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## **Effective Strategies to Attract and Retain Qualified Hospitality Staff in the Post-Pandemic Caribbean**

Rajan Bhattarai  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Rajan Bhattarai

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2025

Abstract

Effective Strategies to Attract and Retain Qualified Hospitality Staff in the Post-

Pandemic Caribbean

by

Rajan Bhattarai

MIS, Bellevue University, 2008

BBS, Tribhuvan University, 2000

Consulting Capstone Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

November 2025

## Abstract

Employee attraction and retention remain critical constraints for Caribbean luxury-wellness resorts in the post-pandemic era. Hospitality and tourism leaders are concerned because persistent vacancy, churn, and extended time-to-competence impair service quality and performance of their organizations. Grounded in the Baldrige Excellence Framework and social exchange theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the effective strategies employed by tourism leaders to attract and retain qualified staff within a Caribbean hospitality organization. Data were collected from five Caribbean leaders (HR director, department manager, and supervisors) using semistructured interviews and analyzing organizational documents. Thematic analysis was used to synthesize the data. Key themes included operational success in linking workforce development with financial and process outcomes, and their transformational leadership approach that cultivates an environment encouraging innovation and supports psychological safety. A key recommendation for hospitality business tourism leaders is to implement a digital hiring funnel and establish a dual-pipeline talent strategy to attract and retain staff. The implications for positive social change include the potential for the Caribbean hospitality employers and policymakers to implement fair, skills-based career pathways that improve access to quality employment opportunities. These actions could enable employees to achieve greater job stability and upward mobility, enhance household income security, and foster long-term community well-being within Caribbean economies.

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## Dedication

First and foremost, I dedicate this doctoral study to God, whose grace and strength sustained me through every step of this challenging yet rewarding journey. To my dad and mom, whose unwavering encouragement and belief in the power of education inspired me to persevere even in moments of doubt, thank you for instilling in me the value of hard work and determination.

To my family (Sunita, my beloved wife; Sabu, my son; and Sabana, my daughter), whose love, patience, and support carried me through the many hours of research and writing. Your sacrifices and understanding made this achievement attainable; I am forever grateful.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Project

### **Background of the Problem**

Caribbean tourism industry leaders have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified employees in the post-pandemic environment. Following COVID-19, this issue has worsened because many workers left the Caribbean region for better opportunities (Mensah & Boakye, 2021). The effect of this issue is a severe shortage of qualified labor within the hospitality sector, leading to operational challenges, poor service quality, and unhappy customers (Magnini et al., 2024). The recovery of domestic worker employment has lagged behind the overall employment trends from 2019 to 2023. The labor force participation rate decreased from 62.5% to 62.3%, highlighting the slower progress in this sector (International Labour Organization, 2023, p.6). This labor shortage affects private and public businesses and poses a broader economic threat to the region, given the Caribbean's heavy reliance on tourism for employment and GDP (Ciarlante et al., 2024). Employees cited low wages, high stress, and lack of career development as critical deterrents to remaining in the industry (Magnini et al., 2024). Compounding the issue, many employees have pursued opportunities in sectors perceived as more stable and rewarding, such as technology or healthcare, following the pandemic (Ciarlante et al., 2024). The general business problem is that labor shortages are threatening the organizational leader's capacity to sustain business operations.

### **Business Problem Consulting Focus and Project Purpose**

The specific business problem is that some Caribbean tourism leaders in the hospitality business lack effective strategies for attracting and retaining qualified staff

post-pandemic. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative single case project was to identify and explore effective strategies that Caribbean tourism leaders in the hospitality business used to attract and retain qualified staff post-pandemic. This project's target population comprises Caribbean tourism leaders from a single organization. Five senior leaders were purposively sampled from the consulting client organization participating in the capstone project. The participant eligibility criteria include being a Caribbean tourism industry leader in the consulting capstone client organization responsible for implementing strategies to attract and retain qualified staff post-pandemic.

The qualitative method was appropriate for this project because it explored the complex and contextual factors influencing staff attraction and retention in the post-pandemic hospitality industry. Qualitative research enables an in-depth exploration of participant experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes (Yin, 2018). A case project design was appropriate for this research project because it allows in-depth exploration of staff attraction and retention and attraction strategies. Case studies are commonly used in business research to explore and interpret complex phenomena within organizational settings (Yin, 2018). The single case project approach was appropriate for this research because it enables the researcher to focus on the specific conditions in the Caribbean, a region heavily reliant on tourism, making it a unique context for exploring skilled staff attraction and retention strategies. All data were collected virtually from the client organization leaders via phone, email, or virtual meeting platforms such as Google Meet or Microsoft Teams. Project data included (a) semistructured interviews with tourism and hospitality business tourism leaders who have been involved in acquisition

and retention strategy implementation; (b) internal organizational archival data, such as hiring and employee turnover records, retention program documents, and other data released by the organization; (c) public data, such as industry reports, labor statistics, and tourism websites relevant to workforce issues; and (d) scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed articles, books, and reports that discuss strategies for attracting and retaining skilled workers in tourism, human resource practices, and the impact of COVID-19 on workforce dynamics. The interview questions are included in Appendix A, and the Interview Protocol is included in Appendix B.

A thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to identify and categorize the key patterns in the data. Member checking, data saturation, and methodological triangulation were used in the analysis process to ensure data saturation. The composite conceptual framework for this project was the Baldrige Excellence Framework (BEF; Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023) and social exchange theory (SET; Homans, 1958), which provided a structured approach to evaluating organizational effectiveness and understanding.

### **Research Question**

What effective strategies did Caribbean tourism leaders in the hospitality business use to attract and retain qualified staff post-pandemic?

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

Assumptions serve as the foundation of the project, which the researcher accepts as true without direct verification (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Assumptions establish a framework that includes expectations about participant behavior, the applicability of

theoretical models, or the stability of external conditions that influence the research. Limitations are factors beyond the researcher's control that may impact the project's scope and validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These constraints can arise from methodological choices, data availability, sample size, or external influences such as economic or social changes. Limitations help contextualize the findings and provide direction for future research to address gaps and improve reliability.

### **Assumptions**

A conceptual framework offers a systematic perspective for analyzing research phenomena, facilitating the basis for evaluating and interpreting results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The BEF is effective in assessing leadership strategies and organizational processes, assuring conformity with performance excellence principles (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). Social exchange theory (SET) underscores the reciprocal dynamics between employers and employees, accentuating the significance of mutual advantages in promoting organizational commitment and workforce stability (Homans, 1958). This project posits that the BEF and SET provide significant insights into comprehending leadership efficacy and staff retention within the Caribbean hospitality industry.

I based this study on three key assumptions. First, I assumed that the selected participants would provide honest, candid, and experience-based responses during the interviews, accurately reflecting their organizational practices and perceptions related to workforce attrition and retention. Second, I assumed that the core challenges affecting hospitality staffing in the Caribbean region, such as labor migration, employee benefits,

and career development needs, would remain consistent during the research period, allowing findings to reflect stability. Third, I assumed that the organization would continue operating under a similar structural, economic, and policy environment, ensuring that any identified strategies could be reliably attributed to leadership practices and organizational policies.

### **Limitations**

Limitations refer to the potential weaknesses or constraints inherent in a project's design, methodology, or scope that may affect the interpretation or generalizability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In this project, a key limitation is its focus on a single Caribbean tourism organization, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to other organizations in the region. Additionally, the inclusion of a limited number of senior leaders as participants narrows the range of perspectives captured. Although this is consistent with the purposefully bound approach typical of qualitative case study research, it may not fully encompass the diversity of viewpoints present within the organization or the broader tourism sector (Guest et al., 2013). The project is bound by the current conditions of the post-pandemic period, which may evolve as the global hospitality industry stabilizes further.

One of the limitations of this study was a restricted geographic focus on the Caribbean hospitality sector, which might limit the applicability of findings to other regions with different economic and labor market dynamics. Another limitation was the industry-specific scope, where findings were specific to the hospitality industry, which had unique labor challenges, and these challenges might not be applicable to other

industries. Additionally, the limitation with the purposive sampling of a small number of senior leaders is that it is appropriate for a qualitative study, which could limit the diversity of perspectives and might not fully represent the broader workforce.

### **Transition**

In Section 1, I provided a foundation for the project, outlined the background of the problem, the specific business problem, and the project purpose. The project detailed the challenges Caribbean tourism industry leaders face in attracting and retaining qualified staff post-pandemic and introduced the qualitative single case project design used to explore effective strategies. The section also described the specific population and data collection methods, which included interviews, organizational data, and public resources. Assumptions and limitations related to the project's scope, participant selection, and data sources were also discussed. In Section 2, I review the relevant literature associated with the business problem, and in Section 3, I outline the methodological approach used in this project, providing the groundwork for the findings and conclusions presented in Section 4.

## Section 2: Literature Review of Business Consulting Topic

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the global tourism industry, including in the Caribbean, which relies heavily on tourism for economic growth and employment. The recovery phase presented unique workforce challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff. This literature review synthesizes insights from academic studies and industry reports, identifying effective strategies Caribbean tourism leaders employ to address these challenges.

This literature review examined key themes related to effective strategies for attracting and retaining qualified hospitality staff in the post-pandemic Caribbean, exploring employer branding, community engagement, workforce sustainability (recruitment and retention), employee training, organizational leadership, leadership types, and leadership strategies for organizational change management within the tourism and hospitality sectors. By structuring the literature review around these core themes, this project comprehensively explored factors influencing workforce management in the post-pandemic Caribbean hospitality sector. The findings from the literature review serve as the basis for the project's conceptual framework and inform practical recommendations for industry leaders. This literature review consists of three major sections. The first introduces the conceptual framework guiding the study, focusing on the BEF and supported by relevant business theory, SET. The second synthesizes scholarship addressing the underlying business problem challenges in attracting and retaining qualified hospitality staff in the post-pandemic Caribbean. The third section reviews

business consulting literature specific to employee attraction and retention, and scholarly evidence for resolving the identified business problem, which offers a synthesis of best practices.

I used a structured strategy to search EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Research Gate, JSTOR, Walden Library, and the Web of Science to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous literature review. The search terms were selected based on the project's primary focus areas, including *employer branding, employee retention and attraction in hospitality, community engagement in tourism, sustainable workforce management, post-pandemic workforce trends, and hospitality business leadership, leadership styles, and tourism in the Caribbean*. Boolean operators (i.e., AND, OR, NOT) were utilized to refine search results and retrieve only the most relevant articles. Additionally, citation chaining was used to track influential studies within the field. This literature review incorporates 109 scholarly sources, of which 85% are peer-reviewed journal articles and 95% published within the last 5 years to ensure that the project is informed by the most recent advancements and empirical findings. By integrating recent peer-reviewed studies, this literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of best practices and emerging trends relevant to the research focus.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### ***Baldrige Excellence Framework***

The BEF offers a structured approach for evaluating and enhancing organizational performance across several sectors. Originating from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program, BEF aims to promote innovation, competitiveness, and

sustainability in business and public service environments. The BEF consists of three components: the leadership triad, the results triad, and the core aspects of measurement, analysis, and knowledge management (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). Alanazi (2025) highlighted the framework's effectiveness in linking business models to strategy execution, revealing a clear empirical relationship between successful implementation and improved organizational outcomes. Rangsunghoen et al. (2024) expanded the applicability of the Baldrige model, demonstrating its efficacy in managing community-based social enterprises and highlighting its potential to improve organizational performance via methodical leadership and strategic planning. Stanley (2021) found that organizations improved operational capacity and augmented efficiency by implementing the Baldrige Excellence Framework. The structured evaluation components of the Baldrige Excellence Framework allow leaders to identify strengths, diagnose gaps, and deploy targeted improvements. Alanazi (2025) discovered that the BEF efficiently connects business models with strategy execution, indicating a concrete empirical correlation between the deployment of a comprehensive framework and enhanced organizational outcomes. By embedding a culture of continuous improvement and performance excellence, this framework contributes to long-term organizational resilience and sustainability. The BEF offers a valuable conceptual structure for guiding leaders in the Caribbean hospitality industry and helps refine the workforce recruitment and retention strategies.

One of the BEF's strengths is its ability to bridge the gap between strategic formulation and operational execution. Yudiandri and Sulistyono (2022) applied Baldrige

criteria within the tourism industry, demonstrating how systematic evaluations and improvement procedures significantly enhanced sustainable management practices at the Mangunan orchard tourism attraction. The researchers emphasized the practical utility of the framework in tourism, showcasing its adaptability in promoting sustainable tourism practices and addressing workforce management challenges (Yudiandri & Sulisty, 2022). Alanazi (2025) highlighted the empirical relationship between BEF implementation and improved business outcomes, particularly in industries with complex value chains and dynamic consumer behavior. The study highlighted the resilience and adaptability of the Baldrige Excellence Framework. Integrating leadership, strategy, employee engagement, operational efficiency, and performance evaluation. This creates a comprehensive framework that systematically allows hospitality companies to identify strengths and areas for improvement. In the context of Caribbean hospitality, where external pressures such as labor shortages, environmental risks, and fluctuating tourism demand are prevalent, BEF provides a cohesive framework for managing competing priorities. By establishing clear performance metrics, role accountability, and strategic clarity, BEF supports real-time responsiveness and strategic resilience.

Effective communication and leadership alignment are central to BEF's implementation. Aydogan et al. (2023) demonstrated that organizations with strong BEF-based communication protocols achieved higher cohesion and role clarity. The framework's emphasis on transparency and stakeholder involvement ensures that all members of the organization understand their role in achieving strategic goals. Leadership within the BEF is not confined to top management but extends across all

levels of the organization. This type of distributed leadership approach supports empowerment, innovation, and accountability.

BEF fosters strategic alignment, ensuring that all organizational activities support overarching objectives, enabling sustained long-term growth. Furthermore, the structured architecture of the Baldrige Excellence Framework cultivates a culture of continuous improvement, which is crucial for addressing external issues such as economic fluctuations, evolving employee expectations, and increased demand for sustainability. Ghafoor et al. (2021) indicated that BEF-guided firms consistently exhibit elevated employee happiness, innovation, and loyalty levels. The systematic evaluation methods of BEF enable executives to discern strengths and deficiencies within the workforce, implementing targeted actions that enhance morale and performance. The systematic approach is critical for Caribbean hospitality enterprises, where the recruitment and retention of people remain persistent (Crick, 2022). Continuous improvement is central to the BEF, cultivating a culture that actively solicits feedback, systematically assimilates learning, and integrates iterative enhancements into organizational practices (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). Aydogan et al. (2023) found that the organizations employing the BEF demonstrated higher resilience, adapting quickly to external disruptions such as economic downturns, health crises, and changing consumer expectations. The framework's systematic evaluation methods, anchored in measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, provided companies with the means to accurately assess their existing condition and implement informed, strategic modifications. Clear

communication and stakeholder understanding, enabled by the BEF, provide a cohesive organizational vision and collective dedication to excellence.

The BEF offers a comprehensive, evidence-based approach for transforming organizational performance. Its integrated components promote strategic alignment, operational excellence, and workforce engagement, making it suited to the hospitality industry (Wang et al., 2024). Adopting BEF principles has seen marked improvements in employee training effectiveness, guest experience, and sustainability initiatives (Ghafoor et al., 2021). Yusuf and Abolade (2025) advocated for BEF-guided conflict management and talent retention strategies as vital to maintaining service continuity. The evaluation criteria in the Baldrige Excellence Framework provide consistency and clarity, fostering transparent communication and stakeholder comprehension. Implementing the BEF provides a structured approach for firms to improve operational efficiency, employee engagement, and customer happiness. BEF's emphasis on workforce development, strategic alignment, and stakeholder engagement addresses many of the sector's pressing issues, including labor shortages, declining service standards, and market uncertainty. Moreover, BEF's flexibility allows organizations to tailor its principles to local cultural and operational contexts, enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. Applying the Baldrige Excellence Framework in the Caribbean hospitality sector provides organizations with strategic insights to enhance operational efficiency, elevate workforce engagement, and manage customer expectations, all of which are crucial for attracting and retaining qualified personnel in a post-pandemic context. For Caribbean hospitality

firms, implementing BEF can provide a strategic roadmap for navigating post-pandemic challenges.

BEF provides a practical and evidence-based framework that integrates leadership, strategy, workforce, and customer value into a single improvement logic. This logic is helpful for measuring, learning, integrating, and improving the existing process. BEF adoption strengthens the bridge from business model to execution, helping to yield organizational intended outcomes (Alanazi, 2025; Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). This is relevant in tourism settings, where systematic evaluation and leadership discipline enhance sustainable management and workforce practices (Rangsunghoen et al., 2024; Yudiandri & Sulistyono, 2022). Aydoğan et al. (2023) argued that BEF-aligned communication and knowledge management routines increase cohesion and resilience. BEF serves as an operating system for continuous improvement, helping leaders identify strengths, isolate gaps, and deploy targeted, metrics-driven interventions that compound over time.

### ***Social Exchange Theory***

Social exchange theory offers a foundational framework for understanding how employees assess workplace relationships by weighing perceived benefits against associated costs. Homans (1958) originally introduced SET as a model of human interaction, where individuals evaluate the utility of a relationship based on a cost–benefit analysis. This approach has since been applied extensively to organizational settings. Studies have further validated the theory’s relevance, showing that organizational support, perceived advantages, and developmental opportunities directly influence

employee engagement and decision-making (Ahmad et al., 2023; Akkermans et al., 2023). In the post-pandemic labor market, within the hospitality industry, SET provides a useful lens through which to interpret employees' decisions to stay with or leave an organization. As workers increasingly reassess the value of their employment in light of evolving job expectations and economic pressures, the theory underscores the importance of aligning perceived rewards, such as job security, recognition, and career growth, with the psychological and emotional costs of labor. Implementing SET-based strategies in Caribbean hospitality organizations can support equitable work environments that prioritize employee satisfaction and resilience, ultimately strengthening workforce retention.

