

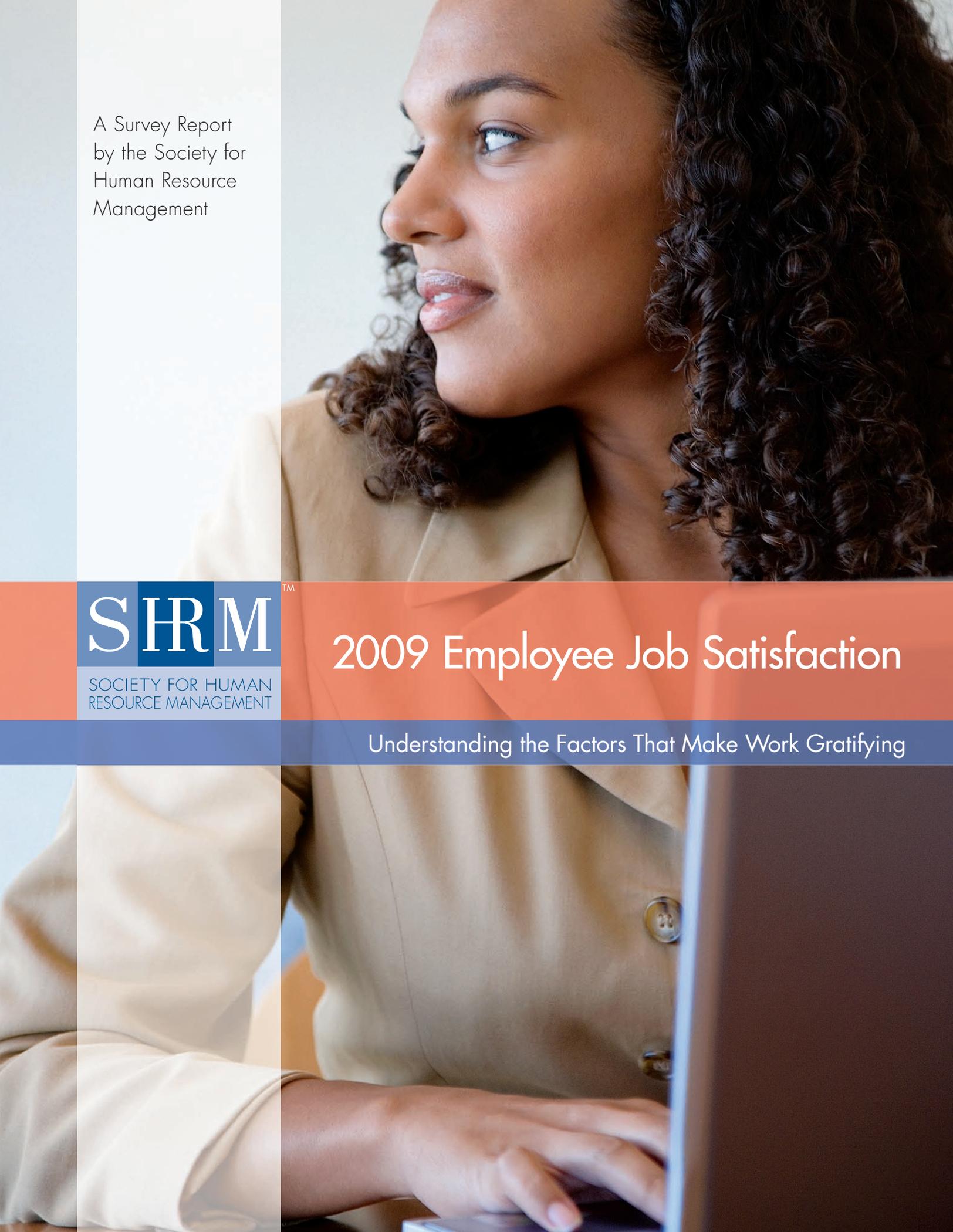
A Survey Report
by the Society for
Human Resource
Management

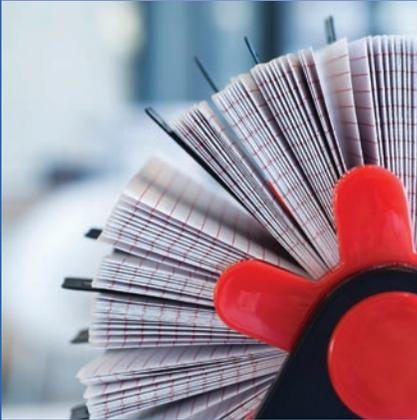
SHRMTM

SOCIETY FOR HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2009 Employee Job Satisfaction

Understanding the Factors That Make Work Gratifying





About This Survey Report

In January 2009, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conducted the Job Satisfaction Survey with a sample of employees and a sample of HR professionals. It is an annual survey that has been conducted since 2002. The objective of the Job Satisfaction Series is to identify and understand factors important to overall employee job satisfaction from the perspectives of both employees and HR professionals. This knowledge helps HR professionals better understand and appreciate employee preferences when developing programs and policies that can influence employee satisfaction. The survey explored 24 aspects of employee job satisfaction divided into four topic areas—career development, relationship with management, compensation and benefits, and work environment. Employees and HR professionals were also asked about how the current financial crisis in the United States and globally was affecting employee job satisfaction.

Media Contact

Julie Malveaux
julie.malveaux@shrm.org
(703) 535-6273

About SHRM

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, the Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China and India. Visit SHRM Online at www.shrm.org.

USA

SHRM
1800 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (800) 283-7476
Fax: 703-535-6432
E-mail: shrm@shrm.org

China

Beijing Representative Office
SHRM Corporation
5/F, South Block, Tower C
Raycom Info Tech Park
No.2, Kexueyuan South Road
Zhongguancun, Haidian District
Beijing, 100190
Tel: +86-10-59822093 / 59822146
Fax: +86-10-59822588

India

SHRM India
702, 7th Floor
Raheja Towers
Plot C- 62, G Block
Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E)
Mumbai 400051
Maharashtra
Tel: +91-22-42472000
Fax: +91-22-42472010

Online

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Executive Summary: Has the U.S. Recession Affected Employee Job Satisfaction?

Research indicates that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to stay with their employers. According to this survey, 86% of employees indicated overall satisfaction with their current position, with 41% of employees reporting they were very satisfied. What's more, majority of employees (58%) reported that the current economic climate has not made any difference in their level of satisfaction—and this is good news for employers, especially during the economically challenging time.

It is not surprising that during the current economic downturn, which some have compared to the 1929 Great Depression, employees selected job security for the second consecutive year as the most important aspect of their job satisfaction. It was also at the top of HR professionals' list this year for the first time. *Benefits, compensation/pay, opportunities to use skills and abilities and feeling safe in the work environment* rounded off employees' top five very important job satisfaction contributors—nearly identical to the top five of 2008 (see Table 1).

Factors that were not strongly connected to employees' overall job satisfaction were *organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace, networking, career development opportunities, paid training and tuition reimbursement programs, and organization's commitment to professional development.*

Other noteworthy findings include the following:

- ◆ Employees whose organizations had been somewhat affected by the current financial crisis were more satisfied overall with their current jobs compared with employees whose organizations had been greatly affected by the recession.
- ◆ Nearly three out of 10 employees were very satisfied with their compensation/pay.
- ◆ The most common methods companies used to measure and monitor employee job satisfaction

were exit interviews, feedback from employees' performance reviews, speaking with employees on an individual basis, tracking turnover data and conducting employee attitude surveys.

What Do These Findings Mean for Employers?

- ◆ **Conduct Environmental Scanning:** Identifying the external forces or trends that affect the organization is an integral part of the organization's strategic plan. Through a process called environmental scanning, organizations systematically gather and analyze all relevant data about external opportunities and threats that may affect them at present and in the future. Examples of external forces include changing demographics, economic conditions, emerging marketplaces, advances in technology and increased global competition. Organizations can then use these data to evaluate their mission/vision, develop goals and develop/train employees.
- ◆ **Tap Into Available Talent:** Opportunities to use skills and abilities were ranked among the top five aspects of job satisfaction for employees. Employee development will likely take a higher priority for organizations in the near future. Although the job market might appear to be saturated due to the current downturn in the economy, several demographic trends (e.g., Baby Boomers retiring around the same time, aging population and shortage of highly skilled workers) will have a major impact on the workplace over the next decade, particularly on talent management. HR professionals are in a position to prepare their organizations for the future by developing programs that will motivate, develop and boost skill levels of employees. Cross-training, mentoring, volunteering, etc., are low-cost programs that organizations can adopt during times of fiscal constraints.
- ◆ **Open the Communication Door:** HR professionals have always rated factors from “the relation-

It is not surprising that during the current economic downturn, employees selected job security for the second consecutive year as the most important aspect of their job satisfaction.



ship with management” category of job satisfaction aspects among their top five contributors to employee job satisfaction. Effective communication between senior management and employees is important. It will help employees understand the organization’s business goals, policies and vision, and keep employees informed about what is going on in the organization. Senior management can keep employees well-informed through companywide meetings and the use of technology in top-to-bottom communications (e.g., CEO blog, intranet mechanisms and e-mails). Organizations should also encourage communication from the bottom-up through employee feedback, suggestions, etc.



The Different Perspectives of Employees and HR Professionals

The recruitment and retention of qualified, skilled employees is the foundation of any business, small or large. Research indicates that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to stay with their employers. Keeping a cadre of happy and motivated employees, however, is often elusive as the expectations of employees shift. These changing expectations stem from demographic trends, such as growing numbers of Generation Y employees (those born after 1981) and women entering the workforce, the retirement of Baby Boomers (those born between 1945 and 1964), caring for elderly parents, and more general changes in society, such as increased stress levels as employees attempt to juggle work and personal responsibilities. As life becomes more challenging, employees may become more stressed. Therefore, the factors long thought to satisfy employees may be shifting, depending on attributes such as the gender and age of employees.

In addition to demographic factors, the economic landscape in which most U.S. and global companies are operating is of particular interest this year. Employees go to work not knowing what to expect; hiring freezes and layoffs lead to taxed resources and diminished employee morale.

HR professionals are an important organizational link to the human capital embodied by employees. Therefore, as organizations face fiscal constraints, the role of HR becomes even more crucial in helping companies balance the necessity to reduce operating costs while maintaining employee motivation and satisfaction on the job.

This report compares the responses of HR professionals and employees in an effort to understand the similarities and differences between these two vantage points. HR professionals are strategically primed to serve as a voice for employees. In addition, as individuals most heavily involved in recruitment, retention and performance management, HR professionals benefit by knowing which factors employees value most. Yet, this is sometimes difficult because understanding what satisfies employees is a dynamic and evolving process. HR professionals

need to know that the programs they are promoting for employees are indeed important to them. One way for HR professionals to gauge their knowledge of employee needs is to recognize the degree to which their perceptions are accurate when matched up against employees' perceptions. While collecting only employee data on job satisfaction would provide useful information for HR professionals, another piece of the puzzle is found in a direct comparison of the two groups' perceptions.

In order to make meaningful comparisons, it is important to consider the employees represented in this study. HR professionals were asked to report on employees in their organizations, i.e., the entire workforce, including both exempt and nonexempt workers. With this in mind, it is accurate to say that the profile of employees from the HR professionals' perspective tends to be a more generalized and inclusive category.

Employee data were analyzed by demographic variables such as employee age, gender and job tenure. These types of analyses are useful because they highlight that not all employees have the same preferences with respect to job satisfaction. HR professionals who are aware of the needs of different groups by age, gender and job tenure may be able to develop programs that appeal to certain groups more than others. For example, if an organization has high turnover among employees 35 years of age and younger, it would be useful to know what factors affect their satisfaction the most and how the organization can offer programs that appeal to this segment of its workforce.

ELEMENTS OF JOB SATISFACTION

The following 24 elements of job satisfaction, and eight special compensation and benefits elements, are examined in this report:

Career Development

1. Organization's commitment to professional development



2. Career advancement opportunities within the organization
3. Career development opportunities for learning and professional growth (mentorships, cross training, etc.)
4. Job-specific training
5. Opportunities to network with others (within or outside the organization) to help in advancing one's career
6. Opportunities to use skills and abilities in work
7. Paid training and tuition reimbursement programs

Relationship With Management

8. Communication between employees and senior management
9. Autonomy and independence to make decisions
10. Management recognition of employee job performance (feedback, incentives, rewards)
11. Relationship with immediate supervisor

Compensation and Benefits

12. Compensation/pay
 - ◆ Base rate of pay
 - ◆ Opportunities for variable pay (bonuses, commissions, other variable pay, monetary rewards for ideas or suggestions)
 - ◆ Stock options
 - ◆ Being paid competitively with the local market
13. Benefits
 - ◆ Health care/medical benefits
 - ◆ Family-friendly benefits (life insurance for dependents, subsidized child care, elder care referral service, etc.)
 - ◆ Paid time off (vacation, holidays, sick days, personal days, etc.)
 - ◆ Retirement benefits (defined contribution plans such as 401(k) and other defined plans such as pensions)
14. Flexibility to balance life and work issues (alternative work arrangements, including job sharing, flex schedules, telecommuting, etc.)

Work Environment

15. Feeling safe in the work environment
16. Job security
17. Meaningfulness of job (understanding how job contributes to society as a whole)
18. Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility (balancing financial performance with contributions to the quality of life of its employees, the local community and society at large)
19. Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace (environmentally sensitive and resource efficient)
20. Overall corporate culture (organization's reputation, work ethics, values, working conditions, etc.)
21. Relationships with co-workers
22. Contribution of work to organization's business goals
23. The work itself (it is interesting, challenging, exciting, etc.)
24. Variety of work (working on different projects, using different skills)

The overall results (figures) are included throughout the report with the corresponding text; however, the following in-depth analyses (tables) are listed at the end of the report in the Appendix:

- ◆ Comparisons of importance of selected aspects of job satisfaction from the perspective of both employees and HR professionals, including significant differences.
- ◆ Comparisons of overall results with 2008 results, including significant changes.
- ◆ Analyses by employees' and HR professionals' organization industry and staff size.
- ◆ Analyses by employee job tenure, gender and age.
- ◆ Analyses of the top five job satisfaction aspects by demographic variables for employees and HR professionals, including organization size, and employee job tenure, age and gender.



Survey Results

Job Satisfaction Aspects in Order of Importance to Employees

Employees and HR professionals were asked to rate the importance of the aspects of the work environment commonly associated with employee job satisfaction. This year, a four-point scale was used, where “1” represented “very unimportant” and “4” represented “very important.” Components of employee job satisfaction in order of importance, as indicated by employees and HR professionals, are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

The impact of the current recession is reflected in the findings of this year’s Job Satisfaction Survey. Job security was found to be the most important aspect of job satisfaction according to employees—a scenario similar to October 2002 and 2008, when talks of recession and mass layoffs were also rampant. Benefits, compensation/pay, opportunities to use skills and abilities and feeling safe in the work environment rounded off employees’ list of top five very important contributors to job satisfaction. These aspects were almost identical to the top five of 2008 (see Table 1). In the current economic climate, with widespread job losses across industries and talk of more layoffs, it is noteworthy that employees ranked job security, benefits and compensation among their top contributors to job satisfaction. These aspects might be considered the primary reasons employees show up for work every day. As economic indicators change from one year to the next, there are also fluctuations in the aspects of job satisfaction that employees and HR professionals view as most important to overall employee job satisfaction.

