



**Final Report 5-6-02**  
**HIMSS/Hersher Associates, Ltd. Job Satisfaction Survey**

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## 1. Executive Summary

The first HIMSS/Hersher Associates, Ltd. Survey, which includes responses from over 360 individuals, suggests that salary and career growth are top considerations used to evaluate satisfaction. Work/life issues are mixed and benefits are the least important among considerations.

- **Salary:** Respondents most frequently identified salary as an item they evaluate regarding satisfaction level with their current position. It also tops their list as the factor most likely to be used to evaluate whether or not they will accept a future position. Forty percent of respondents believed they were not paid market value; this is the same percentage that indicated an increase in compensation would increase their job satisfaction.
- **Career Growth:** Respondents most frequently cited career growth as the reason they left their last position. Just over half indicated they were offered career growth in their current position. Fifty-four percent indicated future career growth opportunities would improve their satisfaction with their current position. This is also a top consideration when making a decision to accept a new position.
- **Work/life balance:** Almost half of the respondents indicated the ability to balance their career and family obligations was important in evaluating their job satisfaction and 41% said it was an important consideration for accepting a new position. Few respondents identified either more time off or a flexible work schedule as being necessary to improve satisfaction in their current position.
- **Benefits:** Benefits and perks do not seem to be as important as career growth, salary, and involvement in decision making when individuals are evaluating satisfaction in their current position or evaluating a new position. Insurance and financial benefits make up two of the three bottom factors used to evaluate current job satisfaction.

### Other notable findings:

- Respondents who rate their superiors as good coaches/mentors are more likely to be satisfied in their jobs than are individuals who feel that their superiors make poor coaches/mentors.
- While almost half of the respondents have been in the healthcare IT industry for at least 15 years, the majority of the respondents have been in their current position for four years or less.

[View the Summary Charts](#)

## 2. Methodology

Healthcare IT professionals were provided the opportunity to fill out this survey from January 21, 2002 through February 22, 2002. They were able to access the survey

through either the HIMSS website ([www.himss.org](http://www.himss.org)) or through the Hersher Associates, Ltd. Web site ([www.hersher.com](http://www.hersher.com)). Additionally, there was a link to the survey on computers located throughout the convention center at the 2002 Annual HIMSS Conference and Exhibition Center in Atlanta, GA. A total of 361 responses were received.

### **3. Profile of Survey Respondents**

Almost two-thirds of the survey respondents, 67%, were from healthcare provider organizations. Another 12% represented consulting firms. The remaining respondents were from a variety of organizations, including vendor firms, managed care/insurance companies, military/VA/government facilities, and academic institutions.

Over 71% of all respondents worked for organizations with revenues under \$500 million. Approximately 29% of respondents came from organizations with operating revenues of under \$50 million. Sixteen percent came from organizations with operating revenues of over \$1 billion.

Almost half of the respondents described their title as Manager (22%) or Director (21%). Approximately 17% of the respondents were chief information officers. Senior staff, staff, clinician, management engineer, and chief executive officer were among the other titles represented in the survey.

Men and women were represented fairly equally. Men comprised 57% of the sample, while 43% of the respondents were women. One quarter of the respondents were between ages 50 and 59. Responses for individuals between ages 35 and 49 were evenly distributed. Individuals under age 25 represented the fewest respondents (2%).

Over two-thirds of the respondents (68%) have been in the healthcare IT industry for ten years or more. This includes 36% who have been in the healthcare IT industry for 20 years or more. Comparatively, only 3% of the respondents indicated they have been in the industry for less than one year, with equal representation across all age groups.

Although most respondents have been in healthcare IT for ten years or more, 64% have been in their current organization for four years or less. About 20% of the respondents were long-term employees, having worked with their current organizations for ten years or more. Additionally, over three-quarters of the respondents (78%) have been in their current positions for four years or less. Only nine participants (2%) have held the same position for 15 or more years.

### **Figures:**

Figure 1.

### **4. Job Satisfaction**

Over half of the respondents (55%) appeared to be happy with their current position and described themselves as satisfied (23%), very satisfied (22%), or extremely satisfied (10%). Forty-five percent of respondents were either unhappy or not completely happy

with their current position with 32% reporting they were somewhat satisfied and 13% reporting they were not satisfied. A significant number of respondents over age 50 indicated they were very satisfied with their current position.