SET has been widely employed to explain how supportive organizational environments influence job satisfaction and employee retention in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Empirical studies conducted in hotel environments have demonstrated that when employees perceive organizational support and fairness, they report higher levels of satisfaction and lower turnover rates (De Souza Meira & Hancer, 2021). Similarly, research on sustainable tourism found that positive interpersonal dynamics among tour guides contributed to both improved performance and greater job satisfaction (Sengoz et al., 2025). During periods of organizational crisis, such as pandemics or economic downturns, employees' loyalty and cooperation have been shown to increase when they perceive their organization as supportive (Subedi et al., 2023). These findings are particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context, where employees are re-evaluating their workplace commitments based on the balance between personal well-being and

organizational demands. SET highlights that organizations must invest in intrinsic rewards, such as autonomy, opportunities for progression, and supportive leadership, to shift the reward–cost balance in favor of continued employee commitment. In doing so, employees are more likely to feel valued, enhancing overall satisfaction and organizational attachment. Hospitality firms in the Caribbean can apply SET principles to craft employment conditions that foster durable, positive relationships, thereby reducing turnover and reinforcing workforce stability.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced unprecedented disruptions to the global hospitality industry. Reduced travel, lockdowns, and health risks reshaped employment conditions, prompting a reevaluation of the employment relationship. SET provides a framework for understanding how perceptions of fairness, support, and reciprocity influence retention. Subedi et al. (2023) explored how SET explains employee support for organizational and governmental responses during crises. The study suggested that transparent communication, empathetic leadership, and visible concern for employee welfare significantly enhance loyalty. These dimensions align with SET's core propositions and underscore the importance of relational capital in times of uncertainty. Sengoz et al. (2025) utilized SET to study sustainable tourism practices and found that when tour guides perceived their contributions as valued and rewarded, their commitment to sustainable practices increased. The study reinforced the idea that employee retention and performance are not merely transactional but deeply relational.

SET continues to offer insights across disciplines and new technological environments, affirming its adaptability and broad applicability. Research has shown that

assessments of fairness, reciprocity, and non-material rewards influence decisions to either maintain or disengage from workplace relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Shore et al., 2006). Equitable treatment, including relational transparency and emotional support, has been directly linked to long-term loyalty and commitment (Blau, 2017). The relevance of SET has extended to virtual and technology-driven contexts, such as the metaverse, where employees continue to evaluate organizational exchanges through a cost-benefit framework (Hajian et al., 2024). As hospitality organizations adopt digital tools and adapt to new service delivery models, SET remains critical for understanding how employees engage with increasingly virtual workspaces. Maintaining transparency, offering flexible work arrangements, and ensuring recognition in digital contexts can help organizations meet evolving employee expectations. This adaptability of SET ensures that its core insights, equity, support, and meaningful exchange, remain pertinent, even as work environments transform. For Caribbean hospitality enterprises pursuing technological integration and operational recovery, SET-informed practices can enhance engagement, foster retention, and support long-term organizational resilience.

Leadership behaviors play a pivotal role in shaping social exchange relationships. Transformational and inclusive leadership styles, which emphasize individualized consideration, fairness, and empowerment, align closely with SET's principles (S. Li et al., 2022). Leaders act as proxies for the organization, and their behavior significantly influences employee perceptions of support and justice. In a hospitality setting, where frontline managers mediate much of the employee experience, leadership quality directly impacts retention outcomes. Studies have shown that leadership styles contribute to

psychological safety, trust, and job satisfaction (Xu et al., 2024). Consequently, leadership development initiatives that cultivate relational competencies are critical in sustaining a committed workforce.

The application of SET in workforce management is evidenced through its emphasis on mutual investment between the organization and its members. Employers invest in employees through compensation, development opportunities, and supportive leadership, while employees reciprocate with loyalty, effort, and continued service (Shore et al., 2006). When the perceived balance is disrupted, such as when demands exceed rewards, employees may withdraw, leading to disengagement, reduced productivity, or attrition. In the context of the post-pandemic labor market, SET provides a useful lens to understand workforce dynamics. Hospitality workers experienced heightened job insecurity, health risks, and emotional strain during COVID-19, altering the traditional cost-benefit calculus of employment. Consequently, retention strategies must now emphasize non-material rewards, such as job security, work-life balance, recognition, and employee voice (De Souza Meira & Hancer, 2021). SET has been frequently linked with employee engagement, which is conceptualized as a psychological state marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption in one's work (Kahn, 1990). The reciprocal nature of social exchanges suggests that when employees perceive organizational support and fairness, they are more likely to be emotionally and cognitively engaged. Ahmad et al. (2023) posited that SET's emphasis on mutual respect and equity enhances intrinsic motivation and organizational citizenship behaviors. In the hospitality industry, where employee-customer interactions significantly influence brand reputation, engaged employees are

vital. Employers who prioritize relational resources, mentorship, career development, and inclusive leadership foster engagement and mitigate burnout.

The BEF and SET together provide a compound conceptual framework for addressing the labor shortage challenges in the post-pandemic Caribbean hospitality industry. The BEF offers a structured, systems-based approach to organizational performance, emphasizing leadership, workforce engagement, strategic alignment, and results-driven decision-making (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). By applying BEF principles, tourism leaders can systematically evaluate and improve their talent acquisition, retention, and workforce development strategies, aligning them with long-term operational and customer service goals. In parallel, SET provides a behavioral lens for understanding the relationships between the organization and its employees, where perceived fairness, recognition, and support influence employee commitment and retention (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Homans, 1958). SET underscores the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, trust, and mutual benefit in fostering loyalty. Together, BEF and SET bridge organizational strategy. BEF drives structural and process excellence, while SET ensures the workforce strategies, address employee expectations and perceptions.

### **Business Problem Evidence Review**

Tourism is vital to Caribbean socio-economic development. However, environmental sustainability, overtourism, dependence on external markets, and worldwide crises like COVID-19 pose business problems. Mohan and Strobl (2023) explored how stay-over tourists affected Eastern Caribbean tax receipts, emphasizing

tourism's importance to national finances. Tourism increases tax revenues and expands cross-functional business opportunities in transportation, hotels, and retail. Wood (2024) examined Caribbean tourism's history to reveal the region's industry dependence. Tourism plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the Caribbean. However, environmental sustainability, over-tourism, shortage of skilled hospitality workers, reliance on external markets, and global crises like COVID-19 threaten the industry's stability. Mohan and Strobl explored the impact of stay-over tourists on tax revenues in the Eastern Caribbean, demonstrating that tourism significantly contributed to national finances. The researchers found that beyond direct tax revenue, tourism also fosters economic growth by expanding business opportunities in related sectors such as transportation, hospitality, and retail. Similarly, Wood examined the historical development of Caribbean tourism, revealing how the industry shaped the region's economic landscape and led to heavy dependence on international visitors. Integrating diversified revenue streams, investing in the local talent market, and promoting eco-tourism can help mitigate some of the industry's vulnerabilities.

Sustainability is essential for the long-term viability of the Caribbean tourism industry as the region grapples with over-tourism and economic instability. Jurgens et al. (2024) examined the limitations of tourism growth in the Caribbean, using Aruba as a case study. The researchers found that unchecked tourism expansion could lead to resource depletion, environmental degradation, and social strain, ultimately threatening the industry's sustainability. Peterson (2023) explored how tourism-induced environmental deterioration and social inequities negatively impacted local communities,

emphasizing the need for more inclusive and sustainable tourism models. Expanding on sustainable development solutions, Bennett et al. (2024) explored the role of the blue economy in supporting Caribbean tourism through innovative financing solutions for fisheries and aquaculture. The research found that integrating marine-based economic activities with tourism can create synergies to promote sustainability and economic diversification. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Caribbean tourism sector, leading to revenue losses and widespread job insecurity. In response, Sharma et al. (2021) posited a resilience-based framework for post-pandemic recovery, advocating for digital transformation, sustainability initiatives, and stakeholder collaboration as key strategies to build a resilient tourism industry.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated labor shortages in the Caribbean hospitality sector, posing a critical barrier to recovery and growth. Ciarlante et al. (2024) documented a substantial post-pandemic migration of hospitality workers to other industries such as healthcare, logistics, and technology, perceived as more stable and financially rewarding. The International Labour Organization (2023) reported that the regional labor force participation rate fell from 62.5% to 62.3% between 2019 and 2023, with the tourism sector's recovery lagging behind. This workforce attrition had depleted mostly the front-line talent pools, limiting organizational capacity to meet rising demand during the tourism rebound. The loss of experienced employees also disrupted training pipelines, forcing businesses into reactive recruitment cycles that were costly and inefficient. Without deliberate strategies to reverse these trends, the sector risks prolonged instability and diminished global competitiveness. Addressing pandemic-

induced labor gaps is not just a recovery measure, but a prerequisite for long-term workforce sustainability in Caribbean tourism.

Staff retention strengthens both organizational and community-level resilience in the Caribbean tourism sector. Peterson's (2023) research showed that long-term employees enhanced guest experiences through personal connections, cultural authenticity, and deep product knowledge. Additionally, local workforce retention supported community economic stability by reducing revenue leakage and circulating wages within local economies (Bennett et al., 2024). Workforce stability creates a feedback loop that reinforces both service excellence and economic inclusivity. Employees embedded within local communities not only deliver better customer service but also engage in community-driven tourism initiatives, strengthening the cultural identity of destinations. These social and cultural benefits translate into competitive differentiation in the global tourism market, attracting repeat visitors and enhancing destination reputation.

Developing effective recruitment and retention strategies is a sustainability imperative for the Caribbean tourism sector in the post-pandemic environment. Shams et al. (2024) identified competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, supportive leadership, and improved working conditions as key retention drivers in high-stress service industries. Sharma et al. (2021) advocated for resilience-based frameworks incorporating digital transformation, sustainability initiatives, and stakeholder collaboration to future-proof tourism operations against shocks. These strategies align with sustainable tourism models that balance economic growth with environmental

stewardship and social equity. By embedding retention-focused policies into broader organizational strategy, tourism leaders can reduce turnover costs, improve service quality, and enhance brand competitiveness.

The findings from these studies underscore the urgent need for sustainable and resilient tourism models in the Caribbean. Over-reliance on traditional tourism practices exacerbates environmental and social challenges. Integrating blue economy principles into tourism development offers a promising avenue for diversifying revenue streams and reducing ecological strain, while resilience-building measures, such as digital innovation and collaborative governance, can enhance the sector's adaptability to future disruptions. The Caribbean can create a more balanced and long-lasting tourism industry by implementing sustainable policies, investing in blue economy initiatives, and fostering resilience through digital transformation.

## **Business Topic Integrative Review and Analysis: Themes**

### ***Employer Branding***

Employer branding has emerged as a strategic tool for enhancing organizational performance, particularly in industries such as hospitality and services, where talent acquisition and retention are critical. Azhar et al. (2024) argued that employer branding is a key differentiator for organizations seeking to attract and retain skilled employees by fostering a positive work culture, offering competitive compensation, and leveraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The researcher found that organizations with strong employer brands exhibited improved employee engagement, lower turnover rates, and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Employer branding plays a role in structuring compensation and profitability through employee-brand alignment. Moorman et al. (2024) explored the intersection of branding and labor economics, demonstrating that companies with well-defined brand differentiation, both vertical (i.e., premium reputation) and horizontal (unique work culture). The researcher found that brand differentiation enhanced employee-brand matching, increased productivity, and financial performance. The internal dimension of employer branding has also been examined in recent literature. Rys et al. (2024) conducted a qualitative project on employer branding during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of maintaining internal brand integrity during unexpected times. The researcher found that organizations that uphold strong internal branding efforts through transparent communication were able to sustain employee trust and engagement.

Employer branding is crucial in influencing internal employee engagement and external consumer views, especially in the hotel industry. Yousf and Khurshid (2021) posited employee engagement as a vital intermediary between employer branding and employee commitment. Strong employer branding cultivates a culture of engagement and psychological commitment among employees, which is crucial for workforce stability in labor-intensive sectors such as hospitality. Employer branding serves as a strategic marketing asset, bolstering the company's reputation and drawing in talent and clientele. Organizations with robust employer branding foster elevated employee engagement, hence increasing commitment and decreasing turnover. Elshawarbi et al. (2023) explored the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on customer perceptions of employer

brands. Research indicates that organizations with robust employer brands typically produce more positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), thereby fostering consumer trust, enhancing brand loyalty, and elevating overall value perception. The impact of electronic word-of-mouth in solidifying these perceptions highlights the significance of a consistent brand message encountered uniformly by both employees and consumers. Employer branding functions as both a human resource strategy and a fundamental aspect of company identity and market competitiveness. In Caribbean hospitality, where staff retention and customer satisfaction are vital for post-pandemic recovery, utilizing robust employer branding can simultaneously improve labor commitment and customer loyalty.

### ***Community Engagement***

Community engagement is essential for sustainability and alleviating the impacts of over-tourism while aiding local populations. Peterson (2023) examined the effects of over-tourism on small island economies, highlighting that an excessive influx of visitors leads to environmental degradation, resource depletion, and socioeconomic disparities. The project found that community involvement in tourist management rules can mitigate adverse effects and promote a more sustainable tourism economy. Tourism-dependent regions should establish participatory governance structures involving local stakeholders in formulating and implementing policies to ensure long-term viability. Implementing structured business excellence models can improve the effectiveness of community-based social enterprises, leading to better social and economic results. Rangsunnoen et al. (2024) employed the BEF to assess the sustainability management and stakeholder involvement of community-based social enterprises (CBSEs). The research found that

integrating business excellence frameworks into CBSEs improved operational efficiency, stakeholder collaboration, and long-term sustainability. Governments and non-profit groups should promote the adoption of business excellence models in community-based enterprises to align with broader sustainability goals.

Community-led environmental initiatives enhance sustainability and resilience, particularly in coastal and tourism-dependent regions. Suryawan et al. (2024) explored post-pandemic marine debris management, emphasizing the significance of community engagement in environmental conservation. The researcher found that participatory approaches, such as community cleanup projects and ecological education, improved waste management outcomes and fostered long-term sustainability. Policymakers should integrate community-based approaches into environmental sustainability efforts to ensure the engagement of local stakeholders. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies prioritizing stakeholder engagement promote sustainable value creation and guarantee enduring corporate success. Alshukri et al. (2024) explored the correlation between CSR, innovation capability, and stakeholder engagement, demonstrating that firms with strong community involvement attain greater sustainable value creation. The research found that companies prioritizing ethical and social responsibilities achieve increased customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, and operational stability. Incorporating CSR principles into community engagement initiatives creates mutual value between the enterprises and local communities, which is beneficial for long-term sustainability and can be a workplace of choice for new talent.

### ***Employee Recruitment and Retention***

Effective leadership and psychosocial factors are central to recruitment and retention strategies in the hospitality industry, where turnover rates remain high. Croes et al. (2025) explored a triadic model that examined the dynamics of hospitality employment retention and turnover, emphasizing elements such as employee engagement, working environment, and managerial techniques. Singh and Sihag (2024) recognized empowered leadership as a vital mediator between high-performance work practices (HPWPs) and employee engagement, particularly among Generation Y employees in the hospitality sector. Krishnan and Rathakrishnan (2025) studied psychological factors influencing turnover, demonstrating that stress, recognition, and job satisfaction are critical determinants in employee retention choices. These findings collectively highlight the importance of addressing both structural and emotional elements of the workplace to reduce turnover intentions. Leadership that cultivates empowerment, emotional support, and clear development opportunities can enhance engagement and satisfaction. Organizations seeking to retain talent in the hospitality sector must implement proactive leadership practices and invest in workplace conditions that alleviate stress and enhance perceived support.

Recognition and career development support are key mechanisms for enhancing employee engagement and reducing turnover. Potipiroon and Junthong (2024) found that benevolent leadership and proactive career management significantly enhanced employee work engagement during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Ndiango et al. (2024) substantiated these findings by highlighting the considerable influence of recognition and

job satisfaction on employee retention in logistics firms. Imran et al. (2025) and Sokolic et al. (2024) further validated the significant influence of acknowledgment and appreciation on improving employee motivation and performance, consequently diminishing turnover rates. The role of consistent, genuine recognition practices and career management support is vital not only in the hospitality industry but also across various sectors. Employers who prioritize formal recognition programs and offer tangible career development pathways can more effectively engage their workforce and lower turnover rates.

Innovation-driven environments, inclusive policies, and transformational leadership approaches also contribute significantly to employee retention. Luo et al. (2025) proposed that laissez-faire leadership may influence the correlation between AI utilization and employee creativity, suggesting that a balance of autonomy and innovation is crucial for employee retention. Siahaan et al. (2025) and Zhang et al. (2024) asserted that transformational leadership approaches facilitated the mediation of job satisfaction and stress, enhancing organizational commitment and diminishing turnover intention. Obeng et al. (2025) and Ramírez-Herrero et al. (2024) found that managing organizational stress via diversity-inclusive policies significantly impacts employee performance and retention. The researchers highlighted that supportive leadership must also accommodate autonomy, promote innovation, and embrace diversity. Such strategies are especially pertinent in technologically advancing or multicultural organizational contexts, where employee expectations are evolving. To improve long-term retention

outcomes, organizations must adopt an inclusive and innovative environment that supports both individual and systemic needs.

These studies underscored the significance of leadership behaviors, acknowledgment, professional growth, and psychosocial management in retention tactics. The prevailing trend across diverse contexts was that hospitality firms must proactively foster workplaces that empower, acknowledge, and engage employees to reduce turnover. Efficiently addressing these elements enhances job happiness, deepens organizational commitment, and reduces turnover intentions. Consequently, hospitality business tourism leaders ought to implement multifaceted retention strategies that incorporate empowering leadership, recognition, psychosocial support, and thorough career development systems to cultivate resilient and dedicated workforces' adept at overcoming industry challenges and minimizing turnover rates.

### ***Employee Training***

Employee training is necessary to enhance workforce competence, adaptability, and organizational satisfaction, particularly amid evolving market conditions, a multicultural environment, and technological advancements. Horvath et al. (2024) highlighted the transformative potential of coaching as an effective training tool, illustrating its capability to significantly enhance leadership qualities and broader organizational competencies. Sonthalia (2024) reinforced this view by exploring how embodying a coaching mindset positively alters leaders' perception of power, fostering more supportive and effective managerial practices. Bansal et al. (2025) illustrated the necessity of redesigning hospitality and tourism jobs through comprehensive training

programs to promote employee well-being, emphasizing the link between practical training and enhanced employee care. Luo et al. (2025) examined laissez-faire leadership's moderating role in managing artificial intelligence (AI) use among service employees, underscoring the importance of targeted training to maximize empathetic creativity in technology-intensive service settings. Šerić et al. (2024) studied integrated marketing communication (IMC) practices during health-related crises, emphasizing the critical need for training hospitality personnel in effective crisis communication and customer engagement strategies. Kumar et al. (2024) echoed this sentiment, underscoring contemporary issues such as digital transformation and crisis management as crucial training areas to equip hospitality employees adequately.

