



# Club Employees' Perspectives Report

Exceeding Member Expectations by Becoming an Employer of Choice

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## Exceeding Member Expectations by Becoming an Employer of Choice

Employee retention and recruitment continue to be the primary concerns of global club leaders. With increased competition for talent across all levels, creating a positive employee work experience is more important than ever.

The first comprehensive study of its kind, the Club Employees' Perspectives study, examines perceptions about how clubs can support their employees in reaching their full potential and what is needed to create a positive people and culture environment that attracts and retains employees.

In this report, GGA Partners provides a comprehensive view of employee experiences, identifies opportunities to enhance overall engagement, and compares the workplace environment to other industries. Our experts, with diverse knowledge and firsthand experience of these trends in action, offer insights into the data's implications and how leaders can leverage this information.

As we move into 2025, delivering an enhanced member experience will be more critical than ever, and we will need to rely on our greatest asset, our people, to deliver on this promise.



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## 2025 Employee Perspectives

### Key Measures of Club Employee Satisfaction and Loyalty

Overall, employees are satisfied with their experience and willing to recommend their club as a great place to work. Some differences across employee groups exist, with targeted opportunities for improvement available to club leaders.

By Liz McDowell, CPA, CA, CCM, Michael Gregory, and Eric Brey, Ph.D.

#### Key Insights

- Club employees are satisfied with their overall experience; employees under 35 have the lowest satisfaction with their workplace.
- Between managers, supervisors, and hourly employees, hourly employees rated their overall experience the lowest.
- Females and member-facing staff experience the highest rates of stress and harassment.

#### Establishing Industry Benchmarks

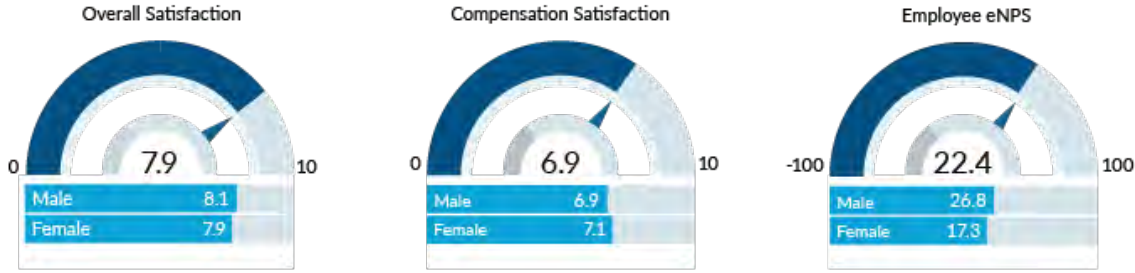
Understanding employee satisfaction is important, but how does your club measure up against its peers? Many clubs do not have clear benchmarks to evaluate their performance. The Club Employees' Perspectives ("CEP") research provides these benchmarks, allowing clubs to assess employee satisfaction across the industry. Leaders can utilize these insights to improve employee satisfaction, cultivate a more motivated workforce, improve retention, and boost overall employee satisfaction.

“Given the high levels of employee satisfaction, Clubs are establishing themselves as an employer of choice and are poised to find long term success with both their attraction and retention efforts.”

- Liz McDowell, Director, Strategy + Operations

**Employee Satisfaction.** Results across core satisfaction measures were encouraging (Figure 1), with participants reporting an overall satisfaction score of 7.9 out of 10. Notably, 46% of respondents were delighted, scoring 9 or 10 out of 10. Satisfaction levels varied among the sample, as Gen Z reported the lowest satisfaction at 7.5, while those with 20 or more years of experience reported the highest at 8.7. Furthermore, managers expressed the highest satisfaction at 8.3, whereas supervisors reported the lowest at 7.7, with hourly staff slightly above at 7.8. With 81% of respondents indicating they are satisfied, the results suggest a positive outlook for an industry striving to position itself as an employer of choice.

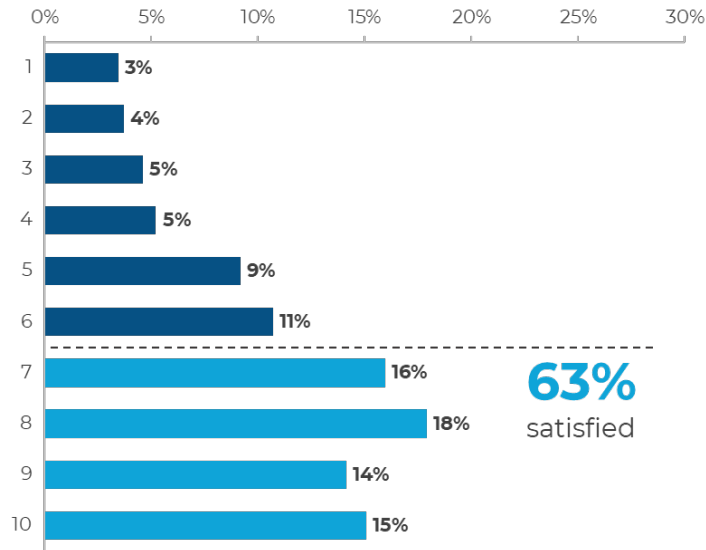
Figure 1: Satisfaction and Loyalty of Club Employees