When asked to select up to three factors used to evaluate job satisfaction, 62% of respondents listed salary, 52% indicated career growth, and 46% work/life balance.

Thirty percent of respondents who believe they are competitively paid reported being very satisfied, compared to 12% of respondents who felt they were not paid market value. Thirty-nine percent of those who felt they were not competitively paid were somewhat satisfied versus 25% for those who felt they were competitively paid.

Along with salary, career growth is also important to job satisfaction. In fact, 54% of respondents acknowledged that career growth opportunities should be improved to increase satisfaction in their current position. Individuals who believe they have growth potential were more likely to indicate they were satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied than are those who do not have growth potential.

Men and women respondents equally cited work/life balance as a factor for evaluating job satisfaction, and those under age 30 were more likely to report it as a factor than other age groups. Least important for respondents evaluating job satisfaction was the availability of insurance benefits, such as medical and dental insurance. Women were more likely than men to select relationship with a direct supervisor, financial benefits (i.e., bonus plan, stock options), and organizational morale as issues when evaluating satisfaction with their current position.

**Figures:**

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

**5. Previous Position**

Prior to their current position, most respondents held a title of director (23%) or manager (21%). Other titles included staff, senior staff, chief information officer, and vice-president. More than half of the respondents (55%) were not promoted within their current organization to their current position.

The primary reason respondents left their last position was for additional growth and challenge. This was cited by one-third of the respondents and was equally identified by men and women (as well as all age groups). Another 10% of respondents indicated they left their last position because of a perceived lack of opportunity for advancement. Rounding out the top five responses were better financial opportunities, reorganization by a previous firm, and recruitment by another organization.

**Figure:**

Figure 5.

## **6. Current Position**

Over half of the respondents (54%) believed their organizations offer them growth potential. Of those respondents, women were slightly more likely than men to believe their current organization offers them this benefit. Respondents under age 30 were much more likely to indicate they had growth potential. Additionally, 51% believed they are competitively paid, compared to 40% of respondents who noted they are not paid market value. The majority of respondents indicated they are paid appropriately. The only group who believed they were paid under market value were respondents age 30 and under.

Approximately one-third of the respondents (34%) indicated the training they received in their current position was satisfactory. Comparatively, 10% reported extreme satisfaction with their training and 5% reported extreme dissatisfaction. More women than men indicated they are satisfied with their training.

The results show changes in the healthcare industry can influence job satisfaction. Approximately half (53%) reported funding impacts their satisfaction. Half of the respondents also reported that lack of resources impact their satisfaction. Change in senior management rounds out the top three (47%).

Women and younger respondents indicated time off and flexibility would improve their job satisfaction.

When respondents were asked to name the skills or training they needed to improve their careers, 42% indicated obtaining an MBA or Master's degree. Younger respondents who may have been counseled by mentors and who are early in their careers and continuing education mentioned this most frequently. Specific technical skills and training were mentioned by 30% of respondents. Other skills included management, communication, and relationship skills. Women respondents cited communication skills most often, while men identified staff and relationship skills.

## **Figures:**

Figure 6.

Figure 7.

Figure 8.

## **7. New Position**

When respondents were asked what job they would take next, one-quarter of individuals indicated they would like to stay in their current position. This is balanced by the 23% of respondents who indicated they would like to change organizations. Women respondents were more likely to report they wanted to stay with their current organization, while men reported they wanted to change organizations. Additionally, 16% of respondents indicated they would like to move into management, compared to only 1% who are ready

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to leave their managerial positions behind. Only 5.6% of the respondents indicated they wanted to leave the healthcare IT industry altogether.

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Only 21% of respondents said they were actively looking for a new position compared to 23% who indicated they were not actively looking for a new position. Fifty-six percent stated that although they were not actively looking at this time, they would consider a new position if someone were to offer them the “right job”. Respondents age 40 to 49 were most likely to be in the market for a new job. Those under age 30 were least likely to be actively seeking a new job.

The top factor that would entice an individual to leave their position is better compensation, cited by 53% of respondents. This factor appears to be very important to respondents between ages 40 and 49, as 63% identified this item. Additional factors that would make a new position attractive are challenges (41%), corporate culture (39%), and location (38%). The least likely factor enticing all respondents to leave their current position is organizational stability (10%).

