Organization, Personnel, and Effectiveness Committee

Annual Employee Survey

Item 6b
February 10, 2026
Presented by: Aaron Brown (Quantum Workplace)

Item 6b

Annual Employee Survey

Subject

2025 Annual Workplace Assessment Update

Purpose

A discussion on the results of the 2025 Employee Engagement Survey – uncovering key insights, trends, and recommended areas of focus.

Recommendation and Fiscal Impact

To improve employee engagement and retention, it is recommended that the organization continue to focus on improving trust in leadership (which saw a significant improvement since 2024), confidence in the future of the organization, and career outlook.

Understanding Employee Engagement

Work

Team

Org
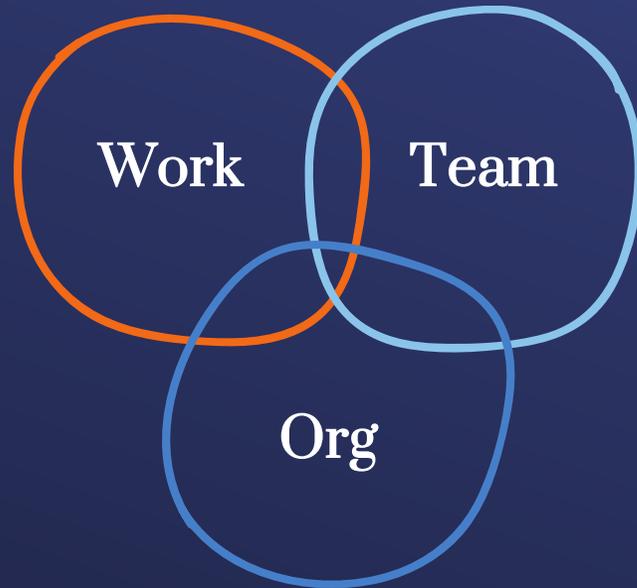
Employee engagement is defined as the strength of mental and emotional connection employees feel toward the work they do, their teams, and the overall organization.

Highly Engaged workplaces have:
- Lower absenteeism
- More productivity
- Lower turnover
- Higher customer satisfaction
- Greater employee satisfaction

Highly Engaged employees:
- Go out of their way to overachieve and help others
- Are proud to work for you
- Actively promote your organization
- Are committed to your overall goals
- Stay working for you in good and challenging times
- Feel inspired by their work

How do we measure employee engagement?

|	We use two types of survey items...	
	Engagement Outcomes	**High Impact Items**
What are they?	• Diagnostic in nature (non-actionable) • Indicate current levels of engagement • Stable from year to year	• Actionable • Influence the engagement outcomes • Unique across organizations and across surveys
Why do they matter?	• These items measure the behaviors we want to see from your employees (e.g., Intent to Stay, Advocacy)	• These items suggest how to take action to move the needle on engagement

Key Insights for 2025 Employee Survey

> **Participation increased while overall favorability held relatively steady:**
> - Confidence in leadership integrity saw the most significant improvement, increasing by more than 18 percentage points compared to 2024.
> - Perceptions of future strategy and communication from executives fell significantly.

> **Change management, communication, and career development perceptions continue to have room for improvement:**
> - **Change Management & Communication:** just 25% of respondents say they understand the reasons behind change (up slightly since 2024).
> - **Career Development:** 51% of respondents believe they are making progress in their development at this organization, yet fewer see opportunities for advancement.

> **Key opportunities exist across the following demographics:**
> - Leadership integrity perceptions increased across major work groups while change management perceptions varied.
> - Those stationed at HQ saw overall favorability increase by 2%, with perceptions measuring leadership integrity, pride, and advocacy among the most improved.
> - Managers report higher overall favorability compared to non-managers but are more at-risk for burnout. Over 40% of people managers say they are struggling or completely overwhelmed by the current workload.
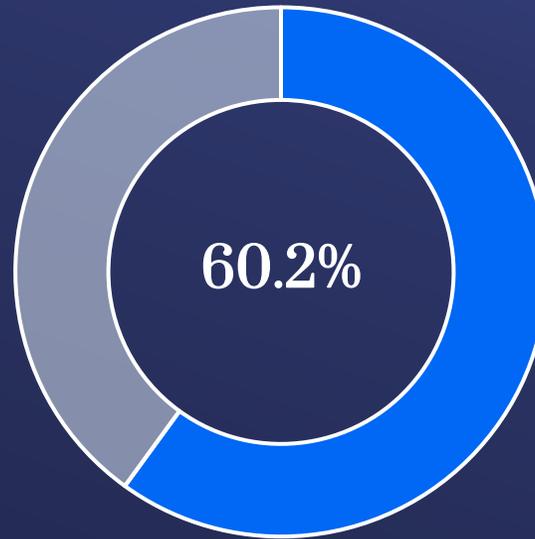
2025 Key Metrics

