

2025-06-02

Performance Committee

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Good morning. The Monday, June 2, Performance Committee will now come to order. We are convened as of 8:30 AM. I would respectfully ask everyone attending this meeting to mute yourself unless you are recognized to speak. Please note that the Committee Meetings of the RDD Board of Directors will be held remotely via Zoom and will be audio and video recorded.

The meeting recordings, along with the unofficial minutes of the meetings, will be posted as soon as practicable on the Board's website. During today's Committee Meeting, we are providing Communication Access Real-Time Translation, also known as CART. Anyone who would like to access this service should send an email to the Board Office at rtd.boardoffice@rtd-denver.com, and a link will be provided. Additionally, the CART transcript can be automatically translated into Spanish for anyone who would like access to a live transcript of this meeting. A live stream of this meeting is also available via RTD's YouTube page.

I would now like to call the roll of the committee members. Director Vince Buzek.

VINCE BUZEK: Present.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Director Lynn Guissinger.

LYNN GUISSINGER: Here.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Vice Chair Chris Gutschenritter.

CHRIS GUTSCHENRITTER: Here.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Director Matt Larsen.

MATT LARSEN: Here.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Director Chris Nicholson.

CHRIS NICHOLSON: Present.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Director Peggy Catlin.

PEGGY CATLIN: Here.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: I am Chair Michael Guzman. I also see Board Chair Julien Bouquet has joined us. And I do not see anybody else on my screen. All right. If they join, help me keep track, guys. [LAUGHS] All right, we'll move into public comment. I would like to open the public comment to anyone who would like to address the committee regarding any topic listed in the published meeting agenda for the current and immediately preceding month. If you wish to speak and have not already done so, please either raise your virtual hand or press *9 on your phone.

During this time, the Committee will not offer any direct comments or responses. However, if you would like to be contacted regarding your public comment, please email the RTD Board at rtd.directors@rtd-denver.com. I don't see any hands raised on the screen. Mr. Kroll, do you see any?

JACK KROLL: Chairman Guzman, this is Jack Kroll, Executive Manager of the Board Office. There are no hands raised. And there were no comments submitted in advance via writing.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Thank you. With no participants in the queue, we will close the public comment period at this time. We will move on to our discussion item. There is one discussion item on the agenda this morning. And that is for the 2025 Employee Survey. I would like to ask John McKay, Executive Business Partner, as well as Ben Celius, Senior Performance Analyst, and Jake Stoudenmire, Manager of Market Research, to present this item.

JOHN MCKAY: Good morning, Chair Guzman. Thank you very much. This is our annual Employee Survey review. I would like to, before we get started here, recognize that we do have a short amount of time to go through this, given the Executive Manager's check-in here and Executive Session in a little bit. I do want to note that these results will be soon available online. They are available in the packet right now. But they'll be posted to the Performance Dashboard in short order.

And I also want to thank Ben Celius, Jake Stoudenmire, all those who volunteered to participate and to lead this survey effort across the district. There were 16 in-person events. As you know, this is held in relation to the work selection shift for the employees with respect to the Run Board. So as they are as employees are selecting their work shifts for the next service change, they are also able to lodge their results for the Employee Survey, just so that we have a broader response.

I'm going to move on to the next slide, just to talk through the outline very briefly. First, we'll do an introduction. I'll hand this over to Ben here in a moment. And Ben will go through all the nuts and bolts of the survey. We'll discuss the Employee Net Promoter score for this year, which is our success outcome for the employee ownership strategic priority.

Next, we'll go through the Composite Index Score, which I personally feel is a better indicator of employee ownership and engagement. Then we'll speak to the employee favorability in response to the prompts that were given in the survey. We'll go through some of the items that we saw largest improvement. We'll talk about the strategic initiatives. And then, again, we'll talk through the key takeaways, which I'm going to right now, not to bury the lede.

There were a few major takeaways from the survey activity for this year. Again, we saw continued favorable response increase over the course of the year. Most, if not all, of the elements in the strategic-- or sorry, in the survey, were-- they tracked higher than they did last year. Next, we'll speak to the efficacy of efforts related to the improvement areas. So we'll talk about why things improved year over year.

