

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

Board of Directors

Human Resources and Labor Relations
Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 9:30 am

Microsoft Teams Meeting
Join on your computer, mobile app
Click here to join the meeting
Meeting ID: 253 704 640 497
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Or call in (audio only)
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Phone Conference ID: 672 715 777#

1.	Call to Order	Jed Ross, Chairperson
2.	Roll Call	Michelle Rhodd, Board Secretary
3.	HR Update	Amber Jackson, Chief People Officer and EVP
4.	Executive Session*	Jed Ross, Chairperson
5.	Adjournment	Jed Ross, Chairperson

This meeting is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at opengovoffice@dc.gov.

¹The DC Water Board of Directors may go into executive session at this meeting pursuant to the District of Columbia Open Meetings Act of 2010, if such action is approved by a majority vote of the Board members who constitute a quorum to discuss certain matters, including but not limited to: matters prohibited from public disclosure pursuant to a court order or law under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(1); terms for negotiating a contract, including an employment contract, under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(2); obtain legal advice and preserve attorney-client privilege or settlement terms under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(4)(A); collective bargaining negotiations under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(5); facility security matters under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(9); personnel matters under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(10); third-party proprietary matters under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(11); train and develop Board members and staff under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(12); adjudication action under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(13); civil or criminal matters or violations of laws or regulations where disclosure to the public may harm the investigation under D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(14); and other matters provided under the Act.



Board of Directors

Human Resources and Labor Relations Committee Meeting – Executive Summary November 12, 2025 / 9:30am

Human Resources Update

DC Water's Enterprise Human Capital Strategy focuses on attracting, developing, and retaining talent to fulfill its mission. The strategy includes initiatives in various areas such as compensation, succession planning, performance management, and talent acquisition. Below are updates on a variety of People & Talent topics that have occurred since the last report.

I. Report on Response to 2025 Employee Engagement Survey

Overview

In keeping with DC Water's core values of reliability, accountability, and transparency, the People & Talent Division undertook a comprehensive, organization-wide initiative in response to the Spring 2025 Employee Engagement Survey. This initiative was designed to rigorously translate employee feedback into measurable actions that foster trust, strengthen engagement, and support a culture of continuous improvement.

Key Achievements & Actions

1. Formation of the Survey Response Committee

- Established a dedicated People & Talent committee to provide structured oversight and ensure accountability throughout the survey response process.
- Developed and implemented the "Now-Next-Later" framework, enabling the prioritization of immediate actions, medium-term initiatives, and long-term strategies.
- Collaborated with each organizational cluster to develop tailored working plans addressing specific feedback themes identified in the survey.

2. Cluster-Specific Action Planning

- Partnered with cluster leaders to ensure action plans were practical, measurable, and aligned with DC Water's strategic objectives.
- Embedded accountability by assigning clear ownership for each action item within clusters, promoting sustained follow-through and measurable progress.

3. Employee Engagement Town Halls (August 2025)

- Facilitated a series of in-person and virtual town halls across multiple DC Water locations to transparently communicate progress and next steps.
- Structured sessions to directly address survey findings and outline DC Water's strategic response, including:

- Cluster-specific all-hands meetings and Senior Executive Team site visits to promote open dialogue and leadership visibility.
- Announcement of the reinstatement of telework for the COO cluster, addressing employee concerns around flexibility.
- Promotion of the Employee Appreciation Tailgate event to reinforce recognition and boost morale.
- CEO David L. Gadis announced the reopening of the HQO side door, responding to direct survey feedback on this item.

Key Achievements

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 - Promotion of the Employee Appreciation Tailgate event to reinforce recognition and boost morale.
 - CEO David L. Gadis announced the reopening of the HQO side door, responding to feedback regarding accessibility and convenience.

This initiative demonstrates DC Water's ongoing commitment to listening and acting on employee feedback. The People & Talent Division has served as a strategic partner in driving cultural alignment, enhancing employee satisfaction, and ensuring that feedback leads to tangible action. These efforts reinforce our dedication to continuous improvement and organizational excellence.

