



**Boston University**  
**WBUR – “Taking the Pulse”**  
Employee Survey Summary

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Prepared by  
Longpoint Consulting, Inc.  
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## WBUR Organizational Climate Survey Summary

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### Background

Longpoint distributed the WBUR Organizational Climate Study Survey to WBUR employees, freelancers and interns on April 18<sup>th</sup> based on a list provided by the WBUR Business Office.

Longpoint sent 240 confidential survey invitations via email through Survey Monkey and allowed three weeks for completion. A total of 173 invitees responded for an overall participant response rate of **72%**.

The following table presents participation by various cohorts:

Survey Cohort	Survey Invites	Survey Responses	Participation Rate
WBUR Employees	178	148	83%
WBUR Freelancers	48	17	35%
WBUR Interns	14	8	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>72%</b>

This summary provides specifics about the data gathered from each survey question. The survey contained numerous opportunities for respondents to provide their perspective via comments and open-ended questions. More than 1,500 comments were received.

### Survey Data Summary

Before reviewing the data that follows, it is important to note several factors considered by Longpoint in its assessment, including:

- Many survey questions asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding a specific topic (e.g., communication, work culture, employee experience, etc.). Longpoint deliberately chose not to present a “neutral” option which would frequently be seen in a Likert Scale range. By eliminating the “neutral” option to an agreement statement, we wanted to encourage participants to reflect on their level of agreement rather than opt out by selecting “neutral.”
- Data from all three cohorts (Employees, Freelancers and Interns) has been aggregated in our reporting.



## Section 1 – Participant Demographics

### Question #1 – Which best describes your position at WBUR?

Position Type	
Senior Leadership Team Member	6.4%
Program/Department Manager	12.7%
WBUR Program/Department Staff/Host	64.3%
Freelancer/Casual Employee	9.6%
Intern	4.7%
Other	2.3%

Those who identified as “Other” generally indicated positions of broadcast recording technician, guest host or administrative staff.

The table above indicates that survey participants represented a strong cross-section of position types across the organization. By cohort, Freelancer and Intern participation rates were lower than Employee participation.

### Question #2 - How long have you worked at WBUR?

Years at WBUR	
Less than two years	20.6%
2 - 4 years	20.6%
5 - 10 years	19.4%
11 - 20 years	25.9%
More than 20 years	13.5%

### Question #3 – How long have you worked in your field/profession?

Years in Field/Profession	
Less than two years	7.1%
2 - 4 years	6.5%
5 - 10 years	22.4%
11 - 20 years	22.4%
More than 20 years	41.6%

Responses to Question #2 indicate that survey participants represented a wide range in number of “Years at WBUR.” A closer look at this group in Question #3 indicates that the station is recruiting experienced professionals, as response percentages in “Years’ in Field/Profession” are higher. For example, though approximately 40% of respondents have worked at WBUR less than five years, only 13.6% have less than five years of experience in their field.



**Question #4 – In which of the following area(s) do you currently work?**

Department/Area	
Business Office/Finance	3.5%
Community Engagement	4.2%
Development	4.2%
Digital	10.2%
Engineers/Technicians	7.8%
General Management	1.8%
<i>Here &amp; Now</i>	14.9%
iLab	10.8%
Local News Room	23.9%
Marketing and Promotion	4.8%
Membership	5.9%
National Program Sales/Syndication	2.4%
<i>Only A Game</i>	5.3%
<i>On Point</i>	9.5%
Production	6.0%
Program and Production	7.2%
<i>Radio Boston</i>	5.4%
Underwriting	10.8%
WBUR Verticals (e.g., The ARTery, CommonHealth)	7.2%
Other	3.6%

This table indicates that all departments participated in this survey with percentages reflecting the overall employee allocation across WBUR. Percentages do not total 100% as many respondents indicated that they work in two or more departments. Those who indicated “Other” presented specific situations which do not easily fit into any of the departments listed.

**Question #5 – Please indicate any racial/ethnic categories with which you identify.**

The table below highlights both a challenge and opportunity for WBUR and its recruiting, hiring and employee retention practices. 95% of survey respondents responded to this optional question, with over 87% identifying as “White.”

