

What's Important to You in a Job?



When it comes to finding a new job, the most successful seekers know that the best jobs are not always just about salary. The truth is, there are a lot of factors that go into every great opportunity, and these are not always the same for everyone. If you are looking for a new job or career, the important thing is that you know what your priorities are before you start your job search. Doing so might just save you from regretting your decision in the future. Consider the following workplace values.

Salary

While salary isn't everything, it is important. After all, you can't use your health care to buy groceries. But you need to determine just how important it is to you. Start by figuring out just how much you need or want to make to be happy. How much do you need to pay your bills, have some fun and still save for the future? Then ask yourself how much extra you need above and beyond the basics in order for you to be truly satisfied. Once you have a range in mind, you can use it to help guide your search.

Benefits

While salary is the top dog for some, the quality of benefits ranks higher for others. Think about your life and figure out what kind of benefits are really important to you. If you have a history of health problems, you should make sure your company's health care plan is one that offers low co-pays and provides affordable access to specialists. Check to see if the company offers flexible spending accounts for uncovered out-of-pocket expenses. Are you a woman who is planning on starting a family? If so, you should learn about and understand the company's maternity benefits. If you are not sure exactly which benefits you need or what kinds of benefits are available, you can look at leading companies' Web sites.

Family-Related Factors

For some, a company's family friendliness is not a factor. However, it is a major issue for others. Do you need a company that can give you a flexible schedule? Do you want a company that puts an emphasis on work/life balance? Some companies offer family-related services such as on-site childcare, flexible scheduling, dependent care reimbursement accounts and more. Other companies do not put as much of an emphasis on families. Make sure you know what you are looking for in this area.

Retirement

Retirement is something many younger workers neglect to think about, but it's an important area to consider. Perhaps having a higher-than-average salary is not as important to you as ensuring that you're taken care of down the line. If so, you need to look closely at the company's retirement plan. Does it offer a matching 401(k) program? What about profit sharing, pension or stock options? Most companies have some method of helping employees plan for the future - make sure you pay attention to this factor.

Location

While location sounds like a secondary factor, it can be a major deal maker or breaker for some. Do you live in a city with a great deal of traffic? Is there access to public transportation? Would you mind spending two hours in the car each day getting to and from work? Some people don't mind a long commute, but others shudder at the thought. If you are someone who can't stand being in the car for long periods of time, make sure you don't settle for a job that is 40 miles away.

Vacation

While some individuals do not need much time off during the year, others desperately need vacation time to re-energize. If vacation time is important to you, make sure you know how much you are getting and whether or not you can actually use it. Vacation is one area in which prospects can often negotiate when getting a higher salary is out of the question.



Other Factors

Do you have other personal priorities you need to consider? What about training and educational opportunities? Or how about actual work hours? At some companies, working 50 to 55 hours a week is the norm, while others have employees punching the clock at exactly 40. Is it a big deal to you to work overtime? What about the overall work environment? Do you want a big corporate campus complete with a cafeteria, company convenience store, and maybe even a health club, or will you be happy in a small office with 10 employees?

The bottom line is that knowing what your priorities are at the beginning of your job search will help you make sure you are moving in the right direction and focusing your energy on jobs that will truly meet your needs.

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