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BENSIMON BYRNE

CONSUMER LOGO 

MOST CANADIAN WORKERS ARE VERY SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOB SITUATION.

MOST CANADIAN WORKERS (59%) ARE VERY SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS AND FEW (ONE IN TEN) ARE VERY DISSATISFIED. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN THE DRIVERS OF THAT JOB SATISFACTION, DEPENDING ON WHAT TYPE OF JOB YOU HAVE—WHITE, BLUE OR NO COLLAR (THOSE WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS NEITHER BLUE NOR WHITE-COLLAR WORKER)—AND INDEED THE NATURE OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT, BE IT PART-TIME, FULL-TIME OR SELF-EMPLOYED.



OVERALL SNAPSHOT

As one might expect, greater pay and greater seniority help with job satisfaction. However, there is no important difference in job satisfaction between men and women, rural and city residents, or immigrants and Canadians of longer standing. Nor is there any difference by age. Indeed, Millennials are just as satisfied with their jobs as everyone else and are not systematically motivated by different factors. That said, Millennials are looking and interviewing for new work more often than older workers. While there is no difference in satisfaction by education level, more highly educated Canadians are much more likely to have something resembling their dream job than are those with high school diplomas only. They are also more likely to have 'careers' rather than 'jobs'.

The major distinction between work types is that people who are self-employed are generally much happier with their work than are employees.

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WHAT DRIVES JOB SATISFACTION?

While compensation is important to job satisfaction, and is most commonly cited as the area current jobs fall short (relative to dream jobs), it is important to note that compensation is not the be-all and end-all. Many of the problems workers cite in the workplace are a function of their job structures, opportunities, and the respect and valuation they receive. So while throwing money at the problem might help, there are many changes employers and managers could make that would improve job satisfaction without raising compensation. More importantly, we see that workers are quite diverse in their drivers of job satisfaction.

Learning opportunities on the job, coaching and mentorship, and a good relationship with your direct superior all have significant effects on job satisfaction. Personal fulfilment is an interesting driver in that, depending on what fulfils someone, they could be looking for very different things in a job or career. A safe workplace environment is also important, especially for women. One in four women do not rate their jobs well on providing a safe workplace; women with blue-collar or no-collar jobs have the least safe conditions.

Beyond that, we found that workers with different types of jobs have different determinants of job satisfaction. White-collar, blue-collar, and no-collar workers have rather different drivers of job satisfaction.

Money is important, but it is not everything. All workers need sufficient pay and something else to be satisfied with their jobs. Blue-collar workers need good pay, meaningful work, a calling, respect for who they are, and ownership and accountability for their work. White-collar workers need good pay, interpersonal respect, mentorship, and recognition. No-collar workers need good pay and structures that enable other aspects that they value in their personal life; they are happier when there is flexibility and perks that support family demands.



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PERSONAL FULFILMENT

The Consumerology study reveals that workers in different types of jobs have different drivers of personal fulfilment. We feel that this is an especially important area for workers to think about; while we might sometimes wonder if another employer, manager or title might make us happier in our work, this research suggests that workers might be better suited by first examining what makes them happy, and then narrowing their search to careers that are more likely to meet those needs.

Blue-collar workers who find their job personally fulfilling regard their work as meaningful. Their job is their calling, providing them with ownership and responsibility for their work. They also feel fairly compensated, and respected for who they are. Blue-collar workers tend to work with objects, and so take pride in the things they create. Their fulfilment comes less from validation from co-workers or clients, but rather from the work itself.

White-collar workers are a bit different. They derive more personal fulfilment from having a sense of purpose, and when their work effectively communicates expectations. They need to feel respected, that their job is their calling, and that their work is meaningful. These workers contrast with blue-collar workers in that their jobs revolve much more around interpersonal relationships (something subjective), due in part to the fact that a job well done tends to be validated by a happy client or boss, rather than an job objectively well done, as with blue-collar workers.

No-collar workers, on the other hand, are most different. For them, personal fulfilment is less about the commodities in their jobs or the relationships they create, and more about structure: transparent leadership, an emphasis on diversity, an understanding of how their work contributes to the goals of the company, a physical space where they can work efficiently, and free perks. We can understand these drivers in the context that no-collar workers are more likely to be part-time workers, single, without children, female, and low income relative to blue- and white-collar workers. As such, the structure of that job and how it facilitates or encumbers the rest of their life is a major part of personal fulfilment and job satisfaction.



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SELF-EMPLOYED, FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

The Workplace Consumerology study also found significant differences between Canadian workers depending on whether they are self-employed or not, and whether they are employed full-time or part-time.

Self-employed workers have a rather different outlook on their jobs; they care more about flexibility and ownership of work. They are more likely to say their job gives them a chance to work with interesting people, recognizes a job well done, and effectively communicates expectations.

Accordingly, self-employed Canadians are more likely to say they take pride in their work, feel productive, get valuable feedback from coworkers, and feel energized at the end of the workday. They are also less likely to feel exhausted at the end of the day, relative to employees. Their greatest source of stress is finding new clients or customers. They are also more likely to see their job as their career, and feel that it makes sense that they work where they do now.

In contrast, full-time employees are more concerned with opportunities within their company and the quality of leadership, relative to self-employed workers. While they are not as content with various interpersonal aspects of the job as self-employed workers, they feel better off than part-time workers. Full-time employees are most likely to have difficulty balancing career and family responsibilities, and are the most stressed. They are also most likely to say the job they are doing is not what they thought they would be doing when they were hired.

Part-time workers are more likely to be concerned with scheduling and sufficient compensation. They're less likely to feel they are doing meaningful work, learning on the job, advancing, or having positive interpersonal interactions. There are signs that part-time workers are less committed to and invested in their work. They are least likely to feel their job is a career or see a path forward with their current employer, and more likely to want to change careers and willing to go back to school to study something that would qualify them for a different job than they have right now.



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CONCLUSIONS

Overall, Canadian workers are quite satisfied with their jobs. But those who wish to better understand the drivers of this satisfaction need to understand three major themes. Firstly, cash is king, but it will only take you so far. Workers will always want better pay, but when we hold compensation constant, or remove it from the equation, we find that workers have very different wants and needs depending on the type of work they do (blue, white and no collar). Indeed we can see that the drivers of personal fulfilment change significantly based on the type of work one does. Additionally, the nature of a worker's employment also has a significant impact on the way they experience their workplace; self-employed Canadians are generally the happiest and most engaged workers, while part-time workers are driven more by the way their jobs clash with or facilitate their lives. All of these factor combine in different ways for each worker; so while most Canadians are quite satisfied with their jobs, they are all satisfied for very different reasons.



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METHODOLOGY

The findings discussed in this report are based on an online survey conducted by The Gandalf Group, among 1,500 working Canadians, proportionate to the gender, age and regional distribution of the Canadian population. We also surveyed Quebec in proportion to the province's distribution of English and French speakers. The survey was conducted August 5 - 14, 2015, in both English and French.