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OPINION RESEARCH • STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

June 12, 2008

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Bob Moore & Hans Kaiser  
RE: U.S. Voters and Workplace Issues

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Health insurance costs are the leading workplace issue concern for U.S. workers today, and respondents are more likely to be concerned about these costs today than they were a year ago. Despite this increased level of concern, another recent national study suggests that employers are underestimating the importance of health insurance benefits when it comes to worker loyalty. Specifically, 60% of employers consider health benefits very important when it comes to employee loyalty, compared to 81% of employees who do.<sup>1</sup>

Our national survey also explored the reasons that workers have left jobs in the past 10 years and what would motivate them to leave their current positions. At the top of both lists is better pay and a better career path, though pay is a bigger motivator for future job changes than career path.

As we reported a year ago in our in-depth study of employee outlook and retention factors, some experts are projecting that the retiring baby boomers and other changes in employment trends will leave a gap in qualified workers as large as 35 million by 2030.<sup>2</sup> If even a percentage of this projection is accurate, the importance of attracting and retaining qualified employees will increase in the coming years, and understanding what concerns and motivates workers will play an important role in developing effective retention programs. Following are the details.

**Health Insurance Costs are Fastest Growing Workplace Issue Concern**

When it comes to workplace issues, U.S. voters are most concerned about an increase in health insurance costs (41%), which represents a significant shift since our February 2007 survey. Voters today are also concerned about job layoffs or job loss (21%) or a cut in pay or lack of pay increase (10%).

The following table compares results from 2007 and 2008:

### Workplace Issue Concerns

“Which of the following workplace issues are you most concerned about personally?”

Workplace Issue Concerns	Feb 2007	Apr 2008	+/-
Increase in health insurance costs	27%	41%	<b>+14%</b>
Job layoff or job loss	18%	21%	+3%
Cut in pay or lack of pay increase	18%	10%	<b>-8%</b>
Reduction in company contribution to retirement program	10%	6%	-4%
Lack of career path or career opportunity	12%	5%	<b>-7%</b>
Reduction in work hours	4%	2%	-2%

There are many different reactions among population subgroups. For example, women age 50 and older are more likely to be concerned about health insurance costs than men and younger women. By party, “soft” Republicans or Democrats (i.e. they vote for more Republicans or more Democrats than the other party, but not all the time), are more likely to be concerned about health insurance costs than “hard core” Republicans and Democrats or Independents. More education also correlates with greater concern about health insurance costs. Worker tenure is a factor in concerns, with longer term workers (5+ years on the job) being more concerned about health insurance costs than newer workers. One reason for this difference is newer workers tend to be slightly more concerned than longer term workers about other issues related to job stability, such as job layoffs and pay cuts. Voters in all subgroups cite health insurance costs as their leading concern, with one exception: by ethnicity, non-Caucasian voters are equally concerned about job layoff or loss as they are about health insurance costs. The following table illustrates these findings:

### Workplace Issue Concerns: *Key Subgroups*

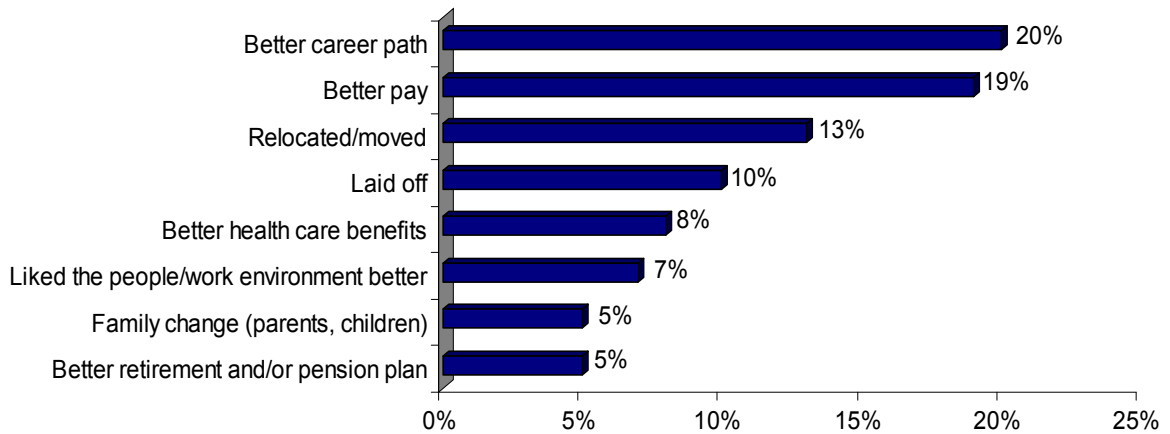
	Increase in health insurance costs	Job layoff/ loss	Cut in pay/lack of pay increase
<b>Gender/Age</b>			
Women 18-49	37%	27%	14%
Women 50+	<b>51%</b>	20%	6%
Men	37%	19%	12%
<b>Party/Voting Preferences</b>			
Mostly Republicans	36%	19%	9%
More Republicans than Democrats	<b>55%</b>	14%	8%
Independent	41%	18%	12%
More Democrats than Republicans	<b>54%</b>	15%	11%
Mostly Democrats	38%	<b>28%</b>	11%
<b>Education</b>			
12 years or less	34%	<b>28%</b>	11%
13-15 years	38%	18%	10%
16 years	<b>45%</b>	21%	11%
17 years or more	<b>52%</b>	14%	11%
<b>Worker Tenure</b>			
4 years or less	36%	25%	14%
5-9 years	<b>46%</b>	18%	8%
10-14 years	<b>43%</b>	21%	17%
15 years or more	<b>49%</b>	15%	13%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Caucasian	<b>45%</b>	20%	10%
Non-Caucasian	29%	27%	12%

### Why Have Employees Left Their Jobs in the Past?

When we asked employed voters who have worked for their current employers for less than 10 years why they left their last job, two leading reasons surfaced: better career path (20%) or better pay (19%). Other reasons for leaving a job include relocation (13%), layoffs (10%), better health care benefits (8%), liked the people/better work environment (7%), family change, such as children or taking care of parents (5%), or new job had better retirement or pension plan (5%). Nothing else was mentioned by more than 2%.

