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# EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Revitalizing a Changing Workforce

A RESEARCH REPORT BY  
THE SOCIETY FOR HUMAN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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## ABOUT THIS RESEARCH REPORT

The following report represents the findings from the SHRM Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Survey of 600 U.S. employees, conducted in November-December 2015. The purpose of the annual employee survey is to identify factors that influence overall employee satisfaction and engagement in the workplace. This information will provide insight on employee preferences and highlight key areas for organizations to consider as they develop and enhance initiatives for organizational improvement.

**The survey assessed 43 aspects of employee job satisfaction and 37 aspects of employee engagement. Each year the aspects are examined and modified, if necessary. The aspects are categorized into the following eight areas:**

CAREER DEVELOPMENT	BENEFITS	WORK ENVIRONMENT	ENGAGEMENT OPINIONS
COMPENSATION	EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGEMENT	CONDITIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIORS

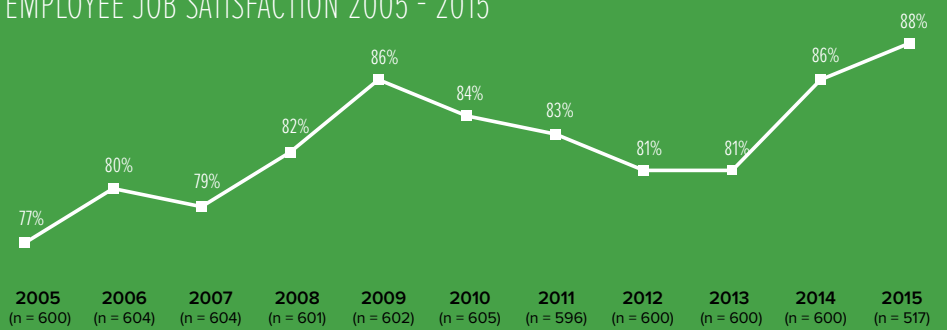
**The overall findings are explained in text and through supporting visual references. Analysis by trend data, demographic variables and other variables can be found in the Appendix. The research objectives of this report are to provide the following information:**

- An analysis of the importance of various contributors to employee job satisfaction, including statistically significant differences.
- An analysis of the relationship between employee satisfaction levels of job satisfaction contributors.
- A rating of the top five contributors to overall employee job satisfaction by demographic variables, including employee gender, age and job level.
- An analysis of employee engagement through an engagement index computation.
- Additional analyses by demographics, including employee gender, age and job level.



**FIGURE 1**

## EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION 2005 - 2015



**Note:** Figure represents respondents who indicated they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their current job. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." "Neutral/Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" were excluded from this analysis.

**Source:** Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

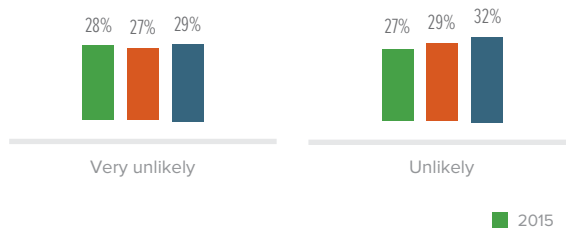
# 88%

OF U.S. EMPLOYEES REPORTED OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THEIR CURRENT JOB, MARKING THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS.

**This year presents the greatest proportion of employees satisfied with their current job since SHRM first administered the Employee Job Satisfaction Survey in 2002.**

In 2015, 88% of U.S. employees reported they were satisfied with their job overall, with 37% reporting they were very satisfied and 51% reporting they were somewhat satisfied. This percentage marks the highest level of satisfaction over the last 10 years. Since 2013, the percentage of satisfied employees has been trending upward. Nevertheless, it is evident that a larger portion of employees are satisfied only to a certain extent, which signals the possibility for improvement. Similar attitudes were found with satisfaction toward employers: 45% indicated being somewhat satisfied and 40% indicated being very satisfied with their organization.

Not surprisingly, as the economy has remained relatively stable over the last couple of years, organizations may have found themselves being able to reintroduce incentives and perks that had been reduced or eliminated as a result of the Great Recession. Conversely, employees have more flexibility to seek out employment opportunities that better fit their needs and wants rather than remain in a position for its job security. Forty-five percent of employees reported that they would be likely or very likely to look for other jobs outside their current organization within the next year.

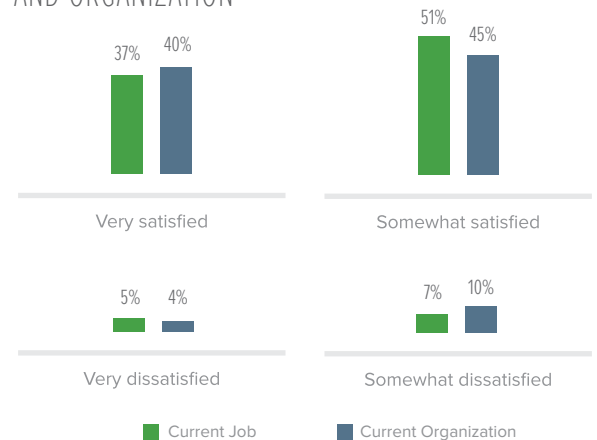


Note: n = 583-600.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

FIGURE 2

## SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT JOB AND ORGANIZATION

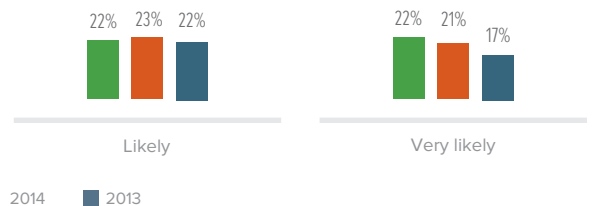


Note: n = 517-521. Figure represents respondents who indicated they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their current job or organization. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." "Neutral/Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" were excluded from this analysis.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

FIGURE 3

## LIKELIHOOD OF LOOKING FOR A JOB OUTSIDE CURRENT ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

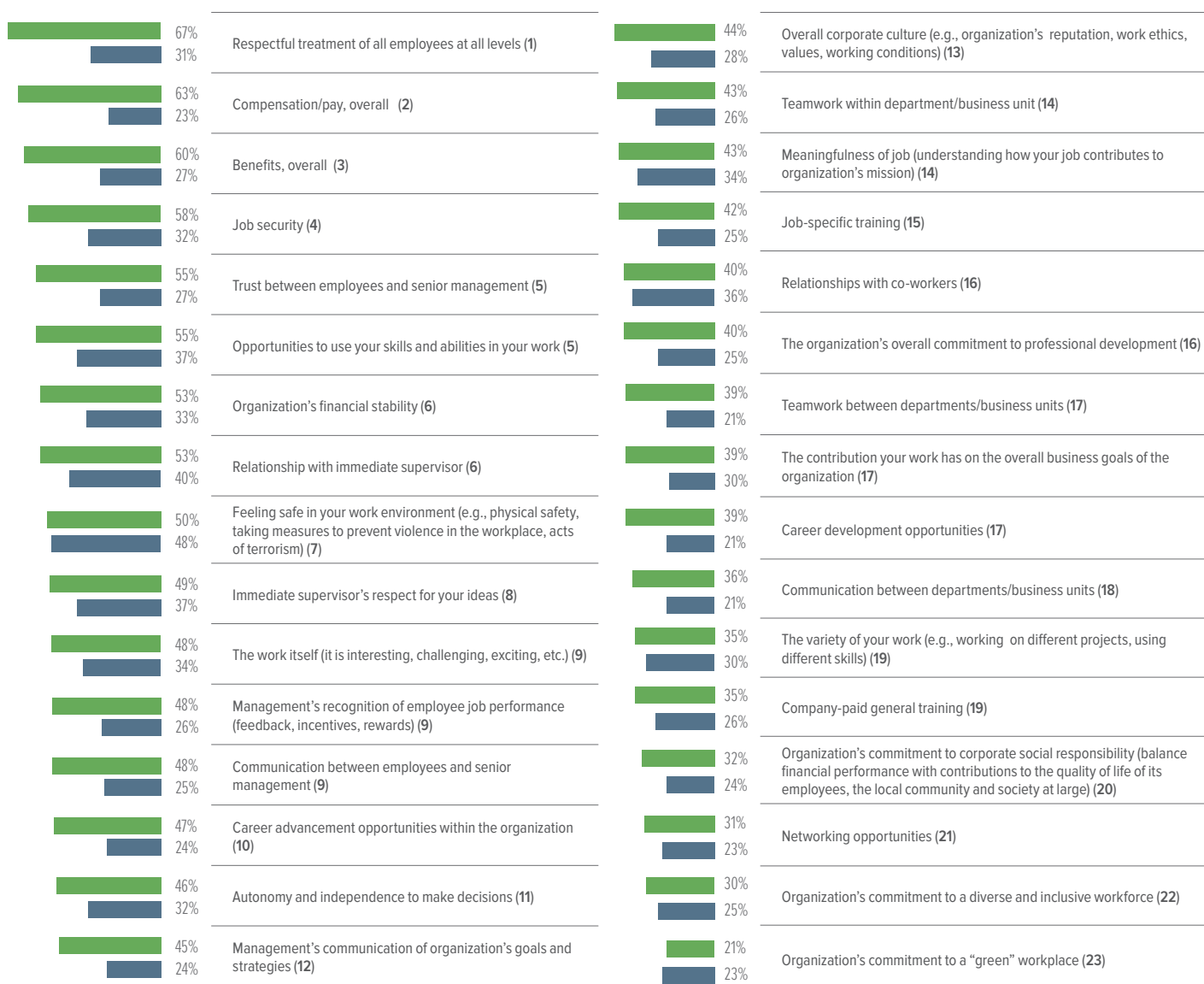
## Top Five Contributors to Employee Job Satisfaction

Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels was rated as very important by 67% of employees in 2015, making it the **top** contributor to overall employee job satisfaction for the second year in a row (see Figure 4; see trend data for importance of job satisfaction contributors in Table 4 of the Appendix). The second consecutive appearance of this aspect at the top of the list of job satisfaction contributors supports the theory that although employees do place importance on financial features of a job such as pay and benefits, they consider culture and connection to be of utmost importance. Feeling appreciated for their time and efforts creates a bond between employees, management and their organization.

FIGURE 4

### JOB SATISFACTION ASPECTS RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT AND VERY SATISFIED BY EMPLOYEES

Very Important  
Very Satisfied



Note: n = 468-595. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." Data are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicated "very important."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)



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# 67%

RESPECTFUL TREATMENT OF ALL EMPLOYEES AT ALL LEVELS WAS RATED AS  
VERY IMPORTANT BY EMPLOYEES IN 2015.

At 63%, overall compensation/pay was the **second** most important contributor to job satisfaction, jumping from the fourth position in 2014. This aspect has held a spot within the leading five job satisfaction contributors since 2002, when SHRM first began administering its Job Satisfaction Survey. Overall benefits were the **third** most important job satisfaction contributor, with 60% of employees rating it as very important. Similar to compensation/pay, benefits have also been among the top five contributors to job satisfaction since in 2002, with the exception of 2012. Moving from the fifth position in 2014 to **fourth** in 2015 was job security, with 58% of employees citing it as very important to their job satisfaction; this aspect has moved around the five principal job satisfaction influencers since 2002.

It is undeniable that compensation/pay, benefits and job security all shape the degree to which employees are satisfied; however, it is also noteworthy to mention that the extent of their importance fluctuates as a result of external factors such as changing economic conditions. Organizations may need to tailor their retention and recruitment strategies around multiple elements, creating a total rewards program. Relying solely on an individual aspect may make their approach less effective or even outdated as dynamics quickly shift.

The **fifth** leading job satisfaction contributor in 2015 was a tie between two aspects: opportunities to use skills and abilities, and trust between employees and senior management. Just over one-half (55%) of employees rated these workplace features as very important to their job satisfaction. Not surprisingly, employees indicated that they want chances to demonstrate their talents. This trend was especially visible when job mobility and growth were static; however, even as employment opportunities expand, employees are noting the importance of fine-tuning their expertise. Although trust between employees and senior management fell three spots, its presence within the leading five job satisfaction contributors reveals that employees value interpersonal relationships and a workplace culture that fosters trust from leadership.

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ORGANIZATIONS MAY NEED  
TO TAILOR THEIR RETENTION  
AND RECRUITMENT  
STRATEGIES AROUND  
MULTIPLE ELEMENTS,  
CREATING A TOTAL  
REWARDS PROGRAM.



Compensation/pay was the second most important contributor to job satisfaction, jumping from the fourth position in 2014.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

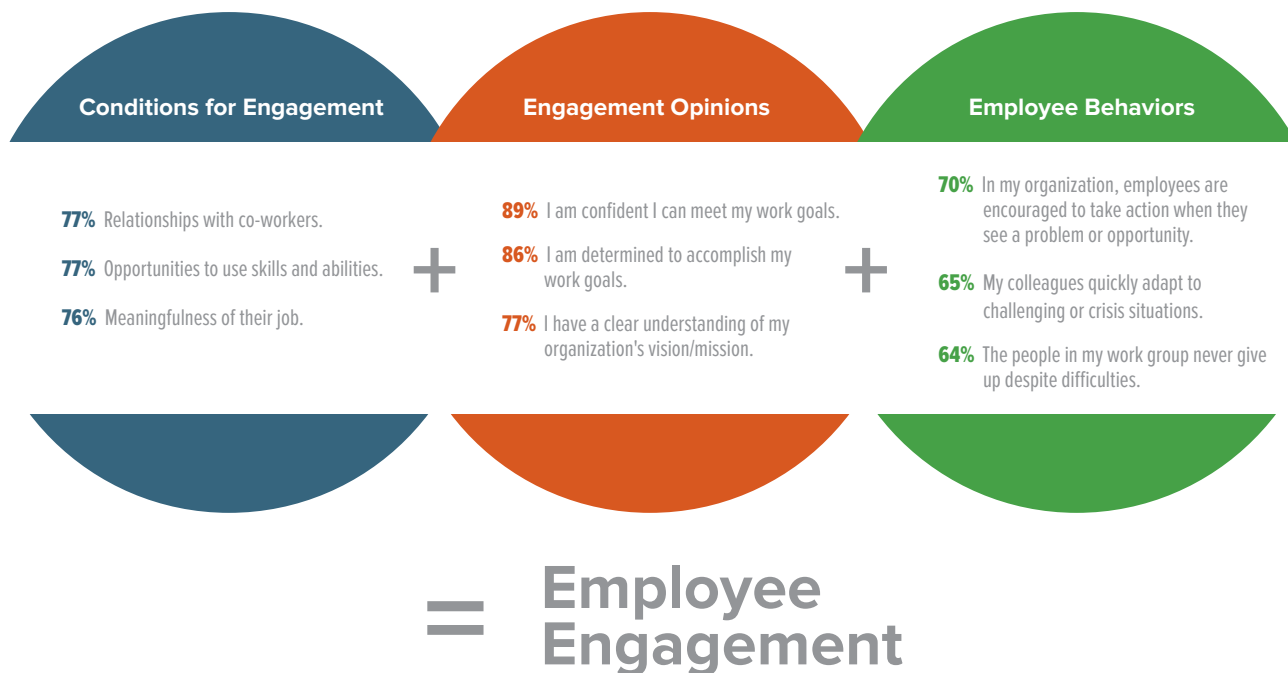
## Top Aspects Contributing to Employee Engagement

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least engaged and 5 being the most engaged, this research found employees to be moderately engaged with an index of 3.8, relatively similar to prior years (3.7 in 2014 and 3.6 in 2013). Employee engagement may or may not be aligned with employee job satisfaction, as engagement is tied to employees' connection and commitment to their work and their particular organization. Furthermore, while employee engagement levels indicate that employees appear to be moderately engaged, this level of engagement may not be widespread throughout the entire organization, as employees in lower job levels appear to be less engaged.