P&T Open House

The successful hosting of an Open House event for our People and Talent Department at DC Water. The open house event was held on September 24th aimed to invite all colleagues to meet the members of our People and Talent Department, which includes Labor Relations, Compliance, Talent Acquisition, Benefits, Compensation, Learning and Development Team and Human Resources Business Partners. The setup resembled a career fair, with each department having its own table. This format allowed for

engaging opportunities, including games and Q&A sessions, where attendees could learn about the day-to-day functions of each department.

Colleagues had the chance to discover training opportunities, understand benefits and the role of our HR Business Partners, and learn what the Talent Acquisition team does beyond recruitment. The event saw participation from our Senior Executive Team members, which significantly enhanced the overall experience and engagement. Snacks were provided and a survey was distributed at the end of the event, which yielded overwhelmingly positive feedback. Many attendees expressed interest in making this an annual event. Based on the success, we plan to host the open house again next year, continuing our efforts to foster engagement and build better relationships with our colleagues.

The success of the event was made possible through collaboration with various team members across the People and Talent Department, as well as OMAC, which helped promote the event and document it through photos and surveys. In conclusion, the Learning and Development Team management of this initiative showcased our commitment to enhancing communication and collaboration within DC Water. The positive feedback reinforces our goal of continuous engagement and support for our colleagues.

II. Benefits

Wellness Report

Achievements & Metrics:

In September, employee engagement in wellness activities was 14%, which is lower than previous months. This decrease aligns with the reduced number of sessions offered during the month.

In October, we hosted our annual flu shot clinics across three sites. Participation was notably lower this year, with 48 employees vaccinated, compared to 119 participants last year. This is related to our ability, or lack there of, to communicate our initiatives to the staff.

We also held our Open Enrollment Health Fair, which was a major success as 332 employees attended, marking an all-time record for attendance.

Overall, October showed a strong rebound in wellness engagement. With a wide range of classes and events offered throughout the month, we achieved a 57% engagement rate, reflecting strong participation and employee interest in our wellness initiatives. Looking Ahead

We have a robust schedule planned for the upcoming months, including ongoing workout classes such as yoga, Pilates, and strength training, along with several special wellness sessions designed to support employees during the holiday season.

As we approach the holidays, a time that can often bring added stress and competing priorities, we're prioritizing whole-person wellbeing. Our upcoming sessions on mindful eating during the holidays and managing mental health during the holiday season are intended to help employees maintain balance across all aspects of wellness: physical, financial, and emotional. These programs reinforce our continued commitment to supporting employees' health and wellbeing, especially during a time of year when self-care can easily take a back seat.

The Annual Physical Campaign remains open through December 5, 2025, with all physicals required to be completed by November 30, 2025. The Health Risk Assessment Campaign is also underway and will close on December 5, 2025.

III. Learning & Development

Successor Academy Program-2025

In alignment with our succession planning efforts, the Learning and Development Team launched the "Successor Academy" program on May 14, 2025. This initiative aimed to advance identified successors on their career growth journeys while equipping them with the essential skills and knowledge needed for future leadership roles.

The program was held on May 14, 2025, and ended on September 10,2025. The program emphasized DC Waters' six enterprise-wide skills critical for effective leadership.