**Compensation Satisfaction.** Compensation is an important aspect of employee satisfaction as it directly impacts motivation, retention, and morale. Notably, respondents have identified satisfaction with compensation as lagging behind other workplaces compared to their other experiences<sup>1</sup>. The results in Figure 2 indicate that only 63% of respondents were satisfied with overall compensation, with males reporting lower satisfaction than females (6.9 compared to 7.1, respectively). While hourly staff expressed the lowest satisfaction with their compensation (6.7), management reported significantly higher satisfaction in this area than other employee groups (7.4).

<sup>1</sup> Club Employees’ Perspectives Report: Exceeding Member Expectations by Becoming an Employer of Choice. Key Measures of Club Employee Satisfaction and Loyalty (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

Figure 2: Breakdown of Compensation Satisfaction



**Employee Commitment.** To better understand employee commitment levels, our research measured the employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) by asking respondents if they would recommend working at their club to friends and colleagues. Responses were encouraging for the industry overall, with an average eNPS of 22.4, which aligns with other hospitality and tourism careers. While overall scores were strong, as more than 77% of respondents indicated their willingness to recommend their clubs, there were significant variations in responses. Of concern is that females are considerably less likely to recommend their club than males (Figure 1) and supervisors are significantly less likely to recommend their club than their managerial and hourly counterparts (Figure 3).

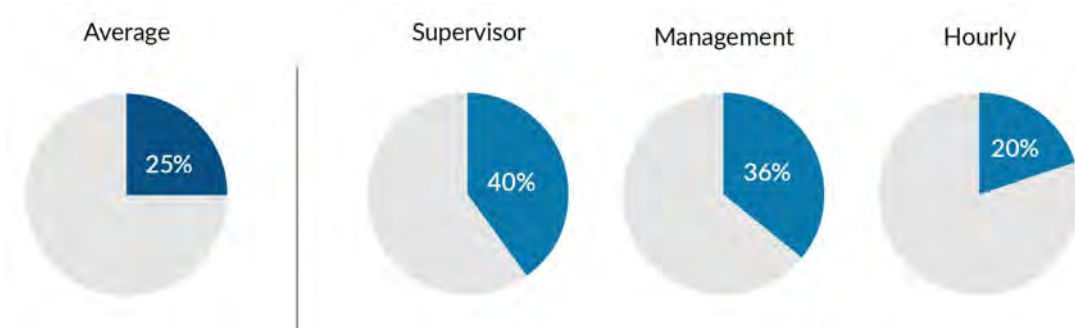
Figure 3: Employee Group Comparison of Commitment



## Employee Stress and Challenges

To further understand the workplace environment, our research examined the presence of both stress and workplace harassment. Identifying these pressure points allows employers to provide proactive support to improve well-being, productivity, and retention. While stress is often a workplace reality, only 25% of club employees feel this regularly. Compared to Gallup’s State of the Global Workplace<sup>2</sup>, 41% of global employees report this feeling. While supervisors (40%) and managers (36%) indicated stress levels closer to these results (Figure 4), hourly employees reported significantly lower levels.

Figure 4: Employee Group Comparison of Stress



Substantial differences based upon gender and position exist when considering instances of witnessing or experiencing harassment. Females report higher rates of harassment (25%) than their male colleagues (16%). Departments where employees are primarily member-facing reported higher rates of harassment, with 50% of food and beverage respondents witnessing or being harassed. These results are consistent with GGA’s Club Leaders<sup>3</sup> and Club Members’ Perspectives<sup>4</sup> research, where member behavior is seen as a regular challenge across the industry.

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With member-facing and female employees experiencing or witnessing harassment at elevated levels, opportunities exist to enhance the employee experience.

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<sup>2</sup> State of the Global Workplace: The Voice of the World’s Employees (Washington, D.C.: Gallup), 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Club Leaders’ Perspectives: Finding Success and Facing Challenges 2024 (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Club Members’ Perspectives: Insights into the Changing Needs and Wants of Private Club Members (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

## Workplace Environment Impacts

Both stress and instances of harassment can impact satisfaction levels, and results indicate that club employees are no different (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Impacts of Workplace Environment on Satisfaction and Loyalty

	Benchmark	Experience Regular Stress		Experience/Witness Harassment	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Satisfaction	7.9	6.4	8.4	6.7	8.2
Compensation	6.9	5.8	7.2	6.1	7.0
eNPS	22.4	-30.3	37.4	-19.3	30.4

Results demonstrate that regular stress impacts overall satisfaction. It is not surprising that both overall satisfaction and compensation satisfaction are significantly lower, but the effect on the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is substantial. Given stress is experienced at elevated levels by both managers and supervisors, these results indicate a specific opportunity for clubs to help retain their current and future leaders. Witnessing and/or experiencing harassment similarly has a negative effect on satisfaction measurements. Although the veracity of these impacts is more muted, results show an opportunity to help retain food and beverage staff and female employees due to their influence.

