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## Boosting and Measuring Employee Satisfaction

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Employees in technical support tolerate the incessant ringing of phones, interpret ambiguous e-mails, and assist disgruntled customers, amongst other daily activities. Some do it with genuine smiles on their faces, some grin and bear it, and others have a hard time ever discarding their scowls. Why are some support staffs generally happier than others?

HDI wanted to find out what organizations are doing to not only measure employee satisfaction, but also increase it. In February 2011, via an online survey, 222 organizations shared their current employee morale boosting tactics, including specifying those they consider the most effective. This report summarizes those practices and lists detailed morale-boosting strategies used by today's support organizations.

### Survey Results

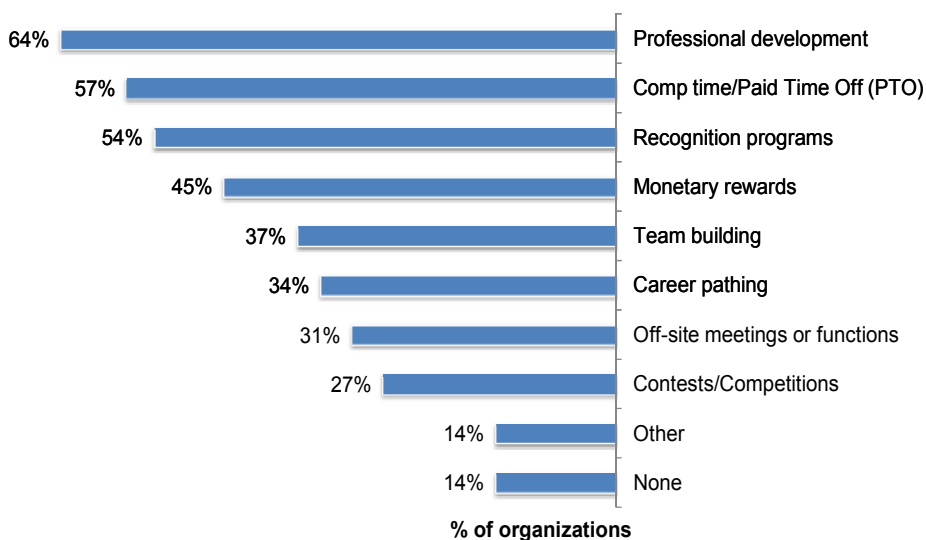
#### *Boosting Employee Satisfaction*

As several survey participants suggested in their comments, each employee is motivated differently. Some organizations have the flexibility to customize their incentives and morale-boosting tactics to address these variations, other do not. For the latter, general satisfaction can best be addressed by finding the methods that have the greatest positive impact for the most people on their staff within their company policies.

About 86 percent of organizations have implemented some type of strategy to improve employee satisfaction. Professional development (training, certification, conferences, etc.) is used by the most organizations (64%), followed by comp time/paid time off (57%), and recognition programs (54%).

While monetary rewards (45%) rank fourth, they are one of the most effective means of boosting morale (see the chart on the following page). Some of the ways organizations are rewarding their staff monetarily are through pay-for-performance incentives, spot bonuses for outstanding work, and annual bonuses and salary increases based on performance. These are individual and/or team-based incentives. Many organizations offer gift cards in various amounts as recognition; one company awards \$2 bills to staff members.

Tactics Used to Increase Employee Satisfaction

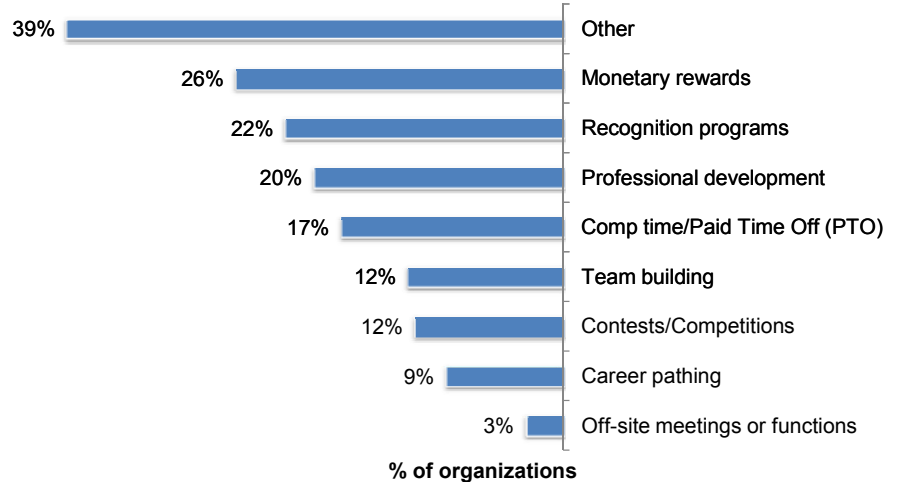


Of the 14 percent who said they use “other” tactics to boost morale, 39 percent believe those are the most effective methods of increasing satisfaction. Some of these include providing formal and informal praise and recognition, reserved/preferred parking, alternate or flexible work schedules, and casual dress days. In addition, many have found that allowing staff to work remotely is an effective means of keeping satisfaction levels high.

Also, it is no surprise that food-related gatherings and events are popular, such as potlucks, donuts on Fridays, birthday celebrations, BBQ cookouts, and boss-buys-lunch days. Another common and important morale booster was communication; open lines of communication, transparency, and personal conversations were all mentioned as contributing to employee satisfaction.

