

LANDED

What Makes GMs Tick: Insights From 500+ Leaders on the Floor



6 in 10

GMs say admin work is
pulling them off the floor

We surveyed **500+ restaurant and hospitality GMs** to understand job sentiment, where process creates friction, and what support actually moves the needle.

We looked at **where GMs would refocus if manual work disappeared**, and why that shift matters for operations at scale.

This perspective *matters* to People & Ops Leaders.

General Managers sit at the center of all on-the-ground operations, but their perspective is **often the least visible in leadership conversations.**

As leaders across People and Ops teams navigate rising costs, shifting organizational structures, new store openings, and evolving tech stacks, larger **responsibility has moved closer and closer to the store level.**

To empower GMs, leaders **must understand their needs, priorities, and sentiments to help them succeed.**



Table of contents

Survey methodology	4
GM satisfaction is high—but driven by effort, not support.	5
Fix hiring first to relieve GM admin overload.	6
GMs stay engaged when they see real, human impact	7
GMs want investment in people-first support.	8
Giving GMs time drives business ROI.	9
Conclusion	10

Survey methodology

We surveyed
500+ frontline leaders

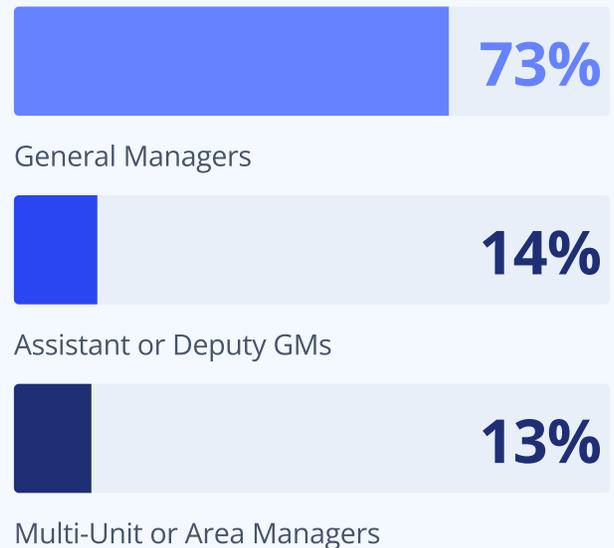
To capture an on-the-ground view of management challenges in high-volume restaurant and hospitality operations, we surveyed **500+ leaders** currently working across multiple segments.

In order to accurately represent the restaurant leadership experience, also included **Assistant and Deputy GMs, as well as Multi-Unit or Area Managers.**

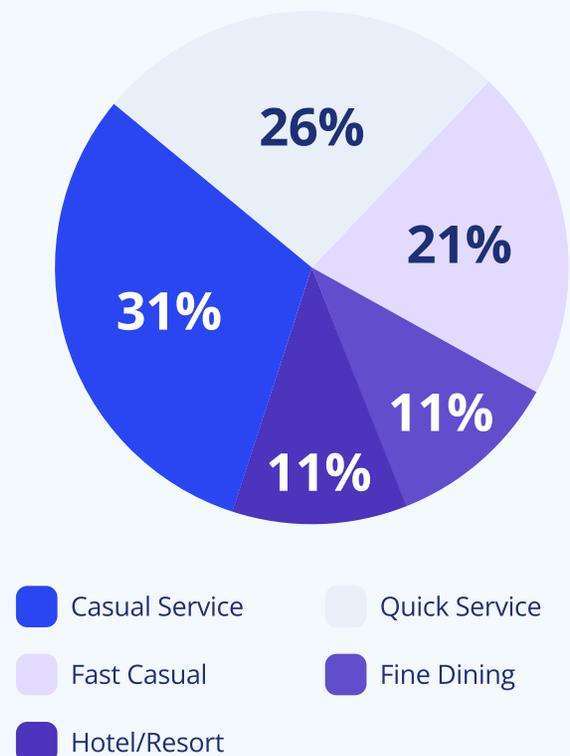
The survey included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions, focusing on **daily responsibilities, time allocation, hiring practices, administrative tasks, and perceived barriers to success.**

Surveys were conducted via Pollfish, a leading online survey platform, over a four-week period. Responses were distributed through panels and professional networks, ensuring representation across roles, tenure, and operation types.

Survey respondents by management job type



Survey respondents by industry



GM satisfaction is high— but driven by effort, not support.

Most surveyed GMs report being **satisfied** in their roles.

On the surface, this signals stability. But taken alongside other findings, it tells a more nuanced story: **satisfaction is being sustained through effort, not enablement.**

Interestingly, despite overall satisfaction, a significant number of GMs **report feeling overwhelmed by the volume of administrative and hiring responsibilities.**

These leaders are **stretched thin**, balancing **day-to-day operations with staffing pressures**, which can impact retention, team morale, and guest experience if left unaddressed.

