Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement

Optimizing Organizational Culture for Success

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Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement

Optimizing Organizational Culture for Success

A Research Report by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

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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 2014. 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:

1   **Career development.**

2   **Employee relationships with management.**

3   **Compensation.**

4   **Benefits.**

5   **Work environment.**

6   **Conditions for engagement.**

7   **Engagement opinions.**

8   **Engagement behaviors.**

The overall findings are explained in text and through supporting visual references. Analysis by demographic 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 ranking 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.

- A ranking of the top five aspects of employee engagement by demographic variables, including employee gender, age and job level.

- Additional analyses by demographics, including employee gender, age and job level.

Executive Summary

In 2014, 86% of U.S. employees reported overall satisfaction with their current job, an improvement of five percentage points since 2013.

This year marks the greatest increase in the number of employees satisfied with their current job since SHRM began administering the Employee Job Satisfaction Survey in 2002. Although the degree of the increase may be a bit unexpected, the direction of employee job satisfaction is less surprising. As the economy becomes progressively stable, it may be easier for organizations to acquire additional resources. This allows for more flexibility in

Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels **was rated as "very important" by 72% of employees in 2014, making it the top contributor to overall employee job satisfaction.**

areas such as hiring and organizational development. By the same token, workers are gaining confidence in the labor market and seeking new employment opportunities that are more compatible with their needs and wants.

In 2014, 86% of U.S. employees reported overall satisfaction with their current job, an improvement of five percentage points since 2013; of this group, 39% reported being "very satisfied" and 47% "somewhat satisfied." This percentage matches the highest level of satisfaction over the last 10 years, which was in 2009. Between 2009 and 2013, levels of job satisfaction had gradually declined.

Top Five Contributors to Employee Job Satisfaction in 2014

Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels was rated as "very important" by 72% of employees in 2014, making it the top contributor to overall employee job satisfaction. At 64%, *trust between employees and senior management* was the second most important contributor to job satisfaction. This year marks the first year these aspects have been included in this report. With the addition of these two new aspects come changes in the leading five job satisfaction contributors. Because both of these components encourage stronger rapport between employees and upper management, it is not surprising that these factors were rated highly as organizations transitioned out of a period of uncertainty.

FIGURE 1: Employee Job Satisfaction 2004-2014

2004 (n = 604)	2005 (n = 600)	2006 (n = 604)	2007 (n = 604)	2008 (n = 601)	2009 (n = 602)	2010 (n = 605)	2011 (n = 596)	2012 (n = 600)	2013 (n = 600)	2014 (n = 600)
77%	77%	80%	79%	82%	86%	84%	83%	81%	81%	86%
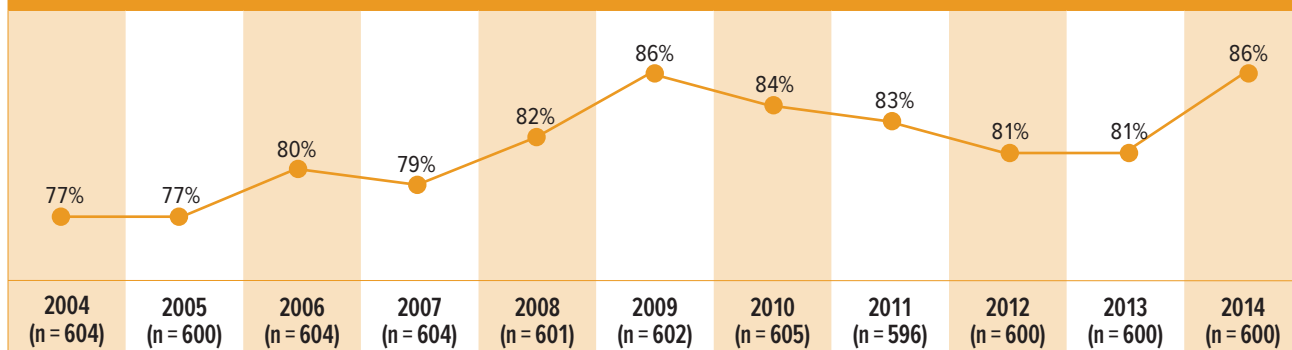
Note: Figure represents respondents who indicated they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their current job. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." "Neutral/Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" responses were excluded from this analysis.

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

FIGURE 2: Job Satisfaction Aspects Rated as "Very Important" and "Very Satisfied" by Employees

Importance		Satisfaction
72%	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels (1)	33%
64%	Trust between employees and senior management (2)	28%
63%	Benefits, overall (3)	27%
61%	Compensation/pay, overall (4)	24%
59%	Job security (5)	32%
58%	Relationship with immediate supervisor (6)	40%
58%	Opportunities to use your skills and abilities in your work (6)	34%
56%	Immediate supervisor's respect for my ideas (7)	37%
55%	Organization's financial stability (8)	33%
55%	Management's recognition of employee job performance (8)	24%
55%	Communication between employees and senior management (8)	23%
53%	Feeling safe in your work environment (9)	48%
52%	Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies (10)	26%
50%	The work itself (11)	36%
48%	Overall corporate culture (12)	31%
47%	Career advancement opportunities within the organization (13)	20%
47%	Autonomy and independence (13)	28%
46%	Meaningfulness of job (14)	35%
44%	Relationships with co-workers (15)	42%
43%	Teamwork within department/business unit (16)	26%
42%	Organization's commitment to professional development (17)	23%
41%	Teamwork between departments/business units (18)	22%
41%	Job-specific training (18)	22%
41%	Communication between departments/business units (18)	21%
39%	Career development opportunities (19)	21%
38%	Contribution of work to organization's business goals (20)	33%
37%	Variety of work (21)	32%
33%	Networking opportunities (22)	21%
31%	Company-paid general training (23)	24%
31%	Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility (23)	26%
29%	Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce (24)	28%
20%	Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace (25)	19%

Note: n = 600. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale were 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, 2015)

Overall benefits were the third most important job satisfaction contributor, with 63% of employees rating it as "very important." With the exception of 2012, benefits have been among the top five contributors to job satisfaction since SHRM began administering the job satisfaction survey in 2002. Moving from the fourth position in 2013, this jump is expected as employees are concerned about the cost of health care and their financial readiness. Furthermore, as the economy continues to improve and workers gain more confidence in finding new employment opportunities, organizations will need to develop strategies to retain their top talent—for example, offering a comprehensive benefits package that includes extra incentives that may persuade employees to continue their tenure.

Compensation/pay was reported as "very important" by 61% of responding employees. While compensation/pay was last year's leading job satisfaction contributor, it has fallen to the fourth position in 2014. Seeing as benefits were rated as "very important" by more employees than compensation/pay this year, organizations may want to consider incorporating a total rewards program that includes both aspects instead of relying solely on compensation/pay moving forward.

Job security was rated fifth among the factors reported as "very important" to job satisfaction in 2014; 59% of employees rated it as "very important," unchanged from 2013. Although this aspect continues to remain critical to employees, the importance of other factors has surpassed the importance of job security given the current state of economic conditions.

Top Aspects Contributing to Employee Engagement in 2014

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.

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).

79% of employees were satisfied with their relationships with co-workers.

The top engagement factors for work conditions included the following:

- 79% of employees were satisfied with their relationships with co-workers.

- 76% of employees were satisfied with contribution of their work to their organization's business goals.

- 75% of employees were satisfied with the meaningfulness of their job.

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.

The top engagement factors as they related to *behaviors* and *opinions* included the following:

- 92% of employees were confident they could meet their work goals.

- 88% of employees were determined to accomplish their work goals.

- 76% of employees had a clear understanding of their organization's vision/mission.

TABLE 1: Top Five Aspects of Job Satisfaction Rated as "Very Important" by Employees: 2004-2014											
	2004 (n = 604)	**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)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	72% (1)
Trust between employees and senior management	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64% (2)
Benefits, overall	68% (1)	63% (1)	65% (2)	59% (1)	57% (2)	60% (2)	60% (2)	53% (5)	53%	53% (4)	63% (3)
Compensation/pay	63% (2)	61% (2)	67% (1)	59% (1)	53% (3)	57% (3)	53% (5)	54% (4)	60% (3)	60% (1)	61% (4)
Job security	60% (4)	59% (4)	59% (3)	53% (2)	59% (1)	63% (1)	63% (1)	63% (1)	61% (2)	59% (2)	59% (5)

Note: A dash (—) indicates the question was not asked on that year's survey. 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, 2015)

TABLE 2: Top Five Employee Engagement Conditions

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

Note: Table represents the percentage of respondents who indicated they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with each employee engagement condition. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis.
Source: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

TABLE 3: Top Five Employee Engagement Opinions and Behaviors

	2011 (n = 600)	2012 (n = 600)	2013 (n = 600)	2014 (n = 600)
I am confident I can meet my work goals.	—	—	—	92% (1)
I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	—	—	—	88% (2)
I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	—	—	—	76% (3)
I am highly motivated by my work goals.	68% (4)	67% (3)	64% (4)	74% (4)
I frequently feel that I'm putting all my effort into my work.	70% (2)	77% (2)	69% (2)	69% (5)

Note: A dash (—) indicates the question was not asked on that year's survey. Table represents the percentage of respondents who indicated they "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statements regarding employee engagement. Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree."
Source: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

What Do These Findings Mean for Organizations?

- **Pay is important, but culture may mean more.** Compensation and benefits are always ranked highly by employees when evaluating satisfaction with their jobs. However, there is increased evidence that corporate culture and relationships with co-workers and managers are held in higher esteem by workers. Nearly three out of four respondents to this survey indicated that respectful treatment of employees at all levels was "very important" when ranking job satisfaction. Knowing this, HR professionals should ensure that their workplace culture and employee engagement strategies are of equal importance to compensation, benefits and other responsibilities.

- **When forming a compensation and benefits strategy, be flexible.** As hiring activity continues to increase in the U.S. labor market, HR professionals must craft competitive pay packages in order to retain and recruit top talent. More workers are seeking flexible schedules in order to better balance their careers and time away from the office, and this change should be taken under consideration, if possible. More than one-half (56%) of respondents to this survey indicated that they would be unlikely or very unlikely to look for a new position outside of their organization in the next year. The leading reasons these employees expected to remain at their current organization were compensation/pay (45%) and flexibility to balance work and life issues (42%). Aside from a competitive base salary, HR professionals should also leverage benefits, such as flexible work arrangements, as a means of attracting workers at all levels of their organization.

- **Define workers' roles in your organization and promote interaction.** Employee engagement is defined, in part, by the conditions in the workplace, and workers have shown an increased preference for knowing their role and where they fit into the success of the organization. HR professionals should make the goals of their organization clear to all workers and then illustrate how those workers' responsibilities contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. This can be achieved in a collaborative environment that encourages regular feedback and interaction among co-workers, as well as between employees and their supervisors.