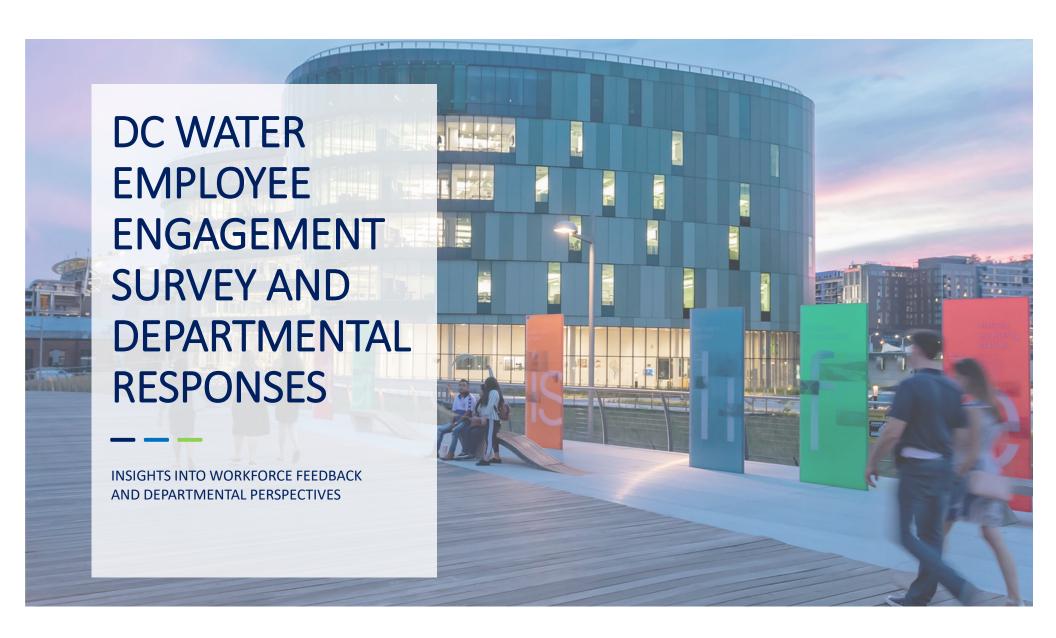
Each participant followed a personalized learning path, completing courses outlined in their individualized development plans. Each month there was an office hours schedule which was an opportunity for the successors to join the virtual session for questions, provide feedback and share their experiences.

Monthly virtual office hours provided successors with opportunities to ask questions, give feedback, and share experiences, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Participants who completed all learning path courses were formally acknowledged, with additional recognition for those who dedicated the most hours to the program.

The Successor Academy not only facilitated the development of our future leaders but also extended access to learning content until June 2026, ensuring ongoing growth and support for the participants.

The Successor Academy program has been a significant step forward in our commitment to succession planning at DC Water. By investing in our identified successors, we are building a stronger leadership pipeline that will contribute meaningfully to the organization's future success.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND GOALS



Overview of Survey Findings

The presentation summarizes key insights from the Employee Pulse Survey and departmental engagement efforts organization-wide.

Aligning Executive Leadership

Sharing findings with leadership helps unify approaches to addressing employee concerns and workplace culture challenges.

Goals for Transparency and Development

The goal is to ensure transparency, promote fairness, and support employee development through initiatives and collaboration.

SURVEY OVERVIEW AND PARTICIPATION

SURVEY BACKGROUND

Pilot Phase (Nov 2024 – Jan 2025)

A preliminary survey was piloted with the Senior Executive Team (SET) and key Leadership personnel to assess clarity, relevance, and alignment with organizational goals.

Pilot survey tested at the Leadership Retreat in Nov 2024 with 209 Respondents

Focus Areas Identified

Through leadership input and workforce insight, four key focus areas were prioritized:

Culture, Leadership, Performance Management, and Communication & Feedback.

Stakeholder Engagement

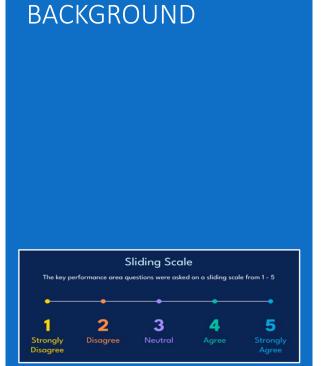
After testing the Pilot Survey, the refined survey was socialized with Union Leadership for transparency and alignment with broader workforce interests.

Their feedback informed refinements and helped build trust and buy-in ahead of full deployment.

Refinement & Calibration

Survey questions were refined to ensure they were inclusive, actionable, and clearly worded.

