’s going well (and what isn’t), what skills they’re working on, and what kinds of support would most help them.

PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL DISCUSSION. Not everyone is aware of how much space they take up in meetings. Similarly, some employees have a hard time taking up any space at all. Encourage employees to assess where they fall on the participation spectrum and in which situations they are more or less likely to speak up and why. Encourage them to push against their comfort zone and “step up” or “step back” more regularly. Also, consider going around the room and asking every participant to weigh in with their opinion in order to encourage broader participation.

“I am often left out of meetings that involve my work and have to wait to hear about it afterwards (if they even remember to tell me).”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT
DIRECT MANAGEMENT:
People are confident in their managers and feel respected by them, but managers are not always supporting employees to do their best work.

The relationship with one’s direct manager has a high impact on employee engagement. Leading Edge survey respondents overall expressed positive experiences with their managers: **Staff have general confidence in their immediate managers** and feel cared for and respected by them. **However, this does not necessarily mean managers are effective**—rather, it reflects the positive feelings people have toward their managers.

88% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I am treated with respect by my immediate manager.”

85% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “My immediate manager genuinely cares about my well-being.”

81% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I have confidence in my immediate manager.”

For the third year in a row, Leading Edge has found that **fundamental management practices are weak in Jewish organizations**. While people appreciate their managers, there is work to be done in terms of meaningful performance reviews, ongoing feedback, division of workloads, and streamlined systems and processes.

“I have had a performance review within the past 12 months.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES, and it was valuable</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES, and it was not valuable</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO, I’ve worked less than a year</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I receive USEFUL feedback on how I am performing.”

58% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I receive REGULAR feedback on how I am performing.”
INSTITUTE A FEEDBACK FRAMEWORK. Find a feedback framework to use within a team or across the organization. Examples of approaches and models to choose from include the following:

- **The Stop-Start-Continue Approach** addresses the following questions: What should the person stop doing? What should the person start doing? What should the person continue doing?

- **The Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) Model**, developed by the Center for Creative Leadership, focuses on giving feedback in specific situations or for specific behaviors, while describing how these behaviors affect others and what the person could do differently next time.

- **The 360 Degree Feedback Model** offers recipients a panoramic view of their performance. Feedback is obtained anonymously from multiple sources, ranging from supervisors and subordinates to team colleagues and peers from outside the organization.

- **The Stanford Method** starts a sentence with either “I like” or “I wish,” or with a suggestion phrased as “What if ...?”

These are just a few examples. Find one that works for the organization and—most importantly—use it!

TRAIN & EVALUATE MANAGERS. Google staff evaluate their managers on a semi-annual basis with a 13-question survey. The first 11 measure whether employees agree or disagree with statements like “My manager shows consideration for me as a person.” The final two questions (“What would you recommend your manager keep doing?” and “What would you have your manager change?”) are open-ended. These survey responses are reported confidentially, and managers receive a report of anonymized, aggregated feedback, plus verbatim answers to the two open-ended questions. Google also provides new managers with training course materials, including a facilitator guide (to help whoever is training the new managers) and a workbook with interactive exercises. These resources are available online.

OFFER “HELP ME” CARDS. Provide people with a clear and easy way to get attention when they really need support from a manager. Create a physical artifact, like a card, that employees are given during their first week. Employees use that card whenever they really need to get their manager’s attention and require immediate support.

“My direct supervisor goes above and beyond to check in on my personal and professional well-being, and to support my needs.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT
GUIDE FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

ENSURE FEEDBACK IS A GIFT. Remember, honest feedback helps employees do their best work and grow professionally. But feedback is only a gift when it is delivered thoughtfully. While these conversations can happen in the moment, more involved discussions should be planned with an agenda so that no one is surprised by the conversation’s trajectory.

BE MINDFUL. Only initiate a feedback discussion under calm circumstances. Set the tone by ensuring privacy and an ability to focus. Do not sit behind a computer or in a place with many distractions.

LOWE...
WORKLOAD:
Nonprofit professionals usually feel stretched, but resentment arises when people feel that workloads are uneven, and that systems and processes hinder rather than support their work.

