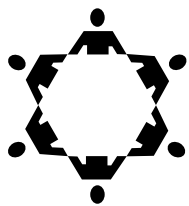


A Leader Among Leaders:
**QUALITIES OF
EFFECTIVE
PRESIDENTS**
OF JEWISH COMMUNITY
CENTERS



The Florence G. Heller
JCC Association
Research Center

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What Makes JCC Presidents Effective?

The presidents of the continent's Jewish Community Centers are the chief volunteer officers of their agencies. Their specific tasks and challenges vary over time and place. That said, a core set of responsibilities characterize most of them, among which are the following:

- They chair their JCC's board or other governing body
- They help shape and articulate vision, mission, and major policy directions
- They represent the JCC to other leaders and to the federation, congregations and other agencies
- They help select and work closely with the chief executive officer
- They take a major role in fundraising
- They exercise broad financial oversight

Beyond these frequently occurring responsibilities are others that emerge, particularly during times of transition or conflict. Examples include releasing or engaging executives, managing conflict, and providing Jewishly informed moral leadership.

Clearly, identifying, recruiting, nurturing, and selecting highly effective presidents are critical to the successful functioning of JCCs, just as it is to numerous other agencies in the Jewish community and the voluntary sector. Yet with all the importance attached to this significant and demanding job, relatively little systematic thought has been given to the rather straightforward and fundamental question:

What makes for an effective president of a Jewish Community Center?

The issue is not only intriguing and intellectually engaging in its own right, but it bears tremendous practical significance, especially to the hundreds of JCC presidents, executives, and other leaders who tend to the pool of future presidents, and who must work with – and live with – the people who assume the highest position of lay leadership of JCCs for periods lasting for two years or more at a time. However, the efficacy of lay leadership also heavily impacts the many thousands of members, from infants to senior citizens, who visit JCCs every day.

Answering the question of effectiveness is also critical for a central headquarters institution (such as JCC Association) that directly and indirectly engages in the ongoing development of current and future agency presidents. What type of nurturance in which specific areas do they need? Business skills? Judaic commitment? Board development? Fundraising? Management? Vision-setting? Communication? All of these (and others) are certainly helpful; but not all are equally necessary to highly effective presidents of Jewish Community Centers today.

Determining what makes for an effective JCC is not at all straightforward or obvious – for several reasons. As we learned in preliminary interviews with veteran observers of JCC presidents at their best and their worst, key stakeholders in the JCC Movement can differ over the relative importance of the roles delineated in the list above. Moreover, the research and business literature on leadership offers only general guidance on the matter, with little relevance to volunteer leadership of not-for-profit agencies, let alone to the specific question of what makes JCC presidents effective.

One reason for the lack of clarity with regard to standards for assessing effectiveness is that, with all their similarities, JCCs present different needs and different opportunities for leadership. To be sure, certain key core qualities are necessary for all effective JCC presidents. However, the challenges to leadership differ during periods of relative stability versus those of fast transition; or during periods of contraction or of expansion; and during times of harmony versus those of strife and contention. Moreover, particular professional executives offer different opportunities for collaboration and partnership. The two influential leaders – the volunteer president and the professional executive – ideally work to complement each other, supporting each other's strengths, and filling in for the other's shortcomings. In short, different times, agencies, situations, and chief executives call for a different mix of talents, skills, and personality characteristics. As a result, no single standard emerges for evaluating the total effectiveness of a president of a JCC.

With this said, in light of all this complexity and variation, how are we to discern the qualities that make for a highly effective president of a Jewish Community Center?

Distinguishing Effective from Ineffective Presidents - An Inductive Approach

OUR RATIONALE

To elucidate the qualities of highly effective presidents, we undertook a study of former and current presidents and chief executive officers at JCCs across the continent. We reasoned that these are the people who best know the job of JCC president and can be most helpful in understanding what makes for effectiveness in that position. We further reasoned that their aggregate opinions could point the way to answering our central question. In this, we are drawing upon the logic embodied in *The Wisdom of Crowds* by James Surowiecki (Random House, 2004) which argues that “large groups of people are smarter than an elite few, no matter how brilliant—better at solving problems, fostering innovation, coming to wise decisions, even predicting the future.”

To be sure, we turned to “an elite few” to help us design a questionnaire that would discern the collective wisdom of the JCC leadership “crowd.” We gained valuable insights from conversations with Marty Linsky, adjunct lecturer in public policy at Harvard University’s School of Government and noted leadership analyst, author, and consultant. We conducted depth interviews with 18 sitting presidents, executives, and others. We conducted a short focus group with members of the Florence G. Heller-JCC Association Research Center executive board. And we consulted with leading JCC Association professionals, many of whom had previously served as executives at highly respected JCCs.

OUR RESEARCH STRATEGY

These preliminary investigations underscored for us the difficulty of settling upon a single, clear definition of effectiveness, and they led us to formulate an innovative research strategy. Our survey questionnaire asked our expert respondents to think sequentially of two JCC presidents they have known (aside from themselves): one whom they believed was highly effective as president, and one who was seen as highly ineffective. We asked respondents to report on such matters as their age, gender, and relative affluence; the nature of their prior experience; the challenges they faced during their terms of office; the performance of the JCC in their time; the presidents’ performance levels in nearly two dozen areas; and the personal skills and qualities (16 of them) the presidents brought to the execution of their volunteer jobs.

Our analysis, in essence, compared the answers pertaining to the effective presidents with those pertaining to the ineffective presidents. So as not to bias the answers, we provided the respondents with no guidance as to how to define “effective” or “ineffective.” We, in effect, let the answers speak for themselves.

We reasoned that the items associated with large differences between effective and ineffective presidents were those that, inductively, are most critical to effectiveness. Conversely, items associated with small differences - items that do little to distinguish the effective from the

ineffective - were not critical to defining the components of effectiveness. In general, effective presidents benefit from a “halo effect” in which respondents assess everything associated with them as superior to that associated with ineffective presidents. Thus, while we may find gaps associated with every question, we are most interested in locating the largest gaps separating effective from ineffective presidents.

An example will clarify this rationale. As we report below, with respect to “people skills,” respondents reported very large differences between the effective and ineffective presidents they knew. With respect to “breadth of prior experience with the JCC,” they reported far more modest gaps. Hence, we could infer that people skills might well be more critical for the effectiveness of a president than his or her prior experience with the JCC. To clarify, this does not imply that presidents should not have a breadth of prior experience with the JCC; it merely suggests that this trait is not one by which we can distinguish effective and ineffective presidents.

The heart of this report, then, is the analysis of how effective JCC presidents differ from ineffective JCC presidents. In those differences lies the implicit definition of the qualities that make effective JCC presidents effective.

The Survey

THE SAMPLE: PRESIDENTS AND EXECUTIVES, PAST AND PRESENT

From May 29 to June 11, 2007 we invited by e-mail 772 current and former presidents and executives of JCCs to participate in a Web-based survey. Our e-mail invitation asked potential respondents to hit a link that directed them to the survey. In all, 208 respondents completed the survey, constituting a response rate of 27%.

THE RESPONDENTS: MIDDLE-AGED, MALE, EXPERIENCED, JEWISHLY ENGAGED

Of the 208 respondents ...

