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Employees happier now than five years ago

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By Vanessa Ho

According to a survey conducted by The Beacon Group of 31,000 employees across North America, 60 per cent of employees said they were satisfied with their workplace in 2007, which was up from 54 per cent in 2002.

Leading the way to this contentment was better compensation as well as the feeling of greater control over their future and more support in carrying out their tasks.

"Workplace satisfaction is becoming an important issue with management at many companies" said Shannon Couch, vice-president of product planning and development at The Beacon Group, in a statement. "As retirements soar, companies are starting to understand that satisfaction equals retention of talent, and that has a direct impact on the bottom line."

The survey evaluated respondents on 12 key workplace issues, including sense of belonging, teamwork, communication, leadership and compensation.

In terms of compensation and career development, respondents across the continent said those areas have improved considerably in the workplace over the past five years. 56 per cent of employees were satisfied with their compensation and career development at their companies in 2007 compared to 49 per cent in 2002.

When it came to having more control over their careers, 61 per cent of respondents said they were able to shape their future at work, which is up 54 per cent from 2002.

Workplace support satisfaction in the form of leadership, training, feedback and recognition also increased steadily with an 11 per cent increase in satisfied respondents up from 50 per cent in 2002 to 61 per cent in 2007.

"Employers are realizing the importance of developing their leaders, providing feedback and most of all recognition in the workplace" said Couch.

Basic workplace satisfaction also improved significantly in 2007 with 64 per cent of employees saying they were satisfied with teamwork, collaboration and communication, up from 59 per cent in 2002.

"Overall workplace trends are looking healthy," Couch said. "But there's no guarantee things will stay where they are with looming financial pressures and increased retirement."