Nonprofit organizations tend to be resource constrained, and often, staff yearn for more people to do the work. When people experience a lack of staff capacity, have the perception that the work is unequally distributed, and feel frustrated with burdensome systems and processes, they are much more likely to consider leaving their organization. Leaders and managers can alleviate some of the pressure by setting clear priorities and striving to evenly divide workloads. It is also valuable to review the systems and processes that are in place to see if they are helping or hindering people’s ability to do their work.

51% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “Workloads are divided fairly among people where I work.”

52% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “Most of the systems and processes support us in getting our work done effectively.”

37% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “There are enough people to do the work we need to do.”

“For some of us, it is very challenging to accomplish all that needs to be done with current staffing levels requiring long days and weeks. We also lack adequate technology and on-site technology support for our programs. This can be frustrating and doesn’t allow [organization] to shine as it could and should.”

– SURVEY RESPONDENT
**WORKLOAD**

**DEFINE COMMITMENT.** Consider quarterly conversations with employees about workload and where the lines blur between commitment, overwork, martyrdom, and burn-out. Most good leaders model work-life balance whenever possible.

**INSTITUTE MEET-LESS FRIDAYS.** Many people spend most of their work day in meetings and need uninterrupted time to do work. Provide employees with regular time blocks just to focus on execution.

**CONDUCT WORK-CYCLE AUDITS.** Review at the annual work cycle to determine how to distribute capacity. Determine times when additional support will be needed and when cross-departmental collaboration could provide the necessary support. Consider hiring temps, interns, and virtual assistants to help during busy times.

**CONDUCT AN ANNUAL SYSTEMS REVIEW.** At least once a year, take stock of all systems and processes employees use to get their work done and ask which ones are helping them and which ones are too cumbersome. Ask if there are other systems and processes that could better help staff achieve their goals.

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**FIGURE 9**

**Building the Pipeline—Previous Work**

“In the past, I worked at the following” *(check all that apply):*

- Other nonprofit: 31%
- Jewish summer camp: 30%
- Other Jewish nonprofit: 28%
- JCC: 15%
- Jewish youth group: 11%
- Hillel: 9%
- Federation: 9%

**Building the Pipeline—Previous Participation**

“In the past, I was a participant in the following” *(check all that apply):*

- Jewish summer camp: 40%
- Jewish youth group: 32%
- Hillel: 25%
- Jewish day school: 21%
- Birthright: 18%
- MASA: 6%
TEAM AND CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION:
People tend to have a more positive experience with their immediate team than they do with other departments.

Just as employees experience a positive relationship with their direct manager, they also tend to feel positively about their team or department. However, they often feel less positive about other teams in the organization. It is a great sign that people enjoy their daily interactions with their teams and feel connected to the people with whom they work. Many of the comments that respondents offered in the survey related to how much they enjoy working with their team.

Although employees tend to like their own teams and managers, their feelings are less positive about their overall organization and its most senior leadership. In terms of productivity, people have the greatest connection to those with whom they spend the majority of their work time interacting. These data are an invitation for organizations to think about how to improve collaboration across teams and forge employee connections to the organization as a whole, especially with the support of managers who act as intermediaries between direct reports and senior leadership.

86% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I am comfortable asking others on our team for help when I need it.”

80% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “There is good cooperation within my team.”

51% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “My team receives high-quality support from other parts of the organization.”

Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life forever.”

– Leslie Knope, the protagonist in the NBC comedy “Parks and Recreation”
TEAM AND CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

LOOK BEYOND THE TEAM. Consider implementing cross-department, peer coaching teams for a mutually beneficial relationship through which two colleagues reflect on current practices, learn new concepts, share ideas, and solve work-related problems together. When establishing a program, make sure to encourage employees to identify a partner they trust, clarify what they want to get out of the coaching, schedule regular meetings, ensure equal time as coach and coachee, focus on active listening, set goals, and hold each other accountable.

MODEL COLLABORATION. Leaders can work with peers from other teams to accomplish goals. For instance, ask someone from another department to sit in on a team’s brainstorming session. Consider an organizationwide “show and tell” where a team presents on the approach it took and reflects on lessons learned. Or try a brown bag series where a team leader teaches a skill set that falls outside the wheelhouse of another department. Make it publicly known that working together with other departments adds value and makes everyone’s work stronger.