Presbitero et al. (2025) found that training programs tailored to enhance employee and supervisory cultural intelligence significantly increased engagement and retention in multicultural hospitality environments. Transformational leadership training helps to foster pro-environmental behaviors, significantly aligning organizational culture with contemporary environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards (Siahaan et al., 2025; Zheng et al., 2024). Similarly, Obeng et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of gender diversity training in reducing organizational stress and improving performance outcomes in diverse and multicultural work environments. Hsieh et al. (2025) underscored the importance of reevaluating housekeeping job quality through targeted training programs that align managerial perceptions with employee expectations, thus enhancing job satisfaction and reducing turnover. The training programs, which are tailored to leadership development, crisis management, logical adaptation, cultural

competence, and diversity management, are critical for enhancing employee capabilities, satisfaction, and organizational adaptability in the hospitality sector. Training is consistently highlighted as a pivotal factor for aligning workforce competencies with evolving market demands, ultimately boosting employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention. Thus, hospitality organizations must strategically prioritize comprehensive, adaptive, and inclusive training initiatives that address contemporary industry challenges, technological integration, cultural diversity, and employee well-being to ensure sustainable competitive advantage and enhanced workforce stability.

### ***Organizational Leadership***

Leadership is how individuals or groups are influenced and directed to attain organizational goals. Ali (2023) and Afzal and Tumpa (2024) argued that effective leadership entails authority, motivation, vision formulation, and adaptability. Burton and Dickinger (2025) posited that external factors influence leadership effectiveness, including market fluctuations and technological advancements. In contrast, Lee et al. (2024) and Cao et al. (2024) emphasized the significance of organizational context and workforce dynamics in determining leadership behavior. These findings indicated that leadership is a dynamic function characterized by context-dependence and complexity, where strategic vision and adaptation intersect. By synchronizing leadership strategies with environmental requirements and internal cultural standards, businesses can enhance performance and cultivate an atmosphere favorable to creativity. Leadership is crucial for developing and maintaining corporate culture, achieving strategic objectives, and fostering agility in a dynamic marketplace (Azhar et al., 2024).

## **Types of Leadership**

Leadership behavior influences employee engagement, well-being, and corporate culture, especially during periods of internal or external crisis. Beijer et al. (2024) highlighted inclusive leadership characteristics, including active listening, openness, and equal treatment, as essential factors influencing psychological safety and transparent communication. Shams et al. (2024) further studied that the leadership practices improve organizational responsiveness and adaptability during disruptions. Elhadidy and Gao (2024) and Xu et al. (2024) explored that humble leadership, defined as leaders who acknowledge their shortcomings and emphasize team contributions, promotes creativity and stimulates service improvisation. Kohnen et al. (2024) and Magnini, Dorn et al. (2024) emphasized that senior executives who focus on employee engagement and well-being typically observe increased motivation, enhanced performance, and reduced turnover within their teams. The impact of leadership style is important on organizational results. Leadership behaviors not only bolster workforce morale but also augment the organization's ability for ongoing enhancement and crisis resilience. In the Caribbean hotel sector, where adaptation, creativity, and employee retention are crucial for post-pandemic recovery, leadership techniques rooted in inclusivity, humility, and employee-centric values are critical for cultivating resilient, high-performing teams.

### ***Ethical Leadership***

Ethical leadership is critical for employee engagement, job performance, and their dedication towards the organization. Ethical leadership cultivates a dependable environment that promotes pro-social and inventive endeavors (P. Li et al., 2024; Wang

et al., 2024). Durrah et al. (2022) and Zettna et al. (2024) argued that authenticity in leadership enhances a sense of belonging and diminishes workplace deviance, fostering corporate citizenship practices. Moreover, humor and empathy in leadership mitigate employee stress and compassion fatigue, essential in high-pressure service sectors (Xu et al., 2024). These studies highlighted that the leaders who embody inclusivity, humility, ethical behavior, and empathy generate supportive environments where individuals feel secure, motivated, and empowered to engage in innovative thought. Such leaders foster resilient and high-performing teams by meeting employees' emotional and professional needs. Thus, leadership behavior founded on equity, openness, and ethical accountability enriches corporate culture and fosters enduring success by supporting employee welfare and enhancing service quality.

### ***Transformational Leadership***

Transformational leadership utilizes a visionary approach that motivates followers to exceed traditional performance benchmarks. B. Ali (2023) and Ali et al. (2024) argued that intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation are crucial for transforming ordinary performance into extraordinary outcomes. Moreover, Ihsan et al. (2021) and Janjua et al. (2024) asserted that these leadership traits enhanced employee engagement, fostered creativity, and bolstered corporate commitment. Janjua et al. and Belias and Trihas (2023) explored transformational leadership to enhance job satisfaction and innovation centered on sustainability within the hospitality sector. The studies suggested that transformational leaders are crucial for improving individual and group performance via supportive and motivational techniques.

Transformational leadership creates an environment that encourages ongoing enhancement and adaptability by nurturing employees' development and creativity. Thus, transformational leadership is a critical catalyst for achieving enhanced organizational outcomes and strategic innovation, particularly in contexts necessitating substantial engagement and adaptability.

### ***Transactional Leadership***

Transactional leadership's tenets focus on clear rewards, disciplinary measures, and defined performance benchmarks. Ali et al. (2024) and Rashwan and Ghaly (2022) highlighted that transactional leaders set explicit goals and use contingent rewards or corrective actions to maintain short-term productivity. However, Hermanto et al. (2024) suggested that relying heavily on transactional tactics may limit long-term engagement or creativity. Sumardin (2021) examined the blending of transactional methods with transformational elements to yield balanced outcomes, ensuring structured goal-setting while preserving motivation. These researchers suggested that transactional leadership could effectively drive immediate results but may fall short of nurturing innovation or sustained commitment unless combined with more inspirational approaches. Leaders can benefit from leveraging transactional techniques for clarity and accountability while introducing transformational aspects to encourage deeper involvement and adaptability. Thus, while transactional leadership secures basic performance standards, leaders should consider integrating a visionary or motivational dimension to foster long-term growth and creativity.

### ***Servant Leadership***

Servant leadership emphasizes the needs and development of followers, prioritizing employee well-being over hierarchical power. Lu et al. (2023) and Shabankareh et al. (2025) noted that servant leaders exemplified empathy, stewardship, and community development. Zafar et al. (2025), along with Wang et al. (2024), posited that these behaviors substantially improved employee trust and organizational commitment. Zafar et al. argued that servant leadership enhances cooperation and environmental performance by prioritizing group objectives over personal interests. These studies suggested that servant leadership fosters a supportive culture, promoting employee collaboration, ownership of individual responsibilities, and the overarching company objective. By prioritizing the services above authority, leaders foster cultures that enhance trust, diminish conflict, and promote sustainable organizational practices. Consequently, servant leadership is particularly advantageous in environments necessitating extensive collaboration, such as the hospitality industry, by harmonizing employee welfare with business goals.

### ***Authentic Leadership***

Authentic and ethical leadership approaches foster openness, self-awareness, and ethical accountability, creating beneficial organizational environments. Durrah et al. (2022) characterized authentic leaders as individuals who continuously harmonize their ideals with their actions. Nazarian et al. (2024) and Wang et al. (2024) underscored the importance of ethical leadership about justice and honesty. P. Li et al. (2024) argued that genuine and principled leadership fosters trust-oriented work environments, diminishing

turnover intentions and elevating employee morale. Edeh et al. (2022) and Kyei-Frimpong et al. (2024) emphasized a direct correlation between ethical leadership in hospitality and the augmentation of creativity and ambidexterity. The findings suggested that authentic and principled leaders significantly impacted culture by cultivating trust, moral clarity, and a collective sense of ethical duty. These leadership strategies foster staff engagement, innovation, and pro-social behaviors, enhancing service quality and stakeholder satisfaction. Consequently, integrating authenticity and ethics into leadership frameworks can provide a more stable, loyal, and innovative staff, especially in customer-centric sectors such as hospitality.

### ***Digital Leadership***

Digital leadership underscores the adept use of technology and data to guide teams in complex, rapidly evolving business environments. Malik et al. (2024) and Yang et al. (2024) contended that digital leaders excel by promoting adaptability, ongoing education, and technological expertise. Burton and Dickinger (2025) and Guerra and Valle (2024) posited that technologically adept leaders in the hotel sector promote innovation, mitigating challenges posed by market volatility. Cao and Le (2024) claimed that leaders who perceive digital change as an opportunity foster strategic renewal and creativity. These studies revealed that digital leadership extends beyond technical expertise, requiring effective communication, empowerment, and the ability to design systems for enhanced competitiveness. Effective digital leadership requires a distinct vision and robust interpersonal skills to improve staff engagement and promote experimentation with novel solutions. Thus, digital leadership is crucial for firms

employing technological breakthroughs, ensuring resilience and strategic growth in volatile markets.

### ***International Leadership***

International leadership has gained heightened attention amidst growing globalization and changing workforce demographics (Guo et al., 2024). Organizations today face increasingly complex environments, diverse cultural settings, and ethical pressures that require leaders to demonstrate adaptability, inclusivity, and moral clarity (Antunez et al., 2024). These researchers explored the evolving scope of international leadership, focusing on how leaders foster motivation, navigate cultural contexts, and uphold ethical standards in multinational and cross-cultural environments.

Guo et al. (2024) argued that the global race for leadership intensifies risks and instability, necessitating leaders' adaptability and strategic insight. Antunez et al. (2024) emphasized that ethical leadership can transcend contextual pressures, demonstrating how principled leadership prevents unethical behavior in international business settings. Further, Primecz and Mahadevan (2024) argued for an intersectional approach to culture and identity, showing that leadership effectiveness depends on recognizing multiple overlapping identity factors. Empirical studies found that empowering leadership and inclusive approaches, such as leader-member exchange (LMX) and team-member exchange (TMX), foster employee engagement, satisfaction, and proactive performance in cross-cultural contexts (Abuelhassan et al., 2024; Shang et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2025). Global leaders must consider cultural variations and ethical imperatives that delegate authority and foster autonomous decision-making, recognized as a cornerstone of

proactive employee behaviors (Abuelhassan et al., 2024). For example, leaders who practice empowering behaviors and uphold integrity can inspire employees to innovate and adopt socially responsible practices, even under divergent cultural norms. At the same time, leadership approaches must be flexible enough to accommodate multiple identity dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, and generational differences to build cohesive, high-performing international teams. By fostering trust-based relationships through LMX and TMX, leaders create environments where employees feel valued, develop loyalty, and exhibit positive organizational citizenship behaviors across cultural boundaries (Shang et al., 2024).

International leadership requires a nuanced blend of ethical reasoning, cultural intelligence, and inclusive relationship-building to navigate diverse global markets successfully. Organizations can benefit from training leaders to integrate intersectionality, ensure ethical guidelines, and adopt inclusive leadership styles like empowering leadership, LMX, and TMX. These measures help promote innovation, employee well-being, and strategic agility, ultimately enhancing organizational effectiveness in a complex global marketplace.

### **Leadership and Organizational Change Management**

Leadership enables organizational change and maintains a competitive advantage in rapidly changing markets. Cao and Le (2024) and Higgs and Rowland (2022) argued that transformative leadership fosters trust, promotes transparent communication, and augments employee motivation to adopt new procedures or technologies (Hermanto et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2024). Reflective leadership, which prioritizes introspection and self-

awareness, has been linked to enhanced change implementation by diminishing employee resistance (Higgs & Rowland, 2022; Malik et al., 2024). In digital transformation, leaders who communicate strategies, invest in skill development, and encourage experimentation are likelier to promote organizational innovation and resilience (Belias & Trihas, 2023; Yang et al., 2024). Effective leadership facilitates knowledge management and collaboration, enabling people to understand dynamic situations and adapt successfully (Hagl et al., 2023; Saeed et al., 2024). Moreover, sustainability, which focuses on leadership, ensures the integration of responsible practices and ESG (environmental, social, and corporate governance) principles during transitions, enhancing organizational resilience (Sancak, 2023; Zheng et al., 2024). The researchers suggested that leaders who combine transformational and mindful strategies with effective strategic communication and emphasize continuous learning manage firms more proficiently during disruptive changes. Consequently, leaders demonstrating clarity, trust, and commitment to technological and sustainability initiatives enable effective transformations that preserve competitive advantage in evolving markets (Guerra & Valle, 2024; Ling & Teh., 2024; Puspani et al., 2025). These leadership styles reduce dissent, promote employee engagement, and foster innovative solutions.

### **Transition**

The reviewed literature underscored the urgency for evidence-based strategies to address persistent labor shortages in the post-pandemic Caribbean hospitality sector. While academic research has offered frameworks for improving employee engagement, leadership practices, and retention mechanisms, the practical implementation of these

within local tourism enterprises remains complex. Bridging this gap requires context-sensitive inquiry into how these strategies manifest in organizational settings. In Section 3, I will outline the methodology for conducting applied research that integrates academic insights with consulting practice. In Section 4, I will present the project findings, along with actionable recommendations for workforce attraction and retention.

### Section 3: Research Project Methodology

#### **Capstone Research Project Ethics**

I served both as a methodological overseer and a business consulting facilitator. I adhered to stringent data-collection methodologies, including the triangulation of diverse sources, ensuring a transparent chain of evidence, and documenting a comprehensive audit trail. I conducted interviews and analyzed organizational documents to answer the research question. The findings were consolidated into pragmatic recommendations that connect academic research with practical managerial solutions. My experience in operations consulting offered significant insights into process enhancement solutions. Simultaneously, my current experience in the leadership role helped facilitate more open and contextually relevant discourse. In contrast, I do not have direct or indirect experience with the hospitality industry.

To safeguard the identity of individuals and organizations, I assigned pseudonyms to all participants and eliminated all identifiable information from transcripts, notes, and published reports. Institutional identities were anonymized to protect the participants in accordance with Walden University's IRB regulations. All documents were securely saved on an encrypted, password-protected device and will be preserved for 5 years prior to permanent deletion.

As the principal investigator, I adhered to the ethical principles defined in The Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). I ensured participants were handled with respect by obtaining informed consent, describing the voluntary nature of their

involvement, and transparently addressing all inquiries. Beneficence was upheld by mitigating risk via data secrecy and guaranteeing that the research inflicted no harm on participants. Justice was maintained by the implementation of equitable sampling methods, guaranteeing that all participants had an equal opportunity to contribute. My commitment to these values ensured participant wellbeing while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the study process.

The organizational research agreement delineated the project scope, data access limitations, publication rights, and included a complimentary assessment of the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). Every participant received a comprehensible document outlining the objectives, procedures, voluntary aspects, risks, advantages, confidentiality protocols, and withdrawal rights. Signed copies are stored independently from unprocessed data. Participants could withdraw consent at any time, verbally or in writing, without repercussions. Upon withdrawal, any unexamined data associated with that individual are removed from the study, and any emergent themes exclusively generated from their data are expunged from further analysis. No financial remuneration is provided to the participants as a form of incentive.

I completed the CITI accreditation and complied with the Walden University Institutional Review Board's (IRB) guidelines, receiving approval (11-05-24-1207799). All personal and organizational identification is substituted with alphanumeric codes in transcripts and reports. Encrypted, access-restricted cloud repositories store digital files,

while physical documents are secured in locked cabinets. Access to raw data is restricted solely to the researcher and the auditor certified by Walden's IRB.

### **Nature of the Project**

This consulting capstone project uses a qualitative single-case project methodology and design to examine effective techniques Caribbean tourism leaders utilize to attract and retain skilled hospitality staff in the post-pandemic environment. The qualitative method is appropriate as it enables an in-depth analysis of complex social and organizational phenomena. It gives the researcher significant contextual insights into leaders' experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes concerning talent acquisition and retention (Yin, 2018). Considering the intricate workforce challenges facing the post-COVID-19 tourism sector, such as increased turnover, reduced employee morale, labor migration, and limited local talent pools, a qualitative approach facilitates the exploration of complex leadership practices and institutional responses that quantitative methods may overlook. This method enables the examination of developing topics such as employer branding, community engagement, leadership behaviors, and organizational culture as expressed by participants in their corporate environment.

The case project design is warranted as it provides a thorough framework for understanding real-world organizational dynamics inside a specified system. The case project analyzes a specific Caribbean tourism enterprise, providing a detailed, context-specific examination of senior management's recruitment and retention strategies (BEF; Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). This design is appropriate for business consulting projects to transform academic research into actionable organizational

guidance. The design is intentionally chosen for its strategic importance in the Caribbean tourism sector, making it a crucial context for examining labor challenges and recovery efforts post-pandemic.

### **Population, Sampling, and Participants**

The target population for this consulting capstone project consists of senior leaders in the Caribbean hospitality sector who are responsible for workforce management, including recruitment and retention strategies. The broader population includes tourism executives, human resources directors, and operational managers within hospitality organizations in Caribbean nations heavily impacted by post-pandemic labor shortages. The project employed purposive sampling to identify information-rich participants with strategic decision-making roles and direct experience managing human capital within the post-COVID-19 tourism context. Purposive sampling allows selecting participants whose insights are especially relevant to the research questions, thereby supporting richer and more contextually grounded inferences (Ahmed, 2025; Raymond & Darsaut, 2025). The final sample consisted of five leaders within a single Caribbean hospitality organization, including individuals holding the titles of General Manager, Human Resources Director, Operations Manager, and Supervisors. This sample was selected to ensure representation across functional areas relevant to staff acquisition, development, and retention initiatives. A sample size of five participants is sufficient for achieving data saturation in qualitative case studies, when participants occupy senior roles with deep contextual knowledge (Ahmed, 2025; Yin, 2018).

