

Ohio Small Business Development Centers 2018 Staff Satisfaction Tracking Survey Summary of Results



Small Business
Development Centers

October 2018
EMC Research, Inc.
88 E Broad Street, Suite 2025
Columbus OH, 43212
Molly O'Shaughnessy, (614) 827-9670
Megan Sympson, (614) 827-9675

EMCresearch.com

COLUMBUS, OH
614-268-1660

IRVING, TX
972-717-7427

OAKLAND, CA
510-844-0680

ORLANDO, FL
407-704-6208

PORTLAND, OR
503-444-6000

SEATTLE, WA
206-652-2454

WASHINGTON, D.C.
202-686-5900

Introduction and Methodology

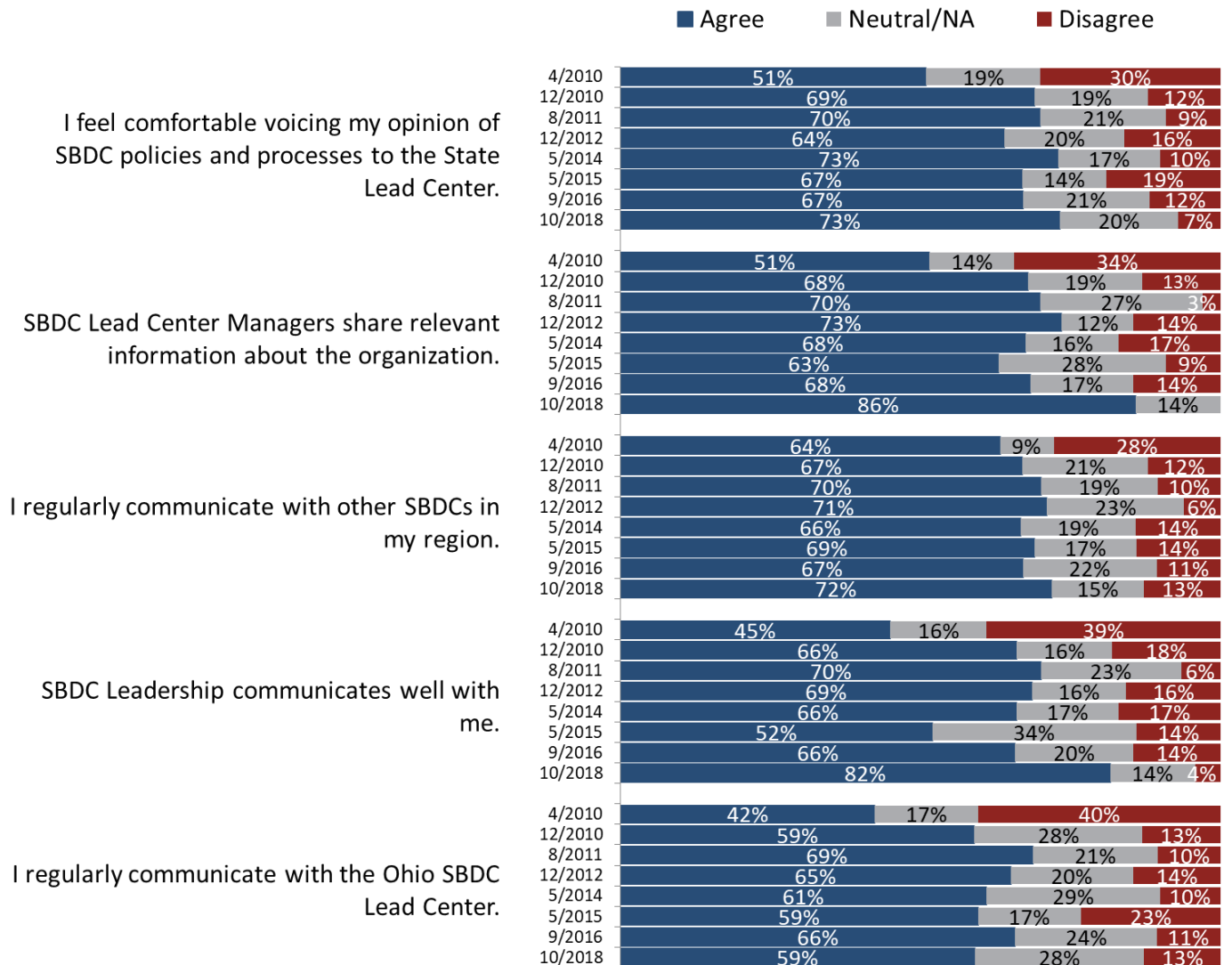
From September 28 – October 22, 2018, EMC Research, Inc. conducted an online survey of the Ohio Small Business Development Centers staff. The survey updates and tracks results from prior staff satisfaction surveys that were initiated in April of 2010. Email invitations and reminders were sent to 88 individual staff members, and 71 complete responses were received – an 81% response rate. Survey questions were identical to the September 2016 survey. The results of the October 2018 survey show sustained and increased levels of staff satisfaction among a majority of attributes tested about the Ohio SBDC.

Findings: Communication

Findings from the October 2018 survey show that since 2016 a majority of staff members remain satisfied with communication between the Lead Center, other SBDCs, and managers. Satisfaction with how Lead Center managers share relevant information about the organization has increased significantly, from 68% in 2016 to 86% in 2018. Similarly, over 4-in-5 respondents (82%) are satisfied with communication from the SBDC leadership.

Dissatisfaction with communication remains low at Ohio SBDC. In 2016, 14% of respondents disagreed with the statement *SBDC Lead Center Managers share relevant information about the organization*, and no one disagreed with this statement in the 2018 survey. Although slightly more respondents reported that they disagree with the statements *I regularly communicate with the Ohio SBDC Lead Center* and *I regularly communicate with other SBDCs in my region*, each only increased by approximately 2%, maintaining low dissatisfaction levels. See Figure 1 for results.