- 68% were men; and 32% women
- 63% were 50-64 years of age
- 62% were lay leaders, generally former presidents; 38% were professionals, generally current executives
- Half had served 15 years or more on their JCC boards
- Almost all (96%) saw being Jewish as “very” or “extremely important” in their lives
- The vast majority (87%) identify as Conservative (47%) or Reform (40%)
- As youngsters ... 54% participated in a Jewish youth group, 42% attended a Jewish overnight camp; and 17% had studied in Israel, testifying to very high levels of informal Jewish educational experiences

In short, this group of Jewish lay and professional leaders is predominantly male, middle-aged, deeply engaged in Jewish communal life, and highly committed to their Jewish identities in part because of the very high rates of informal Jewish education they experienced as children and adolescents.

The Findings: Contrasting Effective with Ineffective Presidents

The Expected Role of Affluence and the Complex Role of Gender

AFFLUENT AND EFFECTIVE

When asked to cite effective and ineffective presidents, respondents were more likely to name effective presidents who were affluent: 18% of the effective presidents were “among the most affluent leaders in my community” as contrasted with just 7% of the ineffective presidents. Not only were effective presidents more affluent; ineffective presidents were less affluent. Of the effective presidents, 14% were seen as less affluent than other leaders in their respective communities, as compared with nearly twice as many (26%) of the ineffective presidents. Clearly, affluence helps make JCC presidents effective. It augments their own ability to make financial donations, and it puts them in social circles that are themselves more affluent and influential in the community. The role of affluence in providing entrée into the Jewish communal leadership class is well-known; its role as an enhancer of effectiveness though may be somewhat surprising to some.

WOMEN AS MORE EFFECTIVE

While the results related to affluence are relatively easy to comprehend, those related to gender are less intuitively obvious. Prevailing images often cast men as more effective leaders than women. The literature documenting gender bias in men and women’s actions and perceptions is rather voluminous, and extends to Jewish communal life.

Respondents rated women as effective presidents more often than men. Only 53% of the men cited by respondents were considered effective, while 61% of female presidents mentioned fell in that category.

Upon closer inspection we learn that the results themselves depend heavily on the gender of the respondent. Male respondents give a slight preference to men in effectiveness; for male respondents, just 24% of the effective presidents are women, as contrasted with 30% of the ineffective presidents. For female respondents, the results are heavily lopsided in the other direction: of the effective presidents they named, 50% were women; and of the ineffective presidents, just 21% were women. However, both men and women saw female presidents as more talented and effective than men in almost all areas, with the one exception of business skills.

Clearly, gender plays an important role in the selection and functioning of JCC presidential leadership, as it does in leadership in other contexts as well.

Prior Planning Is a Key to Effective Performance

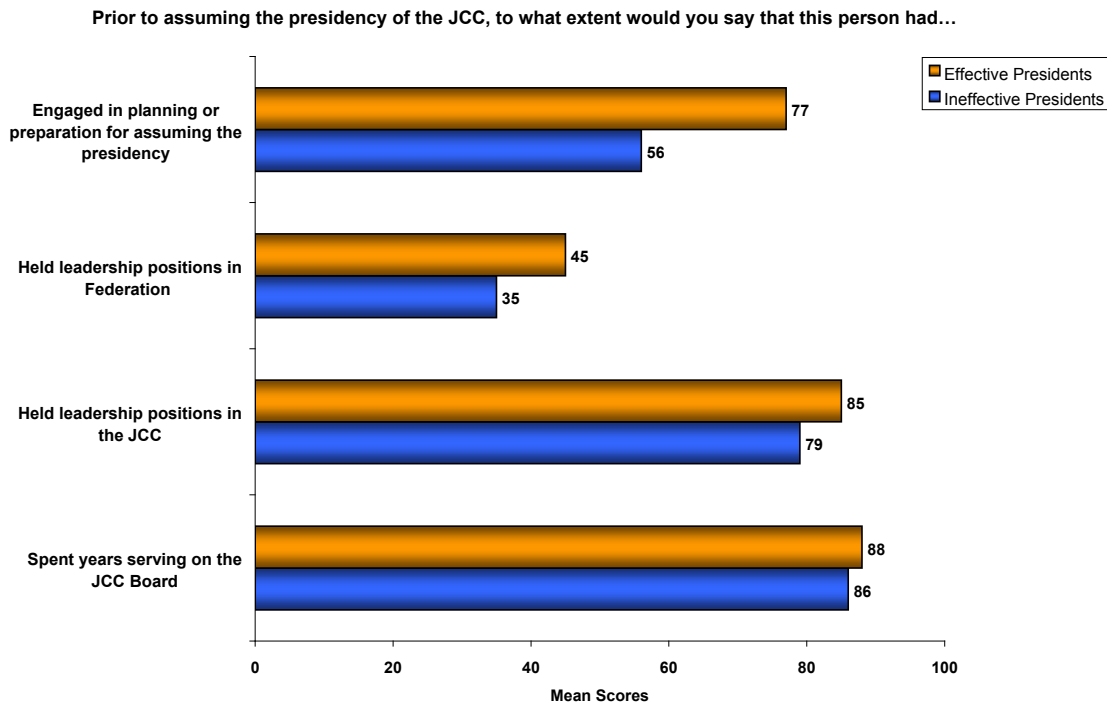
What can we tell about the relationship between the effectiveness of presidents and their experiences prior to becoming president? We asked about four preparatory experiences, and both effective and ineffective presidents received nearly equal grades with respect to the number of years serving on the JCC board and holding leadership positions in the JCC. Familiarity with the JCC—a related issue—is also not highly predictive of effectiveness. In other words, both effective and ineffective presidents have spent many years on the JCC board, held a number of leadership positions, and are familiar with the operation of the JCC. These criteria do not serve to distinguish the effective from the ineffective president. JCC leadership experience, in all its permutations, may be a prerequisite for becoming president, but it alone, or more of it, does little to guarantee effectiveness.

[Methodological note: In all charts below, we have scored individual questions and scales on metrics of 0 to 100. A mean score of 0, for example, would indicate that all respondents gave the lowest possible value on a particular question, e.g., “not at all,” while a 100 would mean that all answered with the highest possible value, e.g., “extremely.” Other answers were assigned intermediate values between 0 and 100.]

In contrast with experience within the confines of the JCC, the effective presidents were more often reported to have held leadership positions in local Jewish federations. Such experience is an important asset for the president who is, in effect, the chief JCC ambassador to an agency that for many JCCs is the most important single source of financial support, if not symbolic support as well.

Most intriguingly, respondents reported the biggest gaps with respect to having engaged in planning or preparation for assuming the presidency (unfortunately, we cannot further specify the nature of such preparation). In this domain, effective presidents led ineffective presidents by 21 points (out of 100), suggesting that planning and preparation, far more than mere board experience, is seen by respondents as critical to effectiveness.