HR professionals, for the first time since the inception of the Job Satisfaction Survey, ranked job security, along with the relationship with immediate supervisor, as the top contributors to employees’ job satisfaction. Other aspects in HR professionals’ top five list were benefits, communication between

employees and senior management, opportunities to use skills/abilities, and management recognition of employee job performance. It is worth noting that compensation/pay, which has been ranked among the top five contributors to job satisfaction for the past seven years, for the first time slid to seventh place in HR professionals’ 2009 ranking (see Table 2).

In addition, employees and HR professionals were asked about how specific elements of compensation and benefits affected employee job satisfaction. These questions, however, are examined separately from the overall 24 aspects of job satisfaction that were of most importance to employees. Also, HR professionals were asked to estimate overall employee job satisfaction at their organizations, and employees were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their current or most recent job.

Organization’s commitment to a ‘green’ workplace, networking, career development opportunities, paid training and tuition reimbursement programs, and organization’s commitment to professional development were among the components that were not strongly connected to overall job satisfaction.

Like employees, HR professionals also identified the organization’s commitment to a ‘green’ environment and networking as the two least important factors.

“One takeaway for HR leaders is the criticality for HR to build a strong foundation of HR practices and programs around staffing, performance management, compensation and benefits programs, and discipline approaches to promote as much stability as practical for employees. Having a good foundation in place can help employees gain a better sense of control over their working environment. This becomes particularly important during volatile times, as in the current economy,” commented Ken Pinnock, SPHR, GPHR, director of human resources service at Mountain States Employers Council and member of SHRM’s Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel.

As economic indicators change from one year to the next, **there are also fluctuations in the aspects of job satisfaction that employees and HR professionals view as most important to overall employee job satisfaction.**



Figure 1 Very Important Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction (Employees)



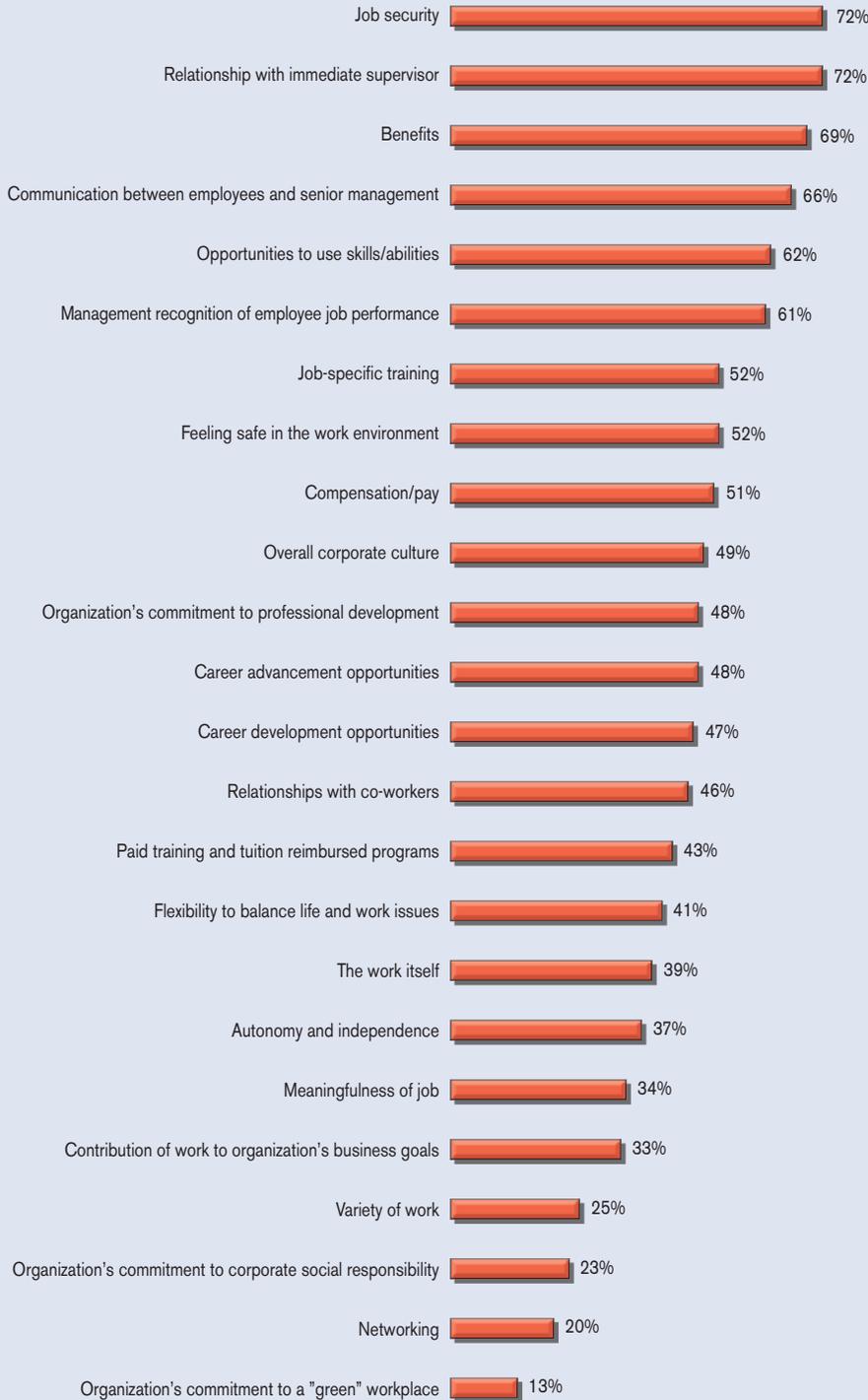
(n = 601)

Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "very important" from a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Figure 2 Very Important Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction (HR Professionals)



(n = 547)

Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "very important" from a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Top Five Very Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction

1 Job Security

Optimism about job growth in the United States is low, according to SHRM's *Labor Market Outlook*.¹ Seven out of 10 human resource professionals are anticipating deeper job cuts in the U.S. labor force in the first quarter of 2009. According to a SHRM poll conducted in early 2009, 30% of employees believe that in six months their jobs would be moderately or significantly at risk.² Given the job market volatility, it is not surprising that both employees and HR professionals were in agreement in rating job security as the most important aspect of employee job satisfaction in 2009 (see Tables 1 and 2). In December 2008, the National Bureau of Economic Research confirmed what many economists, legislators and members of the general public had already assumed—that the recession in the United States began in December 2007.³

“I was not surprised that in this economic state job security has moved to the number one slot as being most important,” says Teresa Bailey, director of HR at ConvaTec and member of SHRM's Corporate Social Responsibility Special Expertise Panel. However, Gerlinde Herrmann, also a member of SHRM's Corporate Social Responsibility Special Expertise Panel, was somewhat surprised that job security ranked so high on the list: “In my experience, job security does not necessarily equal job satisfaction.

How many government employees are ‘satisfied’? This is why when recruiting, I would never use ‘job security’ as a carrot.”

The survey also asked employees what factors have influenced their sense of job security during the current economic climate. Nearly one-half of employees (47%) indicated that their professional abilities/skills and the importance of their job (role) to their organization's overall success increased their sense of job security. Location of employees' company had little impact on their sense of job security.⁴

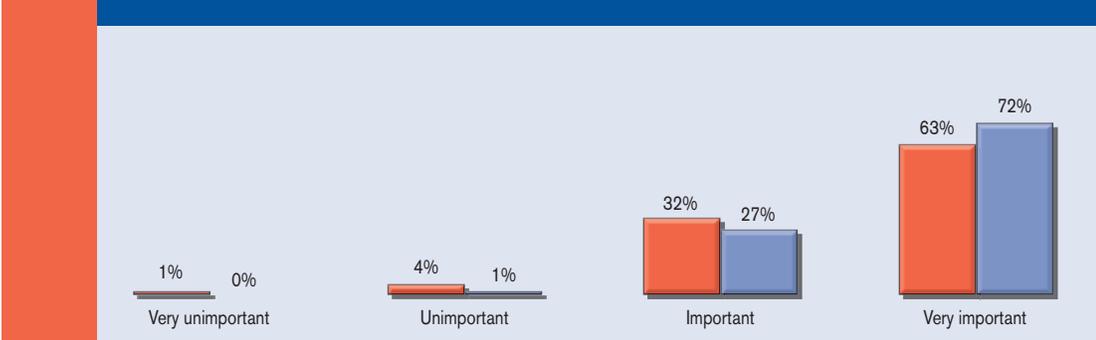
Job security as an aspect of job satisfaction was more important to male employees than to female employees. Employees from medium- and large-staff-sized organizations, compared with those from small-staff-sized organizations, were more likely to cite job security as a very important contributor to their job satisfaction. These data are shown in Table 3.

Nearly one-half of employees (47%) indicated that their professional abilities/skills and the importance of their job (role) to their organization's overall success **increased their sense of job security.**

2 Benefits

Employee benefits are used by organizations to recruit and retain top talent. In times of economic uncertainty, when organizations might not be able to offer their employees pay raises and bonuses, benefits become one of the many tools employers use to increase loyalty, productivity and job satisfaction. Benefits have remained among the top two most important contributors of job satisfaction to employees (Table 1). Differences emerged based on employees' tenure and organizations' staff size.

Figure 3 Importance of Job Security



■ Employees (n = 593) ■ HR Professionals (n = 543)
Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

It is important for organizations to take into account and anticipate **the needs, preferences and make-up of their workforce when considering benefits offerings.**

It is positive that HR professionals are recognizing the growing importance of benefits to employee job satisfaction, **especially during challenging economic times.**

Employees with six to 10 years of job tenure were more likely than their counterparts with three to five years of tenure to report benefits as an important aspect of job satisfaction. Compared with employees from small organizations, employees from medium and large organizations placed higher importance on benefits as a contributor to job satisfaction. These data are shown in Table 3.

Benefits fell behind job security and the relationship with immediate supervisor, which were tied for the top most important aspect of employee job satisfaction this year as perceived by HR professionals. In 2002, benefits did not make the top five list for HR professionals, but since then it placed third or fourth for HR professionals every year the survey has been conducted (Table 2). It is positive that HR professionals are recognizing the growing importance of benefits to employee job satisfaction, especially during challenging economic times. The rising cost of health care and faltering retirement benefits are major concerns for employees. In a 2009 SHRM study of employees, 71% of employees indicated that complete elimination of health care benefits by their employer would have a significant negative impact on them, and 45% reported that suspension of retirement plan

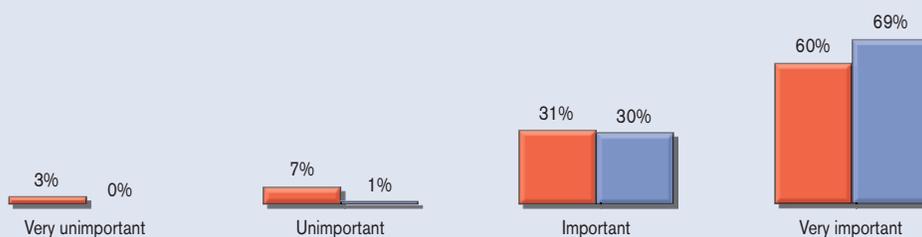
contributions by their employer would significantly affect them.⁵

Employers that have been challenged by the current economic downturn are taking actions to help them weather the economic storm while continuing to achieve their business goals. In doing so, some employers have reduced, frozen or completely eliminated employee benefits. Of the 17% of companies that indicated they have reduced employee benefits as a way to cut cost, 78% reported that they have reduced health care coverage for employees, according to a SHRM poll.⁶

HR is tasked with finding the right mix of employee benefits that satisfies the personal and financial needs of the current and potential workforce—a challenging task given existing business conditions and cost constraints. It is important for organizations to take into account and anticipate the needs, preferences and make-up of their workforce when considering benefits offerings. Finding a cost-effective and affordable benefits package is particularly difficult due to the high cost of health care.

Benefits offerings for employees can include a wide array of benefits and perks; however, of primary

Figure 4 Importance of Benefits



■ Employees (n = 597) ■ HR Professionals (n = 548)

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



importance to many employees are health care, paid time off, retirement and family-friendly benefits. These benefits were examined to learn about their contribution to employee job satisfaction.

As illustrated in Figure 5, health care/medical benefits were the most important benefits for employee job satisfaction. It is noteworthy that while 39% of employees indicated that a defined benefit pension plan was very important, only 22% of HR professionals indicated so. Family-friendly benefits were also more important to employees than HR professionals predicted.

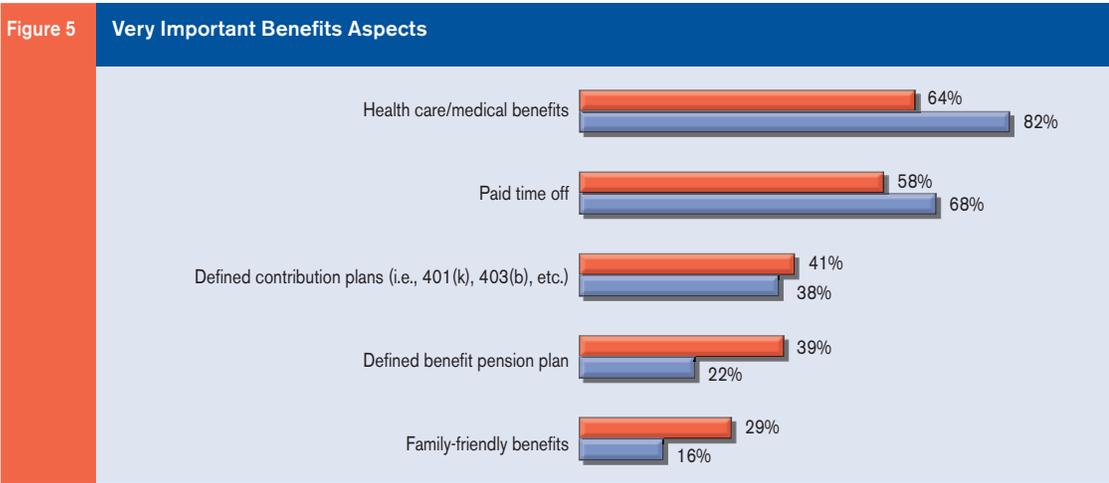
Health care/medical benefits and retirement benefits were valued more by employees at medium and large organizations compared with those at small organizations. It is not surprising that more tenured employees placed greater value on retirement benefits than did employees relatively new to their organizations. Employees with six or more years of job tenure indicated that this aspect was more important to job satisfaction than did employees who had been with their organizations for two years or less.

HR professionals from government entities viewed retirement benefits as more important to employee job satisfaction than did HR professionals in the

private, public and nonprofit sectors, as did HR professionals in large organizations compared with those from small and medium organizations.

These data highlight the significance of retirement planning not only for employees but also for employers. With the significant drop in the stock market in late 2008, many older workers may need to continue working past retirement age because their retirement benefits are no longer what they expected. Social Security and defined benefit pensions are not likely to be available to Generation X employees by the time they leave the workforce, according to many predictions. These factors alone are troubling, yet studies have also shown that employees are not saving enough for a financially secure retirement. More organizations are adopting technology to help their employees with various aspects of their retirement planning, automatically enrolling employees into defined contribution plans unless they opt out and implementing investment advice programs that provide a range of services tailored to participants' needs. According to SHRM's 2009 Employee Benefits Survey Report, 35% of employers offer automatic enrollment of employees into defined contribution plans. This is a slight increase over 2008 (32%).⁷ For more detailed information about the types of benefits and trends

More tenured employees placed greater value on retirement benefits than did employees relatively new to their organizations.