Survey Results: Employee Job Satisfaction

Top Job Satisfaction Aspects in 2014

72% Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels
64% Trust between employees and senior management
63% Benefits, overall
61% Compensation/pay, overall
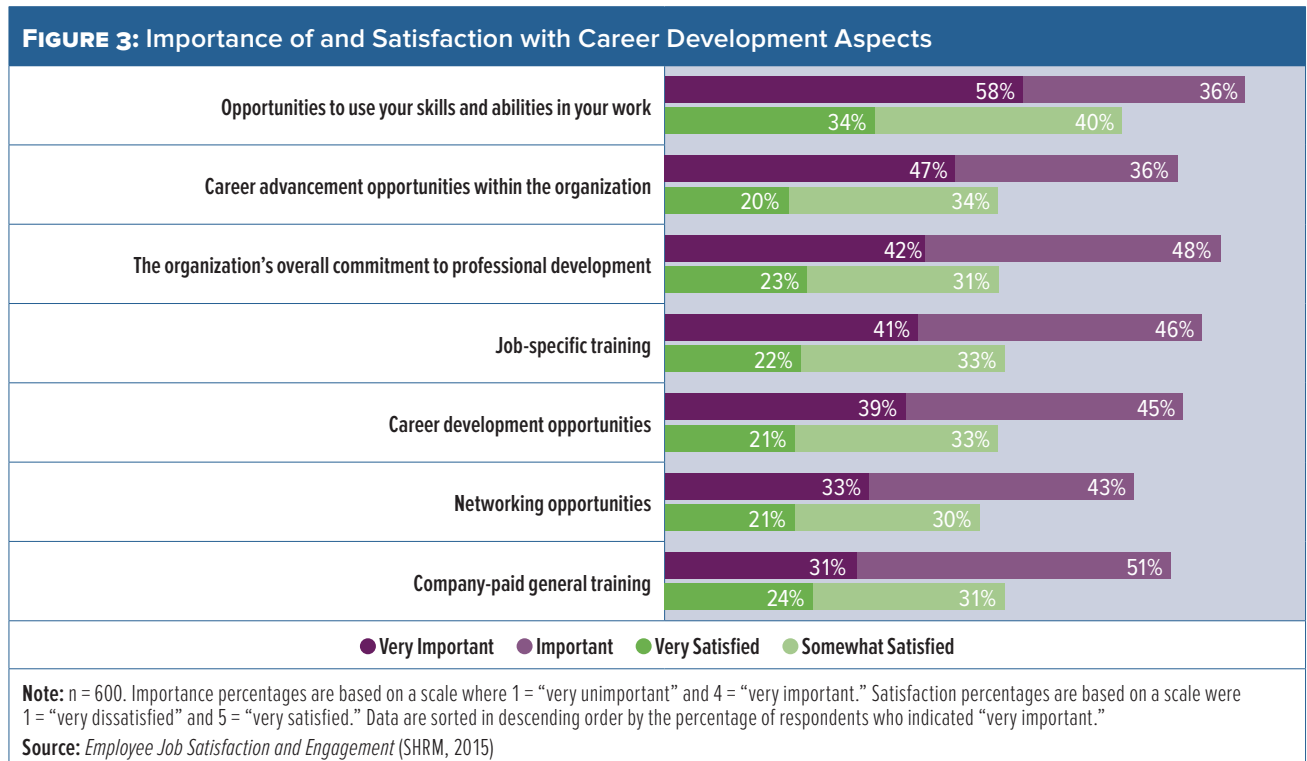**59%** Job security

Career Development

Career development provides opportunities that can be mutually beneficial for both employees and employers. Employees who partake in job training, continuing education and other types of professional development can refine and acquire new skill sets that could help advance their career. In addition, a more knowledgeable staff may translate into various advantages for employers. Developing more well-rounded employees by preparing them to better handle tasks and be successful in their roles helps organizations become more effective and efficient. For example, employee cross-training could mitigate productivity loss while backfilling a position.

Opportunities to Use Skills and Abilities

Nearly three-fifths (58%) of employees rated opportunities to use their skills and abilities at work as a very important contributor to their job satisfaction. With the addition of new job satisfaction contributors to the survey comes the disruption of some trends. This year marks the first time since 2007 that opportunities to use skills and abilities did not make the list of top five job satisfaction contributors.

Seventy-four percent of employees indicated they were satisfied ("somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied") with this aspect. Similar to last year, opportunities to use skills and abilities held the highest percentage of "very satisfied" employees within the career development

FIGURE 3: Importance of and Satisfaction with Career Development Aspects

Opportunities to use your skills and abilities in your work
- Very Important / Important: 58% / 36%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 34% / 40%

Career advancement opportunities within the organization
- Very Important / Important: 47% / 36%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 20% / 34%

The organization's overall commitment to professional development
- Very Important / Important: 42% / 48%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 23% / 31%

Job-specific training
- Very Important / Important: 41% / 46%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 22% / 33%

Career development opportunities
- Very Important / Important: 39% / 45%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 21% / 33%

Networking opportunities
- Very Important / Important: 33% / 43%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 21% / 30%

Company-paid general training
- Very Important / Important: 31% / 51%
- Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied: 24% / 31%

● Very Important ● Important ● Very Satisfied ● Somewhat Satisfied

Note: n = 600. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale were 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, 2015)

category. This level of satisfaction placed opportunities to use skills and abilities at work fourth on the list of factors contributing to employee engagement conditions.

According to the *SHRM Economic Conditions: Recruiting Skill Gaps Survey*, insufficient work experience and a lack of appropriate technical skills were among the leading causes of recruiting difficulty.[1] This concern may be a result of increased global competition for the talent market, higher demand for specialized jobs and the changing demographic of the current workforce (e.g., a large number of Baby Boomers retiring). Incorporating learning opportunities into employees' career development plan would help mitigate the skills gap predicted for the future workforce. In addition, expanding employees' talents can help prevent interruption in operations due to lack of skilled workers.

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, increasing seven percentage points since last year. Over the past seven 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 considered career advancement opportunities as important job satisfaction contributors more so than Baby Boomers did. Female employees were also more likely than male employees to think this aspect was important.

One-fifth (20%) of employees reported being "very satisfied" and one-third (34%) were "somewhat satisfied" with the opportunity for upward mobility in their organization. Middle-management employees were more likely to be satisfied with career advancement opportunities compared with employees at the nonexempt nonmanagement level. Employee retention is critical as turnover can inflict a huge burden on organizations. Productivity loss during recruitment and training of new employees is among the financial and operational consequences of organizations that do not strive to reduce turnover. SHRM's *2014 Human Capital Benchmarking Report* found that the average voluntary turnover rate was 11%, a decrease from 13% in 2013.[2] Furthermore, the report noted that the average cost-per-hire was $3,337, an increase of more than $500 compared to 2013, and the average time spent filling a position was 35 days.

As employees feel more confident about the labor market and the economy, organizations will have to work harder to retain top talent. This research found that 44% of employees indicated it would be "likely" or "very likely" that they would look for a job outside of their current organization within the next year. Two of the leading reasons for seeking employment elsewhere were better career advancement opportunities (33%) and more meaningful work (23%). Failure to see a bright future with the organization may damage employee morale and organizational culture. Organizations may want to

consider developing a mobility program that includes practices such as internal hiring, mentoring and leadership development programs, and succession planning. If upward mobility is not possible (e.g., in a small organization), job enlargement through job rotation may be a substitute to keep employees engaged.

Organization's Commitment to Professional Development

Expanding and improving employees' skills and knowledge through professional development helps them master their duties and 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-two percent of employees rated this aspect as "very important" to job satisfaction, and more than one-half (54%) reported being satisfied with their organization's commitment to professional development.

Although employees continue to place value on continuous learning through professional development opportunities, other SHRM research reveals that fewer organizations are investing in these types of benefits.[3] The *2014 SHRM Employee Benefits Report* found declines in the percentage of organizations offering on-site and off-site professional development opportunities and professional license application or renewal fees compared with 2013, and cross-training not directly related to the job has been declining over the last five years. These reductions may have several causes, including organizations still attempting to recover revenue lost during the Great Recession, competing benefits, and the concern that employees will leave the organization soon after these professional development opportunities are funded.

SHRM research on the strategic use of benefits found that 56% of organizations have difficulty recruiting highly skilled employees; however, just one-third (32%) of respondents have positively leveraged their organization's benefits to recruit these workers in the last 12 months.[4] About two-thirds (65%) of organizations indicated they think professional and career development will become more important when recruiting highly skilled employees in the next three to five years. Employees are more likely to feel engaged in their jobs when they feel that their employer is invested in growing their careers.

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-one percent of employees viewed job-specific training as "very important" to their job satisfaction, comparable to the importance of an

organization's commitment to professional development (42%). Slightly more than one-half (55%) of employees indicated they were satisfied with job-specific training at their organization. Female employees reported job-specific training to be more important to their job satisfaction, and they were more satisfied with it than male employees were.

Career Development Opportunities

Developing career paths and ladders are two techniques that can encourage employees to evolve in their profession. While 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, an increase of six percentage points from 2013, reported that career development opportunities were "very important" to their overall job satisfaction, and 54% were satisfied with this aspect in their current job. Naturally, this element was more important to younger workers (Millennials and Generation X) than to workers in the Baby Boom generation. Middle-management employees were also more likely to report being satisfied with this aspect compared with nonexempt nonmanagement employees.

As organizations continue to be apprehensive about the potential skills gap in the future, it is important 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 incorporate an internship program into the organization's succession planning. A recent SHRM survey found that 34% of organizations hired more interns in 2013 than in the previous year.[5] Organizations most commonly offer internships to undergraduate students (89%); one-half (50%) of organizations offer internships to graduate students and 17% to high school students. The majority (82%) of organizations have hired at least one intern as a full-time employee after their internship ended. More organizations are recognizing the benefits of internship programs, such as gaining additional help with operations and building the talent of the future workforce.

Networking Opportunities

Networking can be used to foster cross-functional and collaborative skills with internal and external partners. Thirty-three percent of employees felt that networking opportunities were "very important" to their job satisfaction, an increase of seven percentage points compared with 2013, and 51% percent were satisfied with their opportunities to network. 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 networking. Millennials were more likely to consider networking to be very important to their job satisfaction than Baby Boomers were; however, middle management employees were more satisfied with it compared with nonexempt nonmanagement employees.

Findings from a survey on recruiting for business and IT employment opportunities revealed that employee referrals were the leading method used by organizations to

As organizations continue to be apprehensive about the potential skills gap in the future, it is important to empower employees with the resources they need to be successful in their roles.

locate their most qualified business and IT job applicants (58% and 46%, respectively).[6] Approximately one-third of organizations found their most qualified business job applicants through informal networking (37%) and social networking websites (34%); however, slightly fewer organizations found successful matches for IT job applicants through these methods (informal networking at 28% and social networking websites at 34%).

Company-Paid General Training

Thirty-one percent of employees felt that paid training and tuition reimbursement were "very important" to employee job satisfaction, and 55% said they were satisfied with this aspect, an increase of 11 percentage points from 2013. Generation X employees were more likely to report paid training as a contributor to their job satisfaction compared with Baby Boomers. Females were also more likely than males to see value in paid training.

