

2015 BEST INDUSTRY RANKING

Employee Engagement
& Satisfaction Across
Industries





EXECUTIVE Summary

All industries are not created equal, or so we tend to assume. Some are thought to be prestigious, others extremely lucrative, and there are always a couple perceived as personally fulfilling. But does any of this make these industry employees happy? Our 2015 Best Industry Ranking Report sets out to answer this very question, comparing 12 distinct industries and exploring what sets them apart.

Interestingly, no one seems to have performed a similar study. But the likely reason became clear as we waded through the data: measurable results require thousands upon thousands of employee responses across a diverse set of industries. TINYpulse was in a unique place to answer this call. With access to over 30,000 employee responses across more than 500 companies collected over the course of 2014, we were distinctly positioned to capture and assess cross-industry employee sentiment.

And the results were startling! Upon ranking industries for overall happiness, it turns out all of our stereotypes and biases were flat-out wrong. Construction & Facilities Services employees ranked #1 for overall employee happiness. Manufacturing, meanwhile, ranked last at #12.

This doesn't mean stop everything and go figure out how to build stuff for a living. Instead, it gives us an opportunity to drill down on what engages these happiest of employees and see how to apply these traits to any work environment. And of course, understand what factors are affecting the bottom-performing industries so they can be turned around.





Peers Drive Satisfaction: 34% of the happiest employees say their peers and colleagues are what drive their workplace satisfaction.



Job Responsibilities Matter: Job fit is key, with nearly 20% of happy employees saying their happiness stems from being energized by their everyday responsibilities.



3 Main Drivers Of Dissatisfaction: The top three drivers of workplace dissatisfaction are having unsupportive managers, not having the tools for success, and lacking opportunities for professional growth.

These findings aren't just curiosities. They are game changers. Factor in the link between employee engagement and [innovation](#), [retention](#), and [revenue](#), and you'll come to one conclusion: organizations that don't invest in their employees and engagement overall are just asking to be outmaneuvered by their savvier, more progressive counterparts. So take note and be ready to ask, "How happy are my employees?"



The **HAPPIEST** (And Unhappiest) **INDUSTRY** **RANKINGS**

Take all your workplace stereotypes and throw them away. An examination of the average employee happiness levels across industries uncovered this surprising finding: employees in Construction & Facilities Services are the happiest group of employees around. Represented by companies that build homes or perform maintenance and landscaping services, just to name a few specialties, this industry group outperforms every other industry on happiness.

HAPPIEST INDUSTRY RANKINGS

- #1 Construction & Facilities Services
- #2 Consumer Products & Services
- #3 Technology & Software
- #4 Telecom, Energy & Utilities
- #5 Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals & Biotech
- #6 Hospitality
- #7 Media & Entertainment
- #8 Finance & Insurance
- #9 Education
- #10 Business Services & Consulting
- #11 Government & Nonprofit
- #12 Manufacturing



And that least happy industry? Ranked 12th, Manufacturing falls behind Finance & Insurance, Education, Business Services & Consulting, and Government & Nonprofit for unhappiness.

There are certainly macro-level drivers impacting these disparities. The Construction industry is **contributing 50% more to the GDP** than Manufacturing, and employees in the Construction field are enjoying **far higher improvements in annual wages**. Seeing your business grow and reaping the fruits of that growth through salary increases will surely drive happiness.

Jay Walter, General Manager of **JWH Group**, an Australian home-building

company and TINYpulse user, offers up a bit more context. Reflecting on what makes his industry unique, Walter notes, “This is an industry that has many walks of life with people working in an office to people out on site. One thing that unites everybody at the end of the day is kicking back for a little bit with a few beers and talking stuff out—the good and the bad. If people have an issue, they will come see a manager during office hours, but sometimes the best environment is when people can relax a bit and just have a drink alongside a manager.”

As we’ll see below, the workplace collegiality that Walter describes plays a huge role in industry satisfaction.