“"I love working with my team. It is one of the reasons I like working here. We work well with each other, respect each other, and share the workload with each other.”

– SURVEY RESPONDENT

Excluding women simply makes no economic sense—and including women can be a tremendous boon to the 21st century global economy.”

– CHRISTINE LAGARDE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
The Gender Lens

Approximately 70% of the total workforce in the Jewish nonprofit sector are female; about 30% are male. But when it comes to leadership positions, it’s the exact opposite. Given this disparity, and other historical gender disparities, in 2018, Leading Edge integrated a more focused gender equity lens into its work.

Differences by Gender

The greatest differences in the way women and men feel about aspects of work are around compensation and psychological safety.

**FIGURE 10**

Largest Gaps Between Female and Male Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I understand how compensation (salaries + raises) is set at my organization.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m comfortable sharing potentially unpopular opinions at my organization.”</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am comfortable providing performance feedback to my colleagues.”</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am compensated fairly for the work I do.”</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe my total compensation (salary + benefits) is fair relative to similar roles at other organizations.”</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHAT CAN BE EXTRAPOLATED FROM THE SIGNIFICANT GAPS IN THESE AREAS?**

When it comes to attitudes around salary and psychological safety, these disparities are on par with the rest of the country. In general, women are less comfortable speaking up in the workplace, with more worry about how they will be perceived, while men tend to be willing to reveal what’s on their minds. Like many sectors in the United States, the Jewish nonprofit field must do better in diminishing these disparities.
Trends by Gender of CEO

When organizations registered for the survey, they were asked to identify the gender of their executive director/CEO, as well as their budget, team size, and the title of the top executive. The following is an analysis of differences that emerged between female-led and male-led organizations.

**AVERAGE BUDGET SIZE:** Male-led organizations had an average budget size of almost three times that of female-led organizations.

**AVERAGE TEAM SIZE:** The average team size at male-led organizations was more than twice the size of female-led organizations.

*Note: Some organizations withheld their operating budgets and were excluded from this analysis.*

*Note: Some organizations did not submit all of their part-time employees for survey participation.*

**TITLE OF TOP EXECUTIVE:** As the numbers reveal, male-led executives are more often called “President and CEO” and female-led executives are more often called “Executive Director.” While women tend to lead smaller organizations in staff and budget size, men leading organizations of comparable size are called CEO rather than Executive Director, unlike their female counterparts.
Perceptions of Male and Female CEOs by Gender of Respondents

When it comes to the way employees view their most senior leader, there are no differences in how female employees relate to their CEOs based on gender. There are, however, notable differences in how male employees experience having a female CEO vs. a male CEO.

The following statistics are based only on how **MALE EMPLOYEES** responded to these questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>MALE RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE A MALE CEO</th>
<th>MALE RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE A FEMALE CEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Senior leaders display actions and behaviors that are consistent with my organization’s values.”</td>
<td>78% responded favorably</td>
<td>68% responded favorably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10% difference in favorability toward male CEOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel proud to work for my organization.”</td>
<td>89% responded favorably</td>
<td>80% responded favorably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9% difference in favorability toward male CEOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have confidence in my organization’s senior leaders.”</td>
<td>76% responded favorably</td>
<td>68% responded favorably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% difference in favorability toward male CEOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The actions of our board members are consistent with my organization’s values.”</td>
<td>66% responded favorably</td>
<td>55% responded favorably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11% difference in favorability toward male CEOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHAT CAN BE EXTRAPOLATED FROM THESE DATA?**

These disparities are unlikely to be related to how female CEOs act as much as how they are perceived. For instance, a growing body of research shows people are more likely to assume the competence of male leadership, while women must prove themselves. On the whole, the longer a female CEO is in place, the more favorable the staff will receive her leadership. This is—to a significant extent—unconscious bias at play.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT:
There is a gap between employees who want to advance and actual opportunities to advance, especially for women.

More than half of respondents—52%—would like to advance within their organization, yet only 38% see opportunities for advancement within their organization (14% gap).

52% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I would like to advance to a more senior role within my organization.”

52% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I would like to advance to a more senior role within the Jewish nonprofit sector.”

38% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I have opportunities for advancement at my organization.”

Although many organizations believe their size limits their ability to offer opportunities for advancement, the data do not support that.

“IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO ARE ON AN ‘INSIDE TRACK,’ AND IF YOU’RE NOT ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE OR YOU DON’T HAVE THE RIGHT SUPERVISOR, YOU WILL NEVER MOVE ON TO HAVE MORE CHALLENGES OR RESPONSIBILITIES.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT
Why do employees at larger Jewish nonprofits not see as many options for advancement?

Staff may see that management is firmly in place, leaving no room for their own growth. It’s also possible these staff are comparing their organizations against similarly sized organizations/companies in other sectors, where there are simply more upward career paths (e.g., medicine, law, consulting, etc.).

Why do employees at smaller organizations have more opportunities for advancement than those at larger organizations?

Some consider “opportunities for advancement” to include developing new skills or taking on stretch projects—neither of which necessitates a title change or job-level advancement. At smaller organizations, these opportunities may be easier to come by because people tend to have broader jobs to accommodate the “all hands on deck” approach of getting the work done. Staff at larger organizations tend to have more specialized positions. In addition, people at smaller organizations may find their work more interesting and challenging because of the more varied nature of their roles.

There is a 6% gap between the number of women who want to advance to a more senior role (39%) and the number of men (45%).

In Leading Edge’s review of comments related to this question, in general female participants cited lack of opportunities as well as a culture that demands more sacrifice within an already challenging work-life balance in order to advance. For men, comments cited lack of opportunities at their organization in addition to a lack of desire to stay within the sector.

“Other men might respond by saying: Okay, this is interesting, but I don’t think like that. I don’t even think about gender. Maybe not. And that is part of the problem. That many men do not actively think about gender or notice gender.”

— CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE, AUTHOR
**SPEAK WITH EMPLOYEES ABOUT CAREER ASPIRATIONS.** Use “stay interviews” to re-engage with employees who are at risk of leaving and also at specific intervals in the employee lifecycle. Include conversations about employees’ career aspirations and any perceived impediments to their long-term success at the organization. Determine how the organization can be a part of their career path and professional development.

**CREATE A VISUAL MAP OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.** Because the nature of work is changing, employees—especially younger employees—are unlikely to stay in a position for longer than a “tour of duty” (i.e., a few years) before moving on to the next opportunity. A career pathing document that clearly lays out opportunities across the organization—with detailed descriptions of the requisite roles and skills—can serve as a foundation to discuss career advancement opportunities.

Here is one example of a career map: https://www.shakeshack.com/job-board/#career-progression

**MAP OUT ROUTES THAT ARE SHORTER TENURE.** Recognize that not every position in an organization is meant to be fulfilling for a long period of time. Some roles are meant to be held for a few years and then it is healthy to get a new person in the position. Managers should know which positions in their organization are meant for the long haul and which are more of a pit stop for an employee who is interested in collecting a variety of skills and experiences before moving on.

**PROVIDE STRETCH OPPORTUNITIES.** Place employees in roles that are slightly outside of their comfort zone to give them an opportunity to develop new skills and grow professionally. By clearly labeling it as a stretch opportunity, expectations are set for others to contribute to the employee’s success. Managers and employees work together to find the right stretch role, which requires a healthy level of commitment, honesty, and communication from all parties involved. For achievement-driven employees, this can be viewed as a reward.

“There’s not a lot of transparency in roles, what someone needs to get into the next role, what that role is, and how often performance is assessed. Career pathing is not included in my supervision conversations.”

— SURVEY RESPONDENT
A common challenge for leaders is how to set and communicate a compensation philosophy. The four survey questions related to salary and benefits were predictably the lowest-scoring questions on the survey. These types of questions tend to be low-scoring, especially in the nonprofit sector. The greatest difference among all areas studied between male and female respondents is related to compensation. Specifically, men are 12% more likely than women to understand how compensation, salary, and raises are set at their organization—likely due in part because men are more often than women in leadership roles within Jewish organizations.

38% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I understand how compensation (salaries + raises) is set at my organization.”
12% gap between women (36%) and men (48%)

41% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I am compensated fairly for the work I do.”
8% gap between women (41%) and men (49%)

56% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I believe my benefits are fair, relative to similar roles at other organizations.”
4% gap between women (57%) and men (61%)

37% of respondents had a favorable response to the statement, “I believe my total compensation (salaries + raises) is fair relative to similar roles at other organizations.”
8% gap between women (37%) and men (45%)

“Our titles make no sense and our salaries are not consistent across the organization. There is very little opportunity for advancement, and raises are the purview of the CFO and are announced via sticky note with no background or information as to why.”

– SURVEY RESPONDENT
CREATE A COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY.

Every organization should have a clearly articulated document that explains the “why” behind salary, benefits, raises, and other incentives. This can go a long way in promoting a culture of trust and ensuring that staff perceive compensation decisions as transparent, objective, and equitable.

A common approach is to compare the salaries of comparable positions at similarly situated organizations (in terms of operating budgets, size, geographic market and reach, and complexity) and determine what to pay versus the market rate. One study to consider using is http://www.prmconsulting.com/shop.

With larger organizations, it is also common to benchmark against similar jobs in the field while creating salary bands, or ranges, for the types of jobs that exist within the organization. It’s also important not to design a compensation philosophy based on current financial position, but rather to think about what is needed to attract and retain the best talent.

CONDUCT A FAIRNESS AUDIT.

Make sure to look at current salaries under a gender, diversity, and inclusion lens at least once a year. Make sure there are no trends around salaries that indicate favoritism based on employee demographics. If any differences exist, work immediately to level the playing field.

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.

Once a philosophy is established, leaders must communicate how salary decisions are made and how and when raises happen. Include this conversation in the hiring stage, with all current employees, and as part of performance reviews. Make sure to explain the process (i.e., how market segments were chosen for comparability data, etc.). This ensures that the employees who ask for raises more often are not the only ones who are rewarded.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ESTABLISHING A COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY:

- When it comes to salary, in what percentile (as compared to similar organization types, budget size, location, etc.) should employees be in?
- When and how are raises and pay adjustments determined?
- When benchmarking the salaries of staff, is everyone—from the CEO on down—paid relative to the same market percentile (i.e., the 50th percentile)?
- What are the most important ways to be competitive when it comes to compensation? What is the value of the benefits package?
- When might pay fall above or below the intended positioning?
- Are cost-of-living increases given?
- Are pay adjustments automatic when an employee has a change in job function or title?
- How does the annual performance review factor into compensation discussions?
- Will all people at the same level be paid about the same? How does the organization feel about incentive pay based on performance?
- What is the organization’s plan for fixing inconsistencies that currently exist?
- How long has it been since the compensation philosophy was reviewed? Is it still within market range of the original commitment?
**FIGURE 12**
Most In Demand Benefits

- Ability to work from home: 25%
- Gym membership: 23%
- Matching 401(k): 20%
- Flex time: 21%
- Student loan repayment: 20%

**FASCINATING FINDING:**
Respondents under the age of 39 selected student loan repayment, gym membership and ability to work from home as the top three benefits they would find valuable beyond the ones they currently receive.

**FIGURE 13**
Most Valued Current Benefits

- Health insurance: 67%
- Matching 401(k): 49%
- Ability to work from home: 28%
- Flex time: 24%
- Paid family leave: 18%

Which of the following benefits, beyond the ones you currently receive, would be most valuable to you (choose up to 3)?
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:
Overall, women feel less psychologically safe—less comfortable expressing themselves and being themselves—than men.

Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for raising issues in the workplace or for making mistakes. The Leading Edge survey assessed psychological safety by posing questions about people’s comfort level when speaking up, providing feedback to others, and sharing unpopular opinions. Female respondents have a lesser sense of safety in these areas than male respondents. Unsurprisingly, those who felt the least psychologically safe in their workplace did not respond to demographic questions related to their gender or age, as they were likely concerned about protecting their identity.

“I feel comfortable speaking up if my values are being compromised.”