## The Club Leader’s Opportunity

Creating a workplace where employees feel valued, supported, and motivated doesn’t require a complete overhaul—small, strategic changes can make a significant impact. Organizations can enhance employee satisfaction and establish a reputation as a top employer by focusing on key areas such as feedback, work-life balance, and employer branding.

Simple organizational shifts to improve employee satisfaction include:

- 1. Provide Regular Feedback and Recognition.** Implement regular performance reviews, one-on-one meetings, and recognition programs to show appreciation for employees' work.
- 2. Strive for Work-Life Balance.** Promote work-life balance through flexible work arrangements, time-off policies, and wellness programs.
- 3. Foster a Positive Work Environment.** Develop a positive and supportive work culture by encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and open communication.
- 4. Expand Competitive Compensation and Benefits.** Offer competitive salaries, benefits packages, and opportunities for professional development.

**5. Continued Effective Leadership.** Build leadership skills that inspire and motivate employees at all levels of the organization.

Leaders can also improve employees' willingness to recommend their club as a great place to work by:

- 1. Build a Positive Employer Brand.** Develop and promote a strong employer brand through social media, employee testimonials, and other marketing channels.
- 2. Start with an Exceptional Candidate Experience.** Create a positive and efficient hiring process to attract top talent.
- 3. Continuously Engage Employees.** Continuously engage employees through surveys, pulse checks, and other feedback mechanisms.
- 4. Provide Public Recognition.** On social media and other public platforms, highlight the company's achievements and positive employee experiences.
- 5. Create Employee Advocacy Programs.** Encourage employees to share positive experiences about the company on social media and with their networks.

Simple organizational shifts are effective at enacting change but, more importantly, communicating to employees that they are essential to clubs can also be. Implementing these strategies can improve the employee experience, and by measuring the results, clubs can continue to become employers of choice.

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Visit <http://www.ggapartners.com/insights> to discover more about how effective strategy can improve employee satisfaction, explore insights from the Club Employees' Perspectives research, and learn how GGA Partners can help support your club's long-term success.





## 2025 Employee Perspectives

### Key Drivers to Attracting and Retaining the Best Talent

Attracting and retaining talent has never been more important. Clubs can become employers of choice by focusing on what matters most – key experience drivers.

By Eric Hutchison, Ph.D., Michael Gregory, and Eric Brey, Ph.D.

#### Key Insights

- Clubs can become employers of choice by identifying and prioritizing their employees' distinct wants and needs.
- Once employees enter their second year of employment, overall perceptions of the employee experience noticeably decline in most areas.
- Employees agree that clubs effectively foster a strong working environment, especially by creating a sense of belonging.

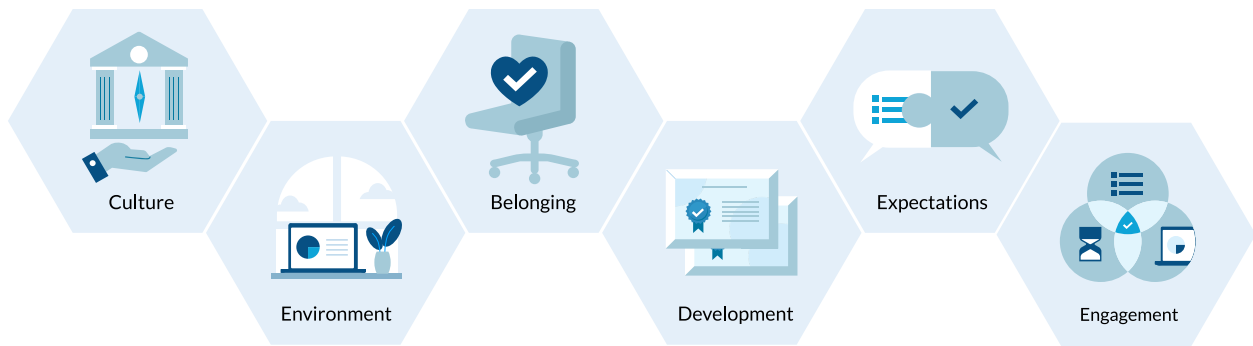
#### Employee Experience Dynamics

The employee experience is a critical factor in a club's long-term success. By fostering a positive and engaging work environment, clubs can boost employee morale, productivity, and retention. These elements are essential for meeting and exceeding increasingly high member expectations.

But what does it take to create an environment where employees can succeed and even thrive?

The Club Employees' Perspectives ("CEP") research provides insights into creating a positive working environment by focusing on six factors: belonging, engagement, expectations, development, environment, and culture (Figure 1).

