



J**o**b Satisfaction in the **M**odern **W**orkplace

By Suzi Salleh

Gone are the days where a job was merely a source of sustenance. How many of you have carried on working with the same sense of joy as the day you signed your appointment letter?

Keeping a job is like managing a love affair: At the start, you're a bundle of nerves but you also feel the excitement of a new chapter. As time goes by, however, you go through several rough patches and the passion starts to wear off.

Unexpected job demands, a chaotic environment, or an irresistible offer may have tempted you to throw in the towel when it comes to your current livelihood. So what is it that young professionals are looking for, in order for them to remain loyal to their jobs today?

Perspectives toward Work

Last year, the Ministry of Manpower reported a surge in employment creation. While this sounds like good news for fresh graduates, the same finding also proved to be alluring to those who were already employed. Today, the notion of work is not simply a job, but a career or "calling". When people view work as a career, they are actually keen to grow in their profession.

Because of this, youths are quick to reach for the Recruit section of the newspapers when their expectations are not met in their place of employment. Josh Goh, Manager of Corporate Services at The GMP Group, which specialises in recruitment, finds that young people today are less inclined to make long-term commitments to work and relationships as most of them grew up in dual-income households and have yet to experience an economic recession.

He adds, "They're not required to support their families. Coupled together with wide access to information, job hopping is a way to find out and choose whatever they deem most suitable for them."

However, do these youths realise that they're picky and restless in terms of securing a job? Jenni Khoo, 23, a Senior Executive in a statutory board feels that while the booming career market allows her and her peers to be more discerning in their job selection, they're not serial job-hoppers.

Says Jenni, "I believe that in the long run, they'd want a stable job like most people. I think the only reason some youths seem to be changing jobs frequently is because they're still looking for their niche."

Getting Job Satisfaction

Do you dread Sunday evenings and look forward to the weekends on Mondays? Is your heart getting heavier every time you're given a new task? If this occurs to you more often than usual, it's time to reassess your approach towards work.

Some common causes for a lack of job satisfaction could be due to little interest in the job scope, mismatched salary and benefits, unresolved conflict between colleagues, and lack of opportunities for career advancement.

Assess your skills, interests, and what motivates you. If you've had formal training in marketing, find a trade in which you can hone your marketing skills to the best of your abilities. For instance, having little interest in property with no desire to learn the trade would likely cause you to lose the drive to work.

Jenni, who has since tendered her resignation, explains, "I wasn't happy with my job as I didn't feel recognised by my superiors for my work." Therefore, a good working environment is not just about having a swanky workstation in a high-rise building, but being appreciated by our bosses and colleagues as well.

A 22 year-old Advertising Account Executive who prefers not to be named, cites "great teamwork and management" as her expectations in a job. IT Specialist Irman J., 27, adds, "It takes good and capable bosses who are not bossy, as well as co-operative colleagues, to make me happy. A nice pay cheque helps, too."

Josh advises young professionals to be realistic about their job expectations. "They shouldn't assume a fast track to success. At the

same time, they also shouldn't be afraid to voice their concerns. Gen-Yers should realise that it's not always [about] them, and should consider the point of view of their employers."

According to Josh, Gen-Yers work better in a self-driven and self-motivated workplace – one where employers allow their young workers to grow and be rewarded according to their achievements.

The GMP group shares that Talent Development and Training are some programmes that they run to retain their employees. Josh explains that the company does a quarterly review to measure performance and recognise top performing teams and individuals.

Calling It Quits

Josh proposes that workers should approach their supervisors or HR department to discuss their grievances in a tactful manner. If matters are unresolved, employees can consider transferring to another department. "When it's obvious that no compromise can be reached, then the employees should consider moving on", he adds.

For Jenni, feeling unappreciated by her superior was not the only catalyst for her to leave her job. She says, "One should quit his job if there's still no change in the job scope after a discussion with his boss. I don't see the point of staying if one feels that the job is a mismatch with one's skills or interest."

Irman J., however, thinks that youths are picky not because they're figuring out their passion; but rather, because of glamour or money. He says, "There are a few near-extinct species that do their jobs because they love to do so. In a nutshell, money talks louder."

Are You The Typical Gen-Y?

