



## **HIT Workforce Engagement Trends**

Assessing job satisfaction and career motivations in healthcare IT professionals

# Introduction

With their [pay on the rise](#) and their skills in high demand, the healthcare IT workforce has plenty to be happy about. But many HIT professionals, even though satisfied in their current roles, keep an eye on the job market and their next career move.

At Healthcare IT Leaders, we have a specialized view into this workforce. Our recruiters deal regularly with IT consultants and full-time IT employees (FTEs), helping to place them in contract and full-time roles with our healthcare clients across the U.S. and Canada.

For this, our first-ever HIT workforce engagement report, we surveyed hundreds of consultants and FTEs. While we

found many similarities between the two groups, we also found significant contrast in how they view their work and their levels of satisfaction, as well as varying motivations for seeking a new job.

We also found a segment of each group that sees the grass as greener on the other side – consultants that hope to convert to full-time employment and FTEs that hope to consult.

If you're a hiring manager, we hope our findings help shed some light on the attitudes of the IT professionals in your workplace. And perhaps, you'll gain insights that can help you attract and retain your talent.



## About Our Survey

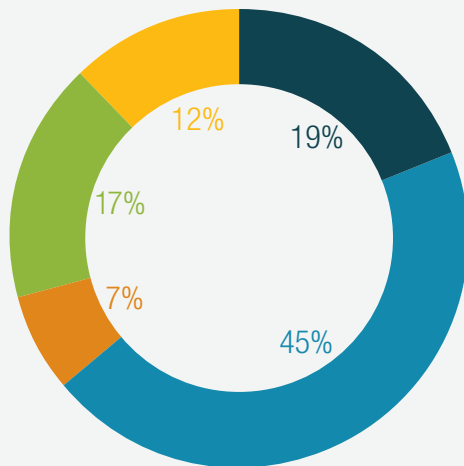
In May 2014, we asked healthcare IT professionals to complete our online job satisfaction survey. Of the 446 valid, completed surveys, 198 were by individuals who self-identified as permanent IT employees with a healthcare industry employer, and 248 self-identified as IT consultants with healthcare clients.

# How satisfied are you with your current job?

43% of consultants said they were **very satisfied** in their jobs, compared to just 19% of full-time employees. On the flip side of the question, just 2% of consultants in our survey said they were **very dissatisfied**, compared to 12% of our FTE respondents.

