



Job Satisfaction

2016 EDITION CHARTBOOK

**TIGHTENING LABOR MARKET
MEANS MORE OPPORTUNITY,
MORE SATISFACTION**



A smiling woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark top, is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is gesturing with her right hand, which is holding a blue pen. In the foreground, there are several large, out-of-focus yellow circles. In the background, a red chair and a white wall with a vent are visible.

Job Satisfaction

Tightening Labor Market Means
More Opportunity, More Satisfaction

2016 EDITION CHARTBOOK

by Michelle Kan, Gad Levanon, PhD, Allen Li, and Rebecca L. Ray, PhD

Top Three Findings

Examining annual job satisfaction continues to provide useful insights into US employees' sentiments about work and offers interesting supplementary insights into the national labor market and macroeconomic trends. The Conference Board survey results on job satisfaction are part of a long-running, comprehensive dataset, which allows for demographic and regional comparisons over time. In addition to overall job satisfaction, we look at 23 components that contribute to job satisfaction, including wages, job security, promotion policy, and health plan.

Three major findings from this year's results:

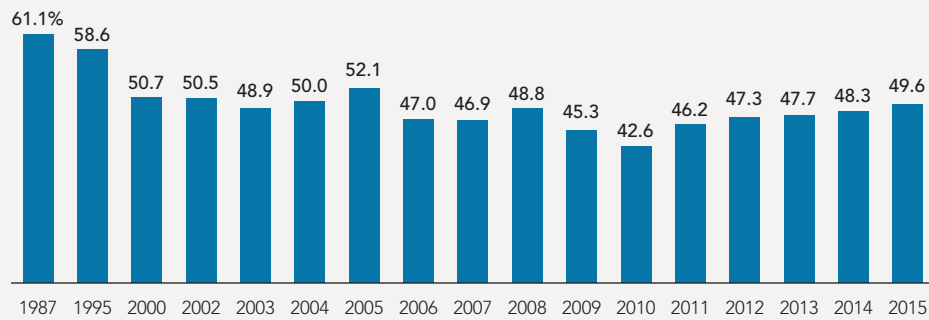
- 1 Job satisfaction has been increasing steadily every year since 2010** In the postrecession recovery period, job satisfaction has made incremental gains each year. In the most recent data, nearly half of US workers (49.6 percent) are satisfied with their jobs. Overall job satisfaction is at its highest since 2005.
- 2 Increasing job satisfaction is largely due to labor market improvements** The rise in workers' job satisfaction is directly influenced by labor market improvements, and the latest annual job satisfaction trends mirror overall gains in the labor market. The rapidly declining unemployment rate, combined with increased hiring, job openings, and quits, signals a seller's market, where the employer demand for workers is greater than the available supply.¹ Young workers especially are benefiting from this—their wage growth has accelerated in recent postrecession years, as has, not surprisingly, their satisfaction with their wages and job security.
- 3 Dissatisfaction is highest with job components that influence future pay/opportunities** US employees expressed the lowest satisfaction levels with aspects of work that are dependent on their evaluated performance. The five job components with the lowest satisfaction are promotion policy (23.8 percent), bonus plan (24.3 percent), performance review process (28.7 percent), educational/job training programs (29.8 percent), and recognition/acknowledgement (31.5 percent). Satisfaction with potential for future growth is also meager, at 33.8 percent.

The 23 charts in this chartbook together provide a glance at the state of US job satisfaction in 2015. The first eight charts are incorporated into this year's report *Job Satisfaction: 2016 Edition: Tightening Labor Market Means More Opportunity, More Satisfaction*, where we examine the relationship between rising job satisfaction and the improving labor market. We look closely at two economic components of job satisfaction, job security and wages, to determine their year-over-year patterns as well as their relation to employment indicators. The remaining 15 charts (pages 10-20) were not published in the report but were included in previous editions of *Job Satisfaction*. In order to maintain continuity for readers and others in the business community who follow the annual data, we are publishing them in this format.

¹ Gad Levanon and Abdul Erumban, *Help Wanted: What Looming Labor Shortages Mean for Your Business*, The Conference Board, Research Report 1601, April 2016 www.conference-board.org/labor-shortages2016.

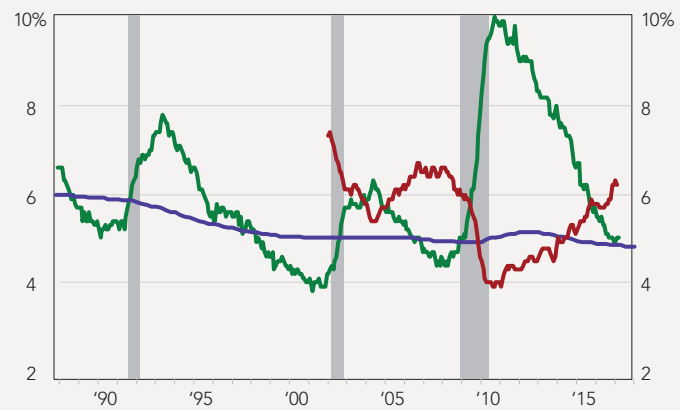
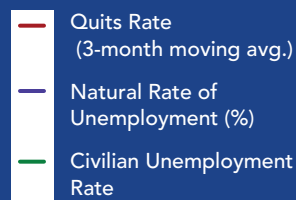
For the fifth year in a row, overall job satisfaction has increased