Employee engagement is typically defined by the actual conditions in the workplace (the environment and the work itself) and workers' opinions and behaviors (how the employees perceive their relationship with their work, as well as how they view others around them relating to their work).

Employee engagement factors were also analyzed according to a variety of demographics, including gender, age and job level. Statistically significant differences revealed from these analyses are shown in the Appendix.

**FIGURE 5**  
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



Note: Top three employee engagement conditions, opinions and behaviors are shown.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

## What Do These Findings Mean for Organizations?

**Employees still value culture, but compensation is increasing in importance.** There is some evidence that after an extended period of wage stagnation, compensation is starting to improve for more workers. But this trend is not widespread and perhaps explains why more employees in 2015 ranked overall compensation/pay as very important for determining job satisfaction when compared with 2014. More than three out of five (63%) respondents cited this factor in 2015, the highest level since 2006 (67%). This also marked the second consecutive year that respondents most frequently pointed to respectful treatment of all employees at all levels as very important for determining job satisfaction. Knowing this, HR professionals' recruitment and retention strategies should be balanced with competitive compensation and a workplace culture that promotes respect.

**Workers' priorities are often similar across generations, but strategies should not reflect a one-size-fits-all approach.**

In what has become a challenging time for managing talent of all levels, HR professionals are frequently leveraging their organizations' benefits as a means of recruiting and retaining high-performing employees. The results from this survey show that Millennials, members of Generation X and Baby Boomers all place a high level of importance on overall benefits when determining job satisfaction. However, they value a few other aspects of their jobs differently. Millennials (88%) placed greater importance on career development opportunities than Baby Boomers did (76%), for example, and members of Generation X (89%) more frequently cited organization's commitment to professional development as a contributor to job satisfaction compared with Baby Boomers (79%). As the proportions of Millennial and Baby Boomer workers in the labor force shift in the future, HR professionals should be aware of different factors that engage employees of all generations.

**Employees want to feel valued and included.** Employers should encourage constant communication and feedback among employees at all levels of the organization. Workers of all career levels and generations place high value on compensation- and benefit-related factors when determining job satisfaction, but nonfinancial factors also weigh heavily in employees' satisfaction with their careers. At least half of respondents to this survey found a variety of these factors to be very important, including trust between employees and senior management, relationship with immediate supervisor, and feeling safe in the work environment. By fostering a workplace environment that emphasizes communication, respect for others and collaboration among workers at all levels, HR professionals can expect higher levels of engagement from their employees.

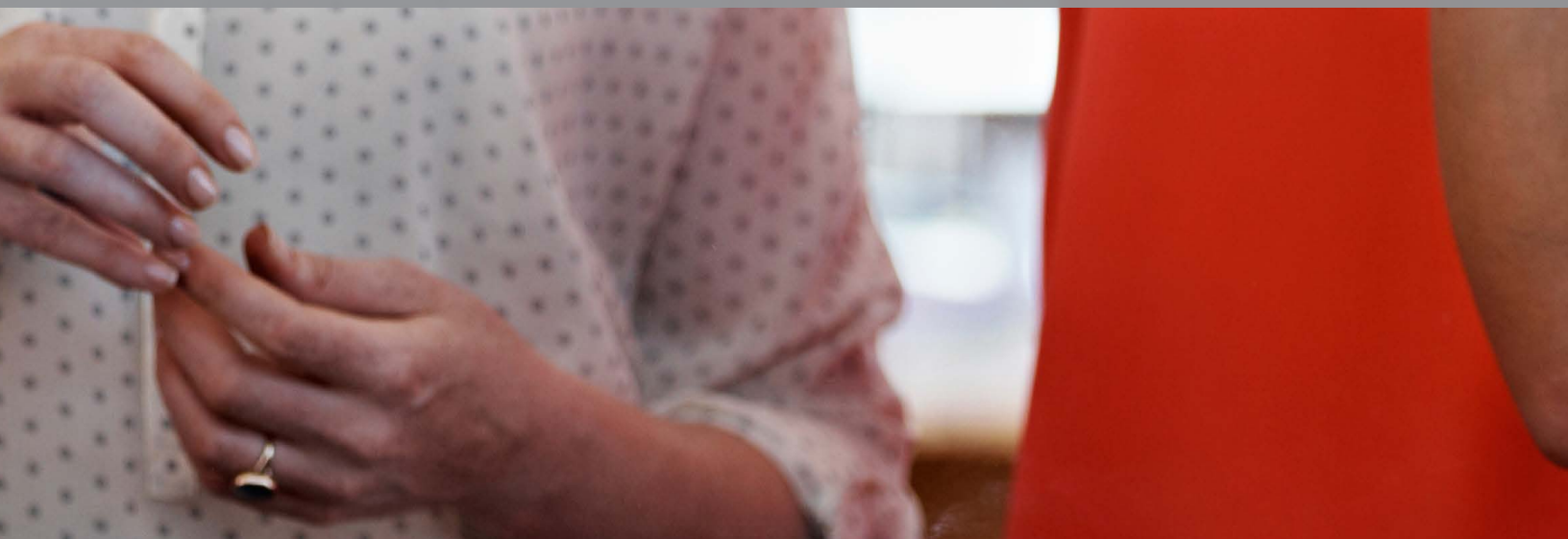
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**WORKERS OF ALL CAREER LEVELS AND GENERATIONS PLACE HIGH VALUE ON COMPENSATION- AND BENEFIT-RELATED FACTORS WHEN DETERMINING JOB SATISFACTION, BUT NONFINANCIAL FACTORS ALSO WEIGH HEAVILY IN EMPLOYEES' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR JOBS.**



STEREOTYPES ABOUT MILLENNIALS OFTEN LEAD TO MISINTERPRETATIONS ABOUT THIS COHORT. THEIR CONFIDENCE AND IDEALISTIC AND AMBITIOUS OUTLOOK ARE FREQUENTLY MISTAKEN FOR ARROGANCE AND EGOTISM.

GIVEN TODAY'S ADVANCEMENTS, MILLENNIALS MAY BE ACHIEVING MILESTONES MORE QUICKLY THAN THEIR GENERATIONAL COUNTERPARTS AND, THEREFORE, LESS WILLING TO STAY PUT FOR EXTENSIVE PERIODS OF TIME WITHOUT PROMOTION.

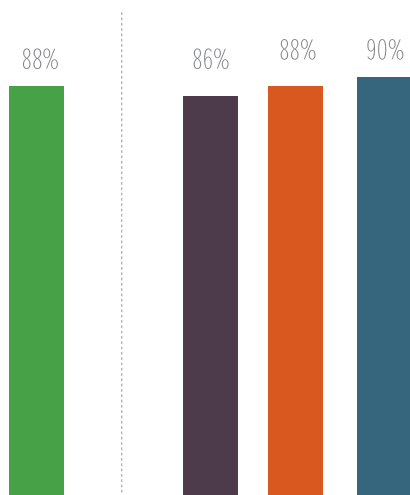


# MILLENNIALS

## Misunderstood in the Workplace?

**At the time when more Baby Boomers begin to exit the workforce, a greater number of Millennials will enter the workforce. It is estimated that Millennial workers (those born between 1980 and 2000) will comprise one-half of the workforce by 2020.<sup>1</sup>**

**FIGURE 6**  
JOB SATISFACTION BY GENERATION



- Overall Employees
- Millennial Employees
- Generation X Employees
- Baby Boomer Employees

**Note:** n = 158-517. Figure represents respondents who indicated they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their current job. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." "Neutral/Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" were excluded from this analysis.

**Source:** Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

The Millennial generation is frequently generalized as entitled, lazy and self-centered. Given these stereotypes, it would not be surprising to see these young workers as less satisfied with their jobs. This research, however, found no statistically significant differences in job satisfaction between generations. Overall, 88% of employees were satisfied with their job this year; 86% of Millennials indicated the same. Similar percentages were reported for Generation X (88%) and Baby Boomers (90%) (see Figure 6).

Stereotypes about Millennials often lead to misinterpretations about this cohort.<sup>2</sup> Their confidence and idealistic and ambitious outlook are frequently mistaken for arrogance and egotism. Given today's advancements, Millennials may be achieving milestones more quickly than their generational counterparts and, therefore, less willing to stay put for extensive periods of time without promotion. Arguably a bit impatient, Millennials are, in reality, eager to contribute and want to be involved, but their attitude is repeatedly frowned upon. For example, as found in this research, younger workers want opportunities for development and self-improvement, even if that means searching for employment outside their current organization. Despite their determination, typically seen as a positive attribute, society misconstrues these shorter tenures as job-hopping, with the implication that Millennials lack a sense of loyalty to their employer.

As a result of these perceptions, organizations develop initiatives and programs to mitigate potential problems while working with these younger staff. However, how effective are these efforts? In fact, are they even addressing the correct issues? It is most likely that this workplace tension is actually a result of various factors and is falsely attributed to generational differences. Many conflicts may be more a product of various life stages, career stages or job levels.<sup>3</sup> For instance, employees with children may place a higher value on family-friendly benefits.

Moreover, this research indicates that there are not a lot of distinctions between what factors each generation values and the degree of satisfaction with these factors. Not surprisingly,

# MILLENNIALS

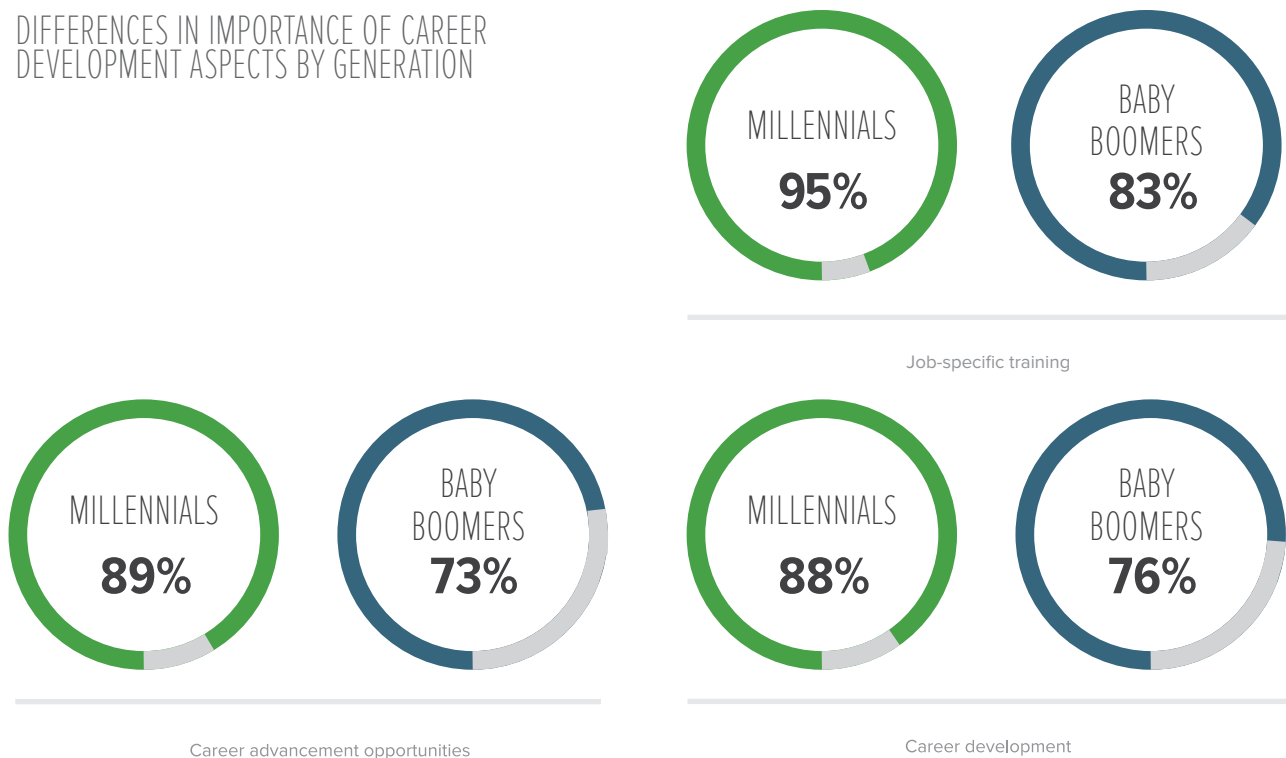
Misunderstood in the Workplace?

Millennials placed more importance on job-specific training, career development opportunities and career advancement opportunities contributing to their job satisfaction compared with older generations (see Figure 7). On the other hand, this research revealed several differences among employees from different job levels in their perceptions of importance of and satisfaction with overall compensation/pay, contribution of work to organization's business goals, variety of work and other aspects (see Table 6, Table 11 and Table 17 in the Appendix).

Furthermore, these shifts in workplace demographics coincide with a unique time period in the professional world.<sup>4</sup> Maintaining “business as usual” is anything but usual and is getting increasingly more difficult. Some believe that the demand for a 24/7 environment is a Millennial characteristic, but isn't that a universal attitude? Largely on account of access to and speed of the Internet and other evolving technology, we are able to attain vast amounts of information and resources in mere moments. Organizations must adjust to fit the changing business landscape, externally and internally. Fulfilling consumers' expectations and wants in a real-time manner requires revision of systems and policies. Organizations must also strive to be adaptable within their workplace to survive by transitioning to continuous feedback instead of relying on solely a formal performance review process and offering flexible work arrangements to avoid business interruptions. The need to dispose of rigid procedures is a reflection of the changing business world rather than the integration of the growing number of Millennial workers.

FIGURE 7

## DIFFERENCES IN IMPORTANCE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS BY GENERATION



Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

## What Should Organizations Consider as Millennials Are Integrated into the Workforce?

**Stop the stereotypes.** Getting rid of any preconceived notions about Millennials can avoid carrying forward inaccurate perceptions about the group. Although Millennials may have slightly different mindsets, on the whole, they tend to place significance on several of the same aspects of job satisfaction that Generation X and Baby Boomers do. Putting excessive focus on generational differences only perpetuates these false impressions. When designing training and development programs or benefits strategies, keep in mind other elements such as career level and life stage, not just age, to build an approach that is appropriate for various groups of employees.

**Cultivate culture.** Value-centric Millennials typically place high importance on openness, equality, community and purpose (although, according to this research, all employees are looking for these types of aspects). Transparency and fairness generate trust. In addition, building an inclusive feel within the organization will help establish an emotional connection between the employee and the employer.

**Develop and engage your talent.** Given that the only generational differences among job satisfaction contributors were within the career development category, it is obvious that Millennials believe managers and employers should nurture and invest in them with the intention of advancing within their profession. Millennials may become impatient with mundane tasks while attempting to pursue their interest, thus it is important to provide opportunities for them to be challenged with new tasks as they have mastered others. Another approach to engage this generation is to implement reverse mentoring: allowing Millennials to be mentors as well as mentees. This strategy may provide this tech-savvy and idealist group of employees an opportunity to display their abilities, especially during a phase of transitioning business conditions. Furthermore, this type of mentoring reinforces the idea that everyone matters.