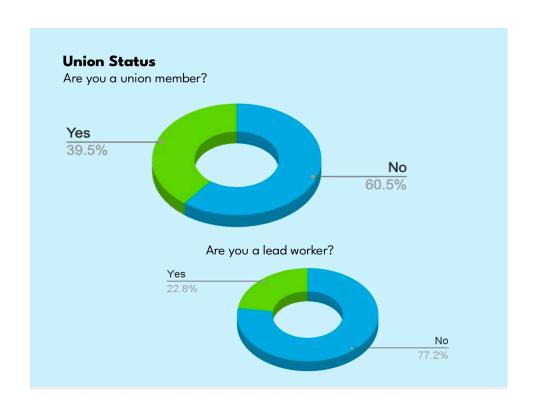
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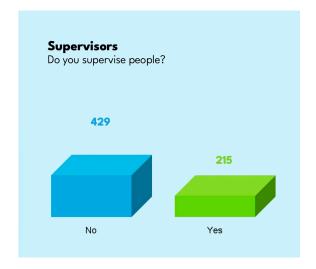


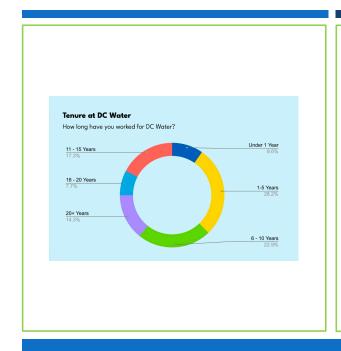
SURVEY

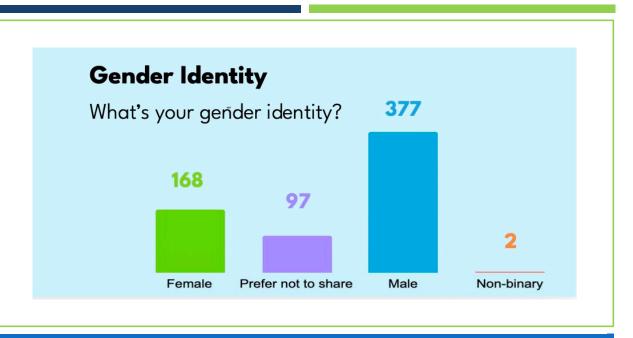


SURVEY PARTICIPATION INFORMATION









SURVEY PARTICIPATION INFORMATION



3.9

Average overall score for four key focus areas

OVERALL SCORE

SURVEY OVERVIEW



Statement	Score
I feel comfortable speaking up about issues that affect my job	3.9
I am informed about decisions that affect my work	3.6
I receive transparent and proactive communications that are relevant to my job	3.9
My manager and I have open and honest dialogue	4.2
My performance reviews are fair and appropriate	3.6
I know what is expected of me at work	4.2
I get immediate feedback about my performance	3.6
There are professional growth and career development opportunities for me here at DC Water	3.4
The Senior Leaders value people as their most important resource	3.3
I get the recognition I need from my manager	3.8
I have the communication I need from my manager to get my job done	4
My manager values me as an important resource	4
I am proud to work here.	4.3
The salary and benefits at DC Water meet me and my family's needs.	3.7
I enjoy working with my team	4.4
I feel accepted by my coworkers.	4.4
I understand how my job helps DC Water achieve success.	4.6

SURVEY STATEMENTS

KEY STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

STRENGTHS IDENTIFIED IN THE SURVEY



Employee Pride and Mission Alignment

Employees feel proud working at the company and understand how their roles align with organizational goals.