We saw that in 2024, those of you who are on this Committee last year, we saw this interesting little swoop in our survey results. The first year, we saw people had a generally higher favorability of RTD and employment here. And then it sort of tapered off over time, and then eventually, toward the longer that folks who were here, we saw, again, increased higher favorability in response to some of these questions.

This year, we've seen a flatter curve, so again, that honeymoon period. And then, basically, people are content once they are here for more than a year. Again, speaking to the difference between the Employee Net Promoter Score and the Employee Ownership Composite Index, we'll talk about which one of those

two measures may be better for a point of reference if we're looking to see how we're doing year over year. And then we'll go through the Key Driver Analysis, which helps us to determine areas of opportunity for increased-- for improvement in the next year. So with that, I'm going to hand this over to Ben to go through some of the survey nuts and bolts.

BEN CELIUS: OK. Good morning, everyone. Ben Celius, Senior Performance Analyst. I'll give you a brief introduction here. I'll cover the survey purpose, the administration, the survey structure, as well as a brief snapshot of the response rate and the participation this year. Next slide, please.

The primary purpose of the Employee Survey as it relates to the Board is it helps us populate the metrics for the Agency Performance Scorecard. So that's probably where you're most familiar with the data that comes out of this survey. As you can see, all the metrics in this example here come straight out of the Employee Survey. So that's where we get that data.

The survey also helps us collect direct employee feedback. We do that through not only the text field, but also through the multiple-choice questions. And it also gives us an understanding of employee satisfaction and engagement. So as you'll see in the next couple of slides, we have some questions directly aimed at that.

It also provides us an opportunity for insight into areas that may need some extra attention. That happens a lot through the free text field, where employees are invited to basically free text responses to us. And we actually glean a lot of information out of that text box. Next slide, please.

The administration happens over a four-week survey period. This year, it went from April 15 through May 16. We expanded it one week from last year to four weeks. Like John said earlier, we did 16 in-person events at nine different facilities. We aim the in-person events primarily at the operational facilities, where we have employees who do not spend a lot of time in front of a computer. So that helps us get the survey in front of them and get their voice into the survey.

We have a number of different methods that-- yeah, let's roll back. We have a number of different methods that we're currently using. At the in-person events, we use a tablet as well as the printed survey. We have employees who prefer one over the other. So we allow both. It's also done online. We promote that through the Hub. We also include it in the Hot Sheet each week. And we also push an icon to the desktops in the break rooms for operational personnel. So they can simply click on an icon and take the survey online. And finally, we also do printed copies. We have a stack of copies that are just left in the break room. And they can put those into a collection box at their leisure. Next slide.

The survey structure remains the same as it was last year. We have five job-related questions. That helps us parse out the information so we can tell how things are going at various locations, departments, and divisions. We also ask the likeliness of recommendation as an employer. That's where we get the Net Promoter Score data from. We also ask about 11 internal services. So essentially, we ask employees how satisfied they are with, say, IT department. And then we collect that information.

So we ask a number of favorability questions. And that's primarily where the information from the Agency Scorecard comes from-- questions such as, does your supervisor treat you with respect? It's those kind of questions. And then we also have a retention-related question, where we have 10 items. And we ask the employees to rank them from 1 to 10 on how important they are for keeping them here as an employee at RTD. And then finally, we have the open-ended question, where they're allowed to free text whatever they want to tell us. Next slide.

Here is a brief overview of the survey of the last three years. So we're at about 32% participation this year, down a little bit from last year. We still have pretty good use of the paper survey options. So about 18% this year chose to use the paper survey over digital. And again, we stuck with 37 multiple-choice questions and one ranked question. Next slide.

Here's a quick breakout of participation by work unit. As you can see, Bus Operations and Rail Operations makes up a majority of our respondents, which makes sense, as they are the larger groups within our organization. Next slide. And finally, here is a breakout of the surveys submitted by various tenure, representation status, and supervisory status.

