

# Want to keep employees happy? Offer learning and development.

**W**hat keeps people in their current job? The answers may surprise you. Pay is not the leading consideration, reports an ongoing survey by Career Systems International. Even the much-vaunted notions of recognition and respect fall lower on the list of Top 20 Retention Drivers.

Almost half—48.4 percent—of the 7,600-plus respondents in the seventh edition of the survey, claim that “exciting work and challenge” top the list of reasons for staying at a job. Second on the list of Top 20 Retention Drivers, at 42.6 percent, is “career growth, learning, and development.” “Working with great people” came in at number three on the list at 41.8 percent. There may be an even more important finding: The top three replies are the same today as they were at the very peak of the tight labor market in 2000.

Despite what the job market may be doing, employees are looking for job growth and learning opportunities, or they are looking for a new job. When the age of the respondents is taken into consideration, “career growth, learning, and development” was listed less frequently for those over 40, but was still a leading factor in retention.

“Our statistics certainly support the continued need for learning and development practitioners who realize that pay is absolutely not the essential driver of retention, but rather learning, development, and growth continue to top the list,” explains Beverly Kaye, one of the authors of the study. Adds Kaye: “A lot more attention needs to be placed on our Baby Boomers and the kinds of career opportunities they want and need. It will be critical that organizations do what they can do to keep their Boomers in the labor force as long as they can. Employees are going to be attracted to organizations that have well-developed mentoring programs, career development initiatives, and job enrichment opportunities.”

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TOP 20 Retention Drivers	RETENTION ITEMS	PERCENTAGE (%)
	Exciting Work & Challenge	48.4
	<b>Career Growth, Learning, &amp; Development</b>	<b>42.6</b>
	Working With Great People & Relationships	41.8
	Fair Pay	31.8
	Supportive Management/Great Boss	25.1
	Being Recognized, Valued, & Respected	23.0
	Benefits	22.0
	Meaningful Work, Making a Difference, & Contribution	17.0
	Pride in Organization, its Mission, & Product	16.5
	Great Work Environment/Culture	16.0
	Flexibility	13.6
	Autonomy, Creativity, and a Sense of Control	12.6
	Job Security & Stability	10.5
	Location	10.3
	Diverse, Changing Work Assignments	7.7
	Being Part of a Team	6.4
	Fun on the Job	6.2
	Work/Life Balance	6.2
	Loyalty/Commitment to Organization or Co-Workers	5.0
	Comfort on the Job	4.2

Source: Career Systems International

## The BIG Number...

When the study's population is sorted by industry, nearly half of computer and high-tech workers rank career growth, learning, and development as the leading factor in staying on a job...

# 46%

## By the way...

Contrary to what some believe, employees who have too little work are actually less satisfied with their jobs than those who are burdened with too much work, according to a 2004 study by Sirota Consulting.

The most satisfied employees in the survey were those who say they have just the right amount of work. They rated their overall satisfaction with their jobs at a 73 on a 100-point scale. Employees with the second highest satisfaction were those who have “too much work.”

The least satisfied employees were those who say they have “much too little work.” Their job satisfaction: 32.

More than 800,000 employees, from 61 organizations, responded to the survey.

In descending order, employees' overall satisfaction with their job as it relates to their workload, on a 100-point scale, are

- workload is “about right” – overall job satisfaction rating of 73
- “too much work” – overall job satisfaction rating of 57
- “too little work” – overall job satisfaction rating of 49
- “much too much work” – overall job satisfaction rating of 42
- “much too little work” – overall job satisfaction rating of 32.

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