Race/Ethnicity	
Asian (including subcontinent & Philippines)	3.8%
Black or African American (including Africa and the Caribbean)	4.4%
Hispanic/Latino	2.5%
Native American or Alaska Native	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
White (including Middle Eastern)	87.3%
Two or More Races	1.3%
Other	0.7%



**Question #6 – With which gender identity do you most identify?**

Gender Identity	
Female	52.7%
Male	47.3%
Transgender Female	0%
Transgender Male	0%
Gender Varian/Non-Conforming	0%
Not Listed	0%

**Section 2 – Communication at WBUR**

Questions #7-#10 focused on communication at WBUR. Participants were asked first about mode and then effectiveness of communication both in their department and station-wide.

**Question #7 – How do you currently receive information pertaining to station-wide matters (e.g., important coverage events, new employee announcements, job postings, public/audience events?)**

Receiving Station-wide Information - Current	
One-on-One Meetings	31.2%
Department/All Staff Meetings	62.4%
WBUR All-Staff Email	88.8%
Futurecast Blog	17.7%
Slack	24.7%
Informal Conversations	67.6%
Social Media	21.8%
Other (please describe)	4.1%

**Question #8 – What is your preferred mode of receiving information pertaining to station-wide matters?**

Receiving Station-wide Information -Preferred	
One-on-One Meetings	24.1%
Department/All Staff Meetings	60.6%
WBUR All-Staff Email	88.8%
Futurecast Blog	7.65%
Slack	7.65%
Informal Conversations	18.2%
Social Media	2.35%
Other (please describe)	4.7%



The table above associated with Question #7 indicates that the majority of respondents currently receive information about station-wide matters through WBUR All-Staff Emails (88.8%), Informal Conversations (67.6%) and Department/All-Staff Meetings (62.4%). When asked to indicate their preferred mode of receiving this information, WBUR All-Staff Emails and Department/ All-Staff Meetings were still preferred. Comments shared by participants indicated that Social Media has been a source of learning about new positions at WBUR, positions filled and other organizational changes.

**Questions #9 – Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements pertaining to communication at WBUR.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The goals of WBUR have been effectively communicated to me.	19%	51%	22%	8%
I know how my role contributes to achieving these goals.	19%	49%	28%	4%
Information regarding station-wide issues is communicated on a timely basis.	7%	41%	37%	15%
Information regarding station-wide issues is communicated clearly.	7%	43%	38%	12%
The goals of my department have been effectively communicated to me.	32%	43%	18%	7%
Information is communicated within my department on a timely basis.	21%	40%	29%	10%
Information is communicated within my department clearly.	23%	38%	29%	10%
Colleagues are responsive when I make inquiries of them.	26%	54%	18%	2%
Employees have appropriate opportunities/forums to express their ideas and perspectives.	11%	38%	38%	13%

Comments indicate that although there may be forums to contribute their ideas, they feel leadership does not listen to them or value their perspective.

**Question #10 – Please provide SUGGESTIONS to enhance communication at WBUR.**

The most common suggestions to improve communication included:

- Greater transparency from management; honest, direct and constructive communication.
- Consistency of information, both in modes and frequency.
- More regular all-station meetings with less “selling” and more “informing.” To include regular updates of key business/performance metrics, organizational issues and programming changes.



- Engage employees earlier on in a project’s development allowing for input prior to implementation.
- Identify a resource to be responsible for station-wide communication.
- Distribute updated organizational chart to all employees.
- Consider WBUR employee newsletter.
- Reduce meetings for managers and staff. Change the “meeting culture.”

**Section 3 – The WBUR Work Environment and Culture**

**Question #11 – Please provide your perspective on WBUR’s greatest strengths.**

- Most employees indicated the key strength of WBUR is the talented staff of passionate and intelligent individuals who are dedicated to working on behalf of the station and its listeners.
- The majority of employees expressed a strong commitment to the institution of public radio and its mission.
- WBUR is viewed as a vital local and national institution.
- There is recognition of the high quality of journalism the station produces each day as well as a fervent desire to ensure that this continues.
- The station’s products -- newscasts, radio programs, podcasts and digital content — are a source of great pride to most employees.
- WBUR’s reputation as a national leader in public radio and its financial strength are viewed as key attributes.
- The station’s community engagement and its loyal audience are essential pillars to WBUR’s success.
- Several mid-level managers were identified as strong, supportive and effective leaders who set clear objectives with their teams, communicate well and provide opportunities for collaboration.
- Many employees feel extremely positively about being BU employees, particularly regarding the University’s generous benefits.