Tenure, we had very good participation from individuals who have been here for 10-plus years. That's great to see, people still involved and engaged at 10-plus years. Representation status-- this was a 50/50 split until the last week of the survey. And then non-represented pulled ahead, probably because they were sitting at their computers that last week and took the survey. And then finally, supervisory status-- so while a large percentage is non-supervisory, the upshot of that is we are still getting a very good voice from our front-line staff. OK.

JAKE STOUDENMIRE: Good morning. Jake Stoudenmire, Manager of Market Research. I'll go through the Employee Net Promoter Score. Again, a quick reminder if you're not familiar with the NPS and how it's calculated-- when asking employees how likely they are to recommend working at RTD to friends or family, anyone answering as a 9 or 10 is classified as a promoter. Anyone 7 or 8 is a passive. And then 0 through 6 are considered detractors. So the score is calculated by-- just subtracting the percentage of detractors from the promoters gives us our NPS score. So as you can see in 2024, our NPS was at negative 2. And this year, we are at 4. So we've got an improvement there. Next slide, please.

And again, this shows you the actual percentages of those classifications. So you can see, we the 35% for promoters, subtract the 31% from detractors, and it gives us our overall NPS of 4. Next slide. All right. For our Composite Index Score, going through the Employee Ownership Composite Index Score-- again, this is an average of employee survey scores related to how engaged, supported, safe feeling, and understanding of how employees contribute to agency success, looking at engagement, supervisor support, resource support, physical safety, safe from crime, psychological safety.

So you can see, the big story here is a 16% increase from the score from the percentage in 2023 to 2025. So this is anyone who answered either Agree or Strongly Agree for those categories. Next slide. Oh, sorry. We have a new kitten, and she is attacking me.

Looking at the individual questions from the Index itself-- again, the big story here is the marked improvement year over year, from 2023 into 2024, and continued on into 2025. Probably the biggest story here on this page is at the very bottom, looking at feeling safe from crime in the work environment, from just 45% in 2023 of employees saying they agree or-- they agree or strongly agree with that statement, to now 70% in 2025, so even a decent improvement over 2024's as well. Next slide.

These are the overall Composite Index scores, broken out by tenure. So we look at those less than one year. This really is the only instance, I believe, in at least my set in the slide deck to where we actually see 2024 outscoring 2025. There, we had 88% answering Agree or Strongly Disagree for their overall Composite Index of 78 for 2025. But again, marked improvement year over year, and then, again, looking- - compared to 2023, pretty substantial improvement. Next slide.

All right, for employee favorability, more of the same-- again, marked improvement year over year. And reiterating the employee safety, feeling safe in my work environment, just 64% in '23, up to 83% now in 2025. Next slide. Again, more of the same here. All right, next. Again, pretty-- I'm a jungle gym this morning. All right, next slide.

Again, the safety perception's probably the largest marked improvement out of all the metrics. And again, looking again now at favorability as opposed to the Composite Index Score by tenure-- a little bit closer this time, especially amongst those very new to RTD, less than a year.

JOHN MCKAY: And jumping in here just briefly, this is that group that I had mentioned in my opening remarks here, that we see that there's, again, this honeymoon period within the first year-- again, 15% improvement over 2023, but the same as last year, in the 89% up here, and then an evening out over here, so starting at 79% for 1 to 3 years, going down to 77% for 10 or more years.

But you can see, this is roughly within the margin of error. All four categories, after the first year, in 2023, you can see that swoop, that starting off. And then, over time, people are generally maybe a little bit less favorable, and then a slight increase at the end. But this is nice to see, that employees across their tenure are satisfied, and more so this year than before.

JAKE SToudenMIRE: Yeah. All right, next slide. So here, just to highlight some of the year-over-year improvements, looking at the statement, "I have trust in my departmental managers to make decisions that align with the values of the organization," we see an 8% increase from last year to this year, and again, broken out on the right-hand side in terms of supervisory status, as well as representation.

And again, for, "I have the resources to successfully perform my duties," 7% increase from last year to this year. And here, highlighting those aspects that had an improvement over 5% from last year. And now, significant, meaning 15% or more improvement over the last two years. A quick note-- this does not mean statistical significance, just significance in terms of the percentage of increase from year over year. All right, next. And continuing on. All right.

