



# New Braunfels Utilities Chief Executive Officer Search

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## Desired Candidate Survey Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction:

To engage internal and external constituents and gather valuable input, New Braunfels Utilities commissioned a survey seeking opinions about the desired traits, attributes, characteristics, qualifications, leadership style, and other preferences constituents want to see in their next Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The purpose of the survey was to ensure that the selection process for the next CEO aligns with the expectations and aspirations of the organization's stakeholders.

## Methodology:

New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) made the survey accessible on its website, shared a link to the survey with employees, and encouraged appointed and elected officials to share and encouraged internal and external constituents to consider participating in the survey, which opened on October 4, 2023, and closed on October 30, 2023, at 11:59 PM (Central). The online tool collected a total of 166 employees, community members, elected or appointed officials, and customers from a diverse range of demographics and perspectives. The consulting firm designed the survey to gather information about the traits, attributes, characteristics, and leadership style the CEO should possess to successfully perform the duties of this prominent position. The survey also sought to gather information about the level of education, experience, leadership traits and management attributes the CEO should bring to NBU, and the challenges and opportunities the individual selected will face. Additionally, the survey also elicited additional suggestions, other areas of concerns or issues the Board of Directors could use to aid in its selection of the next CEO.

## Key Findings:

1. **53%** of respondents to the survey identified themselves as ***NBU employees***, of **which 58% have been working for NBU for less than 9** years and 18% have worked for NBU for more than 20 years.
2. **33%** of respondents rated their satisfaction with NBU services as satisfied, **29% *Very Satisfied***, **15% *Neutral***, **13% *Very Dissatisfied*** and **9% *Dissatisfied***.
3. **63%** of respondents cited “***Ethics and Integrity***” and “***Transparency & Accountability***” as the most important traits the next CEO should possess. While **44%** believed that “***Industry Experience and Expertise***” and **40%** believed “***Visionary Leadership***” are the most important

traits the new CEO should bring to NBU.

4. 40% of responders believe that the biggest challenge the new CEO will face is “Reliability and Affordability,” followed by “**Customer Service and Responsiveness** 15%, Infrastructure Maintenance 10% and Workforce development, recruitment, and retention 6%.
5. According to respondents, the top three traits the next CEO should possess are: **the ability to communicate powerfully and effectively, build relationships, develop others, inspire, and motivate others to high performance, and collaboration to foster teamwork** 69.9%, **High Integrity and honesty** 68.1% and the ability to **take initiative, focus on results, and establish Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timebound goals** 46.4%.
6. 18% of responders believed the new CEO should first focus on **Community**, 17% referenced **Employees** and 17% mentioned **NBU**.
7. 25% emphasized **Community**, when asked about the most pressing issue facing NBU, **Growth** 19%, **Customer** 16%, and **Cost** 15%.
8. 142 respondents provided questions the Board should ask every applicant, of which 17% referenced **NBU**, 17% referenced “**Community**” and 15% referenced “**Employees**.”
9. 25 respondents referenced “**NBU**” 17 referenced “**Community**” and 15 referenced “**Employees**” when asked “what advice or suggestion you would give the new CEO.”