■ Employees (n = 598) ■ HR Professionals (n = 545)
 Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "very important" from a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



in benefits offerings over the last seven years, see the *SHRM 2009 Employee Benefits Survey Report*.

3 Compensation/Pay

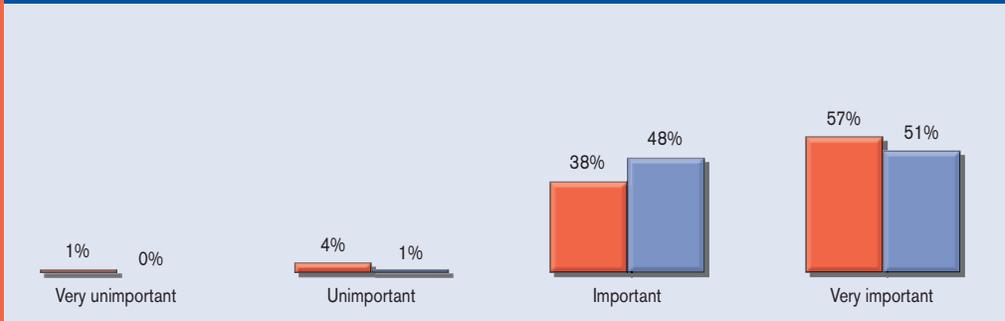
Compensation has consistently remained one of the top five job satisfaction aspects most important to employees. However, during a period of economic uncertainty, HR professionals continue to perceive the relationship with immediate supervisor, communication between employees and senior management and job-specific training as more important to employees than compensation. This is not to downplay the importance of compensation, since more than 50% of HR professionals indicated that this aspect was very important to employee job satisfaction. It may be that while HR professionals see the value of compensation/pay, they also understand that the relationship with immedi-

ate supervisor and open lines of communication with senior management are integral to job satisfaction, especially now, when employee morale is threatened. Employees who are compensated well but have poor relationship with their supervisor may be more likely to be frustrated, less productive and dissatisfied—all of which may negatively affect the dynamics of a team.

Employees were asked how likely they were to stay with their current organization if they were offered more money, with the same benefits, at another company. Almost six out of 10 employees indicated that they would be very likely to leave their current position if they received an offer of a 30% salary increase and the same benefits package from another company (Figure 33). The current economic climate is not likely to prevent employees from asking for an

The current economic climate is **not likely to prevent employees from asking for an out-of-cycle or unscheduled raise** from their employer, according to almost four out of 10 employees.

Figure 6 Importance of Compensation/Pay



■ Employees (n = 601) ■ HR Professionals (n = 546)
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Figure 7 Very Important Compensation Aspects



■ Employees (n = 600) ■ HR Professionals (n = 542)
 Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "very important" from a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



out-of-cycle/unscheduled raise from their employer, according to almost four out of 10 employees.⁸

Even though compensation has ranked among the top contributors to employee job satisfaction, it is unlikely that employees view it in isolation from other factors. To better understand how various elements of compensation factor into employee job satisfaction, employees and HR professionals were asked about the importance of base rate of pay, being paid competitively with the local market and opportunities for variable pay and stock options (Figure 7).

◆ *Being paid competitively with the local market:* 55% of employees and 54% of HR professionals rated this aspect as very important.

◆ *Base rate of pay:* 52% of employees and 43% of HR professionals viewed base rate of pay as very important to employee job satisfaction.

◆ *Opportunities for variable pay (bonuses, commissions, other variable pay, monetary rewards for ideas or suggestions):* 37% of employees and 27% of HR professionals reported that this aspect was very important to job satisfaction. Variable pay, or differential pay, is not added to the employee’s base pay and is dependent upon performance. This allows organizations to better control their labor costs and tie performance and pay together. HR professionals from the public sector were the most likely to perceive this aspect to be important to employee job satisfaction.

◆ *Stock options:* 12% of employees and 6% of HR professionals rated stock options as very important.

It is generally thought that employees feel good about their jobs **when they are using their skills and abilities and contributing to the organization.**

4 Opportunities to Use Skills/Abilities

Similar to 2008, employees rated opportunities to use their skills and abilities in their

Figure 8 Importance of Opportunities to Use Skills and Abilities

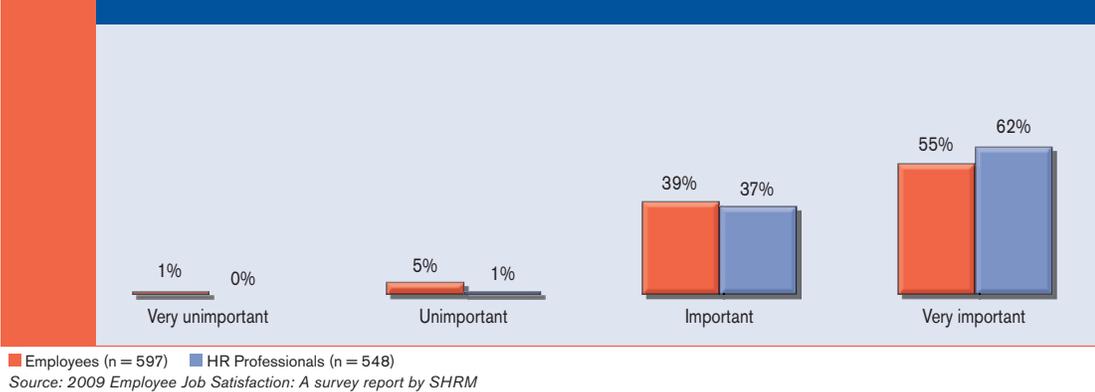
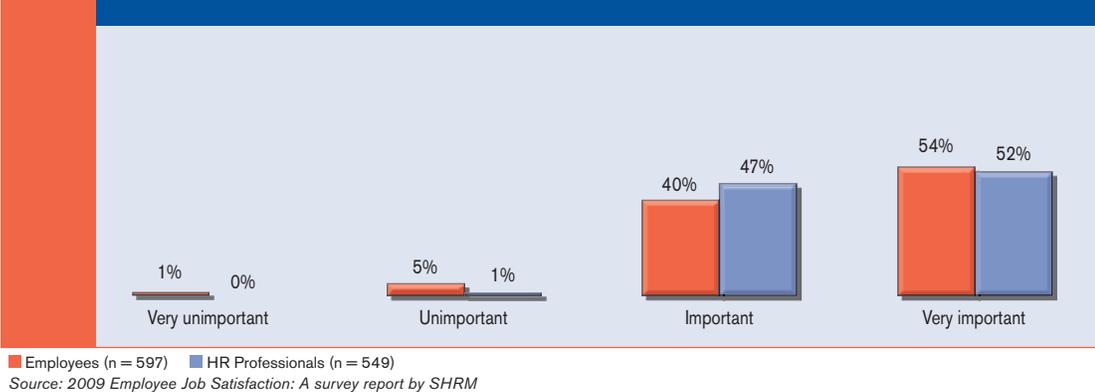


Figure 9 Importance of Feeling Safe in the Work Environment





Insights

Darren R. Reed, PHR
SHRM Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel

Q: In your industry, what do you see as the top three job satisfaction factors?

A: I am in the information technology and financial sector. The workforce that I am working with is primarily made of software programmers, software testers, IT project managers, systems analysts, network and telecommunications analysts, and IT operations analysts. Our exit interview data and our own internal surveying of current employees suggest that the top three job satisfaction factors are challenging work, career advancement and compensation. Our people are typically very technical, intelligent and have a passion for technology. They get bored when they don't have work that stimulates their problem-solving and analytical skills, so it is sometimes a challenge for us to keep them feeling challenged and excited about their work.

Q: From your viewpoint, how is the economy influencing job satisfaction in your workforce?

A: Our business is relatively stable at this point, and we have not had to make large cuts in our workforce. I believe in large part our workforce is happy to have a job, and we've seen some of the more trivial types of complaints we used to get start to drop off. We had relatively low annual salary increases. In most cases, people were appreciative of getting anything at all. The economic crisis has caused people to look at things a little differently, I think. They are taking less for granted. At the same time, many of our people are still nervous about losing their jobs, and in some cases, their spouse has lost his or her job, causing more stress on the family, which sometimes bleeds over to their work life.

Female employees considered feeling safe in the workplace an especially important job satisfaction factor compared with male workers.

work as the fourth most important aspect of their job satisfaction. It was also fourth in the HR professionals' list. It is generally thought that employees feel good about their jobs when they are using their skills and abilities and contributing to the organization. As mentioned earlier, employees were asked how certain factors have affected their sense of job security during the current economic climate. Nearly one-half of employees (47%) indicated that their professional abilities/skills and the importance of their job (role) to their organization's overall success increased their sense of job security.

5 Feeling Safe in the Work Environment

Fifty-four percent of employees and 52% of HR professionals indicated that feeling safe in the work environment was very important to employee job satisfaction. Female employees considered

feeling safe in the workplace an especially important job satisfaction factor compared with male workers. In 2004, this aspect nearly doubled in importance from 2002 and was included in the top five list for employees. HR professionals have consistently rated this element of job satisfaction lower than employees have.

With safety and security threats ranging from terrorism and violence in the workplace to public health issues and workplace accidents, it is not surprising that employees are concerned about workplace safety. This, in turn, may lead to greater expectations of employers to protect their workforce from major threats. A number of employers have taken steps to improve their safety and security systems and disaster preparedness plans. The vast majority of HR professionals (85%) reported that their organizations have disaster preparedness plans in place in



Insights

Ken Pinnock, SPHR, GPHR

SHRM Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel

Director, HR Services Group, Mountain States Employers Council, Inc. (MSEC)

Q: In your industry, what do you see as the top three job satisfaction factors?

A: MSEC is an employers' association, and I see the top three job satisfaction factors to be:

1. *Task and job variety:* We are a unique organization that provides HR consulting and support to more than 2,800 member organizations spanning all industries and sizes. The variety of work and opportunities to work on new projects always exist.
2. Ability to *continually learn and apply new skills* and competencies on the job.
3. Working for an organization with a *very positive reputation* in the Mountain State region. Being associated with the employer brand.

Q: From your viewpoint, how is the economy influencing job satisfaction in your workforce?

A: Right now, satisfaction is okay, as people appreciate the relative job stability compared with many organizations. However, changes are being made that can take a toll on satisfaction. For example, some employees had to switch roles to cover work for an employee who left and whose position was not going to be filled from the outside. As employees are being asked to take on different work roles, satisfaction is negatively affected.

Q: What initiatives is your company taking to positively influence job satisfaction, despite difficult economic times?

A: We continue to provide training and development opportunities as much as possible, and we encourage and scheduling in-house training for all employees. We want the learning aspect of working at MSEC to continue. We also provide frequent updates as to the financial health of the organization.

Q: How is your company retaining key talent in view of the recession?

A: We are not doing anything differently. People are cautious about making job changes at this point. The challenge will be to not burn people out during this time, so when the markets recover, people will still want to stay at MSEC. So support in terms of communication and recognition is very important now.

case of chemical and biological disasters or security threats, according to a 2005 SHRM survey on disaster preparedness.⁹ In 2007, 89% of organizations had implemented security systems as a preventative measure against potential disasters, compared with

70% in 2003.¹⁰ HR professionals can also play a role in crisis management, disaster recovery planning and ensuring the safety of employees at home and abroad. To do this, HR professionals need to be involved in the development of safety and security measures, and



employees and HR professionals both need to have access to resources, including training, that address a wide range of potential disasters.

Results of Other Individual Job Satisfaction Aspects

Career Development

The first series of questions HR professionals and employees were asked fell under the topic of career development. Employees ranked only one of the factors in career development in the top five of very important contributors to job satisfaction.

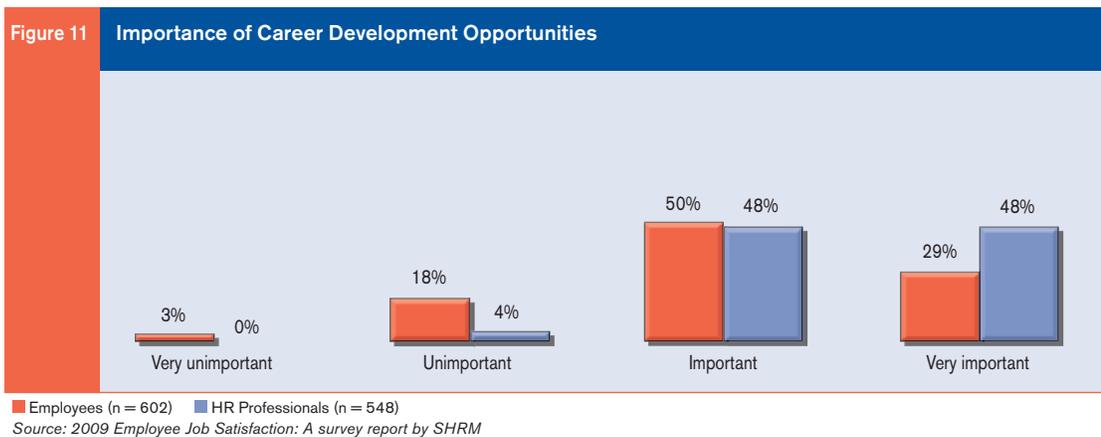
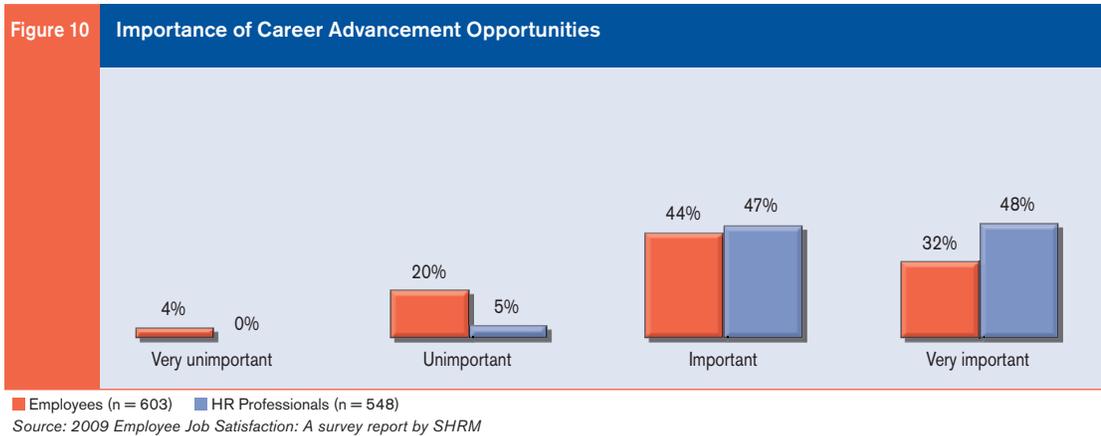
Career Advancement Opportunities Within Organization

As illustrated in Figure 10, 48% of HR professionals and 29% of employees reported that this factor

was very important. Career advancement was more important for employees from medium and large organizations than for employees from small organizations. This aspect was a higher priority for employees aged 35 and younger than for employees aged 56 and older. Similarly, employees with two years or less of job tenure indicated that this aspect was more important to their job satisfaction than did employees who had been with their organizations for 16 or more years. It is not surprising that employees who are relatively new to their organizations placed greater value on career advancement opportunities than did more tenured employees.