Strong Managerial Support

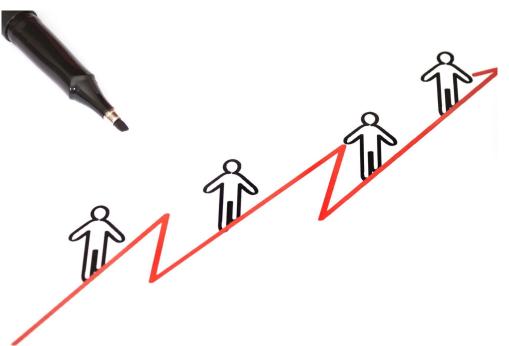
Direct managers are praised for effective communication, support, and constructive feedback practices.



High Department Engagement

IT and Marketing & Communications departments consistently show high engagement and strong leadership.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



Communication and Leadership

Communication breakdowns and leadership quality concerns highlight the need for transparency and fairness improvements.

Career Development and Pay

Employees feel frustrated due to limited career growth and perceived pay disparities in the organization.

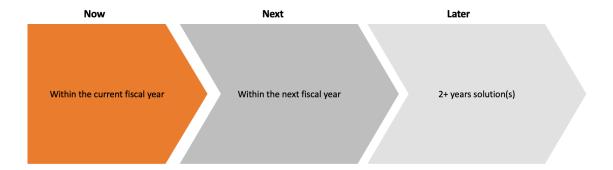
Recognition and Work-Life Balance

Lack of employee recognition and dissatisfaction with telework flexibility affect overall job satisfaction.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

NOW, NEXT, LATER

Prioritizes work, communicate effectively and manage expectations by visually organizing projects across different time horizons.



ORGANIZATIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEY RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

- Onsite Town Halls (8/18–8/20) Core theme:
 Embracing Change: Building a Stronger Future
 Together
- Reinstituted telework for the COO cluster
- EVP Led All-Hands (varied by department)
- SET Site Visits (rotating campuses)
- Employee Appreciation Tailgate (9/17)
- Reopening of the side door to enhance accessibility

Leadership Engagement

Increasing visibility and encouraging employee engagement

DEPARTMENTAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



CAO

Survey results shared with directors and managers.

Departmental meetings held:

- Customer Care (6/18)
- Facilities (9/23)



Engineering

All Hands (9/3) introduced Acting COO.

Direct Q&A with leadership encouraged open dialogue.



OGLA

Leadership met with teams to reflect on survey results.

Emphasis on aligning with organizational values and staff support.



P&T, Labor & Compliance

Hosted Meet & Greet (9/24) and Screening Day (7/9).

Launched Successor Academy via LinkedIn Learning.

Developing training for people managers (launch by year-end).

BUILDING ON FEEDBACK



COO Office

Q1 FY26 All Hands to address key organizational topics.

Task force formed to review desk audits and compensation equity.

Reinforced commitment to fairness and transparency.



P&T Ongoing Engagement

Office coverage maintained 5 days/week.

Job rotations to bridge office and field staff experiences.

Enhanced wellness support and employee development opportunities.



Looking Ahead:

Continued emphasis on collaboration, communication, and culture.

NOW: IMMEDIATE AND SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (FY 2025)

Town Hall Meetings

Host bi-annual town halls featuring leadership at multiple locations to foster communication and engagement.

Professional Development Initiatives

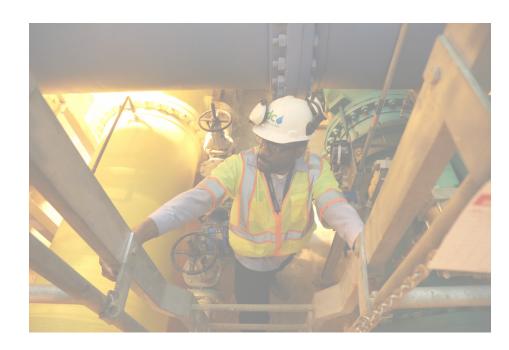
Implemented Success Academy and LinkedIn Learning to support employee growth and succession planning.

Onsite Rotations and Meet & Greets

Onsite rotations and after-meeting activities to build connections between office and field staff.

Employee Recognition Enhancement

Increase On-the-Spot Award amounts to better recognize and motivate employee contributions.