The DRIVERS of INDUSTRY HAPPINESS

After looking at the reasons Construction & Facilities Service employees gave for feeling happy in their workplaces, we found two major drivers:

1. Satisfaction with colleagues
2. Satisfaction with the nature of one's job and projects

Reasons Why Construction & Facilities Services Employees Are Happy At Work





But perhaps these employees say it best:



The biggest reason I would rate my response as [extremely happy] is also the greatest resource that [my company] has—the people whom I work with.

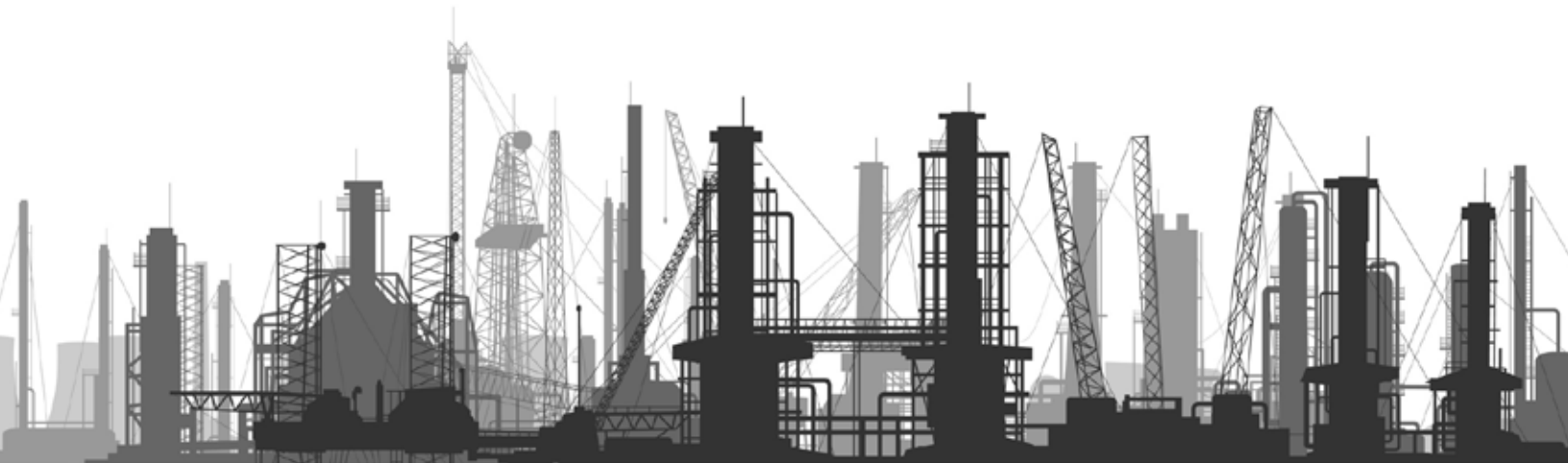
I am really enjoying my role at the moment, very busy, but there are lots of positives and I think things are going in the right direction.

I am very happy at work. I really like what I do, and I get to learn something new every day to improve what I do already. I enjoy my work and working with my coworkers.



Sure, other variables like work environment, professional growth, and the quality of management teams affect happiness. But this evidence shows a disproportionate weight given to colleagues and professional satisfaction.

If you want a positive workplace, employees from the Construction & Facilities Services sector take the following two ideas to heart.





1. Focus On **CULTURAL FIT**

When you interview new job candidates, do you factor in their personality as well as their skill set? When you promote from within, do you factor in their personality as well as their professional accomplishments? If you said “no” to either of these questions, you are failing your culture and your bottom line.

When it comes time to hire candidates, probe on their:

- Process for collaborating on group projects.
- Approach for dealing with pressure in workplace settings.
- Strategies for managing accountability and responsibility.
- Methods for communicating expectations.

And when it comes time to promote candidates, don't forget to consider how they:

- Use praise and recognition.
- Communicate challenges and concerns.
- Guide or mentor their peers and junior colleagues.
- Manage up and down the organization.