Overall satisfaction



Source: The Conference Board

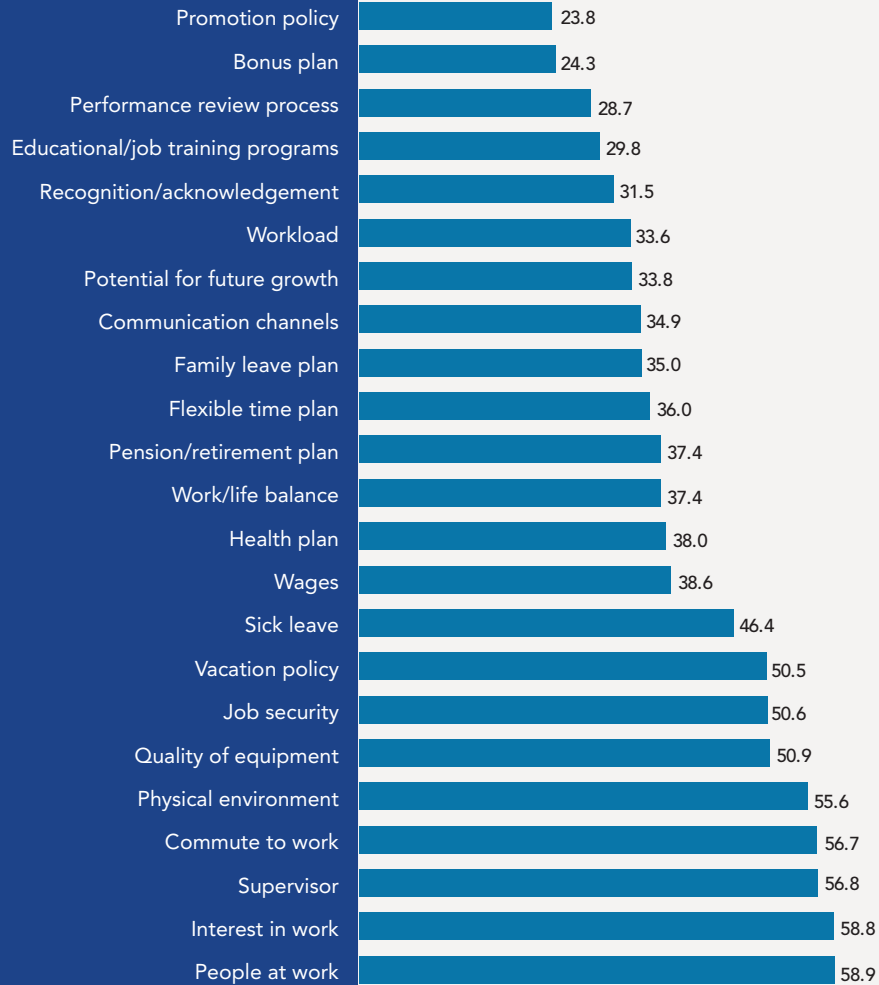
US quits rate goes up as unemployment declines (1985-2016)



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Congressional Budget Office; Haver Analytics

Employees are satisfied with work itself but not with their prospects for advancement

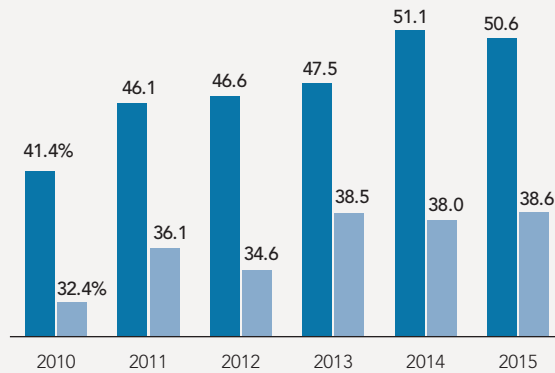
Satisfaction by job component



Source: The Conference Board

With lower layoff rates, employees are increasingly secure about keeping their jobs