Prior to assuming the presidency of the JCC, to what extent would you say that this person had...	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
Engaged in planning or preparation for assuming the presidency	77	56	21
Held leadership positions in federation	45	35	10
Held leadership positions in the JCC	85	79	6
Spent years serving on the JCC board	88	86	2



Leadership Dissension: Sign of Ineffective Presidents

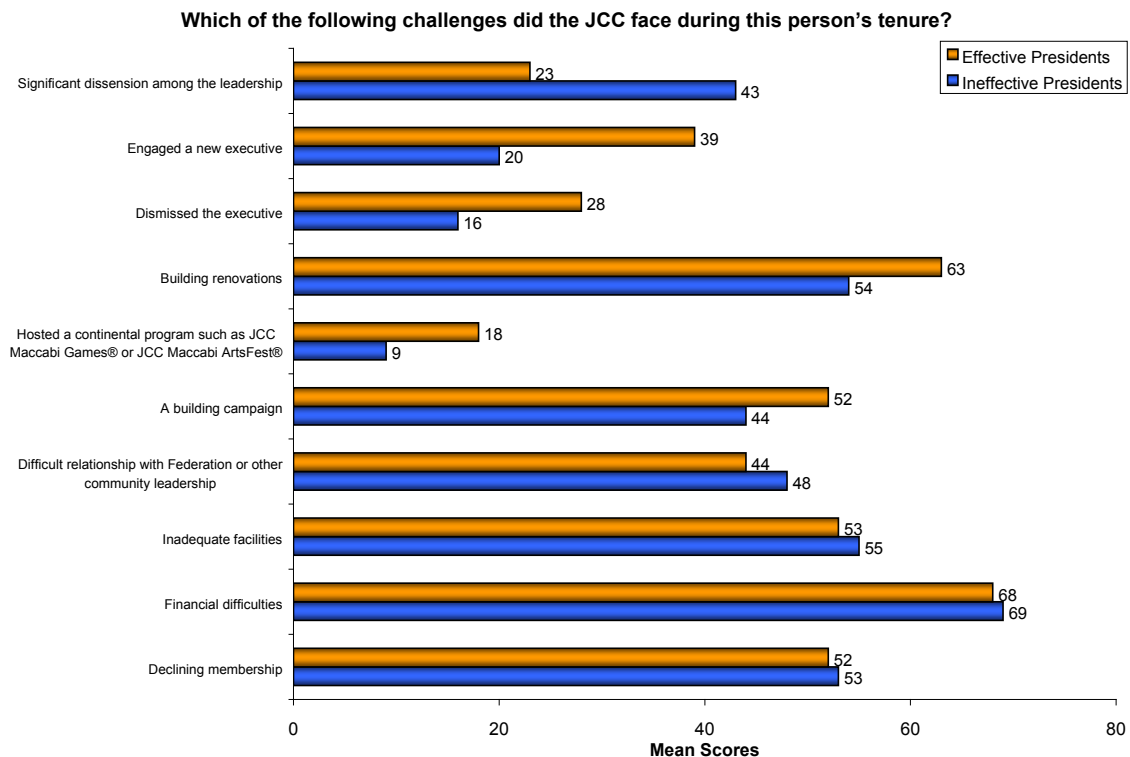
JCCs face a number of challenges in the course of their operations. Some of these challenges provide opportunities for presidents to display their leadership, while others constitute problems to which the presidents may have contributed. To understand how experiences of the JCCs are linked with the effectiveness of their presidential leadership, we asked respondents to report on the sorts of challenges their JCCs faced during the tenure of the presidents about whom they were responding. The challenges may represent the consequences of leadership, or they may constitute opportunities for leadership.

One especially significant finding emerged from these questions: JCCs with ineffective presidents were found to have experienced dissension among the leadership far more often than those led by effective presidents. In fact, the presence of significant dissension among the leadership is the area where the gap between effective and ineffective presidents was largest. Apparently, the weakness of ineffective presidents is felt keenly in the conflictual working relationships of the board members. Indeed, this theme emerges repeatedly in other ways in the analysis, as, in many ways, effective presidents are effective precisely because they relate so well to the lay and professional leaders with whom they work.

Other challenges also distinguish effective from ineffective presidents. Effective presidents, far more than ineffective presidents, served at times when their JCCs engaged new executives, and during periods when their JCCs dismissed executives (of course, dismissal of one executive is a prelude to engaging a new executive). Executive transition of one sort or another presents an opportunity for good presidents to shine and to exert their leadership in ways that leave lasting positive impressions.

Intriguingly, of the ten challenges listed in this question, it was those three that most directly related to the functioning of senior leadership (lay and professional) that most powerfully differentiated effective from ineffective presidents. This evidence points to the notion that the role of the president as a leader of leaders sits at the core definition of effectiveness. Other evidence, as we shall see, points in the same direction.

Which of the following challenges did the JCC face during this person's tenure:	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
Significant dissension among the leadership	23	43	-20
Engaged a new executive	39	20	19
Dismissed the executive	28	16	12
Building renovations	63	54	9
Hosted a continental program such as JCC Maccabi Games® or JCC Maccabi ArtsFest®	18	9	9
A building campaign	52	44	8
Difficult relationship with federation or other community leadership	44	48	-4
Inadequate facilities	53	55	-2
Financial difficulties	68	69	-1
Declining membership	52	53	-1



Performance of the JCC Lay Leadership Most Critical for Effectiveness

In theory, more effective presidents should be associated with higher-performing JCCs. Accordingly, learning precisely where the JCCs of effective presidents excel can instruct us as to the meaning of effectiveness. Is a mark of an effective president the expansion of membership at his or her JCC, or solid finances, or commitment to the Jewish educational mission - or what?

To address this question, we asked respondents to rate the change in performance of several key areas of their JCC during the tenure of effective presidents and of ineffective presidents. Examples include performance of staff, executives and lay leadership, as well as quality of facilities and of programs. Presumably, those areas with the greatest gaps in performance ratings for the two types of president constitute those areas that most embody, or are most influenced by, the notion of presidential effectiveness.

With respect to the Jewish educational mission, JCCs run by effective presidents score only somewhat higher than those led by ineffective presidents. A gap of 16 points separates the assessments in this area, a noticeable difference to be sure, but one smaller than any other in the list of eight areas.

In contrast, more than any other area of performance, the scores for the performance of JCC lay leadership exhibit the largest gaps between effective and ineffective presidents. Fully 34 percentage points separate the responses linked to effective and ineffective presidents on this question. This pattern suggests that the most important measure of JCC performance related to effectiveness is that associated with the lay leadership. We may readily infer that effective presidents manage to produce or provoke their fellow JCC leaders to perform better, while ineffective presidents find it more difficult to do so. Alternatively, we may infer that those presidents who lead their boards to perform especially well are judged effective by their lay and professional colleagues.

