



# MOORE INFORMATION

OPINION RESEARCH • STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

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TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Bob Moore and Hans Kaiser  
RE: Issues in the Workplace

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## **What Do Workers Want? *Compensation is Important, but so is Teamwork***

Results of a recent Moore Information survey of American workers show a diverse workforce with surprisingly similar attitudes about what they feel are important reasons to stay at their job ... and it isn't just about the money.

The average worker in America today has been employed at their current place of work for a median of four years. While this figure by itself may not seem all that interesting, when you look at the trend over the 15-year period between 1991 and 2006, the median length of continuous employment with a single employer has dropped from four and a half years, to four years.<sup>1</sup> And, if your business is manufacturing, odds are your employee retention rate has declined at an even faster pace, since just the start of this decade. While other industries may not have experienced as significant a decline, the economics of retaining good employees is an undeniable and a legitimate concern for all employers. Our recent survey offers some ideas as to what motivates workers to stay with their current employers.

To be sure, good pay is the most important thing workers are looking for in a job, with 78% saying it is quite important to them. And when it comes to other compensation, health care benefits (73% important) and retirement plans (69% important) are also near the top of the list. But in addition to pay and benefits, we also find that a significant share of employees today say that teamwork and flexibility are a large part of what they are looking for in their job. In fact, 76% of all workers said that "the people or team I work with" is an important part of why they stay at their current job and 71% say that "flexibility in their job" is an important part of why they are there.

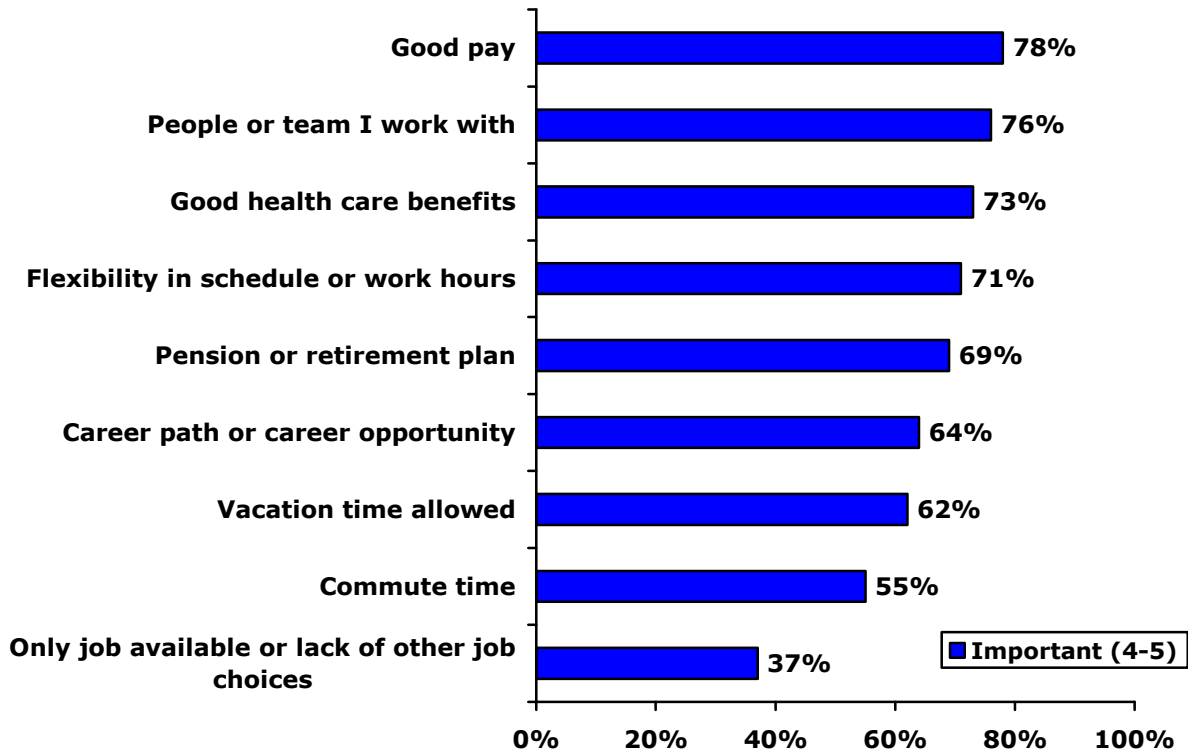
The following chart illustrates the level of importance workers assigned to each of nine different factors that might be considered in their decision to stay in their current job.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2006

### Employment Retention Factors (5-Point Scale)

*"I'd like to ask you some questions about comparing your current job to other job opportunities. Using a five-point scale, where five is very important and one is not important at all, what number between five and one best represents how important each of the following factors is in your choice to stay at your current job?"*



While all workers are concerned about good pay, there are some differences on each of the other elements, and while not terribly surprising, they are nonetheless intriguing. It is also interesting to see where there are no differences in opinions.

For instance, given the current political climate in which both political parties seem light years apart, some may find it surprising that there is very little difference in how Republicans and Democrats view workplace issues. There are some slight differences; Democrats are somewhat more likely to look for retirement plans and health care coverage, and a little more concerned that their current job is the only one available, but on all the other workplace issues, the views of both Republicans and Democrats are remarkably similar. Furthermore, despite the competitive back and forth between Democrats and Republicans on the political front, when it comes to the workforce they are both more likely than Independents to think teamwork is an important reason to stay at their job.

On a somewhat sobering note, Caucasians are less likely than non-Caucasians to be concerned about a lack of job opportunities. Today, more than half of African Americans (53%) say that a "lack of job opportunities" is an important reason why they stay at their current job, while just one-in-three Caucasians (34%) feel that way. This higher level of concern about job opportunities among minority workers could be a contributing factor in importance assigned to vacation time. Fully 77% of African Americans and all non-Caucasians say vacation time is important, versus 58% of Caucasian workers.

Flexibility at the workplace appears to be most important to women and younger voters. Workers with children at home are slightly more likely to be concerned about flexibility, but not much outside the margin of error. On a similar issue, commute times are most important to workers in the Northeast (64%), women (61%) and workers with a high school degree or less education (62%).

There are other issues on which we find deviations between workers with various levels of education. For example, career path opportunities are more important to post graduates than to those with fewer years of education. Interestingly, post grads are less concerned with commuting issues than those with lower educational attainment. Another interesting difference of opinion between employees with various levels of education is the percentage reporting that they stay in a job because it is the only job available – workers without a college degree are considerably more likely to say this is an important factor in their employment status than those with a college education. Likewise, income level also plays a role in an employee's decision to stay in a job. We found workers earning less than \$30,000 annually are more likely than those in higher income brackets to say they are in their job because of a lack of other available job opportunities. This was the most significant difference in reactions to these nine workplace issues by income level.

In shaping the workplace to maintain a committed and contented group of employees, proper compensation is clearly important, whether it is pay or health benefits or retirement plans. But compensation by itself is not necessarily enough. A company which overlooks intangibles like teamwork and flexibility is depriving itself of an important motivational element and denying workers a perquisite they are clearly looking for, which could pay large dividends in employee retention rates.

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*These data are from a poll conducted among a representative sample of 593 employed adults, nationwide, by Moore Information, Inc. The potential sampling error is plus or minus 4% at the 95% confidence level. The interviews were conducted February 6-8, 2007.*

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