

“Are you job-satisfied?”

New information to help leaders and managers struggling to engage their people (and themselves!)

***Quarterly summary of key findings from the
Leadership Management Australasia (LMA)
Leadership, Employment and Direction (L.E.A.D.) Survey
March/April 2011***

Overview

New findings from LMA’s latest Leadership, Employment and Direction (L.E.A.D) Survey reveal that almost 60% of the workforce – leaders, managers AND non-managerial employees alike - either hate their jobs or have a ho-hum attitude, while the rest really love their work or gain satisfaction from it. These attitudes are having a detrimental effect on productivity across the board. Peeling back the layers, we discover what is causing people to feel badly about their positions.

These issues are among the most profound to emerge from the quarterly summary of the L.E.A.D. Survey and they present leaders and managers with an important opportunity to review their own attitudes to their work and to the people they work with...

“With so many people either hating or being ambivalent about their work, there’s little wonder Australasia’s productivity is languishing. A predominant percentage of the workforce is performing at a level of personal productivity below their capability. There are just too many people with a ho-hum attitude, too many just going through the motions and dragging the chain.”

Grant Sexton, Executive Chairman, LMA

Read on to discover how to deal with a lack of engagement...

About the Leadership, Employment and Direction (L.E.A.D.) Survey

LMA's L.E.A.D. survey is a **year-round survey** of people working at all levels within organisations in Australia and New Zealand. It focuses on the issues, needs and expectations of employees, frontline managers, supervisors and business leaders and senior managers.

The survey has been conducted since 2000, predominantly as an annual survey, and provides a sound basis for identifying different perspectives from several key organisational audiences. It is now being conducted entirely online to maximise the opportunity for people to be involved.

Adopting a consistent approach over the last decade, supplemented by strategic evolutions and changes, the survey delivers a **comprehensive data source** and **trend information** that few other surveys can match.

In addition to providing the **most up-to-date picture** of life in today's organisations via responses from the three key audiences (Non-Managerial Employees, Frontline Managers / Supervisors, Business Leaders / Senior Managers) it identifies commonalities, differences and major gaps as well as areas for stronger connection and collaboration.

Further, it provides the **ability to predict** where organisations may need to change, evolve or simply consolidate to provide the environment that employees want to be part of into the future.

The audience for the research is drawn from organisations of all **types** (public, private, quasi-government, franchises, not for profit), **sizes** (micro, small, medium, large), **locations** (metropolitan and regional) and **industries** (20+ sectors).

The diversity and mix of those involved is one of the features of the survey and their response provides the foundation for trend analysis, gap analysis and robust assessments of the current state of play in Australia and New Zealand.

In the latest L.E.A.D. Survey, reported in this summary, the total number of participants involved was **3,484**:

- Business Leaders / Senior Managers – 500
- Middle Managers / Supervisors – 1,117
- Non-managerial Employees – 1,867

Sample sizes of this scale provide robust data and present a very accurate picture of the current state of play in organisations overall and within key sub-groupings. The margin of sampling error at a total sample level is less than 4%.

The profile of the audience in the latest survey is as follows:

Organisation type

- Government/quasi (13%), Public Company (29%), Private Company (46%), Franchise (2%), Not for Profit (4%)

Location

- Metropolitan Australia (61%), Regional Australia (25%), New Zealand (14%)

The profile of the respondents by level in the latest survey is as follows:

Gender

- Leaders – Male – 77% / Female – 23%
- Managers – Male – 75% / Female – 25%
- Non-managerial Employees – Male – 59% / Female – 41%

Age

- Leaders – U/35 years – 16%, 35-44 years – 38%, 45-54 years – 35%, 55+ years – 11%
- Managers – U/35 years – 29%, 35-44 years – 37%, 45-54 years – 26%, 55+ years – 8%
- Non-managerial Employees – U/35 years – 42%, 35-44 years – 30%, 45-54 years – 20%, 55+ years – 8%

The survey design and implementation is **overseen by an experienced, independent research practitioner** and the systems and process used to conduct the survey ensure **valid, reliable and representative samples**.