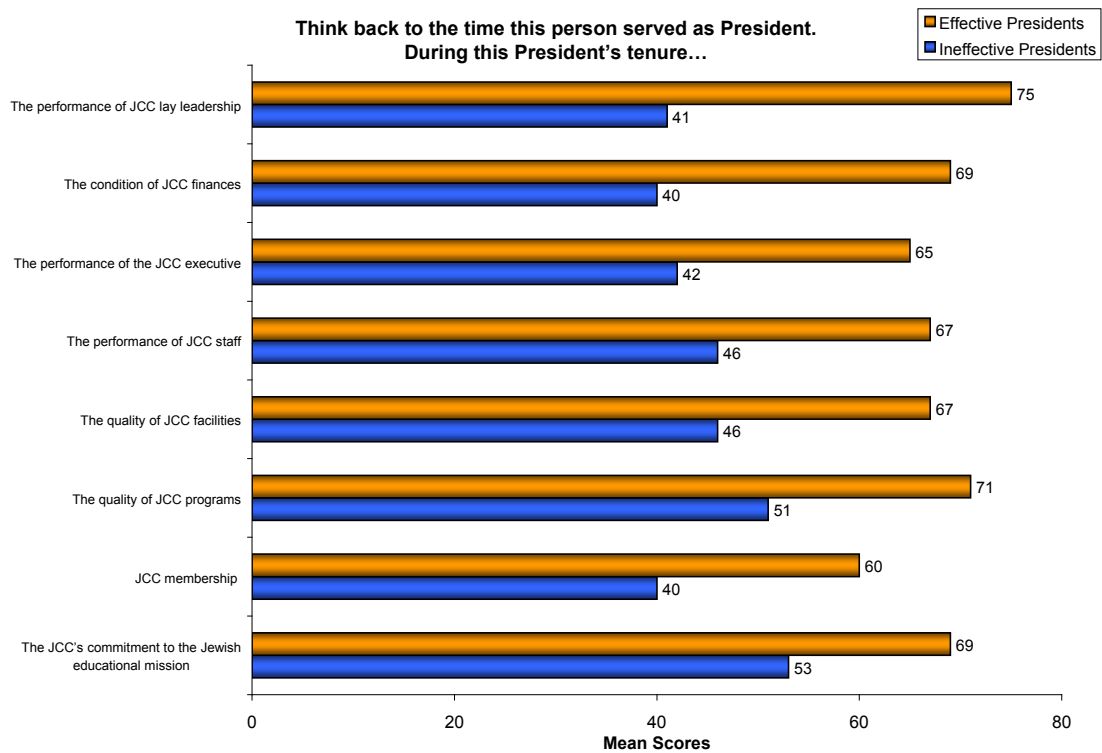
Other items with large gaps include the condition of JCC finances and the performance of the JCC executive. The latter indicates the importance of teamwork within the JCC leadership structure; we rarely see instances of a greatly improved executive paired with an ineffective president.

When asked to rate the working relationship between an executive and president, nearly half (49%) of respondents said that ineffective presidents had good or very good relationships with their executives. However, effective presidents were judged to have bad working relationships with their executives only 6% of the time. This discrepancy shows us that, while a strong working relationship alone does not guarantee a president's effectiveness, it is unlikely that an effective president will maintain a contentious relationship with his executive partner.

The effective president, then, can be seen as effective by way of the performance of those around her and of the JCC in certain areas. In particular, effective presidents are associated with (and may have something to do with) other high-performing lay leaders, healthy finances, and high-performing executives. Conversely, JCCs with excellence in lay leaders, finances, and chief executives are those that bestow the mantle of effectiveness upon those presidents fortunate enough to be leading them at that time.

During this president's tenure...	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
The performance of JCC lay leadership	75	41	34
The condition of JCC finances	69	40	29
The performance of the JCC executive	65	42	23
The performance of JCC staff	67	46	21
The quality of JCC facilities	67	46	21
The quality of JCC programs	71	51	20
JCC membership	60	40	20
The JCC's commitment to the Jewish educational mission	69	53	16

During this president's tenure...	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
The working relationship of the president and the executive	88	61	27



Effective Presidents: Leaders Who Cultivate, Mobilize and Inspire Other Leaders

Effectiveness can be seen through another lens: how well the president achieves a variety of tasks that are common to most JCC presidents, if not the top lay leadership of other communal agencies.

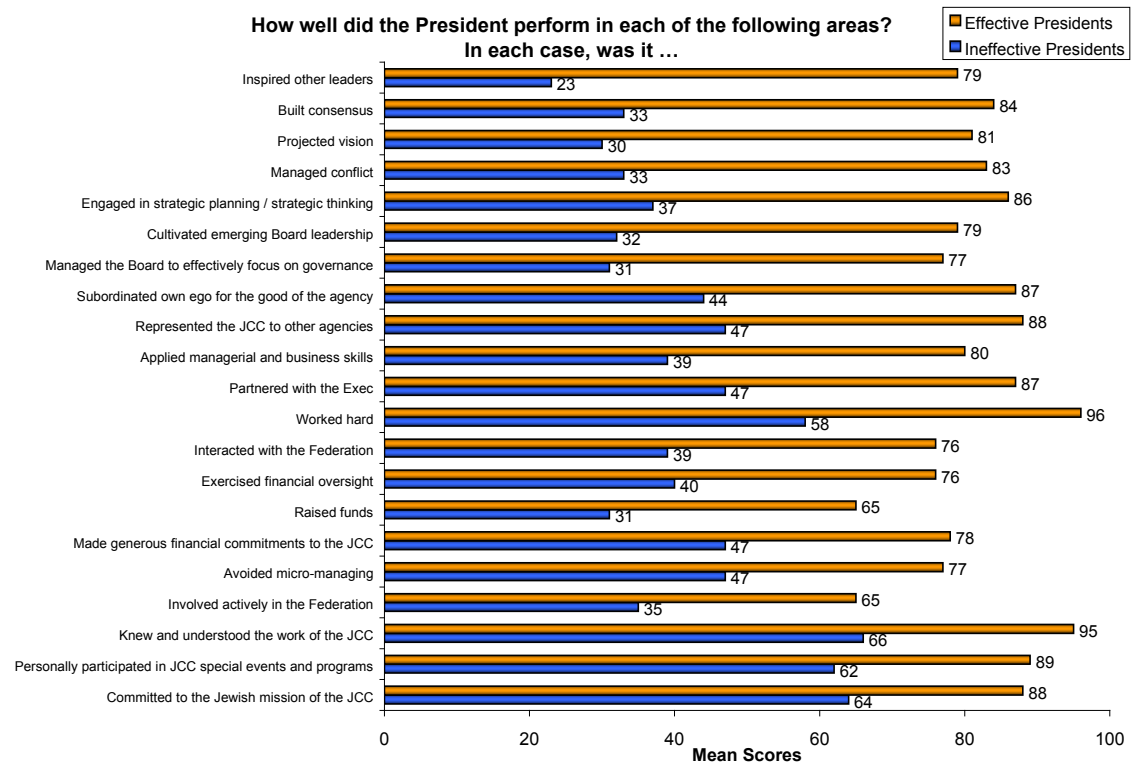
The survey asked respondents how well the effective and ineffective presidents performed with respect to nearly two dozen tasks. As with the previous analyses above, those tasks where performance ratings differ most markedly for effective and ineffective presidents are of greatest interest. Presumably, these are the areas that are most critical for distinguishing the two types of presidents.

The single largest gap in performance rating is associated with inspiring other leaders; fully 56 points separate effective from ineffective presidents on this question. Effective presidents are also distinguished in several other tasks that are related to their interactions with other lay leaders. Among these are:

- **building consensus**
- **projecting vision**
- **managing conflict**
- **engaging in strategic thinking**
- **cultivating emerging board leadership**
- **managing the board to focus effectively on governance**

All these tasks relate closely to the relationship between the president and the volunteer leaders who comprise a JCC's board. The pattern of answers here point to the central role of the president as a leader among leaders. The implicit, principal definition of an effective president is one who can inspire other lay leaders with a clear vision, focus their attention on real issues, and build a cohesive governing body that thinks strategically, avoids petty conflicts, and surmounts issue-oriented conflicts. These characteristics define well-functioning decision-making processes.