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**MILLENNIALS ARE LOOKING TO CREATE OUTCOMES WITHIN MEANINGFUL PROJECTS; DEVELOPING A BOND WITH THESE EMPLOYEES AND SHOWING CONFIDENCE THAT THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES WILL HELP KEEP THEM ENGAGED AND HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE IN ACHIEVING SET GOALS.**

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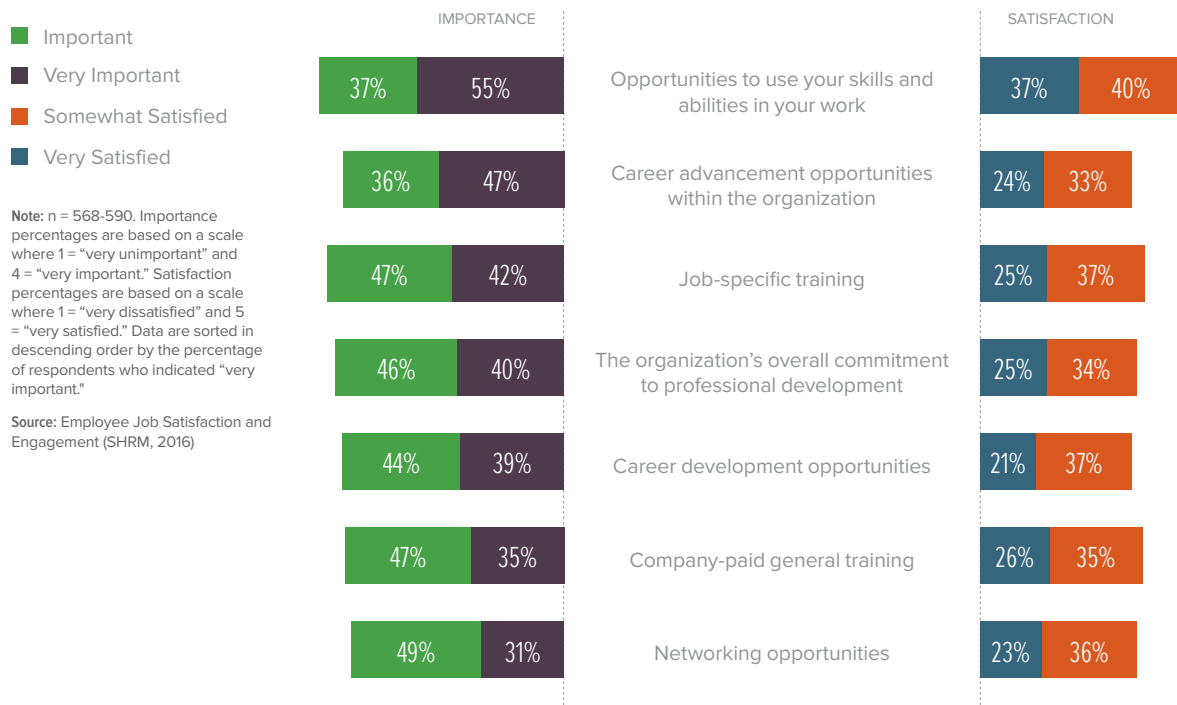
# EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

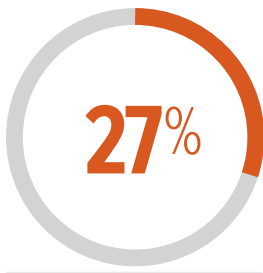


**Given the changes in the way organizations are operating and the shifting demographic composition of the workforce, offering career development opportunities to employees could be extremely beneficial to employers.**

Informal and formal learning experiences can provide employees with a more comprehensive skill set and reassurance that their employer recognizes their value. Presented with new knowledge and abilities, employees will be better prepared to handle new technologies and innovations and may be able to contribute to enhancing their organization's systems and procedures.

**FIGURE 8**  
IMPORTANCE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS





More than one-quarter (27%) of employees who anticipate looking for a new job outside of their organization within the next year reported better career advancement opportunities as a reason for the search, whereas among the employees who said they would be unlikely or very unlikely to explore external employment options, only 9% noted career advancements as motivation to remain with their current employer. This sharp contrast in percentages suggests that organizations may need to improve their efforts to promote employees from within the organization.

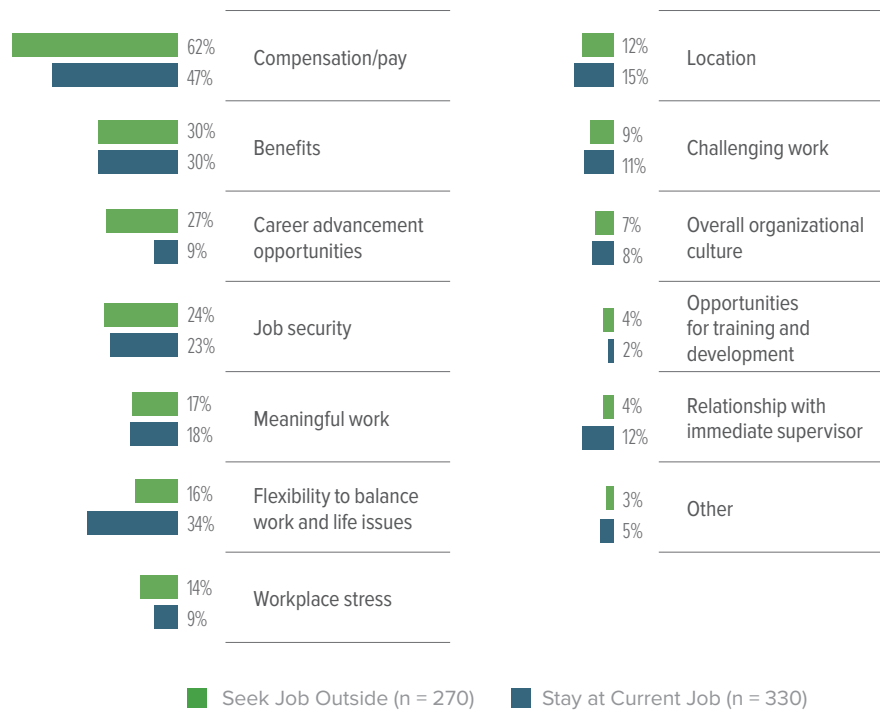
## Opportunities to Use Skills and Abilities

More than one-half (55%) of employees rated opportunities to use their skills and abilities at work as a very important contributor to their job satisfaction. This aspect is tied at number five with trust between employees and senior management. Research indicates that HR professionals are worried about the potential mismatch between the skills required to be successful in a role and the skills that job candidates actually possess. In research addressing the human capital challenges in the coming decade, SHRM found that the leading concerns among HR professionals were developing the next generation of organizational leaders (39%) and managing the loss of key workers and their skill sets due to retirement (35%).<sup>5</sup> Given the anticipated skills gap, career and professional development is particularly important to employees and employers alike. It is essential for organizations

to prepare not only for the influx of Millennial workers and outflow of Baby Boomers, but also for the changes in organizational operations as a result of factors such as new technologies and innovations. Investing in career development opportunities for employees can be valuable for all groups involved. Providing job training, mentoring and other chances to enhance employee learning can serve as a retention and recruitment strategy.

Nearly eight out of 10 (77%) employees indicated they were satisfied (responded “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied”) with this aspect. Similar to previous years, opportunities to use skills and abilities held the highest percentage of very satisfied employees within the career development category. This high level of satisfaction placed opportunities to use skills and abilities at work second on the list of factors contributing to employee engagement.

**FIGURE 9**  
REASONS EMPLOYEES STAY OR LEAVE THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATION



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

## Career Advancement Opportunities Within Organization

Nearly one-half (47%) of employees reported that career advancement opportunities within their organization were very important to their job satisfaction, the same percentage as last year. Over the past eight years, the percentage of employees considering career advancement opportunities as very important to their job satisfaction has risen by almost 20 percentage points. Not surprisingly, Millennials and Gen Xers were more likely than Baby Boomers to consider career advancement opportunities as important job satisfaction contributors. Professional nonmanagement employees were also more likely than executives to think this aspect was important.

One-quarter (24%) of employees reported being very satisfied and one-third (33%) were somewhat satisfied with the opportunity for upward mobility in their organization. Middle-management employees and executives were more likely to be satisfied with career advancement opportunities compared with employees at the nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement level.

Employee retention is critical as turnover can inflict a huge burden on organizations. Productivity loss during recruitment and training of new employees has financial and operational consequences for organizations that do not strive to reduce turnover. SHRM's 2015 *Human Capital Benchmarking Report* found that the average voluntary turnover rate was 12%.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the report noted that the average cost-per-hire was \$3,420, an increase of 73% compared with 2010, and the average time spent filling a position was 42 days, 15 more days than just five years ago.

With an improved labor market and the economy, organizations are making strides to retain top talent. Forty-five percent of employees reported that it would be likely, to some degree, that they would seek out job opportunities outside of their current organization in the next 12 months. Of those employees who anticipate looking for new employment options, more than one-quarter (27%) reported better career advancement opportunities as a reason for the search, whereas among the employees who said they would be unlikely or very unlikely to explore outside employment, only 9% noted career advancements as motivation to remain with their current employer (see Figure 9). This sharp contrast in percentages suggests that organizations may need to improve their efforts to promote employees from within the organization. Not only is it costly for employers to recruit external candidates, but it may harbor animosity among current employees. Always hiring outside applicants may imply that existing employees are not qualified, incapable of succeeding in the role or undeserving of a promotion. Mobility programs and job enlargement are methods that organizations can implement to boost engagement levels.

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**OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, THE PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES CONSIDERING CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS VERY IMPORTANT TO THEIR JOB SATISFACTION HAS RISEN BY ALMOST 20 PERCENTAGE POINTS. NOT SURPRISINGLY, MILLENNIALS AND GEN XERS WERE MORE LIKELY THAN BABY BOOMERS TO CONSIDER CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS IMPORTANT JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS.**

## Job-specific Training

Job-specific training can help employees develop their talents, empowering them to become more effective and engaged in their roles. Employees' expanded knowledge could lead to enhanced organizational processes and increased productivity. Forty-two percent of employees viewed job-specific training as very important to their job satisfaction. Three-fifths (62%) of employees indicated they were satisfied with job-specific training at their organization. Female and Millennial employees reported job-specific training to be more important to their job satisfaction than did male and Baby Boomer employees, respectively.

## Organization's Commitment to Professional Development

Expanding and improving employees' skills and knowledge through professional development helps them master their responsibilities in their current role. Professional development can encompass various learning opportunities, such as formal and informal training and attainment of certifications or degrees. Organizations that dedicate a portion of their budget to professional development send a message that they invest in their employees. Additional benefits of professional development include personal development and greater opportunities for career advancement. Forty percent of employees rated this aspect as very important to job satisfaction. Generation X employees were more likely to report their organization's commitment to professional development as very important to their job satisfaction compared with Baby Boomers. Nearly three-fifths (59%) of respondents reported being satisfied with their organization's commitment to professional development. Executives were more satisfied with this aspect than were nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement and professional nonmanagement employees.

SHRM research on the strategic use of benefits found that 55% of organizations had difficulty recruiting highly skilled employees; however, just two out of five (40%) respondents had positively leveraged their organization's benefits to recruit these workers in the last 12 months, and approximately two-

fifths (39%) of them positively leveraged professional and career development benefits.<sup>7</sup> Slightly more than one-half (54%) of organizations indicated they thought professional and career development would become more important when recruiting highly skilled employees in the next three to five years. Engagement can be improved by attaining new knowledge and skills; providing ways in which to do so can also help build trust and commitment among employees.

## Career Development Opportunities

Developing career paths and ladders are two techniques that can encourage employees to evolve in their profession. Whereas career paths are typically seen as more horizontal movements and career ladders are viewed as more vertical movements, both options serve to help employees grow their skills and knowledge and can lead to higher levels of engagement. Two-fifths (39%) of employees, the same percentage as in 2014, reported that career development opportunities were very important to their overall job satisfaction, and 58% were satisfied with this aspect in their current job. This element was more important to Millennials than to workers in the Baby Boom generation. Professional nonmanagement, middle-management and executive employees were more likely to report being satisfied with this aspect than were nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees.

Research found that the top advantages of older workers (employees who are 55 or older) are their additional experience (77%), maturity/professionalism (71%) and stronger work ethic (70%).<sup>8</sup> Although many believe that the loss of older workers could potentially create a skills shortage, 34% of organizations have not taken any steps to mitigate the issue. As organizations prepare for the possible skills gap in the coming years, it is critical to empower employees with the resources they need to be successful in their roles.

One possible option to prevent a shortage of skilled workers is to recruit younger workers to help fill positions left by the exiting workforce. A recent SHRM survey found that one out of five (20%) organizations had hired 2015 college graduates to begin working after graduation, and 15% indicated they

had hired 2015 college graduates to begin working before graduation.<sup>9</sup> Forty-six percent of organizations had talent development strategies or training programs that focused on recent graduates and/or other employees with limited work experience. These programs may help bridge the anticipated skills gap.

### Company-paid General Training

Thirty-five percent of employees felt that paid training was very important to employee job satisfaction, and 61% said they were satisfied with this aspect, an increase of 17 percentage points from 2013. The rise in satisfaction may be a result of organizations returning training to their lists of offered benefits after a period of shrinking budgets during the Great Recession or a tool to retain or recruit talented workers. Organizations that require their employees to have advanced degrees or value higher education in their culture may want to emphasize this benefit to help attract talent.

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**THE 2015 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS RESEARCH REPORT INDICATED THAT ROUGHLY ONE-HALF OF ORGANIZATIONS OFFERED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS: 56% OFFERED UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE, AND 52% OFFERED GRADUATE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.<sup>10</sup>**

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**ACCORDING TO THE 2015 HUMAN CAPITAL BENCHMARKING REPORT, THE AVERAGE MAXIMUM REIMBURSEMENT ALLOWED FOR TUITION/EDUCATION EXPENSES IS \$4,442, A DECREASE OF 11% FROM 2014.<sup>11</sup>**

### Networking Opportunities

Networking can be used to foster cross-functional and collaborative skills with internal and external partners. Thirty-one percent of employees felt that networking opportunities were very important to their job satisfaction, and 59% percent were satisfied with their opportunities to network, an increase of seven percentage points since last year. Although this aspect is ranked within the bottom five contributors to job satisfaction, it has gained importance over the years. One explanation for this growing trend may be the vast improvements and accessibility of technology and social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter. Executives were more satisfied with opportunities for networking compared with nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement, professional nonmanagement and middle-management employees.

The use of social media for the purpose of recruiting and screening job candidates has become increasingly popular. The majority (84%) of organizations had used social media as a recruitment tool, an increase of 28 percentage points from 2011, according to recent research from SHRM.<sup>12</sup> Another 9% of organizations indicated that although they had never used this approach, they planned to use it. Pursuing passive job candidates (82%) continues to be the leading motivation behind recruiting via social media, followed by increasing employer brand and recognition (77%) and seeking out candidates with particular skill sets (71%). This technique may be helpful to employers in reaching out to candidates who may not have applied otherwise and identifying potential applicants who could meet the requirements of difficult-to-fill positions.