NEXT: MID-TERM ACTIONS (FY 2026)

Performance Management

Align Authority's performance evaluation process and goals with the Board directed goals for the CEO.

Employee Engagement

Reimagine Employee engagement to effectively reach all employees.

AI-Powered Tools for Efficiency

Al tools like Copilot and ChatGPT will be used to enhance operational efficiency and manage employee lifecycle.



LATER: LONG-TERM ACTIONS (2+ YEARS)

Organizational Calendar & Survey

An organizational calendar will track activities, and the People and Talent team will manage regular engagement surveys.

Balanced Goals and Competencies

Implement a 50/50 split between goals and competencies to ensure holistic employee evaluation.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Use cluster-specific data to align evaluations with organizational priorities and employee contributions.



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY AND LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



Commitment to Work Environment

DC Water is dedicated to maintaining a transparent, fair, and supportive workplace culture for all employees.

Strategic Improvement Roadmap

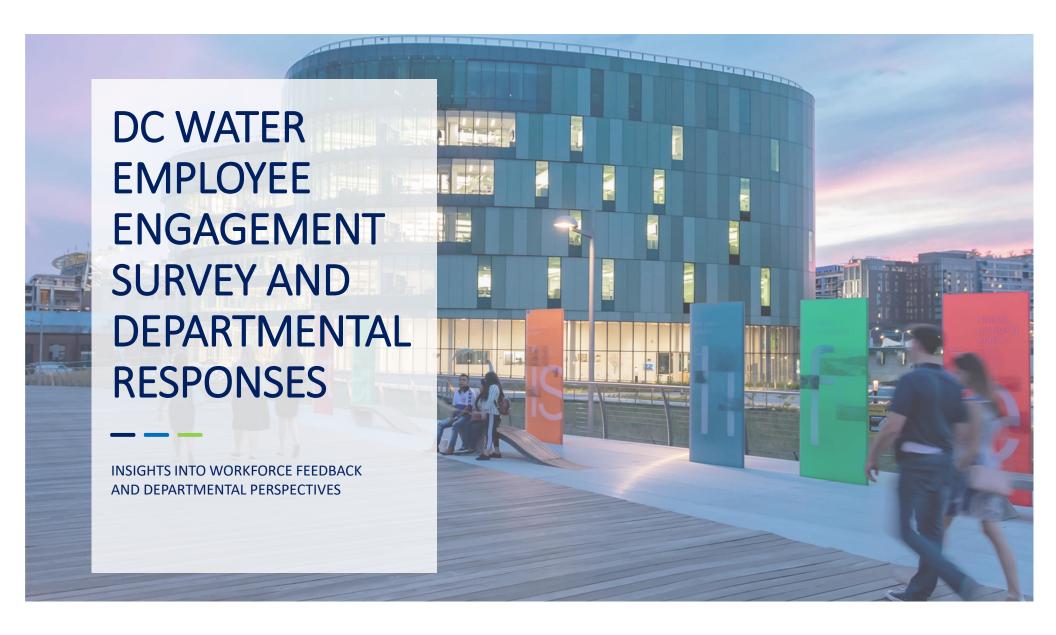
Insights from surveys and engagement activities guide strategic improvements for organizational growth.

Leadership Alignment and Execution

Leadership is encouraged to align on Now/Next/Later initiatives and prioritize their timely execution.

Enhancing Culture and Satisfaction

Addressing employee concerns and building strengths supports culture improvement and long-term success.