Career advancement was more important for employees from medium and large organizations than for employees from small organizations.

Career advancement opportunities were reported as an important aspect to employee job satisfaction more frequently by HR professionals in large organizations compared with respondents in small





and medium organizations. These data are shown in Table 5.

Career Development Opportunities

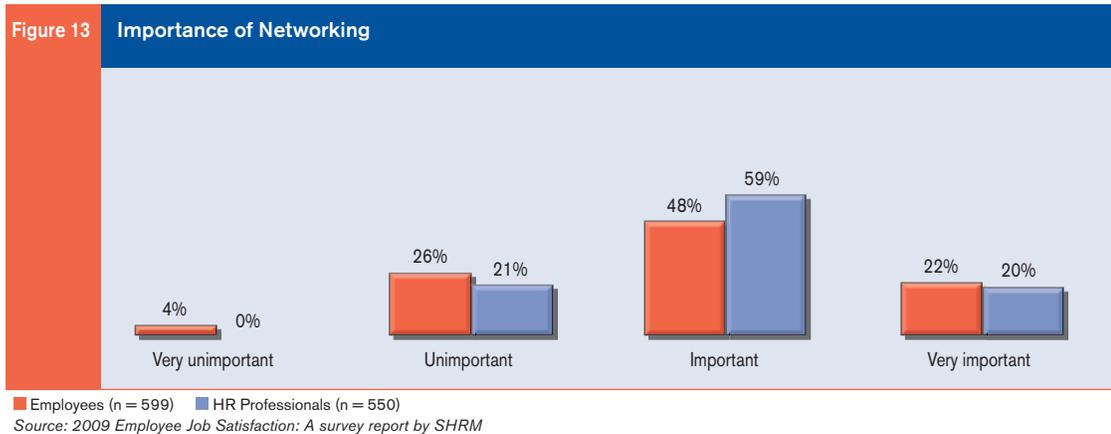
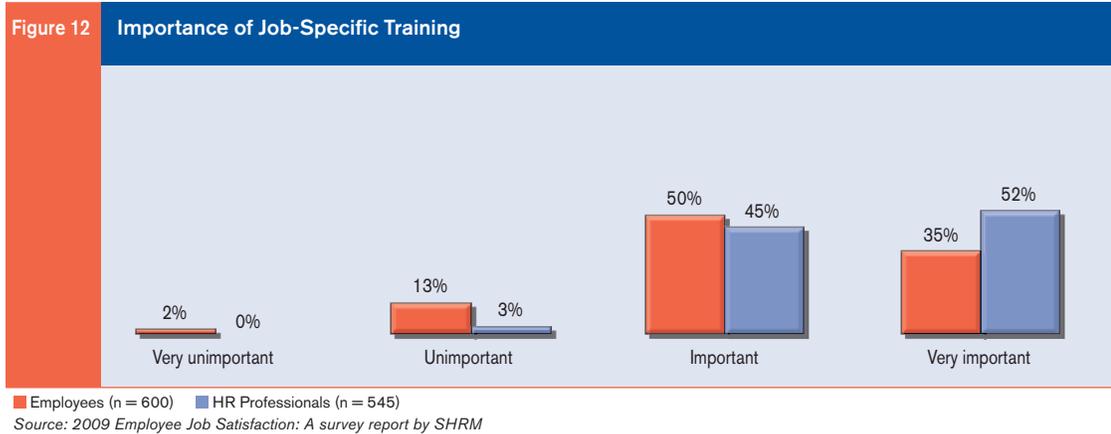
Through on-the-job learning experiences, employees can enhance their skills and competencies. Twenty-nine percent of employees and 48% of HR professionals indicated that career development was very important when assessing job satisfaction (Figure 11).

Similar to career advancement, differences emerged among employees’ age, tenure and organization size. This aspect was a higher priority for employees aged 35 and younger than for employees aged 56 and older. It was more important to employees with two years or less of job tenure than to employees who had been with their organizations for 16 or more years. Lastly, employees from large organizations were

more likely than those from small organizations to tie career development opportunities to job satisfaction (Table 5).

Job-Specific Training

Employers offer job-specific training to provide employees with the relevant skills to enable them to perform their duties efficiently. The immediate application of skills acquired through such training may boost employee confidence and productivity. Thirty-five percent of employees and 52% of HR professionals cited job-specific training as a very important contributor to employee job satisfaction, as shown in Figure 12. Employees appeared to place more value on this aspect in 2009 compared with 2008—possibly as a result of the downturn in the economy. Employees are perhaps looking to job-specific training as a way to boost their skills and abilities, thereby





potentially increasing their sense of job security. Employees from medium and large organizations were more likely to tie this aspect to their overall job satisfaction compared with employees from small organizations. Younger workers appeared to place more value on this component (Table 5).

Networking

This aspect of job satisfaction was placed by both employees and HR professionals among the least important to employee job satisfaction. As shown in Figure 13, only 22% of employees and 20% of HR professionals felt that networking was a very important contributor to employee job satisfaction. While networking may not be particularly important to employee job satisfaction, building alliances can be valuable when looking for job leads or clients. Through networking, employees can obtain career-related guidance and benefit from the experiences

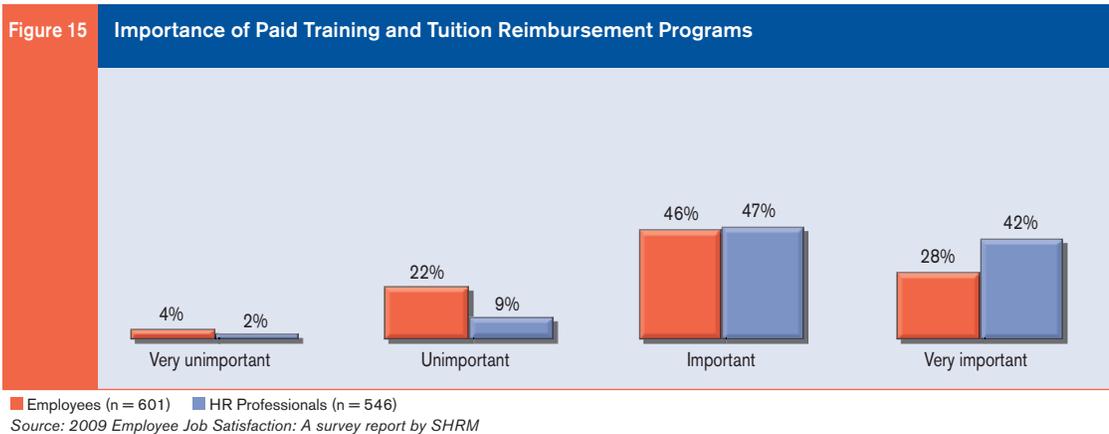
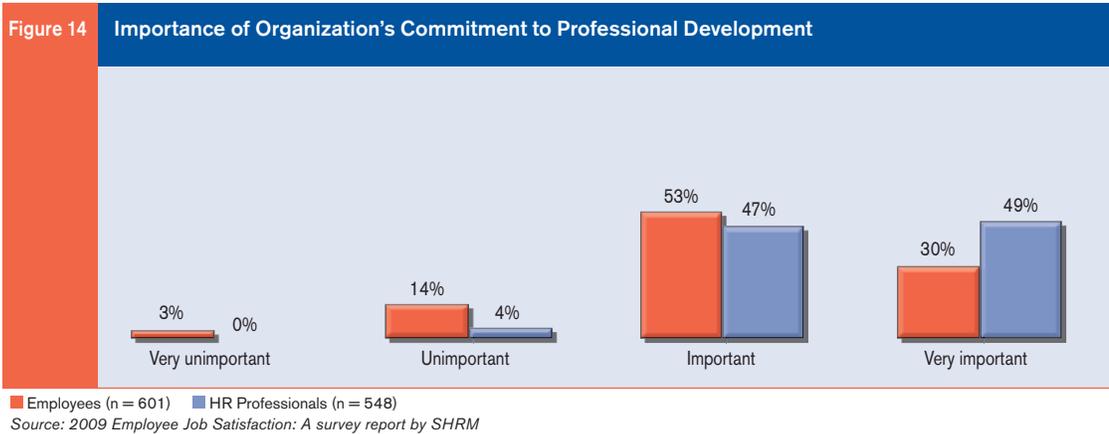
and perspectives of others on this subject. Employees with two years or less of job tenure viewed the opportunity to build alliances as more valuable to job satisfaction than did employees who had been with their organizations for 16 or more years.

“I am amazed that individuals do not see the value of networking in this economy,” said Teresa Bailey, member of SHRM’s Corporate Social Responsibility Special Expertise Panel. “I would say that most HR professionals would disagree with this assessment and tend to say that networking is very important.”

Organization’s Commitment to Professional Development

Thirty percent of employees indicated that an organization’s commitment to professional development was very important to employee job satisfaction, compared with 49% of HR professionals who felt

As a result of the economic downturn, many organizations have made cuts to their professional development budgets, according to 37% of HR professionals who participated in a SHRM poll on the impact of the recession on organizations.





Communication between employees and senior management **has consistently made the list of top five elements of employee job satisfaction** as predicted by HR professionals.

51% percent of employees and 66% of HR professionals reported that **communication between employees and senior management was very important to employee job satisfaction.**

the same way. These data are depicted in Figure 14. Although employees welcome opportunities to participate in training paid for by their employers, for the past seven years HR professionals have predicted this aspect to be more valuable than employees indicated. Professional development opportunities (e.g., attending training or conferences, obtaining certifications) are meant to develop or enhance employees' skills and knowledge so that they can use this information in their current positions, build their resume for future jobs and meet their personal goals.

As a result of the economic downturn, many organizations have made cuts to their professional development budgets, according to 37% of HR professionals who participated in a SHRM poll on the impact of the recession on organizations. In the same poll, almost half (48%) of HR professionals indicated that if the current financial challenges to the U.S. and global economy continue, their companies would likely or very likely cut professional development for employees.

Paid Training and Tuition Reimbursement

Forty-two percent of HR professionals, compared with 28% of employees, perceive paid training and

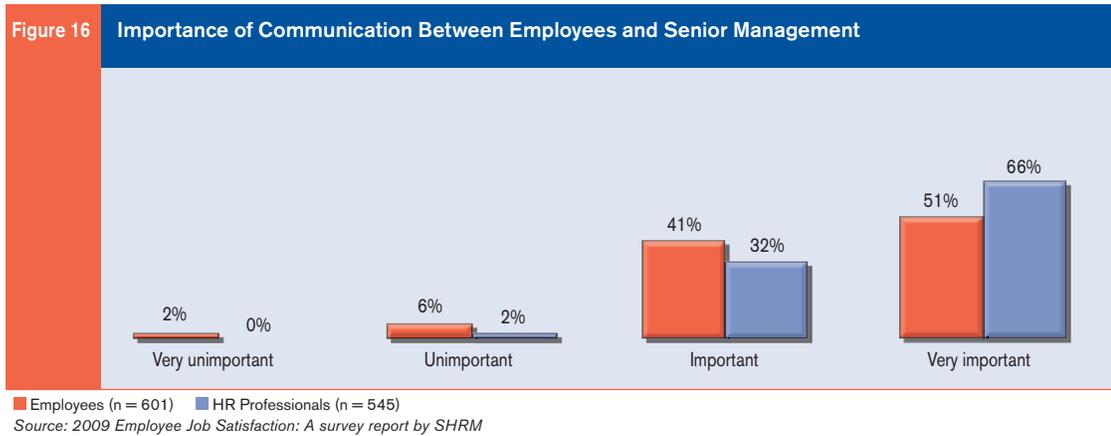
tuition reimbursement as important to employee job satisfaction (Figure 15). Employees from large organizations gave more importance to this aspect than did employees from small organizations (Table 5).

Employee Relationship With Management

HR professionals have tended to rank most of the aspects from this category (relationship with immediate supervisor, communication between employees and senior management, and management recognition of employee job performance) in the top five of very important aspects of employee job satisfaction.

Communication Between Employees and Senior Management

Effective communication from senior management, especially during times of uncertainty, can provide the workforce with direction, dispel rumors and promote trust. Fifty-one percent of employees and 66% of HR professionals reported that communication between employees and senior management was very important to employee job satisfaction. These data are depicted in Figure 16. Communication between employees and senior management has consistently made the list of top five elements of employee job satisfaction as predicted by HR professionals.





Insights

Beverly Widger, SPHR
SHRM Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel

Q: In your industry, what do you see as the top three job satisfaction factors?

A: In my industry—banking—the top three job satisfaction factors are job security, livable wages and excellent benefits, and open communication from senior management and trustees.

Q: From your viewpoint, how is the economy influencing job satisfaction in your workforce?

A: People are concerned about their jobs and job security. While community banks are thriving, there is still an undertone of concern. Taxes in our community are increasing, spouses have been laid off in some families, and there is concern for being able to afford the essentials. Staff are striving for information and to keep informed.

Q: What initiatives is your company taking to positively influence job satisfaction, despite these difficult economic times?

A: We conduct monthly staff meetings with open-book accounting on where the bank stands financially. We also have a customer contact program to keep and continually satisfy customers. We are continuing monthly wellness and social activities as planned. Our bonus is still in place, but it requires making profitability goals.

Q: How is your company retaining key talent, in view of the recession?

A: We are paying competitively, offering good benefits and rewarding good performers.

“Dialogue is a key initiative from all levels of leadership to staff.

When people are worried about their jobs, they must have all the information and have a chance to sound off.”

Marie LaMarche,
member of SHRM's
Employee Relations
Special Expertise
Panel

HR professionals were asked what measures their organizations were taking to keep employee job satisfaction high during uncertain economic times. Encouraging open communication between supervisors and employees (55%) and fostering open communication with employees regarding organization's financial standing (45%) were the top two measures reported.

Employees should not feel uncomfortable or afraid to pose questions, suggestions or their concerns to management. Organizations should ask themselves the question, “Can employees question the decisions of management without fear of repercussions?”¹¹ There are various mechanisms that can be used to encourage feedback and communication from employees

to senior management (bottom-up communication), such as employee attitude surveys, focus groups and suggestion boxes. In addition, employees can also meet with their supervisors one on one to discuss any matters, regularly or as needed, and this can be used as a means of upward communication.

On the flip side, it is important that senior management communicate with employees so that they understand the organization's business goals, policies and vision, and are apprised about what is going on in the organization. It can be particularly challenging for large organizations to keep the lines of communication clear and keep employees in the loop. Senior management can reduce these potential obstacles by sharing organizational information with employees in

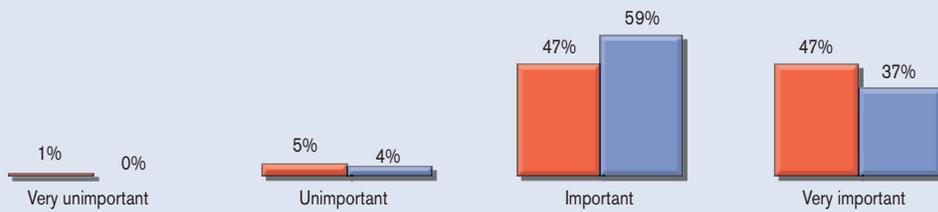


companywide meetings and via technology in top-to-bottom communications (e.g., CEO blog, intranet and e-mails).

