

Hourly employees are optimistic, satisfied, and loyal

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Most Would Prefer Long-Term Employment; Men Earning Almost 45 Percent More Per Hour than Women; Seniors Significant Part of Hourly Workforce

Hourly workers are optimistic that they could find a new job, but most are satisfied with their current job and are surprisingly loyal to their employer, according to The Employment Guide(R) Hourly Employee Survey published by Dominion Enterprises. The findings are part of a national survey conducted in November that will form the basis of a new quarterly index on hourly workforce trends.

"Most of us assume that people would change jobs simply for higher wages, but our survey found that, while money is a key factor, hourly workers really don't want to 'job hop,'" said Jeff Littlejohn, Vice President and General Manager, The Employment Guide and EmploymentGuide.com.

The Employment Guide, is a division of Dominion Enterprises. The Employment Guide and www.EmploymentGuide.com offer businesses a comprehensive recruitment solution for hourly workers through a nationwide series of publications, award-winning websites, and series of job fairs. The free weekly publications are published locally in over 75 markets with a combined circulation of two million copies nationwide. The job board, www.EmploymentGuide.com, attracts over one million unique visitors each month and features a candidate database and job postings. Niche websites have been developed to serve in-demand industries such as transportation and healthcare. Face-to-face recruitment is available through The Employment Guide's job fair program, with over 220 job fairs conducted nationwide each year. "In fact, more than three quarters of the people we spoke with said they would like to stay with a single employer for most of their career," said Littlejohn. "Also, the great majority indicated that they feel a sense of loyalty to their employer that is much, much stronger than we expected."

Only 28 percent of hourly workers agreed with the statement "I generally do not feel an overwhelming sense of loyalty to any given employer," while a significant majority, 72 percent, disagreed.

The Employment Guide Hourly Employee Survey also provided the following data on satisfaction, optimism, loyalty and tenure:

- n 78 percent of hourly workers are generally satisfied with their current job. At the same time, 78 percent indicated that they are optimistic about easily being able to find a new job.

- n More than three-quarters of hourly employees have had only one or two employers in the last three years; 61 percent have had no more than three employers in the past 10 years.

- n Despite being optimistic that they could find a new job, most hourly employees are staying put. Nearly three-quarters or 72 percent said they are not seeking new employment opportunities.

"These are interesting findings for employers," said Sharon Sewell, Senior Director of Marketing Communications with the National Association of Workforce Board (NAWB), Arlington, Va. "In a nutshell, the study suggests the hourly workforce in the United States is interested in employment that stretches out over a period of years and that these job seekers are inclined to be exceptionally loyal to the right employer."

Hourly Wage Discrepancy

The recent survey uncovered a larger-than-expected differential between the wages of men and women in occupations that pay by the hour. These fields include clerical/office administration, customer service, sales, healthcare/nursing, retail, computers/IT, factory & warehouse, hotel/motel/resort, telecommunications, restaurant, construction/skilled trades, transportation, protective services and law enforcement.

The average wage for the women surveyed was \$11.74 per hour versus \$16.99 per hour for men, suggesting that women make 55.3 percent that of men when looking at a broad range of different hourly positions including both skilled and unskilled jobs. According to 2004 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median usual weekly earnings of women are 80.4 percent that of men for full-time wage and salary workers.

Professor Christopher B. Colburn, Ph. D, Chair of the Economics Department of Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., who reviewed the data, offered the following explanation, "The Bureau of Labor Statistics data includes salaried professions where there is greater parity in compensation among men and women. In hourly fields, by comparison, men are likely to earn more per hour on average because they are often in occupations where they may be compensated for physical risk -- with high-paying construction jobs being a prime example. Also, men are, in general, in the workforce longer and thus paid more while women's careers are more likely to be interrupted for family reasons. Lastly, women place a greater emphasis on non-monetary benefits such as flexible hours and day care, which would also explain lower hourly wages."

Men also required more money to change jobs in hourly fields, expecting a 30 percent pay increase to make a move versus 24 percent for women.

Seniors Especially Good Employees

According to the survey, workers aged 55 years or older make particularly loyal employees:

- n 50 percent do not believe it is necessary to change jobs for better pay and advancement opportunities versus 37 percent for all hourly workers
- n 77 percent feel loyal toward their employer
- n only 50 percent are driven by pay/benefits (versus 80 percent of 18-24 year olds, 77 percent of 25-34 year olds, 70 percent of 35-44 year olds and 68 percent of 45-54 year olds)

"Older workers make up a significant portion of the nation's hourly workforce," said Jim Seith, Director, National Programs, AARP Foundation, "As Boomers age, recruiters are likely to hire more and more seasoned workers. And this age data reinforces the facts: older workers are more loyal, not as driven by pay, and more willing to be paid on an hourly basis."

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