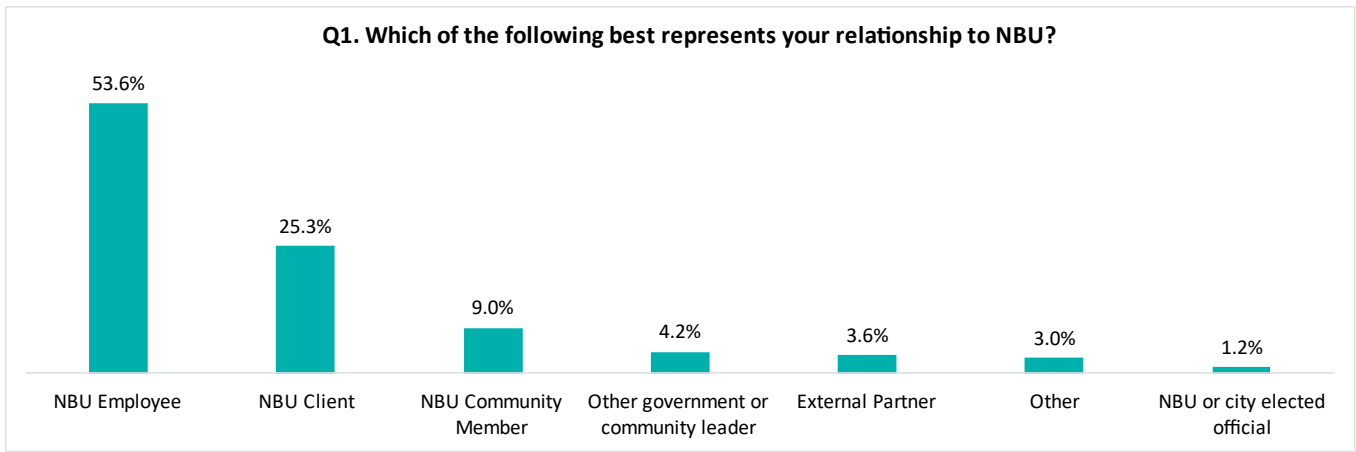
### Conclusion:

Findings from this survey will provide invaluable insight into the respondent’s desires and expectations for the next CEO. Respondents desire that the next CEO will offer a combination of ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability, industry experience, expertise, visionary leadership, empathy, and community engagement. These insights should serve as a foundation to the Board of Trustees in the selection process, ensuring that the next CEO reflects the aspirations and values of the community.