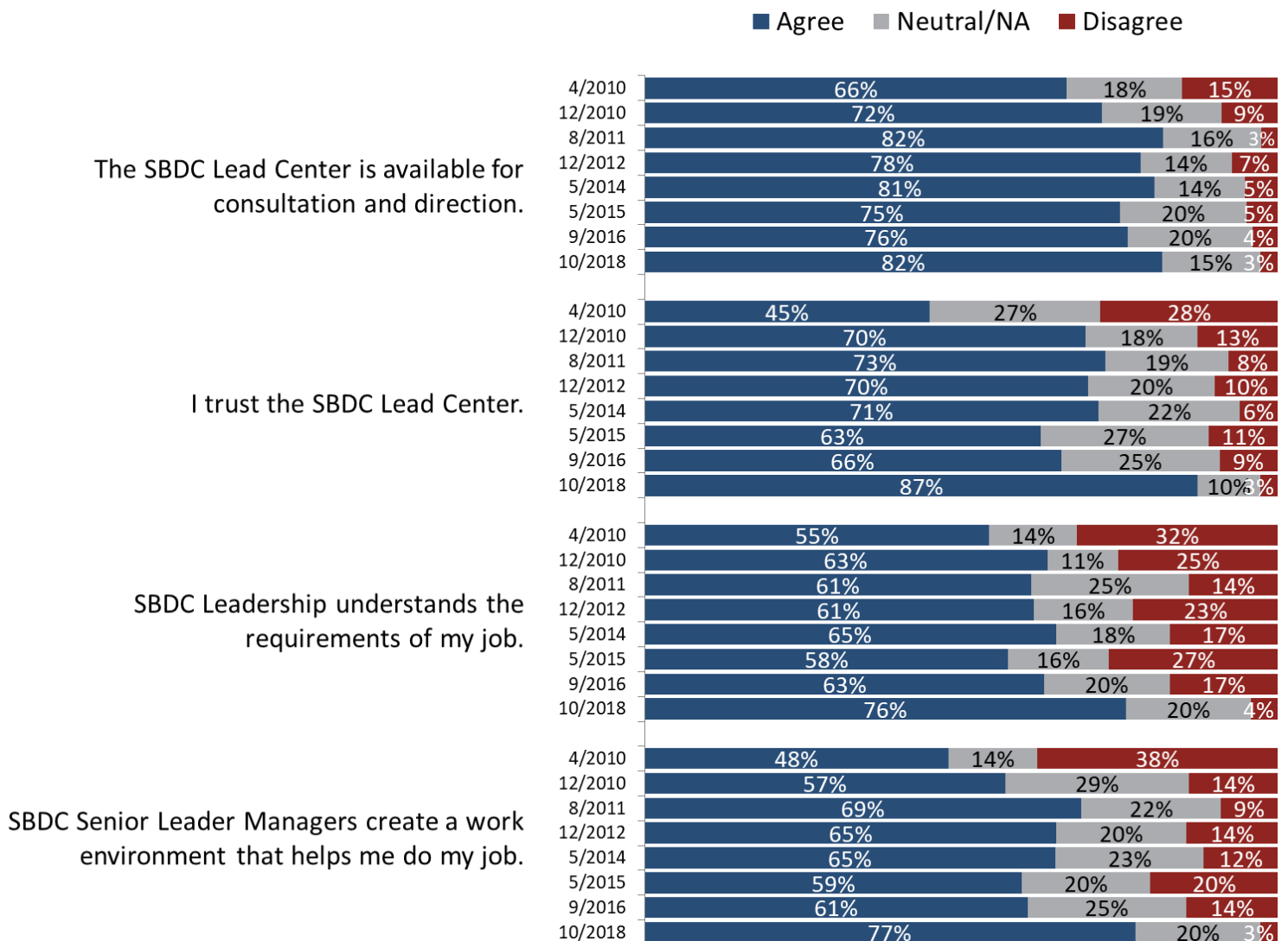
Figure 1. Communication



Findings: Opinions of SBDC Lead Center

Staff satisfaction with the Lead Center has increased since 2016 among all attributes tested. Nearly 9-in-10 (87%) respondents say they trust the SBDC Lead Center – up approximately 20 points since 2016. A large majority (82%) continue to agree that *the SBDC Lead Center is available for consultation and direction*. Approximately one-quarter of respondents also agree that the leadership *understands the requirements of my job* (76%) and that *SBDC Senior Leader Managers create a work environment that helps me do my job* (77%). The results show approximately a 13-point increase among those who agree that leadership understands their job requirements (from 63% in 2016 to 76% in 2018). There was also about a 10-point decrease in employees that disagree with the idea that managers create a work environment that helps them do their job (from 14% in 2016 to 3% in 2018). See Figure 2 for results.

