



2018

State of the **OFFICE MANAGER** Report

SNACKNATION

Introduction



First things first - congratulations! Whether you've read our inaugural State of the Office Manager Report and are eager to see what's new, or if you're downloading this year's report for the first time, the fact that you're reading this right now demonstrates a commitment to your team, your career, and yourself that's worth commending. So give yourself a well deserved pat on the back. (We'll wait.)

Before we get into the nitty gritty, a bit about our goals and how this report came about.

What is the State of the Office Manager Report?

At SnackNation, we're fortunate to be able to work directly with thousands of amazing Office Managers across the U.S. In fact, a big reason we do what we do is to make life a little bit easier for folks like you.

But the more we learned about Office Managers, the more the following paradox became apparent: while it was obvious that scope and complexity of the Office Manager role has been steadily increasing in recent years, the importance of Office Managers was barely acknowledged - let alone celebrated.

When it came to detailed analysis, or even just a nuanced understanding of this mission-critical role, there just wasn't anything out there.

So we created it - a first of its kind report that not only analyzed thousands of data points from actual Office Managers, but recognized the role's elevated status in business. We called it The State of the Office Manager report.

The response was overwhelming. Not only did Office Managers love the insights and tactics within, but the report also connected Office Managers around the U.S. Through our State of the Office Manager webinars and [Facebook communities](#), Office Managers were able to share best practices, pose questions to one another, and even swap war stories.

So our goals are simply this - first to provide Office Managers around the country with data, insights, tools, and best practices, so that they can continue to provide more and more value to their companies and help them reach their own personal and professional goals; and second to celebrate the Office Manager, shining a light on the men and women who don't always get their due, despite doing so much to help their companies succeed.

What's New in This Year's Report?

Our first report surprised even us.

We *thought* we knew how valuable Office Managers are. But after going through the results, it turns out that the role is even more varied and rigorous than we had imagined.

For the inaugural report, we focused on the Office Manager's place within the organization. Our data showed that the Office Manager role was increasingly involved in defining and maintaining company culture, values, and the office environment itself. This tracked back to the elevated importance of culture in companies generally. While we continue to explore these issues in the 2018 report, this year we went slightly more granular on the individual Office Managers themselves.

While we continue to explore these issues in the 2018 report, this year we went slightly more granular on the individual Office Managers themselves.

What do you care most about?

What keeps you up at night?

How do you view the role's importance within the organization?

What does career advancement look like to you?

What are the skills and tools that are most critical for your success?

How do you define success in the first place?

So in our second go-round, we made sure to ask a slate of new questions that focused on who you are, what you care about, and how you provide value to your organizations.

Another thing we learned last year - one of the defining features of the Office Manager role is that it touches nearly every department and every team member. In fact, it's really all about supporting the team. So we wanted to know, how does the size and character of an organization affect an Office Manager's effectiveness? Her perception of the role? Her salary?

This year we sourced some not-so-obvious tools that the top Office Managers use to provide the most value in the role. We've also incorporated advanced tactics and tips from interviews we've conducted with actual Office Managers, or sourced from our Facebook group.



**Join our private FB Group for Office Managers,
where you can connect with other high performers
around the country, get questions answered by
the community, and get access to tons of valuable
resources and content.**

[Join Now](#)

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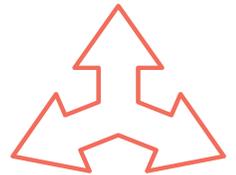
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THE TOP TEN INSIGHTS FROM THE 2018 STATE OF THE OFFICE MANAGER REPORT

1

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE OFFERS MULTIPLE PATHS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT.

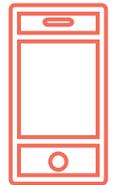
44% of respondents said they believe being an OM is a career path in its own right, while 33% believe it's a stepping stone to figure out another role at their current company.



2

COMMUNICATION AND COMPENSATION ARE TOP CHALLENGES.

The top three challenges over the next 12 months include “negotiating better compensation” (43% rated it a 4 or 5), followed by “poorly defined goals or expectations for my role” (26% rated it a 4 or 5), followed by “improving communication” (26% rated it a 4 or 5).



3

OFFICE MANAGERS ARE A WELL EDUCATED BUNCH.

64% of all Office Managers have a college degree.



4

COMPENSATION REMAINS A STICKING POINT.

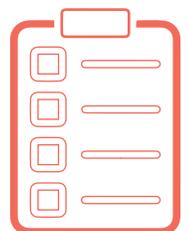
The average compensation for Office Managers is \$55,804. 50% of OM's don't believe they're being paid fairly.



5

EFFICIENCY, MORALE, AND STAYING ORGANIZED ARE TOP PRIORITIES.

The top three priorities over the next 12 months are “implementing new processes to my job easier/more streamlined” (61% rated it a 4 or 5), followed by “improving morale across the team” (59% rated it a 4 or 5), followed by “creating a more organized workplace” (53% rated it a 4 or 5).



TOP 10 INSIGHTS FROM THE 2018 STATE OF THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT REPORT

6

GROWTH AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE HAVE ONLY GOTTEN HARDER.

“Finding growth opportunities within the company” and “disconnecting from work outside of work” are rated the top two things that are harder to do now as compared to 2-3 years ago.



7

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION TOOLS ARE INCREASING OFFICE MANAGERS' EFFECTIVENESS.

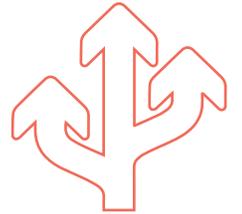
Some not so obvious tools that OM's find useful: Trello, Slack, Asana, Dropbox, Evernote, Expensify, and Wunderlist.



8

VERSATILITY IS AN OFFICE MANAGERS GREATEST STRENGTH.

“Being flexible & adaptable” is rated the #1 most important skill to master as an Office Manager (43%).



9

ADDING VALUE TO THE TEAM IS WHAT OFFICE MANAGERS LOVE THE MOST.

“Being someone in the office that people rely on” is voted as the #1 thing that OM's enjoy the most about their job (29%).



10

...BUT NOT EVERYONE SEES THAT VALUE - AND IT HURTS.

“Feeling undervalued/unappreciated by my coworkers” is voted as the thing that OM's least enjoy about their job.





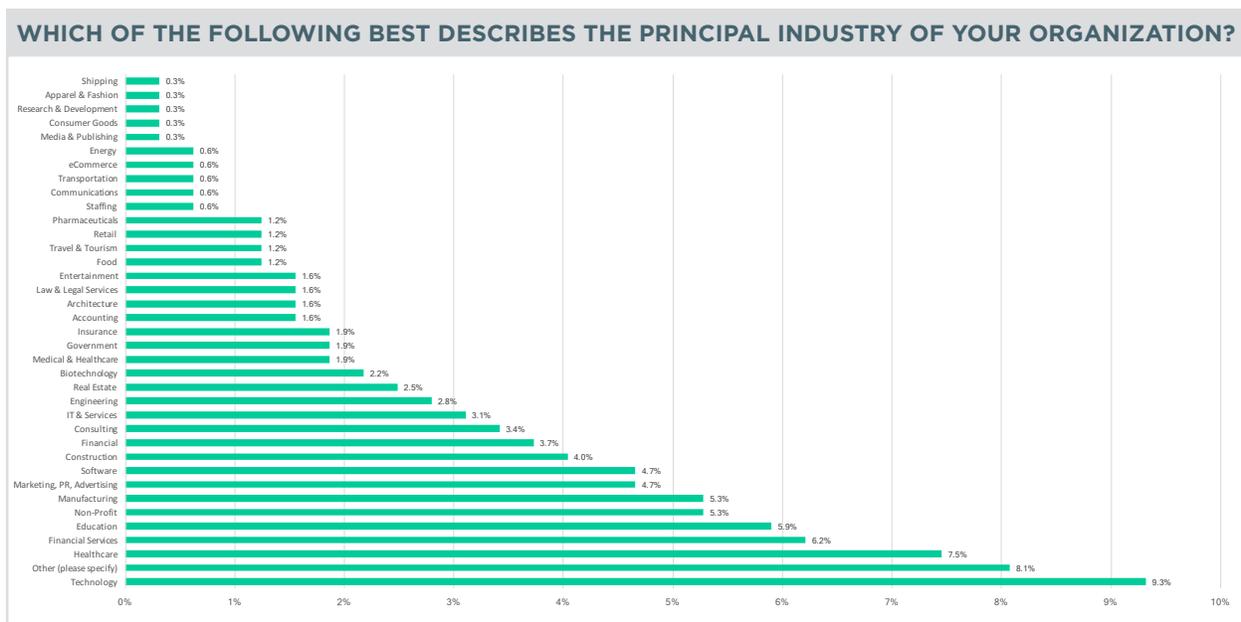
PARTICIPANTS & METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS & METHODOLOGY

A quick note on our methodology.

We did as much as humanly possible to provide a random, representative sample of Office Managers from a diverse array of industries and from companies of all sizes.

In total, we received 324 response from more than 38 industries from across the U.S. The most common sectors include Technology (9.3%), Healthcare (7.5%), Financial Services (6.2%), Education (5.9%), Non-profit (5.3%), Manufacturing (5.3%), and Marketing, PR, and Advertising (4.7%).

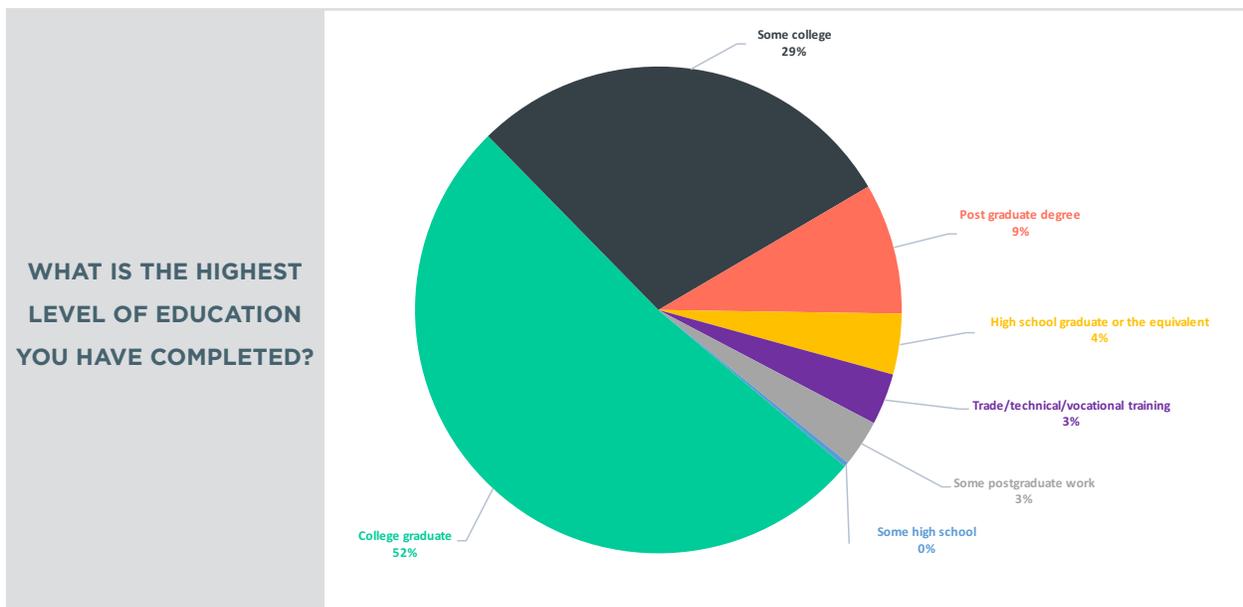


PARTICIPANTS & METHODOLOGY

In terms of company size, responses were wide ranging and evenly distributed. Companies in the 21 - 40 employee range are the most common. 35% work for companies with more than 100 employees, and 17% for those with more than 500.

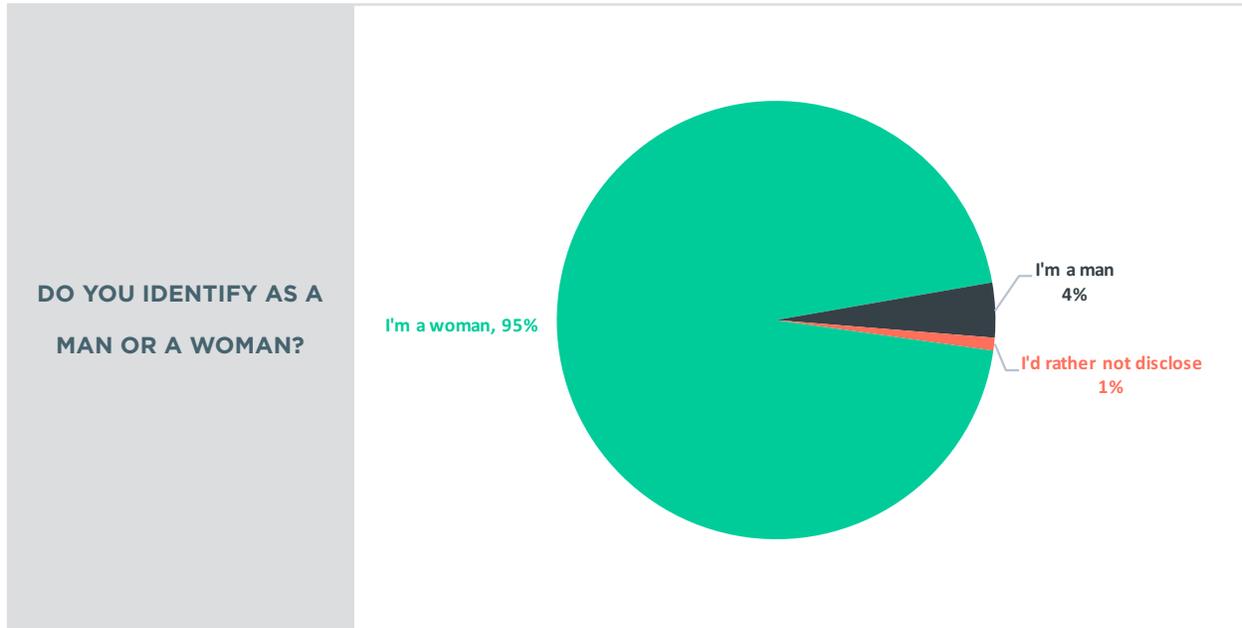


We also found that Office Managers are a highly educated bunch. A strong majority (64%) are college graduates, and 9% even hold a postgraduate degree.



PARTICIPANTS & METHODOLOGY

Finally, we found that the Office Manager role skews female. In fact, it's not even close. An overwhelming 95% of the Office Managers in our survey identify themselves as women.





The **OFFICE MANAGER ROLE** In 2018

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

What does it *really* mean to be in Office Manager in 2018? How do you spend your time? What are your biggest pain points? Which skills translate into success?

The answers lies in the data. So let's dig in.

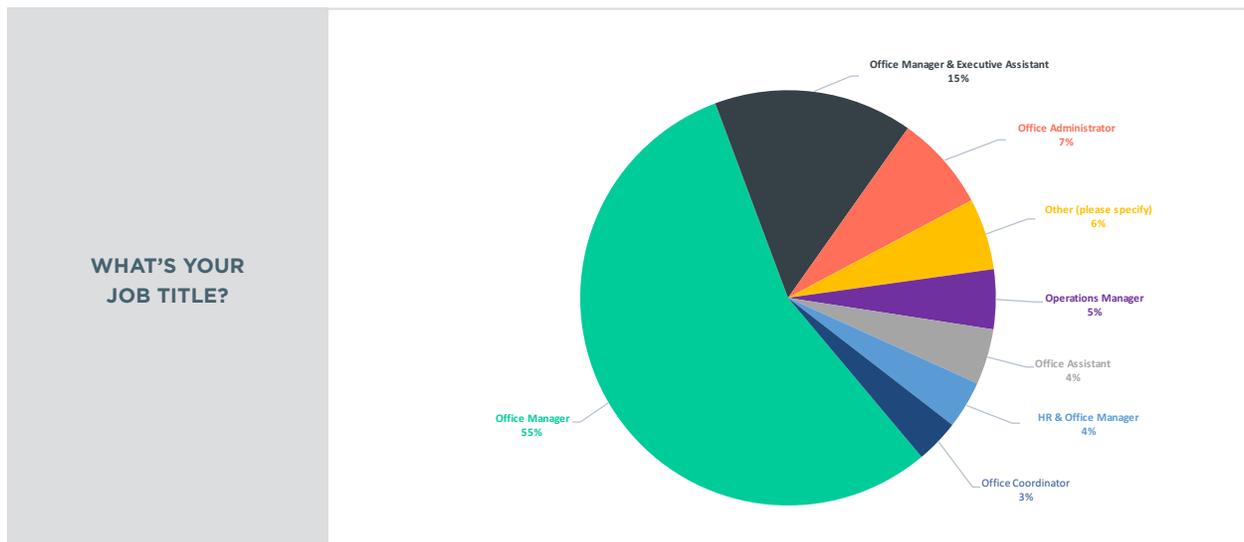
Titles & Org Chart

Generally speaking, we're of the mind that titles aren't all that important in the long run. The value you provide is ultimately more important than what you call yourself (or what others call you). That being said, job titles can still be instructive. A new title might reflect the changing scope of a role, new responsibilities, or increased importance within an org.

So what are "Office Managers" calling themselves?

Our study indicates that the majority (55%) still go by the tried and true "Office Manager" moniker - which means that 45% go by something different. Other variations include:

- Office Manager & Executive Assistant (15%)
- Office Administrator (7%)
- Operations Manager (5%)
- Office Assistant (4%)
- HR & Office Manager (4%)
- Office Coordinator (3%)



THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

As our data shows, many Office Managers are doing double duty, performing Office Manager functions along with HR, Operations, or Admin duties.

Office Managers are doing double duty, performing Office Manager functions along with HR, Operations, or Admin duties.



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In the “Other” category, we also saw “Vibe Manager,” “People & Culture Coordinator,” “Director of First Impressions” and a few other titles that reflect the position’s central role in crafting a company’s culture.

[Max Fiedel](#) is a former Office Manager at Bonobos and Field Trip, whose outstanding performance helped him transition to a dream job in operations. He agrees that the Office Manager title doesn’t truly capture what the role is all about, which is more about being there for the team:

“Office manager, the name of it sounds funny. What you’re doing is you are supporting the team. You are the foundation of this house that the team sits on. And you do whatever you can to support that, and you wear many different hats. ... Somebody that does sales, does sales. Somebody that does marketing, does marketing. You have engineers that build sites. They all have their specific roles. But Office Manager is different. The boundaries are totally what you make yourself available to be.”

Reporting structures can also reveal how the role is perceived and the primary functions and expectations.