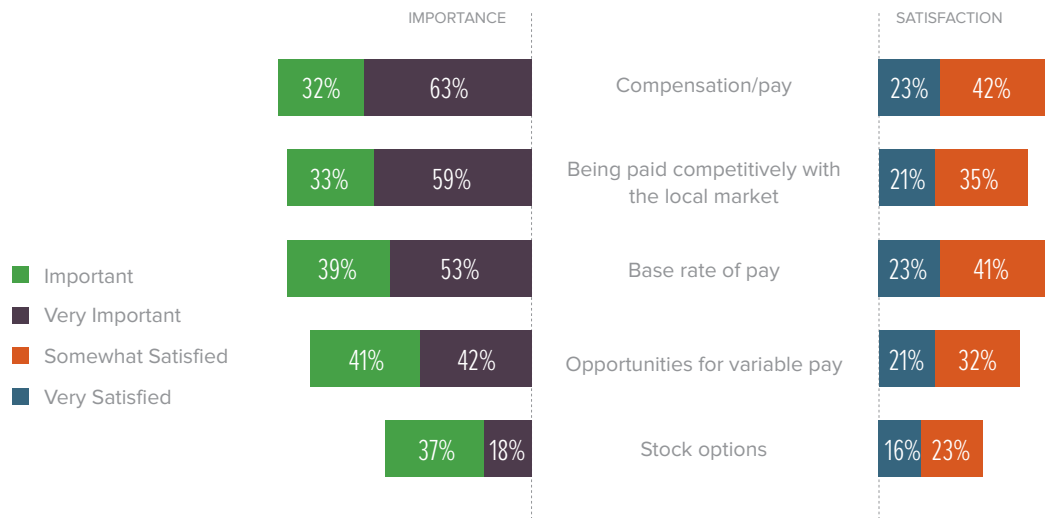


With the introduction of new interpersonal job satisfaction contributors to last year's *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* research report, the data revealed that culture and relationships are just as important as financial components that come with a job.<sup>13</sup>

As the economy continued to improve over the last several years, respectful treatment of employees remained the leading job satisfaction contributor; however, employees have shifted their focus slightly to other aspects of the job such as compensation and benefits. This change in workers' attitudes is not unexpected after a period of neglected salary raises and bonuses, health care premium increases and reductions in employee benefits. Employees may now be in a better position and feel more confident in exploring employment opportunities, as indicated by their motives to leave an organization and the declining importance of job security over the last couple of years.

FIGURE 10

### IMPORTANCE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH COMPENSATION ASPECTS



Note: n = 468-595. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." Data are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicated "very important."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

### Compensation/Pay

Along with job security, compensation/pay has been one of the top five contributors to job satisfaction since 2002; 63% of employees indicated that it was very important to their job satisfaction. This year, compensation/pay jumped up two spaces from last year's fourth position as a contributor to job satisfaction. As economic conditions continue to improve, employees in the workforce may be looking to recoup missed opportunities for raises and bonuses during the Great Recession. Sixty-five percent of employees were satisfied with their overall compensation/pay.

In addition to overall compensation/pay, employees rated the importance of four other common compensation factors that contribute to job satisfaction:

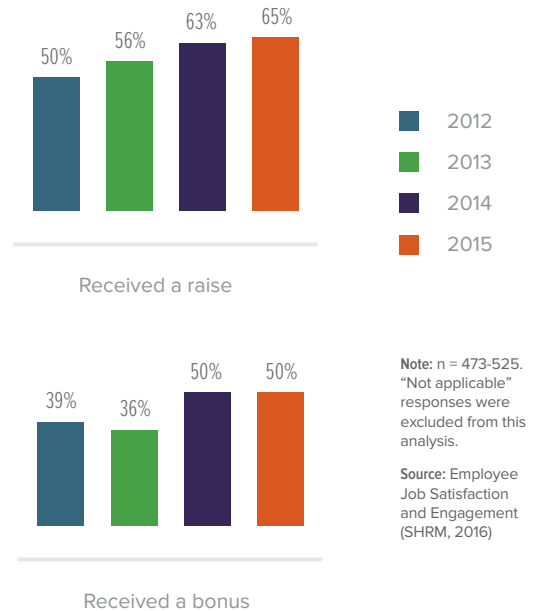
- **Being paid competitively with the local market:** Nearly three-fifths (59%) of employees viewed this aspect as very important to job satisfaction, and 56% were satisfied with this factor. Professional nonmanagement employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) employees to view being paid competitively with the local market as very important to their job satisfaction.
- **Base rate of pay:** One-half (53%) of employees rated this aspect as very important to job satisfaction; 64% indicated they were satisfied with this aspect. Generation X employees were more likely to cite base rate of pay as an important contributor to their job satisfaction compared with Baby Boomers.
- **Opportunities for variable pay** (e.g., bonuses, commissions, other variable pay, monetary rewards for ideas or suggestions): Roughly two-fifths (42%) of employees reported variable pay or differential pay was very important to job satisfaction, and 53% were satisfied with this factor.
- **Stock options:** Less than one-fifth (18%) of employees indicated this aspect was very important to job satisfaction; about two-fifths (39%) of employees whose organizations offered stock options were satisfied with this benefit.

In January 2016, SHRM Leading Indicators of National Employment® (LINE®) research signaled optimism in new-hire compensation.<sup>14</sup> In comparison with the previous year, the rate of increase for new-hire compensation rose slightly in the manufacturing sector and substantially in the service sector. Top talent may soon be looking elsewhere for opportunities if they do not feel like they are being adequately rewarded.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of employees reported receiving a raise (e.g., merit increase, cost of living increase) in the last year—only two percentage points more than last year’s amount, a nine percentage point increase from 2013 and a 15 percentage point increase from 2012. Likewise, one out of every two employees received a bonus in the last 12 months, similar to 2014 and an increase of 14 percentage points from 2013.

FIGURE 11

## PREVALENCE OF EMPLOYEE RAISES AND BONUSES



## Benefits

Historically, benefits have played a major role in contributing to job satisfaction. With the exception of 2012, when this aspect was rated sixth, benefits have been among the top five contributors of job satisfaction since 2002. Even more noteworthy, benefits were among the top two contributors from 2002 to 2010. In 2015, 60% of employees rated benefits as a very important contributor to job satisfaction, keeping benefits at the number three position. As the economy continues to improve and job seekers become more confident in securing new positions, organizations must design competitive benefits packages to attract and retain top talent. Just over two-thirds (68%) of employees indicated that they were satisfied with their benefits.



In addition to the overall benefits package, employees were asked about the importance of seven specific benefits to overall job satisfaction. Importance and satisfaction data for these aspects are as follows:

- **Paid time off:** Sixty-three percent of employees indicated that paid time off was a very important contributor to job satisfaction, and 71% of employees were satisfied with this benefit at their organization.
- **Health care/medical benefits:** Slightly more than three-fifths (62%) of employees reported health care/medical benefits were very important, and 66% were satisfied with this aspect of their benefits package.
- **Flexibility to balance life and work issues:** More than one-half (53%) of employees reported work/life balance was very important to their job satisfaction, the same percentage as base rate of pay. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of employees were satisfied with their work/life balance.
- **Defined contribution plans:** Nearly one-half (48%) of employees rated defined contribution plans (e.g., 401(k), 403(b)) as very important to job satisfaction; two-thirds (64%) indicated they were satisfied with their organization's defined contribution plan(s).

- **Family-friendly benefits:** More than one-third (35%) of employees indicated that family-friendly benefits (e.g., domestic partnership benefits, subsidized child care, scholarships) were very important to job satisfaction; almost three-fifths (57%) of employees were satisfied with them.
- **Defined benefit pension plans:** Roughly one-third (34%) of employees rated defined benefit pension plans as very important to job satisfaction, and one-half (51%) of those with access to a defined benefit pension plan were satisfied with it.
- **Wellness programs:** Almost one-quarter (27%) of employees indicated that wellness programs were a very important contributor to job satisfaction, and 52% of those whose organizations offered wellness programs were satisfied with them.

**FIGURE 12**  
IMPORTANCE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH BENEFIT ASPECTS

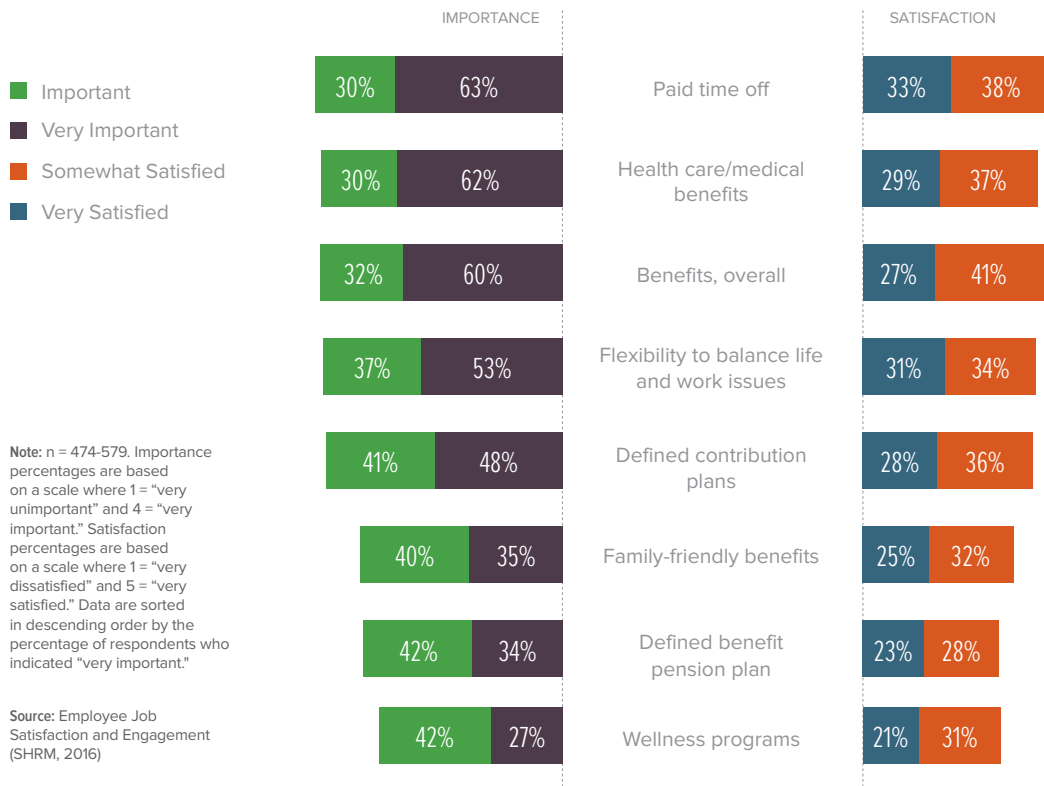


FIGURE 13

BENEFITS LEVERAGED TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES

	All Employees	Highly Skilled Employees	High-performing Employees
Most leveraged benefits	1. Health care <b>80%</b>	1. Health care <b>73%</b>	1. Health care <b>71%</b>
	2. Retirement savings and planning benefits <b>57%</b>	2. Financial and compensation benefits <b>52%</b>	2. Retirement savings and planning benefits <b>51%</b>
	3. Leave benefits <b>47%</b>	3. Retirement savings and planning benefits <b>51%</b>	3. Financial and compensation benefits <b>49%</b>
Benefits to increase in importance	1. Health care <b>65%</b>	1. Health care <b>69%</b>	1. Health care <b>68%</b>
	2. Retirement savings and planning benefits <b>59%</b>	2. Financial and compensation benefits <b>63%</b>	2. Retirement savings and planning benefits <b>66%</b>
	3. Professional and career development benefits <b>55%</b>	3. Retirement savings and planning benefits <b>59%</b>	3. Financial and compensation benefits <b>61%</b>

Source: 2015 Strategic Benefits—Leveraging Benefits to Retain Employees (SHRM, 2015)

SHRM’s 2015 *Employee Benefits* research report found that the prevalence of these benefits varied greatly. For example, the most common health care plan offered was a preferred provider organization (PPO), at 85%.<sup>15</sup> However, 43% of organizations offered health savings accounts (HSAs), which have significantly increased in popularity since 2011. As the cost of health care continues to climb, organizations may shift to different types of health care to offset the expenses.

Whereas nearly all organizations (98%) offered paid holidays, roughly one-half (53%) of organizations offered a paid time off (PTO) plan, which combines vacation, sick and personal time into one plan and thereby allows employees to choose how they spend their time off. Additionally, a greater number of organizations offered the following types of leave benefits in 2015 compared with 2014: paid sick leave, paid family leave, paid maternity leave, parental leave above federal FMLA leave and parental leave above any state FMLA leave. A moderate proportion of organizations offered various flexible work benefits such as telecommuting (60%), flextime (54%) and shift flexibility (21%). Far more organizations offered a traditional 401(k) or similar defined contribution retirement savings

plans (90%) than defined benefit pension plans (26%). Many organizations did not offer a diverse array of family-friendly benefits: 35% of organizations offered an onsite lactation/mother’s room, 9% offered a child care referral service, and 1% offered geriatric counseling. Additional detailed information on benefits trends over the last five years can be found in the SHRM 2015 *Employee Benefits* research report.<sup>16</sup>

Given the rising health care costs and heightened awareness of financial and retirement preparedness, it is expected that benefits will likely play a much larger role in the near future. The SHRM Strategic Benefits Survey Series found that although not particularly common, more organizations have leveraged their benefits packages to recruit or retain employees in 2015 (38% and 33%, respectively) compared with 2013 and 2012.<sup>17,18</sup> Developing a “total rewards” strategy that incorporates employer-sponsored benefits to attract top talent could be valuable for organizations, especially when trying to target certain employee groups. Figure 13 illustrates the benefits that HR professionals have leveraged for employee retention and the benefits they expect to increase in importance in the future.

The SHRM Strategic Benefits Survey Series on health care indicated that approximately three out of four (76%) organizations reported an increase in their total health care costs in their most recent plan year compared with the previous plan year.<sup>19</sup> Nearly all (99%) organizations reported being somewhat or very concerned about controlling health care costs. Roughly one-half of organizations have explored options such as creating an organizational culture that promotes health and wellness, an increase from 2013, and offering consumer-directed health plans (e.g., HRAs and HSAs). Although giving employees resources needed to live healthier lifestyles can mean reduced costs for employers, employees still may have to grapple with unavoidable medical expenses.

Research conducted by SHRM and McGraw-Hill Federal Credit Union found that medical expenses were the top financial challenge affecting employees.<sup>20</sup> Approximately two-fifths (38%) of HR professionals reported that employees had more financial challenges now than during the early part of the Great Recession. HR professionals reported that employees' personal financial challenges interfered with work performance in areas such as overall employee stress (50%), ability to focus on work (47%) and overall productivity (29%). Although 57% of organizations provide some type of financial education, most of the topics involve retirement and investment planning. As the demographics of the workforce shift, organizations may need to rethink the types of financial education they offer to their employees. More emphasis may be needed in areas such as general budgeting advice and medical/health care cost planning to adjust for employees dealing with student loans and medical expenses. Alleviating financial burdens may have a positive impact on employees' ability to focus and thus improve the quality of their work.