Access to participants was gained through a formal request submitted to the organization's senior leadership team, outlining the purpose and scope of the project and ensuring alignment with institutional objectives and ethical research practices. Upon approval, a point of contact within the organization facilitated introductions to eligible participants based on their leadership roles and relevance to the project's objectives. To establish a productive working relationship, I adopted a collaborative and transparent approach by conducting preliminary conversations with each participant to clarify the research intent, ensure informed consent, and foster mutual understanding. Rapport was further strengthened by emphasizing confidentiality, the practical relevance of the research outcomes, and the value of participants' contributions in addressing real-world workforce challenges in the Caribbean hospitality sector.

Participants share key demographic characteristics. They operate within a tourism-dependent island economy, manage teams in a labor-intensive service sector, and have navigated organizational recovery and adaptation efforts in response to pandemic-related workforce disruptions. The specific roles and the context, and Baldrige-aligned leadership practices, increase the interpretive value of findings and allow for targeted recommendations relevant to similar organizations within the region (Ahmed, 2025). Their insights are critical for interpreting strategic behaviors, leadership practices, and organizational responses that may influence the sustainability and competitiveness of the Caribbean hospitality workforce.

### **Data Collection Activities**

This qualitative research project employed a multi-method data collection strategy to capture rich, contextually grounded insights from hospitality business tourism leaders in the post-pandemic Caribbean. As the primary data collection instrument, I employed semistructured interviews and document analysis to facilitate data triangulation and improve the project's credibility and depth. The interview questions are located in Appendix A, which includes interview. Semistructured interviews were selected because they enable a flexible yet focused exploration of complex phenomena, enabling participants to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and organizational practices in their own words (Shoozan & Mohamad, 2024). This method was suitable for investigating leadership behavior, recruitment and retention strategies, and organizational responses to post-pandemic challenges. The consulting service agreement facilitated access to the participants and served as an official framework that supported the scheduling, consent, and conduct of interviews. The agreement also clarified the project's objectives and the scope of the data gathering, aligned with the BEF. To enhance the rigor and consistency of the interview process, I developed and implemented a structured interview protocol. The protocol served as a standardized guide to ensure uniformity across interviews while maintaining the flexibility to pursue emergent themes (see Shoozan & Mohamad, 2024). The standard guide included open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives, prompts for deeper inquiry, and space for reflective follow-up based on participant responses. A copy of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

A further approach involved examining publicly accessible government reports and industry white papers regarding the post-pandemic hotel sector in the Caribbean, which served as an excellent secondary data source (Kelly et al., 2024). Document analysis facilitates the triangulation of interview material and establishes a basis for comprehending industry-wide challenges. Strategic analysis tools like comparative case studies and qualitative research can measure the effects on staff retention and industry resilience. Findlater et al. (2024) examined the labor market trends using statistical analysis to understand workforce development. This methodological diversity supported my use of qualitative methods to understand the sustainability of the Caribbean hospitality workforce. The data collection process also stressed the importance of longitudinal project methodologies to evaluate the long-term effects of sustainable business practices on staff retention. Caribbean slow tourism and sustainable development research demonstrated how sustainable tourism strategies affected workforce stability (Walker et al., 2021). The multiple data sources illuminated how sustainability affected tourism, employee satisfaction, and job security. This data contextualized my research within Caribbean tourism's socio-economic milieu, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of workforce concerns and solutions.

I utilized many evidence sources, including semistructured interviews, internal archival records, organizational reports, and publicly available data, to achieve methodological triangulation and enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. To ensure data accuracy and interpretive validity, I employed member checking as a critical validation strategy. After transcribing the interviews, I shared individual summaries and

selected thematic interpretations with each participant, allowing them the opportunity to confirm, clarify, or contest any points they believed were misrepresented or inaccurately portrayed. This iterative feedback process not only reinforced the authenticity of the data but also empowered participants to actively engage in the process to shape the research narrative. Incorporating their clarifications ensured that the final analysis reflected their intended meanings and contextual nuances. This research, grounded on the BEF (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023) and SET (Homans, 1958), sought to augment academic knowledge and offer practical, evidence-based guidance for hospitality business tourism leaders to address ongoing workforce issues in the Caribbean region.

### **Data Organization and Analysis Techniques**

To ensure methodological rigor and transparency, this qualitative case project employed several methods for organizing and managing the data throughout the research process. A structured cataloging and labeling system were used to archive all collected data, including interview transcripts, meeting notes, and organizational business plan documents. Each participant was assigned a unique identifier to facilitate systematic tracking and cross-referencing. A reflective research journal and a digital research log were maintained throughout the project to document analytical decisions to maintain researcher reflexivity and enhance the auditability and credibility of the findings (Karcher et al., 2024). Methodological triangulation was used to increase the trustworthiness of the analysis, which involved the integration of multiple data sources, including semistructured interviews, organizational documents, and publicly available labor

statistics, to corroborate emerging patterns and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Hussein, 2009). Methodological triangulation strengthened construct validity by converging evidence across different sources, reducing bias, and facilitating more profound insights into leadership strategies (Fusch et al., 2018).

Data analysis followed a logical and sequential process using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework. These phases included: (1) data familiarization, (2) initial code generation, (3) theme identification, (4) theme review, (5) theme definition and naming, and (6) report production. Codes and themes were continuously refined throughout this process to reflect emerging understandings and ensure alignment with the project's research question.

NVivo 14 software was employed to manage and analyze qualitative data. This platform facilitated the visual mapping of thematic relationships to support theoretical saturation. Finally, in alignment with ethical research practices and Walden's guidelines, all data, including transcripts and digital files, are securely stored on an encrypted external hard drive and password-protected cloud platform. This data will be retained for 5 years from the completion of the program and then destroyed.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are foundational concepts used to assess the quality and trustworthiness of a project's results. While they are traditionally associated with quantitative research, they also have important counterparts in qualitative research. In qualitative research, ensuring the rigor and trustworthiness of a project involves

evaluating the criteria of reliability and validity, which are conceptually aligned with dependability, credibility, and confirmability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). Unlike quantitative research, where reliability and validity are assessed through statistical generalizability and repeatability, qualitative research emphasizes the depth, coherence, and authenticity of findings within a specific context. These criteria ensure that the interpretations accurately reflect participant perspectives, are logically derived from the data, and are transferable to similar settings.

### **Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of research findings (William, 2024). A project is considered reliable if the same results can be obtained under consistent conditions over time. Dependability was addressed by member checking whereby participants reviewed my summary of the interview, and provision of and initial themes enabling participants to provide further feedback. This process enhanced consistency by confirming that the findings reflected participants' intended meanings (William, 2024). Furthermore, a structured audit trail was maintained, documenting coding decisions, analytic memos, and methodological choices. This audit trail enabled external reviewers to trace the development of themes and evaluate the rigor of the analytic process. These practices collectively strengthened the reliability of the project.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings, whether the research truly measures or captures what it claims to project (William, 2024). Validity

has been addressed by employing methodological triangulation and integrating data from semistructured interviews, organizational documents, and the BEF. Denzin (2009) emphasized that whether the data is methodological or theoretical, triangulation reduces bias and improves the robustness of qualitative findings. The BEF served as an analytical lens in this project, providing evidence-based evaluative criteria across leadership, strategy, customers, and operations categories (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). The triangulation of interviews, organizational employee handbook, and client planning documents enabled a deeper, multifaceted interpretation of the organizational phenomena under investigation. Confirmability was supported through reflexivity and the maintenance of a detailed researcher journal. Continually examining positionality and assumptions helped mitigate researcher bias and ensured that interpretations were grounded in participant narratives rather than personal perspectives (Gurr et al., 2024). Additionally, qualitative analysis software provided a transparent and replicable framework for data handling and thematic coding, further enhancing confirmability.

Saturation is typically achieved after 12–13 interviews (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022); however, this project followed an alternative approach aligned with the case study methodology. Recognizing the constraints of a single-case study research, the project achieved thematic saturation through redundancy across multiple data sources. Five semistructured interviews, organizational documentation, publicly available information, and the BEF ensured all relevant themes were thoroughly explored and no new patterns

emerged, thus satisfying the conceptual threshold for saturation in qualitative inquiry (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; William, 2024).

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 3, I outlined the research design and methodology adopted for this consulting capstone project, detailing the qualitative single case study approach used to explore workforce recruitment and retention strategies in the Caribbean hospitality industry. The rationale for employing a qualitative methodology was grounded in the need to understand the organizational dynamics influencing staffing challenges in a post-pandemic context. The case study design enabled an in-depth examination of leadership strategies and contextual factors within a single organization. I also described the participant selection process through purposive sampling, the data collection strategy including semistructured interviews and document analysis, and the thematic analysis procedure used to interpret findings. In Section 4, I will present the project's findings in alignment with the research question and conceptual frameworks, offering practical insights and recommendations into effective leadership practices for attracting and retaining qualified hospitality staff in the Caribbean region.

## Section 4: Research Project Findings and Professional Conclusions

The purpose of this single case study was to identify and explore effective strategies that Caribbean tourism leaders in the hospitality business used to attract and retain qualified staff post-pandemic. Scholar-consultants in Walden University's DBA consulting capstone use the Baldrige Excellence Framework (BEF) to analyze and evaluate an organization's process and operational design to identify potential areas of improvement. I applied the BEF, 2023-2024, to gather information through semistructured interviews. Key themes of this project included operational success in linking workforce development with financial and process outcomes, and their transformational leadership that cultivates an environment encouraging innovation and supports psychological safety.

### **Organization Profile**

#### **Organizational Description**

XYZ Inc. was established in the late 1980s as a luxury wellness and hospitality organization with a clear mission to transform lives through wellness. The company's service delivery integrates relaxation, fitness, and personalized nutritional guidance to create holistic guest experiences. By embedding wellness into the company's operational ethos, XYZ Inc. differentiated itself within the luxury wellness tourism market. The organization operates two premier resorts, Resort Alpha and Resort Beta, with plans to expand its footprint to 12 resorts globally by 2030, reflecting its commitment to sustainable growth and cultural authenticity. A corporate team of 29 supports approximately 700 employees.

XYZ Inc. operates in luxury wellness tourism, emphasizing a holistic approach that combines health, relaxation, and cultural sensitivity. The organization's core services are wellness-centric, including spa treatments, fitness programs, and personalized nutritional guidance and care. Post-pandemic, the demand for wellness tourism has grown significantly, positioning XYZ Inc. as a market leader with occupancy rates exceeding 80% and industry recognition such as the Condé Nast "Best Wellness Resort" award.

### ***Organizational Environment***

**Product Offerings.** The company offers multiple wellness-focused services catering to its guests' holistic health needs. These include daily spa treatments, organic meal plans, curated fitness activities, and specialized wellness programs like full-moon yoga and sound therapy. Unique offerings such as turmeric and ginger shots, aloe vera treatments, and customized Ayurvedic therapies set XYZ Inc. apart from competitors. Ayurvedic therapies are traditional healing practices from India that aim to restore balance between body, mind, and spirit through personalized treatments. These therapies emphasize prevention and holistic well-being by aligning individual health with natural rhythms (Verma et al., 2024). The organization also incorporates farm-to-table dining experiences and wellness trails that promote meditation and mindfulness.

**Mission, Vision, and Values.** XYZ Inc.'s mission is to "transform lives through wellness experiences," aiming to become a global leader in wellness tourism by 2026. The company's vision is encapsulated in the tagline, "Entrust your body to us for one week, and we will return it enhanced by our expertise," emphasizing the transformative

nature of its services. The organization's core values include honesty, trust, and customer-centric service, strongly focusing on delivering ethical and inclusive guest experiences. The mission statement is as follows: To develop Resort Alpha and Resort Beta as the leading wellbeing experiences in the wellness market, while reinforcing authentic destination experiences in a resort setting of unsurpassed service excellence.

**Workforce Profile.** XYZ Inc. employs a diverse and regionally recruited workforce comprised of approximately 700 employees, with a projected increase to 730 in the year 2024/25 to support strategic expansion goals. The organizational workforce includes executives, managers/supervisors, and frontline operational staff, with further differentiation by functional roles such as housekeeping, food & beverage, spa services, guest services, and technical support. The workforce is further stratified into executives and corporate support, managers/supervisors (approximately 10% of the site-based staff), operational staff, including housekeeping (cleaners, laundry attendants), food and beverage (chefs, servers, bartenders), front desk and guest services, spa and wellness professionals, and technical and maintenance staff (see Table 1). These roles are deployed across two resort sites, with internal cross-training opportunities for mobility and retention.

**Table 1***XYZ Inc. Workforce Composition by Role (2023/24-2024/25)*

Workforce Segment	Roles	Qualification Required	2023/24 Headcount	2024/25 Projected
Executives	CEO, VPs, Directors	MBA, leadership experience, strategic planning	7	7
Corporate Support Staff	HR, Finance, IT	B.A./B.Sc., HRIS systems, analytics	22	25
Managers/Supervisors	Dept. Heads (Housekeeping, F&B, Spa)	Hospitality diploma, leadership training	70	75
Housekeeping Staff	Room Attendants, Laundry	On-the-job training, cleaning standards	160	170
Food & Beverage Staff	Chefs, Servers, Bartenders	Culinary certificates, food safety compliance	180	185
Guest Services	Front Desk, Concierge, Reservations	Secondary/post-secondary education, communication skills	95	100
Spa & Wellness Staff	Therapists, Instructors	Certified wellness training, holistic care	75	80
Maintenance & Technical	Technicians, Engineers, Groundskeepers	Trade certification, troubleshooting	91	88
Total			700	730

XYZ Inc. fosters engagement through onboarding programs, biannual satisfaction surveys, performance appraisals and recognition, cultural sensitivity training, and wellness benefits. As XYZ Inc. expands from two to 12 resorts by 2030, it would like to recruit across the Caribbean to offset local shortages and build a multilingual, multicultural workforce. Investing in upskilling, particularly in digital reservation systems and sustainability practices, hiring specialists in wellness and culinary arts, as the brand broadens its luxury health offering.

**Assets.** The organization holds assets both in physical infrastructure and intangible capital. Its luxury resorts include high-end accommodation (e.g., villas, beachfront rooms, ocean-view suites), wellness clinics with diagnostic, holistic, and

Ayurvedic specialties, extensive dining and recreational facilities, and beautifully designed natural landscape and architecture. The organization's physical assets include two flagship resorts in the Caribbean, resort Alpha, with approximately 155 rooms, suites, and villas, and resort Beta, with approximately 100 rooms and cottages, both positioned on prime beachfront locations. Resort Alpha's assets extend to expansive wellness clinics, a better-aging clinic, an ayurvedic pavilion, multiple restaurants, fitness and water-sport facilities, and landscaped tropical gardens on Cariblue beach. Resort Beta offers beachfront cottages, garden-view rooms, a spa in the water garden, a lazy river, pools, and tranquil gardens along Malabar beach. Unique architectural features such as ayurvedic centers, water gardens, and beachfront cottages enhance guest experience and brand distinctiveness. Looking beyond the Caribbean, the planned resort Alpha in the European region will add 220 rooms, 50 treatment rooms, and multiple pools with sustainable design standards. Collectively, these physical assets anchor the brand's identity in luxury and wellness, while the European expansion diversifies its geographic presence.

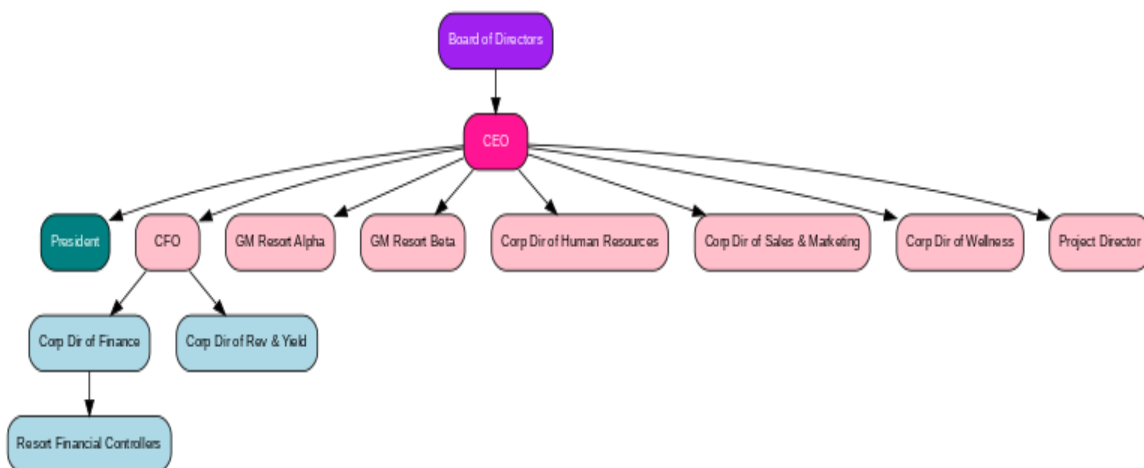
**Regulatory Requirements.** XYZ Inc. adheres to all labor laws and regulatory requirements in its operational regions. Compliance strategies include incorporating local labor regulations into organizational policies, conducting external audits by Ernst & Young, and maintaining transparency in financial and operational practices. The organization's team member handbook aligns with local laws, ensuring compliance and cultural sensitivity.

### ***Organizational Relationships***

**Organizational Structure.** XYZ Inc. maintains a vertically integrated governance structure composed of three principal levels: (1) the board of directors as the top governing authority; (2) a dual executive leadership team consisting of the chief executive officer (CEO) and president, both reporting directly to the board; and (3) a corporate layer of functional directors and general managers who oversee specialized business functions and resort-level operations. Corporate directors are responsible for finance, human resources, sales and marketing, wellness programming, and special projects. Resort-level leadership are the general managers (GMs) of resort Alpha and resort Beta, who report directly to the CEO (see Table 2 and Figure 1). XYZ Inc. employs formal performance management tools such as the Balanced Scorecard and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor strategic execution and operational excellence. Executive actions are regularly reviewed through structured performance assessments and stakeholder feedback.