Figure 1: GGA Employee Experience Model



Note: GGA reviewed extensive Organizational Psychology and Management research to identify factors and variables that align with the club industry's unique expectations.

Building and maintaining a quality employee experience requires a focus on the following workplace dynamics:

- **Culture:** Is a reflection of an organization's shared values and beliefs. It evolves over time and is shaped by the board, club leadership, members, and staff. Supporting a culture that aligns with employees sets the club up for long-term success.
- **Environment:** The physical and emotional conditions of the workplace communicate a message to employees. When workspaces reflect a positive club image, staff feel more valued and respected.
- **Belonging:** The sense of acceptance and value at work. This concept predicts employee retention, as those who belong experience lower stress, anxiety, and burnout, resulting in higher job satisfaction.
- **Development:** Employees who feel supported in developing their skills and abilities perform more effectively and experience greater long-term success.
- **Expectations:** Employees who clearly understand their expectations and how their work contributes to the club's mission can focus on their tasks more efficiently and confidently.
- **Engagement:** Focuses on employee commitment, enthusiasm, and dedication, which can predict organizational performance and success. Engaged employees tend to be more productive and are more likely to contribute positively to their teams.

These constructs are central for leaders because they influence employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. By prioritizing these areas, leaders cultivate a positive work environment and improve employee engagement and retention.

### Building a Successful Employee Experience

Leaders must concentrate on key elements of the employee experience to position a club as an employer of choice and help ensure long-term success.

**Manage Expectations:** It is important to manage expectations through clear communication and defined expectations. Overall, employees surveyed in the CEP study believe their talents are utilized and their skills are reflected in expected outcomes, as indicated by high agreement scores (4.4/5 and 4.3/5, respectively). Clubs can clarify and uphold expectations, particularly for new employees, by aligning the position description, discussions during interviews, onboarding, and performance evaluations. This approach provides a realistic preview of the role and ensures that employees remain aware of the expectations throughout their journey with the club.

**Provide Development Opportunities:** Providing professional development opportunities is a powerful way to boost employee morale and engagement. While CEP research indicates that, on average, 71% of club employees report feeling supported through development opportunities, training, management support, and employer concern for well-being, clubs can further enhance these perceptions. While differences exist among types and levels of employees, clubs can create growth opportunities by conducting training needs assessments, asking employees about their long-term goals, and then identifying development opportunities that align with their ambitions.

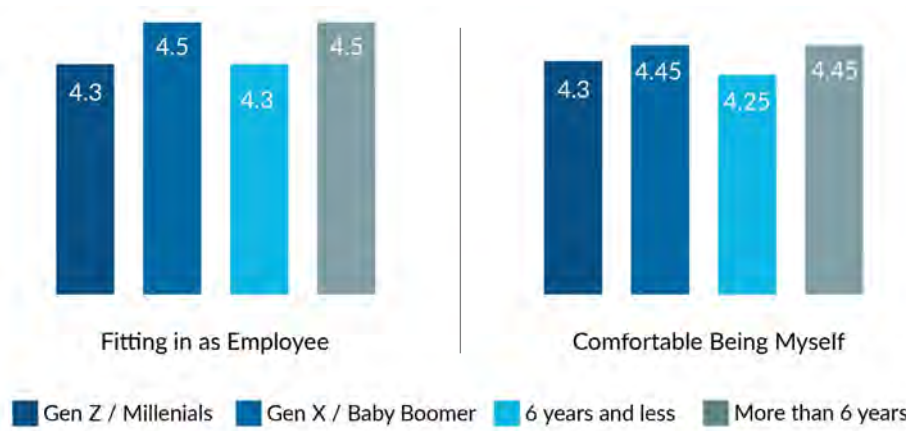
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By providing effective opportunities for professional development, employees can remain engaged in the dynamic club environment.

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**Create Belonging:** To foster a sense of belonging and enhance job satisfaction, productivity, and retention, clubs can cultivate feelings of connection and acceptance among employees. Results from our research show that employees perceive a strong sense of fitting in within the industry (4.4/5), with the most significant opportunity for improvement lying in showing concern for overall employee well-being (3.6/5).