Response Rate
1071 of 1891

56.6%
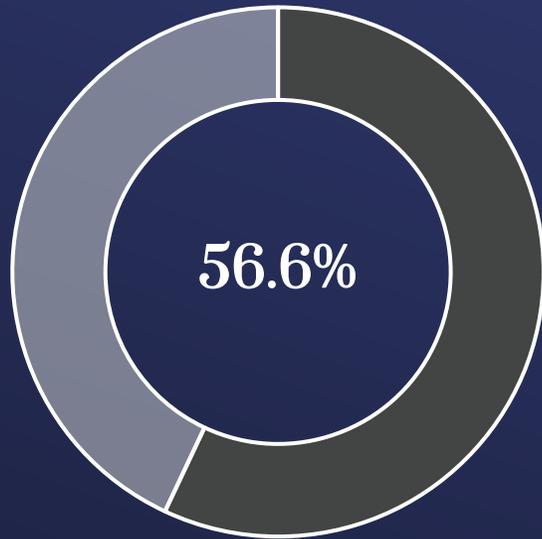
vs. 2024 (53.5%, *+3.1%*)
vs. Same Sized (1000-4999) (79.6%, *-23.0%*)

Overall % Favorable
(% Agree / Strongly Agree)

60.2%

vs. 2024 (60.2%, *-0.1%*)
vs. Same Sized (1000-4999) (67.6%, *-7.5%*)
vs. Utilities (62.3%, *-2.2%*)
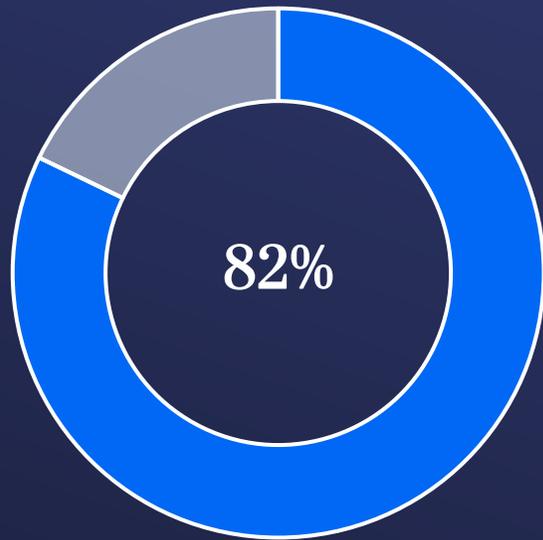
40

6pt Agreement Scaled Questions

397

Open-Ended Comments

Engagement Outcomes (% Favorable)

Each core diagnostic measurement of engagement increased in favorability since the last survey.

My work contributes meaningfully
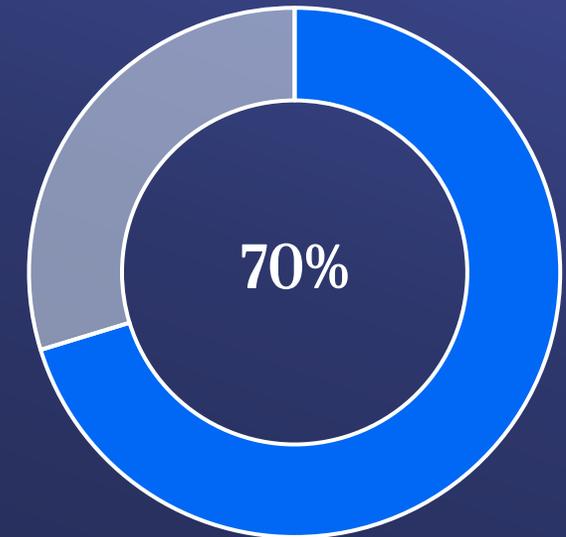to Metropolitan's success.

82%

vs. 2024 (*+0.5%*)

I am proud to work at MWD.