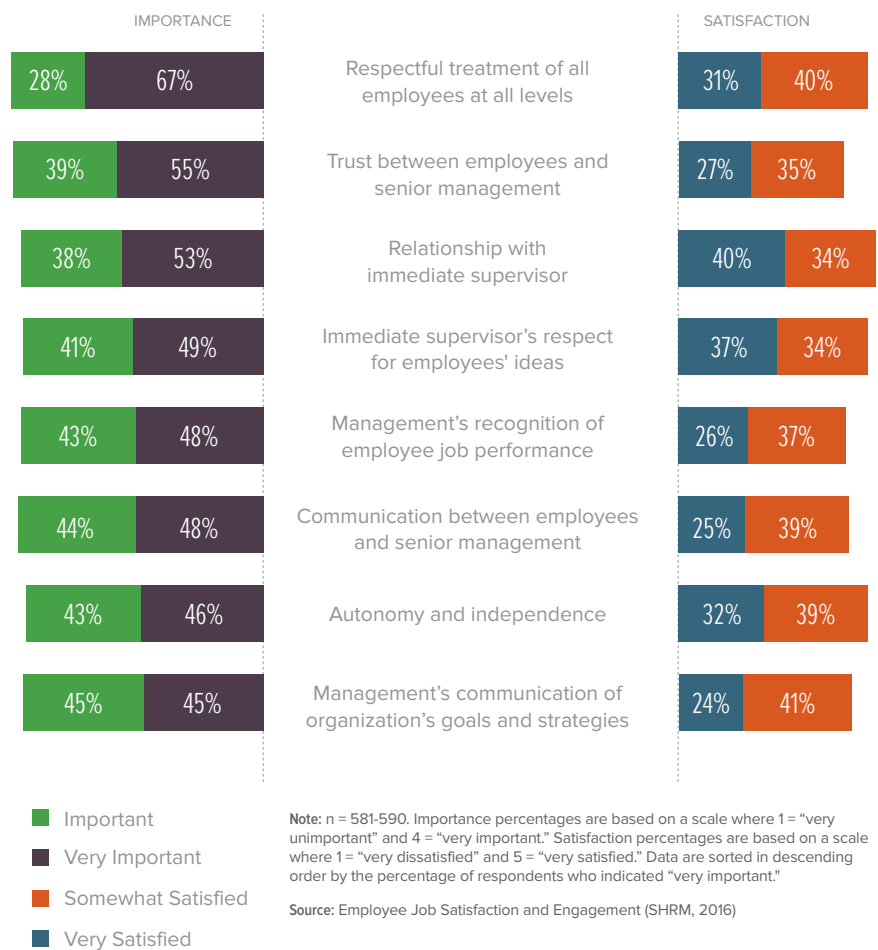
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# EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGEMENT

**Because employees spend much of their waking hours at work, it is not difficult to understand the importance of interpersonal dynamics in the workplace.**

Toxic relationships can quickly lead to disgruntled employees, waning effectiveness levels and other negative consequences. Positive relationships based on a foundation of mutual trust and understanding have the potential to enhance productivity and organizational success. Management can show support for their staff by considering their viewpoints and presenting opportunities for employees to demonstrate their talents and effective communication.

**FIGURE 14**  
IMPORTANCE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH RELATIONSHIP WITH MANAGEMENT ASPECTS



## Respectful Treatment of All Employees at All Levels

For the second year in a row, respectful treatment of all employees at all levels topped the chart as the leading contributor to job satisfaction. Approximately two-thirds (67%) of employees deemed this aspect to be very important to their job satisfaction. Seventy-one percent of employees were satisfied with the level of respect given to employees at their organization. Respect throughout the organization can be incorporated into the corporate culture. It can begin with techniques such as seeking common ground while recognizing and accepting differences.

## Trust Between Employees and Senior Management

Fifty-five percent of employees reported that trust between employees and senior management was very important to their job satisfaction, making it the fifth contributor to job satisfaction, dropping three spaces compared with last year. It is currently tied with opportunities to use skills and abilities in one's work. Roughly three-fifths (62%) of employees were satisfied with trust between employees and senior management in their organization. Organizations that lack trust between their employees and upper management often develop adverse working conditions. If management does not support its workers, suspicion may arise, resulting in a less than productive workforce. Apprehensive employees may feel the need to withhold information or use other tactics to gain leverage.

## Relationship with Immediate Supervisor

Similar to last year, relationship with immediate supervisor remained in the sixth place, with 53% of employees rating it as very important to their job satisfaction; the same percentage indicated organization's financial stability was very important. These two factors tied for the sixth position among the top contributors to job satisfaction. Nearly three-fourths (74%) of employees were satisfied with their relationship with their immediate supervisor. As a condition for engagement (see Table 2), this aspect was the third highest, a jump of two places since last year. Given that an employee's relationship with his or her immediate supervisor has been among the top five conditions of engagement over the last five years, its higher ranking speaks to this aspect's relevance in the workplace. Fostering positive relationships encourages constructive dialogue, from exchanging ideas to providing feedback on performance. By strengthening this bond of trust, employees may be more likely to work through and stay committed during difficult times, reducing the chances of voluntary turnover and associated costs.

## Immediate Supervisor's Respect for Employees' Ideas

Similar to respectful treatment, appreciation for employees' ideas is also significant to workers' sense of belonging. Furthermore, those directly working on the day-to-day challenges of the job may generate the most effective ideas. Nearly one-half (49%) of employees indicated that their immediate supervisor's respect for their ideas was very important to their job satisfaction, a drop of seven percentage points compared with last year. Seven out of 10 (71%) employees were satisfied with their immediate supervisor's respect for their ideas.

## Communication Between Employees and Senior Management

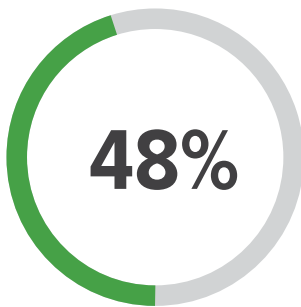
With the rise of flexible work arrangements, globalization and technological advances that make it possible for knowledge workers to work from virtually anywhere, strengthening communication efforts is a critical function of a successful organization. It is also important for organizations to pay attention to what communication methods are most conducive for their particular environment, the purpose of the exchange and their staff's preference. Choosing the wrong communication technique could influence the effectiveness of the message and, thus, possibly affect its end goal.

Forty-eight percent of employees reported that communication between employees and senior management was very important to employee job satisfaction. It is tied for the ninth position with management's recognition of employee job performance. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of employees were satisfied with the communication between employees and senior management. Middle-management and executive employees were more likely to be satisfied with this aspect than nonexempt nonmanagement employees. This discrepancy may be a signal that organizations are not sharing information all the way down the chain of command.

## Management's Recognition of Employee Job Performance

Forty-eight percent of employees reported that management's recognition of employee job performance was very important to their job satisfaction, a decrease of seven percentage points from the previous year. Although recognition alone might not be sufficient to retain top performers, it helps clarify organizational goals and gain a more precise picture of employees' accomplishments.

In collaboration with the National Center for the Middle Market, SHRM fielded a survey to investigate HR professionals' opinions of their organizations' performance management systems. In comparison with other business issues, the majority of HR professionals reported that performance management was a top priority (30%) or was given some attention and resources (65%).<sup>21</sup> Despite the significance of performance management, the HR professionals' ratings yielded mixed reviews of their organizations' performance management systems. Only 2% of HR professionals deemed their performance management system worthy of an A, whereas 53% gave a grade between C+ and B and another 21% gave a C rating. Just under one-half (46%) of HR professionals agreed that their managers "did an effective job of differentiating between poor, average and strong performers." Additional research conducted with Globoforce found that although the majority (80%) of organizations had employee recognition programs, their impact was perceived to be greater when these programs were aligned with organizational values.<sup>22</sup>



**Nearly half of employees reported that management's recognition of their job performance was very important to their job satisfaction.**

Overall, 63% of employees were satisfied with their management's recognition of their performance. Executives were more likely to report being satisfied with management's recognition of their performance than nonexempt (hourly) employees. Many organizations are transitioning to a performance management system that encourages more frequent feedback rather than a discussion that only occurs once a year. This approach can help reinforce employees' expectations, monitor progress more easily and identify potential issues earlier. A less formal process may also alleviate the stress for both managers and individual contributors and may foster a trusting relationship so that employees can feel supported.

## Autonomy and Independence

Forty-six percent of employees indicated that autonomy and independence were very important contributors to job satisfaction. Even though management may establish goals and objectives for the organization, giving employees the freedom and flexibility to decide how and when they complete projects may improve employee satisfaction and engagement. Holding employees accountable for their work outcomes motivates them to produce better results. Roughly seven out of 10 (71%) employees indicated they were satisfied with their level of autonomy and independence. Not surprisingly, executives were more likely to report being satisfied with their level of autonomy and independence compared with employees from all other job levels.

## Management's Communication of Organization's Goals and Strategies

Management's communication of the organization's goals and strategies has a significant impact on the organizational culture in general. As organizational plans and strategies may shift, it is important to effectively communicate any adjustments in business objectives and the organization's vision. It is also helpful to reiterate organizational goals even if they remain unchanged because consistent messages promote unity and employee morale. A transparent organization supports open communication lines, which can stimulate creativity and innovation through collaboration. One-way conversations imply managerial announcements or demands rather than dialogue and may stifle a healthy work environment, resulting in employees feeling isolated or "in the dark."

Just under one-half (45%) of employees indicated management's communication of organization's goals and strategies was very important to their job satisfaction, a decline of seven percentage points since last year. Sixty-five percent of employees were satisfied with their management's communication of their organization's goals and strategies.

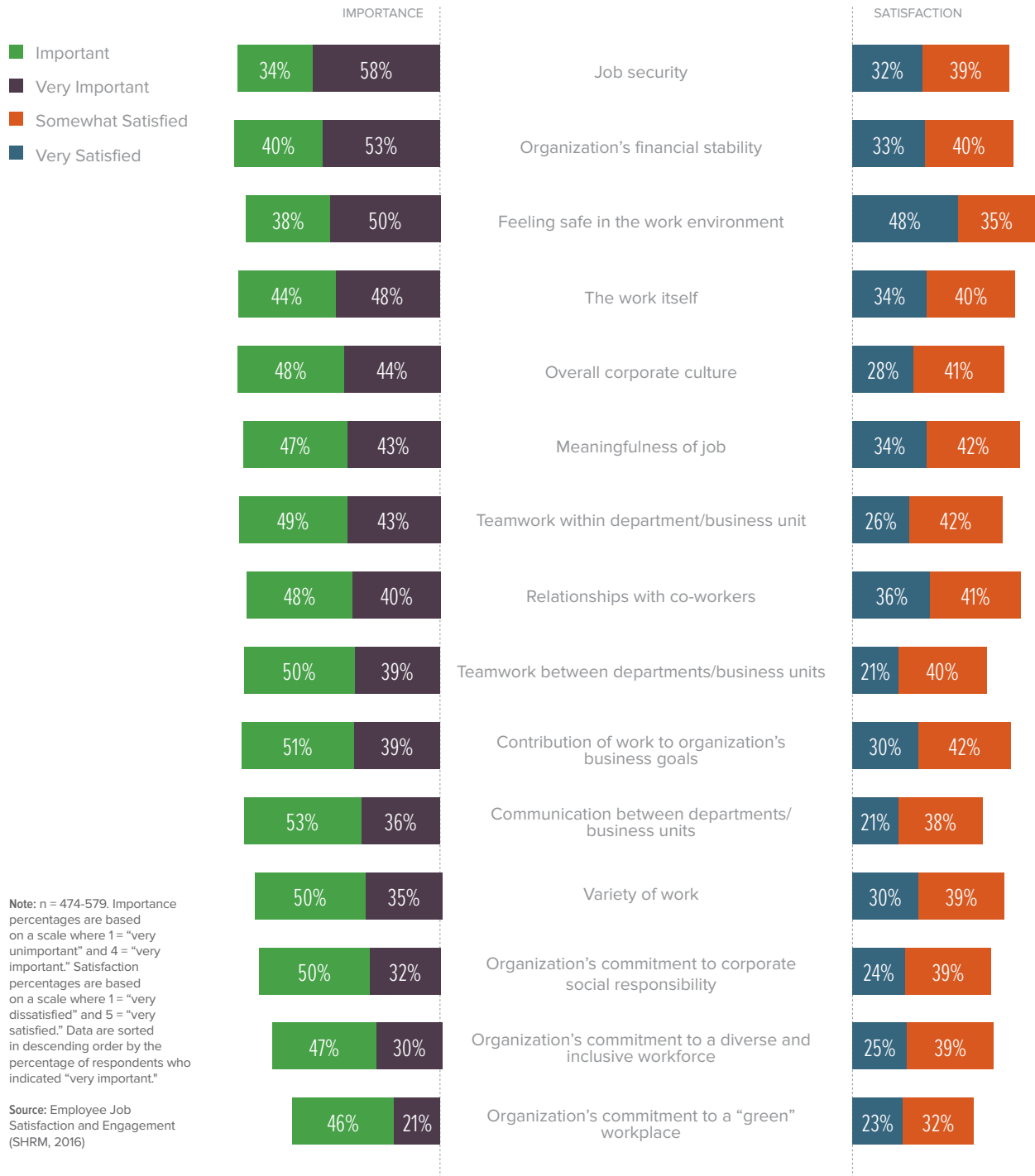
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# EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: WORK ENVIRONMENT



Promoting elements that sustain a healthy work environment fosters satisfied and engaged employees. An ideal work setting involves components such as stimulating work projects, assurance of personal and organizational well-being, and dedicated teammates.

FIGURE 15  
IMPORTANCE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH WORK ENVIRONMENT ASPECTS



## Job Security

Even though economic conditions have stabilized, job security still continues to be a major factor influencing workers' job satisfaction. After the Great Recession began in late 2007, job security claimed the number one spot as the job satisfaction contributor rated as very important from 2008 to 2011. In 2012 and 2013, it dropped down to number two, replaced by opportunities to use skills and abilities and compensation/pay, respectively. Job security dropped down to the fourth position in 2014 and 2015. This year, 58% of employees reported job security as very important to their job satisfaction. Although workers still value steady employment, they are gaining more confidence as the labor market grows, causing job applicants to reprioritize the elements they seek in a job. Job security and compensation are the only two job satisfaction contributors that have remained in the top five list for the last 13 years. Roughly seven out of 10 (71%) employees also said they were satisfied with job security in their current job.

According to this research, even though one-third (37%) of employees reported layoffs in their organization within the past 12 months, roughly one-half (52%) were not at all concerned about the security of their current job. Moreover, nearly one-half (45%) of employees said they would be likely or very likely to look for a job outside of their organization in the next 12 months (see Figure 3). Among that group of employees, 62% reported wanting to pursue other employment for better compensation/pay (see Figure 9). Others said they were looking for better benefits (30%) and better career advancement opportunities (27%) than what their current job offered.

## Organization's Financial Stability

Fifty-three percent of employees reported that their organization's financial stability had a very important impact on their job satisfaction. Organization's financial stability was tied with relationship with immediate supervisor for the sixth position among contributors to job satisfaction, a jump of two places compared with last year. Although an organization's financial stability still remains a crucial job satisfaction contributor, its importance may become overshadowed by other aspects as the labor market improves. Employees may be less concerned about the employer's financial stability as they become more confident about other employment opportunities. Roughly three-fourths (73%) of employees reported being satisfied with their organization's financial stability.

## Feeling Safe in the Work Environment

According to recent SHRM research, less than one-fifth of organizations have experienced incidents of domestic violence (19%), sexual violence (11%) or stalking (14%) within the last

year.<sup>23</sup> More than one-half (54%) of organizations had a formal workplace policy on sexual violence in place; however, only about one-third had policies on sexual violence (35%) and stalking (31%). To uphold the overall well-being of their staff, organizations must assess their safety needs on a regular basis to maximize the efforts in preventing harmful acts.

Although unfortunate events may occur anywhere, even in the workplace, it is reasonable for employees to expect a certain level of security and protection at work. Fifty percent of employees reported that feeling safe in the work environment was very important to their job satisfaction. Female employees were more likely than male employees to report this aspect as an important job satisfaction contributor. Eighty-three percent of employees were satisfied with their level of safety in the workplace.

## The Work Itself

The work itself (e.g., stimulating and challenging assignments) can enhance engagement as employees are more motivated to explore tasks that incite curiosity and inspiration. Given that many individuals spend much of their waking hours on the job, employees may have more interest in their work and in their organizations than their employers think. Rather than mundane, repetitive tasks, employees often prefer working on topics that inspire and energize them; even better if employees are given the freedom to decide what projects are completed and how.