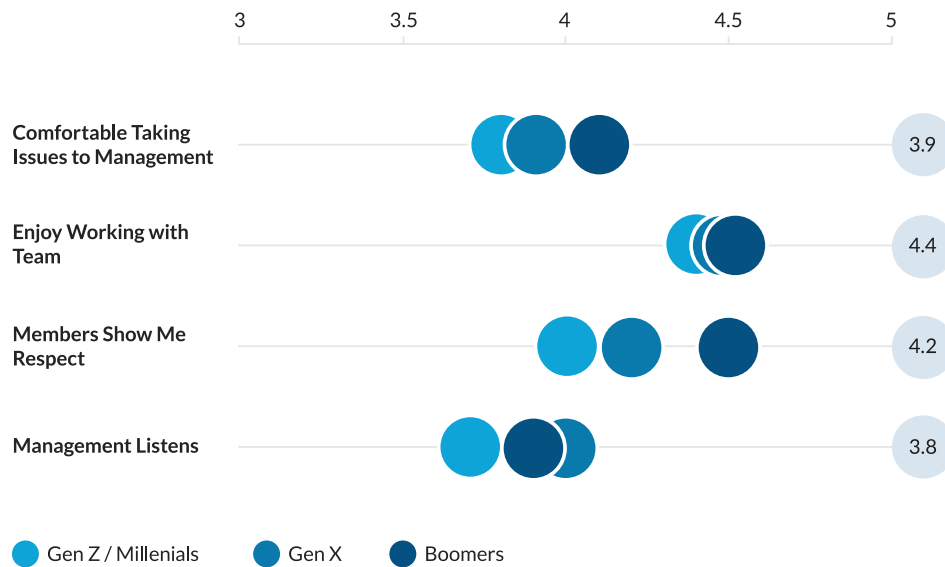
Figure 2: Generation and Length of Tenure Experience Comparison



However, differences arise when considering age and tenure; Gen Z and Millennials do not agree at the same levels as their older and more experienced colleagues, as shown in Figure 2. To build a sense of belonging, providing structured onboarding and facilitating meaningful connections through ongoing team bonding and collaboration is important. Leaders can empower employees by offering growth opportunities, recognizing achievements through employee of the month programs, and engaging them in the decision-making process, where appropriate.

**Emphasize a Positive Environment:** A positive and inclusive work environment supports employee well-being and fosters an effective workplace environment. This involves creating psychological safety through open communication, accountability, and viewing mistakes as opportunities for growth. Our findings in Figure 3 indicate that Gen Z and Millennials view the employee environment less favorably than their Gen X and Baby Boomer counterparts. This suggests that generational challenges exist not only among members but also within the workforce as a whole<sup>5</sup>. Considering the industry-wide challenge surrounding member behavior and the impact this can have on employees<sup>6</sup>, leaders must actively involve members to help ensure a positive working environment for all employees.

**Figure 3: Generation Comparison of Work Environment**



**Monitor Employee Engagement:** Creating a positive and supportive workplace is fundamental for employee retention and exceptional member service. From the joy of working with a team to club members showing respect, monitoring engagement allows clubs to identify issues early and find ways to enhance retention and boost overall service quality for members. Our findings reveal a significant satisfaction gap between the first and second years of employment, suggesting a

<sup>5</sup> Club Members’ Perspectives: Insights into the Changing Needs and Wants of Private Club Members (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Club Leaders’ Perspectives: Finding Success and Facing Challenges 2024 (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

"honeymoon phase" during onboarding. This underscores the need for clubs to strengthen post-onboarding engagement strategies to maintain employee satisfaction throughout their tenure.

**Build a Strong Culture:** A club's culture, or personality, is shaped by shared values, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes, both organically and with leadership support. Understanding the critical aspects of culture is fundamental to the employee experience. Perceived turnover has proven to be a challenging metric, with an average rating of 3.0 out of 5. This rating, indicating indifference (or a "neither agree nor disagree" response), suggests potential concerns. This neutral perception is significant because it can reflect workplace stability, impact member experience, and be an early warning sign for issues such as burnout or limited career growth.

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Club culture defines the club's working environment and significantly includes how employees see their roles, organization, and overall experience.

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### The Club Leader's Opportunity

Leaders who focus on the dynamics of the Employee Experience Model can readily adopt strategies to enhance the employee experience and be better equipped to attract, retain, and motivate top talent.

To prioritize enhancing the employee experience, leaders can begin with the following steps:

1. **Understand the Employee Experience:** Like your members, leaders must address key touchpoints and milestones in the employee lifecycle. The experience mapping process identifies areas for improvement, aligns employees with club goals, and optimizes your people and culture strategy to enhance the club's brand as seen by employees.
2. **Identify Moments of Truth:** Pinpoint experiences that significantly impact employee satisfaction, both positively and negatively. By locating critical employee touchpoints, leaders can reduce turnover, improve service quality, and enhance employee satisfaction and engagement.
3. **Gather Feedback:** Use listening sessions, team meetings, and surveys to understand employee perspectives. Engaging a trusted external partner to manage employee surveys can boost confidentiality and improve response rates, resulting in more accurate and actionable insights.
4. **Implement Changes:** Use feedback to improve the employee experience by tackling challenges and offering opportunities for further development. Align initiatives and performance goals with employee needs and the club's mission and monitor the impact of changes on employee satisfaction and overall performance.

By prioritizing key drivers of employee experience—belonging, engagement, expectations, development, environment, and culture—clubs can create a workplace that attracts and retains top talent. By proactively aligning workplace initiatives with employee needs; leaders can enhance retention, boost performance, and strengthen organizational culture, ultimately elevating the member experience.