75%
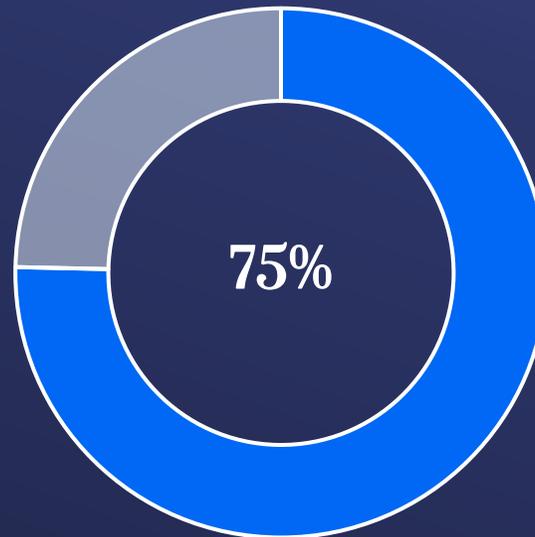
vs. 2024 (*+4.3%*)
vs. Same Sized (1000-4999) (*-3.3%*)
vs. Utilities (*+1.0%*)

I would recommend Metropolitan
as a place to work.

70%

vs. 2024 (*+3.6%*)
vs. Same Sized (1000-4999) (*-1.5%*)
vs. Utilities (*+3.3%*)

Top Trending Questions: 2024 vs. 2025

While confidence in executive leadership integrity increased significantly, perceptions related to future outlook and communication declined.

Question	2025 % Favorable	vs. 2024
** *The Executive Leadership* of Metropolitan demonstrates integrity.	45%	*+18.6%*
** *The Executive Leadership* of Metropolitan walk their talk (exhibit the behaviors and values they expect from employees).	36%	*+10.9%*
** My work is challenging in a positive way.	64%	*+4.8%*
I am proud to work at MWD.	75%	*+4.3%*
I would recommend Metropolitan as a place to work.	70%	*+3.6%*
** I trust that *the Executive Leadership* of Metropolitan has the best interest of Metropolitan's employees in mind.	35%	*-7.8%*
** *The Executive Leadership* of Metropolitan communicates effectively with the rest of the organization.	31%	*-7.5%*
My team, as a whole, has the required skills to perform our work effectively.	68%	*-7.4%*
I receive the training I need to perform my job effectively.	59%	*-4.8%*
My team meets regularly (at least once per month) to discuss our projects and workloads.	69%	*-3.8%*

**High Impact

The Executive Leadership was defined on the survey as: "The Executive Leadership of Metropolitan refers to our General Manager, Ethics Officer, General Counsel, General Auditor, Assistant General Managers, and Group Managers."

High Impact Questions

Question	2025 % Favorable	vs. 2024	vs. Utilities
My work is challenging in a positive way.	64%	*+4.8%*	*-5.3%*
I can confidently connect my team's performance goals to the strategic initiatives of MWD.	54%	*-1.9%*	--
I feel that I am making progress in my career (getting opportunities to learn new skills and grow professionally).	51%	*+0.8%*	*-13.8%*
Our culture supports my health and wellbeing.	50%	*+2.7%*	*-11.9%*
The Executive Leadership of Metropolitan demonstrates integrity.	45%	*+18.6%*	*-13.4%*
I have opportunities for advancement or promotion at MWD.	40%	*-1.4%*	*-8.5%*
The Executive Leadership of Metropolitan walk their talk (exhibit the behaviors and values they expect from employees).	36%	*+10.9%*	*-13.3%*
I trust that the Executive Leadership of Metropolitan has the best interest of Metropolitan's employees in mind.	35%	*-7.8%*	*-18.9%*
The Executive Leadership of Metropolitan communicates effectively with the rest of the organization.	31%	*-7.5%*	--
When the organization makes changes, I understand why.	25%	*+3.2%*	*-18.2%*