How well did president perform in each of the following areas?	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
Inspired other leaders	79	23	56
Built consensus	84	33	51
Projected vision	81	30	51
Managed conflict	83	33	50
Engaged in strategic planning / strategic thinking	86	37	49
Cultivated emerging board leadership	79	32	47
Managed the board to effectively focus on governance	77	31	46
Subordinated own ego for the good of the agency	87	44	43
Represented the JCC to other agencies	88	47	41
Applied managerial and business skills	80	39	41
Partnered with the exec	87	47	40
Worked hard	96	58	38
Interacted with the federation	76	39	37
Exercised financial oversight	76	40	36
Raised funds	65	31	34
Made generous financial commitments to the JCC	78	47	31
Avoided micro-managing	77	47	30
Involved actively in the federation	65	35	30
Knew and understood the work of the JCC	95	66	29
Personally participated in JCC special events and programs	89	62	27
Committed to the Jewish mission of the JCC	88	64	24



Critical: Inspirational Ability, Emotional Intelligence, Reputation, and Political Skills

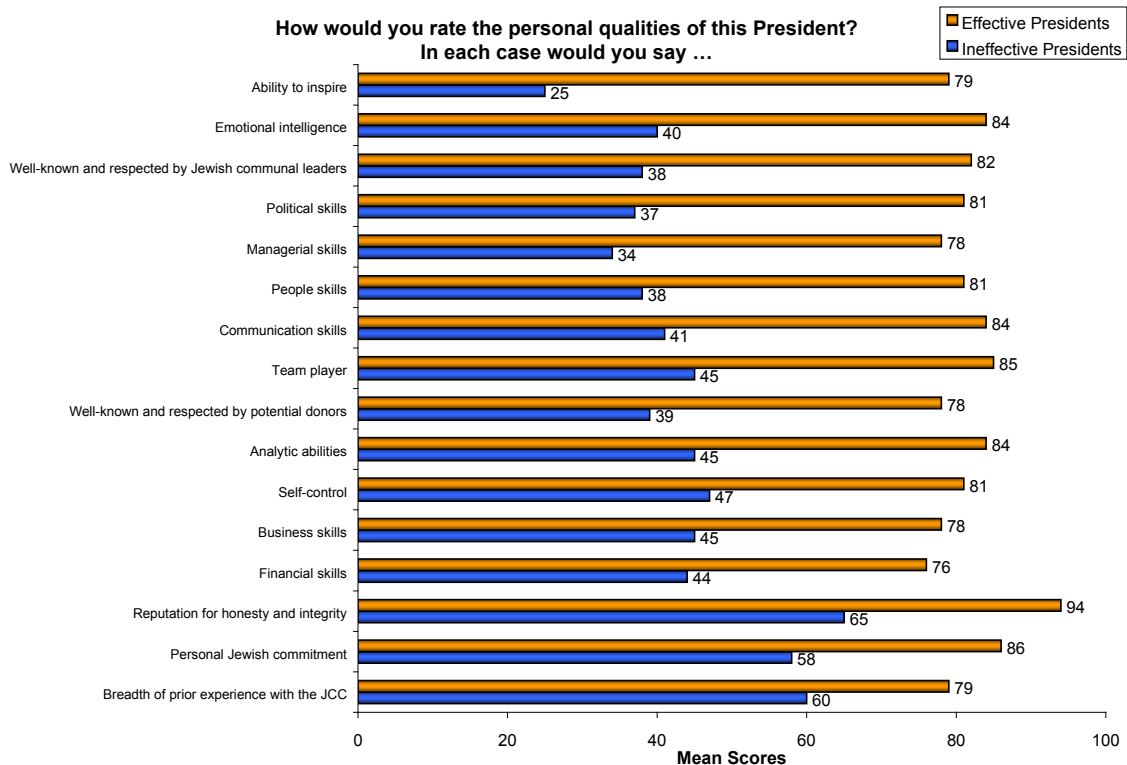
To lead the JCC to perform well as an institution and meet the challenges of its time and to inspire the lay leadership to govern prudently and wisely are no easy tasks. They demand of effective presidents the appropriate skills, talents, commitments, and emotional abilities.

We asked respondents to rank both effective and ineffective presidents with respect to 16 selected personal qualities. Of note, for all the reasons explained earlier, are those qualities where the rankings of effective and ineffective presidents most parted company. At the top of the list, where the gaps between the two types of presidents were greatest, were:

- Ability to inspire
- Emotional intelligence
- Respected by Jewish communal leaders
- Political skills
- Managerial skills
- People skills
- Communication skills

To be sure, gaps characterized the other qualities as well; but these were the qualities where the gaps loomed largest. Taken together, they comprise those qualities highly associated with working with other leaders. Once again, the ability of the president to interact with other volunteer leaders (officers and board members) seems most germane and most emblematic of effectiveness.

How would you rate the personal qualities of this president?	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
Ability to inspire	79	25	54
Emotional intelligence	84	40	44
Well-known and respected by Jewish communal leaders	82	38	44
Political skills	81	37	44
Managerial skills	78	34	44
People skills	81	38	43
Communication skills	84	41	43
Team player	85	45	40
Well-known and respected by potential donors	78	39	39
Analytic abilities	84	45	39
Self-control	81	47	34
Business skills	78	45	33
Financial skills	76	44	32
Reputation for honesty and integrity	94	65	29
Personal Jewish commitment	86	58	28
Breadth of prior experience with the JCC	79	60	19



Leadership, People, and Collaboration: The Heart of Effectiveness

The foregoing analysis covered a vast array of questions, containing a great deal of detail. To grasp the true significance of these findings, we need to reduce the numerous distinctive questions to a small number of major dimensions so as to be able to grasp the “big picture,” to understand how effective presidents differ from their ineffective counterparts.

To organize the findings in a more structured and more comprehensible fashion, we assigned the vast majority of items (individual questions) to nine scale, or indices, that represent the major underlying concepts. Through the use of a statistical technique known as factor analysis, we identified those items that grouped together, suggesting that they were each, in their own way, tapping into a common dimension. Below is a summary of the nine dimensions we identified:

NINE SCALES OF QUALITIES DIFFERENTIATING EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE PRESIDENTS

The **leadership skills** scale measures presidents’ ability to lead JCC board members. Items included: managed the board, inspired members, and cultivated emerging leadership.

The **people skills** scale measures a president’s people management and social skills. It represents how well the president interacts with and manages others. Items included: ability to inspire, communication skills, political skills, emotional intelligence, etc.

The **collaborative skills** scale measures a president’s ability to be a member of a team while also effectively leading it. Items included: built consensus, avoided micro-managing, partnered with the exec, exercised self-control, subordinated ego for greater good, etc.

The **donor relations** scale measures a president’s reputation and involvement in the greater Jewish community, including the federation. Items included: well-known and respected by donors and federation, involved actively in federation, etc.

The **business skills** scale measures a president’s business-related skills. Items included: managerial skills, financial oversight, analytic abilities, etc.

The **fundraising ability** scale measures a president’s ability to raise money for and personally contribute financially to the JCC. Items included: raised funds, and made generous financial commitments to the JCC.

The **Jewish commitment** scale measures a president’s commitment to Jewish values. Items included: reputation for honesty and integrity, personal Jewish commitment, committed to Jewish mission of JCC, etc.