■ Job security
■ Wages

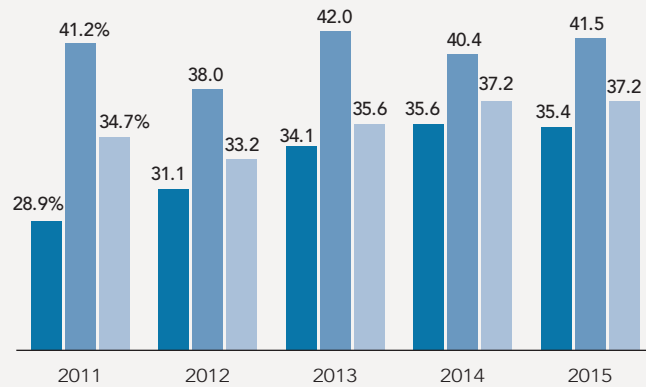


Source: The Conference Board

Since 2011, satisfaction from wages has increased most for workers under 35

■ Under 35
■ 35-54
■ 55 and over

Satisfaction from Wages by Age

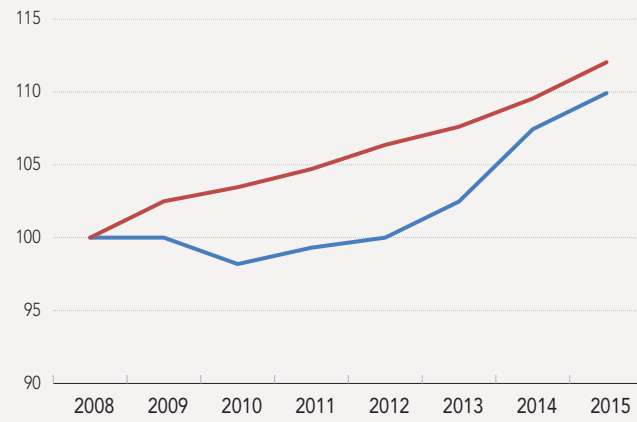


Source: The Conference Board

Wages of young adults are catching up



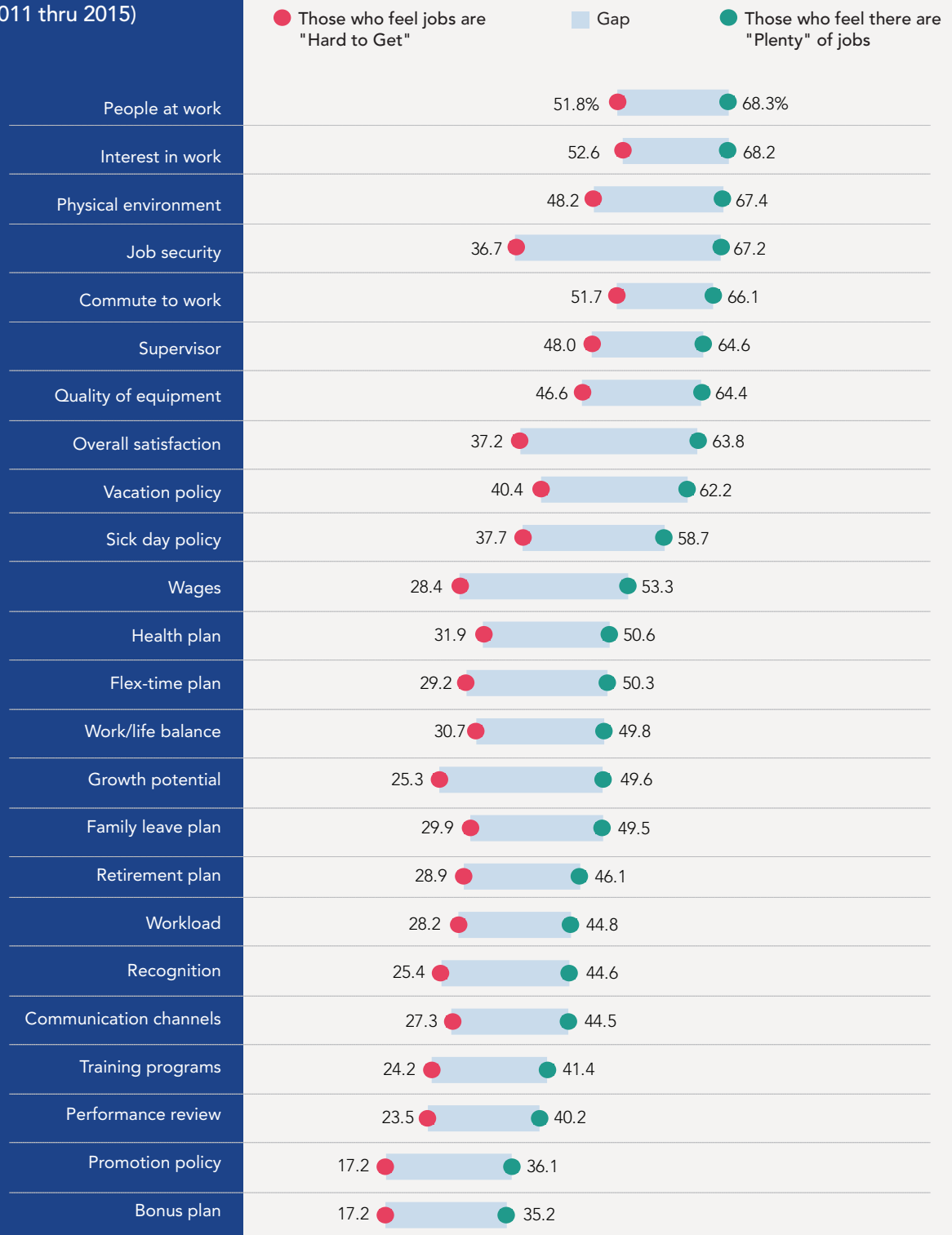
Median Weekly Earnings, 2008=100



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

People who think there are "plenty" of available jobs in their area tend to report higher satisfaction than people who think jobs are "hard to get"

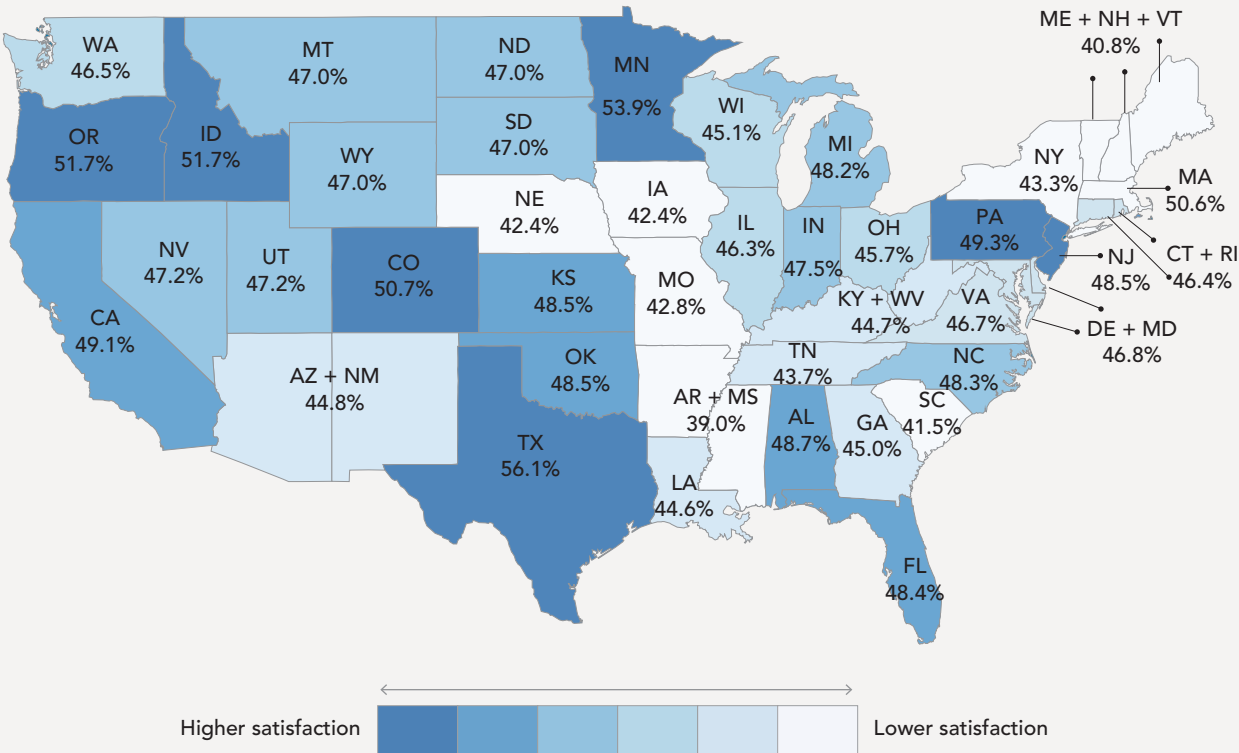
(Aggregated 2011 thru 2015)



Source: The Conference Board

Western US regions generally have higher job satisfaction

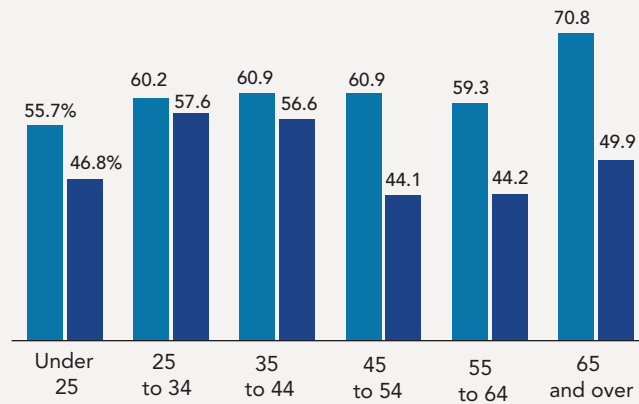
Map of Job Satisfaction by State 2011-2015