According to Marie LaMarche, member of SHRM’s Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel, “dia-

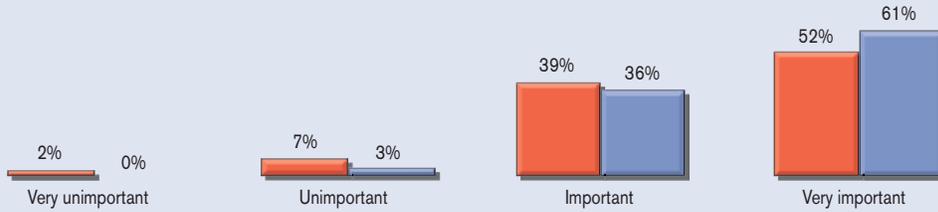
logue is a key initiative from all levels of leadership to staff. When people are worried about their jobs, they must have all the information and have a chance to sound off. Our executive management team is trying to communicate as much as possible with all levels of staff. I also think that when change occurs, we are

Figure 17 Importance of Autonomy and Independence



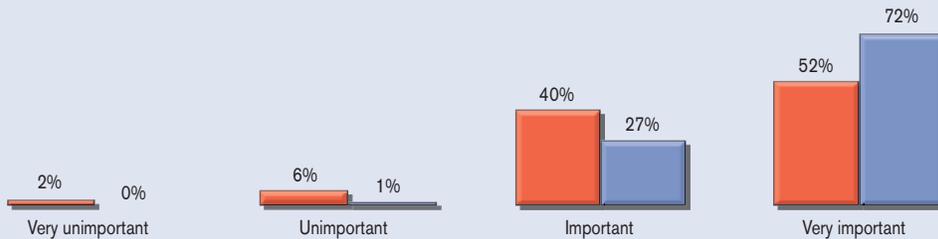
■ Employees (n = 601) ■ HR Professionals (n = 547)
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Figure 18 Importance of Management Recognition of Employee Job Performance



■ Employees (n = 602) ■ HR Professionals (n = 547)
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Figure 19 Importance of Relationship With Immediate Supervisor



■ Employees (n = 601) ■ HR Professionals (n = 546)
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Relationship with immediate supervisor, along with job security, was rated the most important out of the 24 aspects of job satisfaction by HR professionals, while for employees it did not make the top five.

Acknowledging employees' performance through praise, awards and incentives is believed to be a cost-effective way of increasing employee morale, productivity and competitiveness.

asking our unions to think outside the box with us and partner for solutions.”

Autonomy and Independence

Autonomy and independence refer to the degree to which a job provides an employee with freedom and discretion to make decisions, such as scheduling work and determining how it is to be done. Increased autonomy can give employees a greater sense of responsibility for the outcomes of their work and, in turn, may increase their satisfaction. Forty-seven percent of employees and 37% of HR professionals stated that this aspect was very important (see Figure 17).

Management Recognition of Employee Job Performance

Acknowledging employees' performance through praise (private or public), awards and incentives is believed to be a cost-effective way of increasing employee morale, productivity and competitiveness. Fifty-two percent of employees and 61% of HR professionals found this aspect to be very important to employee job satisfaction. These data are shown in Figure 18.

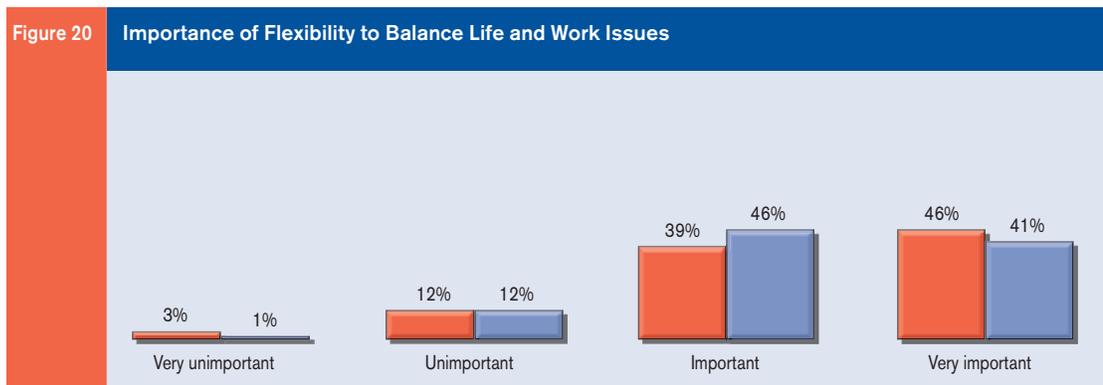
For employees, it was deemed more important in 2009 than in 2008 (Table 1). It is a commonly held belief that employees will feel more committed to

an organization if they believe that their efforts are valued. This is even more relevant during challenging economic times, when employees are expected to do more with fewer resources.

Relationship With Immediate Supervisor

The supervisor-employee relationship has consistently been rated the most important contributor to job satisfaction by HR professionals for the last six years (Table 2). Approximately one-half of employees (52%) have rated this aspect as very important compared with 72% of HR professionals (Figure 19). This element, along with job security, was rated the most important out of the 24 aspects of job satisfaction by HR professionals, while for employees it did not make the top five (Tables 2 and 1, respectively).

The relationship an employee has with his or her supervisor is a central element to the employee's affiliation to the organization, and it has been argued that employee behavior is largely a function of the supervisor. Similar to senior management, when there are open lines of communication (e.g., encouraging an open-door policy), supervisors can respond more effectively to the needs and problems of their employees. Employees who have a positive relationship with their supervisor, where they feel safe and supported,



■ Employees (n = 602) ■ HR Professionals (n = 546)
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



may be more likely to share with their supervisor job-related problems or even personal problems, which can be barriers to employee productivity. It is also important that supervisors set clear expectations and provide feedback about work performance so as to avoid any potential frustrations.

Female employees, compared with male employees, reported that their relationship with their supervisor was more important to their overall job satisfaction. This aspect was seen as more important by employees with tenure of two years or less compared with employees with tenure of more than 10 years (see Table 5).

Work Environment

The final group of questions asked employees and HR professionals to rate the importance of various work environment components in relation to overall job satisfaction.

Flexibility to Balance Life and Work Issues

Organizations have different definitions of work/life balance, but the organizational objective is to ensure that employees feel successful both at work and at home. Flexibility to balance work and life, also referred to as work/life balance, was selected as very important by 46% of employees and 41% of HR professionals (Figure 20).

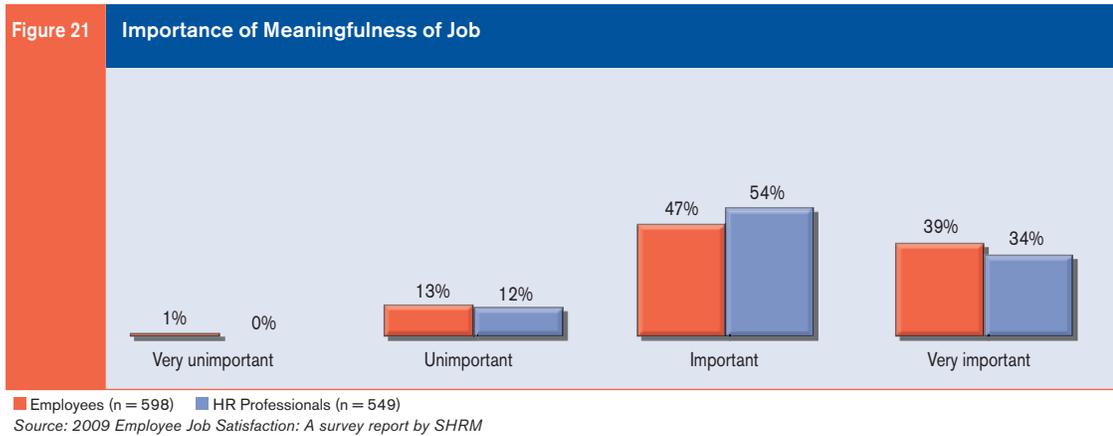
Workplace flexibility dropped from employees' top five list first in 2008 and again this year. Female em-

ployees placed greater value on this aspect than did male employees (Table 5).

Workplace flexibility includes a specific set of organizational practices, policies, programs and a philosophy that help employees meet the demands of their work and personal life. Initiatives can take the form of health and wellness support, financial support, paid and unpaid time off, and workplace flexibility. These types of benefits offerings are further explored in the SHRM survey report titled *2009 Employee Benefits*.¹² Flextime (offered by 59% of organizations), some form of telecommuting (ad-hoc, part-time or full-time basis) (57%) and compressed workweeks (37%) are examples of ways in which organizations provide flexibility for their employees.

During challenging economic times, employers may use workplace flexibility as one of their ways of reducing cost, accomplishing business goals and retaining employees. Offering job sharing and introducing full-time telecommuting to save on building and maintenance costs were among the changes organizations made within the past six months as a result of the financial challenges to the U.S. and global economy, according to a SHRM poll.¹³ The same poll shows that companies are exploring workplace flexibility options as a way to reduce costs. Eighteen percent of organizations reported that if the economy continued to decline, job sharing would likely be implemented and 8% would likely implement full-time telecommuting. In another SHRM study of employees, a quarter

Flextime and compressed workweeks are examples of ways in which organizations provide flexibility for their employees.





of employees cited flexible work arrangements among the top three benefits their employers could offer to help them cope with current or possible increase in gas prices.¹⁴

Meaningfulness of Job

When employees find their work to be meaningful and fulfilling, they are more likely to be satisfied and do their work well. Some people derive meaning through giving back to society. When asked about the meaningfulness of one’s job (the feeling that the job contributes to society as a whole), 39% of employees, compared with 34% of HR professionals, believed that this aspect was very important to overall job satisfaction (Figure 21).

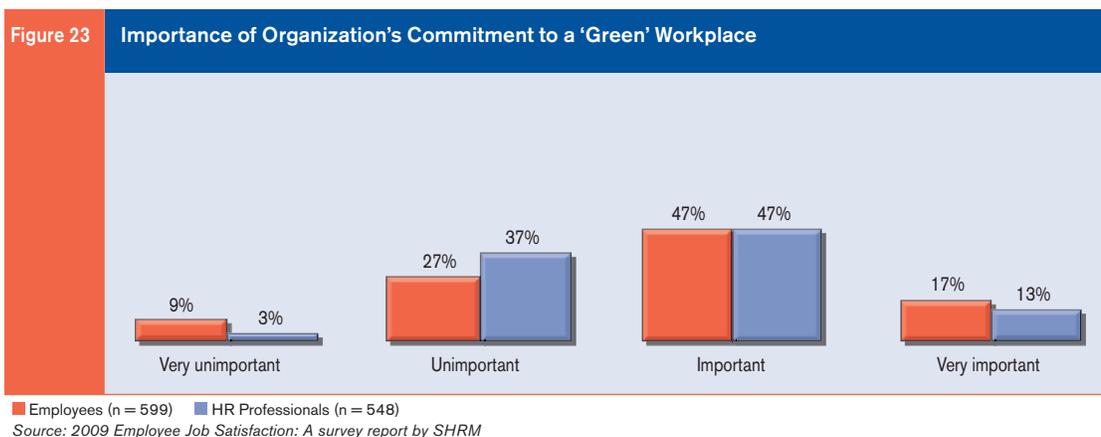
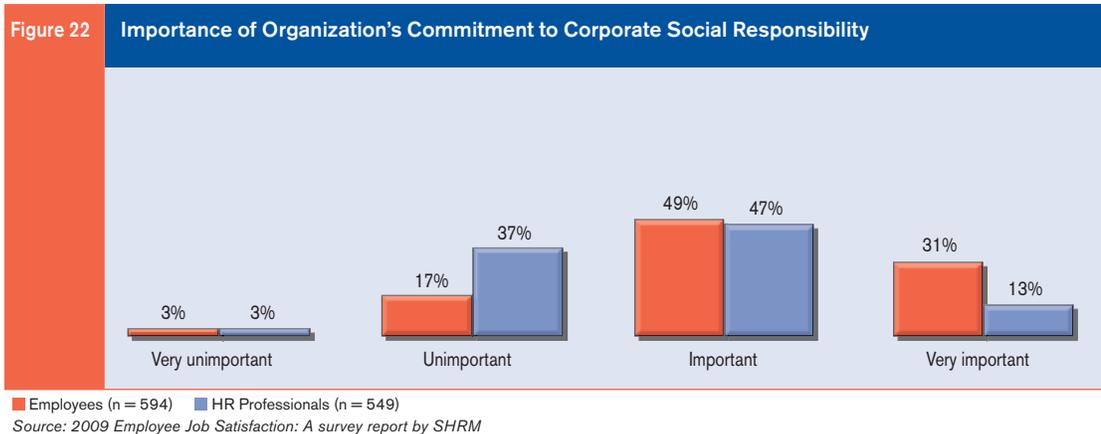
HR professionals in the health industry perceived this aspect to be more important to employee job satisfaction, compared with HR professionals in

manufacturing and services (professional) industries. Likewise, this aspect was deemed more important by HR professionals in the nonprofit sector than by those in the public and private sectors. Organizations can make a concentrated effort to communicate the ways in which the employee’s and the organization’s work contributes to society, including any corporate social responsibility activities that the organization may be involved in.

Organization’s Commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility

An organization’s commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) involves balancing financial performance with contributions to the quality of life of its employees, the local community and society at large. A broad range of practices and activities fall under the umbrella of CSR, such as charitable donations, cause marketing/branding and partnering with environ-

Organizations can make a concentrated effort to communicate the ways in which the employee’s and the organization’s work contributes to society, including any corporate social responsibility activities that the organization may be involved in.





mentally friendly suppliers/companies. As shown in Figure 22, 31% of employees and 13% of HR professionals rated the organization’s commitment to corporate social responsibility as very important. Organizations that practice corporate social responsibility have a stronger appeal for certain employees, particularly employees from medium organizations.