- Female: 68% responded favorably
- Male: 76% responded favorably
- Prefer not to self-identify gender: 46% responded favorably

“My opinion is valued at my organization.”

- Female: 71% responded favorably
- Male: 77% responded favorably
- Prefer not to self-identify gender: 47% responded favorably

“I am comfortable providing performance feedback to my colleagues.”

- Female: 61% responded favorably
- Male: 72% responded favorably
- Prefer not to self-identify gender: 63% responded favorably
BUILD TRUST AT WORK. Employees who trust their colleagues and leadership are more likely to be open, collaborative, and engaged with their teams. The process of building trust begins with self-reflection. Some tips for building trust at work include:

- Admitting when something is not known
- Moderating reactions
- Following through on commitments
- Explaining thought processes
- Asking questions and listening with intent
- Taking responsibility for failures or missteps
- Including others as much as is appropriate
- Trusting others
- Telling the truth

OFFER EMOTION-FOCUSED TRAINING. Train on more than just skills to help employees become more self-aware. Send emerging leaders to manager essentials training that focuses on helping people with high potential to become more emotionally intelligent. This training, which focuses on developing self-awareness and empathy, enables managers to build stronger relationships with direct reports. A lower-cost option is to have team members read a recognized book on the topic (e.g., *Emotional Intelligence*, by Dan Goleman (Bantam, 1995)) and discuss learnings and takeaways as a team.

ADHERE TO THE PLATINUM RULE. The “golden rule” is to treat other people the way you yourself would want to be treated. To create a culture where employees feel safe and comfortable sharing unpopular opinions, implement the “platinum rule”—treat others the way they would want to be treated. Managers can start by taking the time to find out their team’s preferences for frequency of check-ins, style of communication, type of feedback, etc.

CONDUCT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING. Establish a program to teach staff about implicit bias and how stereotypes affect behavior. There is no standard format for unconscious bias trainings. Some involve narrated PowerPoint slides while others involve experts who hold small, intensive workshops over several days. As one diversity and inclusion consultant stated, “providing a thoughtfully designed space that allows for both compassionate and critical dialogues can help wake people up from their status quo.” Reducing unconscious bias will require multiple approaches, not just one, and an ongoing commitment.

UNDERSTAND THE INHERENT POWER OF QUESTIONS. Learn to ask questions as mindfully as possible. For instance, instead of asking “Why did you do this?” ask “What was your thought process?” Teams can question managers and leaders through a similarly thoughtful paradigm. The result is a culture of open dialogue, increased creativity, and out-of-the-box ideas.
The media attention around issues of sexual harassment has elevated this issue, with leaders working to ensure that their organizations have solid policies and procedures in place.

Participants were asked about their awareness of policies around sexual harassment and whistleblowing in 2017 and 2018. They were also asked if they knew what to do if these policies were violated.

In 2017, 67% of respondents knew about an existing sexual harassment policy while 76% knew about one in 2018 (9% improvement).  

6 This analysis was conducted using the raw data: There were two questions related to policy awareness, a multiple-choice question identifying which policies respondents were aware of, and a rating question asking them to either agree or disagree with the statement “I know what to do if one of these policies is violated.”

“Never stop listening to people at all levels of the company. Be physically out and about so that you always have your finger on the pulse and know, at the ground level, the truth of how people are feeling.”

— TRICIA GRIFFITH, CEO, PROGRESSIVE INSURANCE
Trends from Returning Organizations

When organizations choose to participate in the Leading Edge survey, they are prioritizing talent. For the 52 organizations that have now taken the Leading Edge survey more than once, this commitment can be seen in the results:

- For the purposes of this comparison, the 10 questions with the highest impact on engagement and the four engagement questions were used.
- Of these 52 organizations, 73% either improved their scores from year to year, or simply started and remained strong.
- Of these 52 organizations, 38 organizations improved, stayed the same, or remained in the great or excellent categories. Fourteen organizations had dips in their scores, with six starting very strong in 2017, thus making it difficult to improve.
- Of the 18 organizations that have taken the survey three years in a row, all had higher scores for each factor than those that only took the survey once.