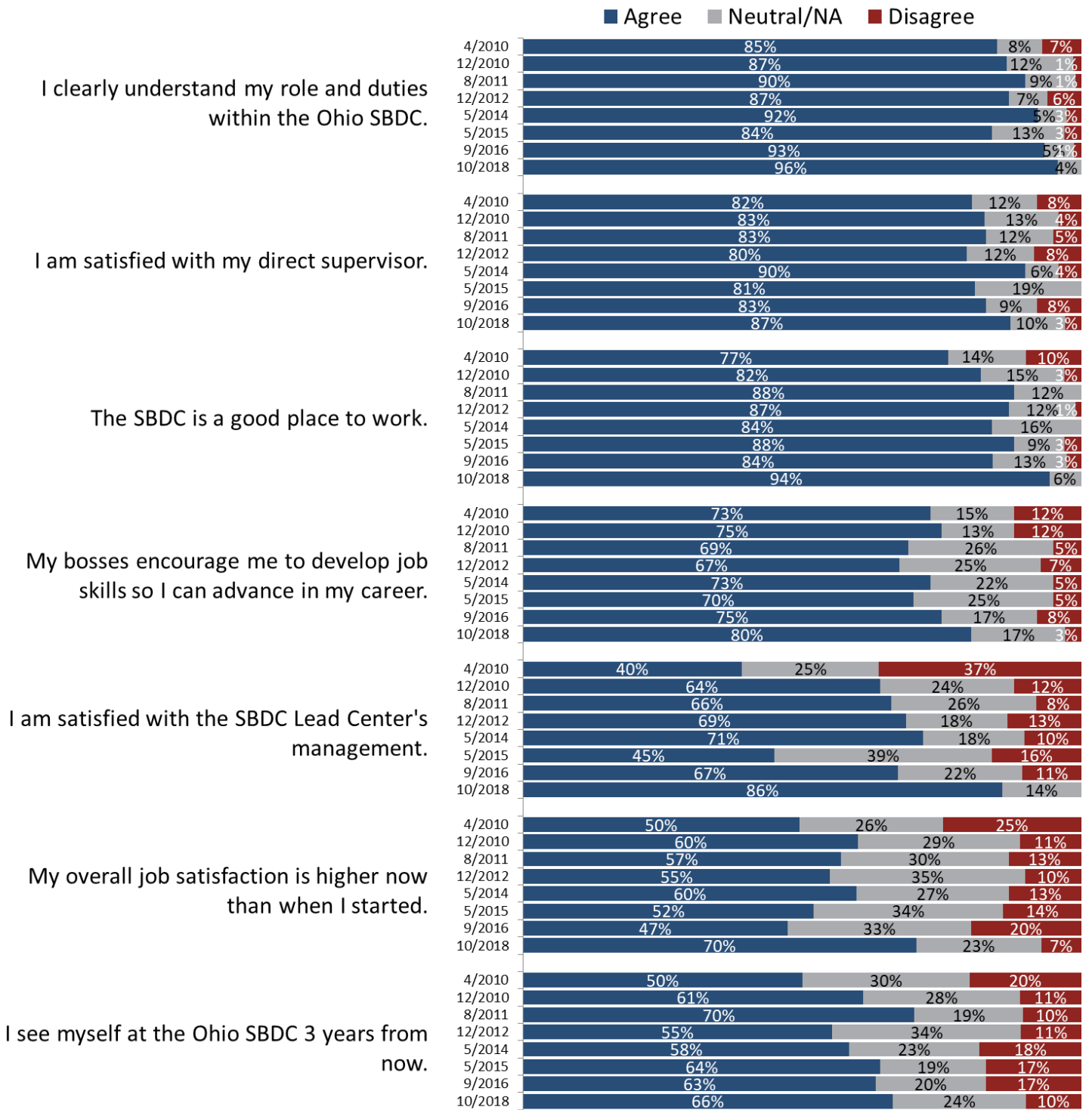
Figure 2. SBDC Lead Center



Findings: Staff Morale

Morale among the SBDC staff has improved since 2016. Nearly all participating employees say that they clearly understand their role within the organization (96%) and that the SBDC is a good place to work (94%). Those that say *SBDC is a good place to work* increased from 84% in 2016 to 94% in this year's survey. A majority of staff (87%) say that they are satisfied with their direct supervisor and believe that their bosses encourage development of job skills to advance their career (80%). These are similar levels of agreement compared to the 2016 survey. Satisfaction with the Lead Center's management has significantly increased between 2016 and 2018, with 86% of respondents agreeing with the statement, compared to 67% in 2016. Moreover, there was approximately a 40-point increase in agreement between the 2015 and 2018 surveys. Finally, 7-in-10 respondents (70%) now report a higher overall job satisfaction now than when they started, when only a near majority of respondents agreed with the same statement in the 2016 survey. See Figure 3 (next page) for results.

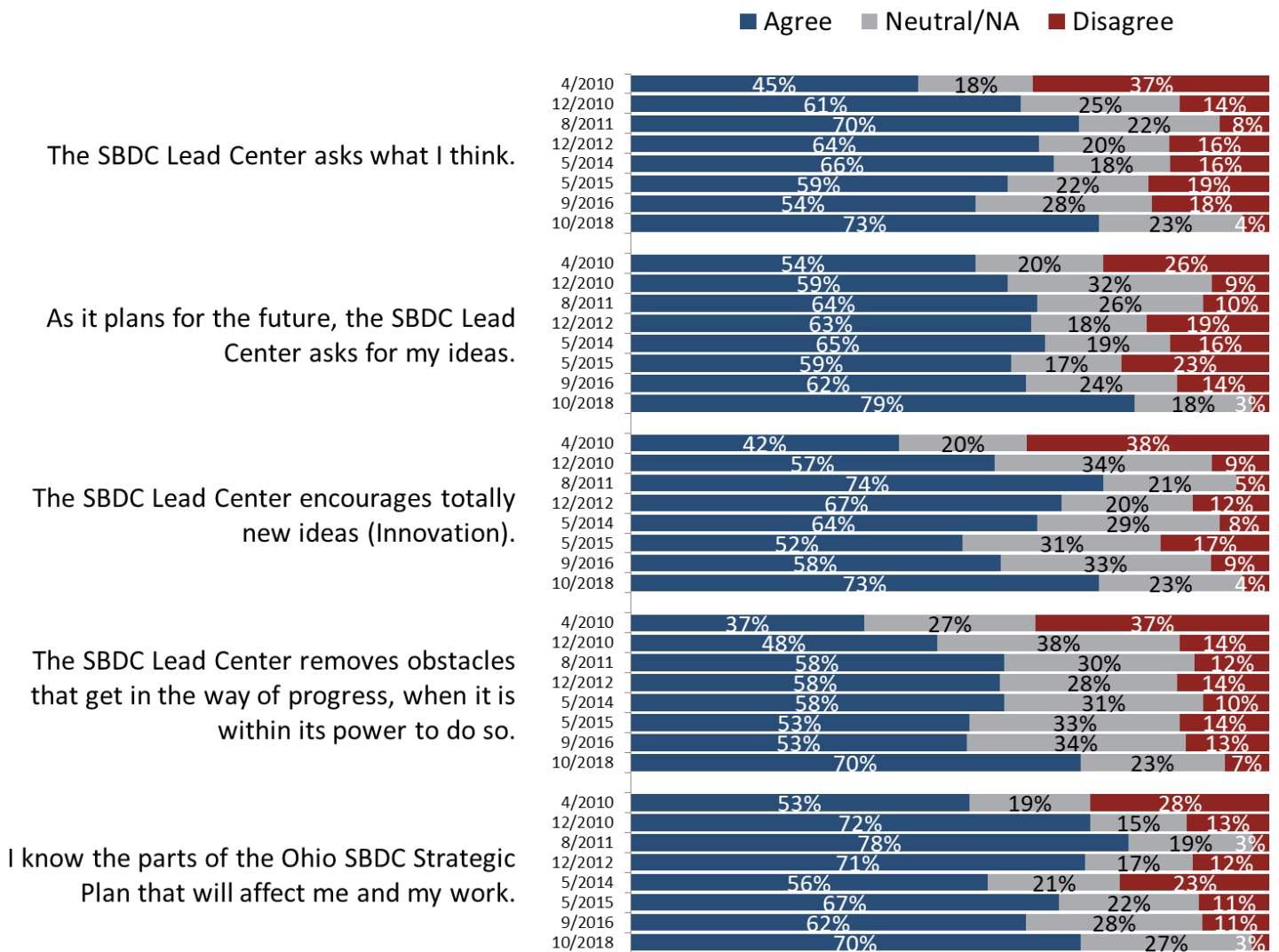
Figure 3. Staff Morale



Findings: Strategic Planning

As with other areas of satisfaction, employees in this year’s survey report a higher level of agreement among all attributes related to strategic planning. There were sizable gains in levels of satisfaction since 2016 in all five attributes tested. Nearly 8-in-10 respondents (79%) say that the SBDC Lead Center asks for their ideas, up from 62% in 2016. A large majority of respondents (73%) also agree with the statement *the SBDC Lead Center asks what I think*, a gain of almost 20-points since the previous staff satisfaction survey. Approximately three-quarters of employees (73%) say that the Lead Center encourages new ideas/innovation. Finally, 7-in-10 employees (70%) report that the Lead Center removes obstacles that get in the way of progress and that they know the parts of the Strategic Plan that will affect themselves and their work. See Figure 4 for results.