Organization’s Commitment to a ‘Green’ Workplace

This aspect of job satisfaction was viewed by both employees and HR professionals as the least important contributor to employee job satisfaction: 17% of employees believed the organization’s commitment to a ‘green workplace,’ one that is environmentally sensitive and resource-efficient, was very important, compared with 13% of HR professionals (Figure 23). According to a SHRM poll on green workplace, the three top drivers of environmentally responsible

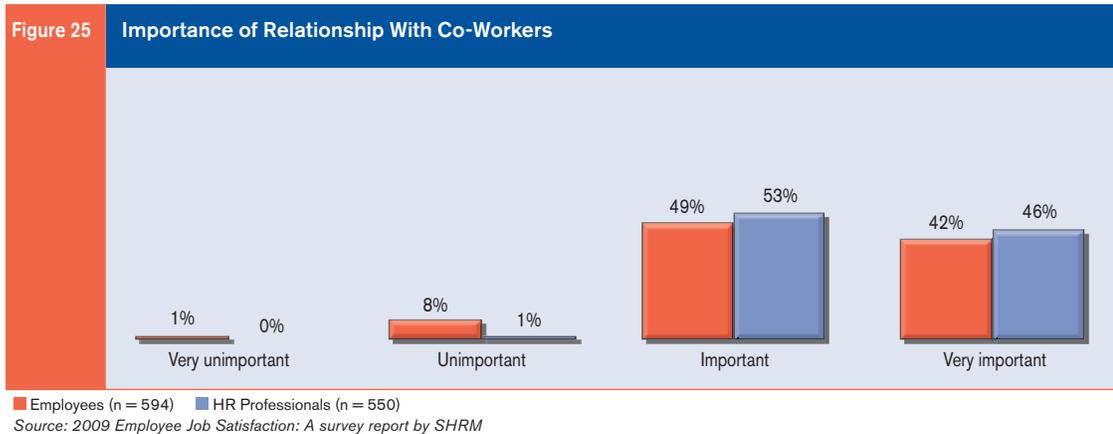
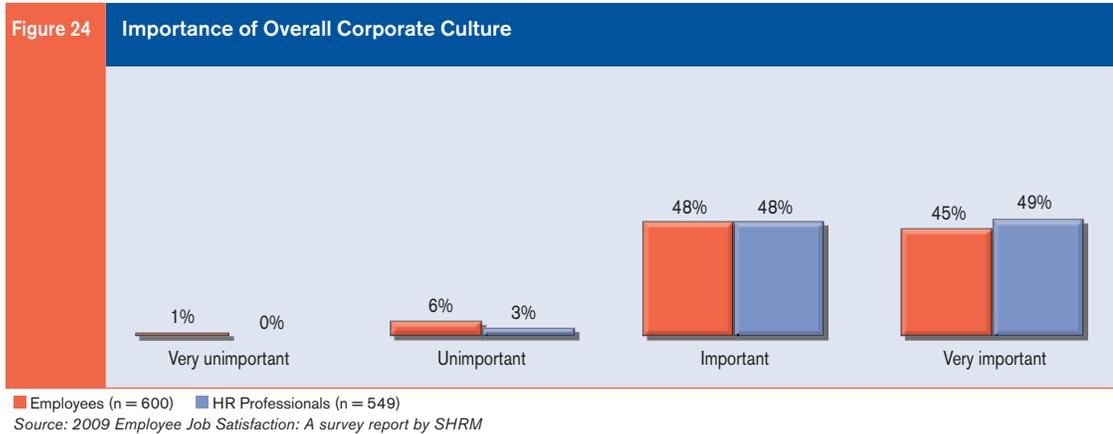
programs, as reported by employees, were contribution to society, environmental considerations and economic considerations.¹⁵

Teresa Bailey, member of SHRM’s Corporate Social Responsibility Special Expertise Panel was delighted “to see that while in 2002 going green wasn’t even on the horizon, in 2009 the survey indicates that 17% (while still low) are recognizing organizations’ commitment to going green. HR professionals should partner to make the organization a ‘green’ workplace and set the standard for the wave of the future.”

Overall Corporate Culture

Figure 24 looks at the overall corporate culture—the organization’s reputation, work ethics, values and working conditions—as it relates to job satisfaction. The definition of corporate culture varies, but

According to a SHRM poll on green workplace, the three top drivers of environmentally responsible programs, as reported by employees, were **contribution to society, environmental considerations and economic considerations.**





culture also consists of the collective attitudes and behavior of individuals within the organization—the explicit and implicit expectations, norms of behavior and standards of performance. Similar proportions of employees (45%) and HR professionals (49%) believed that the corporate culture was very important to job satisfaction. Employees 36 to 55 years old placed greater value on this aspect than did younger employees (Table 5).

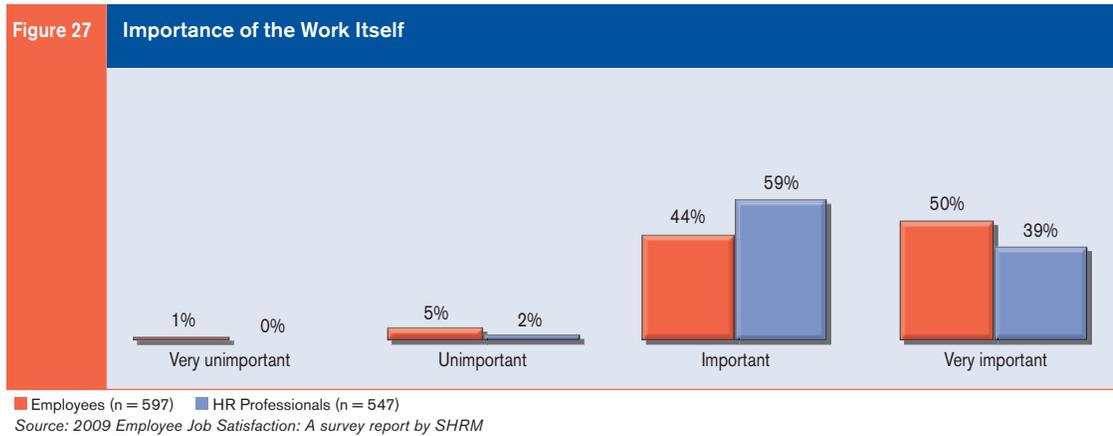
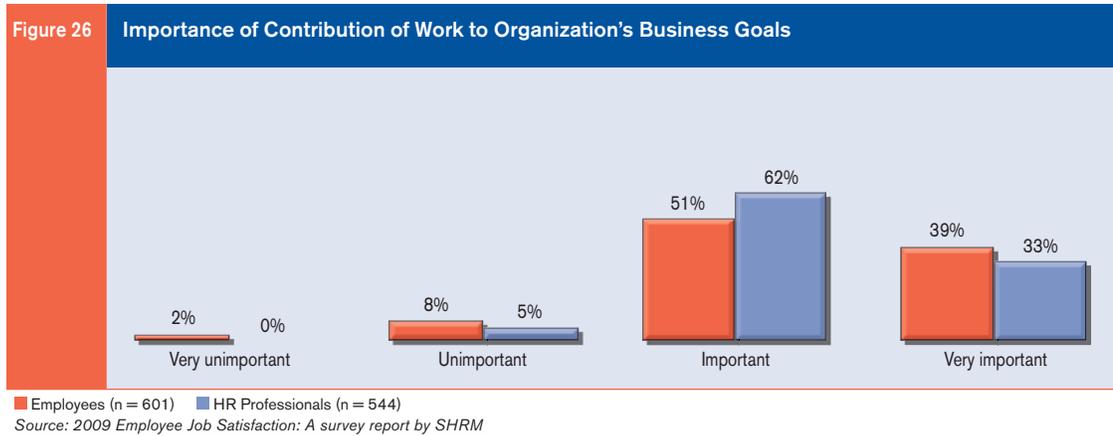
Relationships With Co-Workers

Figure 25 examines relationships with co-workers and their impact on employee job satisfaction. Depending on the type of position, there are some jobs where employees work predominately on their own, while other jobs involve regular collaboration with co-workers. Regardless of job responsibilities, projects often require employees to work together to accom-

plish a common goal, so teamwork skills are generally important for success. How much does the relationship with co-workers contribute to employee job satisfaction? According to four out of 10 employees (42%) and 46% of HR professionals, this factor is very important. Female employees placed greater value on this aspect than male employees did (see Table 5).

Contribution of Work to the Organization's Business Goals

Contributing to the organization's overall business goals can give employees a clearer sense of their role (e.g., how their work fits into the bigger picture) and the significance and relevance of their work to business goals. As reflected in Figure 26, this aspect was viewed by 39% of employees and 33% of HR professionals as very important to employee job satisfaction. HR professionals in small organizations, compared





with those in medium organizations, rated this facet as more important (Table 5). Employees placed more value on this aspect in 2009 (39%) compared with 2008 (34%).

The Work Itself

It can be rather difficult for employees to remain motivated and satisfied with their jobs when their work is not interesting, challenging or exciting. In general, a similar proportion of employees have rated this aspect as very important over the years (Table 1). One-half of employees (50%) indicated that the work itself was very important to job satisfaction, compared with 39% of HR professionals. These data are illustrated in Figure 27.

Variety of Work

It has been argued that employees are more satisfied with their jobs and find their work more meaningful when they can use a variety of skills. Similar to

the ‘work itself’ aspect, ‘variety of work’ includes providing employees with opportunities to work on different assignments and use different skills. HR professionals underestimated the importance of this component: 34% of employees, compared with 25% of HR professionals, indicated that variety of work was very important to employee job satisfaction. These data are shown in Figure 28.

Overall Employee Job Satisfaction

When employee satisfaction is high, it translates into increased productivity, commitment and retention for organizations. In 2009, employees were highly satisfied with their jobs, with 41% indicating they were very satisfied. HR professionals perceived employees as more likely to be somewhat satisfied (63%) than very satisfied (27%). Figure 29 depicts job satisfaction levels for employees, along with predictions of how

Employees whose organizations have been somewhat affected by the current financial crisis were overall more likely to be very satisfied with their current job compared with employees whose organizations have been greatly affected.

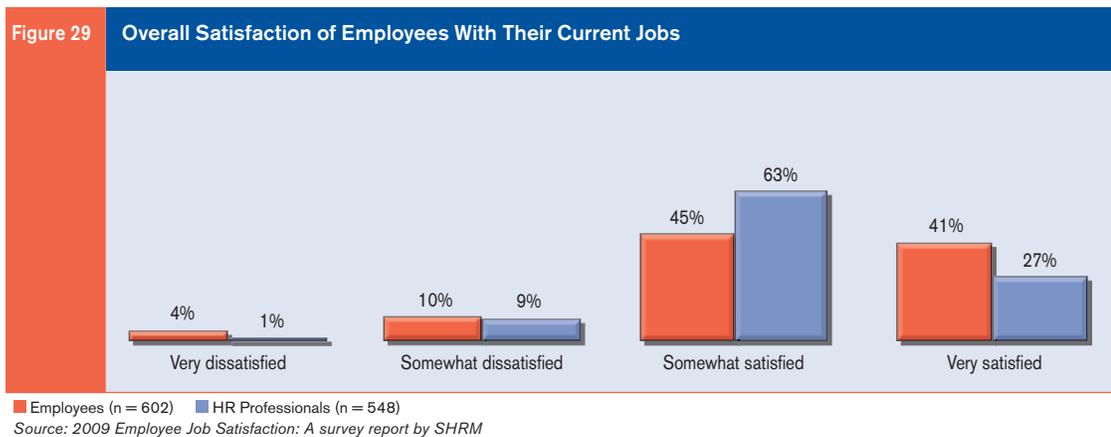
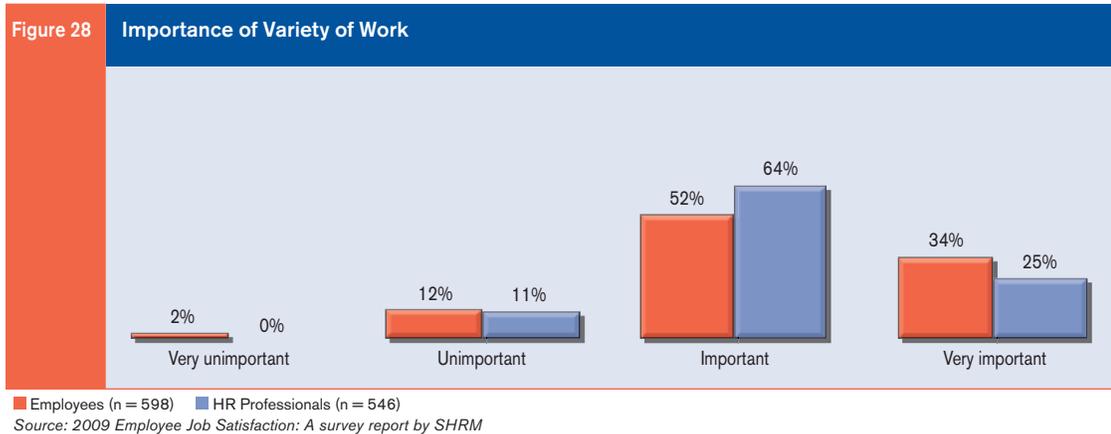
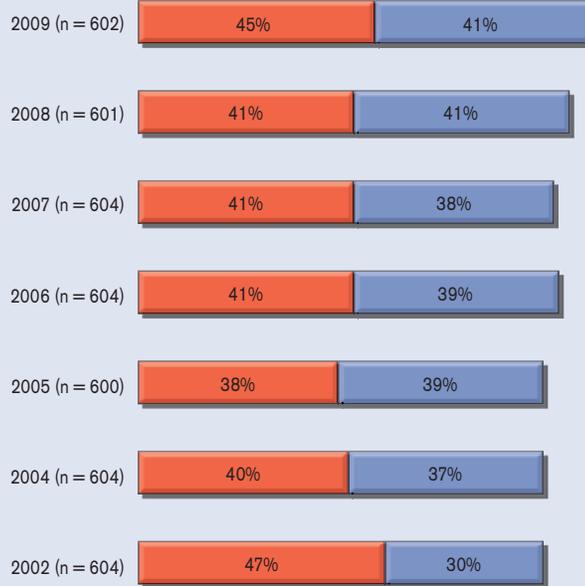




Figure 30 Overall Employee Job Satisfaction Over the Years (Employees)

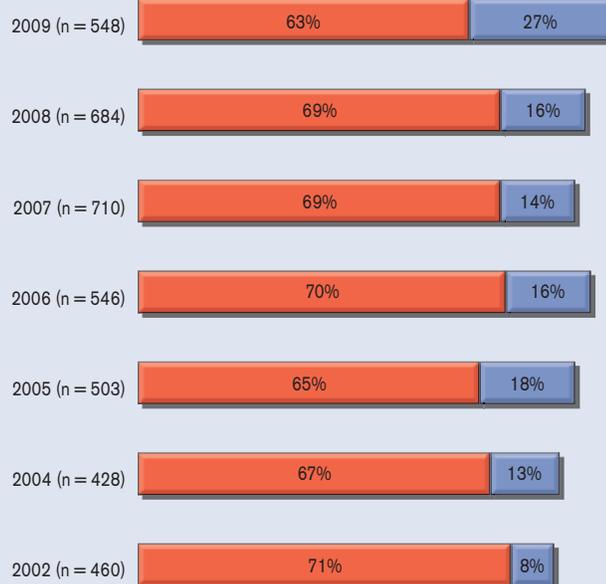


■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Note: Figure represents those employees who answered "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied."

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Figure 31 Overall Employee Job Satisfaction Over the Years (HR Professionals)



■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Note: Figure represents those HR professionals who answered "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied."

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



satisfied HR professionals perceived employees to be with their jobs.

Employees whose organizations have been somewhat affected by the current financial crisis were overall more likely to be very satisfied with their current job compared with employees whose organizations have been greatly affected. It is not surprising that employees in companies where there have been no layoffs were more satisfied than employees in companies where layoffs had occurred.¹⁶

Figure 30 illustrates the trend data on overall employee job satisfaction from September 2002 to January 2009. The overall satisfaction of employees has been consistently favorable over the years, and the data reveal that employees are more satisfied with their jobs now than they were seven years ago, when the first Job Satisfaction Survey was conducted. This finding is surprising, given that 2002 was also characterized as a time of economic and financial instability for organizations, similar to what many organizations are experiencing today.