Source: The Conference Board

Age historical

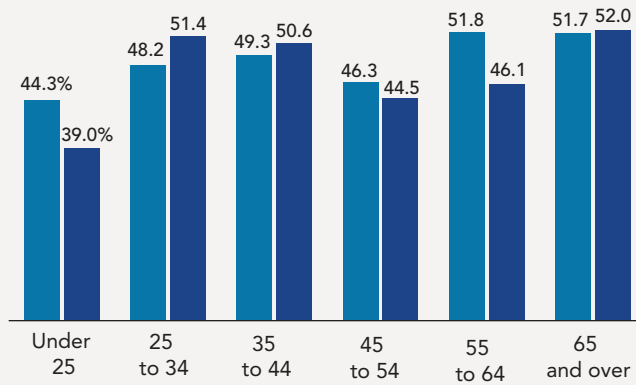
- 1987
- 2015



Source: The Conference Board

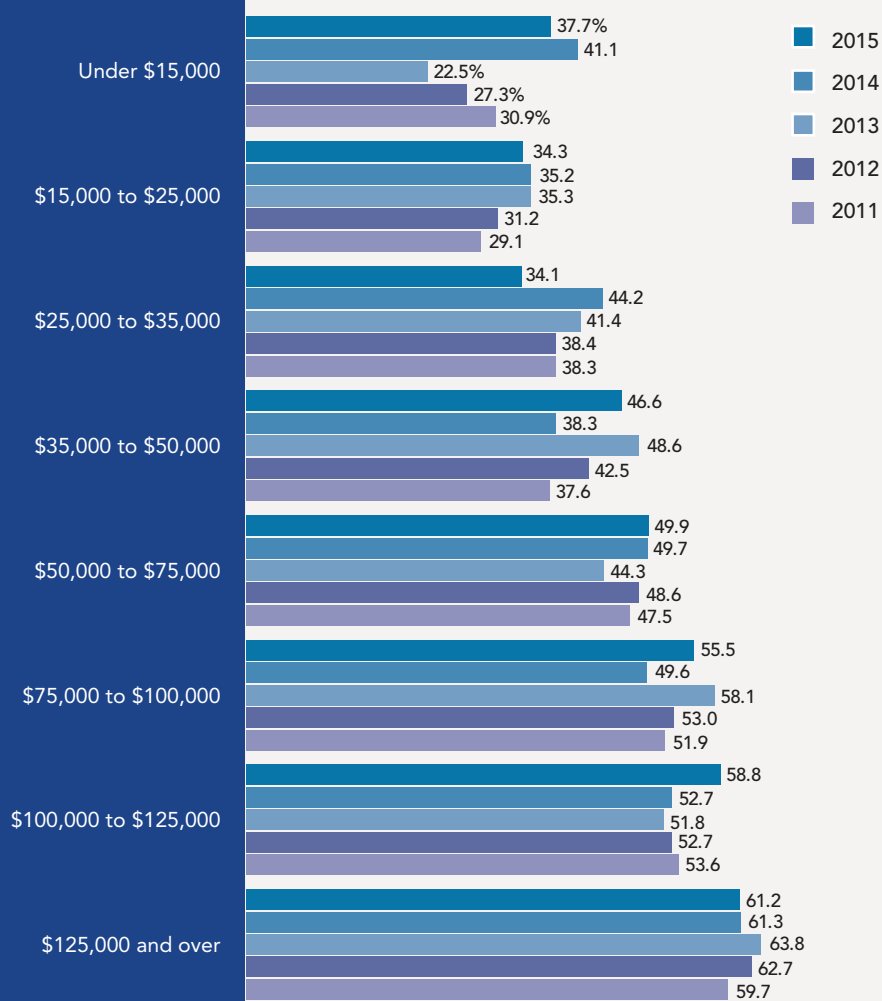
Age prerecession vs. postrecession

- Prerecession (2005-2007)
- Postrecession (2011-2015)



Source: The Conference Board

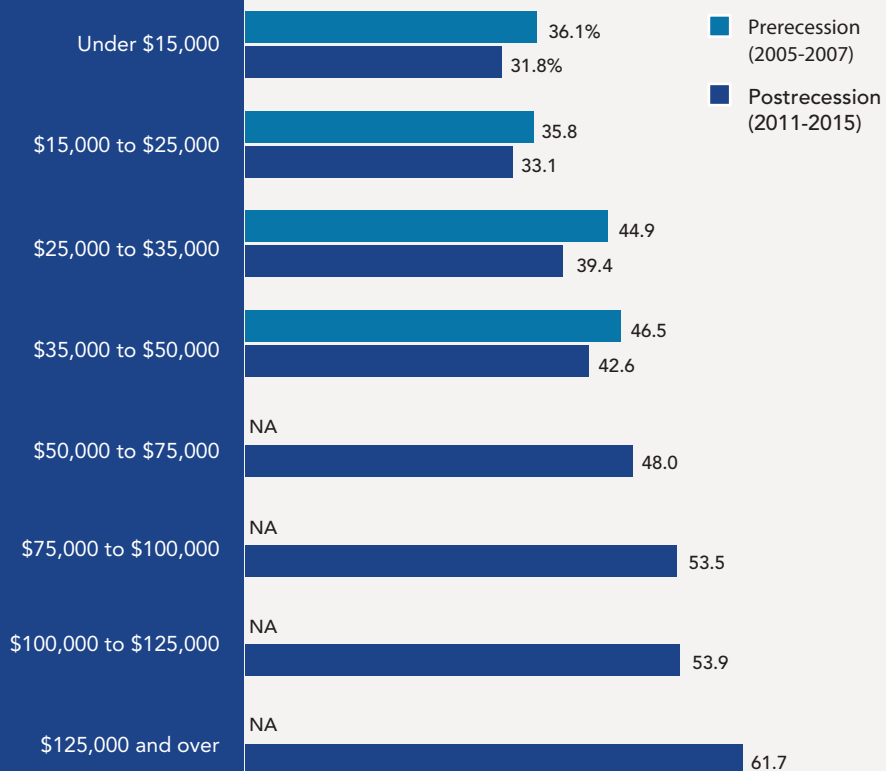
Income postrecession*



* Note: Average incomes increased significantly between 1987 and 2014, which has made job satisfaction for income groups less comparable over time than for other types of groups in this report.