The audience is designed to replicate the structure and nature of organisations at an overall level to create an appropriate representation of the population of people working in organisations across Australia and New Zealand.

The Big Picture...job satisfaction – not all that satisfying really...

According to the first quarter of Leadership Management Australasia’s L.E.A.D. (Leadership Employment & Direction) Survey for 2011, almost 60% of the workforce either hate their jobs or have a ho-hum attitude while the rest really love their work or gain satisfaction from it:

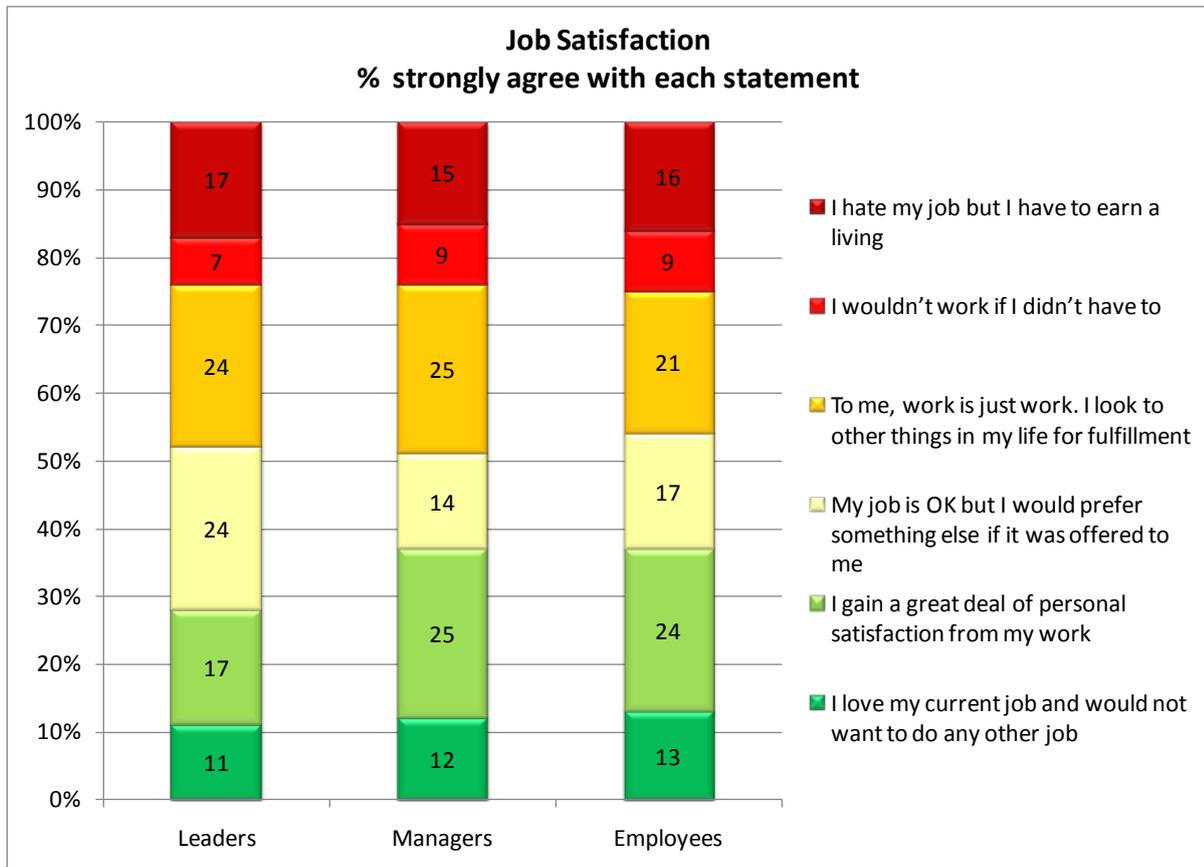


Figure 1: Q. For each statement, please click one answer to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement?