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## 2025 Employee Perspectives

### How Clubs Outperform Other Career Opportunities

Clubs offer a preferred working environment for employees. Leaders can use these insights to recruit, retain, and build a pipeline of talented people by focusing on the strengths of our industry.

By John Hanrahan, Michael Gregory, and Eric Brey, Ph.D.

#### Key Insights

- Across 19 measured attributes, employees indicated that clubs provided better working conditions, with only compensation and promotion opportunities rated better in other workplaces.
- Between managers, supervisors, and hourly employees, hourly employees often rated their experience below those of managers and supervisors.
- Leaders and employees generally agree on what employees want. However, club leaders prioritize training, scheduling, and dedicated spaces significantly more than employees.

#### Recruiting and Retaining Talent

Attracting and retaining top talent is more critical than ever for club leaders<sup>7</sup>, especially as competition for skilled employees intensifies in 2025. With other employers continually raising the bar on benefits and workplace culture, the true differentiator lies in understanding what genuinely drives employee satisfaction and loyalty. The Club Employees' Perspectives ("CEP") research goes beyond satisfaction, offering valuable insights into how clubs compare to other hospitality employers and identifying opportunities to enhance the employee experience.

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<sup>7</sup> *Club Leaders' Perspectives: Finding Success and Facing Challenges 2024* (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

### The Club Employee Experience

As employers, private clubs have made significant changes to successfully attract and retain employees. Our ongoing Club Leaders' Perspectives research has tracked these changes over the past three years, and the CEP results show that clubs are finding success. Employees with experience outside of clubs were asked to select where various employment dynamics differed to understand how successful clubs have been. Each respondent was given three options: better in clubs, not better or worse, and better in other jobs.

Figure 1: Comparison of Workplace Conditions



**Workplace Conditions.** In assessing the work environment, Figure 1 indicates that most clubs perform better in most areas. Employees rated the favorable working conditions (45% compared to 14%) and support from supervisors (43% compared to 16%) superior to other workplaces. These results indicate that leaders have cultivated an atmosphere where employees feel safe and supported, which can be acknowledged and used to attract potential new hires and retain existing employees. While no workplace condition dynamics were superior to clubs, most respondents noted that the remaining dynamics, such as manageable workloads (48%) and environmental safety (48%), were comparable across workplace settings.

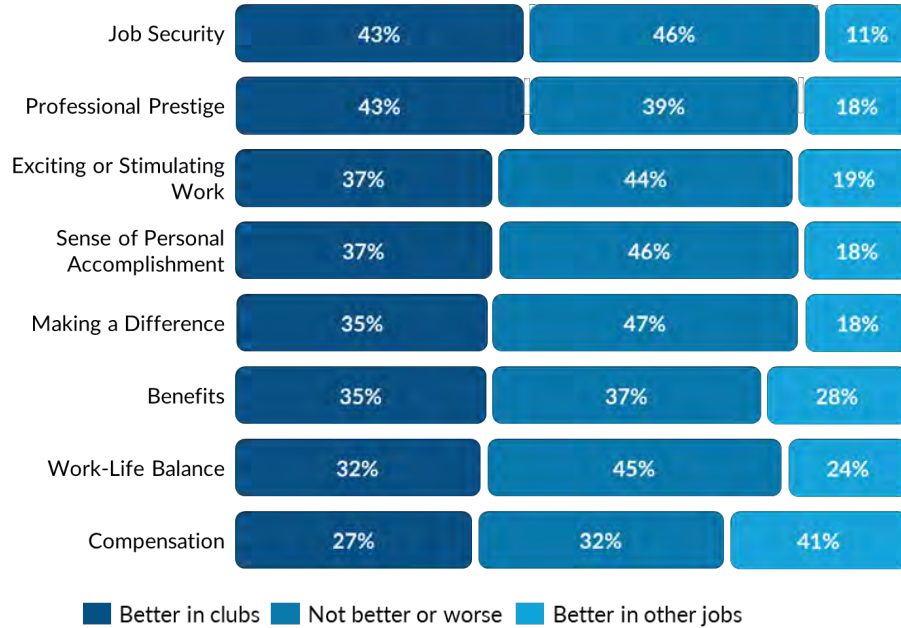
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Clubs are providing a preferred working environment, and these results can be leveraged to attract and retain employees.

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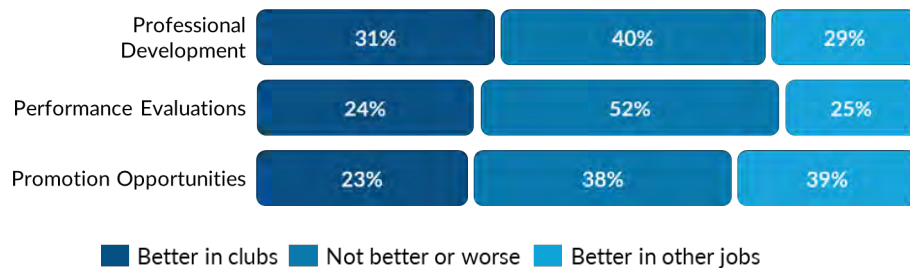
**Personal Fulfillment.** Club employees indicated that the aspects of personal fulfillment in clubs are generally better than in other jobs (Figure 2). Job security (43% compared to 11%) and professional prestige (43% compared to 18%) are substantially better in clubs than in other hospitality occupations. The most notable difference is the compensation rating compared to different jobs, where a difference of -14 % indicates employees see stronger pay opportunities outside of clubs. Like workplace conditions, the remaining dynamics were comparable across various employment settings.