**Table 2***XYZ Inc. Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team*

Level	Title	Reports To	Notes
Level 0	Board of Directors	—	Top governing body
Level 1	CEO	Board of Directors	Chief Executive Officer
Level 2 – Finance	CFO	CEO	Chief Financial Officer
Level 3 – Finance	Corp Dir of Finance	CFO	Oversees resort finance
Level 4 – Finance	Resort Financial Controllers	Corp Dir of Finance	Site-level financial control
Level 3 – Revenue	Corp Dir of Rev & Yield	CFO	Manages revenue optimization
Level 2 – Operations	GM Resort Alpha	CEO	General Manager (resort-level)
Level 2 – Operations	GM Resort Beta	CEO	General Manager (resort-level)
Level 2 – HR	Corp Dir of Human Resources	CEO	Organizational HR strategy
Level 2 – Marketing	Corp Dir of Sales & Marketing	CEO	Sales and branding efforts
Level 2 – Wellness	Corp Dir of Wellness	CEO	Aligns with the company’s core mission
Level 2 – Projects	Project Director	CEO	Leads special strategic initiatives
Level 1 – President	President	Board of Directors	Parallel executive leadership role

**Figure 1***Senior Leadership Team*

**Customers and Stakeholders.** XYZ Inc. serves a diverse client base that includes wellness-focused vacationers, returning loyal guests, business retreat attendees, and culturally motivated travelers. The organization's value proposition is rooted in delivering transformative wellness experiences that are personalized and holistic. Customer loyalty is evidenced by a high proportion of repeat guests and long-term patrons.

Stakeholder engagement extends beyond guests to include local communities, regulatory authorities, supply chain partners, wellness certifying bodies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The organization facilitates multi-stakeholder engagement through biannual listening sessions, government compliance audits, and social impact reporting. These mechanisms enable continuous two-way communication, fostering trust, social connections, and responsiveness to emerging stakeholder needs. Feedback loops include both formal channels (e.g., surveys, net promoter scores, employee feedback instruments) and informal channels (e.g., social media, direct guest interaction, staff debriefings).

**Suppliers and Partners.** XYZ Inc. cultivates strategic supplier relationships that emphasize sustainability, quality, and local empowerment. Key suppliers include organic farmers, artisanal producers, and wellness product vendors who provide goods aligned with the brand's ethos of natural, health-oriented hospitality. The organization's strategic alliances with global travel agencies, regional tourism boards, and academic institutions enable expanded market reach, compliance with international standards, and innovation in wellness programs. By embedding local cultural narratives into service design, XYZ

Inc. promotes authenticity and differentiation while fostering inclusive economic participation within the Caribbean. Through these partnerships, XYZ Inc. upholds its commitment to environmental stewardship, regional economic resilience, and culturally responsive hospitality. These relationships are evaluated annually for alignment with corporate goals using a supplier scorecard methodology, ensuring continuous improvement and shared success.

## **Organizational Situation**

### ***Competitive Environment***

**Competitive Position.** The global luxury wellness hospitality sector has undergone a significant transformation in the post-pandemic era, with rapid growth driven by rising consumer awareness of holistic health, mental well-being, and experiential travel. XYZ Inc. currently commands an estimated 60% share of the regional Caribbean wellness market, positioning itself as a dominant leader through its culturally immersive wellness offerings, tailored guest experiences, and therapeutic programs. Despite its stronghold, XYZ Inc. operates in an increasingly crowded and competitive environment where both regional boutique properties and multinational hospitality brands are intensifying efforts to capture market share. For example, Marriott International has expanded its “JW Marriott Spa by JW” concept in Caribbean destinations, offering stress-relief programs and integrated digital wellness solutions through mobile apps (JW Marriott, 2025). Similarly, Hyatt’s Ziva and Zilara brands have introduced “Wellness at Your Pace” programs, which integrate mindfulness and fitness with all-inclusive offerings aimed at wellness-conscious travelers (World of Hyatt, 2025). These market

entrants often adopt agile pricing strategies, influencer-driven marketing, and curated wellness itineraries to challenge incumbents like XYZ Inc. Resort Alpha benefits from authentic customer care, strong brand loyalty, and brand identity, while Resort Beta, meanwhile, leverages its authentic guest care, high satisfaction ratings, and a wide, spacious beach, all key differentiators in wellness tourism. Opportunities for both properties converge on the growth of health, wellbeing, and wellness travel, and the expanding U.S. market share. Resort Beta additionally benefits from opportunities such as purchasing city council land and securing green certification, enabling long-term strategic growth and environmental stewardship.

**Competitiveness Changes.** In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, XYZ Inc. has recalibrated its strategic posture to address an altered hospitality landscape marked by changing traveler expectations, heightened workforce challenges, and intensified global competition. The organization responded to these external disruptions by deepening its focus on its core mission of holistic wellness, and supported by strategic investments in technology, workforce development, and guest-centric innovation. XYZ Inc. has recognized the value of differentiating through employee excellence. The organization invested in employee training, coaching certification, and performance-based rewards, aimed at enhancing capability and engagement. These investments are especially salient post-pandemic, as the labor market continues to experience talent shortages and high turnover. Market competitiveness has also been strengthened through global brand expansion. XYZ Inc. has pursued a strategy of international outreach while maintaining strong local community engagement, balancing the authenticity of regional culture in

wellness hospitality. Post-COVID, as health-conscious travel continues to gain momentum, XYZ Inc.'s dual emphasis on emotional connection and wellness transformation gives it a distinct advantage among returning and new travelers.

**Comparative Data.** XYZ Inc. benchmarks its performance using TripAdvisor rankings, Condé Nast awards, and guest satisfaction surveys. Comparative data on room rates, service quality, and occupancy rates provide actionable insights for strategic decision-making. The organization's consistently high rankings validate its market leadership and operational excellence.

### *Strategic Context*

XYZ Inc. operates within a dynamic industry where strategic agility is critical. The organization's strategic context encompasses key challenges, including maintaining its competitive position amidst growing demand for wellness tourism and addressing workforce limitations within the Caribbean. Opportunities for innovation arise from integrating advanced wellness technologies and expanding to global markets. To sustain its market leadership, XYZ Inc. emphasizes a balanced approach incorporating guest satisfaction, employee engagement, and financial sustainability. Strategic challenges include addressing regulatory requirements in new markets and managing cultural integration as the organization expands internationally. XYZ Inc. leverages its strong cultural authenticity and wellness excellence foundation to mitigate these challenges. Also, partnerships with local suppliers and international stakeholders enhance operational resilience and market responsiveness. The strategic context also focuses on leveraging comparative data to identify areas for improvement. Regular benchmarking against

industry leaders ensures that the organization remains competitive and aligned with best practices. Table 3 depicts the strategic challenges of XYZ Inc.

**Table 3**

*Strategic Challenges*

Strategic Challenge	Description	Implications
Workforce recruitment and retention	Difficulty in sourcing qualified hospitality professionals in Caribbean markets	Requires aggressive regional recruitment, upskilling, and retention incentives
Global expansion and cultural integration	Entering diverse markets with unique regulatory, linguistic, and cultural barriers	Necessitates localized HR strategies, adaptive wellness programming, and cultural training
Technological innovation in wellness	Rapid pace of wellness tech development (e.g., biometrics, virtual consultation)	Invest in R&D and digital transformation to retain a competitive advantage
Compliance and regulatory complexity	Varying legal standards across jurisdictions for hospitality and health-related services	Demands robust legal advisory capacity and regulatory intelligence systems
Supply chain and environmental resilience	Dependency on local and global suppliers; environmental sustainability imperatives	Calls for resilient vendor partnerships and sustainable sourcing strategies
Financial sustainability and capital allocation	Balancing expansion, technology investment, and employee development within finite resources	Strategic financial planning and prioritization are required to align with ROI metrics
Benchmarking and competitive intelligence	Maintaining leadership in service delivery and wellness outcomes amid increased global scrutiny	Requires data analysis, feedback integration, and a continuous improvement culture

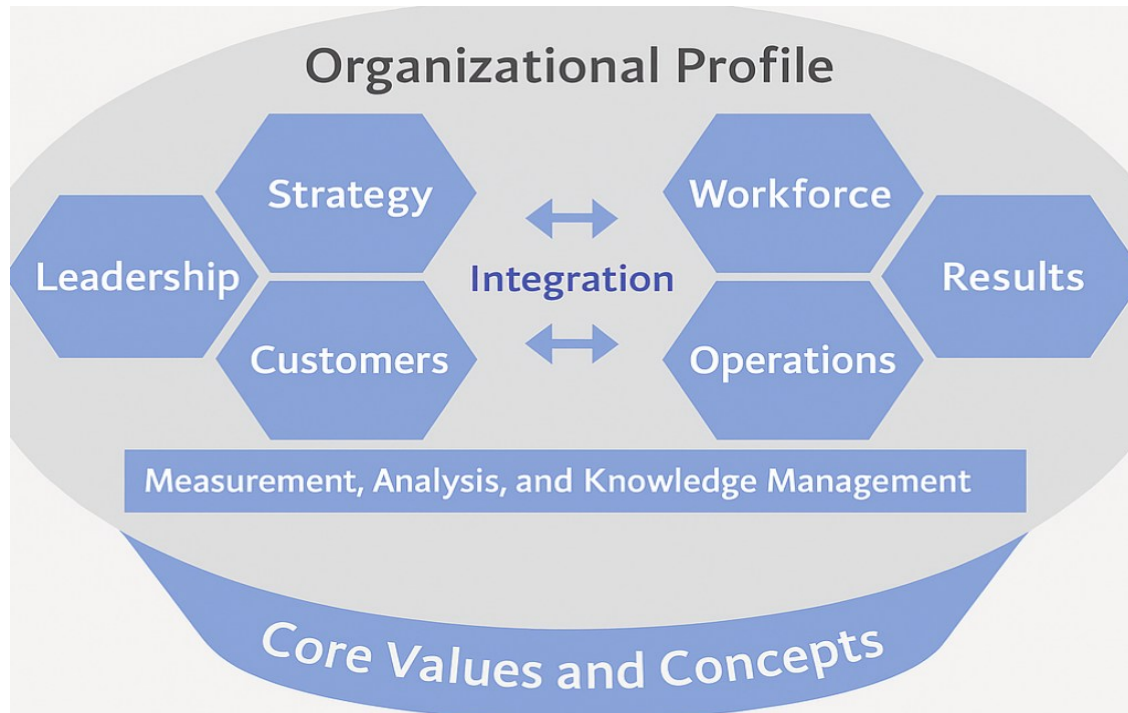
*Performance Improvement System*

XYZ Inc. utilizes a performance improvement system that aligns organizational strategy with measurable results. Anchored by the balanced scorecard, the system identifies and tracks key performance indicators (KPIs) across various functional areas, including guest satisfaction, workforce engagement, financial sustainability, and operational efficiency. Once the organization identifies an area where improvements are needed, it employs workforce engagement strategies, such as coaching, real-time feedback, and tiered appraisals, to empower employees to take ownership of

improvement initiatives. XYZ Inc. also benchmarks against leading competitors and industry standards to ensure that goals are realistic, relevant, and performance-driven. The organization compares its results with those of leading competitors, regional hospitality companies, and global wellness resort standards to ensure alignment with its strategic goals. This integrated benchmarking approach reinforces continuous learning and process alignment across operational and strategic areas. The combined SWOT analyses of Resort Alpha and Resort Beta highlight both shared and unique factors shaping performance improvement.

### **Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers**

The Leadership Triad in the BEF represents the integration of leadership, strategy, and customer focus to achieve organizational excellence. Leadership drives the vision and sets the tone for organizational behavior, ensuring all actions align with core values and strategic goals (Lee et al., 2024). Strategy translates the vision into actionable plans with measurable outcomes, creating a roadmap for sustained performance and adaptability (Alanazi, 2025). Customer focus ensures that all strategic initiatives and leadership actions are aligned with customer needs and expectations, fostering loyalty and satisfaction. Figure 2 depicts the BEF, showing how leadership, strategy, customers, workforce, operations, and results are integrated through measurement, analysis, and knowledge management. At its foundation lie the organization's core values and concepts, guided by the organizational profile. By aligning leadership actions, strategic initiatives, and customer-centric practices with the BEF, the organization ensures a comprehensive approach to sustained success.

**Figure 2***Baldrige Organizational Profile*

*Note.* Adapted from Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2023).

***Senior Leadership***

Senior leaders at XYZ Inc. demonstrate a commitment to aligning their actions with the organization's mission, vision, and values by embedding both strategic and day-to-day activities. Using the balanced scorecard framework, leaders translate the mission to develop a leading wellbeing experience while reinforcing authentic destination experiences and setting of unsurpassed service excellence into annual objectives that cascade through every level of the company through town halls and departmental meetings. This ensures that frontline employees, mid-level managers, and executives share a common sense of purpose that links daily responsibilities to long-term strategic

goals. To reinforce these values, leaders integrate them directly into recruitment, training, and onboarding. Hiring practices emphasize professionalism, empathy, and care, qualities that reflect the organization's wellness ethos. These emphases are supported by research indicating that values-driven, transformational hiring and socialization practices strengthen ethical conduct and culture in hospitality organizations (Ali, 2023). New employees are introduced to the mission and values through orientation sessions, handbooks, and wall displays across resort properties. Ongoing training modules and leadership meetings revisit these principles, ensuring they remain visible, actionable, and relevant.

Senior leadership also sustains a culture of continuous feedback and adaptation. Engagement surveys, guest satisfaction metrics, and glitch reports are systematically reviewed by executives to evaluate how well values are being lived out in practice. When survey feedback highlights gaps in personalized service, leaders respond by adjusting training content and refining guest communication standards. This feedback-to-action loop is also supported by evidence that responsive, data-driven service adjustments can elevate the service quality and customer loyalty (Potipiroon & Junthong, 2024). The leadership team actively models accountability and ethical conduct through transparent decision-making. This leadership team's emphasis on transparency aligns with Antunez et al.'s (2024) findings that ethics-driven governance increases stakeholder trust and strengthens performance discipline. Regular meetings ranging from departmental check-ins to organization-wide town halls provide a platform for leaders to communicate priorities, listen to concerns, and connect daily actions with broader wellness goals. By

embodying the organization's values in decision-making and communication, senior leaders cultivate a high-performance culture grounded in shared purpose and service excellence.

### ***Governance and Societal Responsibilities***

XYZ Inc. promotes responsible governance through clear organizational structures and processes. A board of directors, corporate executive team, and resort leadership teams support the governance framework. Transparency and accountability are ensured through annual audits by Ernst & Young. Additionally, the company employs advanced tools to monitor key metrics, including employee engagement and guest satisfaction, ensuring alignment with its mission and values.

The organization's societal responsibilities are evident in its compliance with local labor laws and its emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Policies in the employee handbook are regularly updated to reflect local regulations, ensuring compliance across all operations. Primecz & Mahadevan (2024) also emphasized the need to adopt organizational policies that align with local sociocultural and regulatory contexts, which aligns with XYZ Inc.'s societal responsibility practices. Moreover, XYZ Inc. actively engages with local communities through initiatives such as environmental restoration projects and collaborations with community leaders, reflecting its commitment to social impact.

## **Strategy**

### ***Strategy Development***

XYZ Inc. employs a strategic planning process grounded in the balanced scorecard framework. Annual strategic planning sessions ensure alignment between evolving market trends, such as the rise of wellness travel and environmentally conscious tourism, and the company's internal capabilities. The annual planning cycle begins each April and follows a disciplined sequence of steps designed to ensure that organizational priorities are evidence-based, market-informed, and results-driven. The process begins with collecting and synthesizing internal and external inputs. Sources include guest feedback surveys, employee engagement surveys, financial and operational performance data, and workforce retention metrics. Leaders also review competitor analysis, market trend reports, regulatory changes, and SWOT analyses to capture risks and opportunities, further supporting XYZ Inc.'s strategy development process. Kumar et al. (2024) also highlighted that the systematic incorporation of competitor intelligence and SWOT-based synthesis is helpful in improving the responsiveness of strategy formulation.

Senior leadership and department heads analyze the results from the prior fiscal year, examining both successes and areas for improvement. Key areas include financial performance (e.g., revenue growth, cost efficiencies), workforce outcomes (e.g., turnover, engagement), and customer satisfaction trends. This review provides the baseline against which new strategies and goals are set. The corporate team integrates intelligence from the Caribbean wellness and global hospitality sectors. Benchmarking against industry leaders, reviewing competitor innovations, and assessing macroeconomic factors such as

commodity costs and labor availability allow leaders to position XYZ Inc. strategically within the market.

Insights and analysis inform the identification of the coming year's priorities, which consistently align with XYZ Inc.'s mission. Goals typically encompass revenue growth, cost reduction, customer satisfaction, employee retention, and innovation in wellness service delivery. These priorities are further aligned with Crick's (2022) study, which suggests that efficiency, experience, retention, and service innovation underpinned competitive positioning and service excellence. During the April sessions, leaders translate strategic priorities into measurable KPIs across the balanced scorecard's dimensions: financial, customer, workforce, and operations. Examples include guest satisfaction indices, voluntary turnover rates, occupancy rates, and financial efficiency targets. These KPIs cascade through every level of the organization, from corporate leadership to resort circle leaders, and are incorporated into appraisal processes and bonus structures. Action plans are developed by department heads, who align local objectives with corporate strategy. Progress is tracked throughout the year using performance management systems (e.g., Performance Pro, Impulse Maintenance). Monthly and quarterly reviews ensure accountability, while corrective actions are implemented when variances occur. The planning process ensures that strategy development is not a one-time event, but a continuous cycle of improvement. By incorporating market analysis, historical data, competitor insights, and SWOT evaluation into the April planning sessions and monitoring execution throughout the year, XYZ Inc. maintains strategic agility.

### ***Strategy Implementation***

Following the annual April strategy development cycle, XYZ Inc. executes its plans through a structured implementation process designed to ensure alignment, accountability, and continuous improvement. This process consists of a series of coordinated steps that cascade strategy into daily operations across the organization. Once corporate objectives and KPIs are established, they are communicated across all levels of the organization. Department heads and Circle Leaders receive tailored objectives aligned with company-wide priorities, such as revenue growth, workforce retention, or customer experience enhancement. These objectives are embedded into appraisal systems, performance reviews, and bonus structures to ensure accountability. Each business unit translates corporate priorities into specific, actionable initiatives. For example, HR integrates turnover reduction targets into recruitment and onboarding strategies, while operations teams embed guest satisfaction goals into service standards and training. Department heads define timelines, milestones, and deliverables that connect directly to the corporate balanced scorecard.