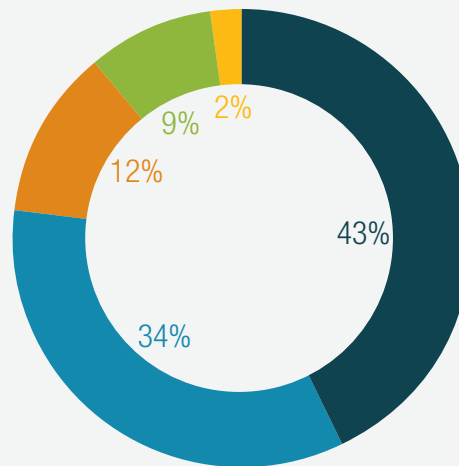
## Full-time Employee

A permanent employee with a health-care industry employer



## Consultant

A contractor, either W2 or self-employed, with healthcare clients



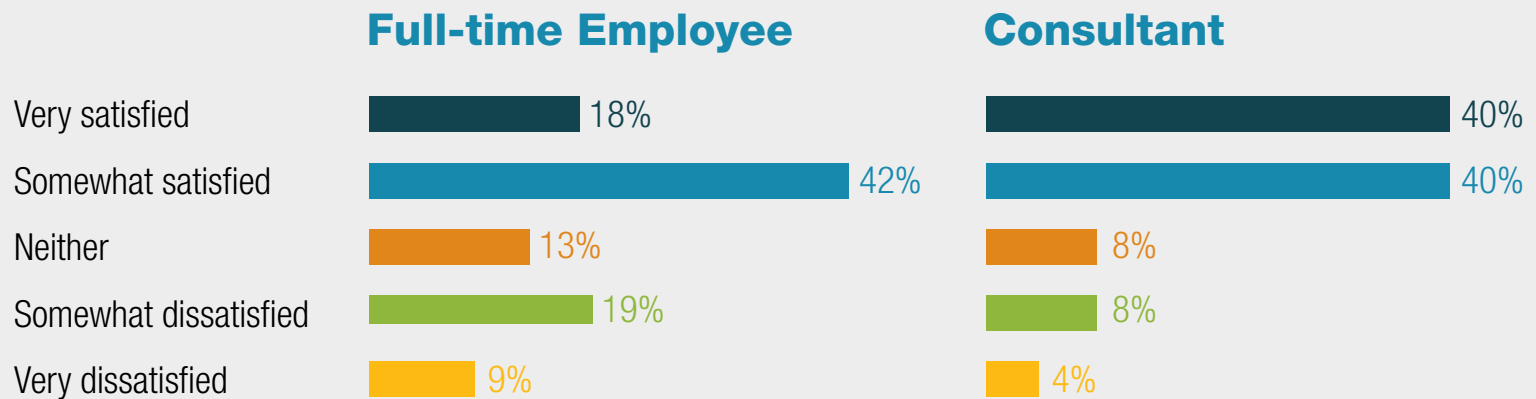
- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

### ✎ CLOSER LOOK

Unhappy workers, whether they are consultants or FTEs, may not be in their current jobs long. 76% of those who say they are very dissatisfied also report that they are [actively looking](#) for a new job.

# How satisfied are you with the pay you receive with your current job?

Industry surveys show consultants make more than the average HIT professional, and our survey shows consultants are happier with their pay as a result. 40% of consultants told us they were **very satisfied** with their current pay, compared to 18% of FTEs. Conversely, 28% of FTEs said they were **somewhat dissatisfied** or **very dissatisfied** with their pay. Just 12% of consultants feel the same way.

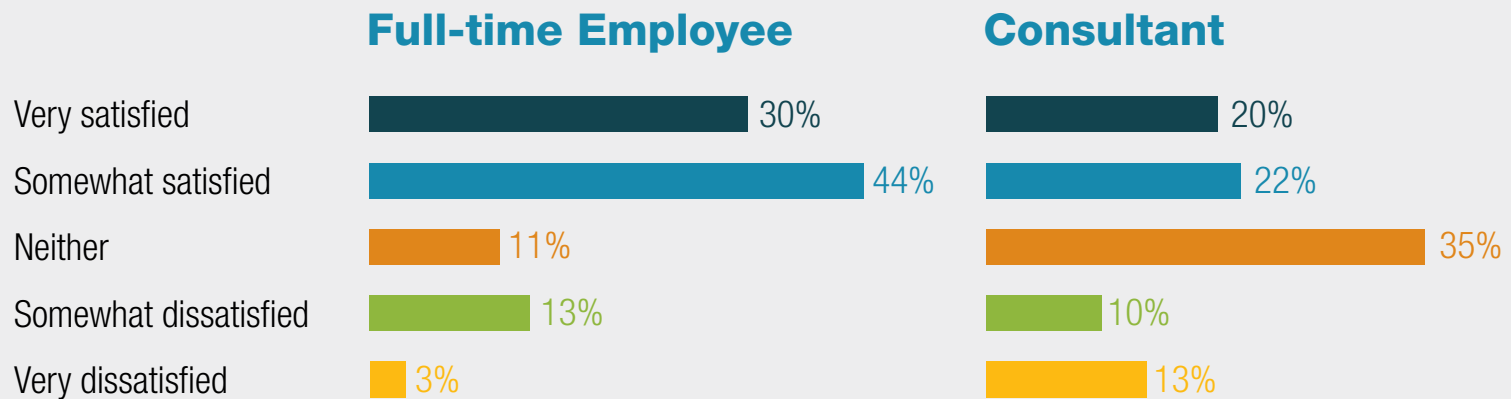


## Q CLOSER LOOK

Money is a powerful motivator for both FTEs and consultants. Both groups rank better compensation as the number-one factor that would make them [change jobs](#).