As part of the survey, participants were asked to briefly describe their morale-boosting tactics. Below is a list of some of these practices by category:

**Which is the Most Effective**  
-includes only those who currently use each tactic-



**Professional Development**

- \$1200 per person annually
- \$1500 per year for approved IT training/certification
- 3-year plan to cycle all support center staff through HDI Support Center Analyst class
- 40 hours training/year
- A+ / Net+ for starters
- At least one external class a year
- Career planning
- Certifications
- Certified our Help Desk as HDI Service Center Analysts
- Conferences
- Cross Training
- Development plan which includes training suited to their job and goals
- HDI
- ITIL
- In- house leadership/ team member development
- Internally developed training program
- Online courses
- On-line training
- Salary bonus and increase programs for certain cert levels.
- Technical certifications
- TestOut
- Trade shows and conferences

**Career pathing**

- Ability to post for open higher positions
- Coaching
- Encourage analysts to "build their resume" daily. Have opportunities in other IT departments.
- Defined career path matrix
- Focus on career path
- Individual Development Plans
- Job shadowing
- Managers help with resumes, career pathing and PD plans
- Regular performance development sessions
- Sharing time/job shadowing with other teams

**Contests/Competitions**

- Fitness competitions to help stay in shape
- Cook-off competition
- Customer service week contests
- Halloween costume contest, Iron Chef cooking contest, Hat Day contest
- Internal to service desk
- Focused on objectives
- QA Contests
- SPIRIT events
- Team with highest monthly stats receives lunch
- Wii Tournament

**Comp time/Paid Time Off (PTO)**

- Days off for training
- Recognition days off
- Certificates earned for a day off
- Flexible schedules
- Lieu bank
- Holiday worked time off
- Volunteer days
- Birthdays off
- PTO for high performers
- Earn comp time from contests

**Off-site meetings or functions**

- Use the company box @ local sport event for team event
- Retreats to plan strategy
- Annual Service Group Meeting
- Peer-to-peer training op
- Dinner and lunch gatherings
- Holiday party in December
- Off-site managers meetings
- Off-site staff meetings
- All hands, corporate location
- Quarterly Meetings
- Team Building Events

### **Recognition programs**

Above & Beyond Program  
Recognition at meetings  
Customer "kudos" are laminated with a certificate and presented to employee to hang in cube.  
Employee/Analyst of the period  
Coffee cards for agents based good work  
Corporate tickets to Football, Basketball, Hockey, Auto Racing, etc.  
Customer service super stars share an ice cream cake or dinner  
Deputy minister awards  
Gift card recognition, manager to staff, staff to staff  
Hand written thank you for a job well done  
In Agency Newsletter  
Informal - praise on the spot  
Monthly award of \$20 each available to up to 5 people in all of IT  
Monthly meetings for positive feedback from customers  
Monthly Service Improvement Award  
Paper certificates  
Movie Tickets  
Peer to peer recognition  
Reward & Recognition Program  
Rewards of employee's choice for going the extra mile  
Service Excellence Awards  
Submitted recommendations to HDI  
Most Improved Technician  
Wall of fame

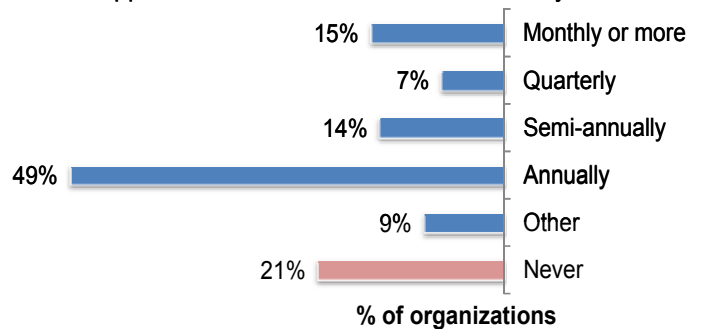
### **Team building**

Analysts in teams to build team cohesion and competition  
Charity initiatives  
Committee promotes employee engagement and organizes fun team building activities and contests.  
Annual Customer Service Week activities  
Annual off-site fun day  
FUN days  
Game days  
Group outings/anniversary lunches  
Meet weekly to stay in touch and share new information.  
Mentoring, idea exchange  
Monthly Activities  
Monthly Celebration  
Pot Luck, All-Hands Meetings  
Quarterly lunches  
Usually touch on a book or article at each meeting  
Team building sessions with purchased materials from HRDQ

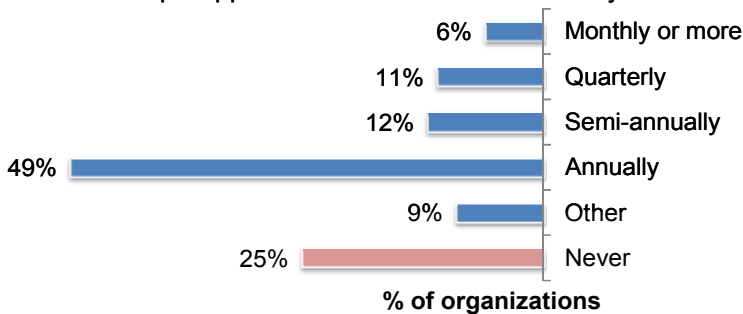
### *Measuring Employee Satisfaction*

To determine if employee satisfaction is increasing, decreasing, or needs improvement, it must be assessed. About 79 percent of organizations are formally assessing support center staff satisfaction; only 75 percent are measuring desktop support staff satisfaction.

**Support Center Staff Satisfaction is Formally Assessed...**



**Desktop Support Staff Satisfaction is Formally Assessed...**



Most organizations that are measuring staff satisfaction are measuring it annually. Many of those who selected "Other" are assessing satisfaction less than annually (e.g., every two or three years) or they are assessing satisfaction informally instead of, or in addition to, formal assessments, through discussions with their staff members.

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