

Employees Dissatisfied with Company Perks

By Michael Laff

EVERY EMPLOYEE APPRECIATES A PAY RAISE, but they and their families also welcome free movie tickets.

Unfortunately, not enough employers are offering the kinds of small perks that keep staff morale high, according to a new global workplace survey conducted by Staffing.org.

A whopping 65 percent of employees said they were dissatisfied with the rewards offered by their employer. The responses indicate that employees are interested in more than just salary because the question referenced smaller benefits such as sporting event tickets, discount movie tickets, free lunches, or other recognition.

"It's not just compensation," says Nick Burkholder, founder of Staffing.org, which researches workplace issues. "The economy has turned around, but employees believe that not enough is getting back to them quickly enough."

According to the survey, employees' overall satisfaction with company benefits is low—only 3.5 percent of survey respondents reported being "very satisfied" with the benefits offered by their employers.

"I was struck by how important they are to people," Burkholder says. "People tell their friends, and their family members appreciate it."

He attributes the gap in employee rewards to the culture of fiscal restraint that accompanied the recent economic downturn. Many organizations determined that whatever was not essential had to be cut, which meant incidentals offered to staff. While most employees understood the need to cut back when times were tough, the climate is much different today.

"After the (technology) bubble burst, human resources executives were under incredible pressure to document value," Burkholder explains. "Now they're either forgetting to do it (offer rewards) or they're not reacting quickly enough."

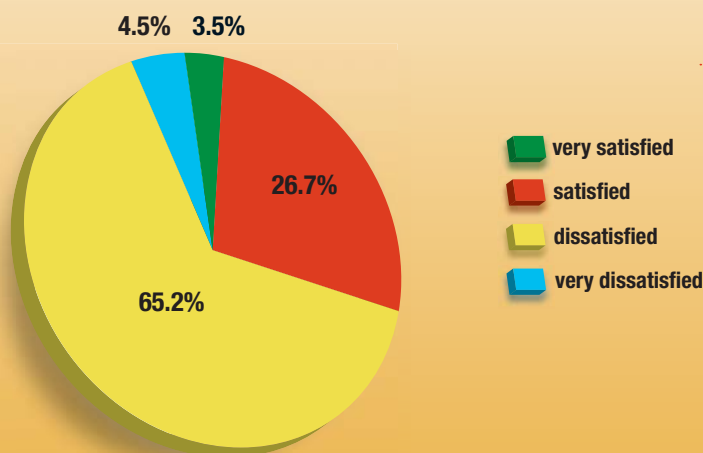
Not all of the benefits need to carry some monetary value. Burkholder notes that one survey participant was pleased to be able to drop off and pick up dry cleaning at work. Even though she was responsible for the cost, she welcomed the convenience.

The BIG Number...



Of employees are dissatisfied with perks offered by their employer.

Respondents were asked to rate their current benefits package. The results are similar to the compensation satisfaction levels.



Source: Staffing.org

At the same time, Burkholder says that some large companies that traditionally gave generous rewards for simple tasks, such as donating blood, have cut back.

The question about benefits was part of a larger Staffing.org survey, the *Recruiting Metrics Performance and Benchmark Report* that focused heavily on the experiences of job holders and job seekers. It asked them for impressions about their managers, future growth opportunities, and the possibility that they will seek another job.

Michael Laff is an associate editor for *T+D*; mlaff@astd.org.