The opinions of HR professionals about employee job satisfaction have remained relatively consistent over the years (Figure 31): 27% of HR professionals in 2009 reported that employees are very satisfied compared with 16% in 2008. It is possible that HR professionals believe that in the current economic context, employees that have not been laid off are satisfied to have a job.

Interestingly, a trend of HR professionals predicting lower levels of employee satisfaction than what employees report continues.¹⁸ This may be related in part to how HR professionals gather feedback from employees. According to responding HR professionals, top five methods organizations use to determine employee satisfaction are exit interviews, feedback from employee performance reviews, conversations with employees on an individual basis, turnover data and employee attitude surveys.

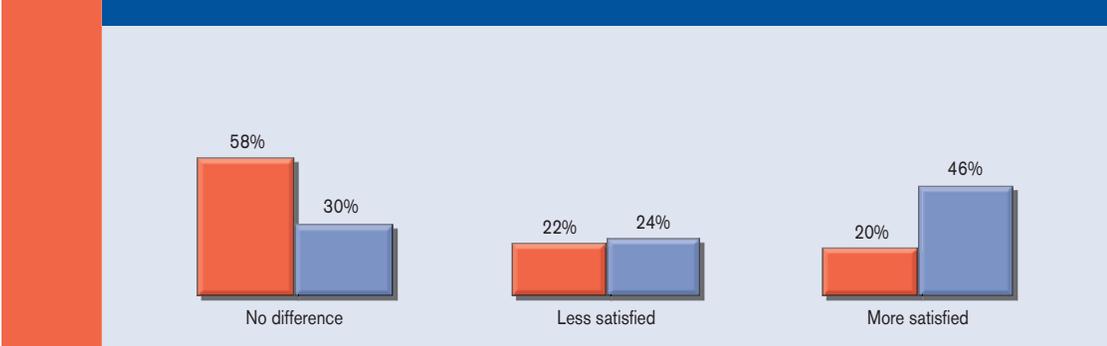
To gain a better understanding of the impact of the economic downturn, the survey asked HR professionals about the satisfaction level of their employees given the current economic climate. Overall, responding HR professionals believed that employees in their organizations were satisfied despite the economic climate. When asked the same question, nearly six out of 10 employees reported that the current economic climate has not made any difference on their satisfaction level (Figure 32). When HR professionals were asked about their satisfaction level with their own jobs given the current economic climate, more than half of HR professionals responded that they were very satisfied with their current jobs.¹⁷

Nearly 60% of employees indicated that they were very satisfied with their relationships with co-workers, meaningfulness of the job and the relationship with their immediate supervisor.

Employee Satisfaction With Individual Job Aspects

Employees were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each of the 24 job satisfaction and addition-

Figure 32 Employee Satisfaction Given Current Economic Climate



Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



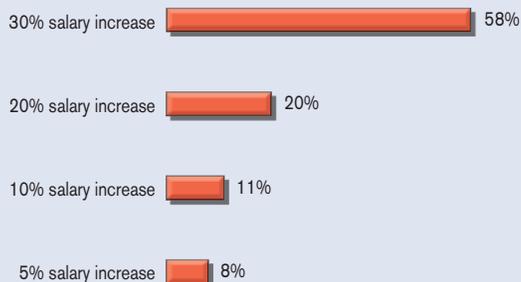
al compensation and benefits aspects if they answered “very important” to any of the aspects.

The satisfaction ratings for the top three very important job aspects—job security, benefits and compensation—were somewhat split across the “somewhat satisfied” and “very satisfied” response categories (for example, 46% of employees were somewhat satisfied with job security, while 38% were very satisfied). Approximately one-half of employees indicated that they were very satisfied with safety in their workplace and opportunities to use skills and abilities, and nearly 60% of employees indicated that they were very satisfied with their relationships with co-workers, meaningfulness of the job and the relationship with their immediate supervisor (see Table 8).

Among the compensation aspects, 49% and 40% of employees were very satisfied with their paid time off and defined contribution plans. Opportunities for variable pay and base rate of pay received the lowest overall score, with fewer than three out of 10 employees being very satisfied (see Table 9).

Overall, 32% of employees were very satisfied with communication between employees and senior management. Career advancement opportunities within the organization (30%) and compensation (29%) received the lowest overall satisfaction scores from employees. These are among the areas that organizations should pay attention to, particularly with respect to the job satisfaction aspects designated as most important to employees, such as compensation.

Figure 33 Salary Offer at Which Employees Are Very Likely to Leave Current Organization



Note: Figure represents those who answered “very likely.” Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = “very unlikely” and 4 = “very likely.”
Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Conclusions

As evidenced by this study, several factors influence employees' job satisfaction, and these factors are dynamic. Job dissatisfaction can contribute to multiple organizational problems and has been associated with increased levels of turnover and absenteeism, which ultimately cost the organization in terms of low performance and decreased productivity. It is important for HR, as a strategic business partner, to be aware of not only the needs and composition of the workforce but also environmental factors and trends.

“One point of interest is how the external environment drives satisfaction. The items that most directly affect employees in the ‘here and now,’ such as job security or benefits, are paramount over such longer-term initiatives such as a ‘green workplace’ or even commitment to corporate social responsibility,” says Ken Pinnock, member of SHRM’s Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel. “Not that any one item is not important, but priorities shift, so HR has to be mindful of what is going on in the external environment—whether in the economy, political landscape or domestic or international orientation.”

It is not surprising that during the current economic downturn employees placed job security at the top of their list of job satisfaction factors for the second consecutive year (2008 and 2009). 2009 was the first time that job security made it to the top of HR professionals’ list. The economic downturn has affected institutions such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, AIG, General Motors and many more—all of which were once viewed as financially solid organizations. Although employees and HR professionals are apprehensive about job security, only three out of 10 employees think often or very often about the prospect of losing their current job.¹⁹

Gerlinde Herrmann, member of SHRM’s Corporate Social Responsibility Special Expertise Panel, cautions: “Even if you can artificially retain folks through job security, as soon as the economy turns (and it always does), we will be facing the ever-looming prospect of talent shortages.” Will employees begin job search once the economy is on the upswing? According to a SHRM survey, 31% of employees

indicated that they will be somewhat or very likely to begin or increase their job search once the economy and job market improve.²⁰

Benefits and compensation have remained in the top five for employees since 2002. Due to the financial crisis in the United States, many employees have seen their retirement savings dramatically decrease in value. According to a SHRM poll, 41% of HR professionals indicated that their organizations offered training courses on debt management for their employees, and another 40% said their organizations offered their employees one-on-one money management or financial advice. During the economic downturn, HR professionals can help their organizations keep employee satisfaction level high by offering benefits that are intangible and cost-effective (e.g., recognition by management, flexible work arrangements, etc.) and educating their employees on the benefits available to them.

Employees named opportunities to use their skills and abilities as one of the top five factors influencing job satisfaction. If organizations are not aware of the skill sets of their employees or fail to utilize them, they may risk losing some of the most talented and valuable employees when the economy improves.

Teresa Bailey, member of SHRM’s Corporate Social Responsibility Special Expertise Panel, believes that “HR professionals need to continue to benchmark and set the standards for succession planning and challenging their employee base to satisfy all employees, recognize the demographics of the multi-generational gaps and identify what motivates each one in the workplace. HR professionals should use the data from a study like this in their specific workplace to ensure that they are reaching the masses and endeavoring to do the best they can do in this economy to provide job security, benefits education, opportunities for skill assessment and creativity in the workplace and also to communicate openly with their employees. While these are tough and challenging times, it’s also a great opportunity for HR professionals to shine.”

“Priorities shift, so **HR has to be mindful of what is going on in the external environment—** whether in the economy, political landscape or domestic or international orientation.”

Ken Pinnock, member of SHRM’s Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel



Methodology

HR Professional Sample

A sample of HR professionals was randomly selected from SHRM's membership database, which included approximately 250,000 individual members at the time the survey was conducted. Only members who had not participated in a SHRM survey or poll in the last four months were included in the sampling frame. Members who were academicians, students, located internationally or had no e-mail address on file were excluded from the sampling frame. In February 2009, an e-mail that included a hyperlink to the SHRM 2009 Job Satisfaction Survey²¹ was sent to 3,000 randomly selected SHRM members. Of these, 2,687 e-mails were successfully delivered to respondents, and 550 HR professionals responded, yielding a response rate of 21%. The survey was accessible for a period of three weeks, and three e-mail reminders and a fax reminder were sent to nonrespondents in an effort to increase response rates.

The sample of HR professionals was generally representative of the SHRM membership population, although there were some differences by industry and staff size of respondents' organizations.²²

Employee Sample

The sample of employees was randomly selected by an outside survey research organization's Web-enabled employee panel, which is based on a random sample of the entire U.S. telephone population. All panelist households who do not already have internet access are provided with a custom-designed Web device so that they can complete surveys online. Out of 1,216 employees, 605 individuals completed the online 2009 Job Satisfaction Survey, yielding a response rate of 57%. The survey was in the field for over a period of seven days. All respondents were employed, either full time or part time.

Comparing the 605 employees in this survey to the 2008 sample of employees showed that the two samples were mostly similar in composition.

Notations

Analysis

Throughout this report, conventional statistical methods are used to determine if observed differences are statistically significant (i.e., there is a small likelihood that the differences occurred by chance). When presenting data from the overall survey results, in some cases, findings are discussed, even if they are not statistically significant. In some cases, the data are not depicted in corresponding tables/figures even though the results are statistically significant. Analyses by HR professionals' and employees' organization staff size are presented and discussed. Additional analyses by employee job tenure, gender and age were also conducted.

- ◆ Organization staff size categories: small (1 to 99 employees), medium (100 to 499 employees) and large (500 or more employees).
- ◆ Organization sector: publicly owned for-profit organization, privately owned for-profit organization, nonprofit organization, government sector and other categories. Results are not presented for other employment sectors due to the small number of organizations in this category.
- ◆ Employee job tenure categories, or total years within the company: two years or less, three to five years, six to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, and 16 years or more.
- ◆ Employee age categories: 35 years old and younger, 36 to 55 years old, and 56 years old and older.



Differences

Conventional statistical methods were used to determine if observed differences were statistically significant (i.e., there is a small likelihood that the differences occurred by chance). Therefore, in most cases, only results that were significant are included, unless otherwise noted. It is also important to note that in some cases, data may be discussed in the text of this report but not presented in an accompanying figure or table.

Tables

Unless otherwise noted in a specific table, the following are applicable to data depicted in tables throughout this report.

- ◆ Data are sorted in descending order by “overall” column in a table.
- ◆ Percentages for a question or a response option may not total 100% due to rounding.
- ◆ Tables include only response options for which there were significant differences.

Figures

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

- ◆ Percentages for a question 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. While SHRM is confident in its research, it is prudent to understand that the results presented in this survey report are only truly representative of the sample of HR professionals responding to the survey.

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 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 SHRM members. Given the level of response to the survey, SHRM Research is 96% confident that responses given by responding HR professionals can be applied to all SHRM members, in general, with a margin of error of approximately 4%. For example, 72% of the responding HR professionals reported that job security was very important for employees’ job satisfaction. With a 4% margin of error, the reader can be 96% certain that between 68% and 76% of SHRM members believe that job security is very important to employee job satisfaction. It is important to know that as the sample size decreases, the margin of error increases.



About the Respondents

Employees

Organization Staff Size

Small (1-99 employees)	34%
Medium (100-499 employees)	18%
Large (500 and more employees)	48%

(n = 593)

Industry

Educational services/education	15%
Services: professional, scientific, technical, legal, engineering	12%
Health care, social assistance (e.g., in-home care, nursing homes, EAP providers, hospices, etc.)	12%
Manufacturing	10%
Retail/wholesale trade	9%
Government/public administration: federal, state/local, tribal	7%
Construction, mining, oil and gas	5%
Financial services (e.g., banking)	4%
Services: accommodation, food and drinking places	4%
Transportation, warehousing (e.g., distribution)	3%
Other services	2%
Insurance	2%
Telecommunications	2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation	2%
Utilities	2%
Biotech	1%
Consulting	1%
High-tech	1%
Pharmaceutical	1%
Publishing, broadcasting, other media	1%
Real estate, rental, leasing	1%
Association: professional/trade	1%
Other	2%

(n = 599)

Job Tenure

2 years or less	23%
3 to 5 years	22%
6 to 10 years	23%
11 to 15 years	12%
16 or more years	20%

(n = 587)

Age

35 and younger	30%
36-55	49%
56 and older	21%

(n = 605)

Gender

Female	49%
Male	51%

(n = 605)



HR Professionals

Organization Staff Size

Small (1-99 employees)	19%
Medium (100-499 employees)	31%
Large (500 and more employees)	50%

(n = 541)

Sector

Publicly owned for-profit organization	22%
Privately owned for-profit organization	47%
Nonprofit organization	20%
Government agency	11%

(n = 546)

Industry

Manufacturing	16%
Services: professional, scientific, technical, legal, engineering	14%
Health care, social assistance (e.g., in-home care, nursing homes, EAP providers, hospices, etc.)	12%
Educational services/education	8%
Government/public administration: federal, state/local, tribal	7%
Financial services (e.g., banking)	6%
Retail /wholesale trade	6%
Other services	5%
Transportation, warehousing (e.g., distribution)	4%
High-tech	3%
Insurance	3%
Consulting	3%
Services: accommodation, food and drinking places	1%
Construction, mining, oil and gas	3%
Telecommunications	2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation	2%
Biotech	1%
Pharmaceutical	1%
Publishing, broadcasting, other media	1%
Real estate, rental, leasing	1%
Utilities	2%
Association: professional/trade	0%
Other	1%

(n = 549)

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.



Appendix

Table 1 Comparison of Very Important Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction: 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (Employees)

	2002 (n = 604)	2004 (n = 604)	2005 (n = 601)	2006 (n = 605)	2007 (n = 604)	2008 (n = 601)	2009 (n = 601)
Job security	65% (1)	60% (4)	59% (4)	59% (3)	53% (2)	59% (1)	63% (1)
Benefits	64% (2)	68% (1)	63% (1)	65% (2)	59% (1)	57% (2)	60% (2)
Compensation/pay	59% (4)	63% (2)	61% (2)	67% (1)	59% (1)	53% (3)	57% (3)
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	–	47%	44%	51% (5)	44%	50% (4)	55% (4)
Feeling safe in the work environment	36%	62% (3)	55% (5)	54% (4)	50% (5)	53% (3)	54% (5)
Relationship with immediate supervisor	49%	49%	46%	47%	48%	47% (5)	52%
Management recognition of employee job performance	49%	47%	45%	47%	49%	44%	52%
Communication between employees and senior management*	62% (3)	54%	50%	48%	51% (4)	50% (4)	51%
The work itself	50%	46%	35%	46%	41%	47% (5)	50%
Autonomy and independence	46%	42%	41%	44%	44%	41%	47%
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	62% (3)	57% (5)	60% (3)	59% (3)	52% (3)	44%	46%
Meaningfulness of job	29%	38%	37%	42%	37%	45%	45%
Overall corporate culture	40%	43%	39%	40%	36%	40%	45%
Relationships with co-workers	23%	33%	34%	35%	34%	39%	42%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	–	35%	33%	37%	32%	34%	39%
Job-specific training	34%	34%	28%	36%	27%	27%	35%
Variety of work	–	37%	45%	40%	34%	35%	34%
Career advancement opportunities	52% (5)	37%	28%	36%	28%	29%	32%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	–	–	–	–	–	33%	31%
Organization's commitment to professional development	–	34%	31%	35%	31%	33%	30%
Paid training and tuition reimbursement programs	–	–	–	–	31%	32%	29%
Career development opportunities	51%	40%	34%	42%	35%	30%	29%
Networking**	–	17%	19%	21%	18%	21%	22%
Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace	–	–	–	–	–	23%	17%

* Starting in 2004, "communication between employees and management" was changed to "communication between employees and senior management."