Supervisor Trends: 2024 vs. 2025

Perceptions of supervisors held relatively strong and overall were stable – 9 of 11 items are rated favorably by at least 70% of the population.
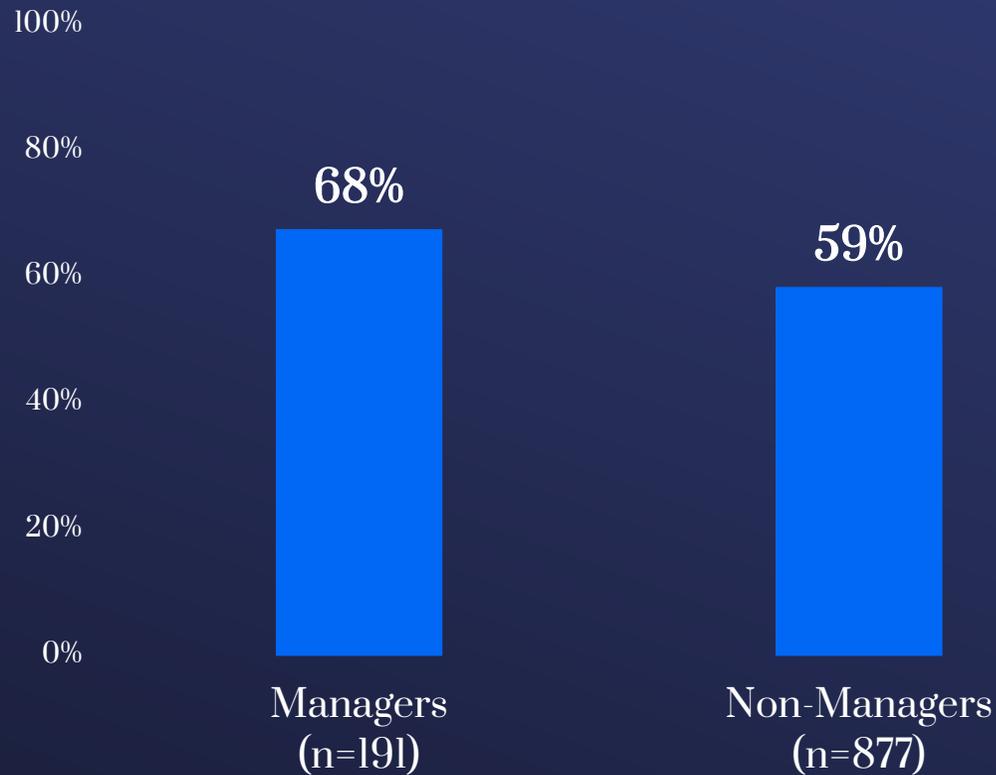
Question	2025 % Favorable	vs. 2024
My supervisor provides me with the proper amount of autonomy to do my job (given my skillset and experience).	83%	*-2.6%*
My supervisor has reasonable expectations for the quality of my work.	83%	*-0.5%*
My supervisor respectfully listens to me.	79%	*+1.4%*
The importance of respectful treatment of all team members is supported by my supervisor.	79%	*-1.6%*
I feel comfortable sharing my ideas with my supervisor.	76%	*-0.8%*
I feel comfortable bringing up issues and challenges to my supervisor.	74%	*-1.3%*
I feel valued by my supervisor.	72%	*-3.7%*
I am recognized by my supervisor for the positive contributions that I make.	71%	*-1.0%*
I meet with my supervisor regularly (at least once per month) to discuss the progress I am making with my work and projects.	71%	*+1.0%*
I have conversations (at least twice per year) with my supervisor regarding my professional development.	60%	*+0.3%*
My supervisor holds team members accountable for their work and responsibilities.	57%	*-1.0%*