Leaders ensure organizational buy-in by engaging employees through town halls, departmental meetings, and digital communication tools. This engagement process clarifies the link between individual contributions and corporate goals, reinforcing a sense of shared purpose. This approach is supported by Zettna et al. (2024), who found that transparent, bidirectional communication enhances commitment, coordination, and execution quality. Performance data are collected through integrated systems (e.g., Performance Pro, Glitch Report, Impulse Maintenance) and reported according to set

cycles. Monthly departmental reviews and bi-monthly executive meetings track progress against KPIs, while quarterly performance dashboards provide a holistic overview. These reviews identify variances early, enabling corrective actions. Strategic agility is maintained by adapting to evolving market conditions and stakeholder feedback. If guest survey data highlight gaps in personalized wellness services, leaders refine training or introduce new offerings. Workforce engagement surveys guide adjustments to HR policies, while financial analyses inform cost-control measures. Achievements tied to strategic goals are recognized through various programs, including bonus awards and career advancement opportunities.

## **Customers**

### ***Customer Expectations***

XYZ Inc. actively listens to its customers to determine their needs and uses this information to enhance its service offerings. Feedback is collected through multiple channels, including interactions with the manager on duty, guest satisfaction surveys, and weekly leadership cocktails where guests can share their experiences directly with senior leaders. Surveys cover all aspects of the guest experience, from room quality to spa services, providing actionable insights that drive service improvements. Šerić et al. (2024) also argued that integrating multichannel customer feedback into service design elevates perceived service quality and increases customer loyalty. For potential customers, XYZ Inc. engages travel agents and tour operators to understand market trends and preferences, ensuring its offerings remain competitive and aligned with customer expectations.

### ***Customer Engagement***

XYZ Inc. builds strong customer relationships through personalized service and a focus on emotional connections. Initiatives such as handwritten notes during turndown service, tailored wellness programs, and loyalty rewards foster a sense of belonging and encourage repeat visits. These initiatives are further supported by a study that found individualized interactions are critical to creating commitment and loyalty behaviors (Potipiroon & Junthong, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). With an average guest repeat ratio almost twice that of industry standards, the company's efforts to create intimate, boutique experiences have proven successful. Additionally, XYZ Inc.'s commitment to resolving customer complaints promptly through Glitch reports and follow-ups demonstrates its dedication to customer satisfaction and fair treatment across all customer segments.

### **Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

Effective organizational performance depends on systematic measurement, analysis, and effective knowledge management. In BEF, this category emphasizes how organizations select, collect, analyze, and use data to drive decision-making and continuous improvement (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). For XYZ Inc., these practices ensure that operational insights, customer feedback, workforce data, and financial results are transformed into actionable knowledge that supports strategic objectives. By integrating measurement and knowledge management into routine processes, the organization enhances accountability, strengthens alignment with its mission, and sustains long-term competitiveness.

## Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

XYZ Inc.'s multiple tracking systems capture daily operations and organizational performance data. Key systems include:

- Guest Experience System: Tracks guest satisfaction and service issues.
- Maintenance Tracking System (Impulse): Manages scheduled maintenance and infrastructure issues.
- Performance Management System (Performance Pro): Tracks employee performance and engagement.
- Glitch Report System: Captures and categorizes guest complaints or incidents.

Each system is integrated into daily workflows, ensuring departments regularly input and review data. HR reports are generated monthly, guest Glitch reports are generated daily, and maintenance reports are generated weekly, while financial performance is tracked quarterly. Data collected from these systems informs continuous improvement. For example, turnover trends help HR address retention challenges, while maintenance reports influence vendor selection decisions. These tracking mechanisms are embedded into decision-making processes, ensuring data insights drive operational and strategic planning.

XYZ Inc. selects data systems based on their ability to generate actionable insights. Performance Pro and Impulse were chosen for their robust reporting capabilities and user-friendly design. Comparative data is reviewed at department meetings and executive discussions, where leaders analyze trends to make informed decisions. For instance, maintenance reports inform procurement strategies, while performance data

guides employee development initiatives. The organization continuously assesses the relevance of its data sources, ensuring alignment with evolving business needs. This approach is in alignment with Saeed et al. (2024), who argued that prioritizing usability and ongoing evaluation of data sources enhanced insight quality and strategic responsiveness. Feedback from department heads influences adjustments to tracking systems. Data selection and analysis are integrated into routine reporting and strategic planning, enabling leaders to make data-driven decisions.

Performance is reviewed through scheduled reporting cycles and analytical tools. Monthly HR analytics reports, daily guest reports, and quarterly financial benchmarking provide comprehensive oversight. Performance data are systematically reviewed, with core metrics including employee turnover, occupancy rates, guest loyalty, ancillary sales, and revenue growth. Reports are discussed at weekly resort leadership meetings and bimonthly executive meetings, with issues addressed immediately, ensuring timely interventions. Leadership adapts strategies based on performance trends. For example, if a particular piece of equipment frequently fails, procurement policies are adjusted to source more reliable alternatives. Performance analysis is embedded into operational workflows, with real-time data informing daily decision-making.

Performance reports serve as the baseline for continuous improvement and innovation, and data-driven insights guide the prioritization of issues and strategic initiatives. Executive teams meet twice a month to review reports and establish improvement priorities. Trends in guest satisfaction, maintenance issues, and financial performance inform long-term strategy adjustments while findings from performance

reviews are integrated into business planning, training programs, and process improvements. Consistent with XYZ Inc.'s findings, Guerra and Valle (2024) also found that regular reviews strengthen cross-functional alignment and sustain innovation. XYZ Inc. senior leaders also evaluate and adopt new technologies and systems based on emerging business needs.

### ***Information and Knowledge Management***

XYZ Inc. adopts a structured approach to information and knowledge management to ensure data quality, accessibility, and security across all organizational functions. The company embeds quality assurance into its processes through role-based training, system audits, and validation protocols. Designated champions within departments are responsible for ensuring data accuracy and consistency. Employees handling critical information undergo specialized training supported by video tutorials, reference guides, and ongoing IT oversight. To safeguard sensitive information, the corporate IT team enforces strict protocols that include firewalls, virtual private networks (VPNs), and real-time system monitoring. While email monitoring and periodic system vetting strengthen security, the organization does not currently use two-factor authentication (2FA), which represents an opportunity for further strengthening of their IT environment.

These practices are consistently deployed quarterly through the organization's centralized digital infrastructure. Data are stored in secure, role-based systems accessible to authorized personnel via desktops, cloud applications, and internal networks. Employees without personal devices are supported through a learning center equipped

with 25 computers. Access protocols are routinely reviewed to optimize usability and ensure compliance with corporate standards. Similarly, knowledge management is deployed through a centralized resource center that houses standard SOPs, training materials, and video tutorials. Onboarding programs introduce new employees to these repositories, while refresher training sessions and leadership meetings reinforce their use. By embedding these tools into everyday workflows, the organization ensures that staff at all levels can retrieve and apply relevant information in their roles. This approach is validated by Saeed et al. (2024), who found that centralized, role-based knowledge and data infrastructures enhance information accessibility, compliance, and decision-making.

The organization uses continuous learning to refine both its data and knowledge management systems. Feedback from employees informs updates to training content, storage protocols, and system usability. Recurring issues identified through audits or user reports lead to refinements in data entry standards and knowledge-sharing practices. Knowledge gaps reported during onboarding or operations prompt timely updates to SOPs and training modules. At a strategic level, leadership evaluates innovation opportunities through SWOT analyses and impact assessments, ensuring that lessons learned from past initiatives guide future improvements.

Information and knowledge management practices are integrated into the organization's strategic and operational frameworks. Security measures and data reliability protocols are incorporated into corporate policies and compliance structures, while performance insights are directly input into business planning and workforce development initiatives. Innovation processes are not treated as isolated projects but are

embedded into strategic planning and performance management systems, ensuring that financial, operational, and customer impacts are assessed collectively. Best practices documented in SOPs are reinforced during onboarding, embedded into leadership development, and cascaded across all operational units.

### **Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results**

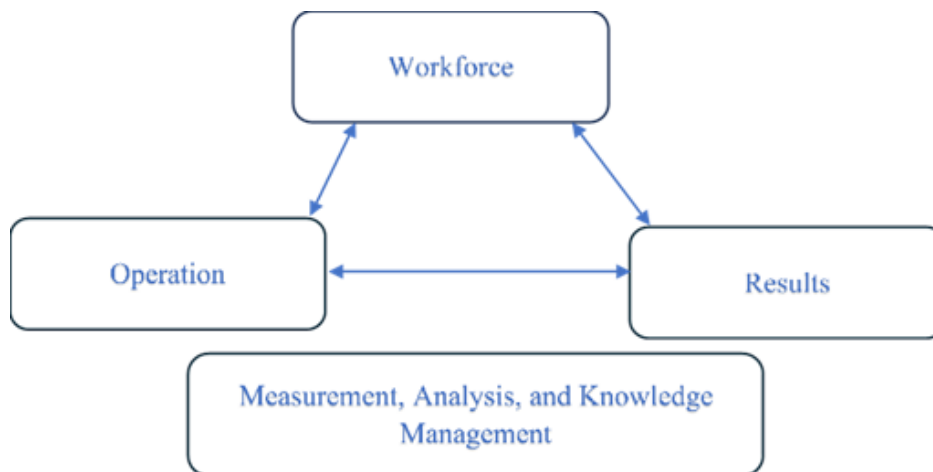
The Result Triad in BEF encapsulates the critical alignment among an organization's workforce, operational systems, and performance outcomes. This triad highlights how effective deployment of workforce capabilities and operational processes drives sustainable organizational results. The workforce serves as the organization's engine of execution. Engaged, well-trained, and culturally aligned staff translate strategic intent into customer-focused actions. BEF emphasizes workforce engagement, development, and alignment with core values and strategic objectives. At XYZ Inc., targeted leadership training, cultural integration, and semi-annual appraisals contribute to workforce excellence. Operations represent the systematic methods and processes by which an organization delivers products and services. Operational excellence within the BEF includes agility, innovation, reliability, and efficiency. XYZ Inc. utilizes centralized property management systems, SOPs tailored to wellness experiences, and wellness-integrated service models to ensure consistency and value creation. Results serve as the evidence base demonstrating the effectiveness of workforce and operational alignment.

These include customer satisfaction scores, employee retention metrics, revenue growth, and social impact measures. At XYZ Inc., data from net promoter scores, guest feedback loops, and internal KPIs are aggregated into a Balanced Scorecard framework

to guide decision-making and strategic refinement. The result triad illustrates how disciplined attention to workforce engagement and operational execution results in measurable performance outcomes. The result triad is grounded in the principles of continuous improvement, feedback loops, and alignment with the organization's mission (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*Baldrige Result Triad*



## **Workforce**

### *Workforce Environment*

XYZ Inc. primarily assesses workforce capability and capacity needs through structured performance appraisals, employee progress evaluations, and alignment with role-specific competencies. Each job role has defined skill requirements and experience thresholds necessary for success, ensuring that performance expectations are established.

Performance reviews are conducted semiannually using a five-point rating system, where 1 represents high performance and 5 indicates underperformance. Employees who score below expectations are subject to Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs), which provide structured guidance and support to improve their performance. This practice is further supported by Ghafoor et al. (2021), who found that consistent appraisal cycles and targeted improvement plans strengthened workforce capability. Findings from these evaluations inform recruitment, training, and professional development strategies. HR collaborates with department heads to design targeted training programs or hiring initiatives if significant gaps are identified. As the organization expands globally, future workforce needs are projected using analytics, ensuring that training and development programs align with emerging business requirements. This process is embedded into XYZ Inc.'s strategic workforce planning.

The organization employs a multipronged recruitment strategy, including targeted hiring via LinkedIn, relationship-based referrals, and regional advertising for local and global positions. This strategy ensures that the organization attracts diverse and highly skilled candidates. This approach is supported by Azhar et al. (2024), who found that employer branding and targeted recruitment channels help improve the applicant quality and organizational performance. All new hires undergo a structured two-day onboarding program, followed by a 90-day onboarding process that includes mentorship, training, and periodic check-ins. Continuous refinement of recruitment processes occurs based on feedback from new hires and hiring managers. This feedback enables XYZ Inc. to refine job advertisements, onboarding timelines, and training materials, ensuring a seamless

transition for new employees. Recruitment and onboarding align with the organization's growth strategy, providing a strong talent pipeline for expansion initiatives. Similarly, Alanazi (2025) highlighted the disciplined implementation of a business model within the BEF to strengthen strategy execution and organizational results, further supporting XYZ Inc.'s alignment of onboarding with growth objectives.

Additionally, the company understands the change in business needs and offers training and upskilling programs tailored to future expansions. For example, in preparation for opening a resort in Europe, employees received local language classes a year prior to the launch. Training programs are scheduled strategically, offering employees opportunities for skill enhancement before new operational requirements arise. Online and in-person training modules ensure that learning is accessible and adaptable, allowing for flexibility and convenience. Yang et al. (2024) provided valuable insights into digital transformation initiatives, emphasizing the significance of integrating knowledge sharing and transformational leadership in organizational strategies, which further supports XYZ Inc.'s approach. Feedback from past expansion projects informs future training plans. Lessons learned from language and cultural training for international expansion efforts have led to earlier and more structured rollouts of training. The workforce capability development strategy is embedded into long-term business planning, ensuring employees are always equipped for new challenges.

XYZ Inc. follows a hierarchical but collaborative workforce management system. Each department has team trainers, team leaders, and division heads who oversee operations and support employee performance. New hires work closely with assigned

team trainers for 60 days before transitioning to independent tasks. Managers and team leaders then conduct regular performance reviews and mentorship sessions to ensure continuous development. Adjustments to workforce management practices are made based on feedback from Q12 employee engagement surveys and performance metrics. This emphasis on engagement-driven adjustment is further supported by Ali et al. (2024), who found a link between leadership-enabled employee engagement and stronger retention and performance outcomes. Workforce organization strategies are standardized across all company locations to ensure consistency in performance expectations and team dynamics.

The organization assesses workforce well-being through biannual employee engagement surveys, aligned with the Gallup Q12 framework. These surveys focus on key indicators, including employee engagement, physical and psychological safety, and workplace accessibility. This structured approach ensures that workforce needs are captured consistently and tied to organizational health objectives. Survey results are analyzed and disseminated across departments, leading to targeted action plans. Aligning survey insights with strategy execution is also supported by Alanazi (2025), who argued that disciplined implementation within the BEF strengthens the linkage between management practices and organizational results. For instance, when feedback indicated dissatisfaction with locker space, leadership responded promptly by upgrading locker facilities to better meet employee needs. Such responsiveness reinforces a culture of trust and continuous improvement.

Over time, the company has identified recurring themes and emerging concerns through the analysis of survey data trends. These insights inform the refinement of wellness initiatives and accessibility standards. The organization continuously learns from both qualitative feedback and quantitative metrics to improve its workforce engagement strategies. Workforce wellness and engagement findings are integrated into strategic and operational planning processes. Investments in facilities, mental health programs, ergonomic improvements, and accessibility enhancements reflect the organization's broader commitment to employee well-being. This alignment ensures that workforce health is not treated as a standalone initiative but as an integral component of enterprise-wide excellence.

The organization ensures that compensation and benefits packages remain competitive through market benchmarking and Q12 employee engagement surveys. Compensation structures include annual merit-based salary increases, performance-based bonuses, and competitive benefits, ensuring high employee satisfaction. Adjustments are made based on workforce expectations and market trends. Compensation policies are integrated into XYZ Inc.'s strategic goals, supporting employee retention and engagement.

### ***Workforce Engagement***

XYZ Inc. approaches workforce engagement as a strategic priority, recognizing that an engaged workforce is essential to achieving its mission of transforming lives through wellness. The organization determines its key workforce drivers through semi-annual Q12 engagement surveys, performance reviews, and feedback from employees at

all levels. These insights show that drivers differ by role: frontline staff emphasize recognition, scheduling, and skill development, while supervisors and leaders prioritize empowerment, communication, and advancement opportunities. Table 4 depicts the key workforce engagement drivers by roles. By tailoring engagement practices to role-specific needs, the company ensures its strategies are meaningful, equitable, and aligned with workforce expectations. Leadership accountability is reinforced by tying engagement outcomes, such as voluntary turnover rates and guest satisfaction index, to the balanced scorecard and the circles of care model, where leaders are expected to show empathy, respect, compassion, and authenticity.

**Table 4**

*Key Workforce Engagement Drivers by Role*

Role	Engagement Drivers
Senior Leaders	Career advancement pathways, succession planning, leadership development, and alignment with the strategic vision.
Supervisors/Managers	Empowerment in decision-making, clear communication, leadership support, and a manageable workload.
Frontline Employees	Recognition and rewards, fair scheduling, skill-building opportunities, and supportive supervisors.

Engagement strategies are consistently deployed across the organization through effective communication and structured processes. Town halls, departmental meetings, and transparent reporting of survey results ensure that employees feel informed and valued. Leaders embed the brand culture into everyday practice by modeling behaviors outlined in the circles of care, reinforcing the company's values and service ethos. Supportive of XYZ Inc.'s approach, Ali et al. (2024) highlighted a strong relationship between the leadership-enabled engagement mechanisms and higher employee retention

and performance. Formal mechanisms include biannual performance reviews, structured recognition systems, and career development initiatives. To support continuous workforce development, XYZ Inc. conducts semi-annual performance appraisals. These appraisals integrate individual, team, and departmental objectives into a unified evaluation system. Employees who perform well receive merit-based increases and bonuses, while improvement plans provide targeted support for employees needing development. Additionally, the Learning Management System (LMS) provides access to on-demand training, leadership development, and succession planning resources, strengthening both engagement and workforce readiness.

The company continuously evaluates its engagement strategies to refine their effectiveness. Trends from Q12 survey data are analyzed across semesters, with lessons learned guiding adjustments in scheduling, training, and benefits. For example, feedback related to work-life balance has led to the implementation of flexible scheduling initiatives, while turnover trends have prompted the development of stronger onboarding and mentorship programs. Training participation rates and feedback are regularly reviewed to enhance program design, ensuring that learning opportunities remain relevant and effective. Periodic DEI audits further highlight areas for strengthening fairness and inclusivity, ensuring engagement strategies remain aligned with organizational values and evolving workforce expectations.