When asked what three factors are most important when considering a new position, salary (71%), career growth (56%), and location (48%) were mentioned most frequently. Almost 100% of women respondents indicated that salary would be used to evaluate a new position, compared to 73% of men. In addition, almost 70% of women respondents indicated job location is a primary consideration.

Other factors such as organizational morale, work/life balance, financial benefits (i.e., insurance, 401Ks), and relationship with a direct supervisor appeared to be more important to female respondents when evaluating a new position than male respondents.

### **Figures:**

Figure 9.

Figure 10.

Figure 11.

Figure 12.

## **8. Mentoring**

Asked to rate their superior as a mentor/coach, 49% of respondents provided a good (32%) or excellent (17%) rating. Another third rated their superiors as poor (19%) or fair (12%). One-fifth said their superiors were average mentors/coaches. Men were more likely than women to rate their superior as poor, while women were slightly more likely to rate their superior as excellent.

Almost all respondents (86%) indicated leadership is what they look for in a mentor/coach. This is more than double the response rate of the next category, management, which was identified by 35% of respondents. Exposure also ranked highly, at 33%. The attribute respondents were least likely to look for in a mentor/coach was public speaking. However, public speaking was considered to be more important by younger respondents who may lack this type of experience. Women were much more likely to identify project management as an important criterion for a coach/mentor.

The quality of a supervisor as a mentor/coach seems to have an impact on job satisfaction. Those who reported having an excellent supervisor are more likely to be very or extremely satisfied with their positions. Conversely, those who have a superior they rate as poor were more likely to rate their satisfaction level as not satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

### **Figures:**

Figure 13.

Figure 14.

## **9. Conclusion**

Individuals who begin a career in the healthcare IT industry seem to be staying in the industry. Over half of survey respondents have been in the field for at least 15 years. Additionally, when asked what they would like to do next in their career, only 6% indicated their next position would be in a different industry.

Most respondents are staying at their current organization for only four years or less and 45% were promoted to their current position from within. Slightly over half of the respondents would accept a new job if the right opportunity came along.

Salary and career growth are two key areas respondents identified as critical for achieving job satisfaction and are areas employers should consider both when hiring new employees and when making decisions about retaining current employees. Employers need to evaluate salaries carefully to ensure their employees are paid competitively, especially in an industry where funding and resources greatly impact job satisfaction. Employees also want the opportunity to grow. Based on the responses, programs that assist employees in obtaining Master's degrees, MBAs, or technical skills would be well received. Additionally, organizations may want to emphasize coaching/mentoring programs for individuals who are in a supervisory role.

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In summary, many individuals who take jobs in the healthcare IT industry make a commitment and stay for years. However the survey suggests that salary, while extremely important, is not enough. Providing opportunities for career growth and challenge are critical for success.

### **About HIMSS**

The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) provides leadership in healthcare for the management of technology, information, and change through member services, education and networking opportunities, and publications. Members are kept abreast of the latest industry information and research, as well as legislative and policy issues. Based in Chicago with an office in Ann Arbor, Mich., HIMSS has 37 chapters and more than 12,000 individual members working in healthcare organizations throughout the world. Individual members include healthcare professionals in hospitals, corporate healthcare systems, clinical practice groups, HIT supplier organizations, healthcare consulting firms, and government settings in professional levels ranging from senior staff to CIOs and CEOs. HIMSS also serves corporate members, which include suppliers and consultants in the health information and management systems industry. HIMSS' Web site is [www.himss.org](http://www.himss.org).

**About Hersher Associates, Ltd.**

Hersher Associates, Ltd. is a nationally recognized executive search and consulting firm dedicated to the recruitment and retention of accomplished leaders in healthcare. Based in Northbrook, Illinois, Hersher Associates, Ltd. is nationally recognized for the recruitment of healthcare Chief Information Officers and other information systems professionals. Established in 1980, Hersher Associates, Ltd. is committed to the healthcare IT industry and has taken a leadership role in identifying and developing new trends in the industry such as succession planning, chief medical information officers, clinical redesign professionals, recruitment and retention planning, and chief technology officers. Hersher Associates, Ltd. is an active and supportive member of HIMSS and CHIME. The Hersher Associates, Ltd. Web site is [www.hersher.com](http://www.hersher.com).

**13. How to Cite This Study**

Individuals are encouraged to cite this report and any accompanying graphics in printed matter, publications, or any other medium, as long as the information is attributed to the HIMSS/Hersher Associates Job Satisfaction Survey.

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