Organizations that require their employees to have advanced degrees or value higher education in their culture may want to emphasize this benefit in order to attract talent. The 2014 *Employee Benefits* research report indicated that roughly one-half of organizations already offered this benefit: 54% offered undergraduate educational assistance, and 50% offered graduate educational assistance.[7] According to the 2014 *Human Capital Benchmarking Report*, the average maximum reimbursement allowed for tuition/education expenses is $5,002.[8] While the percentage of organizations providing undergraduate and graduate tuition assistance decreased compared with 2013, the average maximum reimbursement increased by $411. This variation may be a result of the rising costs of tuition.
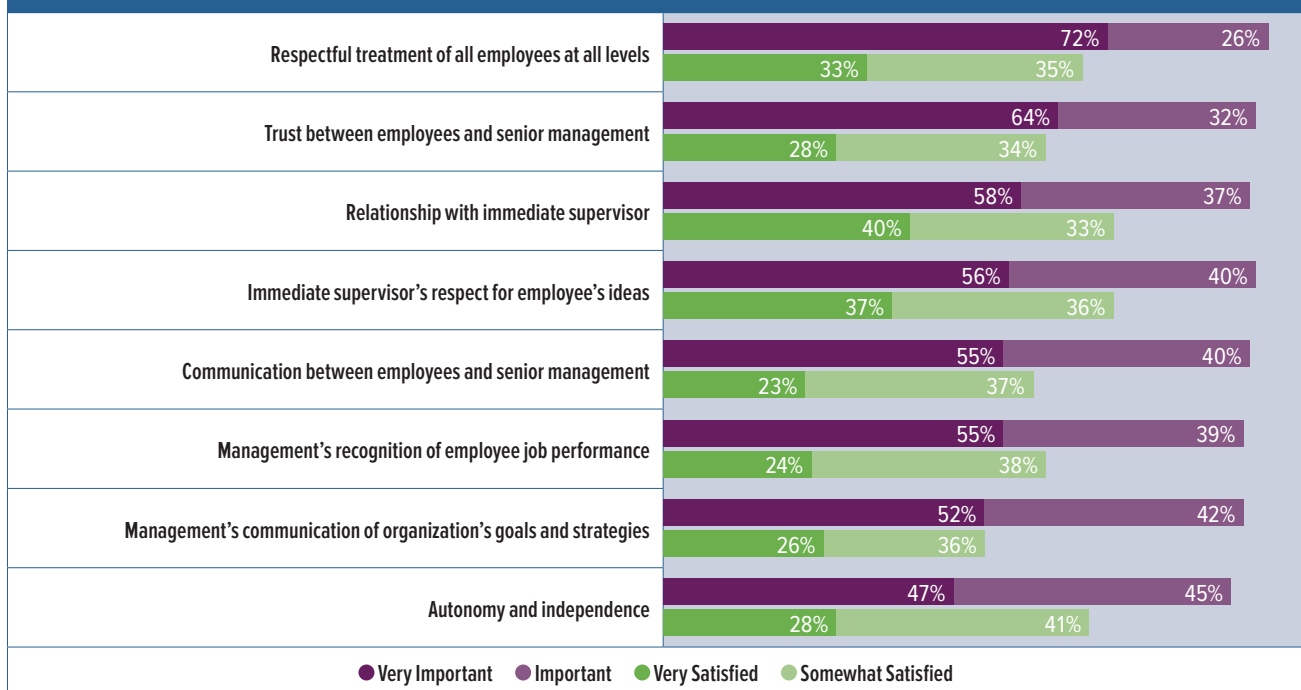
Employee Relationships with Management

Employees may be likely to associate their perception of their supervisor with their overall attitude toward their organization. In fact, management issues are one of the major sources driving up employee turnover, which emphasizes multiple implications the employee/management relationship has on an organization. Poor management has widespread consequences, ranging from diminished employee morale and reduced productivity to damage to an organization's reputation. Developing effective communication practices and respecting employees' work and opinions help build better relationships between managers and their staff. These efforts indicate that

management has a vested interest in their employees. Not surprisingly, the leading two job satisfaction contributors in 2014 were employee-management relationship aspects.

Respectful Treatment of All Employees at All Levels

In 2014, respectful treatment of all employees at all levels topped the chart as the leading contributor to job satisfaction. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of employees deemed this aspect to be "very important" to their job satisfaction. Female employees were more likely than male employees

FIGURE 4: Importance of and Satisfaction with Employee Relationships with Management Aspects

Aspect	Very Important	Important	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	72%	26%	33%	35%
Trust between employees and senior management	64%	32%	28%	34%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	58%	37%	40%	33%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	56%	40%	37%	36%
Communication between employees and senior management	55%	40%	23%	37%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	55%	39%	24%	38%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	52%	42%	26%	36%
Autonomy and independence	47%	45%	28%	41%

● Very Important ● Important ● Very Satisfied ● Somewhat Satisfied

Note: n = 600. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale were 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, 2015)

to report this factor as very important to their job satisfaction. Almost the same percentage (68%) 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

A new addition to the top indicators of job satisfaction was trust between employees and senior management, with 64% of employees reporting that it was "very important" to their job satisfaction, making it the second highest contributor to job satisfaction. Female employees were more likely to consider trust between employees and senior management to be "very important" to their job satisfaction than male employees were. Roughly three-fifths (62%) of employees are 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 other tactics to gain leverage.

Relationship with Immediate Supervisor

For the past three consecutive years, employees rated their relationship with their immediate supervisor among the top five contributors to job satisfaction. However, the addition of respectful treatment of all employees at all levels and trust between employees and senior management to the top five list bumps this job satisfaction aspect to sixth place in 2014. An employee's relationship with his or her immediate supervisor was rated as "very important" by 58% of employees; the same percentage indicated opportunities to use your skills and abilities as "very important." These two factors tied for the sixth position among the top contributors to job satisfaction. The relationship with one's immediate supervisor was cited as "very important" more frequently by female employees than by male employees.

More than seven out of 10 (73%) employees were satisfied with their relationship with their immediate supervisor. As a condition for engagement (see Table 2), this aspect was fifth, tied with the organization's financial stability and the work itself. Given that an employee's relationship with his or her immediate supervisor has been among the top five conditions of engagement over the last four years, the reoccurrence of its high rank speaks to this aspect's significance in the workplace. Fostering positive relationships encourages more constructive discussions ranging 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 My 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. More than one-half (56%) of employees indicated that their immediate supervisor's respect for their ideas was "very important" to their job satisfaction. A greater portion, at nearly three-fourths (73%) of employees, were satisfied with their immediate supervisor's respect for their ideas. Female employees were more likely than male employees to consider this factor as a "very important" job satisfaction contributor.

Communication Between Employees and Senior Management

With the rise of workplace flexible arrangements and globalization, strengthening communication efforts is a critical function of a successful organization. It is also important for organizations to pay attention to what types of communication methods are most conducive for their particular environment and their staff's preference.

Fifty-five percent of employees reported that communication between employees and senior management was "very important" to employee job satisfaction, an increase of five percentage points from the previous year. It is tied for the eighth position with management's recognition of employee job performance and organization's financial stability. Female employees perceived this aspect to be more important than did male employees. Three-fifths (60%) of employees were satisfied with the communication between employees and senior management, an improvement of seven percentage points compared with 2013. Middle management was more likely to be satisfied with this aspect than nonexempt nonmanagement employees were. 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

Fifty-five percent of employees reported that management's recognition of employee job performance was "very important" to their job satisfaction, an increase of five percentage points from 2013. While 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, a SHRM survey investigated HR professionals' opinions of their organizations' performance management systems. In comparison with other business issues, the majority of HR professionals reported performance management was a top priority (30%) or given some attention and resources (65%).[9] 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, while 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." Organizations may consider a transition to incentive programs and variable pay to encourage top performers to continue their tenure with the organization.

Female employees were more likely than male employees to associate management's recognition of employee job performance with their overall job satisfaction. Overall, 62% of employees were satisfied with their management's recognition of their performance.

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 and especially in the aftermath of the Great Recession. As organizational plans and strategies may shift while footing is regained, 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 over one-half (52%) of employees indicated management's communication of organization's goals and strategies was "very important" to their job satisfaction. Females were more likely to consider management's communication of organization's goals and strategies as an important job satisfaction contributor. Sixty-two percent of employees were satisfied with their management's communication of their organization's goals and strategies.

Autonomy and Independence

Forty-seven 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. According to this research, female employees valued autonomy and independence as part of their job satisfaction more than male employees did. Roughly seven out of 10 (69%) employees indicated they were satisfied with their level of autonomy and independence.

Compensation and Benefits

According to last year's *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* research report, employees were concentrating on compensation/pay as a major contributor to their job satisfaction.[10] This emphasis was expected as many workers either did not receive raises and bonuses or received minimal increases during the years of the Great Recession. However, as economic conditions are gradually stabilizing, employees may be looking beyond higher salaries as a reason to leave their current job. More flexibility with work/life issues, better benefits and better career advancement opportunities are among the reasons employees sought out employment outside of their organization. This year's results show that benefits came out slightly higher than compensation/pay as contributors to job satisfaction. Organizations that offer unique fringe benefits may have a great advantage over organizations that only rely on competitive salaries.

Compensation/Pay

Along with job security, compensation/pay has been one of the top five contributors to job satisfaction since 2002; 61% of employees indicated that it was "very important" to their job satisfaction. As the fourth contributor to job satisfaction in 2014, compensation/pay was rated lower than overall benefits. One possible explanation for this swap is the implementation of certain parts of health care reform (i.e., Affordable Care Act) and the workforce preparing for retirement. With the increasing cost of health care and compliance with the employer mandate of the Affordable Care Act, many employees may notice increased premiums or changes in the types of health insurance plans being offered. At the same time, employees are looking to their employer to help support them as they seek financial readiness for retirement. Sixty-two percent of employees were satisfied with their overall compensation/pay.

FIGURE 5: Importance of and Satisfaction with Compensation Aspects

	Very Important	Important	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied
Compensation/pay	61%	35%	24%	38%
Being paid competitively with the local market	57%	36%	22%	33%
Base rate of pay	50%	44%	21%	36%
Opportunities for variable pay	42%	43%	21%	30%
Stock options	15%	34%	19%	23%

Note: n = 600. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale were 1 = "very dissatisfied" and 5 = "very satisfied." Data are sorted in descending order by the percentage of respondents who indicated "very important."

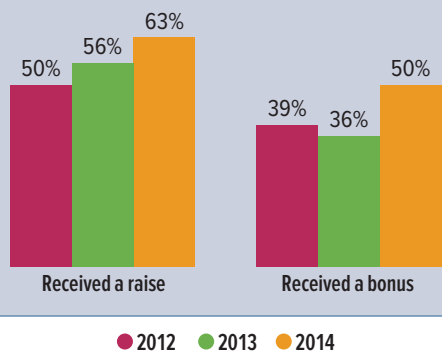**Source:** *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

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 (57%) of employees viewed this aspect as "very important" to job satisfaction and 55% were satisfied with this factor.

- *Base rate of pay:* One-half (50%) of employees rated this aspect as "very important" to job satisfaction; 57% indicated they were satisfied with this aspect.

- *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 51% were satisfied with this factor. Female employees were more likely than male employees to view opportunities for variable pay as "very important" to their job satisfaction.

- *Stock options:* Less than one-fifth (15%) of employees indicated this aspect was "very important" to job satisfaction; about two-fifths (42%) of employees whose organizations offered stock options were satisfied with this benefit.