# How satisfied are you with the benefits you receive with your current job?

Not surprisingly, HIT full-time employees are more satisfied with their benefits than consultants. 13% of consultants say they are **very dissatisfied** with their benefits, compared to just 3% of FTEs. While some consultants receive benefits through their staffing or consulting firms (or perhaps a spouse), many are independent contractors who must buy their own benefits—or go without.



## Q CLOSER LOOK

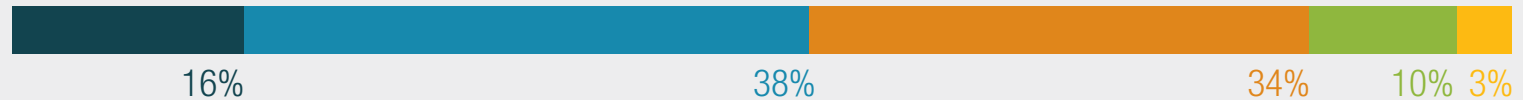
According to our results, consultants unhappy with their benefits are more likely than other consultants to consider a move to [full-time employee status](#).

# How challenging is your job?

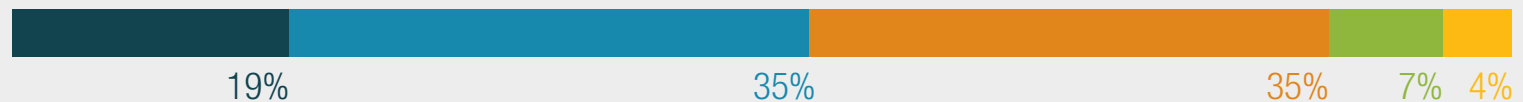
This question finds close alignment between FTEs and consultants. 54% of each group report their jobs are **extremely challenging** or **very challenging**. That's not surprising, given the growing complexity of HIT Initiatives, the increasing volume of work generated from government mandates and rapid advances in areas such as cloud computing, big data and interoperability.

● Extremely challenging   ● Very challenging   ● Moderately challenging   ● Slightly challenging   ● Not at all challenging

## Full-time Employee



## Consultant



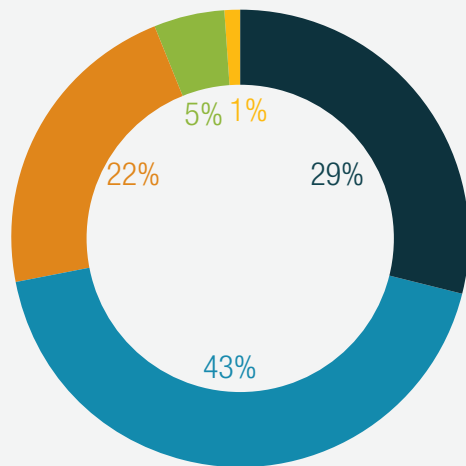
### Q CLOSER LOOK

Challenging work correlates to high levels of job satisfaction among consultants but not FTEs. In fact, almost a quarter of FTEs who ranked their jobs as extremely challenging also said they were [very dissatisfied](#) with their jobs.

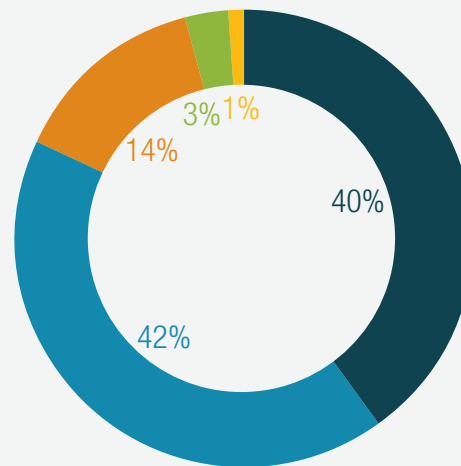
# How meaningful is your work?

A significant majority from both groups find their work extremely or very meaningful, although consultants were more likely than FTEs to rate their work as **extremely meaningful**. Healthcare IT can have a profound impact on patients' lives and outcomes, and our respondents seemed to grasp the critical importance of their roles. Only 1% of HIT professionals overall said their jobs were **not at all meaningful**.