Why this matters

For HR and Talent leaders, this matters because GM satisfaction alone **does not indicate that all systems are working well.**

In fact, it may indicate that **GMs are compensating for gaps themselves.**

Respondents indicated that...



of GMs are **mildly or very satisfied** with their roles.



of GMs are **mildly or very satisfied** with their current compensation and benefits.



of GMs are **moderately or very overloaded** with admin tasks.

Fix hiring first to relieve GM admin overload.

When asked which tasks are most overwhelming, **people management, including labor management and hiring**, was a key concern, with inventory and ordering also cited as stressful.

When evaluating next steps and direct implications for HR, TA, Ops, and Leadership teams, **addressing hiring challenges** is an effective way to tackle labor management issues, rather than the other way around.

Labor management problems, such as difficult scheduling or inconsistent coverage, often stem from **insufficient staffing or high turnover**.

Attempting to “fix” labor management without first ensuring a reliable, stable team **can only create a temporary solution**: schedules may be optimized on paper, but coverage gaps remain, and GMs are forced to react to absences or shortages.

Starting with **hiring** ensures adequate, qualified staffing, making scheduling, coverage, and labor management more sustainable over time.

The 3 most overwhelming admin tasks for GMs

1.
Scheduling and Labor management

25%

GMs reported scheduling and labor management was most overwhelming.

2.
Inventory

25%

GMs indicated inventory and ordering was most overwhelming.

3.
Hiring

18%

GMs indicated hiring was significantly overwhelming.

GMs stay engaged when they see real, human impact

When asked what they find most rewarding in their role, General Managers pointed overwhelmingly to **aspects of human connection** associated with their roles.

Conversely, far fewer GMs pointed to longer-term or abstract outcomes as their primary source of energy:

Developing skills **5%**

Growing their careers **10%**

Contributing to company growth **4%**

This indicates that, for many GMs, motivation is rooted in **immediate, tangible impact**: seeing a team succeed, delivering a great shift, or hitting operational goals that directly affect guests and employees.

This reinforces an important insight: GMs are most engaged when their work creates **clear, human impact**.

Efforts to support and retain GMs are most effective when they center on **enabling great teams and guest experiences**, rather than asking GMs to prioritize abstract goals that sit outside their immediate sphere of influence.

What energizes GMs the most?

31%

Serving guests and customers

26%

Working with their teams

24%

Achieving operational excellence and hitting goals

GMs want investment in people-first support.

When asked where brands should invest to make them more effective, GMs consistently pointed to **support that strengthens people and simplifies work.**

Rather than signaling resistance to technology, these responses **highlight a desire for tools and systems that enable human effectiveness.** By making training easier to deliver, staffing easier to manage, and day-to-day work less manual and fragmented.

💡 Tips for improvement

Training & development

Invest in clear onboarding and ongoing learning opportunities combined with mentorship and peer support.

Staffing & human effectiveness

Adopt an 'always hiring' approach: continuously build your candidate pipeline, prioritize retention, and stay ahead of staffing needs.

What GMs want their brands to invest in to help them succeed:



Giving GMs time back drives business ROI.

GMs are clear about how they would use additional time: reinvesting it into people management and business operations. Giving them bandwidth to focus on these priorities not only allows them to lead more effectively, **but also impacts strategic tasks that can make or break a brand's profit margins.**

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, **more than 50% of GMs report feeling overwhelmed with administrative tasks.** By removing these burdens, GMs can reinvest their energy into the work that drives performance, strengthens teams, and improves the guest experience. This is a key strategy to lessening burnout, improving satisfaction, and **positively impacting retention.**

Organizations that streamline hiring, automate administrative tasks, and reduce day-to-day friction **enable GMs to focus on leadership, strategy, and team development.** When GMs are able to do the work they actually want to do, **your business succeeds.**

If GMs had more time on their hands, they would invest in...



Why this matters

Saving just one GM from turnover **saves ~\$13,867 in hiring costs per person.** It is clear that investing in GM bandwidth has both **operational and financial impacts.**

Conclusion



This report makes one thing clear:

General Managers are motivated by people, performance, and impact.

People



They are most engaged when they can lead teams, mentor employees, and focus on the guest experience.

Manual processes and reactive hiring pull GMs away from that work.

Performance



Over time, this friction shows up as burnout, inconsistent staffing, and higher turnover—outcomes that affect the entire business.

Impact



When organizations invest in supportive hiring infrastructure, the impact is clear: **more engaged GMs, stronger teams, faster stabilization, and better business results.**

For Ops, Talent, and HR leaders, the opportunity isn't to ask more of GMs, **but to give them time back.** Automation and modern hiring interventions remove unnecessary work so GMs can do what only they can do: lead.

Curious how leading brands are using LANDED to save **GMs 50+ hours weekly** and drive stronger labor outcomes?

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