Figure 4: Strategic Planning



Conclusions

The results of the 2018 Ohio Small Business Development Center Staff Satisfaction Survey show increased and sustained levels of high satisfaction across all evaluated areas. Employee satisfaction in relation to communication has remained high among all metrics tested. Significant improvements were made in the way the Lead Center Managers share relevant information about the organization to employees and with the way the Leadership team communicates with each employee.

Respondents are still very satisfied with the SBDC Lead Center. All four metrics tested received their highest ratings since the survey began in 2010.

All ratings of satisfaction among staff in regards to morale remain at high levels, with the most notable increase in satisfaction among employees who say that their overall job satisfaction is higher now than when they started – rising from 47% agreement in 2016 to 70% in this year's survey.

Satisfaction related to the SBDC's Strategic Plan has increased drastically since 2016. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of employees agree with the statement that the Lead Center asks what they think, which is a significant increase from 2016, when a small majority (54%) agreed with the same statement. Similarly, 79% of respondents feel as if the Lead Center asks for their ideas, up 17 points since 2016.

**Ohio Small Business Development Center
2018 Staff Satisfaction Survey
September 28 – October 22, 2018
Sample size=71, 81% response rate**

Results tracked with:

*April 2010 baseline survey
Sample size=93, 46% response rate*

*December 2010 tracking survey
Sample size=79, 69% response rate*

*August 2011 tracking survey
Sample size=77, 73% response rate*

*December 2012 tracking survey
Sample size=83, 77% response rate*

*May 2014 tracking survey
Sample size=77, 84% response rate*

*May 2015 tracking survey
Sample size=64, 82% response rate*

*September 2016 tracking survey
Sample size=76, 71% response rate*

All numbers in this document represent percentage (%) values. Please note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Staff Satisfaction Survey. Your input and opinions are valuable, and your help is appreciated. All survey responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

Leadership

This page is designed to determine the overall employee satisfaction with SBDC Lead Center Management.

1. Please select the answer that best fits the following statements. *(Shown in random order)*

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The SBDC Lead Center is available for consultation and direction.	4/2010	7	8	18	41	25
	12/2010	3	6	19	51	22
	8/2011	1	1	16	51	31
	12/2012	2	5	14	39	40
	5/2014	1	4	14	49	31
	5/2015	2	3	20	41	34
	9/2016	1	3	20	41	36
	10/2018	-	3	15	49	32
SBDC Leadership understands the requirements of my job.	4/2010	13	19	14	34	21
	12/2010	6	19	11	52	11
	8/2011	4	10	25	45	16
	12/2012	5	18	16	33	29
	5/2014	9	8	18	36	29
	5/2015	9	17	16	39	19
	9/2016	3	14	20	47	16
	10/2018	-	4	20	46	30
SBDC Senior Leader Managers create a work environment that helps me do my job.	4/2010	13	25	14	28	20
	12/2010	3	11	29	46	11
	8/2011	3	6	22	48	21
	12/2012	4	11	20	33	33
	5/2014	1	10	23	38	27
	5/2015	3	17	20	39	20
	9/2016	3	12	25	41	20
	10/2018	-	3	20	37	41
SBDC Lead Center Managers share relevant information about the organization.	4/2010	8	26	14	26	25
	12/2010	4	9	19	52	16
	8/2011	3	-	27	45	25
	12/2012	5	10	12	47	27
	5/2014	5	12	16	45	22
	5/2015	6	3	28	41	22
	9/2016	1	13	17	51	17
	10/2018	-	-	14	48	38

Leadership, continued

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
SBDC Leadership communicates well with me.	4/2010	12	27	16	24	21
	12/2010	1	16	16	51	15
	8/2011	4	3	23	51	19
	12/2012	2	13	16	41	28
	5/2014	5	12	17	40	26
	5/2015	5	9	34	28	23
	9/2016	-	14	20	47	18
	10/2018	-	4	14	52	30
I trust the SBDC Lead Center.	4/2010	16	12	27	22	23
	12/2010	5	8	18	54	15
	8/2011	4	4	19	49	23
	12/2012	4	6	20	40	30
	5/2014	1	5	22	44	27
	5/2015	5	6	27	39	23
	9/2016	1	8	25	34	32
	10/2018	-	3	10	48	39

2. Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. *(Open ended)*
[Please see attached list of verbatim responses.]

Strategic Planning

This page is designed to evaluate whether or not field staff feel they are included in the strategic planning elements of the Ohio SBDC Network.

3. Please select the answer that best fits the following statements. *(Shown in random order)*

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know the parts of the Ohio SBDC Strategic Plan that will affect me and my work.	4/2010	5	23	19	41	12
	12/2010	1	11	15	58	14
	8/2011	1	1	19	55	23
	12/2012	1	11	17	53	18
	5/2014	3	21	21	48	8
	5/2015	2	9	22	53	14
	9/2016	-	11	28	51	11
	10/2018	-	3	27	45	25
The SBDC Lead Center asks what I think.	4/2010	9	28	18	30	15
	12/2010	3	11	25	46	15
	8/2011	-	8	22	55	16
	12/2012	4	12	20	41	23
	5/2014	-	16	18	49	17
	5/2015	3	16	22	42	17
	9/2016	4	14	28	37	17
	10/2018	-	4	23	45	28
As it plans for the future, the SBDC Lead Center asks for my ideas.	4/2010	8	18	20	36	18
	12/2010	3	6	32	43	16
	8/2011	1	9	26	47	17
	12/2012	4	16	18	43	19
	5/2014	3	13	19	45	19
	5/2015	2	22	17	45	14
	9/2016	1	13	24	45	17
	10/2018	-	3	18	45	34
The SBDC Lead Center encourages totally new ideas (Innovation).	4/2010	13	25	20	22	20
	12/2010	3	6	34	38	19
	8/2011	1	4	21	47	27
	12/2012	4	8	20	41	27
	5/2014	-	8	29	44	19
	5/2015	3	14	31	38	14
	9/2016	4	5	33	37	21
	10/2018	-	4	23	35	38

Strategic Planning, continued

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The SBDC Lead Center removes obstacles that get in the way of progress, when it is within its power to do so.	4/2010	12	25	27	22	15
	12/2010	6	8	38	38	10
	8/2011	3	9	30	51	8
	12/2012	5	10	28	34	24
	5/2014	-	10	31	44	14
	5/2015	3	11	33	42	11
	9/2016	3	11	34	39	13
	10/2018	-	7	23	44	27

4. Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. *(Open ended)*
[Please see attached list of verbatim responses.]

Workforce Focus

This page is designed to determine overall employee morale and job satisfaction.