### Full-time Employee



### Consultant



- Extremely meaningful
- Very meaningful
- Moderately meaningful
- Slightly meaningful
- Not at all meaningful

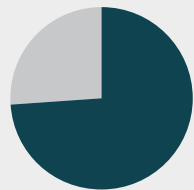
## Q CLOSER LOOK

Among HIT professionals that rate their work as extremely or very meaningful, 89% are also extremely satisfied with their jobs, suggesting a strong correlation between meaningful work and [job satisfaction](#).

# What factors would make you change jobs?

Pay is the number-one reason that FTEs and consultants would consider a job change, followed by opportunities for advancement. A significant percentage (44%) of FTEs feel work/life balance is important, but that's not a top 5 consideration for consultants. Location issues (defined as a preferred city or better commute) rank highly for consultants but are not a major switching factor for FTEs.

## Full-time Employee



74%

Better compensation



56%

Opportunities for advancement



44%

Improved work/life balance



36%

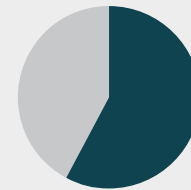
More learning opportunities



35%

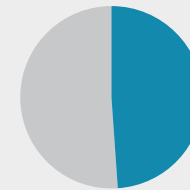
Better benefits

## Consultant



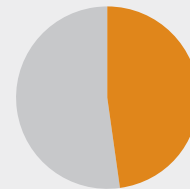
58%

Better compensation



49%

Opportunities for advancement



48%

More learning opportunities



42%

Better benefits



40%

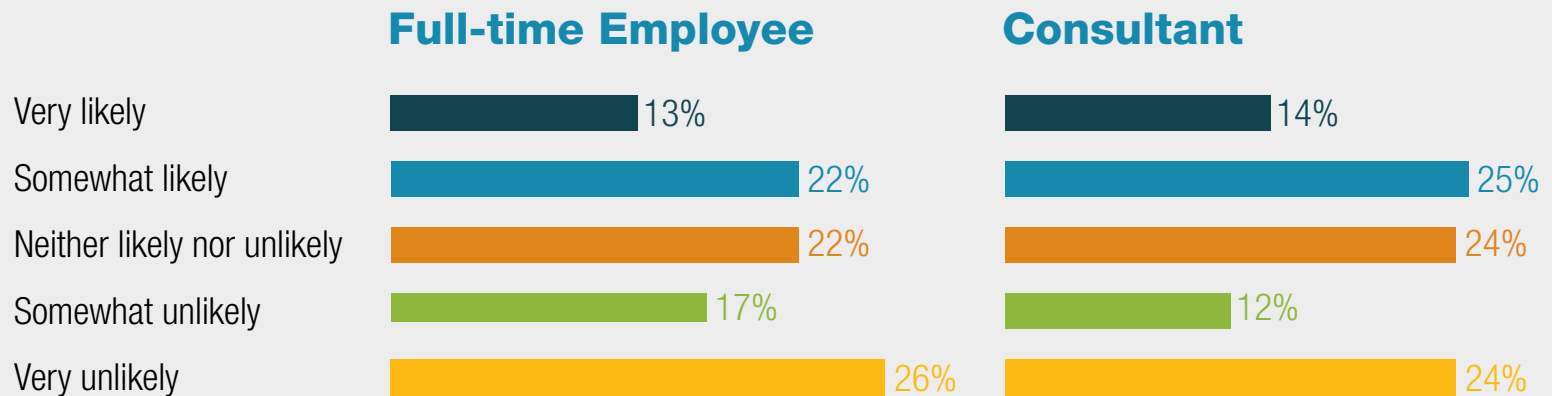
Location issues (city/commute)