Workforce engagement practices are integrated into the organization's performance and culture systems. Results from surveys and performance reviews are tied directly to the balanced scorecard, ensuring that workforce engagement influences

financial, customer, and operational performance goals. This approach is supported by Alanazi (2025), who found that embedding engagement metrics within BEF-aligned management systems strengthens strategy execution and improves measurable organizational results. Engagement insights are shared across departments, influencing HR policies, operational practices, and leadership development initiatives. Best practices in recognition and empowerment are institutionalized through SOPs, onboarding, and leadership training, ensuring cultural consistency across the resorts, and DEI principles are woven into recruitment, promotion, and training policies, reinforcing the organization's commitment to fairness and inclusivity.

## **Operations**

### ***Work Processes***

XYZ Inc. defines its key work processes by aligning them with its mission. Core processes focus on consistently delivering value to guests through immersive wellness experiences, including service design, personalized programming, culinary innovation, spa and fitness delivery, and facility management. These core processes generate revenue by differentiating the guest experience and reinforcing brand loyalty, in alignment with Šerić et al.'s (2024) research. Support processes, including human resources, finance, maintenance, and procurement, ensure that the core processes operate reliably and sustainably. The organization determines the requirements for these processes through a combination of guest feedback surveys, market benchmarking, strategic visioning, and employee input. Requirements are also shaped by the circles of care model, which

defines how employees are expected to deliver service excellence through empathy, authenticity, and professionalism.

Core work processes are deployed through SOPs, wellness guidelines, and carefully designed service experiences. For example, culinary services incorporate wellness-focused offerings such as natural juices and organic dining options, while housekeeping ensures restorative environments through aromatherapy and sleep enhancement amenities such as pillow menus. Spa and fitness programs are designed to immerse guests in holistic wellness, reinforcing the brand promise of transformation. The organization's support processes are also systematically deployed. Human resources integrates recruiting, onboarding, and retention initiatives into daily operations to ensure the availability of skilled staff capable of executing core processes. This approach is further supported by Azhar et al. (2024), who found that coordinated talent acquisition and retention systems embedded in day-to-day operations can help to improve service reliability and sustain quality execution. Finance and procurement focus on efficiency and cost control, while maintenance ensures that facilities and equipment remain safe, reliable, and aligned with guest expectations. Operations processes are monitored through daily books, visual checklists, and regular inspections.

The organization continually improves its work processes by analyzing historical performance data, feedback from guests and employees, and the results of internal audits. For instance, guest satisfaction surveys highlight opportunities to refine service design, while turnover trends inform HR recruitment and retention practices. Consistent with Azhar et al.'s (2024) study, which linked the customers' feedback and workforce

analytics to hiring and retention decisions also aligned with XYZ Inc.'s practices. Lessons learned from audits and inspections guide updates to SOPs, and insights from exit interviews or engagement surveys drive changes in support processes. Innovation is encouraged by incorporating industry best practices and experimenting with wellness-focused design elements, such as new spa treatments or eco-friendly housekeeping practices. Training refreshers are scheduled regularly to embed lessons learned into workforce performance, ensuring that employees remain responsive to evolving requirements.

Work processes are integrated into the organizational system, connecting core and support functions that reinforce both strategy and culture. The balanced scorecard connects process outcomes such as guest satisfaction, occupancy rates, and employee retention to strategic goals. HR recruitment and retention strategies are integrated into support processes, but they also directly impact the ability of core processes to consistently deliver high-quality guest experiences. Similarly, facility maintenance and procurement are linked to guest-facing service quality by ensuring that equipment and spaces meet wellness standards. By embedding work processes into the circles of care model, the organization ensures that both core and support functions operate with consistency, accountability, and alignment to mission. This process allows XYZ Inc. to deliver a seamless guest experience while building organizational resilience.

### ***Operational Effectiveness***

XYZ Inc. maintains operational efficiency through a cost management system integrated into its Circle of Care model. Each unit leader is responsible for managing

departmental budgets and productivity targets. Budget allocations are based on strategic goals, with adjustments made according to occupancy rates. Kumar et al. (2024) emphasized that demand-aligned budgeting, occupancy-based staffing, and disciplined vendor evaluation enhance cost control and operational resilience, further supporting XYZ Inc.'s approach. The organization implements occupancy-based scheduling to align staffing levels with forecasted demand, thus optimizing labor efficiency. Financial performance is evaluated monthly across departments, fostering data-driven accountability and resource optimization. A dedicated procurement officer collaborates with warehouse managers and finance staff to ensure transparency and fiscal discipline. A formalized vendor evaluation process is conducted annually to assess cost competitiveness, responsiveness, and quality standards. This proactive approach to supplier management allows XYZ Inc. to remain agile in response to market shifts while maintaining cost control and service excellence.

Workplace safety is a critical component of XYZ Inc.'s operational strategy. Daily inspections and hazard reporting are systematically conducted to maintain compliance with OSHA regulations and internal safety protocols. Consistent with Ciarlante et al. (2024), XYZ Inc.'s emphasis on structured inspections, hazard reporting systems, and compliance infrastructure reflects evidence-based practices that build a proactive safety culture and support employees' well-being. Management teams conduct regular walkthroughs to identify emerging risks and implement timely interventions. These practices foster a proactive safety culture and reinforce organizational commitment to workforce well-being. XYZ Inc. ensures organizational resilience through a dedicated

disaster preparedness committee comprised of representatives from all major departments. The committee oversees the development and implementation of emergency protocols, including pre-hurricane simulations, updated pandemic SOPs, and fire response training. Critical safety resources, including employee contact databases and emergency kits, are regularly maintained and updated. Training sessions are conducted to ensure all staff are prepared to respond effectively to crises.

Risk is managed through an enterprise-wide framework guided by a cross-functional risk management committee. The organization applies scenario planning, after-action reviews, and internal audits to anticipate and mitigate disruptions. Lessons from past events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have helped to develop new safety procedures, technology infrastructure, and remote operations protocols. Aligned with Sharma et al. (2021), XYZ Inc.'s adaptive learning model embodies a resilience-based framework in which scenario planning and iterative reviews foster continuity and strategic alignment. This adaptive learning model supports continuous improvement, operational continuity, and alignment with organizational strategic goals.

## **Project Results**

### **Product and Process Results**

The analysis of product and process, shown in Table 5, illustrates the recovery trend following pandemic disruptions. Occupancy Bed Nights (BNs) provide a measure of product utilization and operational throughput. In FY 2024/25, the resorts recorded 39,542 BNs, a 5.9% increase from 2022/23 (37,342), nearly restoring pre-pandemic volumes (2018/19: 39,946). Similarly, the occupancy percentage rose to 63.7% in

2024/25, up from 59.8% in 2022/23, although it still trails the pre-crisis peak of 69.2% in 2018/19. These figures suggest that recovery is in progress, with an ongoing opportunity to refine marketing and capacity management to capture the remaining gap.

Average Daily Rate (ADR) growth shows the pricing capability. ADR increased to \$644 in 2024/25, from \$617 in 2022/23, reflecting a +4.3% YoY increase. ADR exceeded the pre-pandemic baseline of \$553 in 2018/19, reflecting +16.5% growth over 5 years. The trend shows that the resorts leveraged their differentiated wellness value proposition to sustain premium pricing.

Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR), which combines occupancy and ADR performance, increased to \$411 in 2024/25, from \$369 in 2022/23. This represents an 11.4% year-over-year improvement and a 12.4% increase compared to 2018/19 levels (\$366). RevPAR demonstrates that process efficiencies and customer demand recovery have converged to restore profitability metrics to levels surpassing pre-pandemic benchmarks.

**Table 5**

*Performance Indicators 2018/19-2024/24*

Indicator	2018/19	2022/23	2024/25	Change 2022/23 to 2024/25	Change 2018/19 to 2024/25
Occupancy Bed Nights (BNs)	39,946	37,342	39,542	+5.9%	-1.0%
Occupancy %	69.2%	59.8%	63.7%	+3.9%	-5.5%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$553	\$617	\$644	+4.3%	+16.5%
Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR)	\$366	\$369	\$411	+11.4%	+12.4%

The operational process demonstrates the emphasized integration across marketing, service delivery, and revenue management. The alignment of occupancy

initiatives with training investments, with 20 training hours per employee in 2024 (up from 12 in 2022), demonstrates how workforce capacity directly supports consistent service quality. The introduction of wellness-focused services (e.g., mindfulness sessions, farm-to-table dining) has further differentiated the product, allowing higher ADR and RevPAR despite occupancy rates not fully regaining 2018/19 peaks.

An evaluation of the resorts' performance through the BEF framework shows that both ADR and RevPAR have reached record levels, signaling good execution in product and process management. All primary performance metrics have shown a positive trajectory from 2022/23 to 2024/25, demonstrating an ongoing recovery and surpassing historical norms in certain areas. ADR and RevPAR have exceeded pre-pandemic benchmarks, while occupancy rates, although improved, remain slightly below previous peaks. The data highlights a good integration between process enhancements, such as expanded training initiatives and the introduction of differentiated wellness services, and positive output measures, including ADR, RevPAR, and customer satisfaction scores.

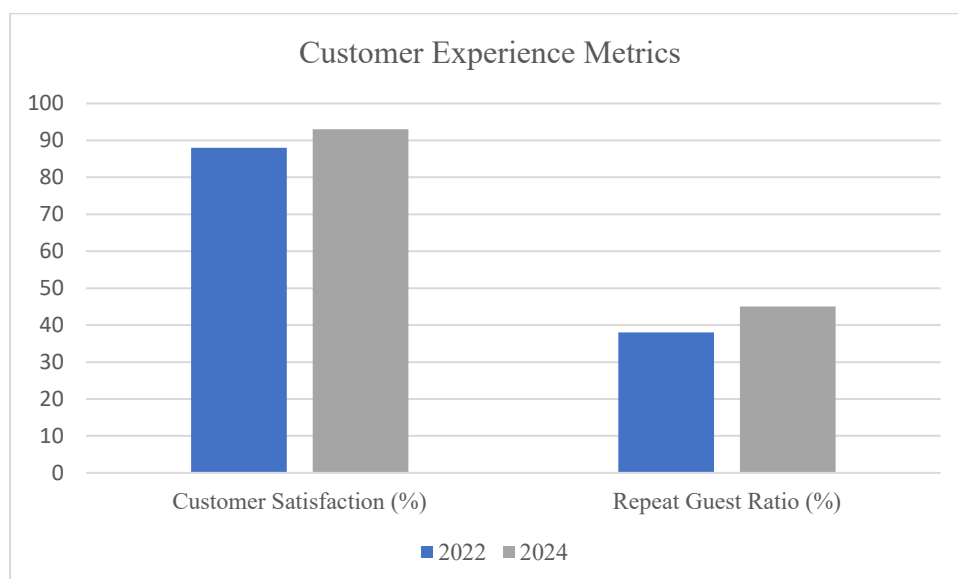
XYZ Inc.'s product and process results underscore pricing resilience and service differentiation. While occupancy recovery is ongoing, the ability to generate higher ADR and RevPAR levels indicates that the resorts have strategically leveraged wellness branding to achieve profitability. This balance reflects a shift from purely occupancy-driven strategies to value-based differentiation, consistent with BEF's emphasis on innovation, process alignment, and integration.

## Customer Results

Customer results highlight sustained loyalty, brand strength, and successful differentiation in the Caribbean's wellness tourism sector. Customer satisfaction improved from 88% in 2022 to 93% in 2024, as measured by internal guest surveys and Tripadvisor scores (4.8/5.0 in 2024). Repeat guest ratios increased from 38% in 2022 to 45% in 2024, reflecting positive customer feedback (see Figure 4)

### Figure 4

#### *Customer Experience Metrics*



The number of North American visitors increased from 20% in 2022 to 40% in 2024, underscoring the effectiveness of targeting regional wellness travelers. This aligns with global industry trends emphasizing experiential wellness and health-oriented tourism. The BEF evaluation dimensions highlight XYZ Inc.'s performance in customer satisfaction and advocacy, with a satisfaction rate of 93% and an NPS of 81, both figures significantly surpassing international benchmarks for wellness resorts, which typically

range between 70% and 75%. These metrics reflect a clear upward trend from 2022 to 2024. The NPS, which increased from 72 in 2022 to 81 in 2024, confirms a rise in customer loyalty. and repeat guest ratios indicate a deeper level of customer loyalty. When compared to competitors, XYZ Inc. stands out in guest ratings, as most of the competitors average around 88% satisfaction, further reinforcing the resort's strong position in the wellness tourism sector. Integration of customer feedback into product development is a key driver of this success, as guest input has directly shaped innovations such as specialized sleep programs and the introduction of plant-based menu options. This collaborative approach ensures a strong alignment between operational processes and customer expectations, resulting in sustained brand strength and continued growth in guest loyalty and satisfaction. Customer results demonstrate a healthy alignment between brand identity and customer expectations. High satisfaction, loyalty, and NPS indicate that process investments in wellness programming and employee recognition are directly translating into customer satisfaction (see Table 6).

**Table 6***Customer Experience and Market Performance Indicators 2022-2024*

Year	2022	2024
Customer Satisfaction (%)	88	93
TripAdvisor Score	Data not available	4.8/5.0
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	72	81
Repeat Guest Ratio (%)	38	45
U.S. Market Share (%)	20	40
International Wellness Resort Benchmarks (%)	70–75	70–75
Caribbean Peer Satisfaction (%)	88	88
Innovations from Guest Input	Data not available	Specialized sleep programs, plant-based menu options

**Workforce Results**

Workforce results show steady progress in engagement, leadership retention, and talent development, while continuing to address persistent turnover and operational inefficiencies. Workforce engagement improved from 74% in 2022 to 80% in 2024, driven by the expansion of training hours from 12 to 20 per employee and the strengthening of recognition programs (see Table 7). Leadership retention increased to 95% in 2024, underscoring the organization’s commitment to succession planning and professional development. However, voluntary turnover remained elevated at 21% in 2024, down slightly from 22% in 2022. These findings reflect gradual recovery and maturation in workforce systems following the pandemic’s disruptions.

**Table 7***Workforce Engagement and Development Indicators 2022-2024*

Metrics	2022	2024
Workforce Engagement (%)	74	80
Training Hours per Employee	12	20
Recognition Programs	Expanded	Increased
Leadership Retention (%)	–	95
Voluntary Turnover (%)	22	21

The 2024–2025 workforce strategy aligns with corporate initiatives that focus on streamlining operations, enhancing staff training, and leveraging technology to reduce service delays, guest dissatisfaction, and rework. Key initiatives such as automating the restaurant booking system, launching the mobile version of the Webroom (guest wellness personalized platform), improving housekeeping protocols, and incentivizing attendance demonstrate an organizational shift toward employee empowerment through process optimization. Additionally, targeted recruitment drives for the wellness center reinforce a data-driven approach to aligning human capital capacity with service innovation.

Complementing process efficiency, the people development program addresses post-pandemic workforce fatigue, attrition, and skill gaps through structured vocational and leadership training. The organization introduced technical and vocational education and training certifications in food & beverage and maintenance, alongside overseas culinary internships and consultant-led programs for sommeliers, butlers, and nutrition ambassadors. The establishment of training in etiquette, wellness therapies, and mentorship for junior employees demonstrates a multi-tiered talent pipeline strategy that aligns with global hospitality education standards. These development pathways appear to be a struggle in supporting succession readiness and enhancing leadership strategies.

Engagement (80%) and leadership retention (95%) remain above Caribbean hospitality benchmarks, with the upward movement in engagement and capability-building initiatives from 2022 to 2024. Workforce training hours and recognition practices are competitive regionally but lag cruise industry incentives for frontline workers. Workforce initiatives such as technical and vocational education and training certification, automation, and recognition demonstrate strong cross-linkages to customer satisfaction, process quality, and operational excellence.

### **Leadership and Governance Results**

XYZ Inc.'s leadership and governance results demonstrate an application of ethical standards, accountability, and transparency. The results show that the emphasis was on succession planning, governance action, and employee satisfaction surveys. The organization uses balanced scorecards to maintain accountability and transparency. The resorts' regular external audits and adherence to international hospitality governance standards reinforce credibility.

Figure 5 depicts the HR priorities for the company in 2024–2025. There are four primary focus areas (i.e., financial & efficiency, culture & behavior, team member experience, and learning & development). These focus areas feature key initiatives, which indicate an equitable allocation of operational attention. The strategic emphasis scores reveal a deliberate hierarchy in importance, with learning & development ranked highest at 95%, which underscores the organization's intent to improve leadership team, internal expertise, and succession planning through continuous professional education. Financial efficiency follows closely, with a 90% emphasis, demonstrating that fiscal

optimization and process automation remain central to HR's strategic role in driving profitability and reducing operational costs. Team member experience (85%) and culture & behavior (80%) round out the matrix, which highlights the importance of employee engagement and organizational culture.

### Figure 5

*Focus Areas and Strategy Trend 2024-2025*



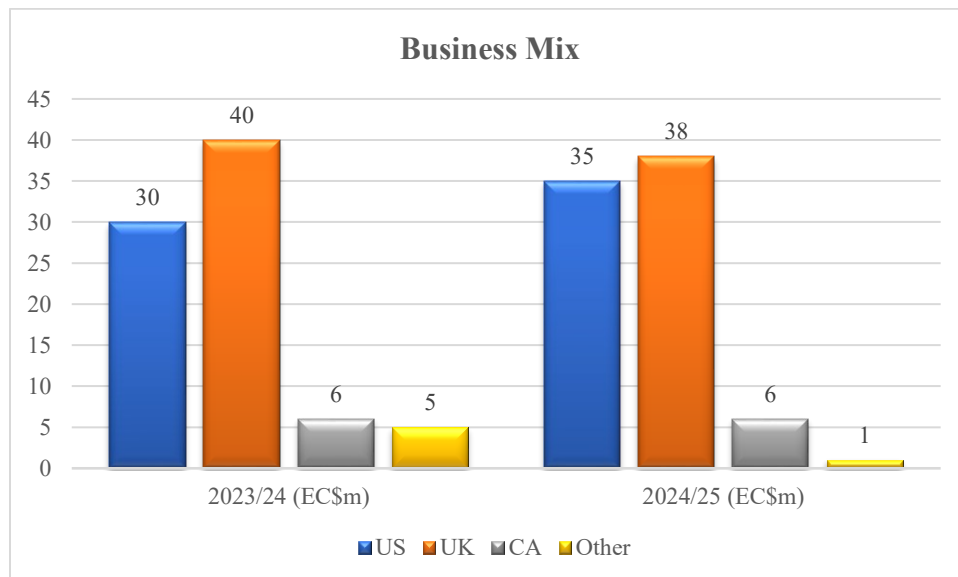
Figure 5 depicts the organization's prioritized strategic domains and focus areas for 2025, which include financial & efficiency, culture & behavior, team member experience, and learning & development. Among these, learning & development exhibits the highest emphasis, indicating a significant investment in building workforce capability and enhancing the leadership pipeline. These focus areas are designed to institutionalize leadership programs as a core component of its broader learning agenda. This trend highlights the shift toward structured leadership capacity building and an approach that enhances managerial competencies, promotes accountability, and fosters ethical

governance. Participants' feedback aligns with this finding, suggesting that leadership development initiatives have become more formalized and integral to achieving both workforce engagement and operational excellence.