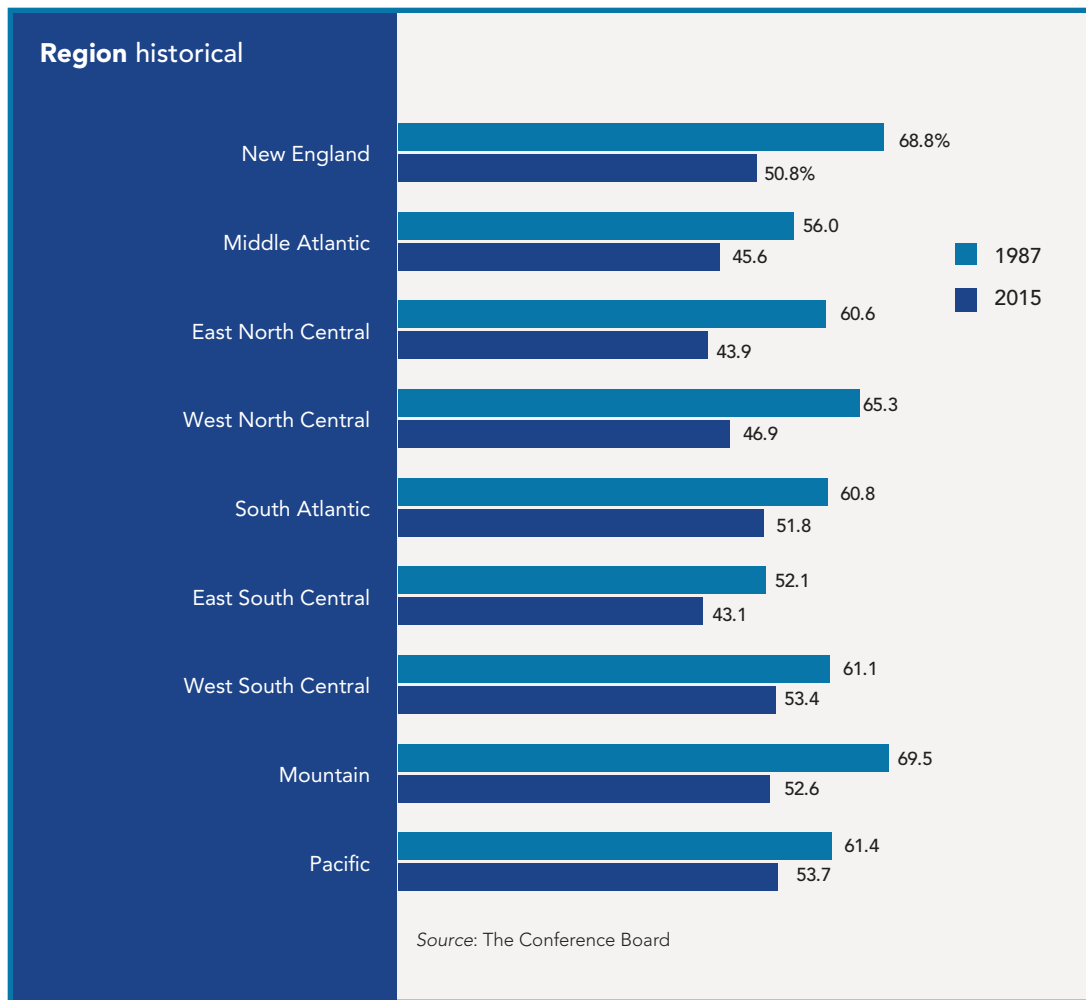
Source: The Conference Board

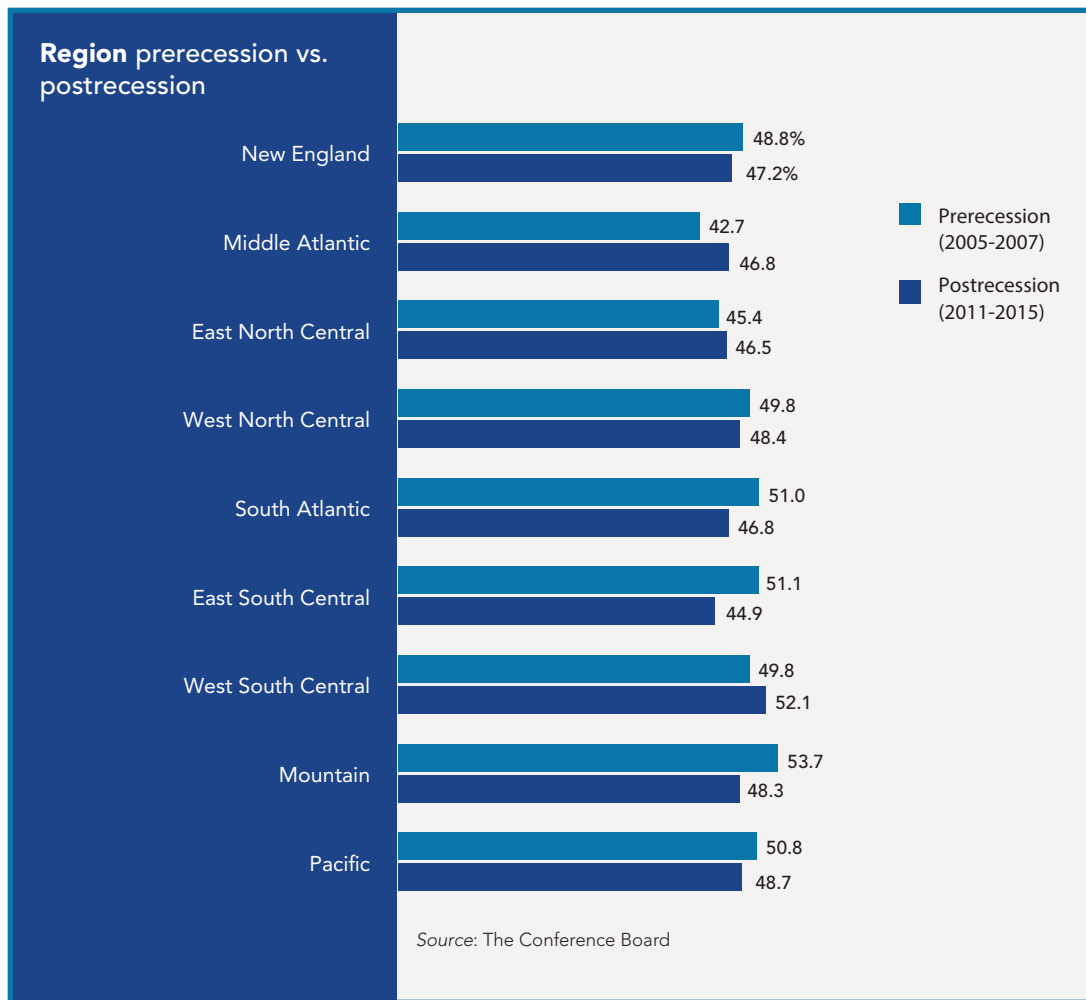
Income prerecession vs. postrecession



* Note: Average incomes increased significantly between 1987 and 2014, which has made job satisfaction for income groups less comparable over time than for other types of groups in this report.

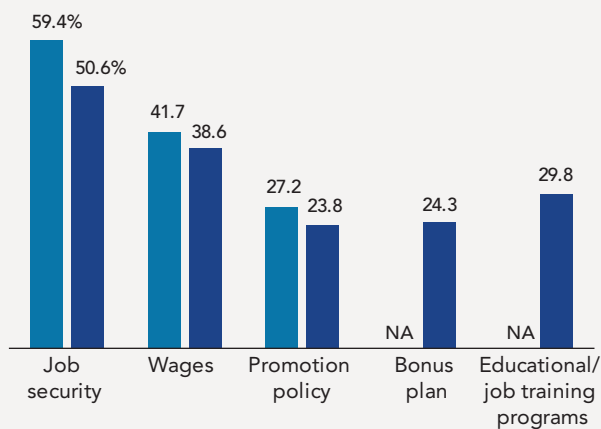
Source: The Conference Board





Economic historical

- 1987
- 2015

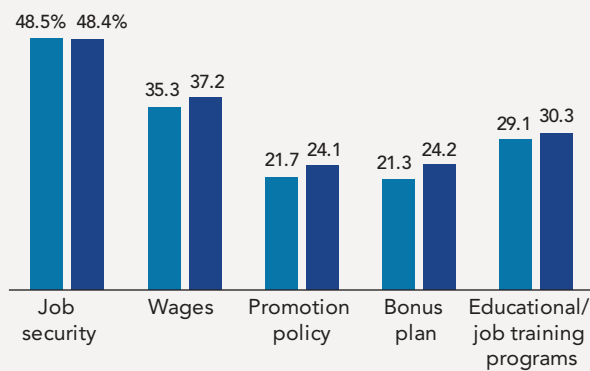


Note: NA indicates data collection for the job component did not occur until after 1987.

Source: The Conference Board