Nearly one-half (48%) of employees reported that the work itself was very important to job satisfaction, positioning it within the top 10 list of job satisfaction contributors, at the ninth spot. Professional nonmanagement and middle-management employees were more likely to cite this aspect as a contributor to their job satisfaction compared with nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees. Approximately three-fourths (74%) of employees reported being satisfied with their work. All other job levels were more satisfied with the work itself than nonexempt (hourly) management employees were.

## Overall Corporate Culture

Often thought of as the "glue of an organization," corporate culture can be described as the shared attitudes and mannerisms held by the members of the organization. These norms influence how groups, internally and externally, interact with each other. Components of corporate culture range from tangible items, such as the dress code and architecture of an office, to the intangibles, such as an organization's mission and values. Because a unique corporate culture can help an organization stand out, it is a critical element that can be used to gain a competitive advantage among competitors and to attract a talented workforce. Organizations with a strong

corporate culture may even interlock it into the organization's brand, especially when organizations encourage employees to "live the brand." More than two-fifths (44%) of employees indicated that corporate culture was a very important job satisfaction contributor, with more middle-management than nonexempt (hourly) employees seeing this aspect as very important. Sixty-nine percent of employees were satisfied with this aspect. A greater proportion of executives were satisfied with their organization's corporate culture than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees.

## Meaningfulness of the Job

Meaningfulness of one's job can be thought of as the feeling that one's job contributes to society as a whole, a specific community, a cause, etc. At the core of an organization, a clear mission and vision are essential because they not only provide guidance and direction but also appeal to stakeholders (e.g., clients, investors) to get their buy-in. The effectiveness of communicating this purpose to employees is equally important. Management may spend a considerable amount of time on communication through speeches and newsletters, but if the majority of employees do not identify with the message, it may be a sign that the vision is either undercommunicated or that employees are not being shown the link between their work and the organization's overall mission. Making a difference toward a cause that is bigger than any one individual or the organization can offer a sense of fulfillment to employees. Nearly one-half (43%) of employees reported that meaningfulness of the job was very important to their job satisfaction. Seventy-six percent of employees were satisfied with this aspect. Middle management and executives were more likely to be satisfied with the meaningfulness of their job than were nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees.

## Teamwork Within Department/Business Unit

Recent SHRM research on job analysis activities found that approximately one-fifth (22%) of organizations conducted personality testing as a method to evaluate job candidates.<sup>24</sup> These results suggest that integrating applicants who have character traits complimentary to the team may affect job satisfaction and, ultimately, productivity. Although the amount of teamwork necessary for successful outcomes may vary based on the type of job, it is inevitable that all organizations will require some interdepartment/business unit collaboration. More than two-fifths (43%) of employees felt that teamwork within their department or business unit was very important to their job satisfaction, and 68% of employees were satisfied with this aspect, an increase of four percentage points from last year.

## Relationships with Co-workers

Positive relationships with co-workers can foster a sense of loyalty, camaraderie, and moral support and engagement among staff. These bonds may boost overall results and productivity as employees are more likely to want to avoid disappointing their teammates and to remain a cohesive team, especially when faced with adversity. Creating a more pleasant working environment through relationships with co-workers can increase employee satisfaction. Two out of five (40%) employees felt that relationships with co-workers were very important to their job satisfaction, and 77% of employees were satisfied with these relationships.

## Contribution of Work to the Organization's Business Goals

Employees generally want to feel that their time and efforts are contributing to the bigger picture. Recognizing how assignments support the organization's business goals can help improve employee job satisfaction. Management may frequently assume that employees already know the significance and relevance of their assignments. However, setting clear explanations and reiterating how employees' work is valued can improve employee effectiveness. Fewer than two-fifths (39%) of employees perceived contributing to the organization's business goals as a very important job satisfaction contributor. Middle-management employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) employees to view this aspect as very important to their job satisfaction. Seventy-two percent of employees were satisfied with this aspect.

## Teamwork Between Departments/Business Units

Just as teamwork within departments/business units is important, so is teamwork between different departments/business units within an organization. In fact, this collaboration can be more challenging as departments sometimes operate in silos. Coordinating on projects across departments can help build a more cohesive message for the organization's external audience and strengthen its brand. Thirty-nine percent of employees indicated that teamwork between departments/business units was a very important job satisfaction contributor. More than three-fifths (61%) of employees were satisfied with this factor.

## Communication Between Departments/ Business Units

SHRM research on recruitment unanimously showed that communication was the most valuable skill, aside from educational training, that organizations looked for in general job applicants.<sup>25</sup> This finding reinforces the importance of communication skills in the workplace. Not only are the interactions within a department or business unit critical, but being able to communicate and collaborate between departments or business units is essential to organizational success. Operating in distinct divisions or silos could have a major impact on how effectively an organization delivers its brand and message to its target audience.

Just over one-third (36%) of employees felt communication between departments/business units in their organization was very important to their job satisfaction. Professional nonmanagement employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to consider this aspect to be very important to their job satisfaction. Approximately three-fifths (59%) of employees were satisfied with the communication between departments/business units in their organization.

## Variety of Work

Workers may become bored and impatient with repetitive tasks and quickly lose interest in the purpose of their role. Providing stretch goals and other opportunities can boost employees' engagement levels. Implementing business practices such as job rotation, job expansion and enrichment can help employees expand their skills and knowledge and keep their engagement levels high. These approaches can also be beneficial to employers as employees may gain a better overall understanding of how the organization operates. More than one-third (35%) of employees reported that the variety of their work was very important to their job satisfaction. Professional nonmanagement and middle-management employees were more likely to report variety of work as a very important aspect of job satisfaction compared with nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees. Although this aspect was not a high contributor to job satisfaction, 69% of employees were satisfied with the variety of their work. Middle-management and executive employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to be satisfied with the variety of their work.

## Organization's Commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be described as a business position that recognizes ethical, environmental and social awareness. The obligation to make a positive influence beyond the organization itself is also a part of this aspect. Engaging in CSR initiatives signals that organizations are concerned about their surrounding local and global community. These programs may include charitable donations and compliance with fair trade practices. Although it is not the intention of CSR to gain immediate financial benefits, incorporating such initiatives into an organization's business model could affect profitability and improve its brand and reputation. Approximately one-third (32%) of employees indicated that their organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility was a very important contributor to their job satisfaction. Females were more likely than males to report their organization's commitment to CSR as a very important job satisfaction contributor. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of employees reported being satisfied with their organization's commitment to CSR, an increase of five percentage points from last year. More professional nonmanagement employees were satisfied with this aspect than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees.

## Organization's Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

Although an organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce was rather low on the list of very important job satisfaction contributors (30%), there is reason to believe that it will gain more weight in the near future. Additional demographic analyses indicate that more females than males deemed diversity and inclusion as very important to their job satisfaction. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of employees were satisfied with their organization's level of commitment to diversity and inclusion, an increase of six percentage points from last year.

Organizations may want to consider forming a diversity committee to support inclusiveness. SHRM research found that only 17% of organizations had internal groups such as diversity councils and diversity advisory boards.<sup>26</sup> Among those, larger organizations were three times more likely than small organizations to have these groups. Although 15% of organizations had staff dedicated exclusively to diversity and inclusion, another 17% used existing staff volunteers for this task. Employers may want to begin with incorporating diversity and inclusion into the organization's corporate culture; other good practices involve modifying job descriptions to reflect inclusive thinking and establishing goals for diverse populations in promotion and succession planning. Furthermore, encouraging a diversity of backgrounds in an organization may prevent groupthink and expand creativity.

## Organization's Commitment to a "Green" Workplace

With 21% of employees indicating their organization's commitment to a "green" workplace was very important to their job satisfaction, this aspect was the last job satisfaction contributor on the 2015 list, similar to last year. Fifty-five percent of employees were satisfied with their organization's commitment to a "green" workplace.

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# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

**In this study, employee engagement was examined through 37 aspects, consisting of employee engagement conditions, opinions and behaviors.<sup>27</sup> Based on a five-point scale, with 1 representing the least engaged and 5 representing the most engaged, an average of all employee engagement items yielded an index of 3.8 for 2015.**

Although it still indicates that employees are moderately engaged, this year's index was slightly higher than last year's index of 3.7 and the 2013 index of 3.6. Engagement levels have remained stable since 2011.

### Conditions for Engagement

A number of job satisfaction contributors are linked to employee engagement; these aspects are described as the conditions for engagement in this research. They refer to the employees' capacity and reasons to engage. Optimal levels of employee engagement can be reached by promoting select workplace aspects that are linked with overall job satisfaction. Providing these ideal circumstances allows employees to commit their undivided attention to their work.

TABLE 1

#### CONDITIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Overall Satisfaction
Relationship with co-workers	2%	3%	17%	41%	36%	77%
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	2%	5%	16%	40%	37%	77%
Meaningfulness of the job	2%	5%	17%	42%	34%	76%
The work itself	2%	6%	17%	40%	34%	74%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	3%	7%	16%	34%	40%	74%
Organization's financial stability	2%	7%	19%	40%	33%	72%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	2%	3%	22%	42%	30%	72%
Autonomy and independence	2%	9%	18%	39%	32%	71%
Variety of work	3%	8%	20%	39%	30%	69%
Overall corporate culture	3%	10%	19%	41%	28%	69%
Communication between employees and senior management	6%	14%	16%	39%	25%	64%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	4%	7%	27%	39%	24%	63%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	6%	12%	18%	37%	26%	63%
Job-specific training	3%	12%	25%	37%	25%	61%
Organization's commitment to professional development	4%	11%	25%	34%	25%	59%
Networking opportunities	4%	10%	28%	36%	23%	58%
Career development opportunities	4%	13%	25%	37%	21%	58%
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	5%	15%	23%	33%	24%	57%

Note: Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." "Not applicable" responses were excluded from this analysis. Data are sorted in descending order by the "overall satisfaction" percentages.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

77%

**SATISFIED WITH RELATIONSHIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO USE SKILLS/ABILITIES**

The highest percentage of employees were satisfied with relationships with co-workers and opportunities to use skills and abilities (77%).

57%

**SATISFIED WITH CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

The lowest percentage of employees were satisfied with career advancement opportunities within the organization (57%).

The data suggest that employees were generally somewhat to very satisfied with engagement conditions at their workplace. This year, two elements tied as the engagement condition with which the most employees reported being satisfied (77%): relationships with co-workers and opportunities to use skills and abilities. Since 2011, relationships with co-workers were the number one element with which the most employees reported being satisfied. In addition, 76% of employees indicated they were satisfied with the meaningfulness of their job. The fewest employees were satisfied with career advancement opportunities within the organization (57%).

No differences were discovered when responses were compared by gender and generation; however, several disparities between job levels were revealed (see Table 16 in Appendix). Middle-management and executive respondents were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to report being satisfied with the following engagement conditions: opportunities to use skills and abilities, meaningfulness of the job, the work itself, contribution of work to organization's business goals, variety of work, and career advancement opportunities within the organization. Professional nonmanagement employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to be satisfied with the work itself, the organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility and career development opportunities. Furthermore, executives expressed higher degrees of satisfaction compared with lower job levels with autonomy and independence, overall corporate culture, management's recognition of employee job performance, organization's commitment to professional development and networking opportunities.

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**EXECUTIVES EXPRESSED HIGHER DEGREES OF SATISFACTION COMPARED WITH LOWER JOB LEVELS WITH AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE.**

Given the numerous distinctions between satisfaction levels among job levels, it is important to examine engagement of all employees. Organizations that reinforce the "management versus nonmanagement" mentality may create strong hierarchies, eliciting cynicism, distrust and negative attitudes and potentially resulting in high turnover and poor employee morale. Job enlargement and job rotation are a couple of strategies that organizations may want to consider to engage employees in lower job levels.

## Engagement Opinions: The "Feel" of Employee Engagement

Engagement opinions (see Table 2) are expressed through feelings of deep concentration, eagerness and passion. These statements capture personal reflection of employees' relationship with their own work. Personal engagement invigorates employees to feel enthusiastic and energized by their work.

The vast majority of employees (89%) agreed with the statement that they were confident about meeting their work goals. Similarly, 86% of employees agreed they were determined to accomplish their work goals. Three-fourths (77%) of employees had a clear understanding of their organization's vision/mission. The fewest employees (55%) agreed that they felt completely plugged in at work.



**TABLE 2**  
ENGAGEMENT OPINIONS

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Overall Agreement
I am confident I can meet my work goals.	1%	2%	8%	40%	49%	89%
I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	1%	2%	11%	43%	43%	86%
I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	2%	4%	17%	46%	31%	77%
I am highly motivated by my work goals.	2%	5%	17%	40%	37%	76%
While at work, I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	1%	8%	20%	44%	27%	71%
I am provided with the resources to do my job well.	2%	11%	19%	44%	24%	68%
I frequently feel that I'm putting all my effort into my work.	2%	6%	24%	39%	29%	68%
I have passion and excitement about my work.	2%	8%	24%	39%	26%	66%
I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.	3%	10%	24%	33%	31%	64%
I enjoy volunteering for activities beyond my job requirements.	3%	13%	27%	35%	22%	57%
I feel completely plugged in at work, like I'm always on full power.	2%	12%	31%	35%	20%	55%

Note: Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree." Data are sorted in descending order by "overall agreement" column.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

Additional analyses of engagement opinions by demographic groups were conducted. Whereas no differences between genders and generations were revealed, a few differences between job levels were found (see Table 17 in Appendix). Professional nonmanagement and middle-management employees appeared more determined to accomplish their work goals compared with nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees. Executives more frequently agreed that they were highly motivated by their work goals compared with nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees. Furthermore, middle-management and executive employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to report having a passion and excitement about their work. Middle-management employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to agree that they were often wrapped up in their work.

**ACCOMPLISHING WORK GOALS**



■ Felt confident  
■ Felt determined

## Engagement Behaviors: The “Look” of Employee Engagement

Engagement behaviors—the “look” of employee engagement—can be described as actions that positively contribute to the welfare of the organization. Engagement behaviors entail employee groups rather than the engagement of individual employees (i.e., engagement opinions).

Seventy percent of employees perceived that in their organization employees were encouraged to take action when seeing a problem or opportunity, the highest-rated engagement behavior since 2011. Other noteworthy findings include roughly two-thirds of employees feeling that their colleagues quickly adapted to challenging or crisis situations (65%) and never gave up despite difficulties (64%).

Very few differences were uncovered while exploring the engagement behavior data by various demographics (see Table 17 in Appendix). Middle-management employees were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to agree that other people in their organization often volunteered for new projects. No significant differences by generation or gender were found.

As the economy continues to recover and employees are more willing to leave their current positions, employers may want to consider developing ways to engage their staff. Given a number of low engagement areas (e.g., viewing unexpected responsibilities as an opportunity to succeed at something new, volunteering for new projects), organizations have opportunities for improvement. Organizations can incorporate low-cost business practices to engage their employees—for example, offering more feedback and recognition, providing more flexibility and autonomy in task completion, and emphasizing the value of employees’ work as it contributes to organizational goals. Ultimately, organizations with a dissatisfied, disengaged workforce will risk higher turnover as their employees seek out more attractive job opportunities.