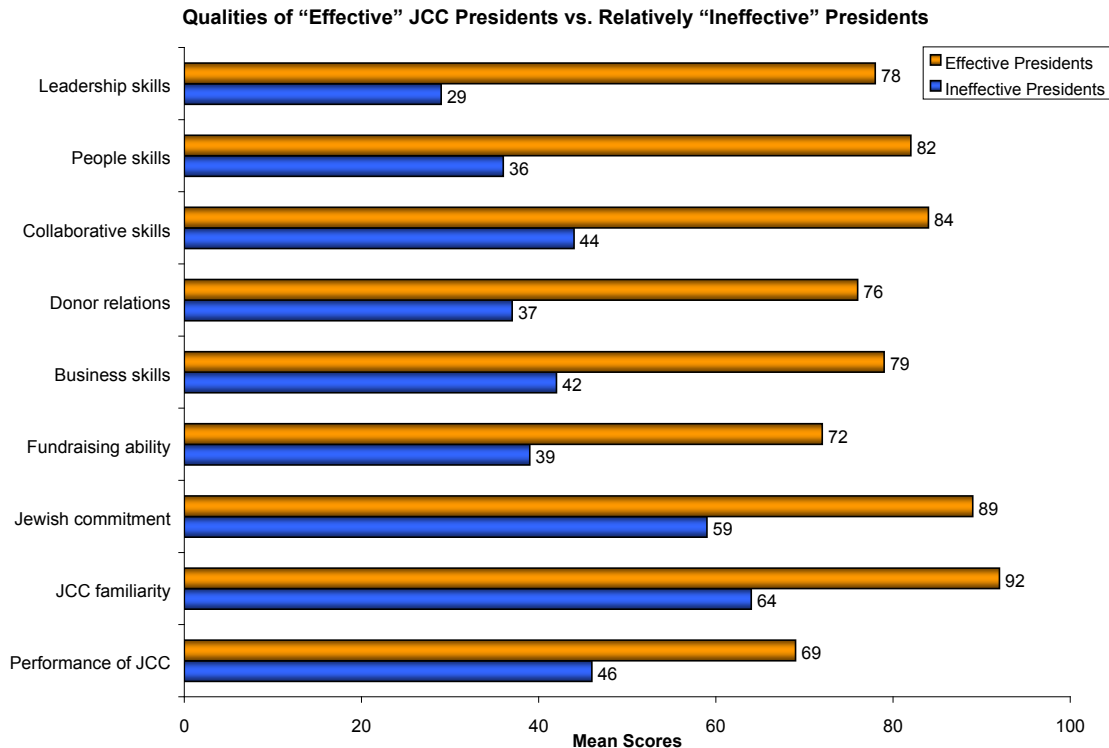
The **JCC familiarity** scale measures familiarity and involvement with the JCC and its programs. Items included: knew and understood work of the JCC, and participated in JCC events and programs.

The **performance of JCC** scale measures the change in performance of the JCC during the president's tenure, embracing such matters as program, leadership, staff, and finances. Items included: quality of facilities, performance of staff, condition of finances, etc.

The chart and graph below report the scores on these scales for effective and ineffective presidents, as well as the gaps between them.

Qualities of Effective JCC Presidents vs. Relatively Ineffective Presidents			
Scale name*	Mean Scores		Difference of Mean Scores
	Effective Presidents	Ineffective Presidents	
Leadership skills	78	29	49
People skills	82	36	46
Collaborative skills	84	44	40
Donor relations	76	37	39
Business skills	79	42	37
Fund raising ability	72	39	33
Jewish commitment	89	59	30
JCC familiarity	92	64	28
Performance of JCC	69	46	23

*Arrayed in descending order with respect to size of the differences in average scores between effective and ineffective presidents.



Of the nine scales, three exhibit the largest differences between effective and ineffective presidents:

- **Leadership skills** - the ability to lead JCC board members
- **People skills** - the ability to interact with and manage others
- **Collaborative skills** - the ability to function as an effective team member

All, of course, revolve around a common theme - the ability to work effectively with JCC lay and professional leaders to effectively guide and govern the agency. Of course, the other areas of functioning (such as fundraising, business skills, and relations with donors) are also critical to effective JCC presidents. But, perhaps surprisingly, it is the leadership, people-related, and collaborative areas that emerge as most critical and most important in distinguishing effective from ineffective JCC presidents.

Conclusion: The Ability to Lead other Leaders

If there is one “take-away” from this study, it is that a specific dimension emerges as central to effectiveness in the functioning of JCC presidents. This essential component is the ability to successfully interact with other lay leaders: to inspire them, nurture them, manage them, and mobilize them to work effectively as a high-performing leadership team. Other dimensions and features also contribute to effectiveness, but the ability to lead other leaders emerges as paramount.

This finding, important in its own right, bears clear policy implications for identifying, developing, selecting, and supporting JCC presidents. With the great variety and complexity of tasks and challenges associated with this role, both presidents and the people around them need to distinguish the most vital and essential features of the position. By focusing on the human component of leadership and the essential interactions and relationships necessary for a successful presidency, JCCs can develop more effective lay leaders and strengthen themselves in the process. This research, in pointing to the ability to lead other leaders, offers useful guidance to the presidents themselves and to the many people who help presidents emerge and function in their roles as the chief volunteer leaders of Jewish Community Centers in North America.

The Survey

All data are percentages unless otherwise indicated.

The Highly Effective JCC President

Think of a former president of a JCC (probably your own) whom you believe was highly effective as president. With respect to this individual, please answer the following questions.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

What is his/her gender?

Male	65
Female	35

In what year did he/she complete service as president?

Before 1990	8
1990-1994	8
1995-1999	19
2000-2004	40
2005 or later	25

Approximately how old was he/she then, when he/she completed service as president?

Under 30	1
30-34	7
35-39	24
40-44	29
45-49	29
50-54	16
55-59	15
60-64	7
65+	2

Compared to other Jewish communal leaders in your community, how would you judge this person's relative level of affluence:

Among the most affluent leaders in my community; belongs to the small circle of very major donors	18
More affluent than most leaders here, but not in the top circle of donors	25
About as affluent as most other leaders	43
Somewhat less affluent than other leaders	12
Much less affluent than other leaders	2

Prior to assuming the presidency of the JCC, to what extent would you say that this person had...

	To a great extent	To some extent	A little	Not at all
Spent years serving on the JCC board	75	16	6	3
Held leadership positions in the JCC	71	18	6	5
Engaged in planning or preparation for assuming the presidency	53	31	10	6
Held leadership positions in the federation	24	20	23	33

CHANGES IN THE JCC

Which of the following challenges did the JCC face during this person's tenure:

	A major challenge	A minor challenge	Not a challenge
Financial difficulties	53	29	17
Building renovations	50	27	23
A building campaign	44	15	41
Engaged a new executive	35	8	57
Declining membership	35	33	32
Inadequate facilities	34	39	28
Difficult relationship with federation or other community leadership	27	36	38
Dismissed the executive	27	3	70
Hosted a continental program such as JCC Maccabi Games® or JCC Maccabi ArtsFest®	16	4	80
Significant dissention among the leadership	10	25	65

Think back to the time this person served as president. During this president's tenure...

	Very good	Good	Mixed	Bad	Very bad
The working relationship of the president and the executive was	70	16	11	3	0

	Improved a lot	Improved somewhat	Held steady	Worsened somewhat	Worsened a lot
The performance of JCC lay leadership	31	39	28	3	0
The condition of JCC finances	24	38	29	6	3
The quality of JCC facilities	24	29	38	7	2
The quality of JCC programs	22	44	31	2	1
The JCC's commitment to the Jewish educational mission	21	39	35	5	1
The performance of the JCC executive	21	30	36	12	1
The performance of JCC staff	17	37	43	4	0

	Increased a lot	Increased somewhat	Held steady	Declined somewhat	Declined a lot
JCC membership	15	31	36	14	4

AREAS OF PERFORMANCE

How well did president perform in each of the following areas? In each case, was it ...