Economic prerecession vs. postrecession

- Prerecession (2005-2007)
- Postrecession (2011-2015)

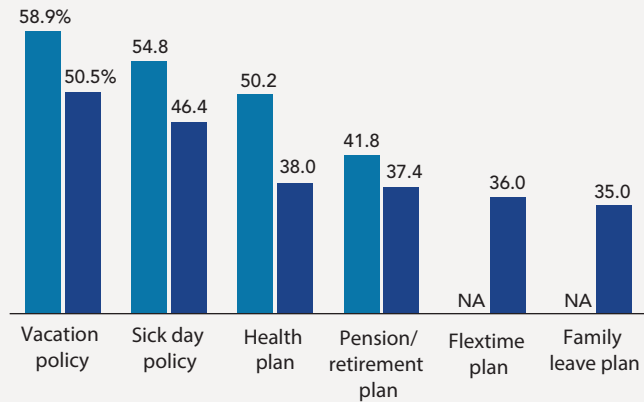


Note: NA indicates data collection for the job component did not occur until after 1987.

Source: The Conference Board

Fringe benefits historical

- 1987
- 2015

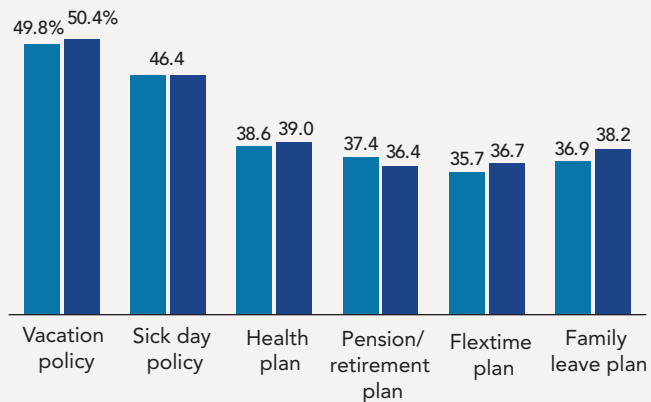


Note: NA indicates data collection for the job component did not occur until after 1987.

Source: The Conference Board

Fringe benefits prerecession vs. postrecession

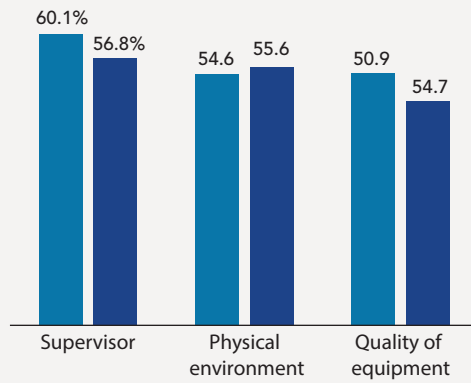
- Prerecession (2005-2007)
- Postrecession (2011-2015)



