

Beyond Salary, What Do Workers Really Want?

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The answer may surprise managers

As the focus on employee recruitment and retention sharpens in a recovering economy, many executives may be undervaluing a perk their workforce wants most, suggests new research from Accountemps.

When asked which workplace perk they think their employees are most interested in receiving this year, 41% of chief financial officers interviewed said better benefits, and 19% said more vacation days. In a separate survey of workers, however, paid time off (30%) narrowly edged out benefits (26%) as most desired in 2015.

The surveys include responses from over 2,100 CFOs from a stratified random sample of companies in more than 20 of the largest U.S. metropolitan areas and an estimated 320 employees age 18 and older who work in an office environment.

CFOs were asked, "Other than additional compensation, which one of the following do you believe would top your employees' wish lists this year?"

Their responses:

- Better benefit plan, such as enhanced healthcare plan—41%
- More vacation days—19%
- Greater scheduling flexibility, such as telecommuting or flexible work hours—15%
- More training or professional development opportunities—12%
- Other corporate perks, such as onsite meals and amenities, health and wellness programs, or subsidized transportation—11%
- Don't know—2%

Employees were asked, "Other than additional compensation, which one of the following would top your wish list when it comes to your job this year?" Their responses:

- More vacation days—30%
- Better benefit plan, such as enhanced healthcare plan—26%
- More scheduling flexibility, such as telecommuting or flexible work hours—19%
- More training or professional development opportunities—15%
- Other corporate perks, such as onsite meals and amenities, health and wellness, or subsidized transportation—9%

Bill Driscoll, a district president with Accountemps, says there's a potential silver lining to the survey results "Changing a company's benefits package can be a lengthy, challenging, and expensive process; reevaluating the vacation policy is fairly straightforward in comparison. Offering additional vacation time shows employees you're committed to helping them achieve greater work-life balance."