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Worked hard	88	10	2	0
Knew and understood the work of the JCC	87	11	2	0
Personally participated in JCC special events and programs	73	22	5	1
Committed to the Jewish mission of the JCC	72	22	6	1
Partnered with the exec	71	20	6	3
Represented the JCC to other agencies	70	25	4	2
Subordinated own ego for the good of the agency	69	25	6	1
Engaged in strategic planning / strategic thinking	67	26	6	1
Built consensus	60	34	4	2
Managed conflict	56	37	6	1
Applied managerial and business skills	54	35	10	2
Made generous financial commitments to the JCC	52	30	16	2
Avoided micro-managing	52	29	15	4
Projected vision	51	41	8	1
Interacted with the federation	50	31	17	3
Inspired other leaders	49	40	10	1
Cultivated emerging board leadership	48	41	10	1
Managed the board to effectively focus on governance	46	40	13	2
Involved actively in the federation	43	22	22	14
Exercised financial oversight	40	50	8	2
Raised funds	33	36	27	5

How would you rate the personal qualities of this president? In each case would you say ...

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Reputation for honesty and integrity	79	17	3	0	1
Personal Jewish commitment	58	29	11	1	1
Team player	56	29	15	1	0
Well-known and respected by Jewish communal leaders	55	25	14	5	1
Emotional intelligence	54	33	11	2	1
Communication skills	53	34	11	2	0
Analytic abilities	53	31	15	1	0
Breadth of prior experience with the JCC	53	22	15	8	3
Self-control	52	28	16	3	1
Well-known and respected by potential donors	51	22	15	9	3
People skills	50	27	19	4	0
Political skills	44	38	15	2	1
Business skills	44	32	18	5	1
Ability to inspire	43	36	19	3	1
Financial skills	40	29	25	5	1
Managerial skills	40	34	22	4	0

The Relatively Ineffective JCC President

Now think of a former president of a JCC (probably your own) whom you believe was among the least effective presidents you have seen in action. With respect to this individual, please answer the following questions, as you did above.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

What is his/her gender?

Male	73
Female	27

In what year did he/she complete service as president?

Before 1990	10
1990-1994	10
1995-1999	24
2000-2004	42
2005 or later	15

Approximately how old was he/she then, when he/she completed service as president?

Under 30	0
30-34	0
35-39	7
40-44	20
45-49	31
50-54	20
55-59	13
60-64	7
65+	3

Compared to other Jewish communal leaders in your community, how would you judge this person's relative level of affluence:

Among the most affluent leaders in my community; belongs to the small circle of very major donors	7
More affluent than most leaders here, but not in the top circle of donors	27
About as affluent as most other leaders	42
Somewhat less affluent than other leaders	19
Much less affluent than other leaders	7

Prior to assuming the presidency of the JCC, to what extent would you say that this person had...

	To a great extent	To some extent	A little	Not at all
Spent years serving on the JCC board	69	22	9	1
Held leadership positions in the JCC	55	29	13	2
Engaged in planning or preparation for assuming the presidency	21	37	29	12
Held leadership positions in federation	11	23	25	41

CHANGES IN THE JCC

Which of the following challenges did the JCC face during this person's tenure:

	A major challenge	A minor challenge	Not a challenge
Financial difficulties	52	34	14
Inadequate facilities	37	37	26
Building renovations	37	33	30
A building campaign	35	18	47
Declining membership	34	38	27
Difficult relationship with federation or other community leadership	32	32	36
Significant dissention among the leadership	24	38	38
Engaged a new executive	18	6	77
Dismissed the executive	14	6	81
Hosted a continental program such as JCC Maccabi Games® or JCC Maccabi ArtsFest®	6	5	89

Think back to the time this person served as president. During this president's tenure...

	Very good	Good	Mixed	Bad	Very bad
The working relationship of the president and the executive was	17	32	34	12	5

	Improved a lot	Improved somewhat	Held steady	Worsened somewhat	Worsened a lot
The quality of JCC programs	4	16	63	14	3
The performance of the JCC executive	4	8	52	28	9
The JCC's commitment to the Jewish educational mission	3	17	68	8	3
The performance of JCC staff	3	9	62	21	5
The quality of JCC facilities	2	13	58	24	4
The condition of JCC finances	1	15	39	34	12
The performance of JCC lay leadership	1	8	50	36	5

	Increased a lot	Increased somewhat	Held steady	Declined somewhat	Declined a lot
JCC membership	3	10	42	37	9

AREAS OF PERFORMANCE

How well did the president perform in each of the following areas? In each case, was it ...

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Committed to the Jewish mission of the JCC	32	38	22	8
Knew and understood the work of the JCC	31	41	22	6
Personally participated in JCC special events and programs	28	45	23	9
Worked hard	28	33	25	14
Subordinated own ego for the good of the agency	23	21	23	34
Avoided micro-managing	18	28	29	25
Made generous financial commitments to the JCC	16	32	30	23
Partnered with the exec	15	33	28	23
Represented the JCC to other agencies	13	34	35	18
Involved actively in the federation	12	22	27	40
Projected vision	3	16	50	32
Interacted with the federation	9	24	41	26
Exercised financial oversight	7	28	43	22
Applied managerial and business skills	6	26	48	21
Raised funds	6	15	44	35
Engaged in strategic planning / strategic thinking	5	26	45	24
Managed the board to effectively focus on governance	4	18	44	34
Built consensus	3	20	49	28
Cultivated emerging board leadership	3	20	47	30
Managed conflict	2	22	49	27
Inspired other leaders	1	8	52	40

How would you rate the personal qualities of this President? In each case would you say ...

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Breadth of prior experience with the JCC	28	17	27	24	4
Reputation for honesty and integrity	26	31	25	15	3
Personal Jewish commitment	20	23	32	22	4
Analytic abilities	11	12	33	35	9
Financial skills	9	15	29	36	10
Self-control	9	23	31	25	14
Business skills	7	20	31	30	12
Team player	7	22	28	30	13
Communication skills	7	12	34	34	13
Political skills	6	13	22	40	19
Well-known and respected by potential donors	6	12	27	42	14
Emotional intelligence	6	10	36	34	13
Well-known and respected by Jewish communal leaders	6	9	29	45	12
People skills	3	15	30	34	19
Managerial skills	2	9	29	42	17
Ability to inspire	1	4	23	41	33

Would you like to add anything in your own words to help us better understand your views on effectiveness of JCC presidents? If so, please share your comments here.

Your Profile

To better understand the results and place them in a larger context, we have a few remaining questions on you background characteristics.

Your gender

Male	68
Female	32

Your age

Under 30	0
30-34	0
35-39	3
40-44	7
45-49	11
50-54	24
55-59	20
60-64	19
65+	16

(IF US) Your residential zip code: _____

(IF CANADA) Your residential postal code: _____

Have you served...

	Yes, now	Yes, in the past	No
As a JCC president	12	57	31
As a JCC officer, other than president	5	64	31
On JCC Association's board	23	15	63
As a JCC executive	31	2	66
As a JCC professional in another capacity	7	24	69

For how many years have you served on the board of your JCC?