### **Financial and Market Results**

The data shows a strategic realignment of XYZ Inc.'s business mix between fiscal years 2023/24 and 2024/25. Total projected revenue increases from EC\$76 million to EC\$79 million, driven primarily by a 12% rise in the U.S. market share from 32% to 44%. This strategic pivot emphasizes greater engagement with the North American market, likely in response to evolving travel access patterns.

The U.K. market, while still the most significant contributor in absolute terms declined slightly from EC\$40 million to EC\$38 million, reducing its share from 60.7% to 47.9%. The Canadian market remains steady at EC\$6 million, suggesting stable demand, while other markets contracted from EC\$5 million to EC\$1 million, signaling a consolidation of focus on primary regions. This distribution highlights a strategic rebalancing of market priorities toward higher-yield, resilient source markets, supported by modest overall revenue growth (+4%) and anticipated ADR improvement of 1.5%, reflecting a continued emphasis on yield optimization and market diversification (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6***Business Mix***Key Theme Findings***Process Strengths*

XYZ Inc.'s operational success in linking workforce development with financial and process outcomes reflects deliberate alignment across the organization's systems. The expansion of training from 12 to 20 hours per employee increased workforce engagement from 74% to 80%, demonstrating measurable progress in employee capability and productivity. This systematic alignment between people, process, and performance aligns with the *Baldrige Excellence Framework's* emphasis on integration and learning (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). Empirical studies confirm this association: Alanazi (2025) found that integrating Baldrige principles into organizational systems improves both efficiency and profitability through feedback-based

learning. Similarly, Cao et al. (2024) argued that strategic integration of quality and performance systems enhances long-term sustainability in service industries.

XYZ Inc.'s approach to leadership, which prioritizes ongoing improvement, mentoring, and a strong sense of responsibility, exemplifies the principles of transformational leadership by cultivating an environment that encourages innovation and supports psychological safety (Cao & Le, 2024; Ihsan et al., 2021). These approaches are consistent with the findings of Ali (2023) and Lu et al. (2023), who noted that transformational leadership facilitates adaptability and ethical conduct across global hospitality organizations. Integrating the lived experience of leaders further substantiates the process strengths: as one participant explained, "We moved quickly to cross-train and develop people so they could be flexible across departments; that reduced gaps and stabilized teams." While another participant emphasized that a team-trainer program and structured induction helped new hires "connect with core values and expectations from day one". Similarly, Burton and Dickinger (2025) emphasized that leadership agility and dynamic capability enable hospitality organizations to innovate during crises. Open communication, shared performance dashboards, and consistent leadership visibility can enhance engagement and build trust, a critical determinant of resilience (Lee et al., 2024). The major process strength lies in the integration of workforce capability with leadership-driven learning, confirming that a well-aligned system of processes, people, and data measurement enhances operational reliability.

### *Process Opportunities*

Although XYZ Inc. has achieved efficiency gains, the next frontier of excellence lies in fully digitalizing HR, compliance, and service processes. Automation of attendance monitoring, work permit renewals, and leave management can enhance transparency and responsiveness. Research demonstrates that digital transformation, when combined with transformational leadership, promotes innovation and organizational resilience (Aydogan et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2024). By scaling automation through AI-driven reporting and implementing self-service modules, XYZ Inc. can reduce transactional workload, enhance agility, and redeploy human resources toward more productive work.

While leadership retention rose to 95%, entry-level voluntary turnover remains 21%, underscoring the need for deeper retention strategies among entry-level employees. Studies have shown that turnover in the hospitality industry is often linked to limited career mobility, work stress, and a lack of recognition (Krishnan & Rathakrishnan, 2025). Employer branding and engagement-based recognition programs, as identified by Azhar et al. (2024), can enhance job satisfaction and loyalty, thereby reducing attrition. Converting engagement into retention for entry-level roles requires targeted job-quality levers and recognition, as one participant noted, “we implemented an LMS and bring in a counselor monthly; recognition is as important as pay for keeping people,” echoing evidence that career development, well-being supports, and recognition attenuate turnover risk. Another participant described “continuous recruitment” and regional or international expansion of sourcing pools tempered by visa access constraints, which

reinforces the need for digitizing the careers portal, streamlined document workflows, and proactive employer branding to sustain pipeline velocity and perceived fairness.

Expanding career progression, well-being programs, and flexible scheduling can improve perceived fairness and psychological ownership, strengthening commitment.

### ***Results Strengths***

XYZ Inc. achieved record-high ADR (€644) and RevPAR (€411) in FY 2024/25, with revenue increasing to \$43.26 M, a 19.3% improvement over pre-pandemic levels. Simultaneously, customer satisfaction rose to 93% and NPS to 81, confirming effective alignment between workforce engagement, service innovation, and market strategy.

These achievements validate the relationship between system integration and organizational results posited in the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023) and Alanazi (2025). Furthermore, Bansal et al. (2025) also found that organizations emphasizing employee well-being and purpose-driven work recorded higher customer loyalty and revenue recovery after crises.

The improvement in employee engagement increased from 74% to 80% and leadership retention is at 95% demonstrating the organization's success in embedding a leadership model that promotes empowerment and trust. This finding aligns with Ali et al. (2024) and Wu et al. (2025), as these researchers found that transformational and inclusive leadership reduces turnover and enhances service quality in the hospitality industry. Participant testimony reinforces engagement practices to measurable gains in guest outcomes and revenue. One participant said, "We saw guest sentiment improve as we stabilized teams and recognized contributions more visibly" Another participant

mentioned that employee retention improved with clearer career paths and development, and that stability shows up in service”. Another participant added, “We monitor turnover and set targets; each team reviews engagement survey results and acts on them with leadership oversight”. Through cascading goals, transparent communication, and recognition systems, leaders reinforce psychological commitment and service excellence factors that translate directly into customer satisfaction and profitability. Results strengths show that leadership and engagement act as mediators linking human capital investments to greater customer and financial outcomes.

### ***Results Opportunities***

Although financial performance surpassed prior benchmarks, occupancy (63.7%) remains below the 2018/19 baseline (69.2%). This indicates opportunities for advanced marketing analytics, channel optimization, and strategic partnerships to expand market penetration. Kumar et al. (2024) emphasized that leveraging real-time analytics and adaptive pricing systems can increase utilization and yield without compromising rate integrity. Adopting a pricing strategy can be a key to helping XYZ Inc. capture remaining demand and strengthen its resilience against seasonal volatility, but high engagement levels have yet to fully translate into lower turnover rates. It is crucial to increase occupancy while stabilizing the workforce portfolio in a competitive Caribbean labor market. One participant noted that “compensation and benefits remain critical as cruise lines compete for our talent,” and that they “survey twice a year and communicate changes; the goal is to stay below 12% turnover,” while another participant added, “we

raised salaries twice and expanded recognition because beginner roles had the most churn.”

According to Bansal et al. (2025) and Kyei-Frimpong et al. (2024), organizations that integrate well-being, flexibility, and recognition into leadership practice achieve stronger retention and innovation outcomes. Blau (2017) suggested that reciprocal relationships, where employees perceive fairness and appreciation, foster organizational citizenship and loyalty. Implementing structured recognition, mentorship, and ergonomic job design can be beneficial in converting engagement momentum into durable retention. XYZ Inc.’s results underscore the importance of optimizing occupancy and transforming engagement into retention, aligning with research that demonstrates a direct correlation between workforce stability and consistent service quality and profitability.

### **Business Recommendations for Professional Practice**

The following recommendations are grounded in and aligned with both the BEF and SET. Their primary aim is to create a cohesive approach that integrates talent acquisition, employee development, and retention strategies to address ongoing staffing challenges within the Caribbean hospitality organizations. These recommendations aim to resolve persistent staffing issues, promote workforce stability, and support sustainable organizational performance in the Caribbean hospitality industry.

#### **Digitize HR Operations and Modernize the Hiring Process**

Building on the ongoing automation and self-service initiatives (i.e., workflow automation, attendance incentives), extend digitalization to the front end of talent acquisition by deploying (a) a mobile-first careers portal with one-click apply, chat Q&A,

and real-time status updates; (b) a candidate mobile app that streamlines assessments, interview scheduling, and document submission; and (c) an applicant tracking system (i.e., interview booked, offer in review, onboarding checklist) and FAQs (Azhar et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024). This process can help align with Gen Z expectations for speed, transparency, and mobile apps, while also reducing transaction costs and cycle time. The organization already applies a multi-pronged recruitment strategy (i.e., LinkedIn, referrals, regional ads) and a structured onboarding program; embedding a mobile-first funnel and automated communications would formalize these practices into a continuous, data-rich pipeline (i.e., funnel conversion dashboards by role/market) and free leaders' time for coaching and strategy rather than administrative work.

Digital transformation can be meaningful when combined with transformational leadership, which enhances resilience, knowledge sharing, and adaptive capacity (Yang et al., 2024). In talent markets, employer branding is amplified through digital touchpoints (i.e., portal content, app notifications, eWOM), which strengthens attraction and commitment, especially for early-career candidates who evaluate brand values and online growth signals (Azhar et al., 2024; Elshawarbi et al., 2023). Personalized and reciprocal communication (i.e., individualized text prompts, timely feedback, and recognition) is consistent with the premise of social exchange theory, which posits that perceived investment from the organization elicits stronger candidate engagement and employee commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Digitizing HR operations also complements the HR priority areas (i.e., learning & development and financial efficiency) by generating analytics on applicant flow and drop-off points to inform

targeted learning and development initiatives and role-specific onboarding, and reducing process waste and follow-up friction costs in recruitment operations. Collectively, a mobile-first careers portal, an application companion app, and personalized texting translate employer brand promises into a high-trust, low-friction candidate experience, which is central to attracting Gen Z and converting engagement into retention at scale (Azhar et al., 2024; Performance Excellence Program, 2023; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Yang et al., 2024). It is recommended to launch a mobile-first careers portal, an applicant tracking system (ATS) that includes self-scheduling, assessments, document upload, and personalized two-way texting, all of which are instrumented through the ATS for funnel analytics (e.g., click→apply, time-to-interview/offer, and onboarding). Iterative development is recommended for two high-volume roles, then scale up while automating compliance tasks (i.e., leave and work permit renewals) to reduce cycle time.

### **Establish a Dual-Pipeline Talent Strategy**

The organization is already experimenting with targeted recruitment for wellness roles and multi-tiered development pathways (i.e., technical and vocational education and training [TVET] certifications, overseas internships, mentorship) to address skill gaps and enhance succession readiness. Formalizing this process into a dual-pipeline strategy that includes (a) external pipelines via memorandum of understanding (MOU) with hospitality schools/TVET providers and (b) internal pipelines via role-based progression and cross-training would accelerate time-to-competence and reduce vacancy costs in hard-to-staff roles. A compelling employer brand, paired with structured early-career pathways, can help raise application volume and quality while lowering voluntary

turnover in the hospitality industry, where career signaling is considered a key component (Azhar et al., 2024). When firms invest in credible development promises (i.e., scholarships, certifications, rotational assignments), employees reciprocate with higher commitment and retention (Blau, 2017). In the BEF, this recommendation strengthens 7.3 Workforce Results by integrating pipelines with strategic workforce plans and demonstrating comparisons (i.e., benchmarks) for applicant and time-to-fill metrics, as well as cycle time metrics (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023). The organization can formalize MOUs with TVET/universities (curriculum alignment, scholarships, guaranteed interviews) and pair with internal role-based progression and cross-training mapped to skills badges. The organization can govern through a pipeline council (i.e., HR, Operations, Finance) and track applicant quality, time-to-competence, internal fill rate, vacancies, and 12-month retention to prioritize seats where demand is highest.

### **Redesign Frontline Work**

Workforce findings indicated that engagement increased from 74% (2022) to 80% (2024), while leadership retention reached 95%. However, frontline turnover remained elevated at 21%, indicating that job design and psychosocial stressors continue to constrain retention. Improving job quality, such as scheduling predictability, workload balance, ergonomic and safety enhancements, and implementing visible recognition programs, reduces turnover intention and enhances service performance (Bansal et al., 2025; Ciarlante et al., 2024; Hsieh et al., 2025; Imran et al., 2025). Operationally, the organization is already deploying process improvements (e.g., automating bookings,

updating housekeeping protocols) that can be reframed as job-quality interventions with a measurable link to defects and cycle time.

The organization can conduct a job-quality diagnostic, then implement stable core schedules with optional flex pools, rebalance the workload to reduce rework and strain, and deploy a phased recognition system with service milestones for employees. The pilot phase can be introduced in-housekeeping and F&B for 12 weeks and scaled up to be introduced into other departments based on available KPIs (i.e., turnover  $\leq$  12%, guest satisfaction). Pairing these with a standardized, tiered recognition system (i.e., spot awards, skills badges tied to TVET modules, and service milestones) aligns with SET's reciprocity logic and should further reduce frontline attrition while reinforcing customer experience differentials.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Strengthening TVET partnerships, internships, and credentials enhances local human capital and mitigates out-migration pressures, as documented in the region's tourism labor markets. A reliable skills pipeline enables more stable employment and upward mobility for entry-level workers, and the outcomes can be aligned with the ILO's regional priorities for resilient, decent work (International Labour Organization, 2023). As job quality improves and psychosocial risks are mitigated, employee well-being improves and service consistency rises, which helps to create positive spillovers for families and communities (Bansal et al., 2025; Ciarlante et al., 2024). Embedding inclusive leadership and fair recognition practices fosters greater workplace dignity for groups concentrated in physically demanding roles (e.g., housekeeping, food &

beverage). Inclusive leadership and recognition reduce stress and increase organizational commitment, with downstream effects on community cohesion as stable hospitality earnings circulate locally (Beijer et al., 2024; Imran et al., 2025). The hospitality sector that retains and develops local talent contributes to diversified, sustainable regional growth.

### **Conclusion**

The study demonstrated that the organization successfully enhanced its engagement, with leadership retention at 95% and customer outcomes differentiating on NPS at 81% and satisfaction at 93%. However, persistent frontline turnover signals challenges in job design and hiring process pipelines. The recommendations above translate the evidence of data collected into a coherent, BEF-aligned program that (a) digitalizes HR administration to reduce hidden burden, (b) builds effective external and internal HR pipelines to provide the necessary training and attract new talent, and (c) redesigns frontline work and recognition to improve job quality and retention. These actions demonstrate sound business practices in hospitality by leveraging employer branding and SET to enhance employee retention (Azhar et al., 2024; Blau, 2017). Through the strategic implementation of transformational leadership, organizations can strengthen staff engagement and increase their capacity to adapt to change (Cao & Le, 2024; Hermanto et al., 2024). Elevating the quality of jobs not only supports the well-being of employees but also underpins the pursuit of sustained service excellence, which is essential for a competitive environment (Bansal et al., 2025; Hsieh et al., 2025). Collectively, these practices form an integrated approach that addresses both

organizational goals and individual needs, promoting a culture where employees are motivated to contribute meaningfully and remain committed. With focused execution and measuring progress in alignment with the BEF trends, comparisons, and integration, XYZ Inc. can leverage its current strengths to create a durable competitive advantage and broader social value.

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### Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What strategies were effective at attracting qualified workers?
2. What challenges did your organization experience in retaining qualified staff post-pandemic?
3. What effect did employee training and development have on organizational retention strategies?
4. How did you address workplace stress?
5. How did your organization adjust its recruitment and retention strategies to adapt to the post-pandemic environment?
6. How did your organization evaluate the effectiveness of its recruitment and retention strategies?
7. How did the organization gather the employee feedback on recruitment and retention?
8. How did the organization analyze and implement the feedback?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the effective strategies used to attract and retain qualified staff post-pandemic?

#### Baldrige Excellence Framework Interview Questions:

##### Organization Profile

1. What are your key organizational characteristics?
2. What is your organization's strategic situation?

##### Leadership

3. How do your senior leaders lead the organization?
4. How do you govern your organization and make societal contributions?

##### Strategy

5. How do you develop your strategy?

6. How do you implement your strategy?

#### Customers

7. How do you listen to your customers and determine products and/or services to meet their needs?
8. How do you build relationships and enhance the customer experience?

#### Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

9. How do you measure, analyze, review, and improve organizational performance?
10. How do you manage your information and your organizational knowledge assets?

#### Workforce

11. How do you build an effective and supportive workforce environment?
12. How do you engage your workforce for retention and high performance?

#### Operations

13. How do you design, manage, and improve your key products and/or services and work processes?
14. How do you ensure effective management of your operations?

#### Project Results

15. What are your product and/or service and process performance results?
16. What are your customer-focused performance results?
17. What are your workforce-focused performance results?
18. What are your senior leadership and governance results?
19. What are your results for financial and marketplace performance and strategy implementation?

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What you will do	What you will say—script
Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Watch for nonverbal queues Paraphrase as needed Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in depth	Example: Baldrige Excellence Framework questions: Organizational Description: What are your key organizational characteristics? Organizational Situation: What is your organization’s strategic situation? Senior Leadership: How do your senior leaders lead the organization? Governance and Societal Contributions: How do you govern your organization and make societal contributions?
Wrap up interview thanking participant	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Follow-up Member Checking Interview XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question.	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found— note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval. Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed</li> <li>2. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed</li> <li>3. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed</li> <li>4. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed</li> </ol>

Did I miss anything? Or,  
What would you like to  
add?

5. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—  
perhaps one paragraph or as needed