Most of our respondents (44%) report directly to senior leadership, either to the company Owner, the CEO, or some other C-level executive (like a CFO or COO). In fact, two thirds of respondents (67%) report to a VP or higher. Remember, the participants in our survey represent companies of all sizes, and could easily report to middle managers or directors. The mere fact that so many report directly to executive leaders tells us that the Office Manager’s role is perceived as an important one.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

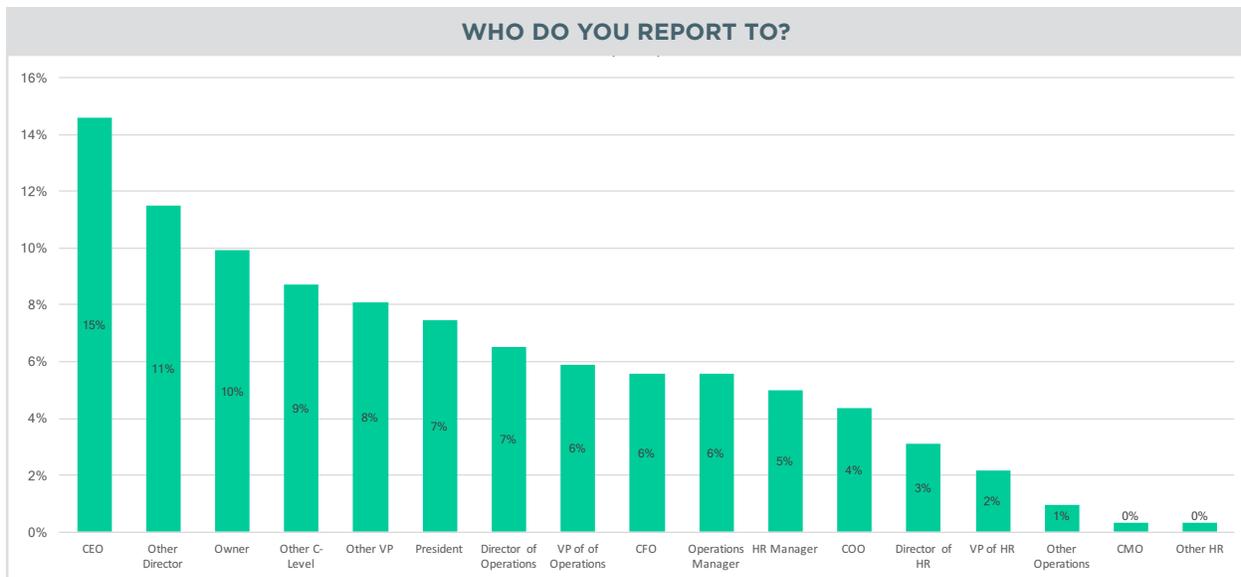
Most Office Managers report directly to senior leadership, either to the company Owner, the CEO, or another C-level executive



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[Chelsey Wagemaker](#), an Office Manager in our community, reports directly to her company's president. It's a fact that she doesn't take lightly:

"Because I work closely with [the President] on a day-to-day basis he does see my work, and does know what I do, and at this point after two years he kind of relies on me. It's a lot more efficient and easy for me to go to him and say that I'm doing good work, so when I ask for a little bit higher compensation he's not going to haggle with me too much about it because he understands that I'm a value to the company."



THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

Workload & Compensation

Studies show that American workers are working harder and harder each year. [An analysis](#) of decades worth of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) demonstrated that national productivity has increased by 400% since 1950. But don't assume that employees are working 10 hours a week instead of 40. Despite that massive leap in efficiency, American workers still work 38.6 hours each week according to the most recent [BLS data](#).

How do Office Managers stack up in light of this trend?

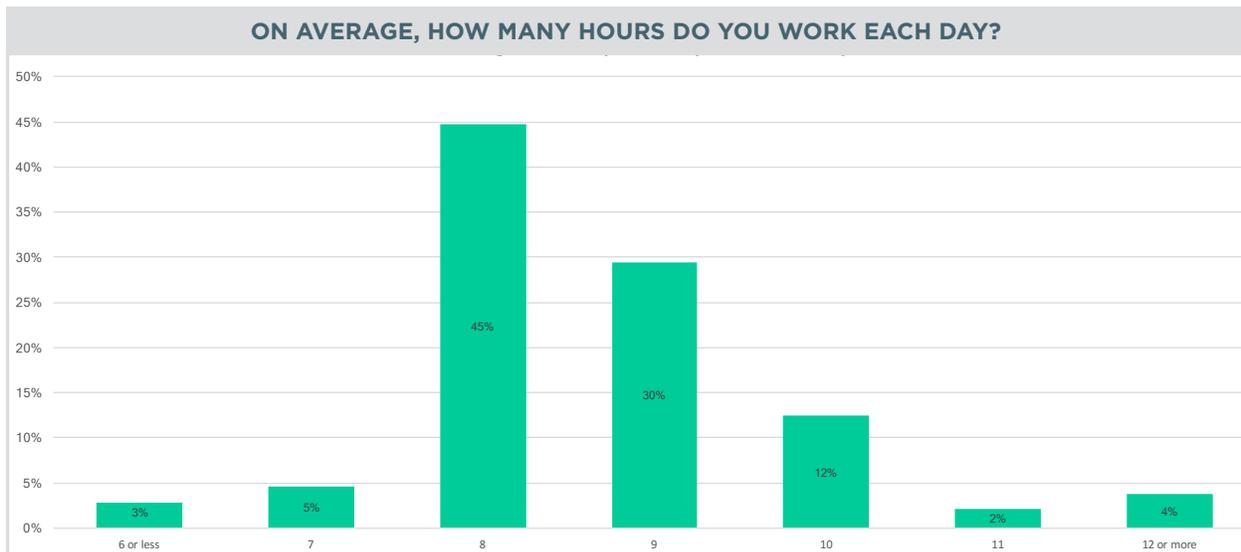
We found that a strong majority (75%) of Office Managers work a standard 8 or 9 hour day. That's still more than the average American worker, who works 7.63 hours each weekday according to the BLS.

75% of Office Managers work more than the average American work, who works 7.63 hours each weekday



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A significant portion are putting in even more time. Nearly one in five (18%) of Office Managers work an average of 10 or more hours per day.

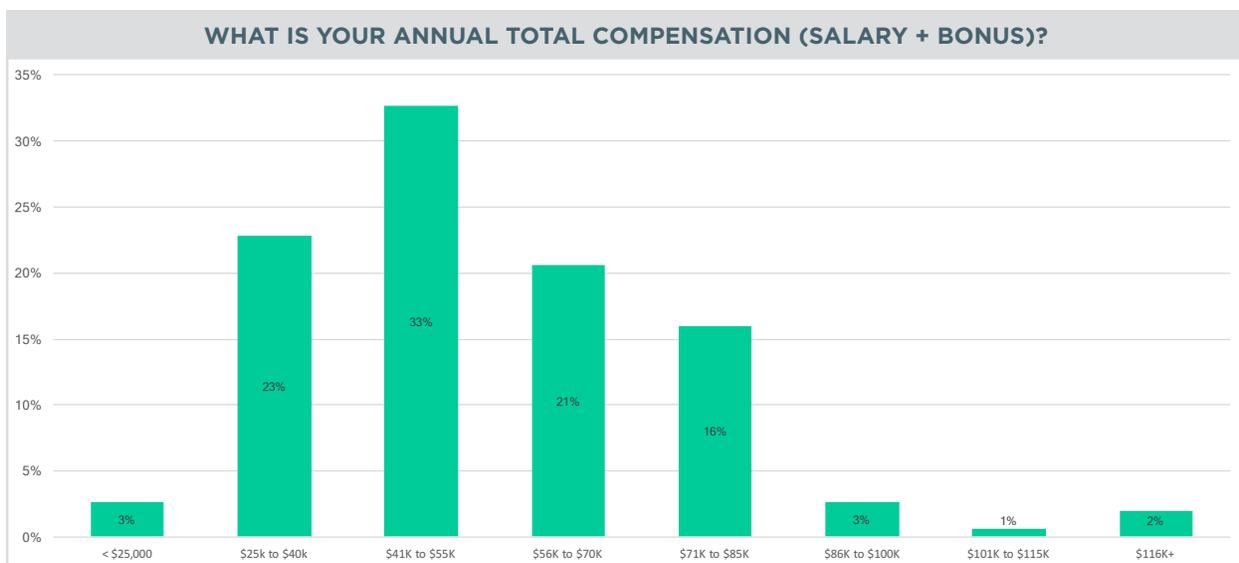


THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

With increasing hours, an augmented scope, and elevated importance, you'd assume that salaries would increase commensurately. But that doesn't appear to be the case.

Most Office Managers make between \$41,000 - 55,000 per year in total compensation (salary and bonus), which isn't far from the median salary for all U.S. workers. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) tells us that the median wage for U.S. workers in the last quarter of 2016 was \$849 per week - which translates to \$44,148 annually. Meanwhile, the average compensation for Office Managers is significantly higher, at \$55,804.

There were exceptions to this rule. 22% of respondents earn more than \$70,000 per year - 78% higher than the median wage. 3% of respondents earn more than \$100,000 annually.

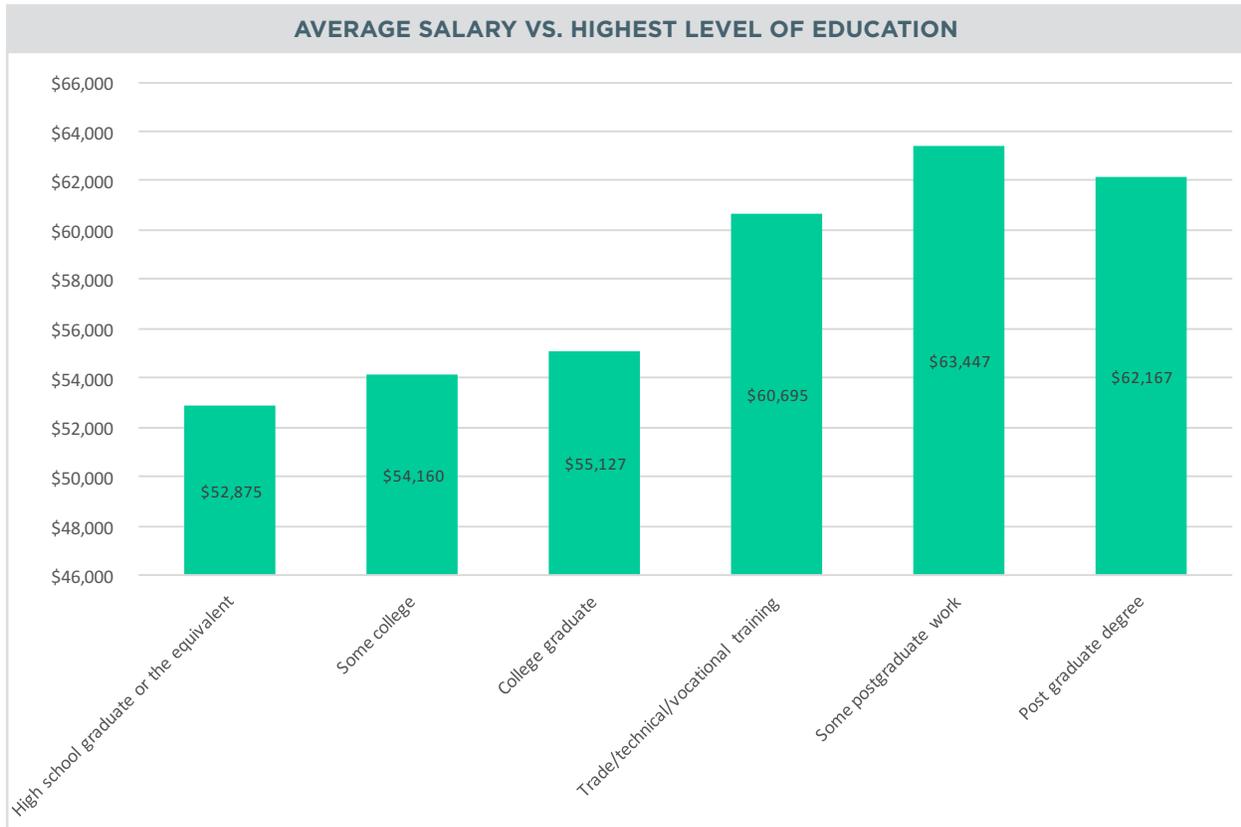


Since we saw a spectrum of education levels, we were curious how that might affect an Office Manager's salary.

In general, we found that compensation and education were correlated (the more education, the higher the salary) but to a relatively limited degree. On average, Office Managers with a college degree can expect a \$3,000 salary increase compared to those with just a high school diploma or equivalent. Those with either some post graduate coursework or a graduate degree see a bump closer to \$10,000.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

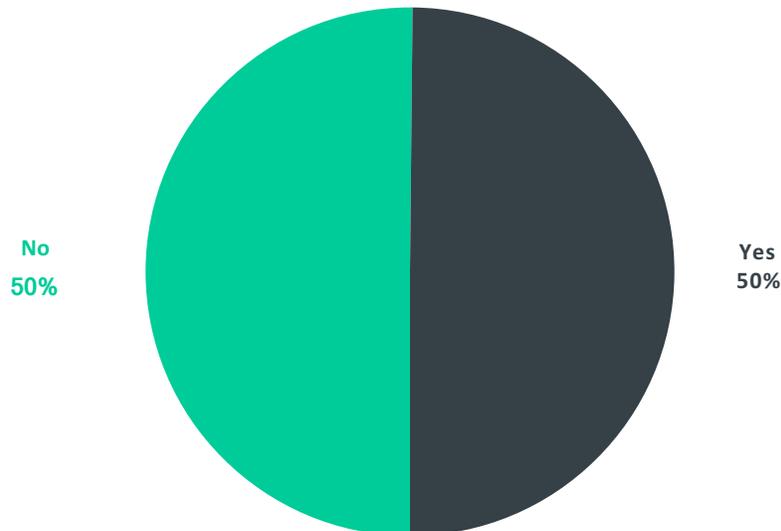
Office Managers with trade-specific education also see an increase. Those with trade or vocational training make just over 10% more than their college-educated counterparts.



All in all, our respondents have mixed feelings about their compensation. When asked if they believe they are being paid fairly, exactly half felt they are, while the remaining 50% feel they deserve more money for their work.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

DO YOU BELIVE YOU'RE BEING PAID FAIRLY?



ACTION STEP

Use Data to Make the Case for More Money

When it comes to negotiating for better pay, the first step is setting aside some time for a face-to-face with your boss. It might seem obvious, but you can't ask for more money if you never get the opportunity.

After that, the best tactic is to come armed with data. Know ahead of time what other Office Managers at similar companies are making, and where you add value.

Office Manager Chelsey breaks it down:

"I did two things when I went into my review with [our President]. I did a survey online from PayScale and from a few other places of other administrative and management professionals I basically gathered up that data and took the average amount of what administrators and management people were getting ..."

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

and went to him and said, 'You know, this is kind of the range of what people are getting paid.' I obviously had incorporated my experience level and also some of the different work I was doing.

I added in what a mid-level HR representative would be getting and I added in what an advanced level office manager or executive assistant would be getting, and just showed him all of those various things.

[Our President] really responds to numbers and to logic, and so knowing that about him helped me as well.

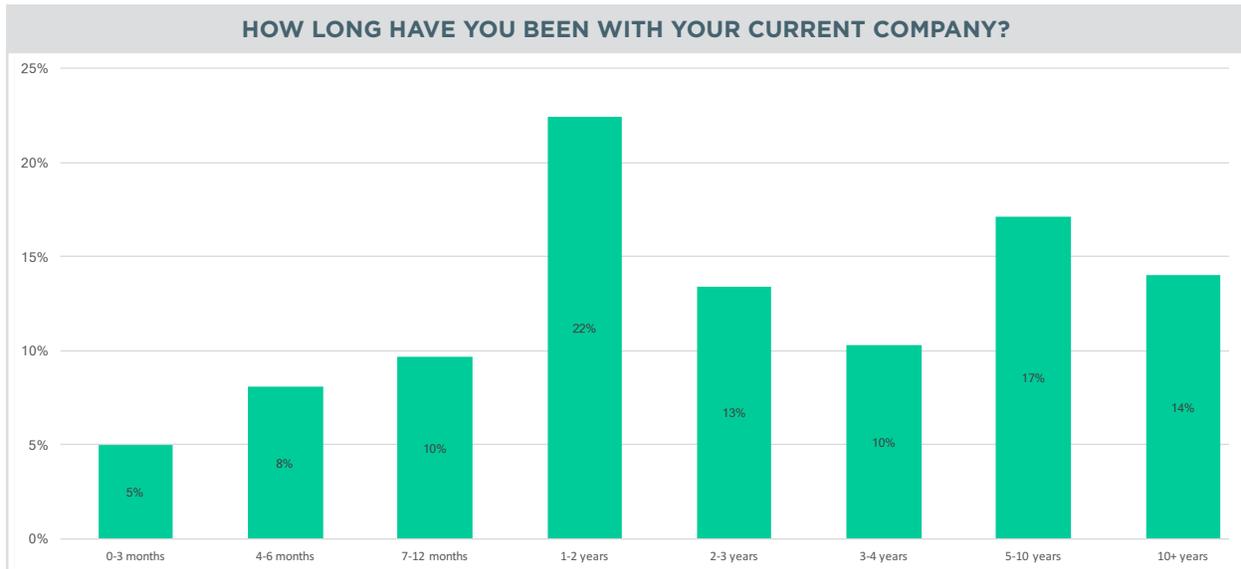
The second part was I brought in my list of tasks and job responsibilities and I said,

'These are all the things that you task me with doing. These are all of the things that I do and I do them all well. And so when I'm asking for it, a raise of more than that, 10% or 12%, which is standard, this is why I'm asking for it.'