**Figure 2: Comparison of Personal Fulfillment**



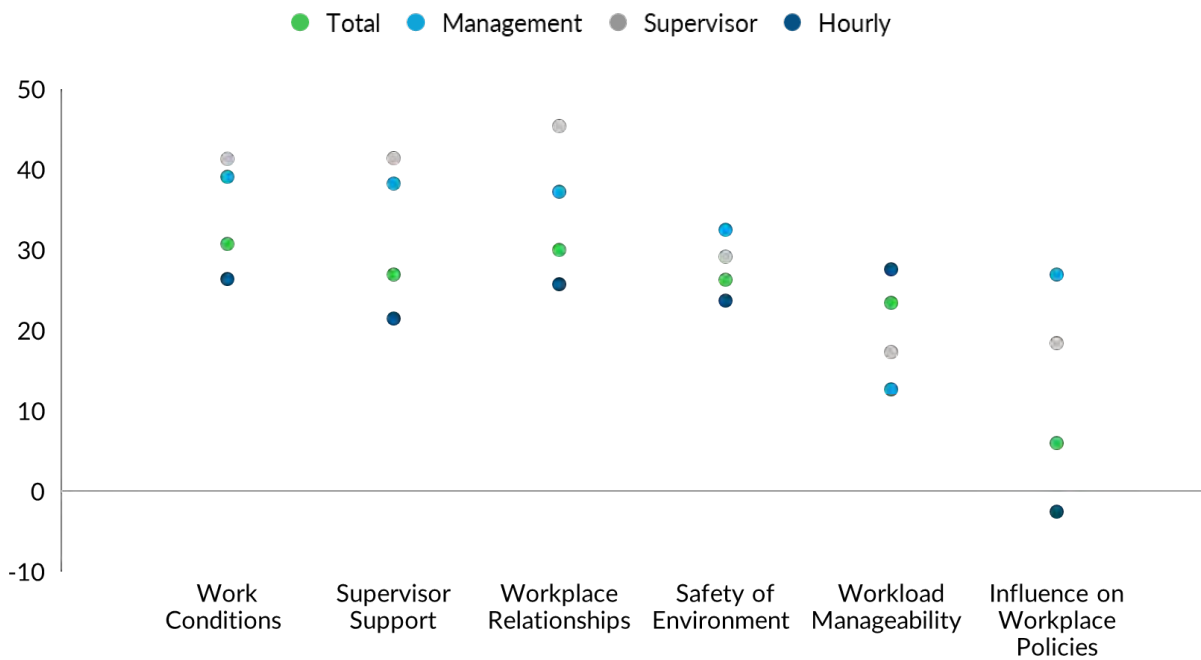
**Performance Opportunities.** Of the three areas assessed, this represents the most significant opportunity for improvement. Results in Figure 3 show that while professional development is better in other jobs, performance evaluations and promotion opportunities were rated below other jobs. Promotion opportunities (-16%) were similar to compensation in that this is one area where employees see better opportunities outside of clubs.

**Figure 3: Employee Performance Recognition**



**Employee Differences.** While clubs are experiencing success, especially for managers, differences persist across employee classifications. This is especially true for hourly employees, who indicated a lower level of preference for clubs over other hospitality careers. Across work environment (7 out of 8), personal fulfillment (7 out of 8 dimensions), and performance opportunities (3 out of 3), hourly employees showed the lowest levels of preference for clubs. Figure 4 visualizes a sample of these differences, with values calculated by subtracting the % of those who said outside of clubs is better from those who indicated clubs are better. Any value above '0' is positive for clubs, where negative values indicate opportunities for improvement.

**Figure 4: Employee Group Differences**



Results reveal a range of disparities among management, supervisors, and hourly employees. Managers rated work-life balance and workload manageability the lowest among all employee groups. Supervisors had varied assessments, with job security, work conditions, supervisor support, and workplace relationships receiving the highest ratings among employee groups. Only compensation and promotion opportunities were deemed lower in clubs by all employees, representing the greatest potential for improvement.

### Comparing Leaders and Employees

There are similarities and differences between the results of the CEP and what leaders believe is necessary to improve the employee experience<sup>8</sup>. Except for performance-based bonuses, where employees selected this attribute at a higher level (46% to 41%), leaders indicated the importance of these attributes at a higher level and, in many instances, a significantly higher level.

