

Everything DiSC® Pulse: What Do Employees *Really* Want?

Take satisfaction in a job well done. Work is its own reward. Do what you love and the money will follow. You've heard them all and probably have even said a few. So what do you all of these sayings have in common? They're all trying to get at compensation. And the general idea is this: where your job is concerned, you can and should find satisfaction internally. Which is great, but it doesn't take into account the little things in modern life, like health care, retirement, and compensation.

Research has shown that employee compensation, whether traditional compensation and benefits or more intrinsic rewards, are vitally important to employee satisfaction. Within our survey of more than 6,000 recent training participants, we examined 1,609 (self-described) professionals. We asked them what types of compensation were present in their current job (i.e. good pay, training opportunities) and what types of compensation would make their current job more satisfying (i.e. better pay, training opportunities).

When asked what benefit or compensation would greatly increase their job satisfaction, not surprisingly better pay was by far number one. However, the benefits that were ranked second through sixth suggested that professionals also value growth. These benefits include (in order):

- More opportunities for advancement
- More recognition for my contributions
- More interesting work
- More opportunities to learn new skills
- More training opportunities

So what, if anything, changes when we ask about actual, current job satisfaction? A lot, actually. In terms of predicting actual satisfaction, good pay ranked much lower on the list: 15th overall. More money may increase satisfaction in other parts of their lives, but it's far from being the most important thing in determining job satisfaction. Benefits and intrinsic rewards that were more related to satisfaction than good pay include:

- A chance to have my opinions heard and considered
- A position that allows me to do interesting work
- A pleasant work environment
- Opportunities to use my skills
- Recognition from my manager or organization
- Opportunities to be creative
- A position that will allow me to work with people I like
- Procedures and policies that make sense
- Opportunities for advancement
- The opportunity to learn new skills
- Many training opportunities
- A sense that my job is secure
- Clear expectations of my work



Here, the elements that are most related to actual satisfaction involve having a chance to contribute: a chance to have opinions heard and considered, opportunities to use my skills, recognition, a chance to make a meaningful contribution. Organizations and managers can start to create a more satisfied workforce by helping people find meaning in their work.

Money is important — we're not trying to downplay that — but in tough economic times, business leaders should remember that psychic rewards are also extremely valuable. Or as author Joseph Conrad put it, "I don't like work...but I like what is in the work."

About the authors

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