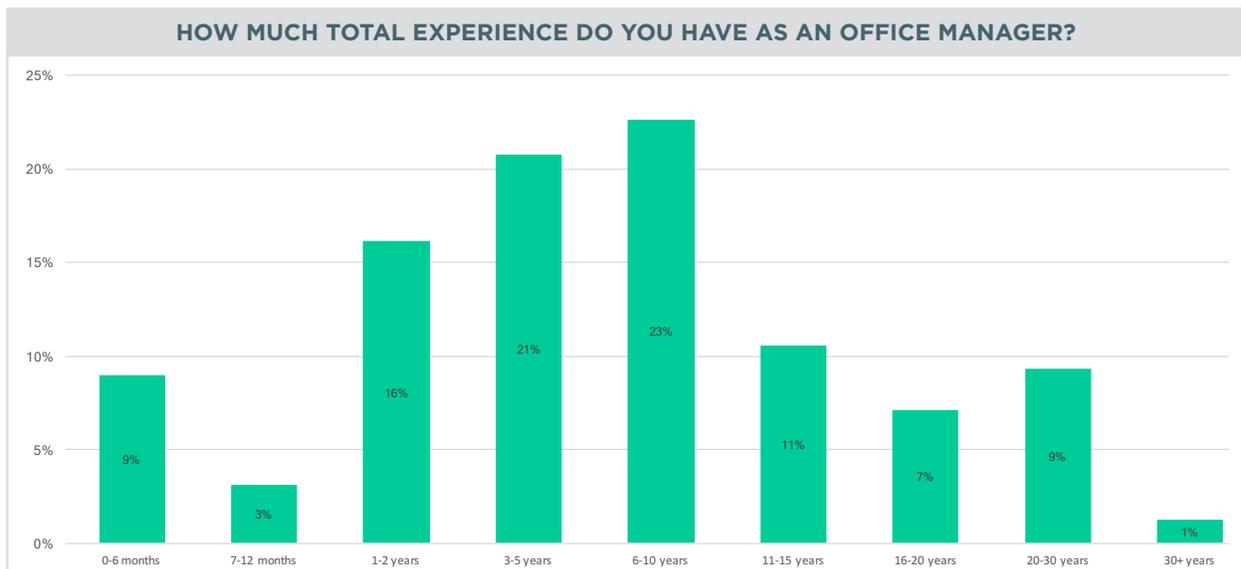
For even more surefire tips, [check out our Office Manager's Guide to Asking for a Raise and Boosting Your Salary.](#)

Most commonly, our Office Managers have been with their current company 1-2 years (22%). More than a quarter (28%) of respondents have been with their companies for five years or more. Compare this to the most recent job tenure data at the BLS, which states that the median tenure for American workers is 4.2 years at their current job (down from 4.6 in 2014).

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

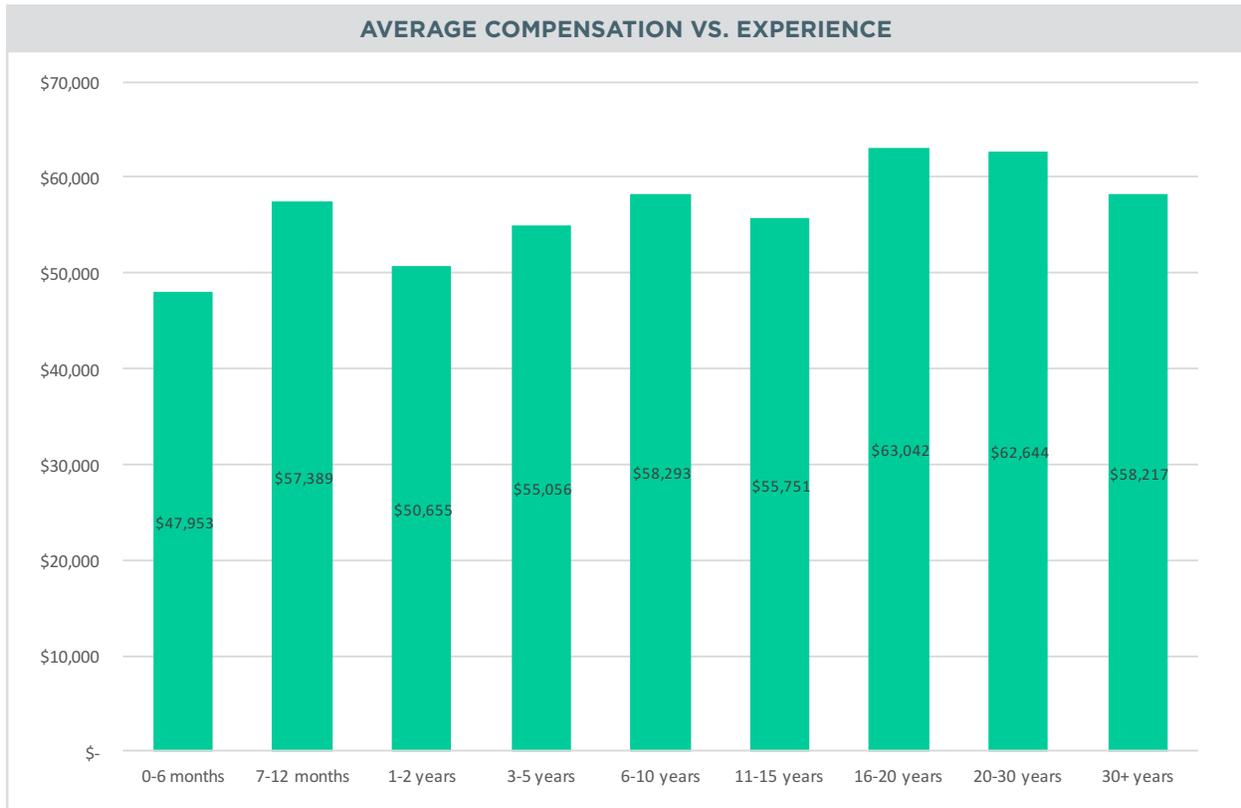


The Office Manager role sometimes gets unfairly pegged as an entry level position, but our data shows that Office Managers are a fairly experienced group. When asked how much total Office Manager experience they have, the most common answer was 6-10 years (23%). More than half (51%) reported having 6 or more years in the role.



Experience definitely shows a positive correlation, but we didn't see a very strong connection between experience and compensation. In fact, the average salary for someone with 30 years of experience is only about \$1,000 more than someone with less than a year of experience.

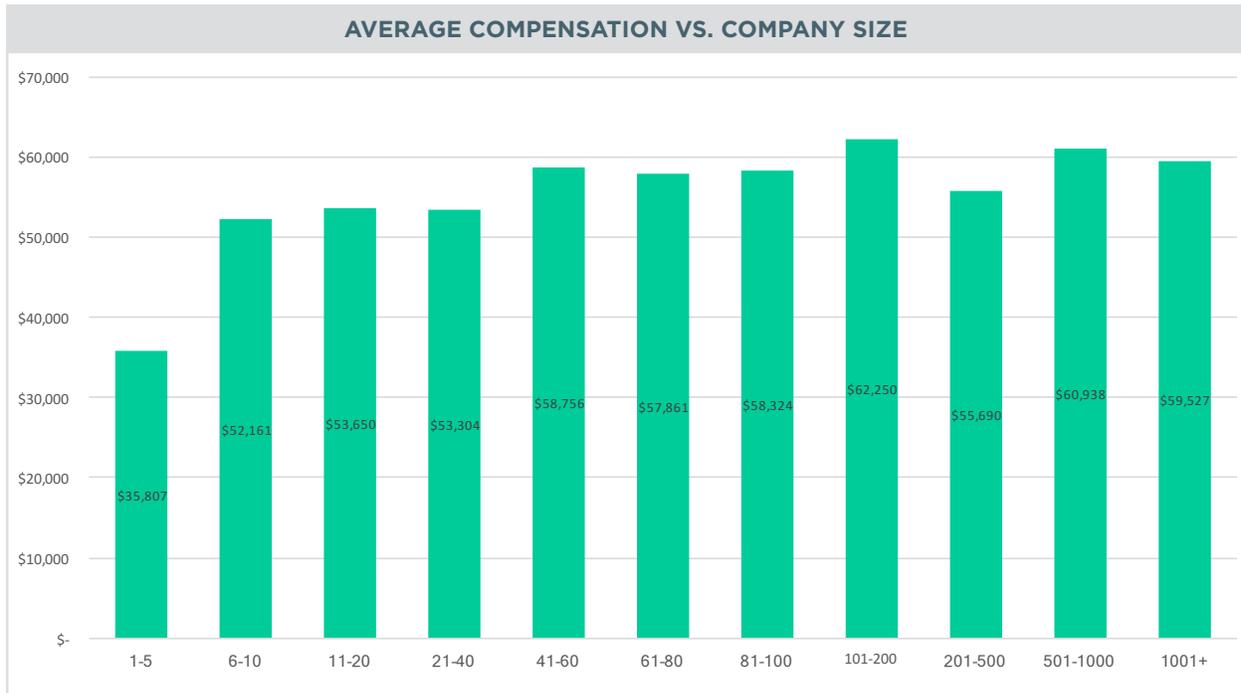
THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



Because the Office Manager role is so much about the team, the role becomes more challenging for bigger companies than smaller ones. We wondered if this increased challenge came with a salary bump.

This is certainly true when you compared the smallest companies to the rest. Office Managers who work for companies with five or fewer employees make 36% less than the average. Those who work for companies with 100-200 employees make 1.7 times as much money as those who work for the companies with just 1-5 employees.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



More Than a Paycheck

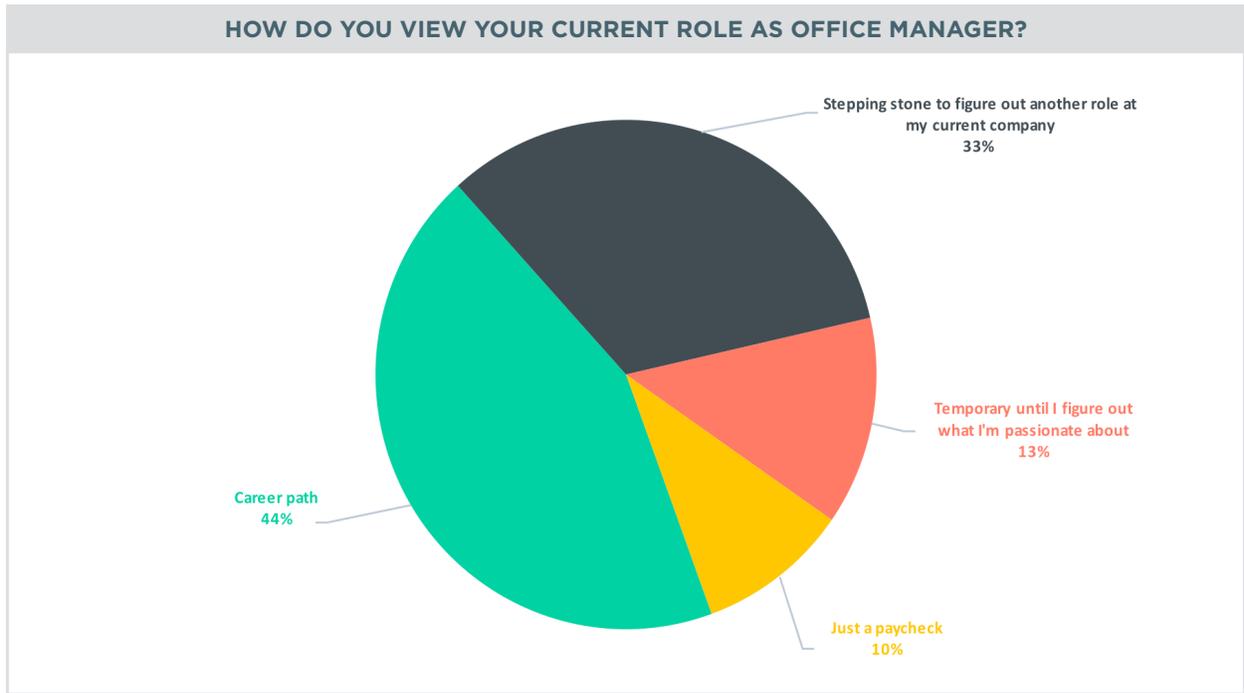
One of the biggest questions we had after our first report had to do with how Office Managers think about their jobs. Is it the career they've always wanted, or a stepping stone to their dream job?

The fact is, being an Office Manager can be both. It's a rewarding and challenging career path in its own right. It can also be a fantastic way to get in the door and prove your worth at your dream company.

One example of the latter comes from the person we mentioned earlier - Max Fiedel, former Office Manager at Bonobos and Field Trip Jerky. His approach was to leverage his Office Manager experience to get a foot in the door at a brand that he really loved, using the role as a way to learn everything he could about the business while impressing higher ups with his work ethic and servant's mindset.

Back to our respondents. How do they view the role?

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



For starters, the vast majority of Office Managers in our study (90%) see their job as more than just a paycheck.

The vast majority of Office Managers (90%) see their job as more than just a paycheck



Most Office Managers (44%) consider the role as a career path in its own right - and one that they intend to pursue. A third (33%) of our respondents view it more as a stepping stone to a more fitting role at their company.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

ACTION STEP

Learn About Your Customer

If transitioning to a different position at your company is your ultimate goal, there are few positions that are a better starting point than the Office Manager. One reason? If you keep your eyes and ears open, you can learn a ton about your customers.

Seriously. Many assume that the Office Manager role is mostly inward facing, and therefore isn't a great place to start if you want to land a sales, marketing, or customer service gig. But according to Max Fiedel, that's not necessarily the case. One of the best kept secrets is that the role is a great way to learn about your customers, and therefore is perfect for someone looking to transition to a forward facing role.

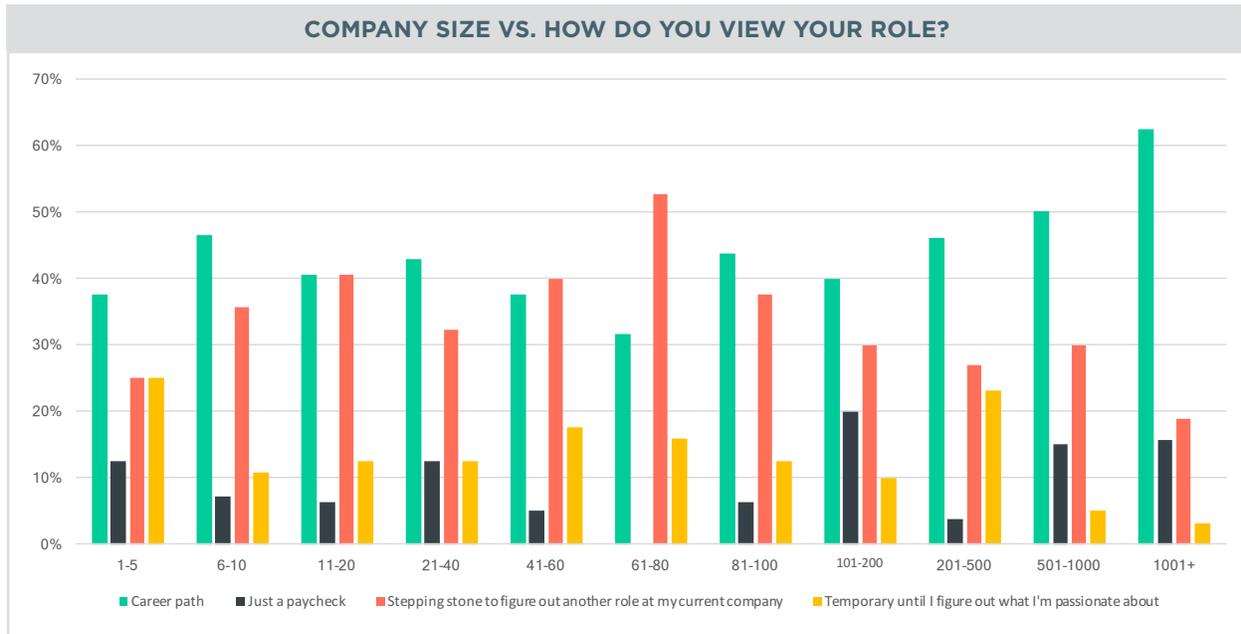
"You have this opportunity to get to know your potential customers, and that definitely helped drive my knowledge of who we were working with, and to understand what they did as a customer. Like, what products were they ordering? How were they ordering it? I was able to get the entire blueprint of all these drivers...."

"[The Office Manager] role really helped me get to know who our customers were, get organized, [set] goals and meet them, to learn how to sell a product by going to trade shows, be able to talk to customers on the phone and do customer service."

To read Max's full story, [click here](#).

The size of an Office Manager's company plays a role in whether she sees her current job as her preferred career path, or as a stepping stone to her actual dream job. For the largest companies (those with more than 1,000 employees), Office Managers are more than three times more likely to view themselves as career Office Managers. That ratio declines precipitously for smaller companies. At companies with 41-60 and 61-80 employees, more Office Managers see the role as a stepping stone rather than their permanent career path.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

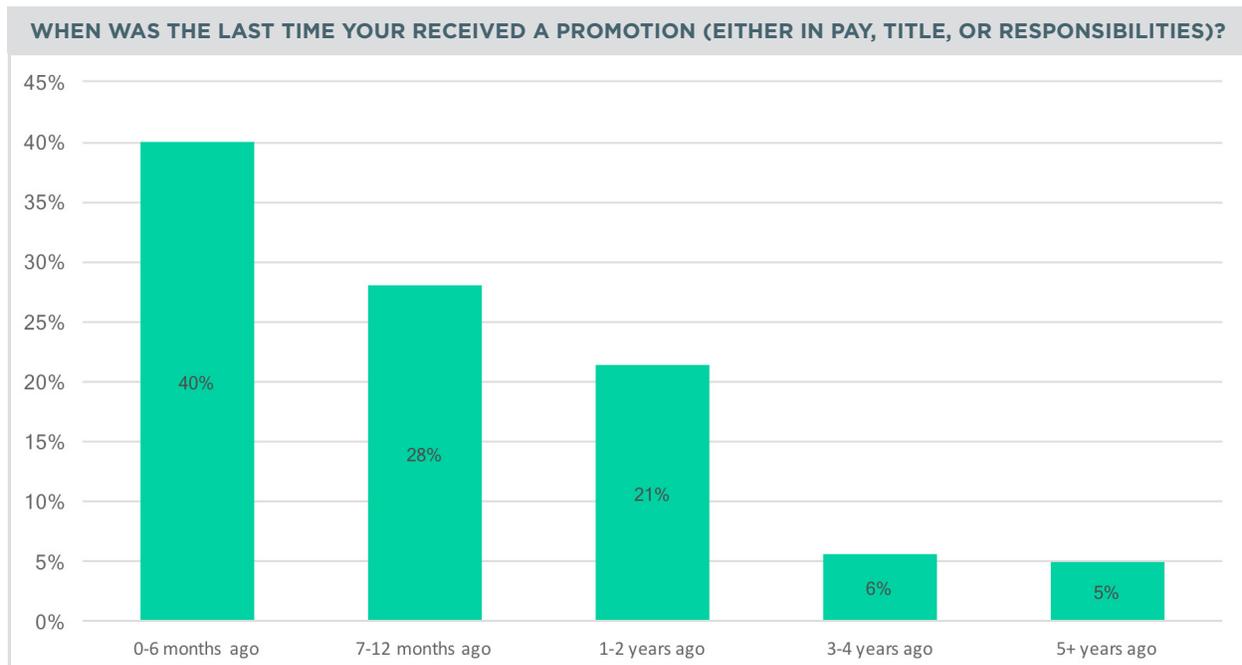


Career Advancement & Professional Growth

A big factor in any career is the potential for growth. It's why we made it one of the nine pillars of [Employee Engagement](#). Employees need to feel like they are making progress toward something in order to connect with their work. When they feel like they're treading water in a dead-end job, that's when most tend to check out - and burn out.