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# 1. Relationship to NBU

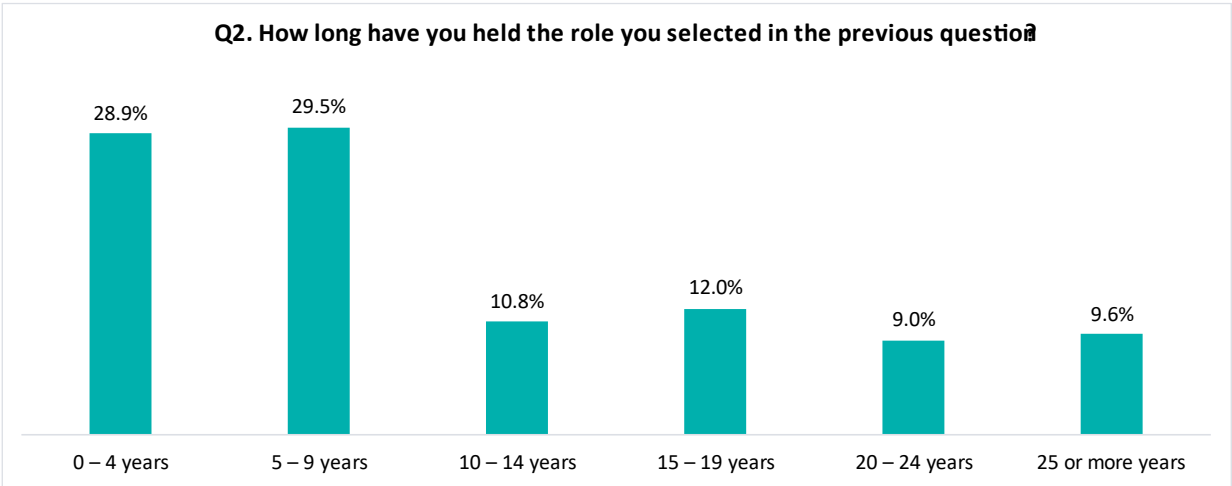


## Other Responses

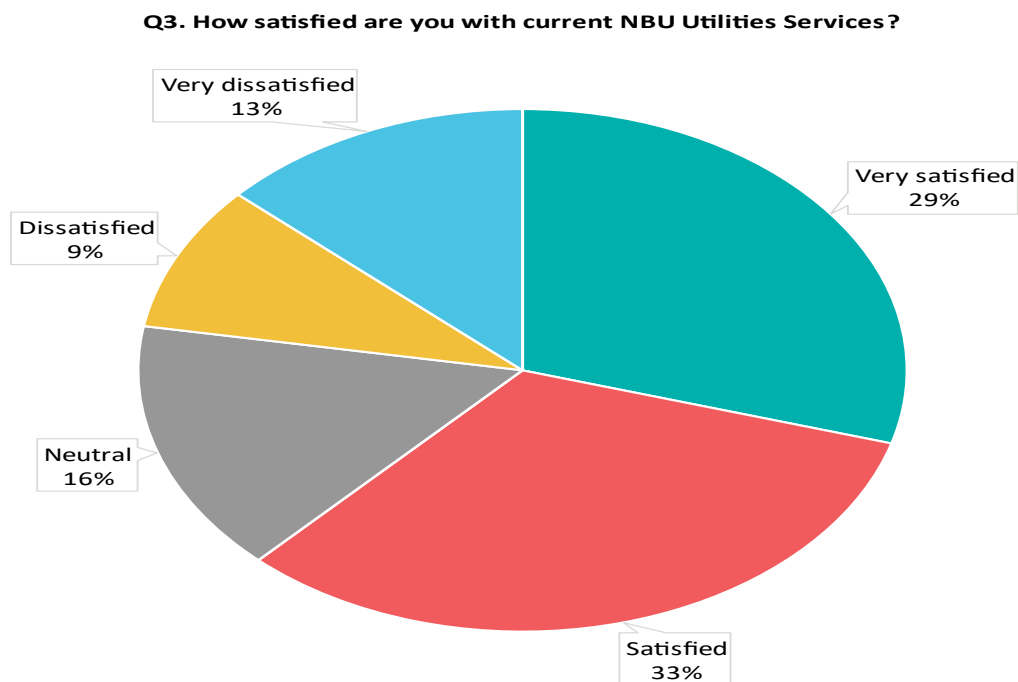
- Chamber Board Member
- Consultant and NBU rate payer
- Ex Board Member
- Friend of the Board
- NBU Trustee

	Responses	
NBU Employee	53.6%	89
NBU Client	25.3%	42
NBU Community Member	9.0%	15
Other government or community leader	4.2%	7
External Partner	3.6%	6
Other	3.0%	5
NBU or city elected official	1.2%	2

# 2. Time in role, function, or relationship with NBU?



### 3. Satisfaction with Current NBU Utilities Services



### 4. Most Important Qualifications the next CEO should have

Answer Choices	Percentage All Respondents
<b>Ethics and integrity</b>	<b>63.9%</b>
<b>Transparency and accountability</b>	<b>63.3%</b>
<b>Industry experience &amp; expertise</b>	<b>44.6%</b>
<b>Visionary leadership</b>	<b>40.4%</b>
Familiarity with NBU and the community	38.6%
Empathy and community engagement	37.3%
Customer-focus approach	30.7%
Innovation and adaptability	30.7%
Experience leading similar organization	18.7%
Financial Acumen	11.4%
Regulatory compliance knowledge	8.4%
Education	6.6%
Certifications and Credentials	0.6%

According to the respondents, the four most important qualifications the next CEO should have are *Ethics and Integrity* 63.9%, *Transparency and Accountability* 63.3%, *Industry Experience* 44.6% and *Visionary Leadership* 40.4%.