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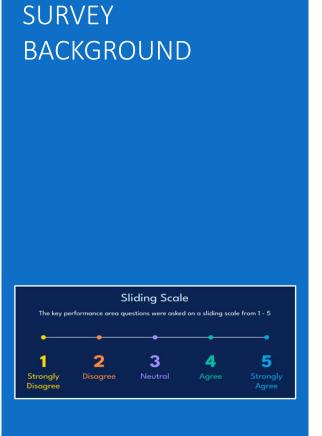
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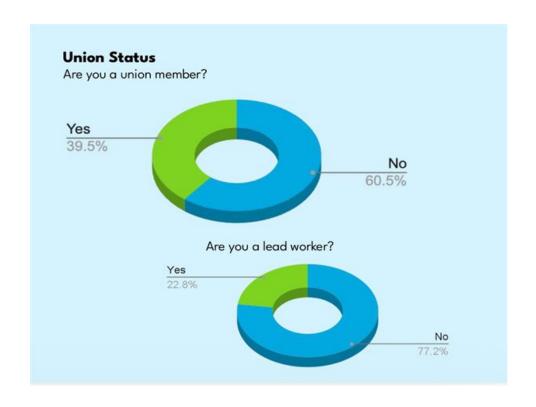
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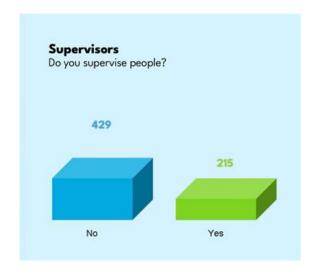
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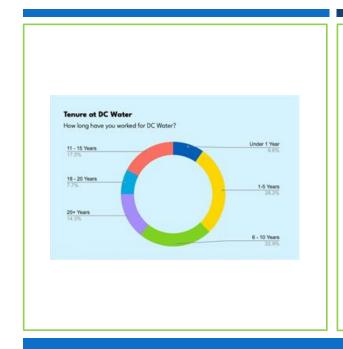


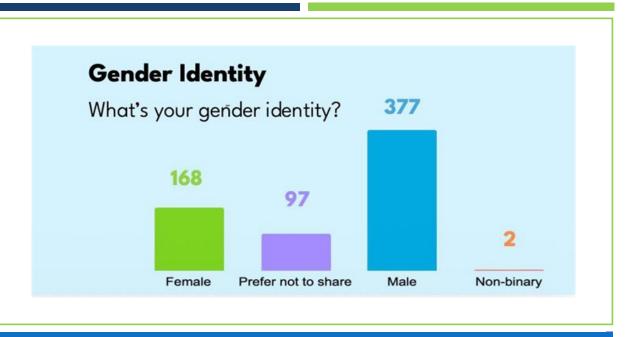


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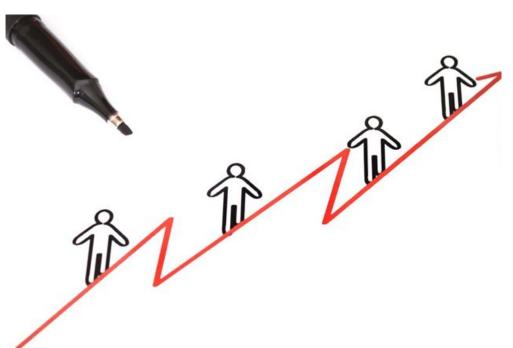
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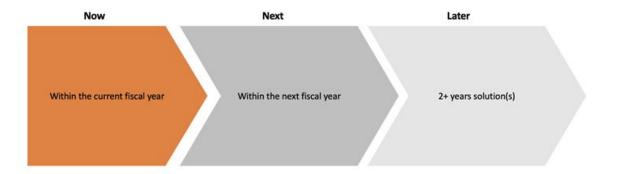
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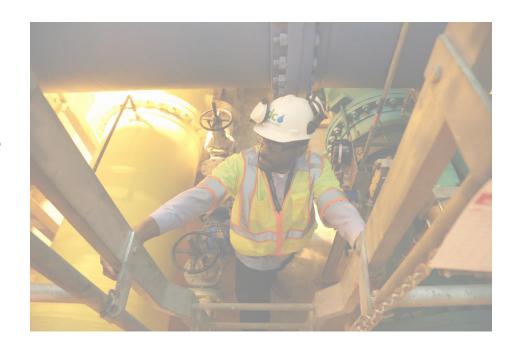
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