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5 Key Factors to Finding Job Satisfaction

By Emily Holland

8-10 minutes

Why do some people get excited to go to work while others loathe Monday mornings? Understandably, we all need to make a living but it seems as though some are enjoying the process more than others.

Fortunately, job satisfaction is dependent on a variety of factors, many of which are within your control. With a little effort, you can either find the job that is best suited to meet your individual needs or learn to find fulfillment in the one you already have.

According to a [recent survey](#) conducted by The Conference Board, 48.3 percent of workers in the U.S. are satisfied with their jobs, a slight increase from the year before. This increase can be attributed to greater job security and satisfaction with regards to other career development areas.

While the percentage of satisfied workers has steadily increased since its lowest point in 2010, when only 42.6 percent of workers reported satisfaction, it is considerably lower than it was 30 years ago. In 1987, [61.1 percent](#) of people were satisfied with their jobs with that number dropping only slightly in the mid-90s.

Unemployment, disappointing wages, and other economic factors

have all contributed to job dissatisfaction, which may help explain the lower survey numbers we are seeing now in comparison to the late 80s.

The survey suggests [age and income](#) may play also important roles in job satisfaction. In 2014, employees between the ages 35 to 44 reported the highest job satisfaction at 50.3 percent. Workers under 25 years of age were least satisfied at 34.1 percent, a drop in comparison to prerecession years (2005 to 2007) when 44.3 percent reported feeling satisfied.

Additionally, workers who earned more than \$125,000 were most satisfied at 61.6 percent while 41.8 percent of those who made less than \$15,000 reported job satisfaction. Interestingly, those who earned between \$15,000- \$25,000 reported a lower satisfaction rate (36.3 percent) than those who earned less than \$15,000.

Job satisfaction (or a lack thereof) influences not only employees but also the organizations they feel dissatisfied with. Dissatisfied workers [experience](#) lower productivity in the workplace, poorer performance, more job stress, and higher turnover rates. Moreover, low job satisfaction can result in low morale and low loyalty to the company itself, according to an [article published](#) in the *International Journal of Learning and Development*.

Two-Factor Theory

So how can you experience more job satisfaction? It may be found in a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic job satisfaction is a result of feeling content with the work itself and the responsibilities that go along with it. Extrinsic job satisfaction has more to do with the work conditions such as salary, job security,

and your relationships with coworkers and supervisors.

A [2012 study](#) conducted in Heidelberg, Germany, examined the effects that intrinsic and extrinsic components had on job satisfaction for dentists. They found that while both were essential, intrinsic motivating factors, such as being able to utilize one's skill set, had the most positive impact on job satisfaction. Additionally, the [results of a survey](#) done by the *Journal of Healthcare Management* among rehabilitation professionals showed that professional growth and having personal values in line with company values outweighed pay when it comes to job satisfaction.

5 Key Factors to Job Satisfaction

1. Engagement. When you are engaged in your work, you are present, focused, and productive. However, according to a [2015 Gallup poll](#), 51 percent of workers reported not being engaged at work, many of which were millennials.

One reason you may not be engaging in your work is because you may not feel you are utilizing your skills and abilities to your fullest potential. Undoubtedly, people are naturally more engaged in work that puts their talents to good use. But [experts](#) have taken notice of a misconception: to truly enjoy work and become fully engaged, you have to make a drastic career change, giving everything up for a bigger purpose.

The truth is, your talents can be utilized in any job you find yourself in. Sure, you may be better suited for some jobs more than others but by engaging fully in work and recognizing how your individual strengths positively impact others, you can bring meaning and purpose to any role.

One way to find meaning in the work you do, even if it isn't your dream job, is to have a clear understanding of the correlation between your work and the company's goals. Being aware of how your job is directly supporting a larger outcome could encourage you to stay engaged and remain motivated.

2. Respect, praise, and appreciation. Regardless of the job, you want to feel respected in the workplace as well as appreciated for the work you do. Employees are [more satisfied](#) in their positions when they feel respected and are praised for a job well done, even if it's a simple thank you from a company manager. Supervisors are often vocal when an employee makes a mistake or something is needed of them but making the same effort to congratulate or voice appreciation can have a positive influence on worker's satisfaction.

[According](#) to the 2016 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), close to half of the employees surveyed rated supervisor's respect for their ideas as "very important" to job satisfaction. The SHRM emphasizes constructive feedback and open communication in the workplace as one way to encourage respect amongst employers and employees.

In short, working a job where you feel disrespected, undervalued, and underappreciated will likely cause you to feel dissatisfied with your work.

3. Fair compensation. The importance employees place on pay as a contributing factor to job satisfaction appears to be on the rise, [according](#) to the 2016 survey conducted by the SHRM. Workers currently rank pay as the second most important factor compared to

the fourth most important factor the year prior. Benefits rank as the third most important factor with 60 percent rating them as crucial to job satisfaction. In essence, employees want to be compensated for their worth and are likely to look for work elsewhere if they're not.

But as important as compensation appears to be to employees, many would choose recognition and praise from a higher-up over cash. In a [survey conducted by the company, BambooHR](#), one-third of workers said they would rather have an executive send a company-wide email praising their accomplishments than receive a \$500 bonus that went unpublicized.

4. Motivation. Understanding your motivation behind the job you either already have or the job you want may help increase job satisfaction as well. Asking yourself the following questions:

- What motivated me to accept this job in the first place?
- What inspires me to do the work I do?
- What inspires me to want to be a [insert job aspiration]?

Answers to these questions can help determine where you are lacking satisfaction so that you can then do something about it, whether that means switching jobs or [changing your approach](#) to your current one.

5. Life satisfaction. Perhaps unsurprisingly, people who are unhappy in life are less likely to find satisfying work.

A [2010 meta-analysis](#) published in *British Psychology Society* reviewed 223 studies that examined the link between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (subjective well-being). The psychologists concluded that people who are predisposed to be

happy and satisfied in life in general are more likely to be happy and satisfied in their work. They note that individuals who are generally unhappy in life and seek satisfaction in their work likely will not find it.

Perhaps nurturing yourself and enhancing your well-being will naturally lead you to satisfaction within a working environment.

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