## 5. Biggest Challenges for the Next CEO

**Q5. Rank the biggest challenges the new CEO will face during year one. Consider the urgency, impact, and significance of each item when determining its importance. (1 is most important, 7 is least important.)**

Rank	Answers	Percentage All Respondents - Choices
1	Reliability and Affordability	<b>40% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 22% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , and 15% 3 <sup>rd</sup>
2	Customer service and responsiveness	<b>15% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 24% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 12% 3 <sup>rd</sup>
3	Infrastructure maintenance	<b>10% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 18% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 28% 3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Workforce development, recruitment, and retention	<b>6% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 9% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 18% 3 <sup>rd</sup>
5	Sustainability and environmental sustainability practices	<b>7% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 12% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 12% 3 <sup>rd</sup>
6	Changing the organizational culture.	<b>12% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 10% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 7% 3 <sup>rd</sup>
7	Preserving the organizational culture	<b>10% 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 5% 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 7% 3 <sup>rd</sup>

## 6. Top Three Traits the Next CEO should have

**Q6. In your opinion, what are the top three traits that you believe the next CEO should possess?**

Answer Choices	Percentage All Respondents
<b>People skills:</b> communicates powerfully and effectively, builds relationships, develops others, inspires, and motivates others to high performance, and collaborates and fosters teamwork.	<b>69.9%</b>
<b>Character:</b> displays high integrity and honesty.	<b>68.1%</b>
<b>The ability to take initiative,</b> focus on results, and establish Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timebound goals.	<b>46.4%</b>
Leading change: develops strategic perspective, champions change, and connects the group to the outside world.	40.4%
Personal capability: demonstrate technical/professional expertise, solves problems, innovates, and practices self-development.	35.5%
Cultural agility: demonstrates an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs and concerns of individuals from different perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds.	22.9%
Strives to create a racially equitable work environment; develops policies, practices, and makes strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people.	6.6%

## 7. Areas CEO should Focus on First

Q7. What do you believe the new CEO should focus on first?

25 respondents (17%) answered **NBU** for this question.



## 8. Most Pressing Issues Facing NBU

Q8. In your opinion, what is the most pressing issue facing NBU right now, and how should the new CEO approach solving the issue you reference?

35 respondents (24%) answered **community** for this question.

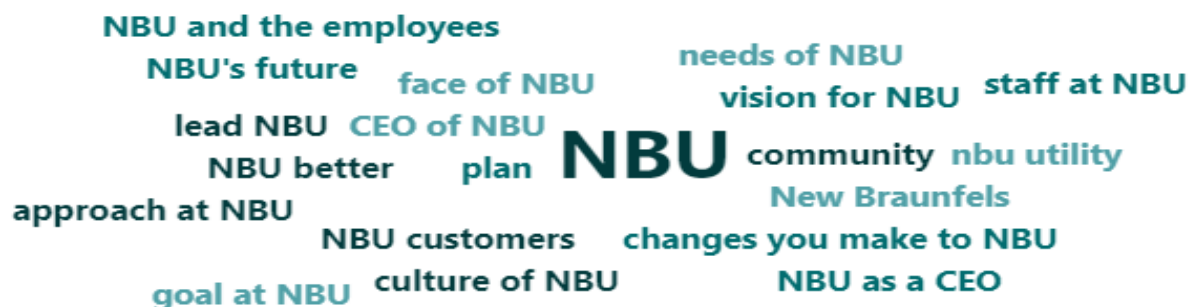




## 9. Suggested Questions the Board should Ask every CEO candidate.

### Q9. What is one question the Board of Trustees should ask every CEO candidate?

49 respondents (31%) answered **NBU** for this question.



1. Why NBU?
2. Why do you want this job?
3. What is your leadership style and if you were hired, what would you want to do first?
4. What would you do to contribute to/enhance the culture of NBU as a workplace?
5. Why do you want to be the CEO of NBU?
6. Why are you in public service?
7. What is your approach to public-private partnerships?
8. What can you bring to NBU that no one else can?
9. What are your plans to drive employee engagement?
10. How do you handle differences of opinion?
11. Why are you applying for this position?
12. What kind of leader are you?
13. Why do you want to be CEO of NBU?
14. Why do you want to be the leader for NBU?
15. What can you do to win customer confidence?
16. Why in the world would you want this job?
17. How are you going to contribute to the local community?
18. Who is your real customer as CEO?
19. Why are you interested in this position?
20. What can you do in the first 90 days that would have the most significant and positive impact on the community that NBU serves?