**Questions #12 – Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements pertaining to WBUR as a place to work:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
...a welcoming and friendly environment.	19%	67%	11%	3%
...an environment that encourages a variety of thoughts and ideas.	12%	55%	27%	6%
. ...a respectful working environment.	13%	61%	25%	1%
...a collaborative and cooperative environment.	14%	53%	29%	4%
...an environment that fosters cross-departmental teamwork.	5%	26%	48%	21%



...an environment that values diversity.	9%	47%	32%	12%
...an environment that is inclusive of all employees.	6%	42%	41%	11%
...an environment where employees feel they are treated fairly.	4%	31%	48%	17%
...known for innovation and risk-taking.	10%	41%	31%	18%

The most favorable score indicated WBUR is a welcoming and friendly environment. A review of comments indicate that this feeling is most prominent at the department level. At the same time, many comments indicated that WBUR is a highly siloed work environment.

**Question #13 – Please provide SUGGESTIONS to enhance the work environment at WBUR.**

The most common suggestions mentioned to improve the WBUR work environment include:

- Increased awareness of the importance and value of a diverse and inclusive work environment.
- Sensitivity and cultural training for organizational leaders and staff.
- A strategic employee driven diversity program which is genuine and “not the public relations efforts currently underway.”
- Paid intern program allowing greater access to a diverse pool of candidates.
- Cross departmental project teams to assist in developing relationships and partnerships across the station.
- A zero-tolerance environment for bullying and “bad behavior.”
- Name plates on cubicles and offices to help in getting to know people.
- Increase the number of social opportunities for all staff increasing engagement and strengthening relationships.
- A recognition by leadership that diversity includes diversity of thoughts, perspectives and ideas and being open to consider all.

**Question #14 – Using the scale below, please provide your assessment of morale.**

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
I would rate my morale as...	18%	34%	31%	10%	7%
My impression of morale within my department is...	10%	30%	35%	18%	6%
My impression of overall morale at WBUR is...	3%	17%	49%	23%	8%





## Section 4 - The Employee Experience

**Questions #15 – Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements regarding recruiting, hiring and career advancement at WBUR:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The recruiting and hiring process at WBUR is clear.	3%	20%	54%	23%
The availability of open positions is well-communicated.	4%	18%	52%	26%
The interview process is efficient.	3%	23%	36%	38%
Open positions are filled promptly.	2%	6%	34%	58%
There is an effective on-boarding process at WBUR.	2%	22%	39%	37%
I receive adequate training to do my job successfully.	13%	53%	21%	13%
I am satisfied with my opportunities for professional growth.	7%	37%	35%	21%
I am satisfied with the career advancement opportunities available to me.	6%	37%	35%	22%
I feel valued as an employee of WBUR.	22%	43%	26%	9%

**Question #16 – Please provide SUGGESTIONS to enhance recruiting, hiring and career advancement at WBUR.**

The most common suggestions mentioned to improve the recruiting, hiring and career advancement at WBUR included:

- Introduce and require transparency, fairness and consistency throughout the hiring process.
- Assess why the hiring process takes so long at WBUR.
- Communicate all job openings and postings to all WBUR staff.
- Reduce the use of “perma-lancers” in the organization.
- Identify development opportunities for every employee.
- Allow for current employees to experience other roles in other WBUR departments.



**Question #17 – How likely would you be to recommend WBUR as a place to work to a friend?**

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
17%	36%	35%	8%	4%

53% of respondents are likely to recommend WBUR as a friend with the balance being unsure or unlikely.

Many of the respondents who were “Unsure” commented that it would depend on a number of factors (e.g., what area at the station the friend might be working, how experienced the friend was, and whether they thought the friend could tolerate working in an environment without adequate support).