One measure for professional growth is the frequency of promotions. When we asked the last time our Office Managers received a promotion (which we defined as an increase in pay, an elevated title, or more responsibility), a large majority (68%) have been promoted in the last year.

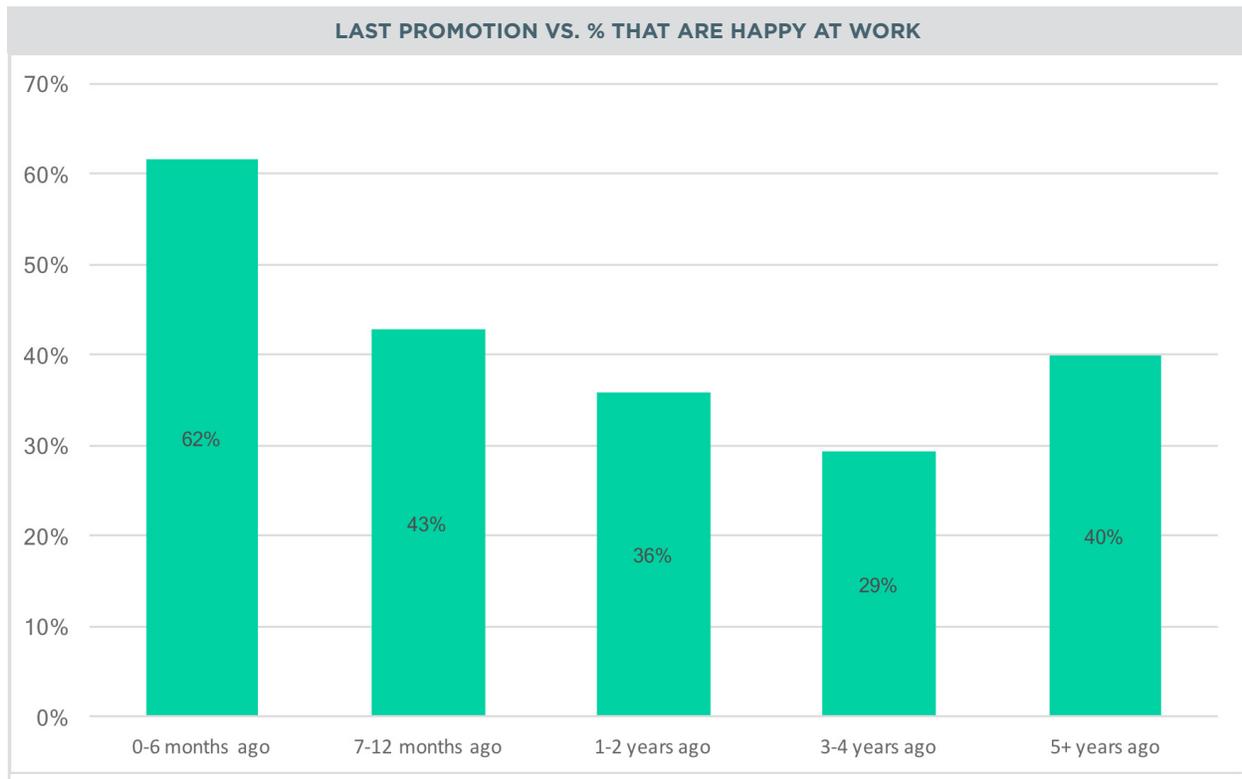
THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



This had an obvious effect on how Office Managers felt about their role. We found a fairly strong correlation between happiness and proximity to last promotion - with few exceptions, the more recent the promotion, the happier the group.

Office Managers who received a promotion in the last six months are three times more likely to report being happy in their role compared to those who received a promotion 3 or 4 years ago.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

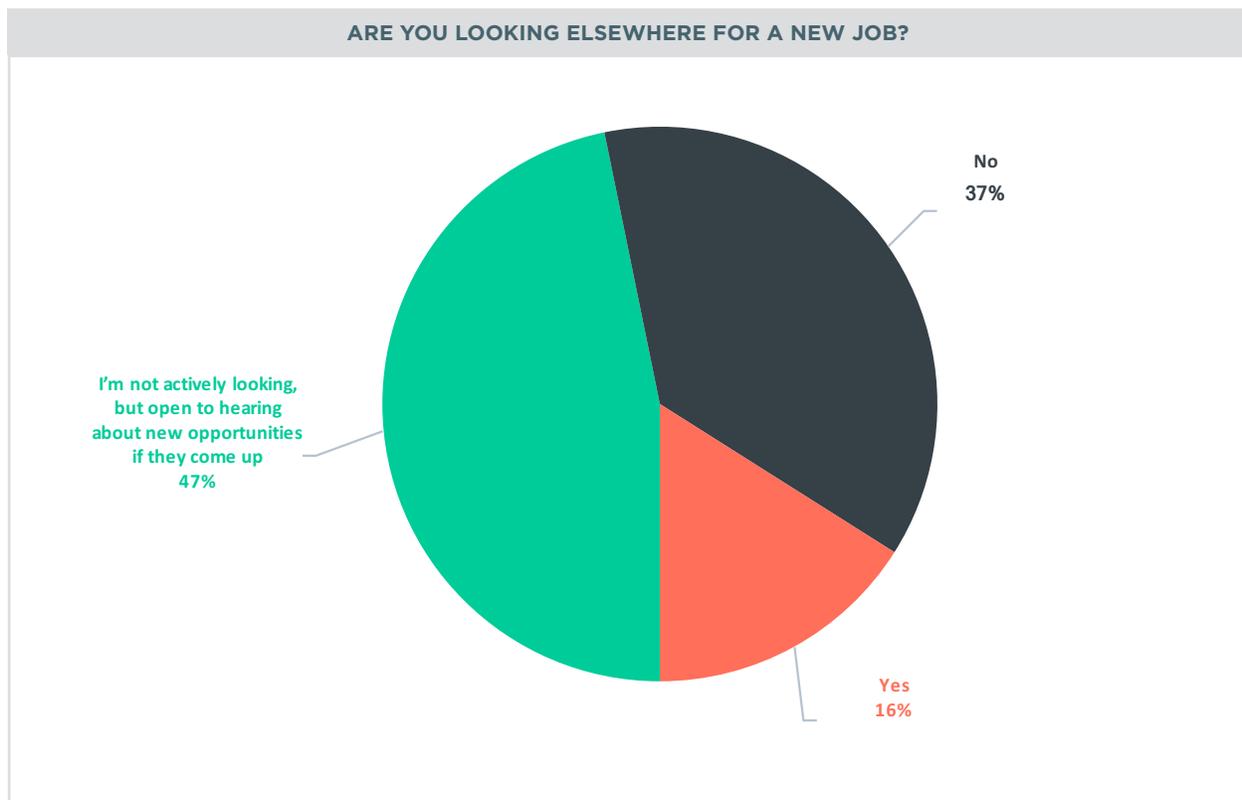


It probably goes without saying that companies shouldn't take Office Managers for granted.

Setting aside the fact that Office Managers deserve recognition for their contributions, it's also in a company's interest to do so.

Office Managers are in high demand and our data shows that they're open to new jobs. While only 16% are actively looking, nearly half (47%) are open to new opportunities - which means 63% of Office Managers could bolt if offered a better deal.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

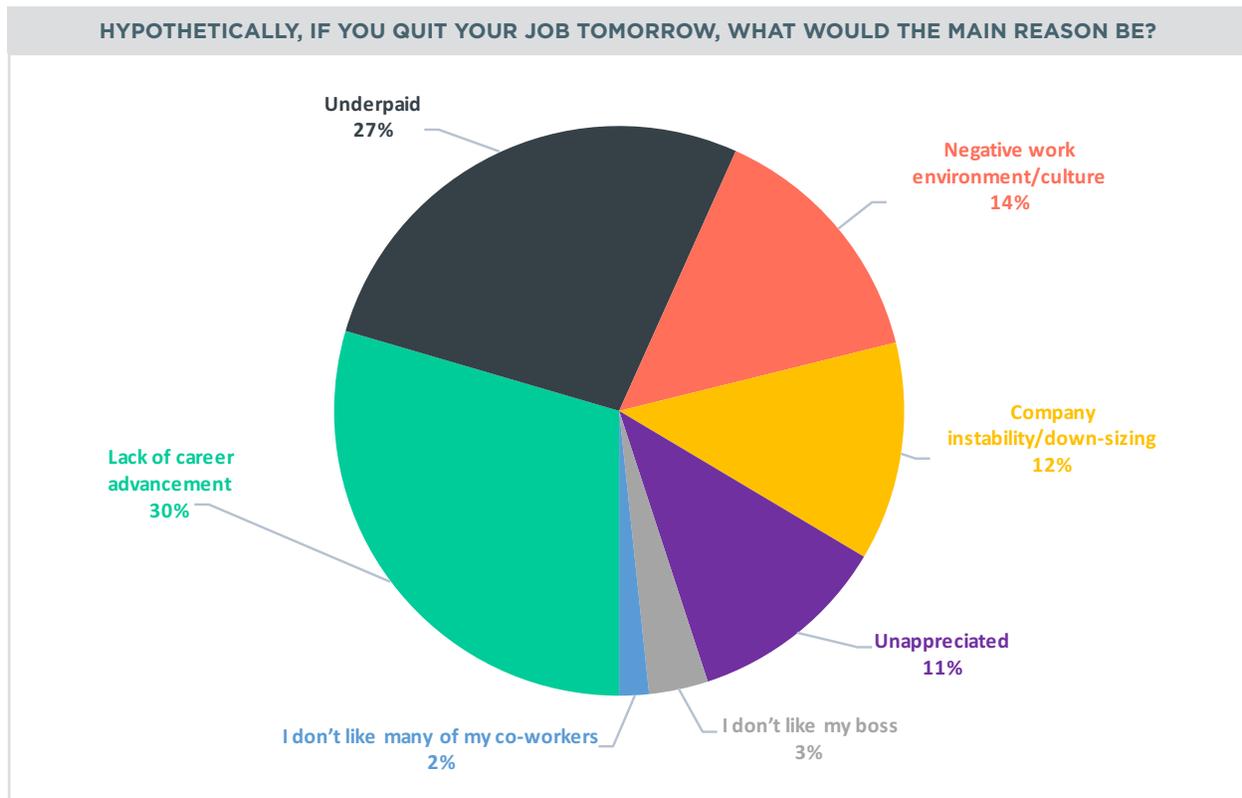


So what would make an Office Manager leave her current situation?

If you think that money is the prime mover in these sort of decisions, you might be surprised to learn that being underpaid was not the number one reason.

Turns out professional growth is the most important thing. Our respondents most often say that lack of career advancement would be the main reason to leave their current job (30%).

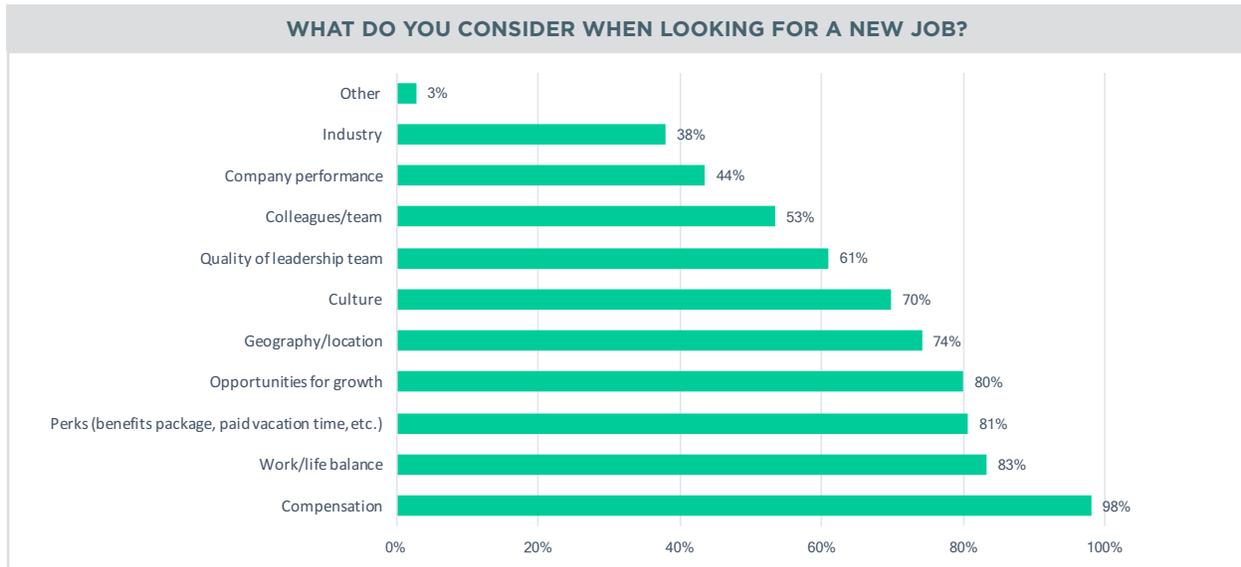
THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



That said, compensation is still the number one consideration when evaluating new job opportunities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 98% of respondents told us it was something they consider.

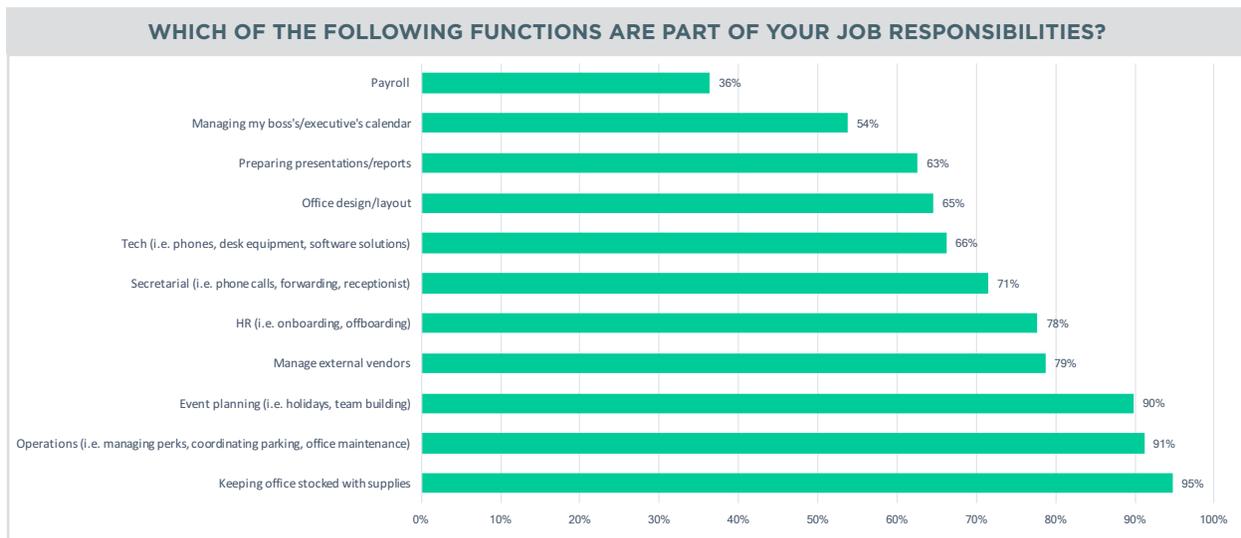
But quality of life concerns weren't far behind. Work/life balance (83%), perks and benefits (81%), growth opportunities (80%), and culture (70%) are all important factors as well. The type of industry and the company's actual performance ranked last in the list of these concerns. Less than 45% of respondents consider these factors.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



Core Responsibilities

It's no wonder Office Managers see the role as a career - it's duties are wide and varied, and helping your company hit its goals is rewarding. But what does the typical Office Manager do on a daily basis? Quite a lot.



Nearly all respondents told us that stocking supplies (95%), operations duties like maintenance and perk management (91%), and event planning (90%) are all part of their normal duties.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

Strong majorities also perform duties previously relegated to HR and Operations. These include onboarding and offboarding employees (78%), tech duties like setting up phones and managing software (71%), and even [office layout and design](#) (65%). More than a third (39%) even have a hand in payroll.

When it comes to the perks being managed, a few standards topped the list.

No surprise, Health Insurance was the most common benefit, with 93% of companies offering it to their employees.

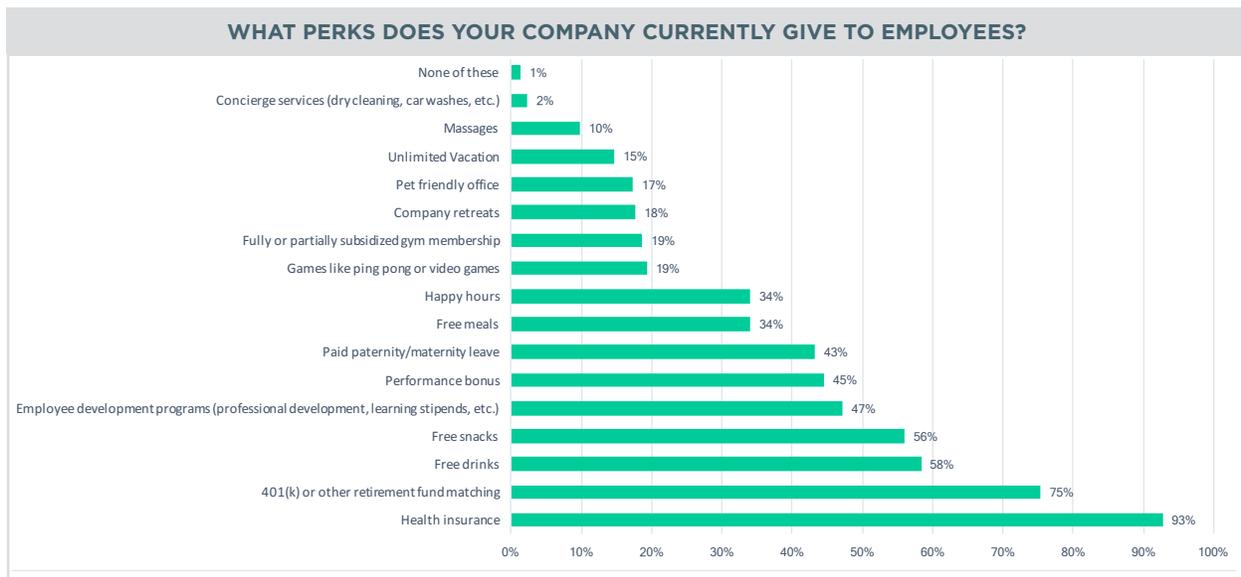
Next came 401(k) matching at 75%, but just 45% offer performance bonuses, and only 15% offer unlimited vacation. 43% offer paid maternity and paternity leave.