In February 2015, SHRM Leading Indicators of National Employment® (LINE®) research signaled optimism in new-hire compensation.[11] For both the manufacturing and the service sector, the rate of increase for new-hire compensation rose in comparison with the previous year. Top talent may soon be looking elsewhere for opportunities if they do not feel like they are being adequately rewarded.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of employees reported receiving a raise (e.g., merit increase, cost of living increase) in the last year, a seven percentage point increase from 2013 and a 13 percentage point increase from 2012. One out of every two employees received a bonus in the last 12 months, an increase of 14 percentage points from 2013.

FIGURE 6: Prevalence of Employee Raises and Bonuses

Note: n = 506-525 (2014); 474-514(2013); 473-513 (2012).Only respondents answered "yes" to this question are shown. Respondents who indicated "Not applicable" were excluded from this analysis.
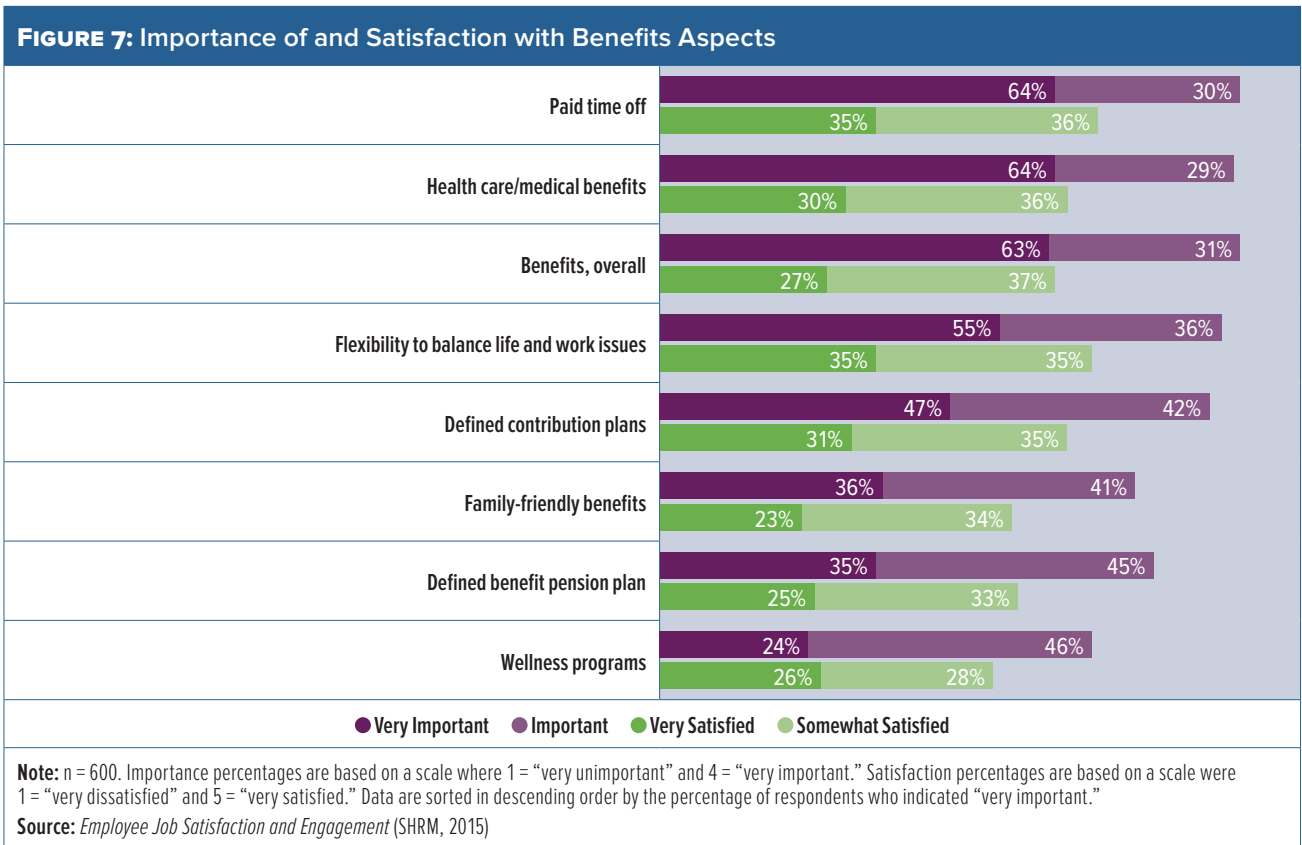**Source:** *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

Benefits

Historically, benefits have been a major factor in contributing to job satisfaction. With the exception of 2012, when they were ranked sixth, benefits have been rated among the top five contributors of job satisfaction since 2002. Even more noteworthy, benefits were ranked among the top two contributors from 2002 to 2010. In 2014, 63% of employees rated benefits as a "very important" contributor to job satisfaction, putting benefits ahead of compensation/pay (61%) and job security (59%). Job seekers are now becoming more confident in securing new positions, forcing organizations to design competitive benefits packages to attract and retain top talent. Just over three-fifths (64%) 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-four 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. Female employees were more likely than male employees to report paid time off as very important to their job satisfaction.

- *Health care/medical benefits:* Slightly more than three-fifths (64%) of employees reported health care/medical benefits were "very important," and 66% were satisfied with this aspect of their benefits package. More often, females viewed health care to be a very important job satisfaction contributor than males did.

- *Flexibility to balance life and work issues:* More than one-half (55%) of employees reported work/life balance was "very important" to their job satisfaction, an increase of 10 percentage points from 2013. Seven out of 10 (70%) employees were satisfied with their work/life balance. Once again, females were more likely than males to report these benefits as important to their job satisfaction. In addition, Millennials and Gen Xers placed more importance on work/life balance as job satisfaction contributors than Baby Boomers did.

- *Defined contribution plans:* Nearly one-half (47%) of employees rated defined contribution plans (e.g., 401(k), 403(b)) as "very important" to job satisfaction; two-thirds (66%) indicated they were satisfied with their organization's defined contribution plan(s).

- *Family-friendly benefits:* More than one-third (36%) 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. Gen Xers were more likely to see family-friendly benefits as job satisfaction contributors than Baby Boomers were.

- *Defined benefit pension plans:* Roughly one-third (35%) of employees rated defined benefit pension plans as "very

FIGURE 7: Importance of and Satisfaction with Benefits Aspects

	Very Important	Important	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied
Paid time off	64%	30%		
			35%	36%
Health care/medical benefits	64%	29%		
			30%	36%
Benefits, overall	63%	31%		
			27%	37%
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	55%	36%		
			35%	35%
Defined contribution plans	47%	42%		
			31%	35%
Family-friendly benefits	36%	41%		
			23%	34%
Defined benefit pension plan	35%	45%		
			25%	33%
Wellness programs	24%	46%		
			26%	28%

● Very Important ● Important ● Very Satisfied ● Somewhat Satisfied

Note: n = 600. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale were 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, 2015)

important" to job satisfaction, and nearly three-fifths (58%) of those with access to a defined benefit pension plan were satisfied with it.

• *Wellness programs:* Almost one-quarter (24%) of employees indicated that wellness programs were a "very important" contributor to job satisfaction, and 54% of those whose organizations offered wellness programs were satisfied with them. Millennial and Generation X employees were more likely than Baby Boomers to view wellness programs as an important job satisfaction contributor; female employees were also more likely than male employees to see these programs as important to their job satisfaction.

SHRM's 2014 *Employee Benefits* research report found that the prevalence of these benefits varied greatly. The most common health care plan offered was a preferred provider organization (PPO), at 84%.[12] However, 45% of organizations offered health savings accounts (HSAs), which have significantly increased in popularity since 2010. This trend may continue to rise as the new health care laws come into play. Whereas nearly all organizations (96%) offered paid holidays, roughly three out of five (58%) 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. There has also been a significant increase in the number of organizations that have offered PTO plans compared with 2010. A moderate proportion of organizations offered various flexible work benefits such

as telecommuting (59%), flextime (52%) and shift flexibility (20%). Far more organizations offered a traditional 401(k) or similar defined contribution retirement savings plans (89%) than defined benefit pension plans (24%). Many organizations did not offer a diverse array of family-friendly benefits as only 28% of organizations offered an on-site lactation/mother's room, 10% 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 2014 *Employee Benefits* research report.[13]

In light of current events and the changing demographics of the workforce, benefits will likely play a much larger role in the future. The *SHRM Strategic Benefits Survey Series* found that organizations do not often leverage their benefits packages to recruit or retain employees (29%-32% and 24%-26%, respectively).[14] 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. Table 4 illustrates the benefits that HR professionals have leveraged to retain employees and the benefits they expect to increase in importance in the future.

Table 4: Benefits Leveraged to Retain Employees			
	All Employees	**Highly Skilled Employees**	**High-Performing Employees**
Most leveraged benefits	1. Health care (74%) 2. Retirement savings and planning (62%) 3. Leave benefits (51%)	1. Health care (70%) 2. Leave benefits; flexible working benefits (both 53%) 3. Retirement savings and planning (46%)	1. Health care (60%) 2. Retirement savings and planning (54%) 3. Professional and career development benefits (52%)
Benefits to increase in importance	1. Retirement savings and planning (67%) 2. Health care (58%) 3. Preventive health and wellness (57%)	1. Flexible working benefits (62%) 2. Health care; retirement savings and planning (both 59%) 3. Professional and career development benefits (58%)	1. Retirement savings & planning; professional & career development benefits (both 62%) 2. Flexible working benefits (59%) 3. Health care (51%)
Source: *2014 Strategic Benefits Survey—Leveraging Benefits to Retain Employees* (SHRM, 2014)			

The *SHRM Strategic Benefits Survey Series* on health care indicated that approximately seven out of 10 (69%) organizations reported an increase in their total health care costs from their last plan year compared with the previous plan year.[15] Not surprisingly, nearly all (99%) organizations reported being somewhat or very concerned about controlling health care costs. It appears that many organizations have explored options such as providing financial education and encouraging preventive health and wellness incentives; however, a sizable proportion of organization have passed the higher costs onto their employees. Although giving employees resources needed to live healthier lifestyles can mean reduced costs for employers, workers 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 in the last year.[16] Approximately two-fifths (38%) of HR professionals reported employees having more financial challenges compared with 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.

This report also revealed that younger generations value flexible work arrangements (FWAs) as a job satisfaction contributor more than older generations do. As more Millennials enter the workforce, organizations may want to promote these benefits to attract high-potential employees. The *SHRM Strategic Benefits Survey Series* found that just over one-half (52%) of organizations provide employees the option to use FWAs, a decrease from the previous year.[17] Of these organizations, one-third (33%) reported that at least half of their staff was permitted to use this benefit.