5. Please select the answer that best fits the following statements. *(Shown in random order)*

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I clearly understand my role and duties within the Ohio SBDC.	4/2010	2	5	8	39	46
	12/2010	-	1	12	53	33
	8/2011	-	1	9	43	47
	12/2012	1	5	7	40	47
	5/2014	1	1	5	55	38
	5/2015	-	3	13	52	33
	9/2016	-	1	5	47	46
	10/2018	-	-	4	45	51
My bosses encourage me to develop job skills so I can advance in my career.	4/2010	5	7	15	37	36
	12/2010	4	8	13	47	28
	8/2011	1	4	26	35	34
	12/2012	2	5	25	29	39
	5/2014	1	4	22	44	29
	5/2015	2	3	25	39	31
	9/2016	3	5	17	43	32
	10/2018	-	3	17	37	44
I am satisfied with my direct supervisor.	4/2010	4	4	12	28	54
	12/2010	-	4	13	37	45
	8/2011	1	4	12	31	52
	12/2012	5	4	12	25	54
	5/2014	1	3	6	39	51
	5/2015	-	-	19	27	55
	9/2016	1	7	9	41	42
	10/2018	-	3	10	35	52
My overall job satisfaction is higher now than when I started.	4/2010	10	15	26	33	17
	12/2010	3	8	29	41	19
	8/2011	1	12	30	32	25
	12/2012	4	6	35	25	30
	5/2014	4	9	27	36	23
	5/2015	5	9	34	36	16
	9/2016	7	13	33	30	17
	10/2018	1	6	23	45	25

Workforce Focus, continued.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I regularly communicate with other SBDCs in my region.	4/2010	5	23	9	37	27
	12/2010	-	12	21	40	27
	8/2011	3	8	19	47	23
	12/2012	0	6	23	39	33
	5/2014	1	13	19	45	21
	5/2015	2	13	17	47	22
	9/2016	1	9	22	43	24
10/2018	1	11	15	52	20	
I regularly communicate with the Ohio SBDC Lead Center.	4/2010	10	30	17	30	12
	12/2010	4	9	28	40	19
	8/2011	1	9	21	53	16
	12/2012	1	13	20	39	27
	5/2014	1	9	29	48	13
	5/2015	5	19	17	44	16
	9/2016	-	11	24	45	21
10/2018	1	11	28	38	21	
I see myself at the Ohio SBDC 3 years from now.	4/2010	12	8	30	27	23
	12/2010	7	4	28	28	33
	8/2011	4	6	19	42	29
	12/2012	4	7	34	22	34
	5/2014	5	13	23	38	21
	5/2015	9	8	19	34	30
	9/2016	8	9	20	34	29
10/2018	3	7	24	35	31	
I am satisfied with the SBDC Lead Center's management.	4/2010	14	23	25	24	16
	12/2010	4	8	24	48	16
	8/2011	3	5	26	47	19
	12/2012	5	8	18	37	31
	5/2014	-	10	18	52	19
	5/2015	5	11	39	31	14
	9/2016	1	9	22	47	20
10/2018	-	-	14	46	39	

6. Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. *(Open ended)*
7. My morale at the SBDC is most affected by... (complete the sentence in the box below) *(Open ended)*
8. What are the greatest strengths of the Ohio SBDC Lead Center's management and how could they further improve on those strengths? *(Open ended)*

9. What are the greatest weaknesses in the Ohio SBDC Lead Center's management and how could they address these issues? (*Open ended*)

[Please see attached list of verbatim responses.]

Management Performance

This page is designed to evaluate management performance, through the opinion of the staff.

10. The following things are needed to help me do my job better. *(Multiple responses accepted.)*

	<u>4/2010</u>	<u>12/2010</u>	<u>8/2011</u>	<u>12/2012</u>	<u>5/2014</u>	<u>5/2015</u>	<u>9/2016</u>	<u>10/2018</u>
Increased funding	75	73	64	72	69	70	70	58
More professional knowledge/training	37	42	63	25	18	34	42	41
Better counseling tools	29	42	36	13	23	41	22	30
Increased communication with SBDC leadership	37	22	25	14	29	30	26	10
Improved leadership/direction	45	29	24	20	19	34	25	11
Increased regional communication	24	23	17	41	34	22	34	18
Other (Please specify)	25	19	12	20	10	17	22	8

11. Please select the answer that best fits the following statements. *(Shown in random order)*

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The SBDC is a good place to work.	4/2010	4	6	14	39	38
	12/2010	-	3	15	47	36
	8/2011	-	-	12	49	39
	12/2012	0	1	12	46	41
	5/2014	-	-	16	48	36
	5/2015	3	-	9	50	38
	9/2016	-	3	13	47	37
	10/2018	-	-	6	44	51
I feel comfortable voicing my opinion of SBDC policies and processes to the State Lead Center.	4/2010	9	21	19	32	19
	12/2010	3	10	19	50	19
	8/2011	1	8	21	43	27
	12/2012	4	12	20	40	24
	5/2014	5	5	17	51	22
	5/2015	8	11	14	55	13
	9/2016	5	7	21	43	24
	10/2018	-	7	20	34	39

12. Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. *(Open ended)*

[Please see attached list of verbatim responses.]

The following questions are confidential and will be used only to classify survey responses by groups.

13. My role in the SBDC is as a(n):

	<u>4/2010</u>	<u>12/2010</u>	<u>8/2011</u>	<u>12/2012</u>	<u>5/2014</u>	<u>5/2015</u>	<u>9/2016</u>	<u>10/2018</u>
Administrative Assistant	12	14	18	12	14	11	9	17
Business Advisor	37	25	27	29	27	34	36	41
Center Director	28	25	25	23	30	30	24	20
Region Director	11	8	9	7	4	6	4	6
State Lead Center	13	3	5	7	4	-	3	3
Prefer not to respond	NA	25	16	22	21	19	25	14

14. I have been with the SBDC program for:

	<u>4/2010</u>	<u>12/2010</u>	<u>8/2011</u>	<u>12/2012</u>	<u>5/2014</u>	<u>5/2015</u>	<u>9/2016</u>	<u>10/2018</u>
0-6 months	7	6	3	6	8	-	3	3
7-12 months	6	8	3	5	5	6	8	1
1-3 years	31	21	29	19	22	23	22	21
4-6 years	27	26	26	24	22	17	11	17
7-10 years	13	14	17	13	13	14	20	15
Over 10 years	17	8	10	16	13	22	18	34
Prefer not to respond	NA	17	13	17	17	17	18	8

15. Please provide any additional comments you believe would assist the SBDC Lead Center. *(Open ended)*
[Please see attached list of verbatim responses.]

Thank you for your participation.