When we asked about food and beverage options, a good portion offer free drinks (58%) and free snacks (56%), but only about a third (34%) offered free meals. Fewer than 1 in 5 (19%) offer fully or partially subsidized gym memberships.

[Office pets](#) have been known to reduce stress, yet only 17% of our Office Managers work in pet friendly environments.

Just under half offered employee development programs (which includes things like tuition reimbursement and professional development programs).

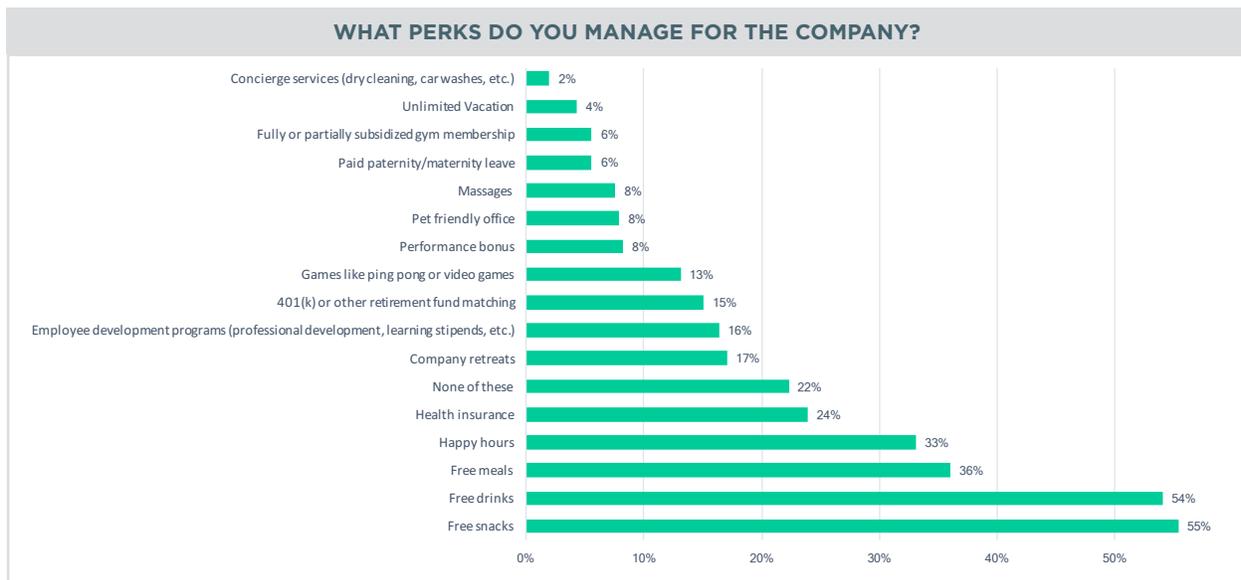
The least common benefits were concierge services like dry cleaning and carwashes.



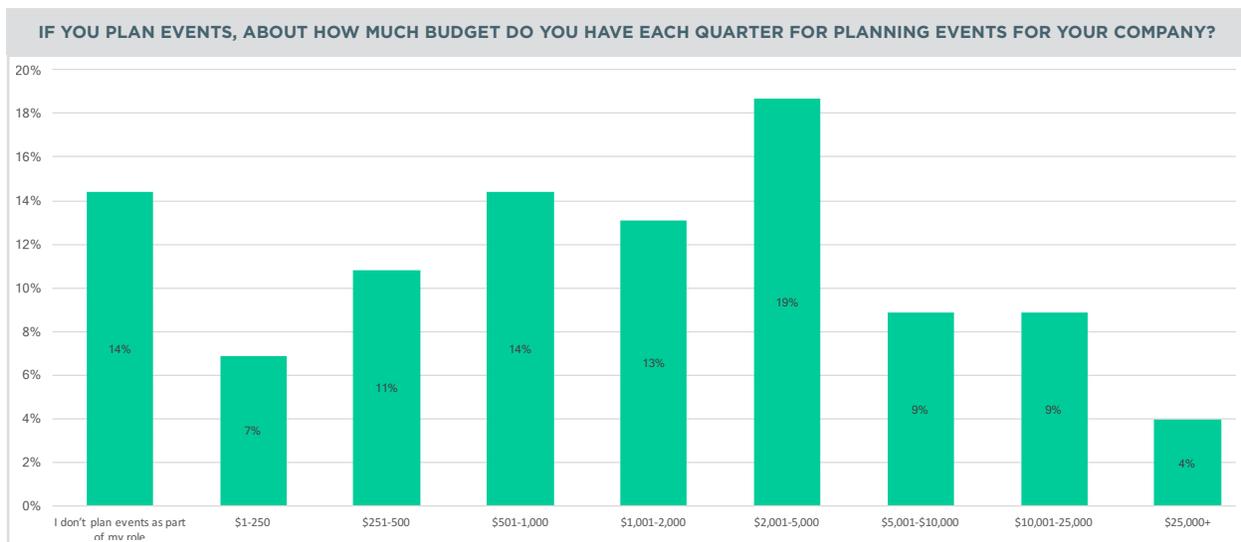
THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

Of those offered perks, Office Managers most commonly are in charge of ordering and managing the company's free snacks (55%), drinks (54%), and meals (36%). A significant percentage also plan events like happy hours (33%) and [company retreats](#) (17%).

A big surprise for us - nearly a quarter (24%) told us that they manage health insurance benefits, something that is typically the exclusive domain of the HR department.



When it came to event planning, companies were willing to dish out some serious budget. Most commonly (19%), Office Managers are given between \$2,000 - 5,000 to spend on events per quarter.



THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

Challenges and Priorities

We asked our Office Managers to rate their priorities looking ahead to the next year, and improved efficiency and morale topped the list. 61% of respondents rate “implementing new processes to my job easier/more streamlined” a “big” or “top” priority, followed by “improving morale across the team” (59%), and “creating a more organized workplace” (53%).



ACTION STEP

Use Airbo to Convey Important Messages to Teams (and Make the Office a Bit More Fun)

Communication is also a sticking point for Office Managers. Ali, an Office Manager in our community, provides a great way to improve team-wide communication:

I use “[Airbo](#)” in my office, it functions as a sort of digital bulletin board. I use it to educate employees on everything from company holidays, open enrollment, taking polls...and they create a lot of great content for you as well.

Everyone loves gamification, and the fact that it reduces inbox noise for everyone is an added bonus.

Share This Report!



THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

ACTION STEP

Improve Morale Through Employee Recognition

In most companies, everyone works pretty hard. Sometimes all people really need to feel happy and fulfilled is a sign that their hard work doesn't go unnoticed.

A formal recognition program is one way to do exactly that. We saw several great suggestions in our Office Manager community for manageable ways you can launch a recognition program at your office.

Office Manager Mandy:

"Tinypulse has been a nice peers recognition tool. Cheers for peers."

Office Manager Chelsea:

"I used Bonusly in my previous job and everyone really enjoyed it! We also had a Slack channel set up so that the appreciation was shared with everyone. It really makes someone's day when they get a little thank you +10 points and since it's shared the entire company would see it and add on if it was a crazy big deal."

Office Manager Genny:

"We use Kudos. It's great. We give and get points. Points are converted to USD or company prizes. For example points can be traded for a vaca day, WFH day, lunch with the GM etc."

For more ideas, check out our [employee recognition guide](#).

When it comes to anticipated challenges, compensation and communication are the top concerns. When asked to rate their top three challenges for the upcoming year, 43% of respondents rated "negotiating better compensation" a "big" or "top" priority, followed by "poorly defined goals or expectations" (26%), and "improving communication" (26%).

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

The Top 3 challenges for Office Managers in 2018: (1) negotiating better compensation (43%) (2) poorly defined goals or expectations (26%) and (3) improving communication (26%)



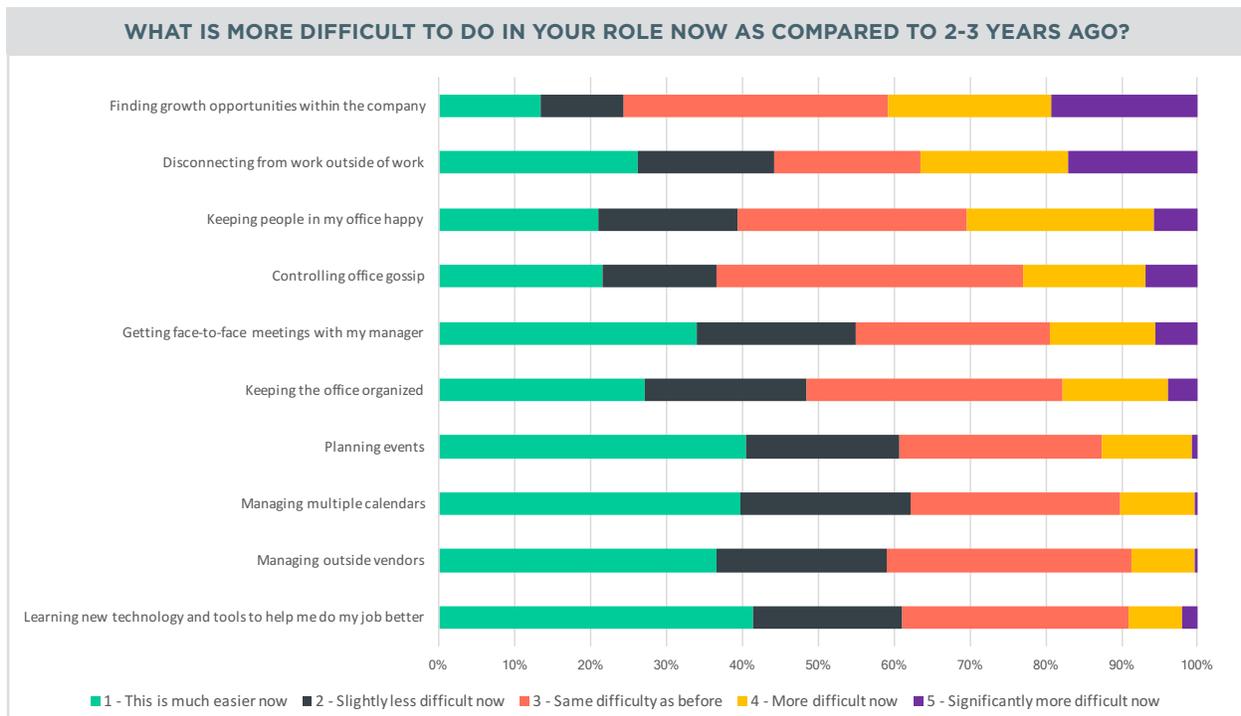
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Notably, time management does seem to be improving for Office Managers. Last year, 27% of Office Managers told us that “an overwhelming workload” was their top concern. This year, only 8% name it one of their biggest challenges, while 15% call it a big challenge.



THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

When we asked them what they found harder today compared to a few years ago, finding growth opportunities within the company was rated the most difficult, followed by disconnecting from the job outside of work. The third area that's harder today than in years prior was keeping people in the office happy.



Skills

What are the skills that set you up for success in this clearly challenging role? Versatility is chief among them.

“Being flexible and adaptable” is the top skill, with 43% of our respondents naming it the most important to master in order to be successful in the role. Which makes sense - in a dynamic, challenging role that serves multiple stakeholders, being able to adapt to changing conditions is absolutely critical.

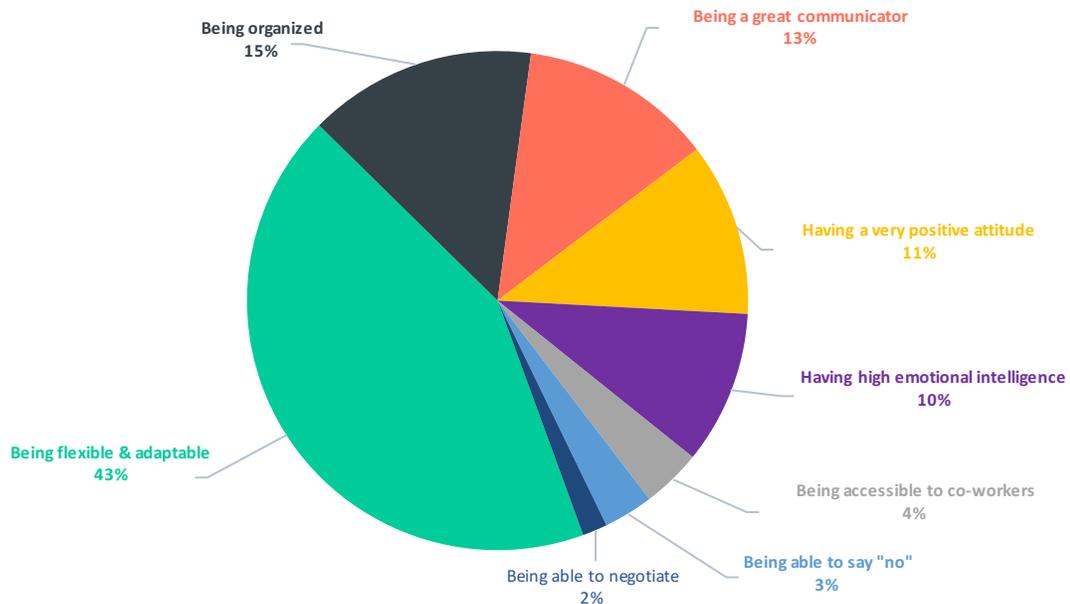
THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

“Being flexible and adaptable” is the top skill for Office Managers, with 43% naming it the most important to master in order to be successful in the role



[Click to Tweet](#)

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SKILLS DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TO MASTER AS AN OFFICE MANAGER?



Our former Office Manager Max explains why adaptability is so important for success in the role:

“One of the most important things to [succeeding in the Office Manager] position was to kind of be a jack-of-all-trades, to make myself available to take on different tasks. I’ve done a lot of different things at Field Trip, and I did a lot of different things at Bonobos that, when you told me what my position is, I wouldn’t necessarily know if I would have [been doing] that. I always want to be seen as the guy that will say yes to anything even if I don’t know what that means. I feel like that’s an important quality for that position.”

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

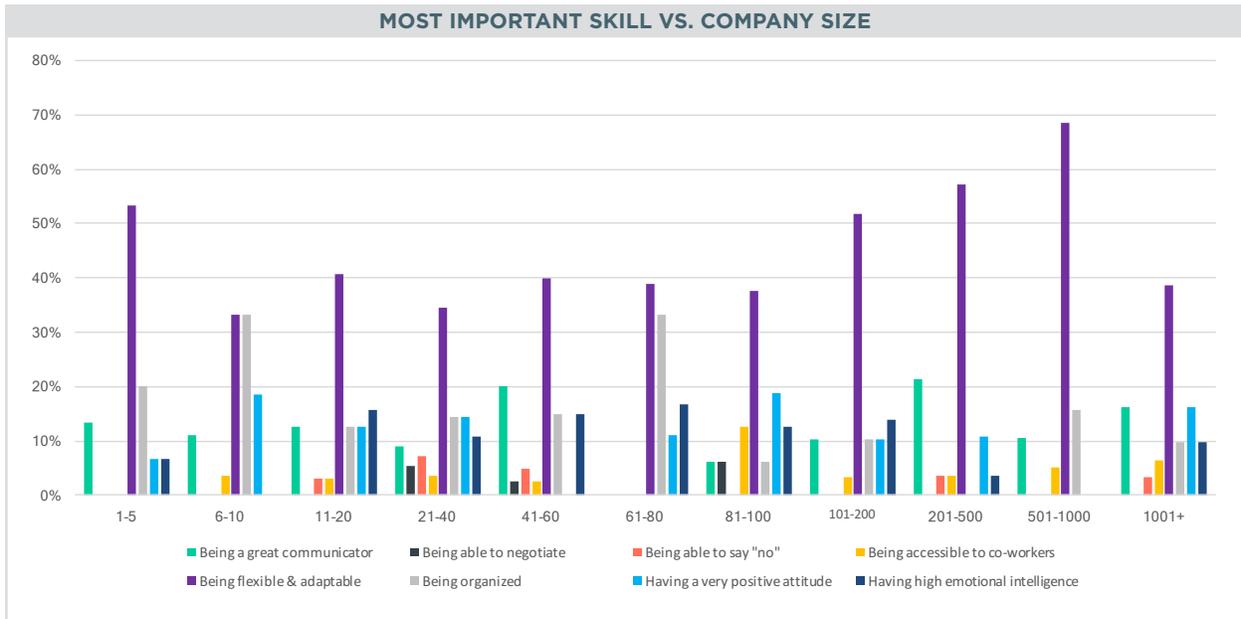
Organization and communication skills are the next two most important skills, coming in nearly even at 15% and 13%, respectively.

Negotiation is not seen as a critical skill by most, with only 2% of respondents calling it important. Our data also indicates that saying “yes” to requests is necessary for success. Just 3% of our survey respondents indicate that the ability to push back and say no is an important skill.

We were also curious to see if the size of an Office Manager’s company affected the skills he or she required to be successful in the role. A few things to note -

- Being flexible and adaptable is especially important at mid-large sized companies. 68% of Office Managers at 501 - 1,000 employee companies rated this the most important skill. Compare that to much smaller companies - those with between 6 and 10 employees - where adaptability is considered a top skill by just 33% of Office Managers, tied in importance with organization.
- Again, we attribute this to the service nature of the Office Manager role. A larger company means a bigger team with more diverse needs, which makes adaptability that much more valuable.
- A positive attitude and a high level of emotional intelligence is also more important at large orgs than smaller ones. Office Managers at companies with more than a thousand employees are twice as likely to rate a positive attitude as their most important skill than Office Managers with companies with five or fewer employees.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018



For a deeper dive on the skills and characteristics of rockstar Office Managers, check out [our article on the subject.](#)

ACTION STEP

Learn from Your Colleagues

As we've seen, being flexible and adaptable is critical to success as an Office Manager. One way to become even more adaptable is to pick up new skills and learn more about your business.

And one of the best ways to do that is to learn from the experts that surround you each and every day - your colleagues.

Here's how:

- Make a lunch date every week (or month) with someone in a different department with the express purpose of getting to know more about what they do and how their team contributes to the company's larger mission.

THE OFFICE MANAGER ROLE IN 2018

- Really dig in. Ask questions like, what has been your team's biggest wins? Biggest challenges? What skills help you most in your job? What was your biggest learning this year? What strategies and tactics worked well for your team? What didn't?
- After your conversation, write down the two or three biggest takeaways from your conversation. Keep these in a spreadsheet for easy reference.
- Not only is this a great way to network within your company, but before long you'll have a whole new set of insights and skills at your disposal.



JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

By now it's probably evident that the Office Manager role is a highly valuable and fulfilling role within the organization. But it's definitely not easy. It requires sustained energy, effort, and focus, and it can be a lot of pressure. Stress can be a factor, and burnout is a real possibility for some.