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.
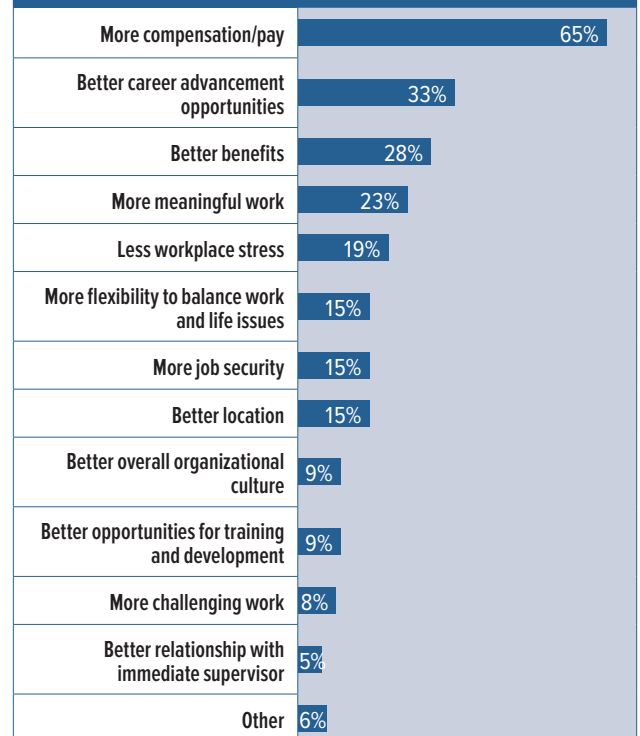
Job Security

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. Fifty-nine percent of employees reported job security as "very important" to their job satisfaction, ranking it number five in 2014's list of job satisfaction contributors. While 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 12 years. Job security was more important to female employees than to male employees. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of employees also said they were satisfied with job security in their current job.

According to this research, even though one-third (33%) of employees reported layoffs in their organization within the past 12 months, nearly three-fifths (58%) were not at all concerned about the security of their current job, an increase from last year's 44%. Moreover, less than one-half (44%) of employees said they would be "likely" or "very likely" to look for a job outside of their organization in the next 12 months. Among that group of employees, 65% reported wanting to pursue other job opportunities for more compensation/pay (see Figure 8). Others said they were looking for better career advancement opportunities (33%) and better benefits (28%) than their current job offered.

Organization's Financial Stability

Fifty-five percent of employees reported that their organization's financial stability had a "very important" impact on employee job satisfaction. Organization's financial stability was tied with communication between employees and senior management and management's recognition of employee job performance for the eighth position among contributors to job satisfaction. Although

FIGURE 8: Reasons Employees Seek Employment Outside of Their Organization

Reason	Percentage
More compensation/pay	65%
Better career advancement opportunities	33%
Better benefits	28%
More meaningful work	23%
Less workplace stress	19%
More flexibility to balance work and life issues	15%
More job security	15%
Better location	15%
Better overall organizational culture	9%
Better opportunities for training and development	9%
More challenging work	8%
Better relationship with immediate supervisor	5%
Other	6%

Note: n = 265. Only respondents who answered they were "likely" or "very likely" to look for a job outside of their current organization were asked this question. Percentages may not total 100% due to multiple responses.

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

FIGURE 9: Importance of and Satisfaction with Work Environment Aspects

Job security — Very Important 59%, Important 37%; Very Satisfied 32%, Somewhat Satisfied 40%

Organization's financial stability — Very Important 55%, Important 41%; Very Satisfied 33%, Somewhat Satisfied 40%

Feeling safe in the work environment — Very Important 53%, Important 38%; Very Satisfied 48%, Somewhat Satisfied 34%

The work itself — Very Important 50%, Important 45%; Very Satisfied 36%, Somewhat Satisfied 37%

Overall corporate culture — Very Important 48%, Important 46%; Very Satisfied 31%, Somewhat Satisfied 36%

Meaningfulness of job — Very Important 46%, Important 46%; Very Satisfied 35%, Somewhat Satisfied 40%

Relationships with co-workers — Very Important 44%, Important 48%; Very Satisfied 42%, Somewhat Satisfied 37%

Teamwork within department/business unit — Very Important 43%, Important 51%; Very Satisfied 26%, Somewhat Satisfied 38%

Communication between departments/business units — Very Important 41%, Important 52%; Very Satisfied 21%, Somewhat Satisfied 33%

Teamwork between departments/business units — Very Important 41%, Important 52%; Very Satisfied 22%, Somewhat Satisfied 35%

Contribution of work to organization's business goals — Very Important 38%, Important 54%; Very Satisfied 33%, Somewhat Satisfied 43%

Variety of work — Very Important 37%, Important 53%; Very Satisfied 32%, Somewhat Satisfied 39%

Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility — Very Important 31%, Important 54%; Very Satisfied 26%, Somewhat Satisfied 32%

Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce — Very Important 29%, Important 45%; Very Satisfied 28%, Somewhat Satisfied 30%

Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace — Very Important 20%, Important 43%; Very Satisfied 19%, Somewhat Satisfied 32%

● Very Important ● Important ● Very Satisfied ● Somewhat Satisfied

Note: n = 600. Importance percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." Satisfaction percentages are based on a scale were 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, 2015)

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.[18] 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 its staff, it is advantageous for an organization to assess its 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-three percent of employees reported that feeling safe in the work environment was "very important" to their job satisfaction, an increase of four percentage points from last year. Female employees were more likely than male employees to report this aspect as an important job satisfaction contributor. Eighty-two 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 topics 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 their organizations than their employers think. Rather than mundane, repetitive tasks, employees often prefer working on topics that inspire and energize them; double bonus if employees are given the freedom to decide what, how and when their projects are completed.

One-half (50%) of employees reported that the work itself was "very important" to job satisfaction, positioning it right outside of the top 10 list of job satisfaction contributors, at the 11th spot. Approximately three-fourths (73%) of employees reported being satisfied with their work.

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." Almost one-half (48%) of employees indicated that corporate culture was a "very important" job satisfaction contributor, with more females than males seeing this aspect as "very important" to their job satisfaction. Sixty-seven percent of employees were satisfied with this aspect, an improvement of seven percentage points since last year.

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. As the core of a foundation, the mission and vision are essential for an organization because they provide guidance and direction but also appeal to stakeholders (e.g., clients, investors) in order 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 still don't seem to identify with the message, it may be a sign that the vision is either under-communicated or that employees aren't 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 (46%) of employees reported that meaningfulness of the job was very important to their job satisfaction. Three out of four employees were satisfied with this aspect, an increase of 11 percentage points compared with 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. More than two-fifths (44%) of employees felt that relationships with co-workers were "very important" to their job satisfaction, and 79% of employees were satisfied with these relationships.

Teamwork Within Department/Business Unit

Recent SHRM research on job analysis activities found that approximately one-fifth (22%) of organizations conduct personality testing as a method to evaluate job candidates.[19] These results suggest that integrating applicants that 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 inter-department/business unit collaboration. More than two-fifths (43%) of employees felt that teamwork within their department or business units was "very important" to their job satisfaction, and 64% of employees were satisfied with this aspect. More females than males felt that this type of coordination among colleagues was more important to their job satisfaction.

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.[20] This finding was also true for business job applicants (90% of respondents said com-

munication was one of the most valuable skills) and IT job applicants (51%).

Roughly two-fifths (41%) of employees felt communication between departments/business units in their organization was "very important" to their job satisfaction. Females were more likely than males to consider this aspect to be "very important" to their job satisfaction. Just over one-half (54%) of employees were satisfied with the communication between departments/business units in their organization.

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. Collaborating on projects across departments can help build a more cohesive message to send to organization's audience and strengthen its brand. Forty-one percent of employees indicated that teamwork between departments/business units was a "very important" job satisfaction contributor. Females were more likely than males to view this aspect as "very important" to their job satisfaction. Nearly three-fifths (57%) of employees were satisfied with this factor.

Contribution of Work to the Organization's Business Goals

Similar to meaningfulness of the job, employees would prefer to think that their time and efforts are contributing to the greater picture. Recognizing how assignments support the organization's business goals can help increase 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. Although just under two-fifths (38%) of employees perceived contributing to the organization's business goals as a "very important" job satisfaction contributor, 76% of employees were satisfied with this aspect, an increase of 10 percentage points from 2013.

Variety of Work

Rarely do you come across employees who request the same tedious assignments over and over again. Most employees, at least occasionally, like the ability to work on different types of projects. 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 (37%) of employees reported that the variety of their work was "very important" to their job satisfaction. Although this aspect was not a high contributor to job satisfaction, 71% of employees were 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 and the obligation to make a positive influence beyond the organization itself. 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 the intention of CSR is not to gain immediate financial benefits, incorporating such initiatives into an organization's business model could affect profitability and improve its brand and reputation. Unchanged from last year, 31% of employees indicated that their organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility was a "very important" contributor to their job satisfaction. Placing it in the bottom quadrant of job satisfaction contributors, organization's commitment to CSR was tied with company-paid general training. Millennial and Generation X employees were more likely than Baby Boomers to report their organization's commitment to CSR as a "very important" job satisfaction contributor. Nearly three-fifths (58%) of employees reported being satisfied with their organization's commitment to CSR.

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 (29%), there is reason to believe that it will gain more weight in the near future. Similar to the 2013 results, additional demographic analyses indicate that more females and Millennials deemed diversity and inclusion as "very important" to their job satisfaction than males and Baby Boomers did, respectively. This aspect may become a higher priority over the next decade, given that acceptance- and collaboration-driven Millennials will comprise more of the workforce. Nearly three-fifths (58%) of employees were satisfied with their organization's level of commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Organizations may want to consider forming a diversity committee to support inclusive thinking. SHRM Research found that only 17% of organizations have internal groups such as diversity councils and diversity advisory boards.[21] Among those, larger organizations were three times more likely than small organizations to have these groups. Although 15% of organizations have staff dedicated exclusively to diversity and inclusion, another 17% use existing staff who volunteer 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 the creativity of ideas.

Organization's Commitment to a "Green" Workplace

With just 20% 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 2014 list. More females and Millennials than males and Baby Boomers, respectively, reported this aspect was "very important" to their job satisfaction. Approximately one-half (51%) of employees were satisfied with their organization's commitment to a "green" workplace.

SHRM research indicates that 72% of organizations practice sustainable workplace initiatives and 50% of those organizations have a formal sustainable workplace policy that integrates these goals into their strategic planning process.[22] The survey findings also reported additional benefits for engaging in sustainable practices: attracting top talent (51%), improving employee retention (40%) and developing leadership (36%).

Survey Results: Employee Engagement

In this study, employee engagement was examined through 37 aspects, consisting of employee engagement conditions, opinions and behaviors.[23] 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 3.7 for 2014. Although it still indicates that employees are moderately engaged, this year's index was slightly higher than last year's index of 3.6. Engagement levels have remained stable since 2011.

Conditions for Engagement

A number of job satisfaction contributors related to the conditions of the workplace are linked to employee engagement; these aspects are referred to as the conditions for engagement in this research. Optimal levels of employee engagement can be reached by promoting particular workplace settings. Providing these ideal circumstances allows employees to commit their undivided attention to their work.

The 2014 data suggest that employees were generally somewhat to very satisfied with engagement conditions at their workplace. This year, and every year since 2011, relationships with co-workers were the number one element with which the most employees reported being satisfied (79%). In addition, 76% of employees indicated they were satisfied with contribution of their work to their organization's business goals. The fewest employees were satisfied with networking opportunities (51%).

Very few differences were apparent when responses were compared by gender and generation. More females than males were satisfied with job-specific training, as were Millennials compared with Baby Boomers. Furthermore, more Millennials than Baby Boomers were satisfied with their career advancement opportunities within their organizations. As for job level, several differences in the percentage of satisfied respondents were uncovered between middle management and nonexempt nonmanagement employees. Middle management respondents were more likely than nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees to report being satisfied with the following engagement conditions: career advancement opportunities, career development opportunities, networking opportunities, communication between employees and senior management, the work itself and the variety of work. Organizations that reinforce the "management versus nonmanagement" mentality may create strong hierarchies, eliciting cynicism, distrust and negative attitudes. Organizations looking to improve these conditions may want to consider a flatter organizational structure, presenting more balance across positions within the organization.