Under 5	8
5-9	19
10-14	22
15 or more	50

**Which of the following characteristics apply to you? Check all that apply:
(actual number saying 'yes' , not %)**

Participated in a Jewish youth group	96
Attended a Jewish overnight camp	75
Took college-level courses in Jewish studies	44
Studied in Israel	30
Participated in a teen travel program to Israel	8
Attended Jewish day school	7

**Have you ever served in leadership positions in...? Check all that apply:
(actual number saying 'yes' , not %)**

Other Jewish organization	111
Other not-for-profit (arts, foundations...)	108
Federation	100
Synagogue	88
Other social service agency (not Jewish)	81

How important is being Jewish in your life?

Extremely important	50
Very important	46
Somewhat important	4
A little important	4
Not at all important	0

**Thinking about Jewish religious denominations, what denomination
do you currently consider yourself to be?**

Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Reconstructionist	Just Jewish	Not Jewish
3	47	40	2	9	0

Survey Results Comparison

This section does not contain the exact responses to the survey. While some of the data shown here are percentages (indicated by the % symbol), the majority are calculated mean score for effective or ineffective presidents and the difference between them. Again, this is indicated for each question.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

What is his/her gender? (%)

	Effective	Ineffective
Male	65	73
Female	35	27

In what year did he/she complete service as president? (%)

	Effective	Ineffective
Before 1990	8	10
1990-1994	8	10
1995-1999	19	24
2000-2004	40	42
2005 or later	25	15

Approximately how old was he/she then, when he/she completed service as president? (%)

	Effective	Ineffective
Under 30	1	0
30-34	7	0
35-39	24	7
40-44	29	20
45-49	29	31
50-54	16	20
55-59	15	13
60-64	7	7
65+	2	3

Compared to other Jewish communal leaders in your community, how would you judge this person's relative level of affluence: (%)

	Effective	Ineffective
Among the most affluent leaders in my community; belongs to the small circle of very major donors	18	7
More affluent than most leaders here, but not in the top circle of donors	25	27
About as affluent as most other leaders	43	42
Somewhat less affluent than other leaders	12	19
Much less affluent than other leaders	2	7

The following questions are ranked in descending order according to difference. Difference is calculated by subtracting Effective Mean Score - Ineffective Mean Score.

Prior to assuming the presidency of the JCC, to what extent would you say that this person had...

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
Engaged in planning or preparation for assuming the presidency	77	56	21
Held leadership positions in federation	45	35	10
Held leadership positions in the JCC	85	79	6
Spent years serving on the JCC board	88	86	2

CHANGES IN THE JCC

Which of the following challenges did the JCC face during this person's tenure:

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
Significant dissension among the leadership	23	43	-20
Engaged a new executive	39	20	19
Dismissed the executive	28	16	12
Building renovations	63	54	9
Hosted a continental program such as JCC Maccabi Games® or JCC Maccabi ArtsFest®	18	9	9
A building campaign	52	44	8
Difficult relationship with federation or other community leadership	44	48	-4
Inadequate facilities	53	55	-2
Financial difficulties	68	69	-1
Declining membership	52	53	-1

Think back to the time this person served as president. During this president's tenure...

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
The working relationship of the President and the Executive was...	88	61	27

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
The performance of JCC lay leadership	75	41	34
The condition of JCC finances	69	40	29
The performance of the JCC executive	65	42	23
The performance of JCC staff	67	46	21
The quality of JCC facilities	67	46	21
The quality of JCC programs	71	51	20
The JCC's commitment to the Jewish educational mission	69	53	16

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
JCC membership	60	40	20

AREAS OF PERFORMANCE

How well did the president perform in each of the following areas? In each case, was it ...

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
Inspired other leaders	79	23	56
Built consensus	84	33	51
Projected vision	81	30	51
Managed conflict	83	33	50
Engaged in strategic planning / strategic thinking	86	37	49
Cultivated emerging board leadership	79	32	47
Managed the board to effectively focus on governance	77	31	46
Subordinated own ego for the good of the agency	87	44	43
Represented the JCC to other agencies	88	47	41
Applied managerial and business skills	80	39	41
Partnered with the exec	87	47	40
Worked hard	96	58	38
Interacted with the federation	76	39	37
Exercised financial oversight	76	40	36
Raised funds	65	31	34
Made generous financial commitments to the JCC	78	47	31
Avoided micro-managing	77	47	30
Involved actively in the federation	65	35	30
Knew and understood the work of the JCC	95	66	29
Personally participated in JCC special events and programs	89	62	27
Committed to the Jewish mission of the JCC	88	64	24

How would you rate the personal qualities of this president? In each case would you say ...

Mean score	Effective	Ineffective	Difference
Ability to inspire	79	25	54
Emotional intelligence	84	40	44
Well-known and respected by Jewish communal leaders	82	38	44
Political skills	81	37	44
Managerial skills	78	34	44
People skills	81	38	43
Communication skills	84	41	43
Team player	85	45	40
Well-known and respected by potential donors	78	39	39
Analytic abilities	84	45	39
Self-control	81	47	34
Business skills	78	45	33
Financial skills	76	44	32
Reputation for honesty and integrity	94	65	29
Personal Jewish commitment	86	58	28
Breadth of prior experience with the JCC	79	60	19

Summarized Interview Responses

While exploring the topic of lay leadership in JCCs and developing the content for the study, we interviewed 18 past and current JCC presidents to learn from their experiences and see if any universal trends would emerge. Many of these presidents said the same things - the most common responses are listed below:

MAIN THEME: RESPECT IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL

WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S JOB:

- Setting strategic goals and big picture
- Not micro-managing staff
- Not daily operations
- Exec's job is to figure out how to implement goals and daily management
- Don't tell exec how to do the job - just make sure it gets done
- Fundraising
- Representing the agency to the community

WHAT IS NEEDED TO BE A GOOD PRESIDENT:

Social networks

- Need as many diverse networks as possible - not just one type of person/group
- Especially helpful to be connected with the federation
- Be well-respected in the community - not just well-known
- This helps fundraising, which is very important

Strong social skills/people skills

- Community relations
- You are the public face of the agency
- Helps with fundraising

Budget/finance skills

- Need to understand and feel comfortable with budget process - everyone who was not comfortable with this mentioned this as one of their biggest frustrations

Business skills

- Ability to analyze situations from a business point of view, not just a social work approach
- Previous professional skills are a plus - it is very helpful

Jewish commitment

- Can't just want to run a gym
 - * This actually wasn't mentioned very often in terms of something needed to be good at the job, but it was mentioned by nearly everyone as a motivator and was often the reason they chose to do the job.

WHAT ARE SOME BAD TRAITS IN A PRESIDENT:

- Doesn't know when to shut up
- Can't speak publicly or whines publicly
- Too focused on feelings and not enough on business
- Inability to be concise and direct
- Can't be just a business person - JCC is not just a normal business. MUST know the JCC and the Movement and understand what we're about.

NEEDED FOR A STRONG PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE RELATIONSHIP:

- Respect and trust
- Honesty
- Open communication - both should always be informed/aware
Nothing should be kept secret from the other
- Humility - neither person can have an ego
- Very clear job definitions
- Never embarrass each other in public - work as a team and address problems privately
- Dependability/reliability
- Shared spirit/ideas/goals for the agency
- Don't be afraid to speak up about a problem and confront the other person
- Approach it like a partnership
- Collaborative partnership with exec - challenge each other



Ann Kaufman
Chair

Alan Mann
Executive Vice-President

Alan Goldberg
Vice-President



The Florence G. Heller
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President

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