Happiness and Stress

To some degree, stress is inevitable. In fact, without stress, there's no opportunity for growth. A good analogy is found in the muscles in our body. Our muscles need a healthy amount of stress in order to grow. In fact, without out it they'll wither and die.

Experts separate stress into two categories, eustress (the good kind) and distress (the kind you want to avoid). Eustress is the type that motivates, and fosters personal and professional growth. Distress is the debilitating kind. This is the type that keeps you up at night, keeps you in a state of panic, and deprives you of your ability to function. The key is keeping your stress within a manageable range, and developing healthy ways to release it like meditation or exercise.

Our superstar Office Manager Chelsey sheds some light on how she deals with stress:

"As an Office Manager, I think the best way of doing things is to find that zen level where you can be personable and not get too stressed. Everybody around you is going to be stressed, and so you have to be that voice of calm and be able to say,

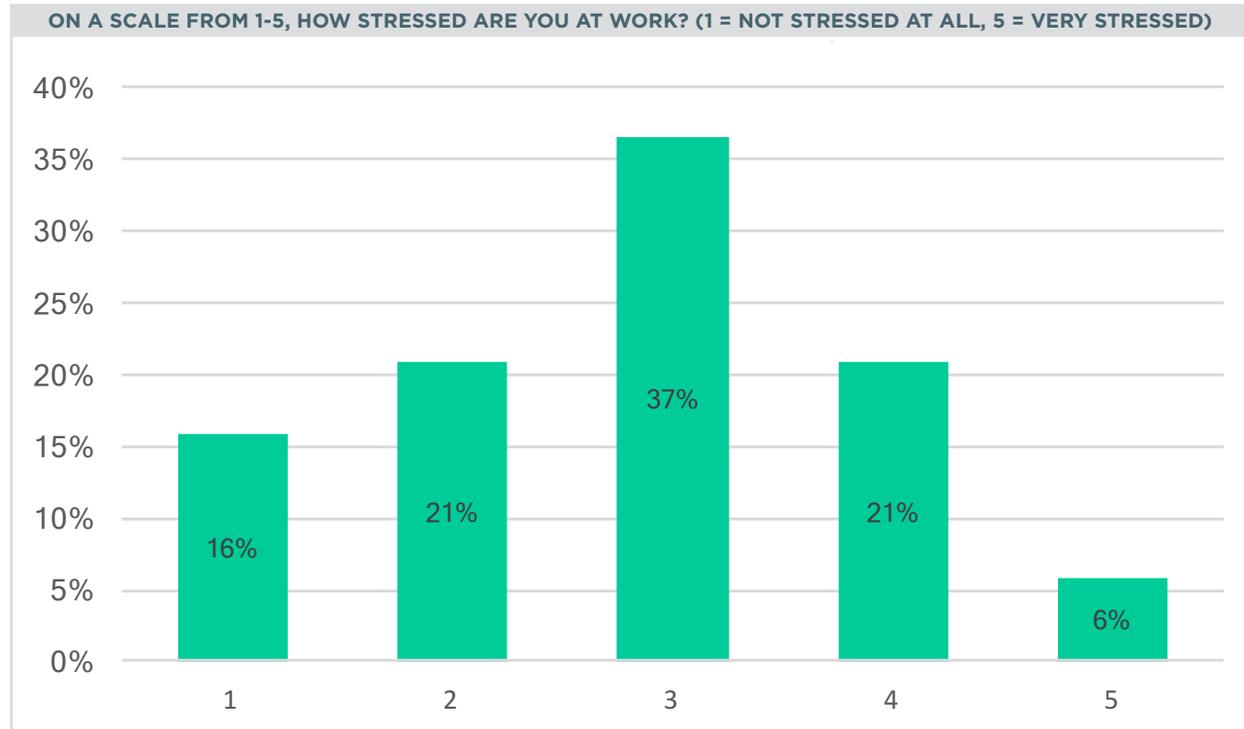
'Yup, I can handle it. Yup, I can take care of it.'

Take people's problems from them and what they need to do, and you can take over and make sure things get done. A lot of it has to do with being able to set aside whatever else is going on in your brain and say, 'I can handle what you need, when you need it.'

What about the rest of our Office Managers? Where do they land on the stress spectrum?

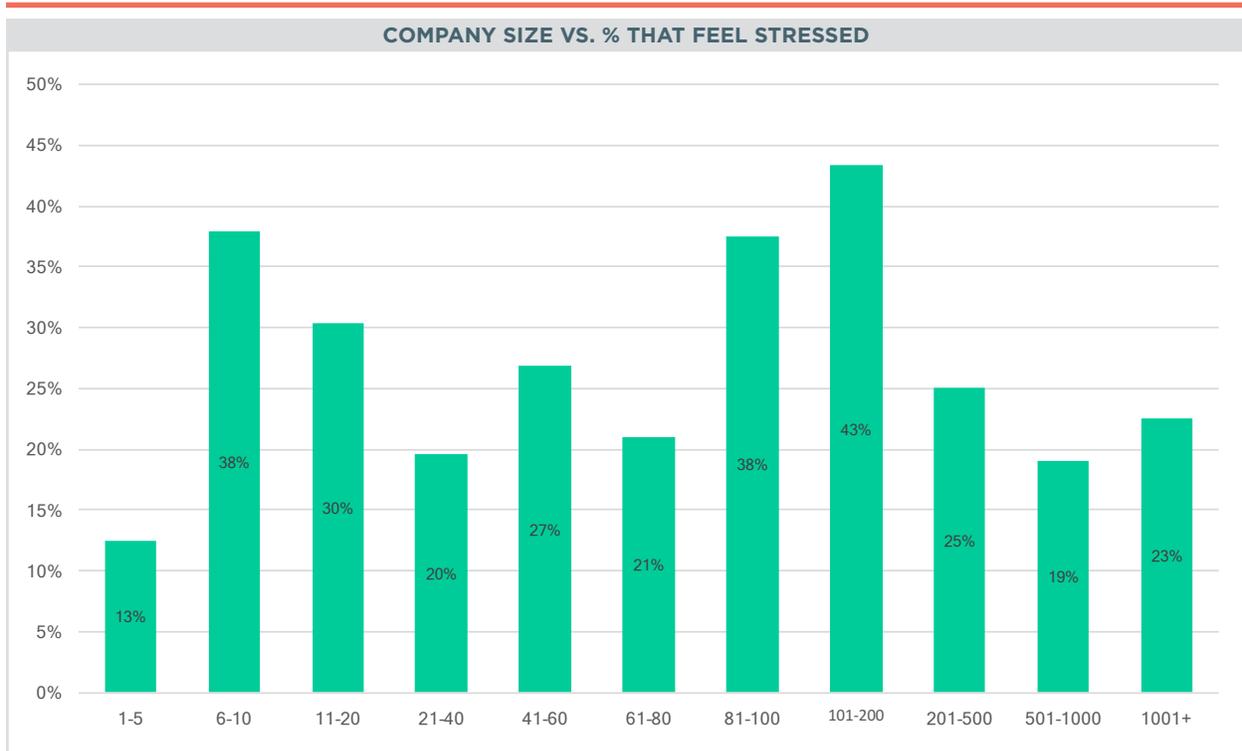
JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

Thankfully, 74% of our respondents reported being in the healthy zone, rating their stress level a 1, 2, or 3 out of 5. In fact, the most common response was 3 (37%).

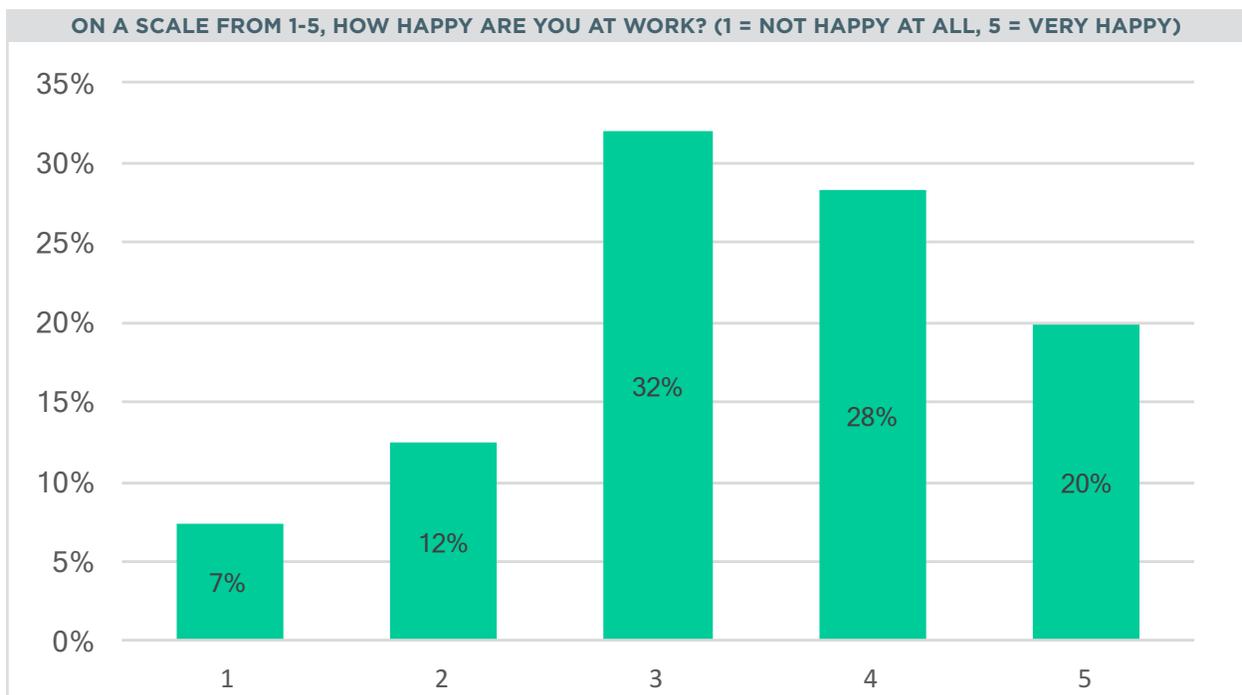


Since Office Managers tend to serve the whole office, we also wondered how company size affects stress levels. Results certainly vary, but Office Managers who work for companies in the 101-200 employee range fare worse, with 43% of respondents rating their stress a 4 or 5 out of 5. Office Managers who worked in offices with just 1-5 employees are the least stressed.

JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT



Next, we asked about happiness. Most (48%) are relatively happy, rating their happiness a 4 (“happy”) or 5 (“very happy”) - though this is down nearly 16% from last year’s findings. The most common response was a 3 - so there is certainly room for improvement when it comes to happiness.



JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

We also asked what Office Managers enjoy most about their job.

We started this report off with the simple observation that Office Managers are team players. Our data shows that it's not just a critical part of the job, it's a point of pride and a source of satisfaction too. When asked about the part of the job they enjoy the most, the most common answer is "being someone in the office that people rely on" (29%).

When asked about the part of the job Office Managers enjoy the most, the most common answer is "being someone in the office that people rely on"

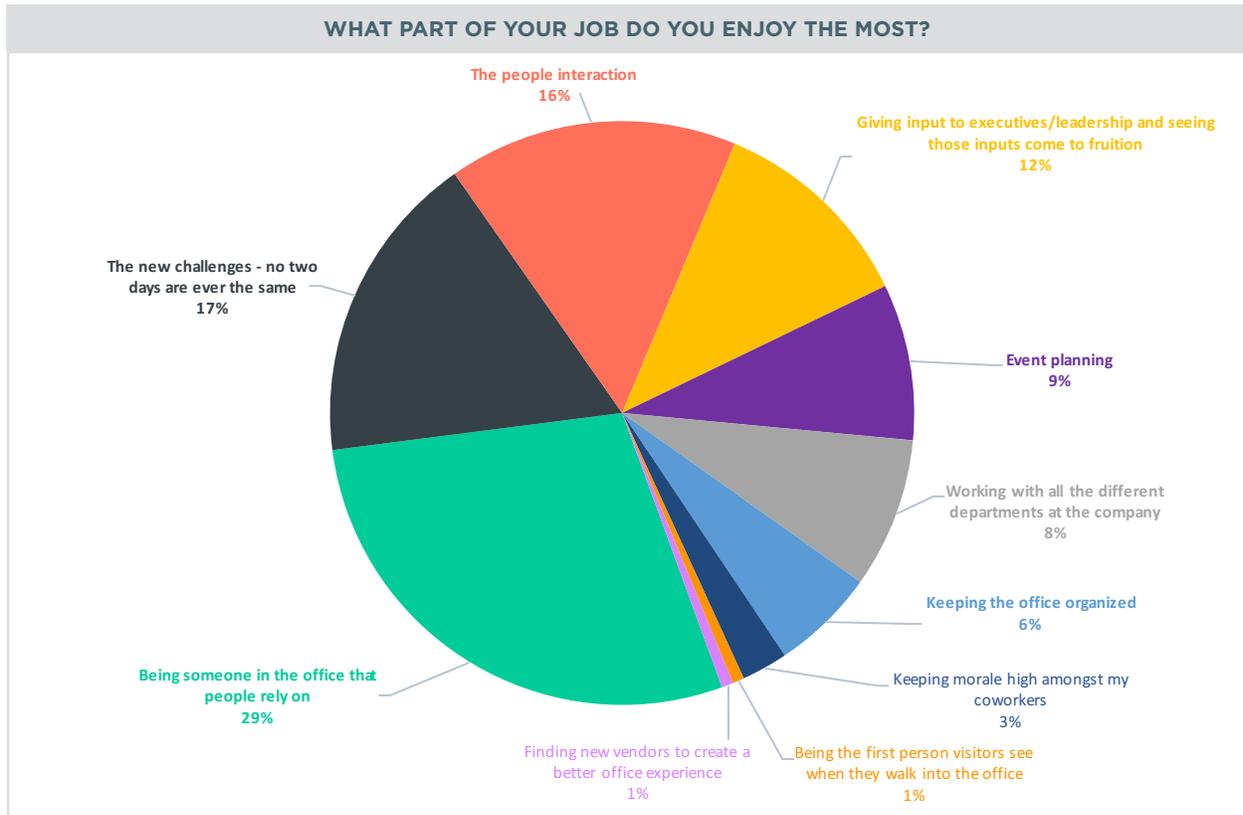


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Another draw for many Office Managers? It's never boring. 17% said that the fact "no two days are the same" is something they enjoy.

Office Managers are definitely "people persons." Aspects that deal with supporting their teammates account for nearly half (48%) of all responses (being someone people rely on, people interaction, working with different parts of the company).

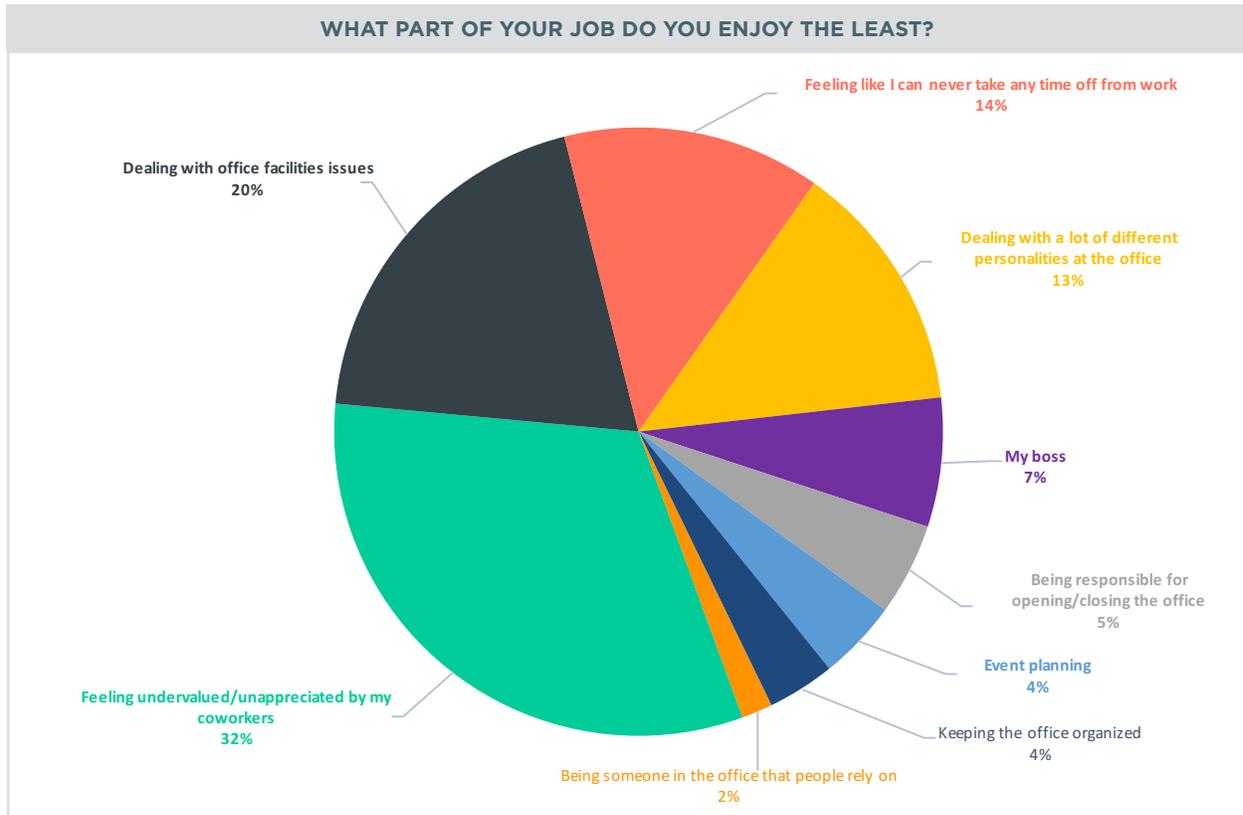
JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT



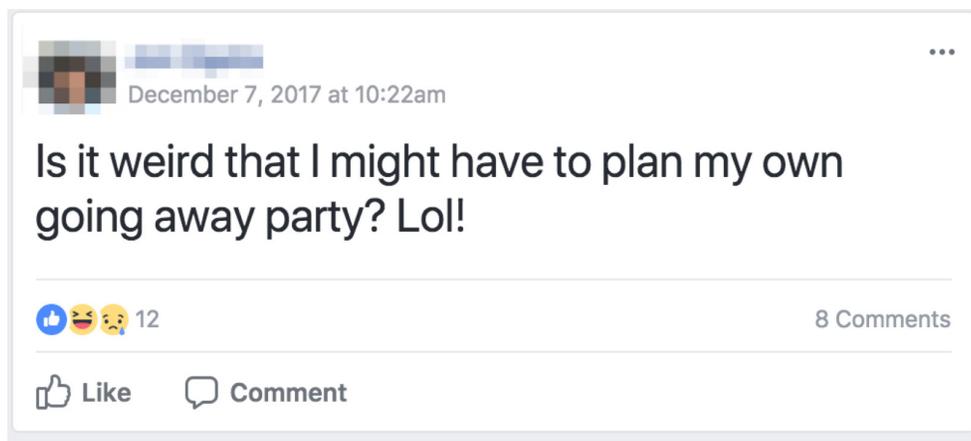
Of course being a team player can be a double-edged sword. It's great to be an integral team member, but it doesn't feel awesome when all your hard work goes unnoticed.