Engagement Opinions: The "Feel" of Employee Engagement

Composed of the 11 statements (Table 6), engagement opinions are expressed through feelings of deep concentration, eagerness and passion. These statements capture personal reflection of employees' relationship with their own work rather than the collective employees. Personal engagement invigorates employees to feel enthusiastic and energized by their work.

In 2014, the vast majority (92%) agreed with the engagement statement that they were confident about meeting their work goals. Similarly, 88% of employees agreed they were determined to accomplish their work goals. The fewest employees (54%) agreed that they enjoyed volunteering for activities beyond their job requirements. Employees may already feel stretched too thin, thus participating in these activities may accentuate preexisting stress related to their workload.

Additional analyses of engagement opinions between demographic groups were conducted; however, few differences were found. Females were more likely than males to report enjoying volunteering for activities beyond their job requirements. Furthermore, middle-management employees were more likely than nonexempt nonmanagement employees to report having a passion and excitement about their work. No significant differences by generation/age were found.

Engagement Behaviors: The "Look" of Employee Engagement

Consisting of eight items, 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.

Sixty-eight percent of employees felt encouraged to take action when seeing a problem or opportunity, an improvement of 10 percentage points compared with the 2013 employee engagement survey results; it is the highest-rated engagement behavior since 2011. Other noteworthy findings include roughly three out of five employees feeling that their colleagues quickly adapted to challenging or crisis situations (63%) and never gave up despite difficulties (62%).

A handful of differences surfaced when analyses were run by gender, generation/age and job level. Females were more likely than males to agree that employees in their organization were encouraged to take action when

they saw a problem or opportunity. Millennials were more likely than Baby Boomers to report people in their work group to be constantly looking out for upcoming challenges; Millennials were more likely than Gen Xers to agree that colleagues dealt very well with unpredictable or changing work situations. Furthermore, Millennials were more likely than Gen Xers and Baby Boomers to agree that employees in their organization viewed unexpected responsibilities as an opportunity to succeed at something new. No differences were found for engagement behaviors between job levels.

As the economy slowly recovers, organizations may want to consider focusing on engaging their current staff by alleviating the extra pressures that may come from reduced budgets and heavier workloads. 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

TABLE 5: Conditions for Engagement

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Overall Satisfaction
Relationship with co-workers	2%	4%	15%	37%	42%	**79%**
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	1%	3%	19%	43%	33%	**76%**
Meaningfulness of the job	3%	5%	16%	40%	35%	**75%**
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	4%	6%	17%	40%	34%	**74%**
Relationship with immediate supervisor	5%	6%	15%	33%	40%	**73%**
The work itself	4%	6%	17%	37%	36%	**73%**
Organization's financial stability	2%	6%	19%	40%	33%	**73%**
Variety of work	4%	6%	18%	39%	32%	**71%**
Autonomy and independence	5%	6%	20%	41%	28%	**69%**
Overall corporate culture	5%	6%	22%	36%	31%	**67%**
Management's recognition of employee job performance	8%	9%	22%	38%	24%	**62%**
Communication between employees and senior management	9%	12%	19%	37%	23%	**60%**
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	4%	7%	32%	32%	26%	**58%**
Job-specific training	5%	11%	29%	33%	22%	**55%**
Organization's commitment to professional development	6%	13%	27%	31%	23%	**54%**
Career development opportunities	6%	12%	28%	33%	21%	**54%**
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	8%	12%	26%	34%	20%	**54%**
Networking opportunities (within or outside the organization)	5%	10%	35%	30%	21%	**51%**

Note: 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 "overall satisfaction" percentages.

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

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, especially as the job market improves.

TABLE 6: Engagement Opinions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Overall Agreement
I am confident I can meet my work goals.	1%	1%	6%	36%	56%	**92%**
I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	1%	1%	10%	44%	44%	**88%**
I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	3%	5%	16%	42%	34%	**76%**
I am highly motivated by my work goals.	2%	6%	18%	37%	37%	**74%**
I frequently feel that I'm putting all my effort into my work.	2%	8%	21%	43%	26%	**69%**
I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.	3%	9%	20%	39%	29%	**68%**
While at work, I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	3%	9%	20%	41%	27%	**68%**
I am provided with the resources to do my job well.	3%	10%	21%	43%	24%	**67%**
I have passion and excitement about my work.	4%	9%	27%	36%	25%	**61%**
I feel completely plugged in at work, like I'm always on full power.	3%	14%	29%	35%	20%	**55%**
I enjoy volunteering for activities beyond my job requirements.	4%	12%	29%	34%	20%	**54%**

Note: Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree." Data are sorted in descending order by the "overall agreement" column.
Source: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

TABLE 7: 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.	3%	7%	23%	44%	24%	**68%**
The people in my work group quickly adapt to challenging or crisis situations.	4%	10%	23%	42%	21%	**63%**
The people in my work group never give up despite difficulties.	3%	8%	27%	42%	20%	**62%**
Employees in my organization deal very well with unpredictable or changing work situations.	5%	12%	28%	34%	21%	**55%**
The people in my work group are always flexible in expanding the scope of their work.	5%	14%	29%	36%	17%	**53%**
The people in my work group are constantly looking out to see what challenge is coming next.	4%	12%	33%	35%	17%	**52%**
In my organization, employees view unexpected responsibilities as an opportunity to succeed at something new.	6%	14%	34%	31%	16%	**47%**
In my organization, employees often volunteer for new projects.	6%	16%	34%	32%	13%	**45%**

Note: Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree." Data are sorted in descending order by the "overall agreement" percentages.
Source: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

Conclusions

In a typical economic recovery, job creation is often one of the last things to accelerate, and this held true in the years following the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Hiring was sporadic, at best, in the early part of this decade, but finally hit its stride in 2014, which was the best year for job creation since 1999, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. 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, HR professionals can expect more workers to gain confidence in their prospects and seek career opportunities with other organizations.

SHRM's *Challenges Facing HR Over the Next 10 Years* research, conducted a few years ago, found that retaining and rewarding the best employees (59%), developing the next generation of corporate leaders (52%), and creating a corporate culture that attracts the best employees to organizations (36%) would be the greatest challenges facing HR executives within the next decade.[24] We may already be seeing evidence of these results in the workplace today. This year's job satisfaction and engagement survey revealed that, although many workers still rank financial factors very highly when evaluating job satisfaction, corporate culture and relationships are just as important, if not more. In order for HR professionals to implement successful retention and recruitment strategies, their tools must be deployed equally between these financial elements—such as paying competitive salaries and offering flexible work benefits—and cultural qualities of the workplace, which may include a heavy emphasis on employee engagement.

The *Challenges Facing HR Over the Next 10 Years* research also revealed that HR professionals believed offering flexible work arrangements (40%) and creating an organizational culture where trust, open communication and fairness are emphasized and demonstrated by leaders (37%) would be the most effective tactics in attracting, retaining and rewarding the best employees over the next 10 years. Seeing as this year's results support these find-

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Although many workers still rank financial factors very highly when evaluating job satisfaction, corporate culture and relationships are just as important, if not more.

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ings, the "office culture" factor in particular should not be ignored by HR professionals. Interpersonal elements, as part of corporate culture, hold much weight in the workplace given that the two highest contributors to job satisfaction were in the relationship with management category. Given the shifts in employee preferences and the upcoming changes in the workforce demographics, organizations may want to consider conducting an employee job satisfaction and engagement survey of their staff. In fact, nearly one-half (49%) of organizations reported conducting an employee survey to assess job satisfaction and/or engagement in the last year.[25]

Ultimately, as the U.S. labor market and economy continue to improve and job opportunities increase, HR professionals should equally weigh the financial and cultural elements of their recruitment and retention strategies.

Respondent Demographics

Organization Staff Size	
1-99 employees	36%
100-499 employees	16%
500-2,499 employees	13%
2,500-24,999 employees	20%
25,000 or more employees	15%
Note: n = 599. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.	

Job Level	
Nonmanagement (e.g., assistant, coordinator, specialist)	40%
Professional nonmanagement (e.g., analyst, nurse, engineer)	28%
Middle management (e.g., manager, supervisor, director)	26%
Executive level (e.g., CEO, CFO)	7%
Note: n = 600. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.	

Job Tenure	
2 years or less	29%
3 to 5 years	23%
6 to 10 years	22%
11 to 15 years	12%
16 or more years	14%
n = 600.	

Education Level	
No high school	0%*
High school graduate	9%
Some college	22%
2-year degree	13%
4-year degree	36%
Post-graduate degree	21%
Note: n = 599. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Respondents who chose "prefer not to answer" were excluded from the analysis. An asterisk (*) indicates that the percentage is less than 0.5%.	

Generation/Age	
Millennials (born after 1980)	26%
Generation X (born 1965-1980)	37%
Baby Boomers (1945-1964)	35%
Veterans (born before 1945)	2%
n = 600.	

Race	
White	84%
Asian or Asian-American	6%
Black/African-American	3%
Hispanic or Latino	3%
Two or more races	3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%*
Note: n = 585. Respondents who chose "prefer not to answer" were excluded from the analysis. An asterisk (*) indicates that the percentage is less than 0.5%.	

Gender	
Female	52%
Male	48%
n = 600.	

Organization Industry	
Retail trade (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)	16%
Finance and insurance (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)	15%
Manufacturing (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)	14%
Professional, scientific and technical services (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)	12%
Educational services (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)	8%
Health care and social assistance (ambulatory health care services; hospitals; nursing and residential care facilities; social assistance)	6%
Accommodation and food services (accommodation; food services and drinking places)	6%
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional and similar organizations (religious organizations; grantmaking and giving services; social advocacy organizations; civic and social organizations; business, professional, labor, political and similar organizations)	5%
Transportation and warehousing (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)	4%
Information (publishing industries, excluding Internet; motion picture and sound recording industries; broadcasting, excluding internet; telecommunications; data processing, hosting and related services; other information services)	4%
Construction (construction of buildings; heavy and civil engineering construction; specialty trade contractors)	3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation (performing arts, spectator sports and related industries; museums, historical sites and similar institutions; amusement, gambling and recreation industries)	3%
Wholesale trade (merchant wholesalers, durable goods; merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods; wholesale electronic markets and agents and brokers)	3%
Real estate and rental and leasing (real estate; rental and leasing services; lessors of nonfinancial intangible assets, excluding copyrighted works)	3%
Repair and maintenance (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)	2%
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (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)	1%
Personal and laundry services (personal care services; death care services; dry cleaning and laundry services; other personal services)	1%
Public administration (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)	1%
Utilities (electric power generation, transmission and distribution; natural gas distribution; water, sewage and other systems)	1%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (crop production; animal production; forestry and logging; fishing, hunting and trapping; support activities for agriculture and forestry)	0%*
Management of companies and enterprises (offices of bank holding companies; offices of other holding companies; corporate, subsidiary and regional managing offices)	0%*
Mining (oil and gas extraction; mining, excluding oil and gas; support activities for mining)	0%*
Note: n = 600. Percentages may not total 100% due to multiple responses. An asterisk (*) indicates that the percentage is less than 0.5%.	