## 10. Respondents Suggestions or Advice for the new CEO

**Q10. What is one suggestion or advice you would you give the next CEO?**

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21 respondents (16%) answered **NBU** for this question.



**The following is a sample of suggestions from respondents to the new CEO:**

1. Be yourself.
2. Diagnose before you start treating.
3. Work on the aging infrastructure and reliability
4. Mimic the Undercover boss scenario and get to know the common people (Front line Employees) and their concerns.
5. NBU is a great place to work, this is not to say it will be easy or straight forward, but it is very rewarding to be here.
6. I suggest you be honest and transparent, but strategic with our customers. Be empathetic to all our customers, not just one side of town or class.
7. Think strategically and understand the larger ecosystem you operate within.
8. We have really good people working here at NBU that really care about each other and the organization. Get to know them and don't be too quick to replace people with ones that you know.
9. Be forward thinking.
10. Always remember, people (and their safety) come first.
11. Take care of the people, but demand professionalism.
12. Get to know everybody that works for you. Connect in a real human way. Be able to say no more. Don't be scared to push back.

13. Enjoy the NBU Culture and know that you'll never make the public happy.
14. Be honest. Be trustworthy. Believe the best in people and expect them to succeed. Technical acumen is beneficial, but people respect and respond when they feel valued.
15. Take customer service seriously. Everything from consumer facing to industry facing.
16. Do your best to improve the lives of employees and customers alike.
17. Communication and transparency are paramount .
18. Trust the process.
19. Lead with strength and heart, hold leadership accountable, and listen to your employees.
20. Treat people how you want to be treated, everyone knows they are below you on the company flow chart, no need to remind them every day.
21. Be humble, I know I do not have experience as a CEO, but I've learned in a short time that you do not have to have all the answers but be willing to admit it and get them and utilize trusted coworkers and friends to help you. Allow them to give you feedback on decisions, good and bad.
22. Integrity is the most important value.
23. Treat everyone equally and hold everyone to the same standards.
24. Be humble and come see the employees from time to time.
25. Over communicating is a good thing when it comes to people's utility bills - educate, inform, connect.
26. Make sure get involved and build relationships with all staff not just executives, directors, and managers. Try to fully understand what each area at NBU does and how important each area is. Don't just say things, take action. Like they say..."Actions speak louder than words."
27. Trust your employees to do the right thing.
28. Be humble. Check your ego.
29. Get to know community members from all backgrounds.
30. Don't be afraid to make the hard decisions (Even knowing they may affect me).

## Conclusion

New Braunfels Utilities started the process of identifying its next Chief Executive Officer on August 21, 2023. The CEO is NBU's chief administrative officer responsible for planning, managing operations, and leading a resolute and highly skilled workforce to achieve goals established by Board of Trustees that are consistent with NBU's vision, mission, guiding principles, and priorities.

The findings of this survey revealed a clear consensus among respondents regarding the desired qualities of our next CEO. Respondents overwhelmingly value integrity, open and honest communication, and a focus on addressing community needs. These qualities are essential for building trust, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that NBU programs and services serve the best interests of the community. Thus, the new CEO should be a person of unwavering integrity, demonstrating ethical conduct in all aspects of their work. This individual should be transparent and accountable, providing clear and accurate information to both internal and external stakeholders. Open and honest communication is paramount, fostering a culture of trust and collaboration within the organization. The new CEO should be an effective communicator, able to articulate complex or technical matters in a clear and understandable manner.

The new CEO should be committed to serving the needs of our community and should understand the unique challenges and opportunities facing NBU and the community and should be able to collaborate with the Board, other leaders in the organization, and the community to align business plans, objectives, strategies, and priorities. Furthermore, the new CEO should also be an active and engaged member of the community, fostering professional relationships with the NBU workforce, local businesses, residents, and organizations.

By prioritizing these qualities, the Board of Trustees have a general framework to identify the next CEO then establish a path that will enable the new CEO to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders, with integrity, transparency, and a profound commitment to the overall well-being of the NBU constituents.