JOHN MCKAY: And it comes back to me at this point. So noting that that market improvement year over year, especially over a two-year window, would not be possible without some of the efforts that were put in by staff. So those are the strategic initiatives that are developed year over year. Specifically with respect to the Employee Survey, those are Back to Basics, People Power, and Welcoming Transit Environment, the fourth being Customer and Community Connections, which isn't really engaged by the survey.

So moving forward, Back to Basics-- in 2023 and '24, one of the tactics developed was surrounding internal communication. And you can see, over that two-year period, there's been a 20% increase in employee responses to the prompt, "I am adequately informed about agency news, projects, and initiatives." This is due to some internal communications enhancements, including changes to the way that we distribute our internal newsletter, crew meetings, things like that. People are feeling more generally informed, all the way from 50% from represented staff, up to 67% currently.

Moving into-- excuse me-- employee retention is next. We see this wedge here-- sorry, this pie chart here. Strongly Agree, 57%, and 27% Agree that they will be working in RTD one year from now. Our Senior Manager of Total Rewards said that this is incredibly-- he's coming from the private sector. He said, I've never seen anything like this in an agency, public or otherwise. So this is very good to see.

Moving forward to the top three most important employment and workplace characteristics, we ask folks to rank their top 10-- or the 10 that we offer them that they were asked to rank their top three. And you can see that fair compensation in 2024 was by far and away the most important work characteristic. If we move forward to 2025, it's about the same. It's actually considerably less in the top end.

And then there are some other things that have risen in importance, including tools and equipment, which is new to-- this has risen a lot more than I would have anticipated. We need to delve into what this means to individual people. That could mean a lot of things to 3,000 different people. This could be wrenches and things to mechanics. This could mean IT equipment for certain people, tablets and things. So we'll have to delve into see what that means for folks.

Moving into our Key Driver Analysis for 2025, we've seen that there were two other areas of opportunity in 2024. Those where, I believe, manageable workloads and professional development opportunities. Those have increased. And so they've fallen out of the Areas of Opportunity box down at the bottom right-hand corner. Just briefly walking through this. Most of the folks on this meeting have seen this before.

But on this chart here, the higher-- the farther along the y-axis it goes to the top, that indicates higher satisfaction with RTD and RTD services. And then, the farther to the right, the higher importance it is to individual employees based on this ranking activity that we ask them to do. And so we can see that fair compensation is really close to the mean, could still possibly use some improvement. And maybe this is surrounding employee communication around their compensation or opportunities for them to use their professional development funds and things like that. So they can use that for their own personal benefit. And also, opportunities for advancement is another area that we'll be taking a look at in 2025, '26.

Moving again to the employee security-- as we said before, this has increased 25% over a two year period. This is incredible. This is still the lowest score, the lowest favorable response of all of the survey responses. But we can see that a lot of the efforts that have been put into increasing Welcoming Transit Environment within Union Station and then across the district, all of these efforts are taking hold.

Again, key takeaways-- we can see that there was a continued favorable response increase. We can see that the efforts that we've been engaging in to improve some of those scores have really had-- have taken effect. They've improved those scores. We see that higher favorability is less influenced by tenure in 2025, noting that flattened curve from year one and beyond.

And talking again about the Employee Net Promoter Score versus the Employee Ownership Ownership Composite Index, we can see that, if we were to go back to the one-pager that showed the Agency Performance Scorecard toward the beginning of this presentation, all of those five metrics that we consider to be performance metrics, key performance metrics for this particular strategic priority, we can see that those numbers are moving considerably. But the Employee Net Promoter Score is not raising as much. So there's less linkage there than we would like.

So I think that that Employee Composite Index may serve as a better overall success metric in future years. And that's something that we had raised in the last year. We're seeing that again this year. And again, the Key Driver Analysis that I just showed highlights the opportunities for 2025 and '26. And with that, we have finished the presentation and are open to questions from the Board.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Thank you very much. Are there any questions or comments from the Committee? Director Nicholson, I saw your hand shoot up first.