Source: The Conference Board

Work environment historical

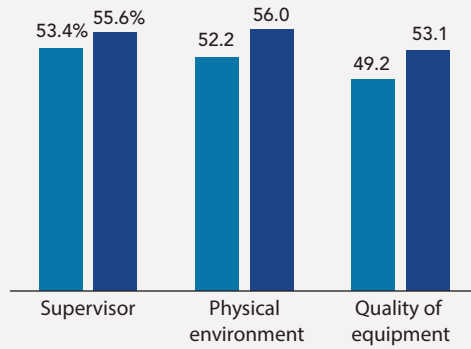
- 1987
- 2015



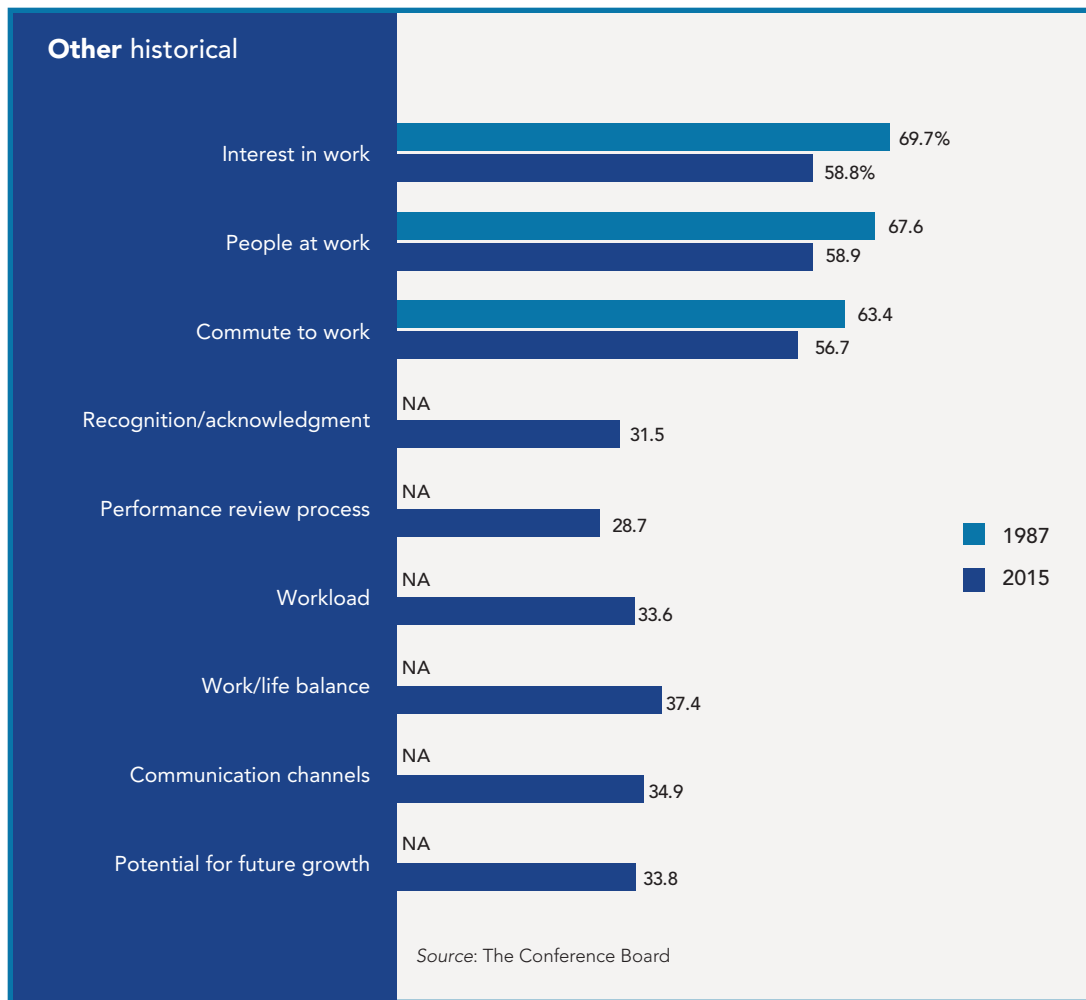
Source: The Conference Board

Work environment prerecession vs. postrecession

- Prerecession
(2005-2007)
- Postrecession
(2011-2015)



Source: The Conference Board



Other prerecession vs. postrecession



Source: The Conference Board

Census Regions Map

New England Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Middle Atlantic New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

South Atlantic Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia

East North Central Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin

East South Central Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee

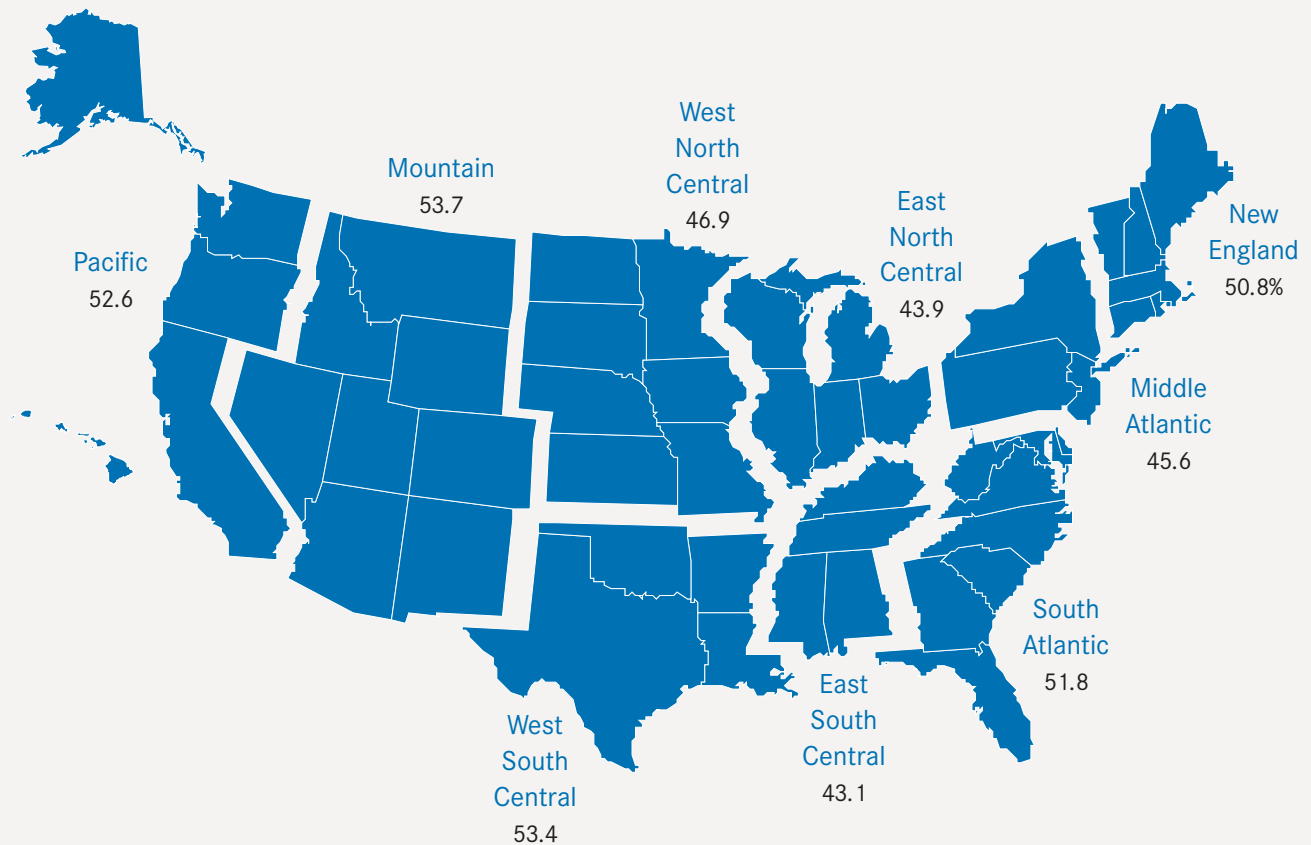
West North Central Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