### Reasons for Leaving Last Job

“Which of the following best describes why you left the job with your last employer?” (Leading responses)

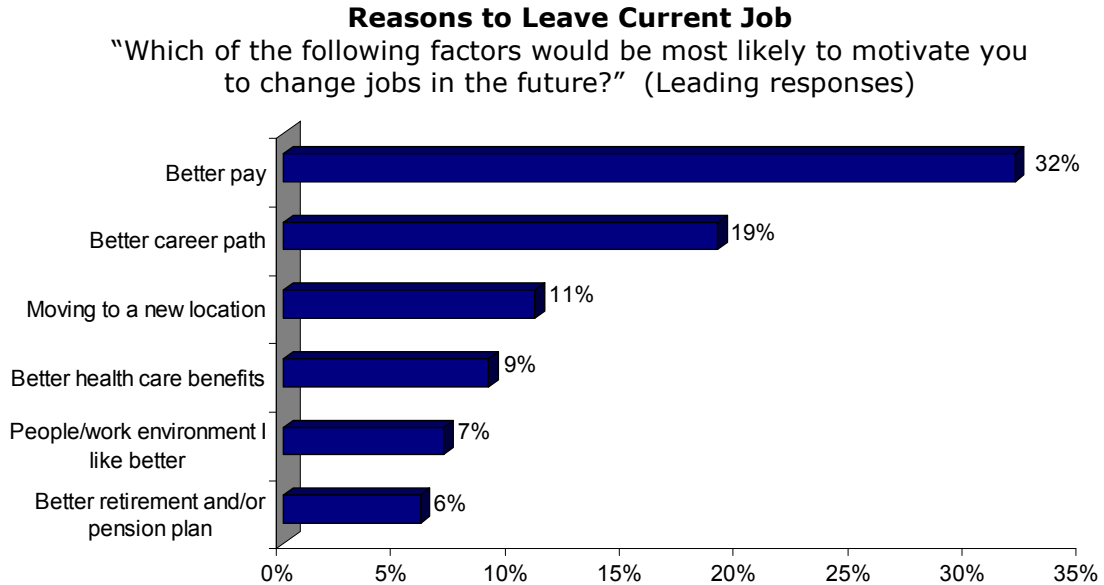


When combining the numerous responses provided into broader categories, we find three overriding themes emerge. First, 66% of employed voters say they left their last job based on a choice to improve their job situation (career path, better pay and benefits), while 19% left due to changes in their circumstances (i.e. relocation, family changes) and 12% gave reasons that were not their choice to leave (layoffs, firing, company went out of business, etc.). Clearly, a majority of employees were willing to change their job to meet their own personal objectives, which again, underscores the importance of employers considering what factors generate employee loyalty.

Looking at the data another way, among employees who left their job to improve their situation, 32% left for financial benefits, and 33% left for non-financial benefits. This suggests that money, while important, is only half of the equation when employees consider other opportunities.

### Why Would Employees Leave Their Jobs in the Future?

Regardless of past reasons for leaving, employees are most likely to say they will leave their jobs in the future for better pay (32%), followed by better career path (19%), if they had to move to a new location (11%), better health care benefits (9%), people/work environment they like better (7%), or better retirement and/or pension plan (6%).



Not surprisingly, lower income employees are more motivated by pay than higher income employees. Education also drives concerns - workers with post graduate education are equally interested in pay and career path, while those with less education are primarily motivated by better pay. While better pay is a motivating reason to leave a job for workers of all tenures, better career path/opportunity is more motivating for workers with 0-9 years of experience than workers with 10 years or more at their current job. Further, workers who have been at their current job for 15 or more years register double digit interest in leaving their current job for better health care benefits, moving to a new location or a better work environment.

## Reasons to Leave Current Job: Key Subgroups

	Better pay	Better career path
<b>All</b>	32%	19%
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Less than \$50,000 a year	<b>41%</b>	9%
\$50,000 or more	26%	25%
<b>Education</b>		
12 years or less	35%	14%
13-15 years	33%	9%
16 years	32%	24%
17 years or more	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Worker Tenure</b>		
4 years or less	38%	<b>25%</b>
5-9 years	28%	<b>25%</b>
10-14 years	32%	14%
15 years or more	24%	9%

Please feel free to call or email with questions or to obtain a copy of our 2007 report.

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*These data are from a telephone survey conducted by Moore Information, Inc. April 23-27, 2008 among a representative sample of 800 voters nationwide. The potential sampling error is plus or minus 3% at the 95% confidence level.*

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<sup>1</sup> MetLife Study of Employee Benefits, Q3 2007.

<sup>2</sup> National Viewpoints: Employee Outlook and Leading Factors in Employee Retention, Moore Information 2007.