The areas that tend to see the greatest improvements are related to cross-organizational collaboration and meaningful performance reviews. These are areas where leadership can tangibly implement new systems in a relatively short period of time. On the other hand, some of the survey questions that address deeper issues, like perceptions of leadership or the organization itself, are not solved as quickly.

Overall, the organizations that are involved in the Leading Edge Employee Experience Survey are making progress slowly and steadily. Similar to getting into shape, lasting success is best achieved by making incremental changes, practicing consistent new behaviors, and building new muscles along the way.

Experts know there is no magic wand that can shift the employee experience overnight. Culture change takes time, especially when the players remain the same.
Why Do Staff Want To Leave?

Participants were explicitly asked to identify the top three reasons they would want to leave their organizations. The following are the four most popular answers:

1. Better financial opportunities/benefits elsewhere 59%
2. Insufficient opportunities for career development 28%
3. Need/desire to relocate 26%
4. Work/life balance 21%

Yet, when Leading Edge looked at the largest gaps between those claiming they want to leave within the next year and those who plan to stay, a different picture emerged. Senior leadership, direct managers, and internal communications (closely tied to leadership) have the greatest impact on people’s plan to stay or leave their organization. For example, only 31% of employees who plan to leave their organization within the next year agree that there is open and honest two-way communication, yet 85% of people who plan to stay for five or more years agree with that statement.

**FIGURE 15**
Gap Analysis by People’s Intent to Stay at Their Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leavers</th>
<th>Stayers</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Leadership</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Leadership</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My opinion is valued at my organization.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Management</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have confidence in my immediate manager.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Management</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am included in decisions that affect my work.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and Feedback</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I receive appropriate recognition for good work at my organization.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Leadership</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have confidence in my organization’s senior leaders.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stayers:** intended to remain for five or more years (N=2,715)
**Leavers:** planned to leave their organization in the next year (N=587)
Conclusion

In 2018, Leading Edge had the privilege of interacting with 105 Jewish nonprofit organizations in North America and was humbled by the incredibly important work that is happening in this sector. Because of the importance of the mission, employees doing this critical work will thrive in places that value them as professionals and as people.

The survey is a tool for organizations to make sure they are engaging employees and empowering them to maximize their potential.

It is critical of a feedback culture to not only ask for employee opinions, but also to take them seriously. While this survey is by no means the solution to all workplace challenges, it is a useful tool for organizations to understand both their strengths and gaps as an employer.

As more Jewish nonprofit organizations strive to become employers of choice, tools such as the Leading Edge Employee Experience Survey offer insights and opportunities to become even better places to work.

Leading Edge would like to thank the intrepid 105 organizations that opted to participate this year, and is eager to continue the journey of building a sector that is full of mission and meaning, professional development and work-life balance, boundless respect, and mindful leadership.

“Do not be afraid of work that has no end.”

—AVOT DE RABBI NATAN
When people are financially invested, they want a return. When people are emotionally invested, they want to contribute.”

— SIMON SINEK, AUTHOR
APPENDIX A:
Participating Organizations

14th Street Y
Aaron Family Jewish Community Center of Dallas*
ADL
American Associates, Ben-Gurion University
Avodah: The Jewish Service Corps**
Baltimore Jewish Council
BBYO**
Beber + Perlman Camps’
Bend the Arc**
Bender Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington*
Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School
Board of Jewish Education Early Childhood Centers
Boulder Jewish Community Center
Calgary Jewish Federation
Camp Tawonga
Camp Young Judaea Texas*
Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation*
Congregation B’nai Jeshurun*
Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center