CHRIS NICHOLSON: I try to be quick on the draw. Thank you for that presentation. It was wonderful. I enjoyed reading that over this morning. I found the distinctions between the different employee types and the representative versus non-represented really interesting. And I just wanted to ask, can we get those numbers broken down by the different employee types that you mentioned at the beginning of the spreadsheet? Because you had a couple of different departments in there-- Bus Operations, Rail Operations, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

I would just be fascinated to look at, not just represented versus non-represented, but among our different types of employees, is there a meaningful difference in the key drivers of what they're looking for? Is there a difference in, for example, fair compensation being an issue in some departments over others? So is that something that you could provide to Board members, a bit more granular breakdown of those numbers.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Mr. McKay?

JOHN MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would say that employees were saying that that's an important factor. They're not saying that that's an issue right now. I just want to make that distinction, that we ask them to rank the most important characteristics. That's not to say that somebody is disappointed with their current salary. They're just saying that is an important employment characteristic, just to make that-- draw that specific line.

And as far as more granular data, if you have specific asks about-- if you could tell me which one you're interested in the most, or a few of them, we can delve into that data. Thank you.

CHRIS NICHOLSON: Awesome. I'll send you an email.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Madam CEO, I saw your hand go up, but then it went down. Did that get covered?

DEBRA JOHNSON: Yes, it did. And I was just going to put it in a different element as well, recognizing as we talk about this, considering that we do bargain for wages with 2/3 of our workforce. And considering the time in which this was done, that could be a factor as well. But Mr. McKay answered the question as best suited, which I believe addressed my concerns as well-- not my concerns, my response.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Great. Director Catlin?

PEGGY CATLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And GM/CEO Johnson, I appreciate your context for that. I just wanted to say, I reviewed this over the weekend. And I was really encouraged. I thought the trend was very, very positive. So I just wanted to say-- I appreciate that further explanation today. But I just wanted to say that this looked really good. Thank you.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Mr. McKay?

JOHN MCKAY: If you like these results, just wait till you hear the Customer and Community results on the meeting on the 23rd, just to plug for the next meeting.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Vice Chair Gutschenritter, it is your turn.

CHRIS GUTSCHENRITTER: Thank you, Chair Guzman. And thank you very much for the presentation. My question-- is there any target for the survey participation?

JOHN MCKAY: Not a target, per se, Mr. Chair, if I may.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Please.

JOHN MCKAY: Not a target, per se. We'd like to see-- a couple of years ago, we had a 47% rate. And that's incredible. Jake Stoudenmire, who's also on this call, he had said that both private and public sector, 20% to 30% is considered good. So we're over 30%. That's fantastic.

We have heard from people in the open-ended comments at the end that they're feeling a little bit of survey fatigue. So there is an opportunity, perhaps, in 2026, to maybe do a smaller scale or-- just to make sure that we're still hitting the same stuff that-- the strategic plan elements, as long as we're capturing those things somehow. We'll talk about that internally to figure out how best we can roll out a different survey next year.

CHRIS GUTSCHENRITTER: OK, thank you. Yeah, I mean, I feel like 32% is a little low. And I would love to see us somehow creatively think about, how can we improve that number? Whether it's like a departmental competition, and the department with the highest participation percentage gets a pizza party, something. I just-- I feel like there's opportunity to improve that, even though to 20%, 30% is considered good.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Madam CEO?

DEBRA JOHNSON: Yes, thank you. I was going to have Mr. Stoudenmire expound. But before I do that, recognizing the Vice Chair's comments, we do have full-fledged engagement in recognizing-- you were talking about incentivizing individuals. We do give giveaways. We give food. We do a lot of different things, and recognizing that the intent behind garnering as much feedback as we can, considering that 2/3 of our workforce are out on the front lines, we intentionally, as Mr. McKay said, do that during the bid selection process with their work shifts, and recognizing that we want to see a greater representation. This is statistically valid.