If you want a positive, collaborative environment, then you must hire and promote only those people who exhibit these traits. Do otherwise and you'll just be hurting your company in the long run.



2. Focus On **EMPLOYEE-JOB FIT**

Sometimes you make a great hire ... who hates their day-to-day responsibilities. This challenge is particularly common with more junior employees who are still learning what they love and hate to do. They may have said “yes” to a job, only to realize it bores them to death.

This leaves you with two options: wait for them to quit, or work with them to adjust their long-term responsibilities. If you’ve found the perfect cultural fit, think long and hard if you’re willing to let that person give you their two weeks’ notice.

Consider working with them to see what energizes them about their role and what drags them down. Over time, as new opportunities arise in your department or company as a whole, a better fit might appear. Your company gets to keep a stellar colleague, and your new hire gets the professional growth they’re looking for.



Cultural fit is something our research has continued to prove separates high-performance organizations from their lower-performing counterparts. Yet, too often companies hire solely on skills, abilities and intelligence rather than focusing on what really matters—having a passion for work and a positive attitude towards peers and customers.

Kevin Oakes, Chief Executive Officer, i4cp



A COUNTERPOINT: What Brings Employees DOWN

What drives employees to be unhappy at work? We drilled down into individual responses from employees in the Manufacturing sector, the unhappiest industry on our list, to see what exactly is bringing them down.

Top 5 Drivers of Manufacturing Employee Unhappiness

- #1 Unsupportive manager
- #2 Lack of tools and resources to complete the job
- #3 Little opportunity for professional growth
- #4 Poor internal processes and systems
- #5 Dissatisfaction with colleagues

Once again, employees are the best at explaining their discontent:

“My management team does not treat me with respect in front of my peers.

It's really not fun to have to do the job of other departments because they lack the resources to do it, especially when your own team is starving for resources as well.

I don't feel like there is much career growth and my manager(s) are not supportive of my growth.

Procedures are rarely the same for more than 2 days running as ideas and speculations change and with no real thought process of how it should be done we end up chasing our tails the majority of the time.





Dan Davis, Editor in Chief of the [Fabricators & Manufacturers Association](#), adds additional insight into this dissatisfaction. “Most people think of manufacturing as taking place in dark and dingy environments, which was probably true 50 years ago. However, today these facilities have modern lighting systems that offer incredible visibility, and employees are working with cutting-edge equipment that might have cost thousands of dollars. Some facilities have not made these investments, so their employees may not see the benefit. Also, if a company is not taking the time to have safety meetings or invest in safety guards to protect employees, will employees think that they have an employer that is looking after them? Probably not.”

Stephen Lobis, President of [Rose City Printing & Packaging](#), one of the few

Manufacturing companies using TINYpulse to receive high happiness scores, was quick to point out the role managers have in impacting employee satisfaction. According to Lobis, “The primary job of [manufacturing managers] is to make employees’ lives easier. Always ask for their thoughts on how to solve a problem. Always follow up with people on their ideas for improvement.” Employees whose managers don’t follow this approach are likely the ones reporting dissatisfaction.

Core to Lobis’ perspective is that managers cannot make blind guesses as to what is or is not plaguing their organizations. The onus is on managers to proactively ask employees what their pain points really are. When you leverage anonymous employee survey tools like [TINYpulse](#), you receive candid, valuable, and actionable feedback.



The reality is that many employees are not comfortable speaking up in staff meetings or directly to supervisors about workplace concerns. By offering them a completely confidential means of sharing feedback, supervisors will be in the know, and will be more confident making the right managerial and business decisions.

Kevin Sheridan, Best-Selling Employee Engagement Author and Leadership Consultant



Consider just some of the simple questions you could pose:

1

On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you at work?

2

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the performance of your direct supervisor?

3

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much opportunity do you have for professional growth in this organization?

4

What drives you crazy here and decreases your productivity?