Verbatim responses to open-ended questions**2. (Leadership) Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. (Open ended)**

[Colleague] keeps me informed and we work very well together.
3. Most times but not always. 4. Don't know. 6. Most times, but they don't always get back with answers to my questions.
At times, we have not received replies to our questions. [Colleague] comes across as extremely abrasive and belittling. I've found everyone else to be very friendly and helpful.
Email responses can sometimes be slow. If no answer is known at the time, it would be appreciated that the question/request is acknowledged but let us know they are looking into getting an answer.
Extremely satisfied with State leadership.
I appreciate the SBDC Lead Center's staying connected, engaging and being friendly, current and innovative.
I do not deal directly with the SBDC Lead Center so I cannot really answer these questions.
I feel disconnected from SBDC leadership. If I need help I usually contact one of staff, not leadership.
I feel things have really improved at the Lead Center under the leadership of [colleague].
It is difficult to get specific answers to a question or problem sometimes or to know who is the person that would handle it.
It is difficult to get the state center to respond to emails that we send regarding clients and Center IC issues. We usually need to send several before receiving a response.
Overall, Strongly Agree with Leadership. Communication is always an area to improve (for me too).
Response time from lead center could be quicker.
State has responded quickly to my questions and accounting team is fabulous.
The great improvement in leadership is due to a change in leadership. [Colleague] values everyone's contributions--whether Lead Center or field network, and ALL levels. We are all a part of the Team SBDC.
The question relating to the work environment may not apply to the Centers located outside of the Columbus Lead Center. The creation of the work environment is connected with the host organizations. Our Center facility hosts have created a work environment that helps our SBDC team do our jobs.
The question that relates to understanding the job, sometimes gets lost when demands or more requests are made during the time of quarterly reporting, and deadline-oriented tasks. Dealing with individual clients and getting information we need to show our value and meet goals, is very time consuming and takes a great deal of discipline to obtain. Sometimes we think it is not understood how much work and time it takes to extract certain information in a timely fashion.
There are times I e-mail the lead center and the e-mails go unanswered or respond as though I am a complete idiot. The lead center no longer communicates with the Center Director regarding financial issues, but rather the host. This has caused the host to control our funds with an iron fist and to second guess or deny financial decisions made by the Center Director.
They listen to their staff concern and inputs!

4. (Strategic Planning) Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. (Open ended)

Again, change in Leadership. [Colleague] listens and asks for input from everyone, rather than being politically coy and keeping everything close to the vest.
I am not sure the Lead Center even knows what our center is doing. It definitely focuses on a couple of specific centers- Columbus State and OU.
I haven't seen too many new or innovative ideas, nor do I think the Lead Center is intentional about encouraging them, highlighting them, driving them through their example.
Not as strong an area as Leadership, but also requires more time and coordination. Perhaps the 2019 Plan can have a rep from either each of the Ohio districts, -or- a rep from each size Center: Small, Medium and Large to advocate for us.
SBDC could really position itself as the economic development center in every single community. But I feel that this is left to individual center to achieve, rather than the SBDC lead center taking the lead.
Sometimes I feel as though they add a layer of reporting that is simply redundant.
Strategic planning has always been an Ohio Network activity and the State Lead does do a good job in getting the input from its Ohio SBDC Network.
The Lead Center team is very supportive of the network of Centers. We appreciate the use of innovative technologies like webinars, mobile apps that increased the quality of communication, best practice sharing and professional development resources.
Yes, the Lead Center is very flexible and works to help with our success.

6. (Workforce Focus) Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. (Open ended)

1. when necessary 4. when necessary
Ever since [colleague] took over there has been a big change for the good of the organization.
Happy
I don't have a supervisor or boss (other than our board of directors).
I have a very supportive host supervisor that allows our Center to operate autonomously and leverages tremendous support to the team, stakeholders, SMEs, partners and the Lead SBDC.
I love my direct supervisor. She treats me with respect and in a professional manner. She also encourages my professional development.
I see myself at the Ohio SBDC 3 years from now -- assuming they continue funding the center. Regularly communicate the Ohio SBDC Lead Center -- send in all monthly reports and make sure they are informative, not just short statements that some have state they do. Seek to talk with the director when at events with him, send e-mails and make calls as needed. Calls aren't always answered.
Now that the Lead Center has an Ass't Director, more projects seem to be getting done or getting attention, and communication from State Director is now improving, mostly through monthly conference webinar calls.
Retiring soon
The job is still challenging and exciting every day. I like it better now than when I started mostly because of my past experiences, comfort level and improved knowledge of the program.
The Leadership has been very good. As we all experience not enough staff at times to be responsive all the time, the State Lead office does their very best to support the Network.
THERE IS NO CAREER PATH. THE LEAD CENTER DOES NOT SET THE RATE OF PAY OR THE CAREER PATH. IT IS UP TO EACH HOST. QUITE FRANKLY, IT SUCKS.
Very happy with people in nearby SBDC centers. Very happy with direct supervisor who is open to ideas. Not sure how long I'd stay with SBDC, though. I feel so many restrictions when fundraising or going after new ideas. Perhaps this is because SBDCs can't exist on its own.
Yet, again, a change in leadership and new, refreshing perspective.

7. My morale at the SBDC is most affected by... (complete the sentence in the box below) (Open ended)

Access to the leadership.
Allotting time to counsel clients and eliminating or reducing the interferences that distract me from my counseling.
Being freed up to work with clients, learning new things, and being appreciated. I wouldn't be a business person if I didn't include money in the mix.
Encouragement and motivation. Doing an excellent job!
Feeling that I have the power and ability to affect change
Flexible scheduling of my work hours
Frankly, I don't have a morale problem. I truly love what I do.
I feel morale is affected by the relationships and cooperation we receive from our Leadership, and co-workers. In our case, morale is very good!! It takes a village to work as a team and when respect of opinions are shown, and willingness to work together in a helpful manner, it is sure to be a great environment in which to work.
If I am set up for success or failure.
Impact
It comes from the top. The Director sets the tone. There has been a 180-degree change in the program and how the Director perceives his workforce and the mission of the program.
Lack of recognition for the things our center and region are doing
Leadership definitely affects morale of an organization and I feel the leadership in place now is better than it has been in years past, leading to improved morale across all SBDC's. A bad attitude is contagious, and I see more positive attitudes than negative among other SBDC constituents.
Leadership style (or lack of) of the center director
Leadership without micro-management.
Local center leadership.
Long term vision.
Low pay and benefits
Making sure that the line of communication is always kept open between management & employees. Employees being recognized for their efforts.
My below average salary in comparison to the guidelines suggested in the RFP. Our University host has salary guidelines that do not provide equitable treatment with other SBDCs that are located at Universities.
My coworkers.
My direct supervisor
My Director and the vision for our office going into 2019.
My director, [colleague]. I have never met a more professional or kind person.
My morale at the SBDC is most affected by myself ultimately. The reason I took this position was to make a positive impact in my community day to day. If I'm able to contribute to that goal, I'm doing what I set out to accomplish. And that in itself is the most impactful on my morale.
My morale at the SBDC is most affected by the clients I serve.
My morale is amazing, and I love my job! I feel part of the team, I've been accepted for who I am and my work ethic! I love working with the SBDC.
No path for advancement
Pay