Methodology

Survey Methodology

The sample of employees used in this research was randomly selected by an outside survey research organization's web-enabled employee panel, which is based on the American Community Study. In total, 600 individuals completed the online 2014 Job Satisfaction and Engagement Survey. All respondents were employed, either full time or part time.

A comparison between the sample of 600 employees in the 2014 sample and the 2013 sample showed differences in generation/age, education level and organizational industry. Compared with the 2013 sample, the 2014 sample consisted of more Generation X employees and fewer Baby Boomers, employees with more advanced educational degrees, and employees working in the finance and insurance industry.

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, unless otherwise noted.

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 4%. For example, 58% 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 54% and 62% 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.

Appendix

TABLE 8: Aspects of Job Satisfaction Rated as "Very Important" by Employees: 2004-2014

	2004 (n = 604)	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)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	72% (1)
Trust between employees and senior management	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64% (2)
Benefits, overall	68% (1)	63% (1)	65% (2)	59% (1)	57% (2)	60% (2)	60% (2)	53% (5)	53%	53% (4)	63% (3)
Compensation/pay, overall	63% (2)	61% (2)	67% (1)	59% (1)	53% (3)	57% (3)	53% (5)	54% (4)	60% (3)	60% (1)	61% (4)
Job security	60% (4)	59% (4)	59% (3)	53% (2)	59% (1)	63% (1)	63% (1)	63% (1)	61% (2)	59% (2)	59% (5)
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	47%	44%	51% (5)	44%	50% (4)	55% (4)	56% (3)	62% (2)	63% (1)	59% (2)	58%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	49%	46%	47%	48%	47% (5)	52%	48%	55% (3)	54% (5)	54% (3)	58%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	56%
Communication between employees and senior management	54%	50%	48%	51% (4)	50% (4)	51%	47%	53% (5)	57% (4)	50%	55%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	47%	45%	47%	49%	44%	52%	48%	49%	50%	50%	55%
Organization's financial stability	—	—	—	—	—	—	54% (4)	55% (3)	52%	53% (4)	55%
Feeling safe in the work environment	62% (3)	55% (5)	54% (4)	50% (5)	53% (3)	54% (5)	51%	48%	47%	49%	53%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	52%
The work itself	46%	35%	46%	41%	47% (5)	50%	54% (4)	53% (5)	52%	51% (5)	50%
Overall corporate culture	43%	39%	40%	36%	40%	45%	41%	46%	47%	45%	48%
Autonomy and independence	42%	41%	44%	44%	41%	47%	46%	52%	48%	47%	47%
Career advancement opportunities	37%	28%	36%	28%	29%	32%	34%	36%	42%	40%	47%
Meaningfulness of the job	38%	37%	42%	37%	45%	45%	38%	35%	39%	41%	46%
Relationship with co-workers	33%	34%	35%	34%	39%	42%	38%	38%	40%	41%	44%
Teamwork within department/ business unit	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	43%
Organization's commitment to professional development	34%	31%	35%	31%	33%	30%	33%	36%	36%	36%	42%
Communication between departments/ business units	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41%
Job-specific training	34%	28%	36%	27%	27%	35%	34%	33%	36%	40%	41%
Teamwork between departments/ business units	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41%
Career development opportunities	40%	34%	42%	35%	30%	29%	31%	33%	34%	33%	39%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	35%	33%	37%	32%	34%	39%	36%	33%	34%	35%	38%
Variety of work	37%	45%	40%	34%	35%	34%	35%	32%	33%	33%	37%
Networking opportunities	17%	19%	21%	18%	21%	22%	22%	26%	27%	26%	33%
Company-paid general training	—	—	—	31%	32%	29%	26%	24%	28%	27%	31%

	2004 (n = 604)	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)
TABLE 8: Aspects of Job Satisfaction Rated as "Very Important" by Employees: 2004-2014 (continued)											
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	—	—	—	—	33%	31%	28%	28%	28%	31%	31%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	22%	27%	28%	29%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	—	—	—	—	23%	17%	17%	17%	17%	22%	20%

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, 2015)

Table 9: Comparison of Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Select Employee Demographics

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job Level
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	98%	Female (99%) > male (96%)	—	—
Trust between employees and senior management	96%	Female (99%) > male (93%)	—	—
Compensation/pay, overall	96%	Female (98%) > male (95%)	—	—
Job security	96%	Female (98%) > male (93%)	—	—
Organization's financial stability	96%	Female (98%) > male (94%)	—	—
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	96%	Female (99%) > male (93%)	—	—
Communication between employees and senior management	95%	Female (98%) > male (93%)	—	—
Relationship with immediate supervisor	95%	Female (98%) > male (91%)	—	—
The work itself	95%	—	—	—
Benefits, overall	94%	—	—	—
Management's recognition of employee job performance	94%	Female (97%) > male (90%)	—	—
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	94%	Female (97%) > male (91%)	—	—
Overall corporate culture	94%	Female (97%) > male (92%)	—	—
Teamwork within department/ business unit	94%	Female (97%) > male (91%)	—	—
Opportunities to use skills/ abilities	94%	—	—	—
Communication between departments/ business units	93%	Female (97%) > male (89%)	—	—
Teamwork between departments/ business units	93%	Female (96%) > male (90%)	—	—
Autonomy and independence	92%	Female (95%) > male (89%)	—	—
Meaningfulness of the job	92%	Female (95%) > male (88%)	—	—
Relationship with co-workers	92%	Female (96%) > male (88%)	—	—
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	92%	Female (96%) > male (88%)	—	—
Feeling safe in the work environment	91%	Female (96%) > male (84%)	—	—
Organization's commitment to professional development	90%	—	—	—
Variety of work	90%	Female (93%) > male (87%)	—	—
Job-specific training	87%	Female (91%) > male (82%)	—	—
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	85%	Female (91%) > male (78%)	Millennials (89%), Generation X (88%) > Baby Boomers (78%)	—

TABLE 9: Comparison of Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Select Employee Demographics (continued)

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job Level
Career development opportunities	84%	—	Millennials (89%), Generation X (90%) > Baby Boomers (75%)	—
Career advancement opportunities	83%	Female (87%) > male (80%)	Millennials (94%), Generation X (87%) > Baby Boomers (73%)	—
Company-paid general training	82%	Female (86%) > male (77%)	Generation X (86%) > Baby Boomers (74%)	—
Networking opportunities	76%	—	Millennials (83%) > Baby Boomers (69%)	—
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	74%	Female (82%) > male (64%)	Millennials (80%) > Baby Boomers (65%)	—
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	63%	Female (72%) > male (54%)	Millennials (72%) > Baby Boomers (55%)	—

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, 2015)

TABLE 10: Importance of Job Satisfaction Contributors

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	1%	2%	26%	72%
Trust between employees and senior management	1%	3%	32%	64%
Benefits, overall	1%	4%	31%	63%
Compensation/pay, overall	1%	3%	35%	61%
Job security	1%	4%	37%	59%
Opportunities to use your skills and abilities in your work	2%	3%	36%	58%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	1%	4%	37%	58%
Immediate supervisor's respect for my ideas	1%	3%	40%	56%
Communication between employees and senior management	1%	3%	40%	55%
Management's recognition about employee job performance	1%	5%	39%	55%
Organization's financial stability	1%	3%	41%	55%
Feeling safe in your work environment	1%	8%	38%	53%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	1%	5%	42%	52%
The work itself	1%	5%	45%	50%
Overall corporate culture	1%	5%	46%	48%
Career advancement opportunities	3%	14%	36%	47%
Autonomy and independence	1%	6%	45%	47%
Meaningfulness of job	1%	7%	46%	46%
Relationships with co-workers	1%	7%	48%	44%
Teamwork within department/business unit	1%	5%	51%	43%
The organization's overall commitment to professional development	2%	8%	48%	42%
Job-specific training	3%	11%	46%	41%
Communication between departments/business units	1%	6%	52%	41%
Teamwork between departments/business units	1%	6%	52%	41%
Career development opportunities	3%	13%	45%	39%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	1%	7%	54%	38%
Variety of work	1%	9%	53%	37%
Networking opportunities	4%	20%	43%	33%
Company-paid general training	3%	15%	51%	31%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	3%	12%	54%	31%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	4%	23%	45%	29%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	7%	30%	43%	20%

Note: n = 600. 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, 2015)

TABLE 11: Top Five "Very Important" Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Employee Gender

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Male	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Trust between employees and senior management	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Compensation/pay, overall	Benefits, overall
	64%	59%	58%	57%	56%
Female	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Benefits, overall	Trust between employees and senior management	Compensation/pay, overall	Relationship with immediate supervisor
	79%	70%	69%	66%	65%

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, 2015)

TABLE 12: Top Five "Very Important" Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Employee Generation/Age

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Millennials	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Compensation/pay, overall	Trust between employees and senior management	Benefits, overall	Feeling safe in the work environment; job security; career advancement opportunities
	76%	67%	66%	65%	62%
Generation X	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Benefits, overall	Trust between employees and senior management	Job security	Compensation/pay, overall
	71%	69%	65%	63%	61%
Baby Boomers	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Trust between employees and senior management	Opportunities to use skills/abilities; compensation/pay, overall	Benefits, overall	Organization's financial stability
	70%	61%	60%	58%	56%

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, 2015)

Table 13: Top Five Very Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction 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
	76%	67%	64%	63%	60%
Professional nonmanagement	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Benefits, overall; trust between employees and senior management; opportunities to use skills/abilities	Compensation/pay, overall; relationship with immediate supervisor	Job security	Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas
	73%	62%	60%	56%	55%
Middle management	Trust between employees and senior management	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Benefits, overall	Communication between employees and senior management; management's communication of organization's goals and strategies; opportunities to use your skills/abilities; organization's financial stability	Job security, relationship with immediate supervisor
	68%	66%	62%	58%	57%
Executive management	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	The work itself	Trust between employees and senior management	Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	Autonomy and independence
	69%	68%	67%	66%	65%

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, 2015)

Table 14: Importance of Compensation and Benefits as Job Satisfaction Contributors

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Health care/medical benefits	1%	6%	29%	64%
Paid time off	1%	5%	30%	64%
Being paid competitively with the local market	1%	6%	36%	57%
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	2%	7%	36%	55%
Base rate of pay	1%	6%	44%	50%
Defined contribution plans	1%	9%	42%	47%
Opportunities for variable pay	1%	14%	43%	42%
Family-friendly benefits	3%	20%	41%	36%
Defined benefit pension plan	2%	18%	45%	35%
Wellness programs	4%	27%	46%	24%
Stock options	7%	44%	34%	15%

Note: n = 515-598. 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, 2015)

TABLE 15: Comparison of Important Aspects of Compensation and Benefits by Select Employee Demographics

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Generation/Age	Differences Based on Job level
Base rate of pay	94%	—	—	—
Paid time off	94%	Female (97%) > male (92%)	—	—
Being paid competitively with the local market	93%	—	—	—
Health care/medical benefits	93%	Female (96%) > male (90%)	—	—
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	91%	Female (97%) > male (85%)	Millennials (95%), Generation X (94%) > Baby Boomers (86%)	—
Defined contribution plans	89%	—	—	—
Opportunities for variable play	85%	Female (87%) > male (81%)	—	—
Defined benefit pension plan	80%	—	—	—
Family-friendly benefits	77%	—	Generation X (83%) > Baby Boomers (72%)	—
Wellness programs	70%	Female (76%) > male (62%)	Millennials (74%), Generation X (74%) > Baby Boomers (61%)	—
Stock options	49%	—	—	—