Of greatest concern is the fact that one in six people in the workforce hate their jobs, but say they still have to earn a living. This includes 17% of Business Leaders and Senior Managers, 15% of Middle and Frontline Managers and 16% of other employees.

Nearly half the Leaders and Senior Managers have only a neutral view of their jobs (48%). They look for fulfillment in other parts of their lives or find their job ‘okay’ but would prefer to be doing something else. A sizeable proportion of Middle and Frontline Managers (39%) and Employees (38%) also feel the same way.

At the opposite end of the scale, only 28% of Leaders said they loved their jobs or gained a great deal of satisfaction from the work they do. Engagement with current roles was notably higher for Middle Level Managers (37%) and Employees (37%).

“Organisations need to engage their leaders because they in turn influence the engagement, morale, productivity and commitment of the greater workforce. With Australia facing overall skill and talent shortages for the future, we can’t afford to have such high levels of disengagement and low workplace commitment. Not only are organisations suffering in the area of productivity they are also still shouldering the added cost of staff turnover.”

Grant Sexton, Executive Chairman, LMA

Let’s explore and understand these key issues through a closer look at the L.E.A.D. survey results with a view to equipping leaders and managers with some strategies and actions to address the key issues evident in this quarter’s results.

So, why the long face?

The reported lack of job satisfaction appears to derive from a number of areas – all of which can be addressed and overcome. For Leaders/Senior Managers and Managers/Supervisors, work/life imbalance, the difficulties of finding and retaining quality staff and high staff turnover are central to a lack of job satisfaction.

Amongst Non-Managerial Employees, lack of job satisfaction seems to stem from a lack of recognition and reward and, to a lesser extent, a lack of opportunity to develop with the organisation. It remains the case that more than 80% of employees would like to develop and progress with their current organisation but only around 60% feel this is possible.

So let’s look at each of these areas in turn...

1. Work / life balance – the balancing act of balancing acts

Leaders with negative attitudes to their jobs work the same number of hours as those with neutral or positive views (around 50 hours a week). But importantly they don't feel they have the right balance between work and other aspects of their lives (49% compared to 60% for those with neutral or positive attitudes).

Managers with negative attitudes to their jobs are also working the same number of hours as those with neutral or positive views (around 49 hours a week), but they too don't feel they have the right balance between work and other aspects of their lives (52% compared to 58% for those with positive attitudes):