## If you are a full-time employee, what is the likelihood you will switch to become a Consultant within the next year?

## If you are a consultant, what is the likelihood you will switch to become a full-time employee within the next year?

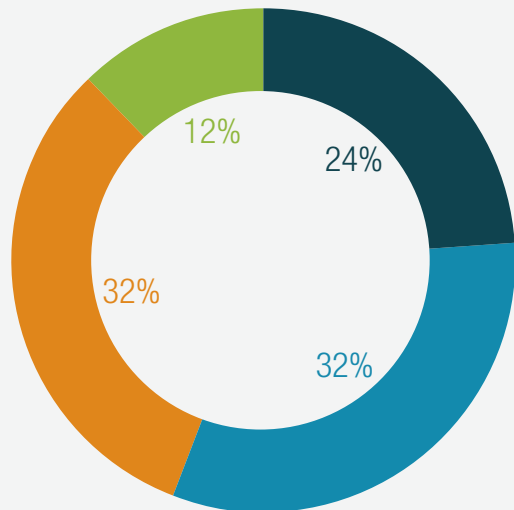
Responses from consultants and FTEs suggest that large segments of each group believe the grass is greener on the other side. Consultants may be travel-weary or worried about their future prospects and thus ready to opt for the security of a full-time job. FTEs may see the higher pay and relative autonomy of consulting as preferable to their current roles.



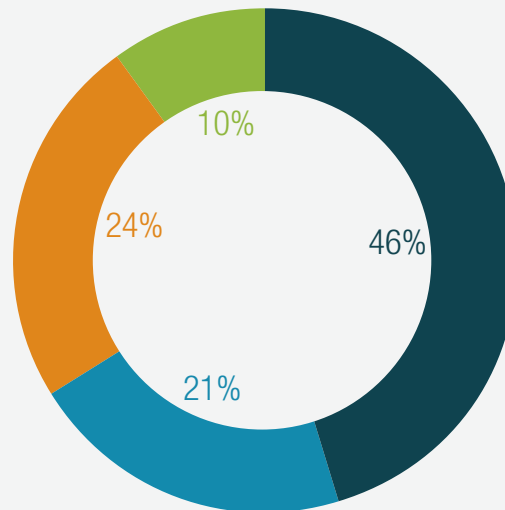
# How would you describe your current job search status?

With the short-term duration (3-6 months) of most consulting assignments, it's not surprising that consultants are nearly twice as active in the job market than FTEs. But both groups have a large segment of occasional or passive job seekers, and only one of 10 in the HIT workforce say they are not open to a new job.

### Full-time Employee



### Consultant



- Actively looking
- Occasionally looking
- Open to a new job but not looking
- Completely satisfied, not open to a new job or looking

# Which of the following activities have you engaged in during the past month?

In a white hot job market, consultants and FTEs are equally prime targets for outside recruiters, although consultants are more likely to reply to recruiting inquiries. Other top activities shown here, like networking and maintenance of resumes and professional profiles, may simply reflect a “new normal” for proactive career management by HIT professionals.

Received a message from a recruiter



Replied to a message from a recruiter



Edit my resume or professional profile to keep it up to date



Read a description for/explored a job at a different company



Engaged in professional networking



- Full-time Employee
- Consultant



## *Implications for Hiring Companies*

What should you make of all of this if you're a hiring manager? We think the following are key takeaways for recruitment and retention in a healthcare IT workplace.

### **Money Matters**

It may not be what you want to hear, but pay is critical in the hiring and retention of HIT talent. Use industry surveys to identify pay benchmarks for your key roles and ensure that your salaries are competitive by job titles, responsibilities and location.

### **Reconsider Consultants**

To fill an open role, turn up your recruitment of consultants, many of whom are interested in returning to the ranks of FTEs. While you may not be able to match their consulting pay, benefits and reduced travel are key motivators for those ready to abandon the consultant lifestyle.

### **The “Always Looking” Workforce**

Only a small minority of the HIT workforce said they

would not consider a new job, meaning most would change employers if the circumstances were right. If you're a hiring manager, look beyond active job seekers and tap into the deep pool of passive candidates evident in our survey. Most HIT professionals are receptive to recruitment outreach, so you have little to lose by contacting those with the skills you're looking for.

### **Focus on Retention**

Per above, understand that most of your workforce is also at risk to leave. Keep your team engaged and well-compensated, but also strive to understand the personal motivators of individuals that you hope to retain. And consider conducting a survey like this one to measure satisfaction in your department. The results may surprise you.



## ***Feedback?***

Let us hear from you at [info@healthcareitleaders.com](mailto:info@healthcareitleaders.com)

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