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, 2015)

TABLE 16: Employees' Satisfaction With Aspects of Job Satisfaction

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Feeling safe in the work environment	1%	2%	14%	34%	48%
Relationship with co-workers	2%	4%	15%	37%	42%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	5%	6%	15%	33%	40%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	4%	5%	17%	36%	37%
The work itself	4%	6%	17%	37%	36%
Meaningfulness of the job	3%	5%	16%	40%	35%
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	4%	6%	17%	40%	34%
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	8%	7%	17%	35%	33%
Organization's financial stability	2%	6%	19%	40%	33%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	1%	3%	19%	43%	33%
Job security	1%	7%	19%	40%	32%
Variety of work	4%	6%	18%	39%	32%
Overall corporate culture	5%	6%	22%	36%	31%
Autonomy and independence	5%	6%	20%	41%	28%
Trust between employees and senior management	8%	11%	20%	34%	28%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	3%	5%	33%	30%	28%
Benefits, overall	6%	10%	19%	37%	27%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	4%	11%	24%	36%	26%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	4%	7%	32%	32%	26%
Teamwork within department/business unit	5%	10%	21%	38%	26%
Company-paid general training	5%	11%	30%	31%	24%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	8%	9%	22%	38%	24%
Compensation/pay, overall	7%	15%	16%	38%	24%
Organization's commitment to professional development	6%	13%	27%	31%	23%
Communication between employees and senior management	9%	12%	19%	37%	23%
Job-specific training	5%	11%	29%	33%	22%
Teamwork between departments/business units	7%	11%	25%	35%	22%
Career development opportunities	6%	12%	28%	33%	21%
Networking opportunities	5%	10%	35%	30%	21%
Communication between departments/ business units	6%	13%	27%	33%	21%
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	8%	12%	26%	34%	20%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	4%	8%	36%	32%	19%

Note: n = 466-561. 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 17: Job Satisfaction Aspects: Differences in Importance vs. Satisfaction

	Very Important	Very Satisfied	Differences (Gaps)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels (1)	72%	33%	39%
Compensation/pay, overall (4)	61%	24%	37%
Trust between employees and senior management (2)	64%	28%	36%
Benefits, overall (3)	63%	27%	36%
Communication between employees and senior management	55%	23%	32%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	55%	24%	31%
Career advancement opportunities	47%	20%	27%
Job security (5)	59%	32%	27%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	52%	26%	26%
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	58%	34%	24%
Organization's financial stability	55%	33%	22%
Communication between departments/business units	41%	21%	20%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	56%	37%	19%
Job-specific training	41%	22%	19%
Organization's commitment to professional development	42%	23%	19%
Teamwork between departments/business units	41%	22%	19%
Autonomy and independence	47%	28%	19%
Career development opportunities	39%	21%	18%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	58%	40%	18%
Overall corporate culture	48%	31%	17%
Teamwork within department/business unit	43%	26%	17%
The work itself	50%	36%	14%
Networking opportunities	33%	21%	12%
Meaningfulness of the job	46%	35%	11%
Company-paid general training	31%	24%	7%
Feeling safe in the work environment	53%	48%	5%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	31%	26%	5%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	38%	33%	5%
Variety of work	37%	32%	5%
Relationship with co-workers	44%	42%	2%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	20%	19%	1%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	29%	28%	1%

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. 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. Numbers in parentheses indicate the position of the aspect in 2014.

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

TABLE 18: Job Satisfaction Aspects: Differences in Importance vs. Satisfaction: Male Employees

	Very Important	Very Satisfied	Differences (Gaps)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	64%	30%	34%
Trust between employees and senior management	59%	26%	33%
Compensation/pay, overall	57%	24%	33%
Benefits, overall	56%	28%	28%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	48%	21%	27%
Communication between employees and senior management	48%	22%	26%
Career advancement opportunities	44%	19%	25%
Job security	53%	29%	24%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	47%	25%	22%
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	58%	37%	21%
Organization's financial stability	53%	33%	20%
Autonomy and independence	46%	27%	19%
Teamwork between departments/business units	37%	20%	17%
Organization's commitment to professional development	38%	22%	16%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employee's ideas	49%	34%	15%
Career development opportunities	37%	22%	15%
Communication between departments/business units	35%	20%	15%
Teamwork within department/business unit	38%	25%	13%
Overall corporate culture	42%	29%	13%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	51%	38%	13%
Job-specific training	33%	21%	12%
Networking opportunities	35%	24%	11%
The work itself	46%	37%	9%
Meaningfulness of the job	41%	33%	8%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	37%	32%	5%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	23%	28%	5%
Relationship with co-workers	36%	40%	4%
Organization's commitment to a "green" workplace	14%	18%	4%
Feeling safe in the work environment	40%	44%	4%
Company-paid training	27%	23%	4%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	25%	22%	3%
Variety of work	35%	32%	3%

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, 2015)

TABLE 19: Job Satisfaction Aspects: Differences in Importance vs. Satisfaction: Female Employees

	Very Important	Very Satisfied	Differences (Gaps)
Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels	79%	35%	44%
Benefits, overall	70%	27%	43%
Compensation/pay, overall	66%	24%	42%
Trust between employees and senior management	69%	29%	40%
Communication between employees and senior management	62%	23%	39%
Management's recognition of employee job performance	60%	26%	34%
Management's communication of organization's goals and strategies	56%	26%	30%
Job security	64%	34%	30%
Career advancement opportunities	50%	21%	29%
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	59%	31%	28%
Communication between departments/business units	47%	21%	26%
Job-specific training	47%	22%	25%
Organization's financial stability	58%	34%	24%
Immediate supervisor's respect for employees' ideas	62%	40%	22%
Relationship with immediate supervisor	65%	43%	22%
Organization's commitment to professional development	45%	24%	21%
Overall corporate culture	54%	34%	20%
Teamwork within department/business unit	48%	28%	20%
Career development opportunities	41%	21%	20%
Teamwork between departments/business units	44%	24%	20%
The work itself	54%	35%	19%
Autonomy and independence	48%	30%	18%
Networking opportunities	31%	18%	13%
Meaningfulness of the job	50%	37%	13%
Feeling safe in the work environment	64%	52%	12%
Company-paid general training	35%	25%	10%
Relationship with co-workers	51%	43%	8%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	37%	30%	7%
Variety of work	39%	32%	7%
Organization's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce	34%	28%	6%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	40%	34%	6%
Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace	25%	20%	5%

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 "Difference (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, 2015)

TABLE 20: Comparison of 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	79%	—	—	—
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	76%	—	—	—
Meaningfulness of the job	75%	—	—	—
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	74%	—	—	—
Relationship with immediate supervisor	73%	—	—	—
Organization's financial stability	73%	—	—	—
The work itself	73%	—	—	Middle management (78%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (65%)
Variety of work	71%	—	—	Middle management (77%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (64%)
Autonomy and independence	69%	—	—	—
Overall corporate culture	67%	—	—	—
Management's recognition of employee job performance	62%	—		—
Communication between employees and senior management	60%	—	—	Middle management (68%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (54%)
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	58%	—	—	—
Job-specific training	55%	Female (59%) > male (49%)	Millennials (63%) > Baby Boomers (48%)	—
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	54%		Millennials (64%) > Baby Boomers (49%)	Middle management (65%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (47%)
Organization's commitment to professional development	54%	—	—	—
Career development opportunities	54%	—	—	Middle management (63%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (47%)
Networking opportunities	51%	—	—	Middle management (59%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (44%)

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, 2015)

TABLE 21: Comparison of 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.	92%	—	—	—
I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	88%	—	—	—
I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	76%	—	—	—
I am highly motivated by my work goals.	74%	—	—	—
I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work.	69%	—	—	—
While at work I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	68%	—	—	—
I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.	68%	—	—	—
In my organization, employees are encouraged to take action when they see a problem or opportunity.	68%	Female (71%) > male (63%)	—	—
I am provided with the resources to do my job well.	67%	—	—	—
My colleagues quickly adapt to challenging or crisis situations.	63%	—	—	—
The people in my work group never give up despite difficulties.	62%	—	—	—
I have passion and excitement about my work.	61%	—	—	Middle management (69%) > nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement employees (52%)
Employees in my organization deal very well with unpredictable or changing work situations.	55%	—	Millennials (64%) > Generation X (50%)	—
I feel completely plugged in at work, like I'm always on full power.	55%	—	—	—
I enjoy volunteering for activities beyond my job requirements.	54%	Female (59%) > male (49%)	—	—
The people in my work group are always flexible in expanding the scope of their work.	53%	—	—	—
In my work group, we are constantly looking out to see what challenge is coming next.	52%	—	Millennials (62%) > Baby Boomers (46%)	—
Others in my organization view unexpected responsibilities as an opportunity to succeed at something new.	47%	—	Millennials (59%) > Generation X (44%), Baby Boomers (39%)	—
Other people in my organization often volunteer for new projects.	45%	—	—	—

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 the "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, 2015)

TABLE 22: Top Five Employee Engagement Opinions and Behaviors by Employee Gender

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Male	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I am highly motivated by my work goals; I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	While at work I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.
	93%	87%	73%	69%	68%
Female	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I am highly motivated by my work goals.	I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work; in my organization, employees are encouraged to take action when they see a problem or opportunity.
	92%	90%	79%	75%	71%

Note: 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."
Source: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

TABLE 23: Top Five Employee Engagement Opinions and Behaviors by Employee Generation/Age

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Millennials	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	In my organization, employees are encouraged to take action when they see a problem or opportunity; I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I am highly motivated by my work goals.	I am provided with the resources to do my job well.
	94%	89%	76%	75%	73%
Generation X	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I am highly motivated by my work goals.	I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work.
	91%	88%	79%	73%	71%
Baby Boomers	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I am highly motivated by my work goals; while at work I'm almost always completely focused on my work projects.	I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes; I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work.
	92%	89%	73%	72%	68%

Note: 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." Responses from Veterans were not shown due to a small sample size (n < 25).
Source: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* (SHRM, 2015)

TABLE 24: Top Five Employee Engagement Opinions and Behaviors by Employee Job Level

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Nonexempt (hourly) nonmanagement	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I am highly motivated by my work goals.	I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work.
	93%	88%	78%	70%	69%
Professional nonmanagement	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I am highly motivated by my work goals; I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I frequently feel like I'm putting all my effort into my work.	My colleagues quickly adapt to challenging or crisis situations.
	90%	86%	70%	66%	65%
Middle management	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I am highly motivated by my work goals.	I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission.	I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.
	94%	91%	81%	78%	74%
Executive management	I am determined to accomplish my work goals.	I am confident I can meet my work goals.	I am highly motivated by my work goals.	I have a clear understanding of my organization's vision/mission; I have passion and excitement about my work; I am often so wrapped up in my work that hours go by like minutes.	I am provided with the resources to do my job well.
	93%	90%	86%	81%	79%

Note: 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."

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

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