** Organizations that took the survey all three years.
* Organizations that took the survey twice.
Federation CJA
Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family & Children's Service of Palm Beach
Footsteps*
Foundation for Jewish Camp*
Gann Academy*
Ginsburg Solomon Schechter Early Childhood Center
Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center**
Hazon*
Hillel International – 177 professionally staffed Hillels on campuses across the globe**
Hillel International – Schusterman International Center**
Honeymoon Israel
IKAR*
Institute of Southern Jewish Life
J Street
JCC Association of North America
JCRC of Greater Boston**
JEVS Human Services
Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island
Jewish Child & Family Services of Chicago
Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore**
Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh*
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund of San Francisco**
Jewish Community of Louisville
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis*
Jewish Family Service & Children's Center of Clifton Passaic
Jewish Family Service of Cincinnati
Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans
Jewish Federation and Family Services, Orange County*
Jewish Federation of Cincinnati*
Jewish Federation of Cleveland*
Jewish Federation of Edmonton
Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta
Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas*
Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis*
Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City
Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ*
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia*
Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix
Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh**
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland**
Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver
Jewish Federation of Greater Washington*
Jewish Federation of Ottawa
Jewish Federation of Winnipeg
Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA
Jewish Nevada
Jewish Social Service Agency*
Jewish Theological Seminary*
Jewish United Fund / Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Jews United for Justice**
JOIN for Justice
JVS Career Services
Keshet:
Keshet: For LGBTQ equality in Jewish life**
Leichtag Foundation
Mayerson Jewish Community Center
Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters*
Minneapolis Jewish Federation
Moishe House**
Moriah Early Childhood Center
OneTable*
Orthodox Union – NCSY**
Orthodox Union – Yachad*
Oshman Family Jewish Community Center*
Pearlstone Center
Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools*
Reconstructing Judaism
Sefaria**
Shalom Austin*
Shalom Hartman Institute of North America*
Sharsheret*
Siegel Jewish Community Center*
Sixth & I
TAMID Group
The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation*
The Shimon ben Joseph Foundation
The Wexner Foundation*
UJA Federation of New York
Union for Reform Judaism
United Jewish Federation of Tidewater
UpStart*
Weinstein Jewish Community Center
Westside Jewish Community Center

** Organizations that took the survey all three years.
* Organizations that took the survey twice.
**APPENDIX B: More Demographic Data**

Organizations by Geographic Reach

- **South**: 11%
- **Midwest**: 26%
- **West**: 15%
- **International**: 17%
- **National**: 13%
- **Canada**: 8%
- **East**: 10%

Organizations by Type

- **Community Relations**: 2
- **Youth & Student Engagement**: 3
- **Religious**: 3
- **Summer Camp**: 3
- **Early Childhood Center**: 4
- **Foundation**: 5
- **Educational**: 5
- **Umbrella Organization**: 7
- **Social Justice**: 8
- **Social Service/Human Service**: 10
- **Other**: 14
- **Jewish Community Center**: 15
- **Federation**: 26

*This category includes organizations such as JTS, Upstart, Sharsheret, and Honeymoon Israel.*
Respondents by Department

- Development/Fundraising: 24%
- Finance / Operations/Grantmaking: 8%
- General administration/Support staff (not department-specific): 7%
- Human resources: 5%
- Information technology: 2%
- Marketing/Communications: 2%
- Programming/Direct service provider: 2%
- More than one: 2%
- Not specified/Other: 11%

Respondents by Tenure

- <1 year: 16%
- 1 to <2 years: 25%
- 2 to <5 years: 9%
- 5 to <7 years: 7%
- 7 to <10 years: 11%
- 10+ years: 2%
- Not specified: 13%

SECTION 4
APPENDICES
APPENDIX C: Employee Engagement Trends

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

**Employee Engagement by Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Engagement Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 65</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66+</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employee Engagement by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Engagement Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employee Engagement by Tenure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Engagement Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 year</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to &lt;2 years</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to &lt;5 years</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to &lt;7 years</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to &lt;10 years</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employee Engagement by Professional Level

- Individual contributor: 73%
- Manager with at least one direct report: 78%
- Manager of managers: 82%
- Executive/Leadership team: 91%
- Other: 77%

Employee Engagement by Department

- Development/Fundraising: 78%
- Finance/Operations: 81%
- General administration/Support staff (not department-specific): 76%
- Grantmaking: 82%
- Human resources: 87%
- Information technology: 82%
- Marketing/Communications: 71%
- Programming/Direct service provider: 75%
- More than one: 77%
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The Wexner Foundation
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

ABOUT CULTURE AMP

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 impact, 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 effective employee feedback programs. Organizations that work with Culture Amp tap into the creativity and experience of over 1,200 innovative companies that put culture first.

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