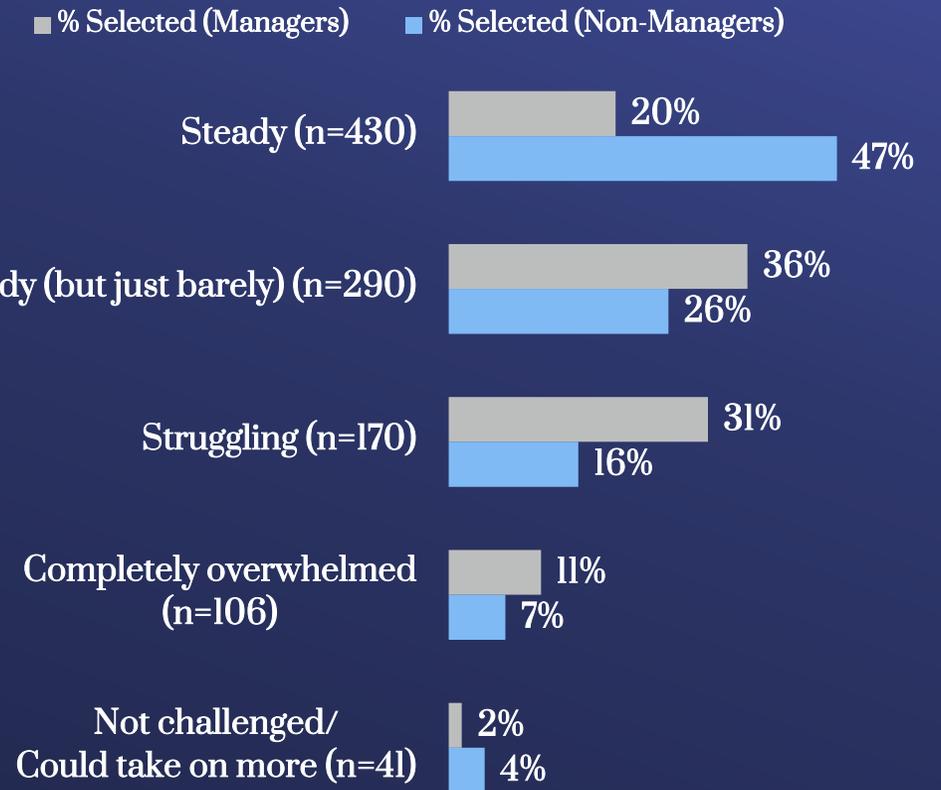*Supervisor* was defined on the survey as: "Your supervisor is the person you directly report to."

Top Differences between Managers and Non-Managers:
Managers are more favorable on areas measuring team dynamics and their own career development but are less favorable towards staffing and efficiency questions.

■ Managers (% Favorable)   ■ Non-Managers (% Favorable)

	Managers	Non-Managers
Diverse perspectives are valued on my team.	87%	63%
My team meets regularly (at least once per month) to discuss our projects and workloads.	85%	66%
My team explores innovative solutions to get work done (doesn't just rely on a "status quo" strategy).	74%	54%
I feel that I am making progress in my career (getting opportunities to learn new skills and grow professionally).	67%	47%
I have opportunities for advancement or promotion at MWD.	54%	37%
My team is adequately staffed to accomplish the work expected of us.	26%	34%
MWD processes are efficient.	13%	19%

Key Initiatives Implemented After 2024 Employee Survey

- **Employee Inspection Trips:** Trips began in April and help employees connect with other employees and better understand the complexity of MWD operations.

- **Desert Employee Appreciation:** April 9, 2025, at Iron Mountain

- **New Hire Training:** Hiring Manager Guide

- **Recruitment Timelines:** Process improvements have been identified and are in the process of being deployed districtwide.

- **Performance Evaluation Form:** The evaluation template was digitized with integrated workflow and reporting, streamlining the administration of the annual evaluation process and ensuring timely feedback.

- **Launch of "Process Matters" Initiative (April 2025):** An initiative led by SRI and directed by the General Manager.

Next Steps

- Recommended Focus Areas

- Tips for Taking Action

Continued Core Focus Areas for 2026

› **Trust in Leadership and Future Outlook (+Communication and Change Management):**
  - Model Transparent Change Communication
  - Leverage Increased Trust in Leadership
  - Empower Supervisors as Strategic Communicators
  - Circle Back on Key Changes

› **Career Outlook and Burnout:**
  - Encourage leaders and supervisors to better understand ideal growth paths for each employee via regular 1-on-1 conversations. Build out an approach owned mainly by the employee but also heavily influenced by guidance and coaching from their supervisor or other key leaders.

  - Encourage transparency in decision-making, especially concerning talent decisions (e.g., promotions, hirings, etc.). While specifics of individual situations cannot always be shared, supervisors can ensure all employees understand the process undertaken to arrive at those decisions.

Tips for Taking Action

- Top-down efforts should be coupled with local-level efforts

- Set clear expectations for next steps and hold leaders accountable for taking action

- Remember everyone plays a role in engagement

- Communicate about engagement throughout the year

Quantum Workplace — Research Findings

Lack of Time, Resources or Prioritization	21%
Leadership or Management	20%
Poor or Lack of Communication	16%
Unwillingness or Inability to Change	12%
Organizational Structure or Culture	10%

Identifying barriers to effective action ensures focusing on overcoming challenges and optimizing the effectiveness of your employee listening strategy.

Information from Quantum Workplace Panel Study: Taking Action on Employee Surveys

Questions

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
1928