

Older and Wiser?

Mature Workers Post Higher Job Satisfaction Scores Than Young Workers



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HR Solutions conducted a study of extensive employee data (over 10,600 completed Employee Opinion Surveys from 18 organizations, all surveyed within the last three years). The analysis looked at the degree of statistical significance between two age groups: employees less than 25 years old and employees 55 and up (i.e. “young” workers and “mature” workers). With this data, we analyzed differences in Overall Job Satisfaction between mature and young workers.

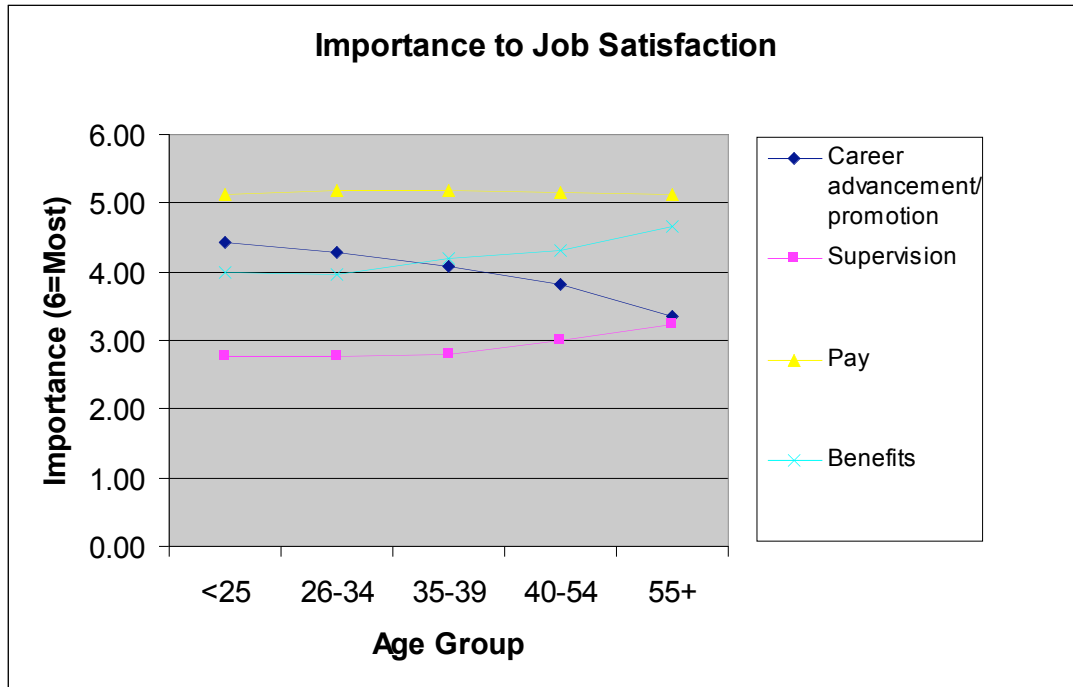
The chart below depicts the percentage point differential between the two age groups:

Survey Item	Employees <25 Normative Score	Employees 55+ Normative Score	Percentage Points Differential
My work is personally rewarding.	66%	80%	+14
All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	67%	80%	+13
I find my work interesting.	73%	86%	+13
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	74%	83%	+9
The benefits I receive (health insurance, vacation, etc.) are adequate.	60%	65%	+5
I am satisfied with the difference in pay between new and experienced employees doing the same job.	32%	28%	-4
The organization provides effective on-the-job training.	70%	64%	-6
I feel I have job security.	72%	63%	-9

To put this data into some perspective, mature workers were thirteen percentage points more likely to respond more favorably to the outcome variable, “All in all, I am satisfied with my job,” than young workers. Additionally, they were fourteen percentage points more likely to answer more favorably than young workers when asked whether or not they found their work rewarding. However, when asked about job security, mature workers scored 9 percentage points below the young workers’ score. Furthermore, young workers were more satisfied with the on-the-job training provided by their organization than mature workers, scoring 6 percentage points higher than mature workers. When asked to rank the most important aspects to their future job satisfaction, employees consistently rated pay consistently as the most important factor, regardless of the age group.

Interestingly, we identified two shifts in opinion for the two groups. It seems that as workers reach their mid or late thirties a greater importance is placed on benefits, while the importance of career advancement begins to decline, as you can see in the chart below.

A similar change of opinion occurred for the maturing workforce as career advancement and opportunity for training switched positions between the 40-54 age group and the 55+ age group. The mature workers ranked opportunity for training as a factor more important than career advancement; a finding not altogether surprising if one considers that mature workers have more than likely risen to the highest levels of the organization leaving them with fewer possible promotional opportunities.



Definitive differences in job satisfaction among the young and the mature segments of the workforce were plentiful. We speculate that these differences emerged due to varied life stages, personal health, family status, and positions within the organization.

How can you make the most of your own multi-generational workforce?

- Educate you managers on how to best “use” both young and mature workers.
- Understand the generational differences in your workforce (learn about the Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y).
- De-bunk the myths (More seasoned workers cannot effectively use technology – inaccurate or higher costs/more absences due to sickness and health problems – simply not true).
- Utilize the different generations’ strengths to benefit the organization.

A workforce whose strengths are most effectively utilized is one with highest productivity and job satisfaction. Keeping the priorities of workers from different generations in mind will maximize organizational performance.

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