Our survey told us as much. When asked to name the part of their job they enjoy the least, feeling undervalued and unappreciated by coworkers topped the list, with 32% naming it the worst thing about their job. Next on the list is dealing with facilities and other office issues (20%), and feeling like they can never take time off from work (14%).

JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT



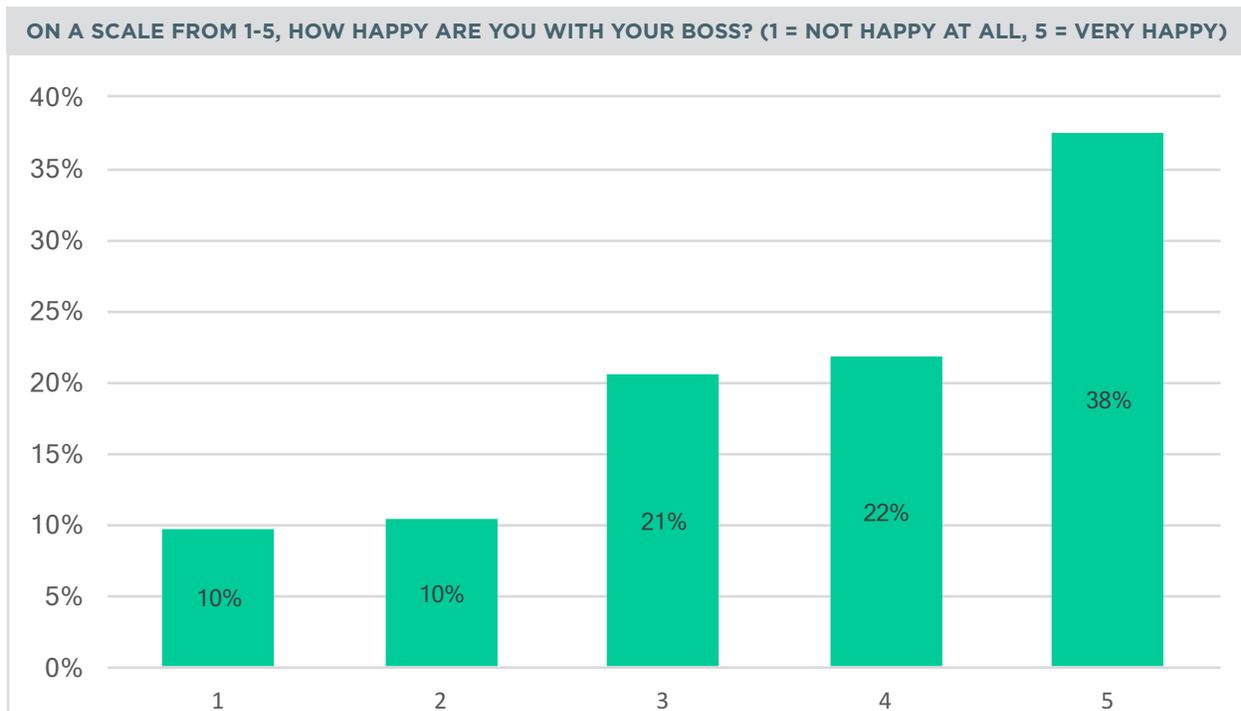
We found many stories that supported this finding in interviews with Office Managers and in our online communities, we found many stories that supported this finding. One that stuck out was from an Office Manager who was asked to throw his own going away party on his last day at the company, despite several years of service.



JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

If there's room for improvement in the happiness department, bosses aren't necessarily to blame. When asked to rate how happy they were with their boss, the numbers were markedly better than overall happiness scores.

Most commonly (38%), our respondents are "very happy" with their boss, giving them a perfect 5 out of 5. In fact, 60% rated their boss either a 4 or 5 out of 5.

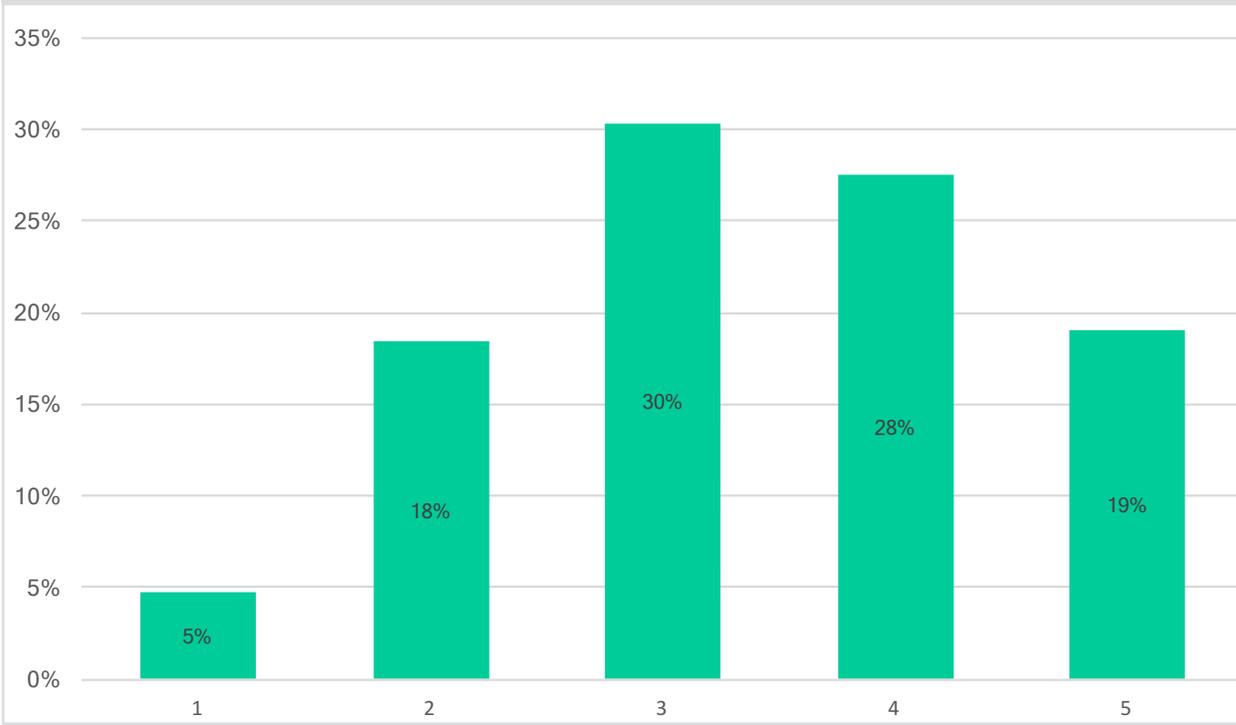


One factor in happiness and engagement is definitely work-life balance. People need to feel that other areas of their lives aren't suffering as a result of their dedication to the team.

Looking at work-life balance, most Office Managers rated it a 3, 4, or 5. The most common response was a 3, which indicates again that there is definitely room for improvement.

JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

ON A SCALE FROM 1-5, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE? (1 = INCREDIBLY UNBALANCED, 5 = PERFECTLY BALANCED)



ACTION STEP

Practice Work/Life Integration

One way for Office Managers to improve their work-life balance is to throw out the concept altogether.

Let's be real. Separating "work" from "life" is a fool's errand. Most adults spend the majority of their waking hours at work, so it's really all just "life."

Instead, we subscribe to the concept of work/life integration.

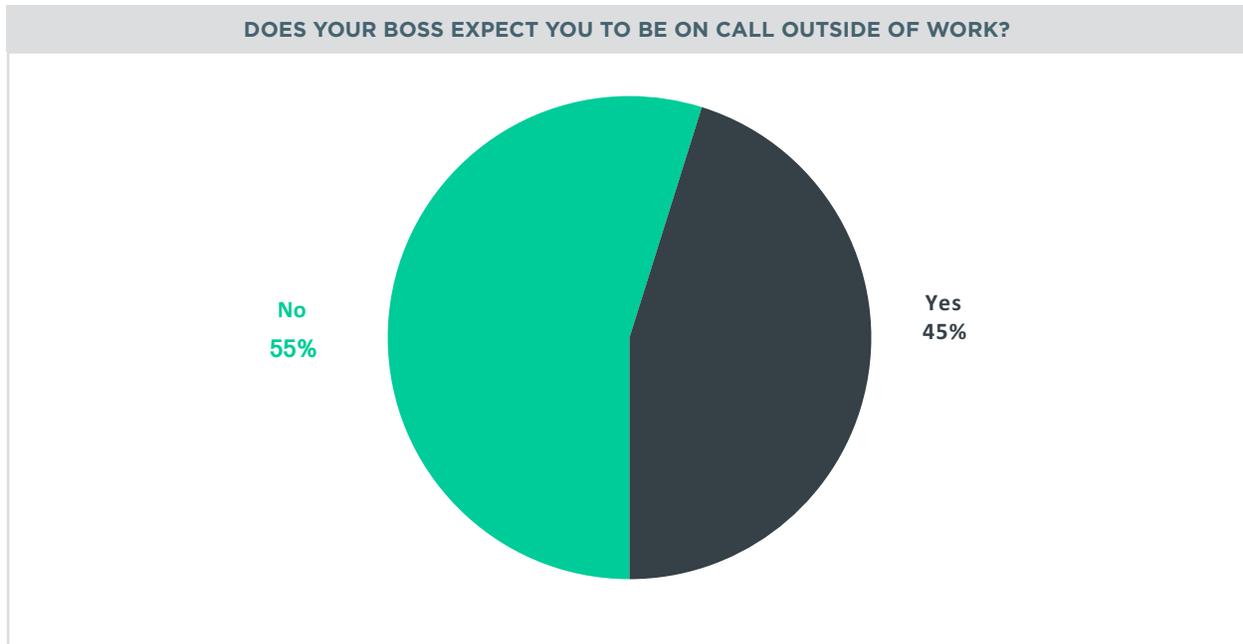
This doesn't mean that we should all remain glued to our smartphones or laptops, working around the clock. It means that we first recognize that life is mostly made up of work, and therefore strive to create a work environment where we actually want to spend our time.

JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

With that comes a culture that allows for flexibility and that makes room for things like family, hobbies, and public service. Remember that as an Office Manager, you have more influence on your company's culture than you probably realize.

Maintaining a healthy working life requires being able to unplug every once in awhile. But with the ubiquity of smartphones, email push notifications, and enterprise chat apps, this is easier said than done. It can feel like your role requires you to be reachable all the time, which can have a deleterious effect on engagement and morale.

When we asked if their boss expects them to be on call outside of work hours, results were fairly split. 55% told us that they are not expected to be on call outside of work hours, while the remaining 45% do have to be reachable off hours.

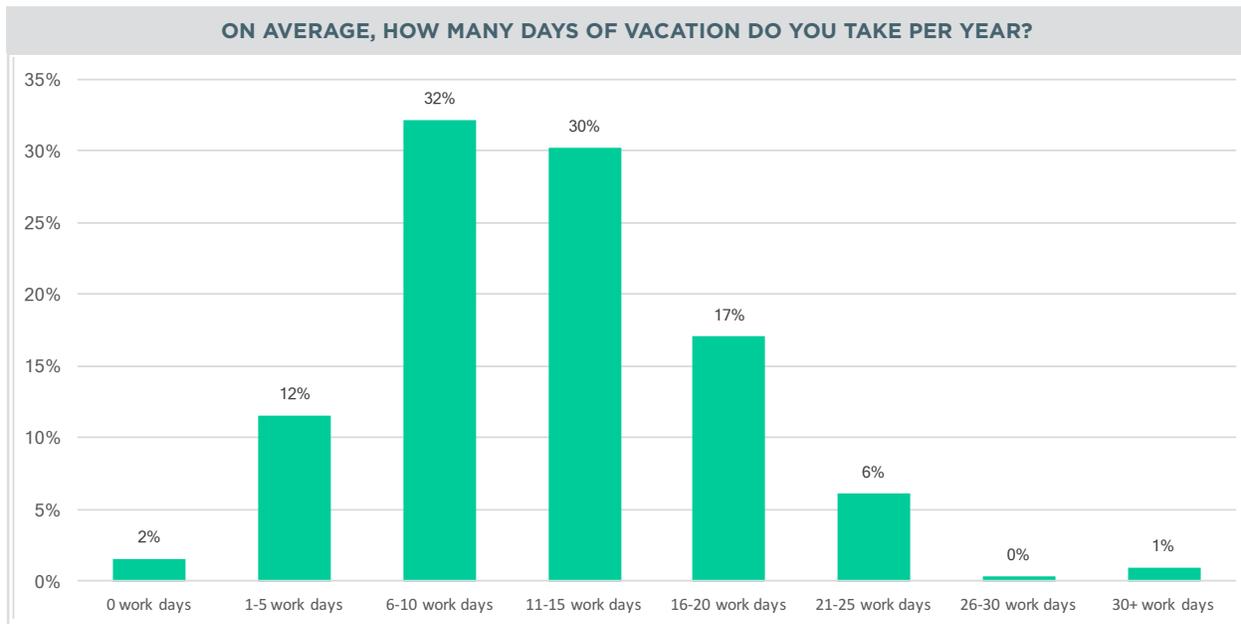


JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

Another factor in maintaining healthy work/life integration is time off to rest and rejuvenate, but in a role as a critical and team-centric as the Office Manager, it can seem like taking time off is a luxury they can't afford. There's certainly pressure to take fewer vacation days than allotted.

Of course, the opposite is true - your company can't afford for you to burn out because you left half your vacation days on the table.

So how are Office Managers doing? Our study shows that there's room for improvement.



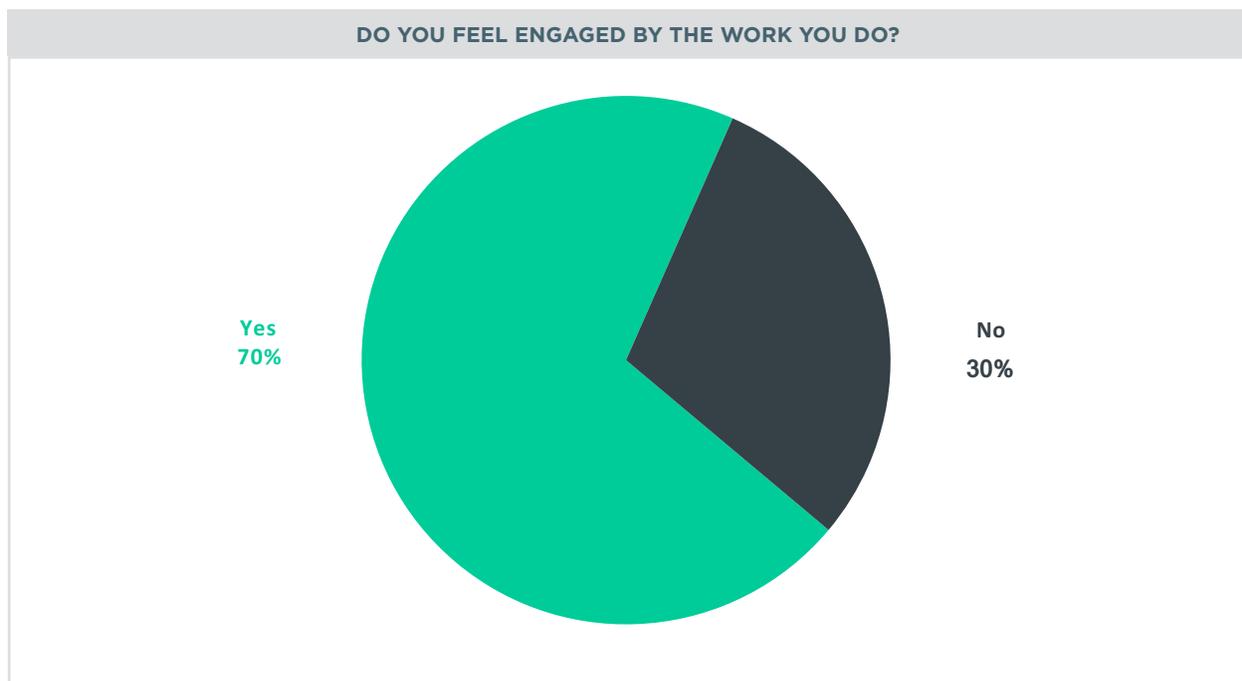
Most commonly, Office Managers take 6-10 days of paid vacation per year. Nearly half (47%) take 10 or fewer vacation days a year, far short of the [national average allotment of 16 days of paid leave](#).

JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

Engagement

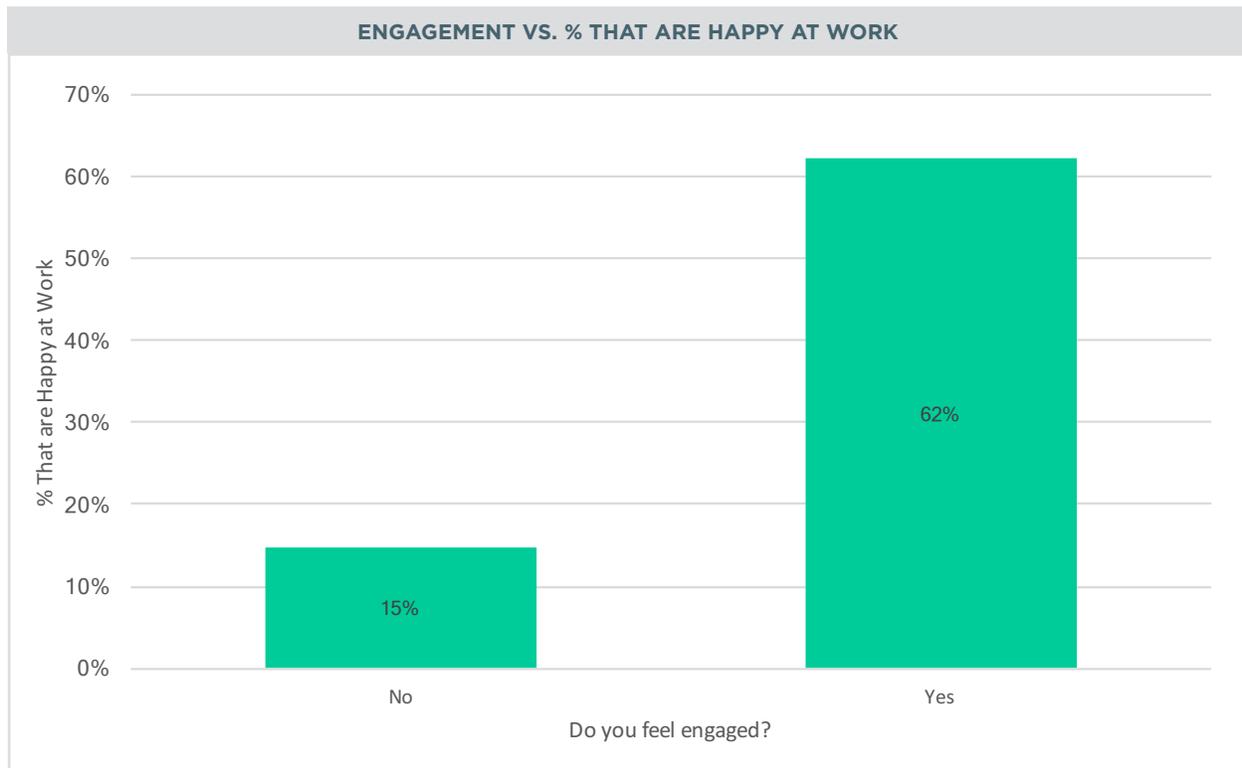
Our questions about happiness and stress are all leading up to the question of engagement, which is really the ultimate goal. Engagement is the extent to which you're personally involved in your company's success.