5

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your colleagues and team members?

The sooner you start asking, the sooner you'll know what really irks your employees. And the sooner you'll be able to tackle the issues that stand in the way of higher employee engagement.



The **LARGER FACTORS** That Drive Employee **HAPPINESS**

The happiest and least happy industries are one thing. But what about trends as a whole? Looking at the top three and bottom three industries shows clear disparities along several dimensions.

Industry Responses On A 1-10 Scale



If the breakdowns above are surprising, they shouldn't be. Consider the data from our 2014 [Employee Engagement & Organizational Culture Report](#) and internal research:

- **Peers Are Key:** Colleagues are the number one driver of employees going the extra mile. Organizations with lackluster interpersonal relationships are bound to be less satisfying work environments.



- **Direct Supervisors:** It is often said people don't quit a job; they quit their boss. With 49% of employees showing levels of dissatisfaction with their direct supervisor, it comes as no surprise that unhappier employees are hit hard by a negative supervisor relationship.
- **Organizational Culture:** There is an epidemic of poor work cultures, with 64% of all employees reporting that they do not have a strong work culture. It's no wonder unhappy employees are suffering most from this trend.
- **Recognition:** Recognition drives employees to work hard and feel valued, yet nearly three out of four employees don't feel fully recognized for doing great work. This dearth of recognition is most present in unhappy industries.
- **Transparency:** Transparency is the #1 factor contributing to employee happiness. Organizations that fail

to share information and trends will have unhappy employees.

If you think happiness is just a fluffy measure, consider this sobering disparity: our data shows that happier employees are nearly 20% more likely to see themselves working for their employer in one year than their unhappy counterparts. And if you don't have a fear of attrition, let's put some **costs behind that employee loss:**

- The cost of losing an employee making less than \$50,000 annually is 20% of their salary, or about \$10,000.
- Senior leaders leaving their employer can cost the organization 213% of their annual salary. For an executive making \$200,000 per year, that's a \$426,000 hit to the P&L.

Start paying attention to these factors. If you don't, your employees will walk out the door, and you will be scrambling to make up those costs.



This research shows that companies in any industry can build an engaged workplace if they understand how. The three big drivers are job and team fit, organizational culture, and leadership. When leaders look holistically and focus on these issues, companies can have an opportunity to build a fantastic place to work.

*Josh Bersin, Principal & Founder, Bersin by Deloitte,
Deloitte Consulting LLP*



WHAT NOW? How Can We Actually IMPROVE Our Workplaces?

While the quick answer might seem to jump ship for those seemingly happy industries, the truth is that all organizations have the potential to be fulfilling and satisfying work environments. The secret lies in paying greater attention to those factors that influence workplace satisfaction:

CULTURE FIT



Hiring and promoting for culture fit will go a long way to creating the type of environment that embraces change, innovation, and collegiality. You'll end up with positive, motivated employees and the right senior leaders to guide them forward.

Support employees in their evolution. As you get to know them better, and they get to know their interests better, work with them to find a job that fits them perfectly. Productivity will go up, and they'll be happy to stick around for the long haul.

PROFESSIONAL EVOLUTION





EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION TOOLS



When all employees are encouraged to spread positivity, a lot can be done to turn lackluster cultures around. Embrace recognition tools that let managers and peers give each other high fives.

Given the clear link between transparency and employee happiness managers would be wise to clearly communicate expectations and find opportunities to share challenges and opportunities facing the organization as a whole.

OPEN COMMUNICATION



But more than anything, embrace asking your employees what's on their minds. While these factors are likely impacting your employees' satisfaction, the truth is that there may be more endemic issues unique to your workplace.

You can't change what you don't know. And you don't know what you don't measure. So start measuring your culture. If you want to attract the best, brightest, and most engaging employees, your culture is one of the strongest recruiting and retention tools around. Culture is the ultimate competitive advantage. Embrace this fact, and you will outperform your competitors for years to come.

