

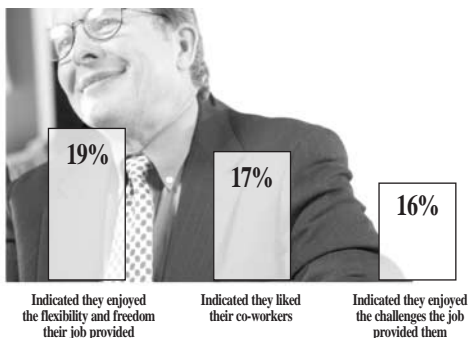
Poll STATION

With Linda Banister



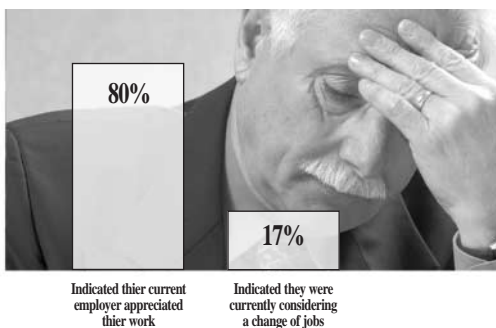
People spend a considerable amount of their life working. For many, work consumes more time than any other single activity. In fact, for some people, work plays an important role in shaping their identities. This month we asked Edmontonians about their work and career plans.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR JOB?



To start, survey participants were asked if they were currently working. Approximately two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents indicated they were. Interestingly, 69 percent of working respondents indicated they were working in their chosen field. When asked what they liked about their current job, a variety of answers were provided. Nineteen percent liked the flexibility and freedom of their jobs. Seventeen percent said they liked their co-workers, while 16 percent liked the challenge their work provided.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING A CHANGE OR SKILLS UPGRADING?



The majority (80 percent) of working respondents said that their current employer appreciates their work. Perhaps not surprisingly, only 17 percent of those currently working are considering changing jobs. Of those considering a change for something other than money, the most commonly cited reason was finding something more interesting (27 percent), followed by wanting more flexibility (nine percent), and seeking different co-workers (nine percent).

Next, respondents were asked whether they had plans to upgrade their skills to further their careers. About half (52 percent) said that they planned to upgrade their skills.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO TO RETAIN STAFF?

Finally, working survey respondents provided advice to help employers retain their workforce. Twenty-three percent said it is important to treat employees with respect. Similarly, 16 percent said that recognizing or showing appreciation for employees could help keep staff. Creating a positive work environment (13 percent), a fun workplace (11 percent), and offering benefits or a pension (11 percent) were other suggestions for retaining staff.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR LAST JOB?

The 36 percent of respondents who were not currently working were questioned further about the last job they held. Over two-thirds (69 percent) indicated their last job was in their chosen field. They also said they had liked the challenge of their job (17 percent). Others mentioned liking their job because of their co-workers (11 percent) or the wages (11 percent).

While three-quarters of respondents not currently working said their last employer appreciated their work, a third of them (31 percent) thought about changing jobs. The single greatest reason—they were looking for something more interesting (18 percent).

Respondents not currently working also offered advice on retaining employees. The most commonly stated method to retain employees (other than paying them well) is to treat people with respect (39 percent). Appreciating employees (28 percent) and offering benefits and pensions (14 percent) were other strategies suggested to retain staff.

The Poll Station surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓

Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research and Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. Want a question included in the Edmontonians Poll? Contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at lbanner@edmontonians.com. Visit www.banister.ab.ca.