**Questions #18 – Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements regarding performance and productivity at WBUR:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Clear expectations and goals regarding my job have been established and communicated to me.	27%	50%	16%	7%
I receive formal feedback regarding my job performance (e.g., an annual performance review).	33%	55%	8%	4%
The feedback I receive in my review is meaningful and appropriate.	26%	41%	22%	11%
I receive timely informal feedback on the work I do.	23%	45%	25%	7%
I receive meaningful, appropriate informal feedback on the work I do.	21%	46%	27%	6%
I am recognized when I produce good work.	27%	47%	22%	4%
I have appropriate access to my supervisor/manager when I need guidance/direction so that I can perform my job.	33%	47%	16%	4%
My supervisor/manager provides effective guidance/direction to me so that I can perform my job.	26%	41%	26%	7%
I have access to growth and development opportunities.	5%	41%	41%	13%
I am satisfied that I have opportunities to apply my talent and expertise.	16%	46%	30%	8%
When concerns/disputes arise at WBUR, they are handled fairly.	5%	36%	45%	14%
Employees are held accountable for meeting expectations at WBUR.	6%	35%	41%	18%



**Question #19 – Please provide SUGGESTIONS to enhance performance and productivity at WBUR.**

The most common suggestions mentioned to enhance performance and productivity at WBUR included:

- Change the current culture of not addressing non-performers moving to a culture of accountability.
- Train all levels of managers in all aspects of Performance Management.
- Introduce a culture of feedback beyond the annual performance review to include informal day-to-day feedback, coaching and more frequent performance discussions.
- Eliminate group disciplinary/performance meetings with multiple managers and participants.
- Provide development opportunities for all employees including conferences, job-shadowing and encourage staff to apply their talents across other areas of the station.

**Section 5 - The WBUR Organization and Leadership**

**Questions #20 – Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements regarding organization and leadership at WBUR:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a clear understanding of the organizational/reporting structure of WBUR.	14%	34%	38%	14%
I have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of leaders across the WBUR organization.	8%	25%	45%	22%
I have a clear understanding of the organizational/reporting structure of my department.	33%	41%	20%	6%
I have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the leader(s) in my department.	31%	39%	22%	8%
I trust that information that I request to be treated as confidential is kept confidential by my supervisor or manager.	22%	40%	27%	11%
WBUR is an organization in which decisions are generally made at the appropriate organizational level.	7%	30%	45%	18%



**Question #21 – Please provide SUGGESTIONS regarding the organization and leadership at WBUR.**

The most common suggestions mentioned regarding the organization and leadership at WBUR included:

- Review the organizational structure and assess all management positions.
- Simplify the organization.
- Define and communicate roles and responsibilities for all management positions, then define the reporting structure of all staff for each manager. Communicate a simple organizational chart to all employees.
- Review and evaluate every position station-wide ensuring that each one accurately reflects the current work being done.
- Assess each department’s organizational structure to ensure efficiency, clear roles and responsibilities and reporting structure.
- Recognize the need for additional Public Radio experience within the management team.

**Section 6 – WBUR’s Performance and Future**

**Questions #22– Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements regarding WBUR’s performance and future:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am familiar with Futurecast.	17%	53%	18%	12%
I understand the role that I play in the success of Futurecast.	9%	23%	41%	27%
WBUR successfully maintains editorial/journalistic integrity while balancing the business needs of the station.	22%	61%	13%	4%
It is important that employees understand the business metrics of WBUR’s performance (e.g., audience, downloads, traffic, finances, ratings.)	37%	51%	9%	3%
I understand the business metrics of WBUR’s performance.	12%	35%	40%	13%
I feel good about the direction in which WBUR is headed.	13%	44%	33%	10%
I feel confident that change will result from the information learned through this feedback process.	11%	39%	38%	12%



**Question #23 – Please provide *SUGGESTIONS* regarding WBUR’s performance and future.**

The most common suggestions mentioned regarding WBUR’s performance and future included:

- Slow down...the new ideas being introduced are reactive, unplanned, unfunded and tactical. There is a need for a strategic approach.
- Get back to the basics of good journalism.
- Invest in the infrastructure for current programs before introducing new efforts.
- Transparency with performance metrics such as financials, membership, ratings, underwriting and traffic.
- Rededicate to the principal that business must never interfere with journalistic mission.