Josh Goh, Manager of Corporate Services of The GMP Group shares with **dna** the common expectations that youths have:

- Most Gen-Yers seek quick career advancements and professional development opportunities. The average job tenure for this generation is 16 months compared to 3 years for Gen-X or more than 5 years for Baby Boomers.
- World-known brand names are a large draw for Gen-Yers.
- Gen-Yers are also more ambitious and entrepreneurial. It's not unusual for Gen-Yers to aspire to be young CEOs with role models like 22-year old Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook!
- Open working relationships are important to young professionals while bureaucracy will only turn them off.



How happy are you in your current job?

Is there such a thing as an ideal career, where the work you do doesn't feel like a chore at all? Or is it just an impossible dream? This is where **dna** helps you to work out your current job satisfaction before you decide to call it quits.

1. Do you enjoy reading about the developments of your industry?

- A) Yes. It has always been second nature to me.
- B) I will, if I must.
- C) I don't care about industry news, unless my company is involved.

2. How do you feel when your boss assigns you inane ad-hoc duties on top of your current portfolio?

- A) I'm alright with that if my main portfolio is still the bigger pie.
- B) I feel slightly annoyed. That task should be assigned to the admin people!
- C) Wait a minute. What's the return on investments (ROI) for me here?

3. How often do you daydream about being in another vocation?

- A) I rarely do so since my first day in this job.
- B) Whenever I feel the lows at work.
- C) Don't even talk about daydreaming. I fantasise about my dream job in my sleep too.

4. If your salary increases by 15%, would you stay in the same job?

- A) Absolutely!
- B) Maybe not. Someone has poached me...
- C) Nope. Not even for a million bucks.

5. The company is down with staff so you're putting in more hours than you used to.

- A) Life can't be smooth sailing all the time. This adversity is actually an opportunity!
- B) My boss promises time-off from work. Okay, not too bad.
- C) That's a sign to hunt for greener pastures.

6. When you're very stressed at work, who do you turn to?

- A) My colleagues give me moral support.
- B) The colleagues I trust, but I depend largely on my friends to whine about work.
- C) My colleagues are out to ruin me! I listen to the voice inside my head.

7. Have you thought about climbing up the ranks in your company?

- A) Yes, even though I'm not the competitive sort.
- B) I want to grow, but I don't know if it's worthwhile to do so in my company.
- C) I did, until I realised that vertical movement is rare for newbies like me.

8. Can you attain "work-life" balance at your current job?

- A) Yes. My boss has no issues with me leaving the office on the dot, as he values my effort on those days when I work overtime.
- B) Not really, but I'm fine with that as my career is top on my priority list.
- C) Yes. My tasks are getting too easy for me. I'm packing my bags 30 minutes before knock-off time!

9. I feel that my employer is not sincere about grooming me in the organisation.

- A) Nah, I'm forgiven for my mistakes and opportunities are never-ending!
- B) I think I just have to be patient. There's hope!
- C) Totally agree. They are sucking my life like marrow from the bones!

10. Do you know what to do if your boss makes a counter offer when you resigned?

- A) Oh man, I wouldn't know what to do.
- B) Is my boss for real? I have doubts.
- C) Thanks, but no thanks!

Mostly As

You're definitely enjoying what you do and have a high threshold for even the most inane matters at work. You're motivated by the company's objectives and their plans for you. Even though you put in extra hours and duties, you take it as a test of your abilities under pressure. Challenges in the job and good colleagues around you keep you sane at work.

Mostly Bs

It's normal for us to ponder about the "What ifs". For instance, "What if I had accepted the other job offer?" Instead, the question we should ask ourselves is "What could be done". Work on improving on your job satisfaction.

Obviously, hate is too strong a word to describe your current livelihood. Accept that because of your learning curve and pace of the company, promotion may not come easily for you. If you're keen on carving a career in the industry, give yourself more time.

Mostly Cs

The mistake most of us make is accepting a job "as it comes" and not being able to approach it positively. Have you put your 100% into this job? And if you have doubts about staying, have you shared your thoughts with your superiors?

People don't necessarily need to have passion in what they do, but they must be satisfied with what their jobs offer. When there are more push factors for you to drop what you do, we can't argue more.