

# The Vector Poll™

Vector Research + Development Inc.

101 Gordon Road, Toronto, ON, M2P 1E5  
Tel 416 733 2320 [www.vectorresearch.com](http://www.vectorresearch.com)

## ***Love my job, but if you hear of anything...***

By Marc Zwelling  
President  
The Vector Poll™

Do you like your job? According to an Angus Reid Institute poll conducted last year, 74 per cent of Canadian workers are satisfied with their “current employment situation overall.”

- 64 per cent are satisfied with their pay and benefits
- 69 per cent are satisfied with their workload and on-the-job stress
- 72 per cent are satisfied with their job security

Surveys on job satisfaction are misleading. They understate the true level of employee discontent. Employers appear to have created great working conditions because unhappy employees have left for more rewarding careers. They turn up as happy workers in other workplaces.

Yet even workers who are satisfied are not necessarily engaged in their jobs. EKOS Research asked a cross-section of Canadian employees in 2012, “How often do you look forward to going to work?”

Among workers aged 55 to 64, just 23 per cent said they always look forward to it. Among 18-to-34-year-old employees, even fewer — 12 per cent — said they can’t wait to get to work.

Though we’re happy enough at work, we’re still looking around. Job-search websites such as Indeed.ca, Workopolis.com and Monster.ca make it easy to trawl for new jobs during our breaks or even when we should be working.

The Angus Reid Institute poll found that while three quarters of employees are satisfied, 63 per cent say they are interested in “a significant career change.” Some 26 per cent are “very interested” in working at something else.

Other employee research reveals that employers set a low bar if they want workers to be merely satisfied.

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Despite the smiley faces in the statistics, millions of workers are hardly thrilled with their conditions. Barely 20 per cent are “very satisfied” overall with their current job.

Only 17 per cent are very satisfied with their pay and benefits.

Only 14 per cent are very satisfied with their “opportunities for advancing” their career in their current job.

These findings generally mirror the results of a Vector Poll™ conducted in 2013. It found employees across the country were happiest with their workplace safety and health conditions, their ability to balance their jobs and family demands, and the sense of accomplishment they get from their job.

They were unhappiest with their pension plans, their opportunities for promotion and their chances to take part in decisions that affect their job.

Money does buy happiness on the job — at least some happiness. The Reid poll shows that generally the higher your annual earnings the more satisfied you are with most aspects of your job — not only your pay but also your workload, job security and the ability to balance family and career demands.

But no measure of job satisfaction illustrates workers’ real convictions as much as asking what they would rather do. Nearly eight in 10 Canadians have wanted to be their own boss. According to an Ipsos poll in 2016, 77 per cent at one point in their life wanted to work for themselves. Nearly 2.8 million people are self-employed, but that’s only 15 per cent of all employees. If self-employment is their dream job, disappointment is rampant.

When Ipsos asked people why want to work for themselves, among those would-be freelancers and entrepreneurs 61 per cent cited the chance to set their own hours. Half said they could make more money if they worked for themselves. Nearly eight in 10 thought they would be more productive and motivated if they didn’t have to report to a boss.

These surveys reveal that Canadians are using only some of their skills and only part of the vast discretionary effort they could apply on the job. If management created more opportunities to do what we’re particularly good at, we’d love our work.

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Marc Zwelling is the founder of the Vector Poll™ ([www.vectorresearch.com](http://www.vectorresearch.com)) and author of Public Opinion and Polling For Dummies (Wiley, 2012).