**TABLE 3**  
ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIORS

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Overall Agreement
In my organization, employees are encouraged to take action when they see a problem or opportunity.	2%	9%	20%	46%	24%	70%
My colleagues quickly adapt to challenging or crisis situations.	1%	11%	24%	43%	22%	65%
My work group never gives up despite difficulties.	1%	9%	26%	43%	21%	64%
Employees in my organization deal very well with unpredictable or changing work situations.	3%	10%	26%	41%	21%	61%
In my work group, we are constantly looking out to see what challenge is coming next.	2%	12%	30%	38%	19%	57%
The people in my work group are always flexible in expanding the scope of their work.	3%	12%	31%	38%	17%	55%
Others in my organization view unexpected responsibilities as an opportunity to succeed at something new.	4%	14%	30%	37%	16%	53%
Other people in my organization often volunteer for new projects.	4%	18%	31%	32%	16%	48%

**Note:** Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree.” Data are sorted in descending order by “overall agreement” column.

**Source:** Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)





**Hiring trends have significant implications for job satisfaction; in leaner times with low employment growth, workers tend to stay put and place high value on job security, even if they are not particularly happy with their positions. Conversely, during labor market expansions, more workers gain confidence in their prospects and seek career opportunities with other organizations.**

There is little doubt that the U.S. labor market has grown stronger in recent years. Roughly 5.8 million jobs were created in the 2014-2015 timeframe, which marked the best two-year stretch of employment gains since 1998-1999, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).<sup>28</sup>

Although wage growth has not accelerated substantially during this time, the ranks of the country's long-term unemployed—those without jobs for 26 weeks or longer—have declined considerably. And although millions of people continue to work part time for economic reasons—defined by the BLS as those who would prefer full-time employment but work part time because their hours have been reduced or they cannot find a full-time job—their numbers have slowly decreased as well.

However, other data show that hiring could be even more robust. HR professionals reported elevated levels of recruiting difficulty throughout 2015, according to SHRM's Leading Indicators of National Employment (LINE) report.<sup>29</sup> In a separate SHRM survey, more than one-half (55%) of HR professionals said they had trouble in particular with recruiting highly skilled employees.<sup>30</sup>

Recruiting problems aside, another significant challenge for HR professionals is keeping current employees engaged with their jobs. Even in this period of sizable employment growth, workers are moderately engaged, meaning some may be detached from their current roles or fearful of losing their jobs, according to this survey. Nearly one-half (48%) of those surveyed had some level of concern about the security of their job, and another 45% said there was some degree of likelihood that they would look for work outside of their organization within the next 12 months.

Consequently, HR professionals have a formidable task in managing current trends with the U.S. labor market. Improved economic conditions have increased demand for hiring, yet recruiting struggles are prevalent at many organizations. Employment conditions have stabilized, but many workers do not feel secure in their jobs and will likely explore other options.

In turn, effective employee engagement can perhaps alleviate these issues for HR professionals. Many already agree that this is their top concern. "Maintaining high levels of employee engagement" was the most pressing human capital challenge in today's economic environment, according to *Business and Human Capital Challenges Today and in the Future*, a 2015 research report from SHRM.<sup>31</sup>

Data from this research show that many employees place equal emphasis on financial factors, such as competitive compensation and benefits, and nonfinancial factors, such as communication between employees and management and respectful treatment of all workers. As a result, creating a workplace environment that balances these factors should be a top priority of HR professionals.



## Respondent Demographics

### Organization Staff Size

1 to 99 employees	33%
100 to 499 employees	12%
500 to 2,499 employees	12%
2,500 to 24,999 employees	24%
25,000 or more employees	19%

n = 600.

### Generation/Age

Millennials (born after 1980)	31%
Generation X (born 1965-1980)	37%
Baby Boomers (1945-1964)	31%
Veterans (born before 1945)	1%

n = 600.

### Job Tenure

2 years or less	28%
3 to 5 years	22%
6 to 10 years	21%
11 to 15 years	11%
16 or more years	17%

Note: n = 597. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

### Job Level

Nonmanagement (e.g., assistant, coordinator, specialist)	31%
Professional nonmanagement (e.g., analyst, nurse, engineer)	32%
Middle management (e.g., manager, supervisor, director)	27%
Executive level (e.g., CEO, CFO)	10%

n = 600.

### Education Level

No high school	1%
High school graduate	10%
Some college	19%
2-year degree	14%
4-year degree	39%
Post-graduate degree	18%

Note: n = 599. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Respondents who chose "prefer not to answer" were excluded from the analysis.

### Race

White	68%
Black/African American	12%
Hispanic or Latino	9%
Asian or Asian American	6%
Two or more races	3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1%

Note: n = 591. Respondents who chose "prefer not to answer" were excluded from the analysis.

**Organization Industry**

<b>Retail trade</b> (motor vehicle and parts dealers; furniture and home furnishings stores; electronics and appliance stores; building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers; food and beverage stores; health and personal care stores; gasoline stations; clothing and clothing accessories stores; sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores; general merchandise stores; miscellaneous store retailers; nonstore retailers)	19%
<b>Professional, scientific and technical services</b> (legal services; accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services; architectural, engineering and related services; specialized design services; computer systems design and related services; management, scientific and technical consulting services; scientific research and development services; advertising, public relations and related services; other professional, scientific and technical services)	18%
<b>Manufacturing</b> (food manufacturing; beverage and tobacco product manufacturing; textile mills; textile product mills; apparel manufacturing; leather and allied product manufacturing; wood product manufacturing; paper manufacturing; printing and related support activities; petroleum and coal products manufacturing; chemical manufacturing; plastics and rubber products manufacturing; nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing; primary metal manufacturing; fabricated metal product manufacturing; machinery manufacturing; computer and electronic product manufacturing; electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing; transportation equipment manufacturing; furniture and related product manufacturing; miscellaneous manufacturing)	17%
<b>Finance and insurance</b> (monetary authorities--central bank; credit intermediation and related activities; securities, commodity contracts and other financial investments and related activities; insurance carriers and related activities; funds, trusts and other financial vehicles)	14%
<b>Accommodation and food services</b> (accommodation; food services and drinking places)	8%
<b>Transportation and warehousing</b> (air transportation; rail transportation; water transportation; truck transportation; transit and ground passenger transportation; pipeline transportation; scenic and sightseeing transportation; support activities for transportation; postal service; couriers and messengers; warehousing and storage)	8%
<b>Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services</b> (office administrative services; facilities support services; employment services; business support services; travel arrangement and reservation services; investigation and security services; services to buildings and dwellings; other support services; waste management and remediation services)	7%
<b>Health care and social assistance</b> (ambulatory health care services; hospitals; nursing and residential care facilities; social assistance)	6%
<b>Information</b> (publishing industries, excluding Internet; motion picture and sound recording industries; broadcasting, excluding internet; telecommunications; data processing, hosting and related services; other information services)	6%
<b>Wholesale trade</b> (merchant wholesalers, durable goods; merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods; wholesale electronic markets and agents and brokers)	6%
<b>Construction</b> (construction of buildings; heavy and civil engineering construction; specialty trade contractors)	5%
<b>Real estate and rental and leasing</b> (real estate; rental and leasing services; lessors of nonfinancial intangible assets, excluding copyrighted works)	5%
<b>Repair and maintenance</b> (automotive repair and maintenance; electronic and precision equipment repair and maintenance; commercial and industrial machinery and equipment, excluding automotive and electronic, repair and maintenance; personal and household goods repair and maintenance)	5%
<b>Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional and similar organizations</b> (religious organizations; grantmaking and giving services; social advocacy organizations; civic and social organizations; business, professional, labor, political and similar organizations)	4%
<b>Arts, entertainment and recreation</b> (performing arts, spectator sports and related industries; museums, historical sites and similar institutions; amusement, gambling and recreation industries)	4%
<b>Educational services</b> (elementary and secondary schools; junior colleges; colleges, universities and professional schools; business schools and computer and management training; technical and trade schools; other schools and instruction; educational support services)	3%
<b>Public administration</b> (executive, legislative and other general government support; justice, public order and safety activities; administration of human resource programs; administration of environmental quality programs; administration of housing programs, urban planning and community development; administration of economic programs; space research and technology; national security and international affairs)	3%
<b>Utilities</b> (electric power generation, transmission and distribution; natural gas distribution; water, sewage and other systems)	2%
<b>Personal and laundry services</b> (personal care services; death care services; dry cleaning and laundry services; other personal services)	1%
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</b> (crop production; animal production; forestry and logging; fishing, hunting and trapping; support activities for agriculture and forestry)	1%
<b>Management of companies and enterprises</b> (offices of bank holding companies; offices of other holding companies; corporate, subsidiary and regional managing offices)	1%
<b>Mining</b> (oil and gas extraction; mining, excluding oil and gas; support activities for mining)	1%

Note: n = 600. Percentages may not total 100% due to multiple responses.



## Survey Methodology

The sample of employees used in this research was randomly selected by an outside survey research organization's web-enabled employee panel. In total, 600 individuals completed the online 2015 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Survey in November and December 2015. All respondents were employed, either full time or part time. The demographic profile of the sample obtained was matched to the demographic profile of U.S. employees.

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts a monthly survey of households called the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the Bureau of Labor Statistics to attain information about the labor force, its characteristics and employment. A comparison between the sample of 600 employees in the 2015 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Survey sample and the CPS showed differences in education level, race/ethnicity and organizational industry. Compared with the CPS findings, the 2015 sample consisted of more employees with higher-level educational degrees, more racially diverse employees and more employees in the following industries: retail; professional, scientific and technical services; manufacturing; and finance. The 2015 sample had fewer employees in the health care and social assistance and educational services industries.

## Notations

**Analysis:** For this report, standard statistical research methods were used to determine if observed differences were statistically significant (i.e., likelihood that the difference is not likely due to chance). Some results discussed within this report may not be statistically significant. Furthermore, not all findings are presented in an accompanying figure or table.

**Tables:** Unless otherwise noted in a specific table, please note that the following statements are applicable to data depicted in tables throughout this report.

- Data are sorted in descending order by the “overall” column in each table.
- Percentages for a question or a response option may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Tables in the Appendix present the overall percentage and the percentage by select employee demographic characteristics; however, only response options for which there were significant differences are shown.

**Figures:** Unless otherwise noted in a specific figure, the following statements are applicable to data depicted in figures throughout this report.

- Percentages for a question or a response option may not total 100% due to rounding.

**Generalization of results:** As with any research, readers should exercise caution when generalizing results and take individual circumstances and experiences into consideration when making decisions based on these data.

**Number of respondents:** The number of respondents (indicated by “n” in figures and tables) varies from table to table and figure to figure because some respondents did not answer all of the questions. Individuals may not have responded to a question on the survey because the question or some of its parts were not applicable or because the requested data were unavailable. This also accounts for the varying number of responses represented within each table or figure.

**Confidence level and margin of error:** A confidence level and margin of error give readers some measure of how much they can rely on survey responses to represent all U.S. employees. Given the level of response to survey items asked of all respondents, SHRM Research is 95% confident that responses given by responding employees can be applied to all U.S. employees, in general, with a margin of error of approximately 2%. For example, 53% of the responding employees reported that the relationship with their immediate supervisor was very important to their job satisfaction. With a 95% confidence interval, the reader can be 95% certain that between 51% and 55% of employees believe that the relationship with their immediate supervisor is very important to employee job satisfaction. It is important to note that as the sample size decreases, the margin of error increases.

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# APPENDIX

TABLE 4

## JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT BY EMPLOYEES: 2005-2015

	2005 (n = 601)	2006 (n = 605)	2007 (n = 604)	2008 (n = 601)	2009 (n = 601)	2010 (n = 600)	2011 (n = 600)	2012 (n = 600)	2013 (n = 600)	2014 (n = 600)	2015 (n = 600)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	72% (1)	67% (1)
Compensation/pay, overall	61% (2)	67% (1)	59% (1)	53% (3)	57% (3)	53% (5)	54% (4)	60% (3)	60% (1)	61% (4)	63% (2)
Benefits, overall	63% (1)	65% (2)	59% (1)	57% (2)	60% (2)	60% (2)	53% (5)	53%	53% (4)	63% (3)	60% (3)
Job security	59% (4)	59% (3)	53% (2)	59% (1)	63% (1)	63% (1)	63% (1)	61% (2)	59% (2)	59% (5)	58% (4)
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	44%	51% (5)	44%	50% (4)	55% (4)	56% (3)	62% (2)	63% (1)	59% (2)	0.58	55% (5)
Trust between employees and senior management	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64% (2)	55% (5)
Organization's financial stability	—	—	—	—	—	54% (4)	55% (3)	52%	53% (4)	55%	53%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	46%	47%	48%	47% (5)	52%	48%	55% (3)	54% (5)	54% (3)	58%	53%
Feeling safe in the work environment	55% (5)	54% (4)	50% (5)	53% (3)	54% (5)	51%	48%	47%	49%	53%	50%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	56%	49%
Communication between employees and senior management	50%	48%	51% (4)	50% (4)	51%	47%	53% (5)	57% (4)	50%	55%	48%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	45%	47%	49%	44%	52%	48%	49%	50%	50%	55%	48%
The work itself	35%	46%	41%	47% (5)	50%	54% (4)	53% (5)	52%	51% (5)	50%	48%
Career advancement opportunities	28%	36%	28%	29%	32%	34%	36%	42%	40%	47%	47%
Autonomy and independence	41%	44%	44%	41%	47%	46%	52%	48%	47%	47%	46%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	52%	45%
Overall corporate culture	39%	40%	36%	40%	45%	41%	46%	47%	45%	48%	44%
Meaningfulness of the job	37%	42%	37%	45%	45%	38%	35%	39%	41%	46%	43%
Teamwork within department/business unit	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	43%	43%
Job-specific training	28%	36%	27%	27%	35%	34%	33%	36%	40%	41%	42%
Relationship with co-workers	34%	35%	34%	39%	42%	38%	38%	40%	41%	44%	40%
Organization's commitment to professional development	31%	35%	31%	33%	30%	33%	36%	36%	36%	42%	40%
Teamwork between departments/business units	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41%	39%
Career development opportunities	34%	42%	35%	30%	29%	31%	33%	34%	33%	39%	39%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	33%	37%	32%	34%	39%	36%	33%	34%	35%	38%	39%
Communication between departments/business units	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41%	36%
Variety of work	45%	40%	34%	35%	34%	35%	32%	33%	33%	37%	35%
Company-paid general training	—	—	31%	32%	29%	26%	24%	28%	27%	31%	35%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	—	—	—	33%	31%	28%	28%	28%	31%	31%	32%
Networking opportunities	19%	21%	18%	21%	22%	22%	26%	27%	26%	33%	31%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	—	—	—	—	—	—	22%	27%	28%	29%	30%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	—	—	—	23%	17%	17%	17%	17%	22%	20%	21%

Note: Sample sizes are based on the actual number of respondents by year; however, the percentages shown are based on the actual number of respondents by year who answered the question using the provided response options. A dash (—) indicates that the question was not asked in that year's survey. Numbers in parentheses indicate position of aspect in the respective column year. Table represents the percentage of respondents who indicated the aspect was "very important" to their job satisfaction. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 5