Positively by recognition for my achievements; negatively by many changes in policies that waste so much of my time going back and redoing work.
Seeing us make a difference and impact with the entrepreneurs, small businesses, stakeholders, partners and the talent helping us manage capacity through collaboration.
Setting clear direction through effective communication (voice and electronic) and getting recognition for a job well done, or sometimes need to do more or better. More professional credit for our accomplishments (by our hosts, peers and Ohio) is a very cost-effective way to improve morale and retain staff.
Staff relationships and having high impact clients that are complex.
Support from State, my host and my co-workers. Very friendly and encouraging network.
The ability to do my job without being micro managed.
The ability to see individuals and businesses open their doors and succeed.
The acknowledgment of contributions and achievements of SBDCs around the entire state of Ohio and not just SBDCs located in certain areas of the state, deserving or not.
The actions of the SBDC host.
The degree of autonomy afforded to me.
The lead center's ability to amplify and expand what's already working and focusing on providing vision, toward the "strength based approach"...discover, dream, design, deliver...along with their appreciative inquiry which reinforces the forces of energy to the organization.
The need to get signed attribution statements. E-mails from the client should suffice.
The only real negative is the lack of effective salary increase capabilities within the state budgets.
The SBDC Leadership and its clients
The strong support of my host.
The team that surrounds me.
There are many factors that can affect the morale of employees in a positive way, for me it affected me in a positive way because I was able to develop myself professionally in an appropriate environment and with a good team.
Understanding what we really do at the local level and how we interface with the community.
Work load and feeling of worth to the organization.

8. What are the greatest strengths of the Ohio SBDC Lead Center's management and how could they further improve on those strengths? (Open ended)

[Colleague] clearly understands the operational, political and practical aspects of this program, making him a very effective Lead Center Director. Keep in touch with the field and get input from the experienced directors in the various regions.
A clear-cut mission of the future of the Ohio SBDCs.
Accessibility and knowledge.
Accounting team is vastly improved with [colleague] taking charge
Communicating with centers and making everyone feel part of the team
Communication and strong leadership. I think they do a good job.
Communication and willing to help when needed.
Communication is a great strength - no suggestions for improvement
Communication with the field staff and willingness to help resolve issues.
Current leader of the state lead center is 1000% improved.



Focusing us on creating a desired future as SBA wants!
Good communication. Keep it up
Good understanding of the environment within the state and reasonably good understanding of the environment of the SBA.
Great job with communication
Greatest strength is their communication
I believe there is a continuous effort to improve the accuracy of our data entry which makes us a more credible organization. Assistance with communicating this from a marketing sense to our partners and stakeholders would be helpful. I see a lot of economic dev orgs touting metrics that I know don't meet the same strict guidelines that our organization does.
I deal directly with the Lead Center on rare occasions. I have been satisfied every time that I did.
I Don't Know.
I think including everyone on the monthly calls is effective. I think there needs to be better training for CIC.
Identifying and pursuing new programmatic ideas, managing the government red tape so we don't have to worry about it.
Improve: Spend more time in the field to understand our daily battles, but not to audit or critique us; just get our local perspective; we don't need to do Any More Reports! Strengths: The admin staff has been around for several years and that consistent workforce has kept our leadership at a high level. They deserve a big truckload of praise and thanks!
increased internal communications and professional development opportunities
Innovation, technology ~ improvement by listening more (I am often interrupted during speech) fiscal management more understanding and coaching than lecturing and punitive measures
Innovative, supportive and sympathetic to the challenges in the field. Improvement could come with more empathy for those in the field.
Knowledge of how the systems works keeps us informed and keeps us sheltered from higher management.
Monthly directors' calls are done well. To improve, perhaps include a more defined Q&A session at the end.
Not sure what their strengths are. They don't exactly share when I ask.
Planning & Organizational Continue to listen to the suggestions that are given.
Progressive and innovative
Pro-network orientation
Responsive
SBDC Lead Center is available and quick to respond.
The director tries to keep the centers abreast of relevant information going on at the state and federal level.
The greatest strength is the way they invest in their employees, they make you feel part of the organization, and challenge you to accomplish more. They can keep doing what they are doing.
The greatest strengths include: communicating program and strategic objectives, willingness to communicate and be transparent, their understanding of how we operate in the field and trying to be accommodating to our needs. The state lead director has also gone to great lengths to talk to other SBDC's in other states to bring best practices back to Ohio for implementation. Improvements: can be made in the areas of not asking for things at last minute but understandably sometimes that is due from last minute SBA requests.
The greatest strengths of the organization are: Adequate advertising and promotion, Effective customer service, Clear profitability of the business where you can improve, reward your employees (vouchers, incentives, bonuses, etc.) growth opportunity within the organization.

The improvements and growth of new leaderships in the past two years.
The monthly conference calls are good to keep the centers updated. Beyond that, having access to the recording of the conference call or notes of everything/recap to be sent to all SBDC staff would be helpful to assure nothing is missed.
The SBDC Lead Center is doing a great job, greatest strengths: communication, consistency, approachable, professionalism.
They always try and communicate with us. Thank you for this!
They are passionate about the work we do and are an intrapreneurial team within the network of government agencies.
They do take feedback from the SBDCs in the field. However, the Ohio SBDC Lead Center can be more transparent with some of their conclusions after taking in the feedback or suggestions from the field. That's not always the case.
They have gotten a lot better at communication. It would be nice if they held consistent standards across the network.
They listen. They respect the field and its contributions to the mission of the program. They are strategically focused. Again, all driven by the Director.
They tend to be a reasonable bunch.
They're supportive.
Understanding the data - teach us to use the tools in Center IC to improve efficiencies and productivity.
We do receive a great deal of support from our Ohio SBDC Lead Center. They are there to support the Ohio Network and do look for ways to continue to educate and streamline reporting when they can. Having daily knowledge of how a center operates, which includes all the data a center must collect to satisfy what is expected over and above counseling time, with all of the documentation required to keep all the records current, the Lead Center could be open to what it takes to collect the info, and not think the work is not being done. Offices get very busy, which also means being present for our communities, and accountable to our Cash match community partners. Like the Ohio SBDC Lead center, many SBDC's are challenged by coverage of staff and deadlines that surround the work of an SBDC. Improvements could be to note what stage in the fiscal year the center is operating, to be patient with client outcomes the center is working towards, the over abundant accountability that is required just to deliver services to a client, when we could take the word of our client or bank that a loan has been provided without going to the nth degree to get a signature from those that are hard pressed in running a business and may not have the time to report. Kudos to the State of Ohio for attempting to make this last process of impact reporting a little easier. We will try that option in FFY 2019 as our Impact crusade started in September with one to one contacts to retrieve. We trust our Lead Center and we know they are open to any improvements.