And I was just going to offer, and being on a public agency space, this response rate is head and shoulders above the crowd, recognizing that other agencies-- and this is from my own experience, working at six other transit agencies beside this one-- really is something to applaud. Mr. Stoudenmire, do want to expound, referencing the participation rate?

JAKE STOUDENMIRE: Absolutely. Thank you. So again, having nearly a third of our workforce taking the survey is great. "Good" is one word to use it. Getting up close to a third is great. It's a fine balance. I understand the want and the desire to have more participation. And again, more participation is always good.

It is a fine balance, though. When you start to push for more and more completion, it can drive something similar to the Hawthorne effect. If anyone's familiar with psychology and research, folks alter their-- they alter their responses when they know they're being watched or being pushed towards something. So if you're really, really, really heavy on participation, it can actually drive up feelings of paranoia or concern, like, why are they wanting so much participation?

So again, not that there isn't more that we can do to encourage participation. But again, it is a very fine balance between encouraging participation and mandating participation, for lack of a better word.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: All right, Director Buzek.

VINCE BUZEK: Thanks very much. Thanks for the presentation. With regard to the participation, my guess, without any scientific background, is much like Google reviews, right? I'm happy. I'm not going to participate. I'm unhappy. I'm going on Google. And I'm giving you one star. So maybe the lack of participation says something.

But overall, I think the improvement that we're seeing over these several years is really all down to GM/CEO Johnson and her team. And I'm not surprised that it takes time, because as we all know, when change is implemented, people get their-- people don't like it. But then, as time goes on, they see that the changes are good. Then they realize that it was the right thing to do. And they're much happier. So I think that's what we're seeing here when we look at this over a period of time. So hats off to you, GM/CEO Johnson. And thanks for the presentation.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: OK, thank you. I want to tell you, I was happy to see this, because safe and happy employees make safe and happy customers, in the same way that safe and happy baristas make safe and happy customers at my other job. So I am excited to see the correlation and what's coming up with customer experience surveys in a couple of weeks.

So gentlemen, thank you. And thank you for keeping the presentation tight so we can move on to other matters. Thank you so much. Are there any other matters to discuss before we move into the Executive Session? Chair Bouquet?

JULIEN BOUQUET: Yeah. Thank you very much, Chair Guzman. I just wanted to take this moment real quick. Yesterday, there appeared to be an anti-Semitic attack that occurred in Boulder. I just want to say that the heart of this agency, the heart of this Board, go out to you, Director Guissinger, your constituents, Boulder community, the Jewish community, not only here in Colorado, but the Jewish communities all across the world. So I just wanted to acknowledge that as an agency, that, again, as we mentioned during our Executive Committee a couple weeks ago, you can't fight hate with hate, love always wins in the long run, and that this agency's heart is with all of you. Thank you.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: Thank you. Sorry, I have to hold space for a minute. Are there any other matters to discuss? All right. As a reminder, our next meeting will be Monday, June 23, at 8:30 AM. At that meeting, we are set to discuss the results of our Customer and Community Surveys.

In a moment, the Committee will meet in Executive Session to further our dialogue with the General Manager/CEO regarding her performance in meeting the agency values, core, and base job duties, and the progress towards her 2025 short-term goals.

I would like to append the motion to move into Executive Session to state that the Performance Committee will be deemed adjourned after it adjourns into the Executive Session. For public transparency, this means that once the Committee moves into Executive Session, the main meeting will be adjourned.

I will now entertain a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss the following, pursuant to Section 24-6-402(4)(f)(i) of the Colorado Revised Statutes for consideration of personnel matters regarding the Board's dialogue with the General Manager and CEO on her performance in meeting the agency values, core and base job duties, and progress towards her 2025 short-term goals, and input from the Board of Directors on the same. Do I have a motion?

VINCE BUZEK: Buzek so moved.

PEGGY CATLIN: Second.

MICHAEL GUZMAN: I have Buzek as the movement and Catlin as the second. Are there any no votes on this action? Seeing none, then our regular session is adjourned at 9:04 AM. Directors, please move over to the Executive Session. Oh, sorry, Melanie. OK. Please move over to the Executive Session and allow a few minutes for everybody to move over. Thank you.