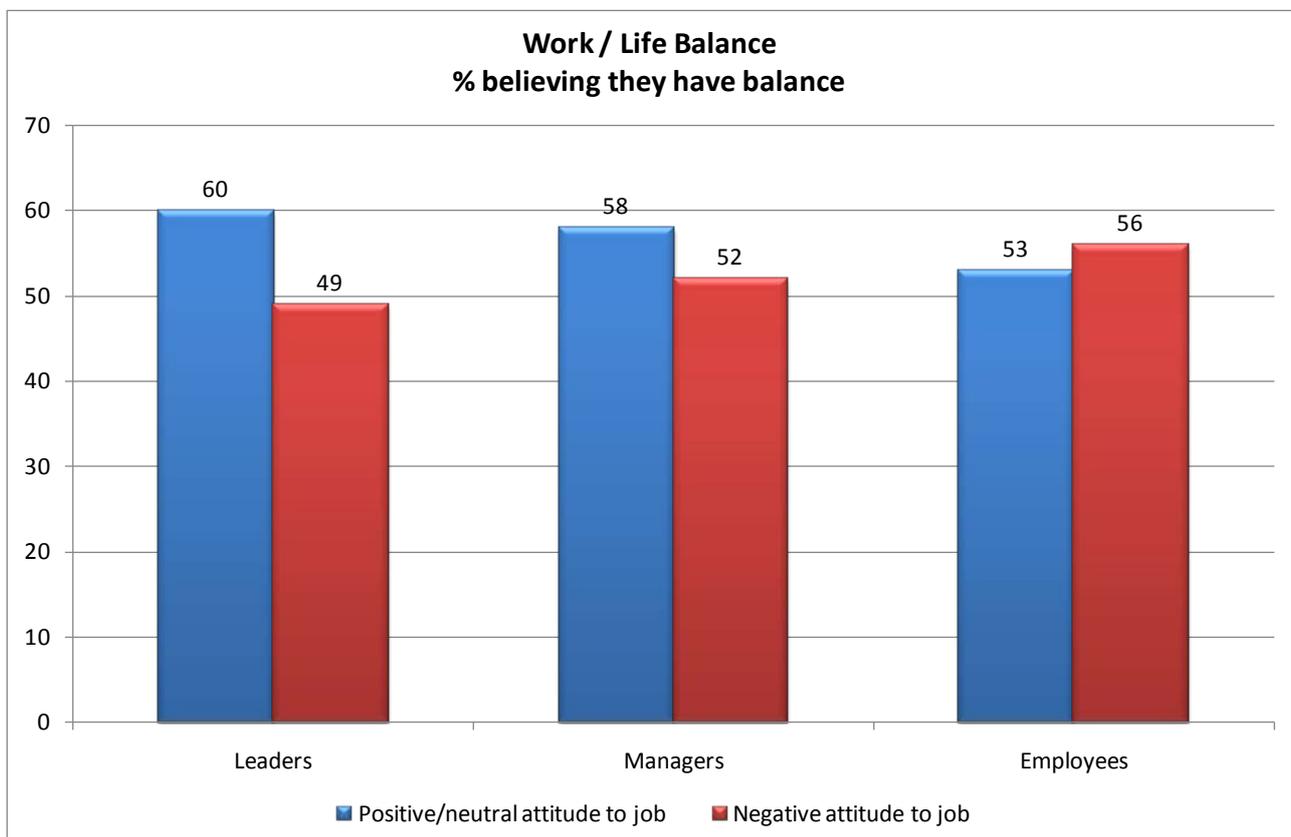


Figure 2: Q. Do you feel you have the right balance between work and other aspects of your life at present?

What should leaders and managers do?

Leaders and managers need to recognise the impact that a lack of work-life balance can have on their attitude to their job and their work – and be aware of the impression they give off to others when they experience a lack of balance.

Consider the following actions to correct the balance:

- ✓ Establish what your imperative and important tasks / activities / decisions are for a given day and prepare a plan to work through and achieve them. When you've achieved what you wanted to (or done so to your satisfaction), leave on time (or early if you're permitted to), go for a run, do whatever fulfils the other part of work/life balance – the life part.
- ✓ During the day, manage / control interruptions to or deviations from your plan – remember you are the only person who can control your time. Holding firm to your plan will mean you achieve your aims for the day and can depart when you've successfully completed what you planned to complete.
- ✓ Periodically (at least one a day ideally) take a step back from the work and take time out to reflect on what's important to you. Think about yourself as a Total Person – rounded, fulfilled in all areas of your life, not just focussed around financial and career aspects. Be prepared to change your attitude and behaviours to correct any imbalance.

“As leaders and managers, we are people with lives first and workers with jobs second – one should not and need not dominate the other – balance comes from each being present in the right proportions”

Grant Sexton, Executive Chairman, LMA

2. Finding and retaining good people – holding the fort AND the troops

Leaders with negative attitudes to their jobs believe it is harder for them to find good people (89% hard) compared to those with positive (75% hard) or neutral (63% hard) attitudes to their jobs. The challenge of finding the right people appears to wear leaders down and impact negatively on their job satisfaction.

Likewise, Leaders with negative attitudes to their jobs believe it is harder to retain good people (46%) compared to Leaders with positive (40%) or neutral (40%) attitudes – clearly the pressure of talent management is felt at both ends of the scale – attraction and retention.

The results for Managers echo those of Leaders – those with negative attitudes to their jobs believe it is harder for them to find good people (82% hard) compared to those with positive (75%) or neutral (73%) attitudes to their jobs. And Managers with negative attitudes to their jobs believe it is harder to retain good people (56%) compared to those with Managers with positive (41%) or neutral (50%) attitudes.