West South Central Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

Mountain Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming

Pacific Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

Percentages represent those satisfied with their jobs in 2015.



Source: The Conference Board

Additional Resources from The Conference Board

Publications

EXECUTIVE ACTION REPORTS

The US Labor Supply Problem: Which States Are Most at Risk?
Executive Action 442, September 2015

Faster Than Expected: The US Labor Market Continues to Tighten
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Executive Action 394, March 2013

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Research Report 1602, May 2016

Help Wanted: What Looming Labor Shortages Mean for Your Business
Research Report 1601, April 2016

DNA of Engagement: How Organizations Build and Sustain Highly Engaging Leaders
Research Report 1596, March 2016

Job Satisfaction: 2015 Edition: A Lot More Jobs—A Little More Satisfaction
Research Report 1551, September 2015

Buy, Build, Borrow, or None of the Above? New Options for Closing Global Talent Gaps
Research Report 1572, February 2015

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Employee engagement is not a new concept. Most employers recognize that engaged employees produce more and stay longer in an organization that treats them well, listens to their needs, and helps them develop. And while most organizations measure employee perceptions in some fashion, few have been successful building, sustaining, and leveraging employee engagement to create tangible business outcomes. The challenge has intensified with the emergence of a new generation in the workforce, heightened international competition, and the unparalleled pace of change in the world. It's what we call a VUCA world—full of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.

The Engagement Institute™, a partnership between The Conference Board, Deloitte, Sirota, ROI Institute, and The Culture Works, has been designed to steward the evolving process of learning and discovery around the critical business issue of employee engagement. As the environment and the conditions around us change, so will the focus areas of research and application. The Engagement Institute members will work to shape the thinking and, in turn, advance the global understanding of engagement and its impact to successfully drive business performance.

This research community of practice provides cross-industry leaders the opportunity to partner with experts and work collaboratively to shape how organizations understand and drive engagement through a series of research activities and peer learning opportunities. Together, we will uncover new insights and develop new practices which drive continuous engagement improvement and quantifiable business impact.

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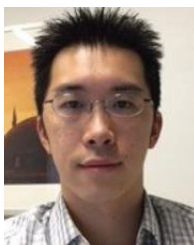
About the Authors



Michelle Kan is associate director, knowledge organization at The Conference Board. She is responsible for coordinating the enterprise-wide Key Business Issue (KBI) process through which the cross-functional dissemination teams, researchers, writers, and outside contractors develop and deliver expert-quality, aligned, and relevant content. She is also involved with the project management and research development for The Conference Board CEO Challenge® and the supervision of the Business Information Service (“AskTCB”) department. In her previous role as research associate on the human capital research team, her research projects spanned leadership development, organization design, talent management, and diversity and inclusion. She is a coauthor of the report from The Conference Board on *Job Satisfaction* as well as *Designing Global Businesses for Innovation and Growth* (2014), *Do Ask, Do Tell: Encouraging Employees with Disabilities to Self-Identify* (2015), and *Inclusion + Innovation: Leveraging Diversity of Thought to Generate Business Growth* (2016). Kan graduated magna cum laude from Bryn Mawr College with a BA in sociocultural anthropology. She is currently a master’s candidate in social-organizational psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University.



Gad Levanon, PhD is chief economist, North America at The Conference Board. He oversees the labor market program, the US forecasting program, and the Help Wanted OnLine® program. Levanon created The Conference Board Employment Trends Index™, a widely used measure that fills the need for a leading index of employment. His research focuses on trends in US and global labor markets, and forecasting using economic indicators. He also writes a popular blog on labor markets for Human Capital Exchange™. In addition to writing reports for The Conference Board, he has published extensively in academic and professional journals. Before coming to The Conference Board, Levanon worked at the Israeli Central Bank, where he participated in the analysis of financial markets and monetary policy. Levanon received his PhD in economics from Princeton University, and he holds undergraduate and master’s degrees from Tel Aviv University in Israel.



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Rebecca L. Ray, PhD is executive vice president, knowledge organization and human capital at The Conference Board and the leader of the human capital practice. Previously, she was a senior executive responsible, at various times, for organizational learning, training, management and leadership development, employee engagement, performance management, executive assessment, coaching, organizational development, and succession planning at several marquee companies. She taught at Oxford University and New York University and led a consulting practice for many years, offering leadership assessment and development services to Fortune 500 companies and top-tier professional services firms. She was named “Chief Learning Officer of the Year” by *Chief Learning Officer* magazine and one of the “Top 100 People in Leadership Development” by *Leadership Excellence* magazine. She serves on the advisory boards for NYU’s Higher Education/Business Education program at The Steinhardt School of Education and University of Pennsylvania’s Executive Program in Work-Based Learning Leadership. She is the co/author of numerous articles and books, including *Measuring Leadership Development*. She holds a doctorate from New York University.

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