**Starting in 2008, "networking with others who have similar backgrounds and interests" was changed to "opportunities to network with others (within or outside the organization) to help in advancing your career."

Note: Table represents those who answered "very important." 2009 percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." 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 this question was not asked. Numbers in parentheses indicate position of aspect in respective column year.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 2 Comparison of Very Important Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction: 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (HR Professionals)

	2002 (n = 461)	2004 (n = 429)	2005 (n = 505)	2006 (n = 548)	2007 (n = 713)	2008 (n = 685)	2009 (n = 547)
Job security	59% (4)	50%	49%	50%	48%	53%	72% (1)
Relationship with immediate supervisor	61% (3)	70% (1)	71% (1)	72% (1)	70% (1)	68% (1)	72% (1)
Benefits	53%	60% (3)	61% (4)	62% (3)	62% (4)	62% (3)	69% (2)
Communication between employees and senior management*	77% (1)	59% (4)	60% (5)	61% (4)	60% (5)	61% (4)	66% (3)
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	–	57%	52%	53%	49%	61% (4)	62% (4)
Management recognition of employee job performance	62% (2)	68% (2)	69% (2)	71% (2)	65% (3)	63% (2)	61% (5)
Job-specific training	34%	47%	43%	45%	43%	49%	52%
Feeling safe in the work environment	30%	40%	39%	45%	38%	48%	52%
Compensation/pay	54% (5)	58% (5)	62% (3)	60% (5)	67% (2)	54% (5)	51%
Overall corporate culture	33%	32%	32%	37%	37%	41%	49%
Organization's commitment to professional development	–	48%	43%	50%	42%	45%	48%
Career advancement opportunities	43%	43%	47%	49%	46%	43%	48%
Career development opportunities	48%	51%	50%	55%	49%	44%	47%
Relationships with co-workers	29%	34%	30%	30%	32%	38%	46%
Paid training and tuition reimbursement programs	–	–	–	–	38%	41%	43%
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	46%	53%	53%	50%	48%	43%	41%
The work itself	33%	34%	30%	29%	29%	39%	39%
Autonomy and independence	24%	32%	29%	33%	34%	33%	37%
Meaningfulness of job	18%	20%	23%	24%	26%	27%	34%
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	–	22%	21%	24%	24%	25%	33%
Variety of work	–	14%	13%	16%	16%	20%	25%
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	–	–	–	–	–	17%	23%
Networking**	–	14%	15%	17%	14%	16%	20%
Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace	–	–	–	–	–	8%	13%

* Starting in 2004, "communication between employees and management" was changed to "communication between employees and senior management."

**Starting in 2008, "networking with others who have similar backgrounds and interests" was changed to "opportunities to network with others (within or outside the organization) to help in advancing your career."

Note: Table represents those who answered "very important." 2009 percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important." 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 this question was not asked. Numbers in parentheses indicate position of aspect in respective column year.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Table 3 Comparison of Selected Very Important Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction (Employees)

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Organization Staff Size	Differences Based on Tenure
Job security	63%	Male > female	Medium and large > small	–
Benefits	60%	–	Medium and large > small	6 to 10 years > 3 to 5 years
Feeling safe in the work environment	54%	Female > male	–	–

Note: A dash (–) indicates that there were no significant differences in this category.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM


Table 4 Comparison of Selected Very Important Compensation and Benefits Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction (Employees)

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Organization Staff Size	Differences Based on Tenure	Differences Based on Age
Health care/medical benefits	63%	–	Medium and large > small	–	–
Paid time off	58%	Female > male	–	–	–
Defined contribution plans (e.g., 401(k))	41%	–	Medium and large > small	11 to 15 years > 2 years or less	–
Defined benefit pension plan	39%	–	Medium and large > small	6 to 10 years and 16 or more years > 2 years or less	–
Family-friendly benefits	29%	–	Large > small	–	35 and younger > 56 and older

Note: A dash (–) indicates that there were no significant differences in this category.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Table 5 Comparison of Selected Very Important Aspects of Employee Job Satisfaction (Employees)

	Overall	Differences Based on Gender	Differences Based on Organization Staff Size	Differences Based on Tenure	Differences Based on Age
Career advancement opportunities	32%	–	Medium and large > small	2 years or less > 16 or more years	35 years and younger > 56 and older
Career development opportunities	29%	–	Large > small	2 years or less > 16 or more years	35 years and younger > 56 and older
Job-specific training	35%	–	Medium and large > small	–	35 years and younger > 56 and older
Networking	22%	–	–	2 years or less > 16 or more years	–
Paid training and tuition reimbursement programs	28%	–	Large > small	–	–
Relationship with immediate supervisor	52%	Female > male	–	2 years or less > 10 or more years	–
Relationship with co-workers	42%	Female > male	–	–	–
Meaningfulness of job	39%	–	–	–	56 and older > 35 years and younger
Overall corporate culture	45%	–	–	–	36–55 years > 35 years and younger
Corporate social responsibility	31%	–	Medium > small	–	–
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	46%	Female > male	–	2 years or less > 16 or more years	–

Note: A dash (–) indicates that there were no significant differences in this category.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 6 Comparison of Importance of Selected Aspects of Job Satisfaction (by Sample)

	Employees (n = 601)	HR Professionals (n = 547)	Differences Based on Sample
Organization's commitment to professional development	30%	48%	HR professionals > employees
Career advancement opportunities	32%	48%	HR professionals > employees
Career development opportunities	29%	47%	HR professionals > employees
Job-specific training	35%	52%	HR professionals > employees
Networking	22%	20%	–
Opportunities to use skills/abilities	55%	62%	HR professionals > employees
Paid training and tuition reimbursement programs	29%	43%	HR professionals > employees
Communication between employees and senior management	51%	66%	HR professionals > employees
Autonomy and independence	47%	37%	Employees > HR professionals
Management recognition of employee job performance	52%	61%	HR professionals > employees
Relationship with immediate supervisor	52%	72%	HR professionals > employees
Compensation/pay	57%	51%	Employees > HR professionals
Benefits	60%	69%	HR professionals > employees
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	46%	41%	–
Feeling safe in the work environment	54%	52%	–
Job security	63%	72%	HR professionals > employees
Meaningfulness of job	45%	34%	–
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	31%	23%	Employees > HR professionals
Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace	17%	13%	–
Overall corporate culture	45%	49%	–
Relationships with co-workers	42%	46%	–
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	39%	33%	–
The work itself	50%	39%	Employees > HR professionals
Variety of work	34%	25%	Employees > HR professionals

Note: Sample sizes are based on the actual number of survey respondents; however, the percentages shown are based on the actual number of respondents who answered the questions using the provided response options. A dash (–) indicates that no statistically significant differences were found.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 7 Comparison of Importance of Selected Aspects of Job Satisfaction in 2008 and 2009 (Employees)

	2008 (n = 601)	2009 (n = 601)	Differences Between 2008 and 2009
Career development opportunities	38%	29%	Decrease
Networking opportunities	29%	22%	Decrease
Organization's commitment to professional development	41%	29%	Decrease
Paid training and tuition reimbursement programs	44%	30%	Decrease
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	52%	39%	Decrease
Meaningfulness of job	54%	39%	Decrease
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	44%	31%	Decrease
Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace	33%	17%	Decrease

Note: 2008 numbers were recalculated based on a four-point scale. Only response options with statistically significant comparisons are included.

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 8 Comparison of Importance and Satisfaction With Job Aspects (Employees)

	Importance		Satisfaction	
	Very Important	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	
Relationships with co-workers	42%	33%	59%	
Meaningfulness of job	39%	36%	59%	
Relationship with immediate supervisor	52%	29%	58%	
The work itself	50%	35%	55%	
Feeling safe in the work environment	54%	34%	55%	
The variety of work	34%	38%	52%	
Opportunities to use skills and abilities	55%	37%	52%	
Flexibility to balance life and work issues	46%	32%	51%	
Contribution of work to organization's business goals	39%	42%	50%	
Autonomy and independence to make decisions	47%	32%	48%	
Overall corporate culture	45%	37%	45%	
Organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility	31%	38%	39%	
Organization's commitment to a 'green' workplace	17%	41%	39%	
Job security	63%	46%	38%	
Networking	22%	33%	38%	
Benefits	60%	39%	38%	
The organization's commitment to professional development	30%	39%	38%	
Job-specific training	35%	39%	36%	
Management recognition of employee job performance	52%	33%	34%	
Organization's financial stability	53%	48%	34%	
Paid training and tuition reimbursement	29%	36%	33%	
Career development opportunities for learning and professional growth	29%	44%	32%	
Communication between employees and senior management	51%	35%	32%	
Career advancement opportunities within the organization	32%	46%	30%	
Compensation/pay	57%	43%	29%	

Note: Only respondents who indicated that the job aspect was "very important" were asked this question. Data are sorted by the "very satisfied" column. 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 4 = "very satisfied" and exclude "not applicable."

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 9 Comparison of Importance and Satisfaction With Compensation and Benefits Aspects (Employees)

	Importance		Satisfaction	
	Very Important	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	
Paid time off	58%	36%	49%	
Defined contribution plans (e.g., 401(k))	41%	44%	40%	
Defined benefit pension plan	39%	39%	39%	
Health care/medical benefits	63%	37%	39%	
Stock options	12%	40%	38%	
Family-friendly benefits	29%	39%	35%	
Being paid competitively with the local market	55%	37%	30%	
Base rate of pay	52%	41%	27%	
Opportunities for variable pay	37%	32%	26%	

Note: Only respondents who indicated that the job aspect was “very important” were asked this question. Data are sorted by the “very satisfied” column. 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” 4 = “very satisfied” and exclude “not applicable.”
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Table 10 Top Five Very Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Employee Job Tenure

Job Tenure	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
2 years or less	Relationship with immediate supervisor	Compensation/pay	Benefits, job security	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Feeling safe in the work environment
	66%	60%	59%	58%	55%
3 to 5 years	Job security	The work itself	Relationship with immediate supervisor	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Management recognition of employee job performance, feeling safe in the work environment
	63%	56%	55%	54%	53%
6 to 10 years	Job security	Benefits	Compensation/pay	Feeling safe in the work environment, communication between employees and senior management	Relationship with immediate supervisor, opportunities to use skills/abilities
	71%	68%	63%	61%	58%
11 to 15 years	Job security	Benefits	Compensation/pay	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Feeling safe in the work environment
	65%	63%	61%	56%	54%
16 years or more	Benefits	Job security	Compensation/pay	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Feeling safe in the work environment
	58%	57%	53%	49%	47%

Note: Table represents those who answered “very important.” Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = “very unimportant” and 4 = “very important.”
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 11 Top Five Very Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Employee Age

Age	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
35 and younger	Compensation/pay	Benefits	Job security, relationship with immediate supervisor	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Communication between employees and senior management
	61%	60%	58%	55%	54%
36 to 55	Job security	Benefits	Compensation/pay	Opportunities to use skills/abilities, feeling safe in the work environment	Management recognition of employee job performance
	67%	62%	59%	54%	53%
56 and older	Job security, feeling safe in the work environment	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Benefits, the work itself	Communication between employees and senior management	Compensation, management recognition of employee job performance
	60%	56%	53%	50%	49%

Note: Table represents those who answered "very important." Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM

Table 12 Top Five Very Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Employee Gender

Gender	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Male	Job security	Benefits	Compensation/pay	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Recognition by management
	59%	57%	56%	53%	50%
Female	Job security	Benefits	Feeling safe in the work environment	Compensation/pay	Opportunities to use skills/abilities, relationship with immediate supervisor
	66%	62%	61%	58%	57%

Note: Table represents those who answered "very important." Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."
 Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Table 13 Top Five Very Important Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Organization Staff Size (Employees and HR Professionals)

Staff Size of Organization	Respondents	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Small (1-99 employees)	Employees	Compensation/pay	Job security	Management recognition of employee job performance	Opportunities to use skills/abilities, the work itself	Feeling safe in the work environment
	%	53%	52%	49%	48%	47%
	HR Professionals	Communication between employees and senior management	Benefits	Relationship with immediate supervisor	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Management recognition of employee job performance
	%	76%	69%	66%	64%	60%
Medium (100-499 employees)	Employees	Job security	Benefits	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Feeling safe in the work environment, compensation/pay	Communication between employees and senior management, relationship with immediate supervisor
	%	74%	72%	61%	60%	57%
	HR Professionals	Job security	Benefits Communication between employees and senior management	Relationship with immediate supervisor	Communication between employees and senior management	Management recognition of employee job performance
	%	73%	69%	68%	66%	58%
Large (500 and more employees)	Employees	Job security	Benefits	Compensation/pay	Feeling safe in the work environment	Opportunities to use skills/abilities
	%	67%	65%	60%	58%	57%
	HR Professionals	Relationship with immediate supervisor	Job security	Benefits	Opportunities to use skills/abilities	Management recognition of employee job performance,
	%	77%	75%	68%	65%	63%

Note: Table represents those who answered "very important." Percentages are based on a scale where 1 = "very unimportant" and 4 = "very important."

Source: 2009 Employee Job Satisfaction: A survey report by SHRM



Endnotes

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- ⁵ These data are not depicted in a table or figure.
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- ¹⁶ These data are not depicted in a table or figure.
- ¹⁷ These data are not depicted in a table or figure.
- ¹⁸ These data are not depicted in a table or figure.
- ¹⁹ These data are not depicted in a table or figure.
- ²⁰ Society for Human Resource Management. (2009). *SHRM survey brief: The employee point of view: The economic downturn*. Retrieved from www.shrm.org/surveys.
- ²¹ This survey instrument is available upon request by contacting the SHRM Survey Program at surveys@shrm.org or by phone at 703-535-6301.
- ²² Compared with the general SHRM membership, more HR professionals in the sample were from medium-staff-sized organizations and fewer from large-staff-sized organizations. HR professionals in this sample were more likely to be from the services (profit) and education/educational services industries.



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Project leaders: Justina Victor, survey research analyst

Project contributors: Nancy R. Lockwood, M.A., SPHR, GPHR, manager, HR Content Program
Evren Esen, manager, SHRM Survey Research Center
Steve Williams, Ph.D., SPHR, director, SHRM Research

External contributors: **SHRM Corporate Social Responsibility Panel**
Teresa A. Bailey
Gerlinde Herrmann, CHRP
Tareyce Scoggin-Aranda, SPHR

SHRM Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel
Marie LaMarche, MBA, SPHR
Ken Pinnock, SPHR, GPHR
Darren Reed, PHRA, PHR
Beverly A. Widger, SPHR

Editor: Katya Scanlan, copy editor

Design: Terry Biddle, graphic designer

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