Figure 5: Club Leader and Employee Differences

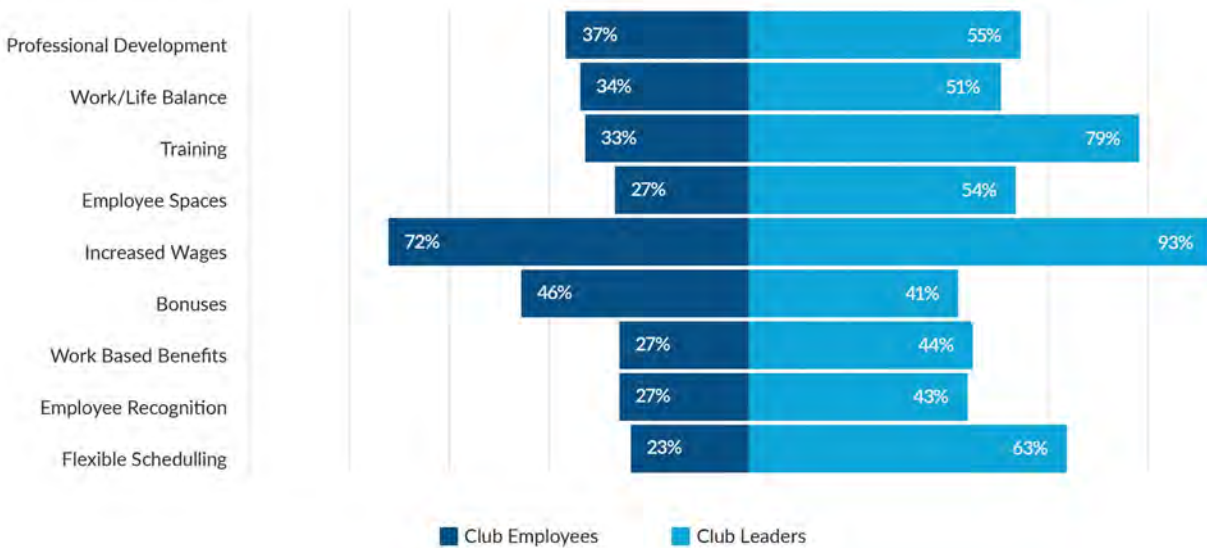


Figure 5 shows the greatest differences are found in the perceived desire for training (46%), flexible scheduling (40%), and the importance of employee spaces (27%). Even wages show a 19% difference between the percentages of employees and leaders who view this as necessary for improving the employee experience. When examining these results, it is important to note that these employee experience attributes are essential, as their removal could elicit adverse reactions. This is especially true for training, where employees place significantly less emphasis on enhancing the experience than leaders. These results indicate that current training can be improved or better aligned with employee needs.

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To help understand the needs of your employees, leaders need to understand which efforts would be most successful for their individual club.

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<sup>8</sup> Club Leaders' Perspectives: Finding Success and Facing Challenges 2024 (West Palm Beach, FL: GGA Partners), 2024.

## The Club Leader's Opportunity

Concerns exist about clubs' ability to attract and retain staff, and the results of the CEP indicate that ongoing efforts to improve the employee experience are yielding positive outcomes. However, we expect that enhancing the employee experience will continue to be a priority for club leaders. To support these initiatives, leaders can focus on the following:

1. **Hourly Employee Emphasis.** For leaders, recognizing that hourly employees view clubs less favorably than management raises the question, "How can we improve the employee experience for this unique and important employee group?" A few avenues include providing a clear path to promotion, presenting opportunities for performance-based pay, and increasing compensation (where appropriate relative to the market).
2. **Gather Employee Insight.** Club leaders can leverage tailored resources and strategies informed by employee surveys to identify the unique needs of their employees across different departments and groups. Striking a balance between enhancing the employee experience and maximizing return on investment requires small yet impactful actions informed by employee preferences that can boost employee satisfaction and retention.
3. **Celebrate Successes.** Lean into CEP results that provide unbiased, quantifiable support that clubs are a great place to work when recruiting new employees. Emphasizing the benefits of clubs, such as job security, prestige, working conditions, and management support, helps create a compelling story to attract employees. While improvement opportunities will always exist, these results can be used in your current or next recruiting cycle.

Leaders who focus on understanding the specifics of what their employees want will be able to enhance the employee experience and improve recruitment and retention outcomes.

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Visit <http://www.ggapartners.com/insights> to discover more about how effective strategy can help clubs be a preferred place to work, explore insights from the Club Employees' Perspectives research, and learn how GGA Partners can support your club's long-term success.





## Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all participating clubs for their invaluable support and commitment to surveying their employees. Your collaboration has been instrumental in enabling us to gain a deeper understanding of the daily experiences and perspectives of our most critical assets—our people. This study’s insights and outcomes would not have been possible without your partnership, and we remain forever appreciative of your contributions to its success.

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