9. What are the greatest weaknesses in the Ohio SBDC Lead Center's management and how could they address these issues?

Access to influencers to advocate and assist with fund development and marketing tools and resources.
Availability
Believing they are communicating and including all in that process. Address the issue by thinking about the noted issue.
Center IC is a diverse tool - but so little of it is has consistent and clear definitions. Impact is collected, compiled, and compared differently among Centers and consultants. I have several different definitions given across time for what items such as business starts, sales growth, and jobs retained refers to. Do HICs still matter? How about contracts? There is a lot of unclarity and uncertainty with little consistency.
Chose not to respond
Consistently hiring the best candidates based on fit and experience.
Could have more training on the CIC Reporting system.
Government bureaucracy
Honestly, I can't think of any - maybe better response to CIC technical issues?
I Don't Know.
Inconsistent response time. Requests/questions should always be acknowledged.
It's not a weakness but the funding issues at SBA are a concern
Just be open to Center challenges when sending out requests during busy times. Know this adds even more pressure to staff and time taken away from our goal achievement.
Lead Center appears to not hold Center Directors accountable for staff performance, or lack thereof, which is demoralizing for staff members who strive to achieve performance goals.
Limited communication other than the monthly call. It is hard to get answers to systems questions. Very focused on the Columbus area centers
Low level of staffing. Asking the Lead employees to do too much.
Needs to look for ways to offer benefits to the centers that do not have benefits because the host cannot afford them. Center personnel should be willing to pay for part of the benefits.
Not always responsive when we need changes in Center IC. Additional staff would probably be the best way to address.
Not sure of any weaknesses at this time
Nothing comes to mind at this time
One of the biggest weaknesses of the organization is the language since we are located in the center of the Hispanic community, often customers can not access all our services because they do not know the language, they could address these problems with interpreter services or offer language classes for small entrepreneurs.
Please stop all the emails about SBDC Workplace! Too much and redundant.
Receiving assistance or having issues fixed on Center IC that cannot be corrected by our own center takes a really long time or gets overlooked by the state center even after several attempts of getting in touch. To address these issues would be to simply reply and just let us know approximately when we can expect results. When [former colleague] worked there, she always replied and had our issues fixed within 24 hours. It seems as if things have been very disorganized since she left.
Response time
Responsiveness to inquiries

Roles of the staff are unclear in some areas. Sometimes communication is still an issue, though improving. Travel to the local centers to get a better idea of what each is like - challenges, opportunities, host support, etc. Take away best practices from actually spending some time at the centers.
Serving as a repository of valuable resources that can be used by counselors. The library in CenterIC is terribly out-of-date, and what's in there isn't that useful to begin with.
Some of the lead center staff does not get back to you on questions always, and sometimes they will ask for information to be sent to them that you already sent but did not receive a confirmation of receipt. This is not always the case though.
Sorry, I don't have any critiques to offer at this time.
The absence of [former colleague] (that position), things seemed to have gotten behind, but hopefully now are getting back into place.
The major weakness comes from above, from upper management of the agency itself. The SBDC has a multitude of innovative programs it would like to pursue on behalf of Ohio's small business owners, but has faced delays, denials and total disinterest (or uninterest) in the program.
The timelines for completing a request (or the period of time when the request is made) by the State is not always realistic. It is getting better.
They have a total lack of understanding as to what happens in the field.
Though the leadership talks about sharing best practices, it's hard to get someone to show me how it's done.
Timeliness when they ask us to complete tasks. I realize some of this is out of their control, but further lead time would be appreciated when possible.
Too much work to do and not enough staff and time. But they do maximize their efforts as much as possible.
Training for CIC. More training webinars or a workplace group for CIC questions only.
Transparency. Acknowledging achievements and successes of SBDCs in other areas of the state rather than specific areas all the time.
Unsure

10. The following things are needed to help me do my job better. (Other – specify responses)

An alternative database to CIC perhaps a portal like Salesforce
Increased support from Agency management.
More sharing of best practices in the field.
More time to spend working with clients; less time spent on added extra time-consuming things like working in Counselors' Connect, for example.
Most of all regions have great communication. The main ingredient is access to more funding.
Stop assuming you know what we do and giving us tools we don't need.

12. (Management Performance) Please explain any answer you wish or provide additional feedback. (Open ended)

Good place to work if you do not require benefits. Need additional funding to bring on more counselors.
I am not sure the lead center cares about what our center has to say or is doing. I love working at our center and with our host. We have learned to be productive with limited support from the lead center. The lead center has developed some new tools to make our jobs easier
I do not deal directly with the state lead center.
I found a job that I do for love, also that makes me feel proud to help the community and be part of its development.
I think the Lead Center could do a better job of getting to know the SBDC Advisors.
It's always a different business in a different industry with a different owner personality, and I love the variety. I have some really meaningful and enjoyable community engagement.
Love my job!
Thanks for doing a great job, you guys!
The best Center network I ever worked
The low pay is, in part, offset by lifestyle. I can leave the work at 5:00 and go home.
WE have a great Ohio Lead Center Staff!!
Well, I do share my opinion. Sometimes it's taken into consideration, other times I am not sure if anyone cares.
While our local production is improving Year over Year, and we are one of the youngest Centers in Ohio, and at the top of the small center category, my financial compensation has not reflected my efforts. Very discouraging compared to my private sector counterparts. Therefore, I Neither Agree/Disagree. I know I have the ear of the State Director. Strongly Agree.

15. Please provide any additional comments you believe would assist the SBDC Lead Center. (Open ended)

Don't make us do these surveys at the end of our Fiscal Year! And when it comes time for the 2019 Competitive Grant RFP, please communicate early and often. Any indication of deadlines and supporting documents needed is appreciated.
I am the President of the Host so some of these questions do not apply but we are very grateful for the partnership!!
It has been refreshing to have consistent leadership for a change.
Keep up the good work!
Keep up the great work!
Keep us in a strategic readiness mode
No additional comments, thanks.
None that haven't been provided
Not at this time
Openness to acknowledging we have great and very educated advisors and continue to attempt to reduce amount of reporting required to show our value to the SBA and to our State. We love to serve small businesses and we know the SBDC Lead Center does their best to support centers in the delivery of services. Thank you.....
The State Lead Center management needs to visit the local centers more. In addition, the lead center needs to be more accommodating to Center's needs, particularly, in the accounting area. It seems, the accounting procedures are designed to make life easy for the State's management, particularly, regarding the Invoice procedures. Come visit us.
We need more funding, to keep this talent, we are great group of people who worked hard no matter the hour, time and place, to accomplish and help succeed our clients. Because we all love entrepreneurial and small business!!!