What should leaders and managers do?

Leaders and managers need to reflect on how their own attitudes, and the signals they give off to current and prospective employees, can affect willingness to join or stay with an organisation. Employees will look to leaders and managers as exemplars of the desired attitudes and behaviours and model themselves accordingly.

Consider the following actions to ensure you project the right impression:

- ✓ Develop a keen awareness of how you project – how do others see you, how do you see yourself, what needs to change in order to project desirable traits? Self-awareness is the starting point for action to correct any areas of weakness or blind-spots.
- ✓ Seek regular feedback to help modify or refine your attitudes and approaches. Be willing to listen to what others have to say about you, remembering that people join organisations and leave managers – if you are not fulfilling their expectations as a leader or manager, they may have one eye on the door.
- ✓ Make a commitment to yourself to do what is needed to convey the right impression – making the choice to change in response to feedback is essential – if you are unwilling to consider change, you may very quickly find yourself facing an even tougher job of finding and retaining quality people.

3. Staff turnover – time to turn over a new leaf?

Leaders who feel it is hard to find good people are reporting higher levels of staff turnover (13.4%) than those who find it easier (8.9%). Leaders who feel it is hard to retain good people are also reporting higher levels of staff turnover (16.8%) than those who find it easier (9.3%). They've got a double-whammy of pressure coming from the difficulties of finding and retaining staff expressed in the form of higher staff turnover.

Managers facing hardship in retaining good people also report higher levels of staff turnover (19.4%) than those who find it easier (12.8%).

Staff turnover occurs for many reasons which leaders and managers ought to be aware of and be able to respond to and combat. Often, when a team member leaves an organisation, it's not until an exit interview is undertaken that the underlying reasons are discovered – and all too often, the reasons could have been addressed and the issues overcome to retain that valuable team member.

Consider the following reasons cited by employees for considering a new job elsewhere:

Reasons for considering a new job in another organisation	
<i>Base – Employees at all levels (n=1,114)</i>	%
Better salary/pay	51
Better opportunities for career development/growth	32
More interesting or challenging position/role/work	30
Lost interest in previous position/role/work	23
Lack of reassurance about career path	14
More flexible working conditions	11
Don't/didn't like my manager	9
Better opportunities for training and professional development	8
Don't/didn't like my current organisation	5
Another reason	16

Table 1: Q. Which TWO of the following would you say were the main reasons for considering, looking for, applying for or taking up a job in another organisation?

Employees with negative attitudes to their job are more likely to cite better salary/pay as a reason for looking elsewhere (56%) compared to those with positive (50%) or neutral (56%) attitudes to their jobs. They are less likely to be looking on the basis of better opportunities for career growth and development (28% compared to 37% for those with positive attitude).

What should leaders and managers do?

- ✓ Take the time to get to know and understand the motivations of the key people in your team – what makes them tick, what influences their performance, what makes them want to stay and develop with the organisation rather than want to move.
- ✓ Reflect on the reasons why people consider moving or actually move jobs – salary/pay, opportunities for growth, challenge – what are you doing to fulfil these clear expectations of a job that will keep someone focussed and dedicated to high performance?
- ✓ Identify the change or changes needing to be made in order to ensure you're not pre-disposing people to consider alternative employment. Remember, according to this latest LMA L.E.A.D. Survey, half the workforce has considered looking a job elsewhere in the last six months and 13% have actually applied for one.

Summary

The latest findings from LMA's L.E.A.D. Survey remind leaders and managers of the importance of getting to know and understand the people and motivations across all levels in the organisation. With understanding comes a greater appreciation of our own role and avenues to fulfil that role – to project the desired impressions to others, to lead by example in terms of work-life balance and to be aware and responsive to attract and retain quality staff. Importantly, it can reverse negative attitudes to work and make the role more fulfilling for the leader or manager.

If you would like to improve engagement in your organisation contact an LMA representative in your area today toll free on (AU) 1800 333 270 or (NZ) 0800 333 270, or email us at info@lma.biz