## IMPORTANCE OF JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	2%	4%	28%	67%
Compensation/pay, overall	1%	4%	32%	63%
Benefits, overall	2%	6%	32%	60%
Job security	2%	6%	34%	58%
Opportunities to use skills and abilities at work	4%	4%	37%	55%
Trust between employees and senior management	2%	4%	39%	55%
Organization's financial stability	1%	6%	40%	53%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	2%	7%	38%	53%
Feeling safe in the work environment	2%	10%	38%	50%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	3%	7%	41%	49%
The work itself	2%	6%	44%	48%
Communication between employees and senior management	2%	6%	44%	48%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	1%	8%	43%	48%
Career advancement opportunities	4%	13%	36%	47%
Autonomy and independence	1%	10%	43%	46%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	3%	8%	45%	45%
Overall corporate culture	2%	7%	48%	44%
Teamwork within department/business unit	2%	7%	49%	43%
Meaningfulness of job	1%	9%	47%	43%
Job-specific training	4%	7%	47%	42%
Relationships with co-workers	1%	11%	48%	40%
The organization's overall commitment to professional development	4%	10%	46%	40%
Teamwork between departments/business units	2%	9%	50%	39%
Career development opportunities	5%	12%	44%	39%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	1%	9%	51%	39%
Communication between departments/business units	2%	10%	53%	36%
Company-paid general training	3%	15%	47%	35%
Variety of work	2%	13%	50%	35%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	3%	15%	50%	32%
Networking opportunities	4%	16%	49%	31%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	5%	18%	47%	30%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	7%	27%	46%	21%

Note: n = 515-595. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis. Data are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicated "very important."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 6

## IMPORTANCE OF JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS, BY SELECT EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job Level
Compensation/pay, overall	95%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (98%) > nonexempt (hourly) (92%)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	94%	—	—	—
Trust between employees and senior management	94%	—	—	—
Organization's financial stability	93%	—	—	—
Benefits, overall	93%	—	—	—
Job security	92%	—	—	—
Communication between employees and senior management	92%	—	—	—
The work itself	92%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (95%), middle management (95%) > nonexempt (hourly) (86%)
Overall corporate culture	92%	—	—	Middle management (95%) > nonexempt (hourly) (87%)
Teamwork within department/business unit	92%	—	—	—
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	92%	—	—	—
Relationship with immediate supervisor	91%	—	—	—
Management's recognition of employee job performance	91%	—	—	—
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	90%	—	—	—
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	90%	—	—	—
Meaningfulness of the job	90%	—	—	—
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	90%	—	—	Middle management (94%) > nonexempt (hourly) (84%)
Teamwork between departments/ business units	89%	—	—	—
Autonomy and independence	89%	—	—	—
Job-specific training	89%	Females (92%) > males (87%)	Millennials (95%) > Baby Boomers (83%)	—
Communication between departments/business units	88%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (92%) > nonexempt (hourly) (82%)
Relationship with co-workers	88%	—	—	—
Feeling safe in the work environment	88%	Females (92%) > males (85%)	—	—
Organization's commitment to professional development	86%	—	Generation X (89%) > Baby Boomers (79%)	—
Variety of work	84%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (87%), middle management (88%) > nonexempt (hourly) (76%)
Career development opportunities	83%	—	Millennials (88%) > Baby Boomers (76%)	—
Career advancement opportunities	83%	—	Millennials (89%), Generation X (86%) > Baby Boomers (73%)	Professional nonmanagement (88%) > executives (71%)
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	82%	Females (86%) > males (78%)	—	—
Company-paid general training	82%	—	—	—
Networking opportunities	80%	—	—	—
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	77%	Females (83%) > males (71%)	—	—
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	67%	—	—	—

Note: A dash (—) indicates that there were no statistically significant differences by the respective demographic (e.g., by gender). Table represents the percentage of responding employees who reported each aspect was "important" or "very important" to their job satisfaction. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Data are sorted in descending order by the "overall" percentage column. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 7

## TOP FIVE JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT, BY EMPLOYEE GENDER

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Male	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation, overall	Benefits, overall	Job security	Opportunities to use skills/abilities; trust between employees and senior management
	64%	60%	59%	56%	55%
Female	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation, overall	Benefits, overall	Job security	Opportunities to use skills/abilities; relationship with immediate supervisor; trust between employees and senior management; feeling safe in the work environment
	69%	65%	61%	60%	55%

Note: Table represents the percentage of respondents who rated each aspect as "very important" to their job satisfaction. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 8

## TOP FIVE JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT, BY EMPLOYEE GENERATION/AGE

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Millennials	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation, overall	Benefits, overall	Job security	Opportunities to use skills/abilities; relationship with immediate supervisor; trust between employees and senior management
	66%	65%	61%	58%	55%
Generation X	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation, overall; job security	Benefits, overall	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Trust between employees and senior management; organization's financial stability
	70%	66%	65%	58%	56%
Baby Boomers	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation, overall	Trust between employees and senior management; organization's financial stability	Benefits, overall	Relationship with immediate supervisor
	63%	57%	54%	53%	52%

Note: Table represents the percentage of respondents who rated each aspect "very important" to their job satisfaction. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Responses from Veterans were not shown due to a small sample size (n < 25). Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 9

## TOP FIVE JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT, BY EMPLOYEE JOB LEVEL

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation/pay, overall; benefits, overall	Job security	Trust between employees and senior management	Feeling safe in the work environment; organization's financial stability
	65%	64%	60%	50%	49%
Professional nonmanagement	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation/pay, overall	Benefits, overall	Job security	Opportunities to use skills/abilities; relationship with immediate supervisor
	70%	64%	63%	59%	57%
Middle management	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Trust between employees and senior management; compensation, overall	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Relationship with immediate supervisor	Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas; benefits, overall; job security
	66%	61%	60%	58%	57%
Executive management	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Communication between employees and senior management	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Organization's financial stability	Compensation, overall
	72%	64%	63%	62%	57%

Note: Table represents the percentage of respondents who rated each aspect as "very important" to their job satisfaction. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 10

## IMPORTANCE OF COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS AS JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Paid time off	2%	5%	30%	63%
Health care/medical benefits	2%	7%	30%	62%
Being paid competitively with the local market	2%	6%	33%	59%
Base rate of pay	2%	6%	39%	53%
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	2%	8%	37%	53%
Defined contribution plans	2%	9%	41%	48%
Opportunities for variable pay	2%	15%	41%	42%
Family-friendly benefits	4%	21%	40%	35%
Defined benefit pension plan	4%	20%	42%	34%
Wellness programs	3%	27%	42%	27%
Stock options	5%	39%	37%	18%

Note: n = 514-595. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis. Data are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicated "very important."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 11

## IMPORTANCE OF COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS AS JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS, BY SELECT EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job level
Paid time off	93%	—	—	—
Base rate of pay	92%	—	Generation X (95%) > Baby Boomers (88%)	—
Being paid competitively with the local market	92%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (97%) > nonexempt (hourly) (86%)
Health care/medical benefits	92%	—	—	—
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	90%	—	—	—
Defined contribution plans	88%	—	—	—
Opportunities for variable play	83%	—	—	—
Defined benefit pension plan	76%	—	—	—
Family-friendly benefits	75%	—	—	—
Wellness programs	69%	—	—	—
Stock options	56%	—	—	—

Note: A dash (—) indicates that there were no statistically significant differences in this category. Table represents the percentage of respondents who rated each aspect as "important" or "very important" to their job satisfaction. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Data are sorted in descending order by the "overall" percentage column. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 12

## SATISFACTION WITH JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Feeling safe in the work environment	2%	4%	12%	35%	48%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	3%	7%	16%	34%	40%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	3%	7%	19%	34%	37%
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	2%	5%	16%	40%	37%
Relationship with co-workers	2%	3%	17%	41%	36%
The work itself	2%	6%	17%	40%	34%
Meaningfulness of the job	2%	5%	17%	42%	34%
Organization's financial stability	2%	7%	19%	40%	33%
Job security	3%	8%	18%	39%	32%
Autonomy and independence	2%	9%	18%	39%	32%
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	5%	9%	15%	40%	31%
Variety of work	3%	8%	20%	39%	30%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	2%	3%	22%	42%	30%
Overall corporate culture	3%	10%	19%	41%	28%
Benefits, overall	5%	10%	17%	41%	27%
Trust between employees and senior management	6%	12%	20%	35%	27%
Company paid general training	6%	9%	24%	35%	26%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	6%	12%	18%	37%	26%
Teamwork within department/business unit	4%	7%	22%	42%	26%
Organization's commitment to professional development	4%	11%	25%	34%	25%
Communication between employees and senior management	6%	14%	16%	39%	25%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	3%	6%	26%	39%	25%
Job-specific training	3%	12%	25%	37%	25%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	6%	9%	20%	41%	24%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	4%	7%	27%	39%	24%
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	5%	15%	23%	33%	24%
Compensation/pay, overall	8%	12%	15%	42%	23%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	3%	9%	34%	32%	23%
Networking opportunities	4%	10%	28%	36%	23%
Career development opportunities	4%	13%	25%	37%	21%
Teamwork between departments/business units	4%	11%	24%	40%	21%
Communication between departments/ business units	5%	13%	24%	38%	21%

Note: n = 468-593. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis. Data are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicated "very satisfied."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2015)



TABLE 13

## JOB SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTORS: DIFFERENCES IN IMPORTANCE VS. SATISFACTION

	Very Important	Very Satisfied	Differences in Percentage Points (Gaps)
Compensation/pay, overall (2)	63%	23%	40
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels (1)	67%	31%	36
Benefits, overall (3)	60%	27%	33
Trust between employees and senior management (5)	55%	27%	28
Job security (4)	58%	32%	26
Career advancement opportunities	47%	24%	23
Communication between employees and senior management	48%	25%	23
Management's recognition of employee job performance	48%	26%	22
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	45%	24%	21
Organization's financial stability	53%	33%	20
Opportunities to use skills/abilities (5)	55%	37%	18
Career development opportunities	39%	21%	18
Teamwork between departments/business units	39%	21%	18
Job-specific training	42%	25%	17
Teamwork within department/business unit	43%	26%	17
Overall corporate culture	44%	28%	16
Organization's commitment to professional development	40%	25%	15
Communication between departments/business units	36%	21%	15
Autonomy and independence	46%	32%	14
The work itself	48%	34%	14
Relationship with immediate supervisor	53%	40%	13
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	49%	37%	12
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	39%	30%	9
Company-paid training	35%	26%	9
Meaningfulness of the job	43%	34%	9
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	32%	24%	8
Networking opportunities	31%	23%	8
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	30%	25%	5
Variety of work	35%	30%	5
Relationship with co-workers	40%	36%	4
Feeling safe in the work environment	50%	48%	2
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	21%	23%	2

Note: Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis. Data are sorted in descending order by the "Differences (Gaps)" column. The difference/gap percentages are based on the absolute difference between the percentage of respondents who indicated the aspect was "very important" to their job satisfaction and the percentage of respondents who indicated they were "very satisfied" with the aspect in their current job.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

**TABLE 14**  
TOP FIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CONDITIONS: 2011-2015

	2011 (n = 600)	2012 (n = 600)	2013 (n = 600)	2014 (n = 600)	2015 (n = 600)
Relationship with co-workers	76% (1)	79% (1)	73% (1)	79% (1)	77% (1)
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	74% (2)	75% (2)	70% (2)	74% (4)	77% (1)
Meaningfulness of the job	69% (5)	70% (5)	64%	75% (3)	76% (2)
Relationship with immediate supervisor	73% (3)	71% (4)	70% (2)	73% (5)	74% (3)
The work itself	76% (1)	70% (5)	68% (3)	73% (5)	74% (3)
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	71% (4)	72% (3)	66% (4)	76% (2)	72% (4)
Organization's financial stability	63%	63%	65% (5)	73% (5)	72% (5)

Note: Table represents those who answered "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied." Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." "Not applicable" responses were excluded from this analysis.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

**TABLE 15**  
TOP FIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OPINIONS AND BEHAVIORS: 2011-2015

	2011 (n = 600)	2012 (n = 600)	2013 (n = 600)	2014 (n = 600)	2015 (n = 600)
I am confident I can meet my work goals.	—	—	—	92% (1)	89% (1)
I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	—	—	—	89% (2)	86% (2)
I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	—	—	—	76% (3)	77% (3)
I am highly motivated by my work goals.	68% (4)	67% (3)	64% (4)	74% (4)	76% (4)
While at work, I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	70% (3)	66% (4)	66% (3)	68%	71% (5)

Note: A dash (—) indicates that this question was not asked that year. Table represents those who answered "agree" or "strongly agree." Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree."

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

**TABLE 16**  
**ENGAGEMENT CONDITIONS, BY SELECT EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS**

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job level
Relationship with co-workers	77%	—	—	—
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	77%	—	—	Middle management (82%), executive (91%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (69%)
Meaningfulness of the job	76%	—	—	Middle management (81%), executive (88%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (66%)
Relationship with immediate supervisor	74%	—	—	—
The work itself	74%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (76%), middle management (82%), executive (87%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (61%)
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	72%	—	—	Middle management (77%), executive (88%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (63%)
Organization's financial stability	72%	—	—	—
Autonomy and independence	71%	—	—	Executive (93%) > nonexempt (hourly) (62%), professional nonmanagement (70%), middle management employees (74%)
Variety of work	69%	—	—	Middle management (77%), executive (87%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (58%)
Overall corporate culture	69%	—	—	Executive (83%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (61%)
Communication between employees and senior management	64%	—	—	Middle management (72%), executive (80%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (57%)
Management's recognition of employee job performance	63%	—	—	Executive (80%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (56%)
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	63%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (70%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (52%)
Job-specific training	61%	—	—	—
Organization's commitment to professional development	59%	—	—	Executive (80%) > nonexempt (hourly) (51%), professional nonmanagement employees (58%)
Career development opportunities	58%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (60%), middle management (64%), executive (80%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (45%)
Networking opportunities	58%	—	—	Executive (83%) > nonexempt (hourly) (45%), professional nonmanagement (61%), middle management employees (62%)
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	57%	—	—	Middle management (66%), executive (74%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (46%)

Note: A dash (—) indicates that there were no statistically significant differences by the respective demographic (e.g., by gender). Table represents the percentage of responding employees who indicated being "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with each job satisfaction aspect. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." Data are sorted in descending order by the "overall" column. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)

TABLE 17

## ENGAGEMENT OPINIONS AND BEHAVIORS, BY SELECT EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job Level
I am confident I can meet my work goals.	89%	—	—	—
I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	86%	—	—	Professional nonmanagement (92%), middle management (90%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (78%)
I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	77%	—	—	—
I am highly motivated by my work goals.	76%	—	—	Executive (87%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (69%)
While at work, I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	71%	—	—	—
In my organization, employees are encouraged to take action when they see a problem or opportunity.	70%	—	—	—
I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work.	68%	—	—	—
I am provided with the resources to do my job well.	68%	—	—	—
I have passion and excitement about my work.	66%	—	—	Middle management (72%), executive (80%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (55%)
My colleagues quickly adapt to challenging or crisis situations.	65%	—	—	—
I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.	64%	—	—	Middle management (71%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (56%)
The people in my work group never give up despite difficulties.	64%	—	—	—
Employees in my organization deal very well with unpredictable or changing work situations.	61%	—	—	—
I enjoy volunteering for activities beyond my job requirements.	57%	—	—	—
In my work group, we are constantly looking out to see what challenge is coming next.	57%	—	—	—
I feel completely plugged in at work, like I'm always on full power.	55%	—	—	—
The people in my work group are always flexible in expanding the scope of their work.	55%	—	—	—
Others in my organization view unexpected responsibilities as an opportunity to succeed at something new.	53%	—	—	—
Other people in my organization often volunteer for new projects.	48%	—	—	Middle management (55%) > nonexempt (hourly) employees (40%)

Note: A dash (—) indicates that there were no statistically significant differences by the respective demographic (e.g., by gender). Table represents the percentage of respondents who indicated they “agree” or “strongly agree” with statements on engagement opinions and behaviors. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree.” Data are sorted in descending order by the “overall” percentage column.

Source: Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement (SHRM, 2016)





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