There's good news - Office Managers as a whole appear to be very engaged. A full 70% of our respondents are engaged by the work they do.



JOB SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

Studies show that engaged employees are happier, healthier, more productive, and lead more fulfilling lives. Likewise, our data indicates that engaged employees are more than 4 times more likely to also report being happy at work.



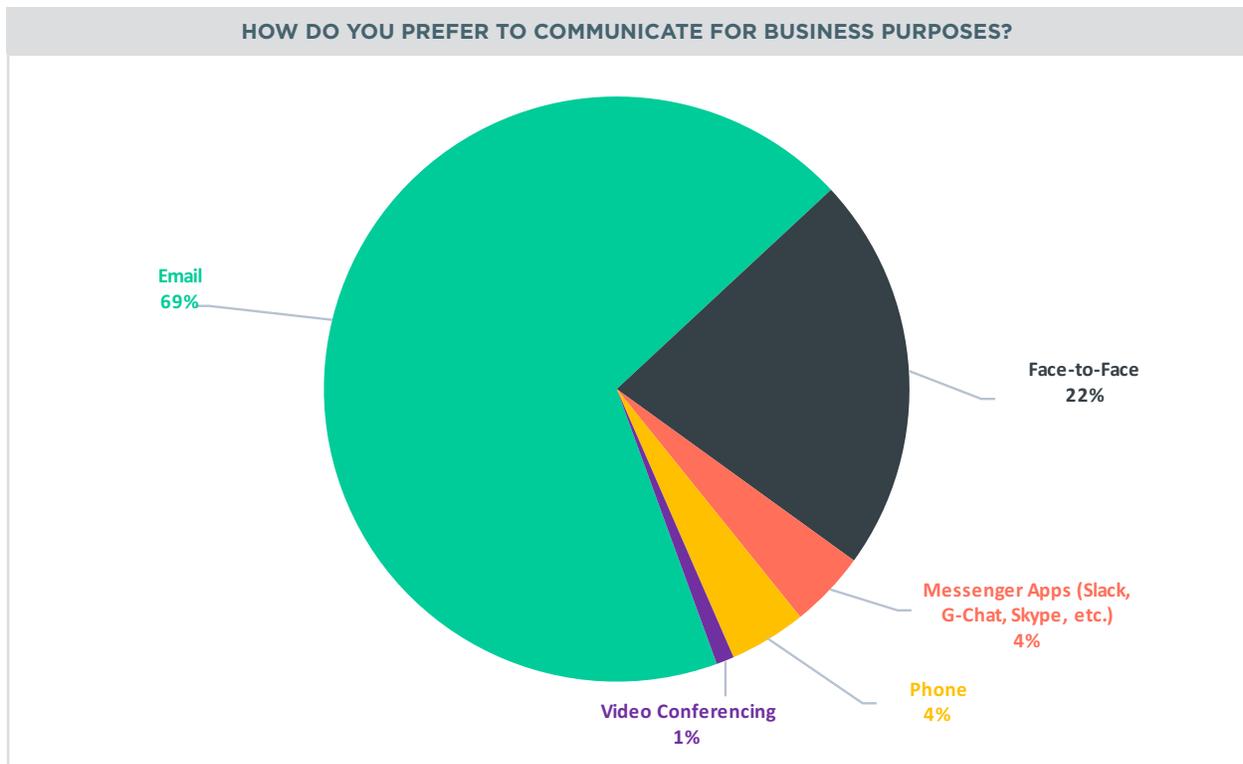


COMMUNICATION & TOOLS

COMMUNICATION & TOOLS

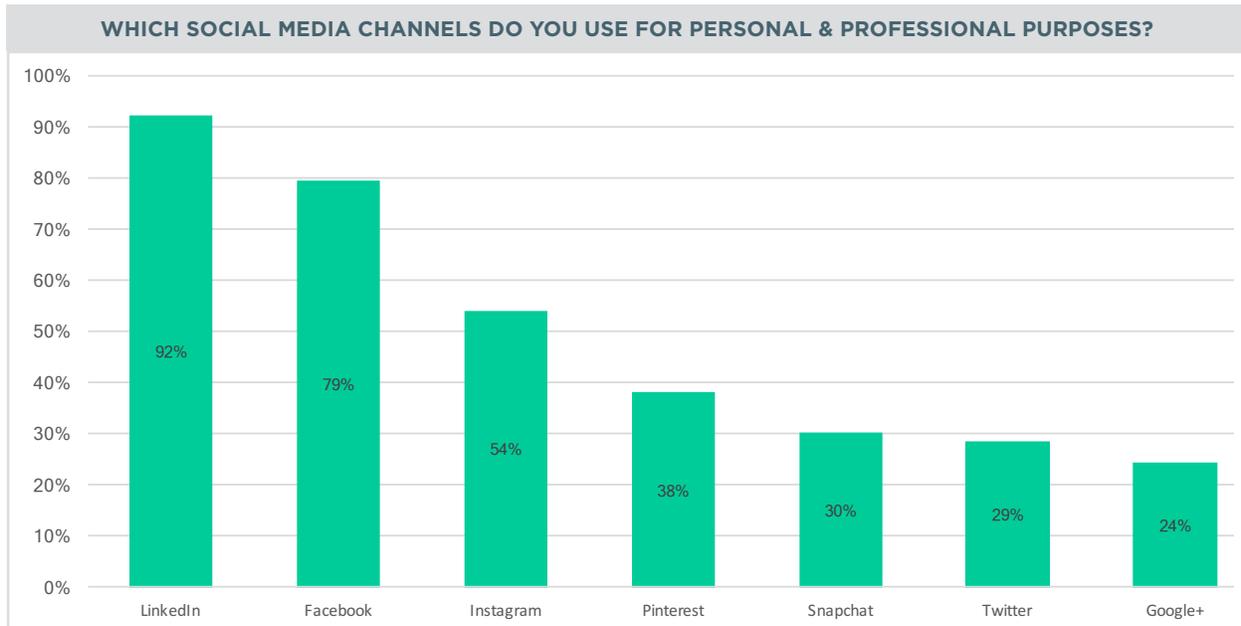
For business communication, email is still the preferred means, beating out face-to-face meetings by more than 3x. Enterprise messenger apps - the so-called email killers like Slack, G-chat, and Skype - barely made a dent, with only 4% preferring to get their message across in these channels.

It looks like email's fate is safe for now, but this is a missed opportunity according to our community. Office Manager Nora loves Slack for internal communication. "We use Slack heavily," she says, "and it is great for fast communication and delegating tasks."



Nearly all (92%) of our Office Managers use LinkedIn for personal and professional purposes, eclipsing even Facebook (79%). More than half use Instagram (54%), but there was steep drop off for Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, and Google+, which are used by 24-38% of our respondents.

COMMUNICATION & TOOLS



When it comes to communication in their role, the results surprised us. Most commonly (26%), Office Managers receive feedback just once a year, likely in an annual review. An alarming 21% of employees never receive feedback on their job performance. In a role as critical to team performance, and where growth is so highly valued, this is not nearly enough.

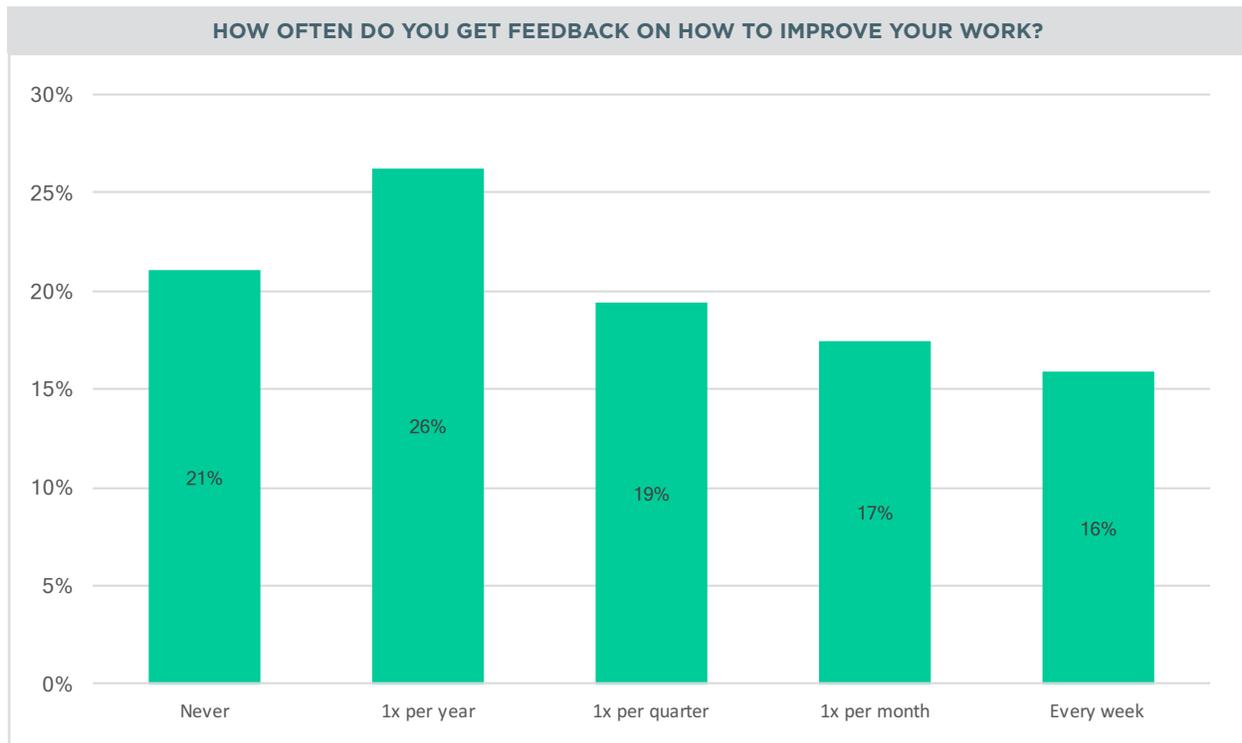
ACTION STEP

Use Work Anniversary as an Opportunity to Ask for Feedback

For those who never receive feedback, Office Manager Chelsey Wagemaker has a handy tip for making it happen at least once a year. She advises leveraging your work anniversary:

"I asked [my boss] 'when can we carve out an hour to sit down and have this conversation.' The fortunate thing about having that work anniversary is that you guarantee, if not before, on this day we're going to carve out time and make this happen."

COMMUNICATION & TOOLS



The absence of feedback isn't due to a lack of face-to-face contact. Most Office Managers meet with their bosses rather frequently. More than half (54%) meet with their boss once a week, and nearly three quarters meet once a month or more. This means that even though Office Managers meet frequently with their bosses, the conversation doesn't include performance feedback.

COMMUNICATION & TOOLS

- **Trello** - this free project management tool is a great way to stay on top of the myriad projects that an Office Manager inevitably works on. They have fantastic mobile apps as well.
- **Asana** - another project management tool that Office Managers love. Great for goal tracking.
- **Slack** - this uber-popular enterprise chat service is one of the best ways to cut down your inbox and eliminate internal information silos.
- **Dropbox** - backup and organize big files, share them with anyone, access them anywhere.
- **Evernote** - the big advantage of Evernote (besides seamless integration across devices) - you can search your notes. A game changer for people who rely on old school pen and paper note taking.
- **Expensify** - chances are you'll be in charge of expenses for some or all of your team. Expensify is the easiest way to do that.
- **Wunderlist** - a planning app that has been called a life saver by our community members.
- **BlueJeans** - this was the most recommended video conferencing service in our online communities.
- **Calendly** - simplifies one of the most annoying tasks for Office Managers (or anyone really) - scheduling. They provide a one click solution.

COMMUNICATION & TOOLS

ACTION STEP

Prioritize

Multitasking is a myth. Our brains aren't capable of performing more than one high level task at once. "Task switching" is probably a more accurate term, and it's a guaranteed way to do two things rather poorly.

That's why prioritization is so important. It enables you to order your most important tasks and knock them out one by one.

Here's Chelsey Wagemaker again to explain how prioritization also helps you prevent others from hijacking your time:

"I think as a new manager is starting out you've got to figure out where those priorities are and you've got to stick to them as well, and let your team know that those are your priorities.

I actually have a sheet at my desk listing my top 5 priorities. Then it's just figuring out where people fall.

If they come to me and they say,

'I've got this project', then I can reference the sheet and show what I'm doing today... This is my first priority. You're going to be somewhere here. I'll get to you either right this afternoon, end of day, end of week.' "



CONCLUSIONS & BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES

CONCLUSIONS & BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES

By now we hope it's clear that the Office Manager role is a mission-critical one. Office Managers are the lifeblood of any team. They provide crucial support, fill organizational gaps, solve problems, and just plain take care of business. In many cases, a company's Office Manager performs entire org functions that are typically handled by other departments. Bottom line, Office Managers are crucial for the overall success of any business.

Because Office Managers are men and women of action, here are our top recommendations for those who want to thrive in the role now and in the future:

- **Be prepared to be flexible.** Our data showed that being adaptable to any situation was the number one skill for success in the Office Manager role. Approach your job with this mindset and you'll be in a position to succeed.
- **Push for quarterly feedback.** You told us that you're meeting with your boss pretty frequently. Take advantage by reserving part of this time for performance feedback. Your manager will appreciate the initiative, and you'll walk away with valuable insight on how to provide more value to your organization - and reach your professional goals that much faster.
- **Work with your manager to set expectations.** "Poorly defined expectations" was a top challenge. When expectations are loose, your job can slowly start to feel overwhelming. Get ahead of that by clarifying expectations and setting achievable goals.
- **Learn about your customer.** Because it's (incorrectly) seen as an inward-facing role, one of the best kept secrets of the Office Manager position is that you can learn a ton about your company's most important stakeholder - its customers. If transitioning to another position is your goal, take advantage and learn all there is to know. [This interview](#) lays out one Office Manager's approach.
- **Take your allotted vacation.** All of it. Burnout is a real risk for Office Managers because the nature of the role makes it feel like you can never step away. But the truth is, your company can't afford to lose someone as valuable as you are. (And leave your work phone at home!)

CONCLUSIONS & BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES

- **Learn the latest apps and tools.** Making the most of your time is a key to success. Leverage all the great productivity tools out there and get your time back.
- **Use Slack for internal communication.** You told us that improving communication was a top challenge. Since Office Managers work with just about everyone on the team, you need a robust, efficient way to communicate. Slack is one of the best ways to reduce internal email traffic and eliminate information silos.
- **Spearhead a recognition program.** Improving morale was a challenge for a lot of our Office Managers. Recognition is a great way to do that. Need some ideas? [Check out our guide.](#)
- **Negotiate for higher pay.** Our data shows that education, tenure, and experience are only loosely correlated with compensation levels. This tells us that no matter who you are, you're in a better negotiating position than you think. Focus on the value you provide the team, and make your case. Check out this guide on [negotiation tactics](#), or our [Office Manager's Guide to Asking for a Raise and Boosting Your Salary](#).
- **Let SnackNation make you look like a snack genius.** Are you one of the 56% of Office Managers in charge of keeping the office stocked with free snacks? Well here's a tip - don't waste time ordering snacks yourself. Save yourself a ton of hassle and become the office hero by letting [SnackNation](#) handle everything for you. Each month, SnackNation will ship you an expertly curated assortment of great tasting healthy snacks that will keep your team happy, healthy, and productive.

ABOUT SNACKNATION

Congratulations again! You've made it to the end. We know that was a lot of information, but we hope you found at least a few things that will help you on your professional journey - or at least make your job a little easier each day.

Why Do We Care So Much About Office Managers?

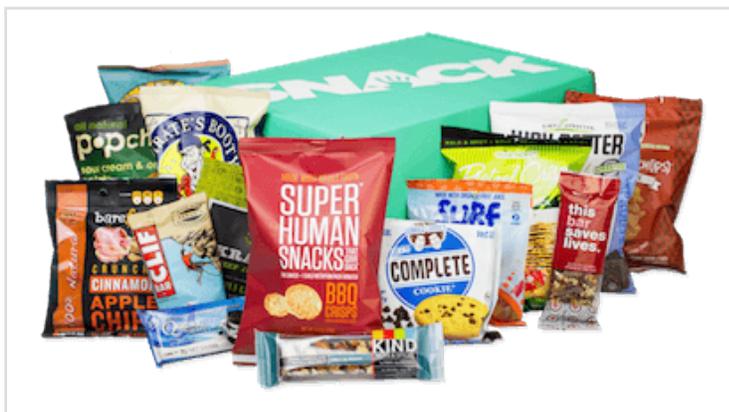
Now, a bit about us.

We're SnackNation, the leading healthy snack membership experience, fueling high performing companies and empowering healthy lifestyles across the U.S. Each month we provide a curated selection of great tasting, healthy snacks to some of the coolest offices in the country - places like The Huffington Post, the NFL Network, MailChimp, Microsoft, and tons more.

While curating and delivering snacks is what we do, there's really a lot more to it than that. We're dedicated to helping people become better versions of themselves by supporting increased health, productivity, and happiness, starting at the workplace. We also know that perks matter when it comes to creating an engaged culture, and we see making your job easier as part of our core mission.

If you enjoy this content, be sure to [check out our blog](#) and join our mailing list by clicking the Subscribe button on that page. We write constantly about workplace culture, employee engagement, and other issues and concerns specific to the office manager role. Each year we also produce an updated version of this report so you can stay up to date on the latest trends, tools, and tactics to help you reach your full professional potential.

Keep being the amazing rockstar you are!



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