

2025



Supply Chain Workforce Survey

Know the factors that impact your
recruitment & retention success

Proprietary Market Research Conducted by Total Talent Resources





2025 Supply Chain Workforce Survey

Labor shortages and challenges with churn are ever-present for supply chain employers. According to data from MFI, 2.1 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. are predicted to remain unfilled by 2030. Having a winning talent strategy is business-critical to weather the ups and downs of the industrial sector and to take full advantage of growth opportunities. Decisions in this area should begin with a review of accurate and current information about what it takes to attract and retain the workers you need.

Do you KNOW what workers in the manufacturing & logistics industries really want?

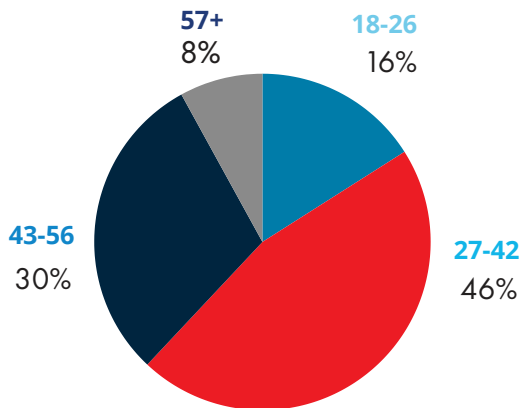
- With 64% of supply chain workers actively seeking a new job right now, that's a question worth answering

At Total Talent, we've surveyed 2,322 industrial workers to provide actionable, data-backed insights about what candidates value most in their job search and their careers.

Research Methodology

We collected responses to our 2025 Industrial Labor Survey electronically, leveraging email and SMS outreach to increase participation. Our final responses came from a diverse cohort of hourly industrial workers from Illinois, Texas, and Florida.

Age Range of Respondents



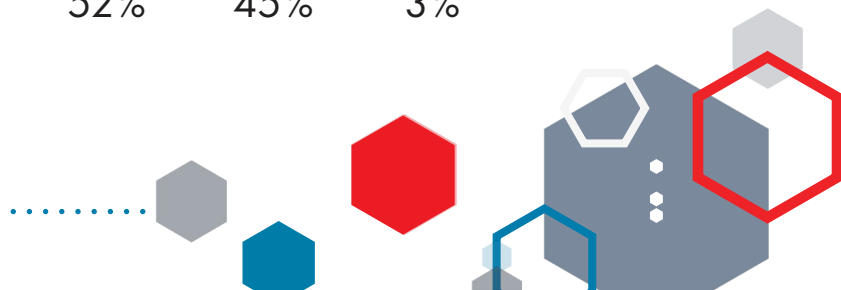
52%



45%

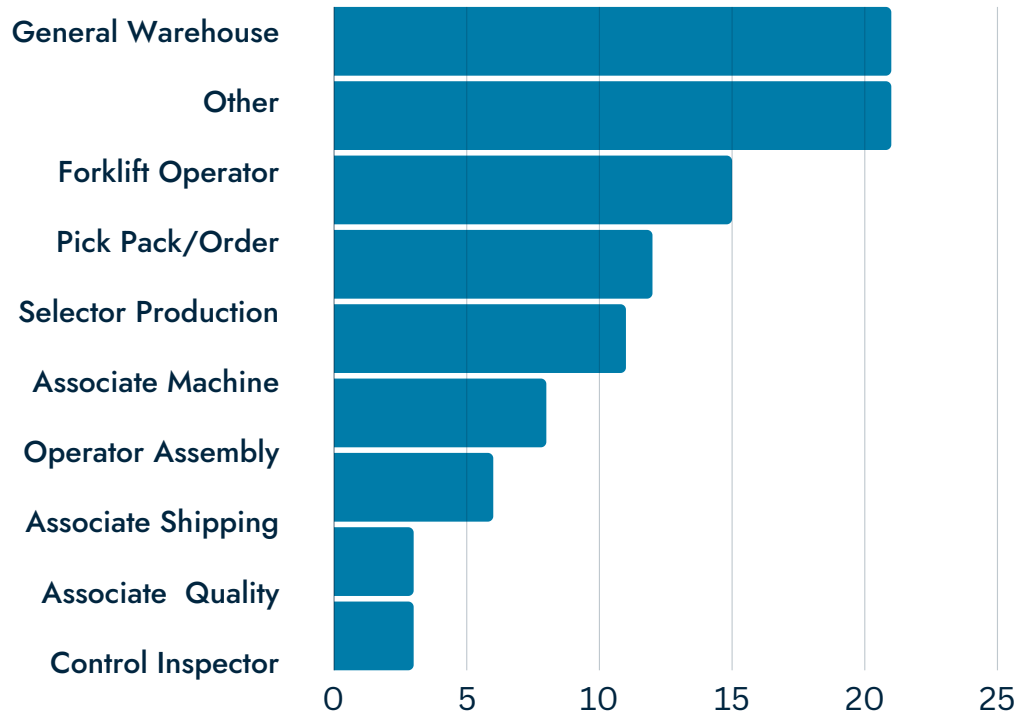
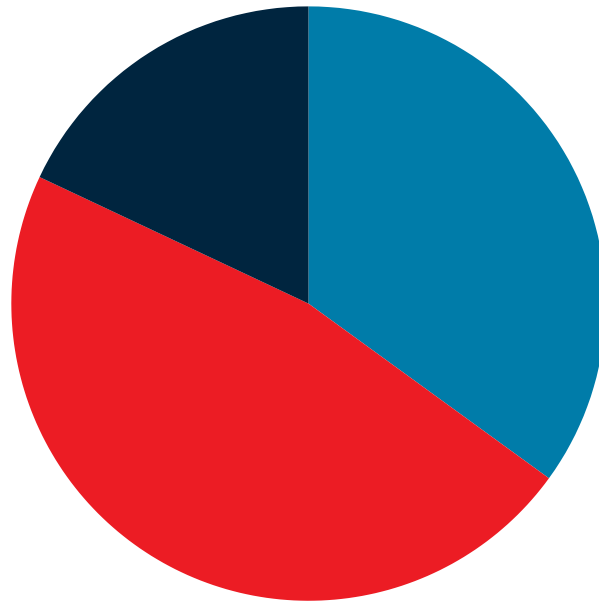
Prefer Not To Answer

3%





■ Manufacturing/Production
■ Warehouse/Distribution ■ Other



Insight 1 | Shift Preferences

In 2023, the Institute of Supply Chain Management published an opinion piece touting the benefits of flex work to encourage loyalty, promote safety, boost productivity, and diversify the workforce. Over the past few years, many employers have experimented with flexible scheduling for supply chain roles including Amazon, Target, and GE Appliances.

There is certainly some interest in this model on the part of job candidates. For example, when Land O'Lakes rolled out their flex program, they reported a record number of applicants in the first few days. Having more options for scheduling can be a valuable solution for filling workforce gaps and attracting non-traditional employees like students and parents.

Regular Shifts Are Still the Most Popular Option

Despite the buzz around flex work for warehouse roles, having a predictable and consistent work schedule is a top priority for most workers. Regular 8 hour shifts are the most sought after positions by a wide margin, while a 4-day work week (with 10 hour shifts) is a popular second option. Flexible scheduling and gig work combined ranked lower than any other option, with "work when I want" being the selection for less than 3% of respondents.



Notable Takeaway: Offering 10 & 12-Hour Shift Options Might Deliver Benefit

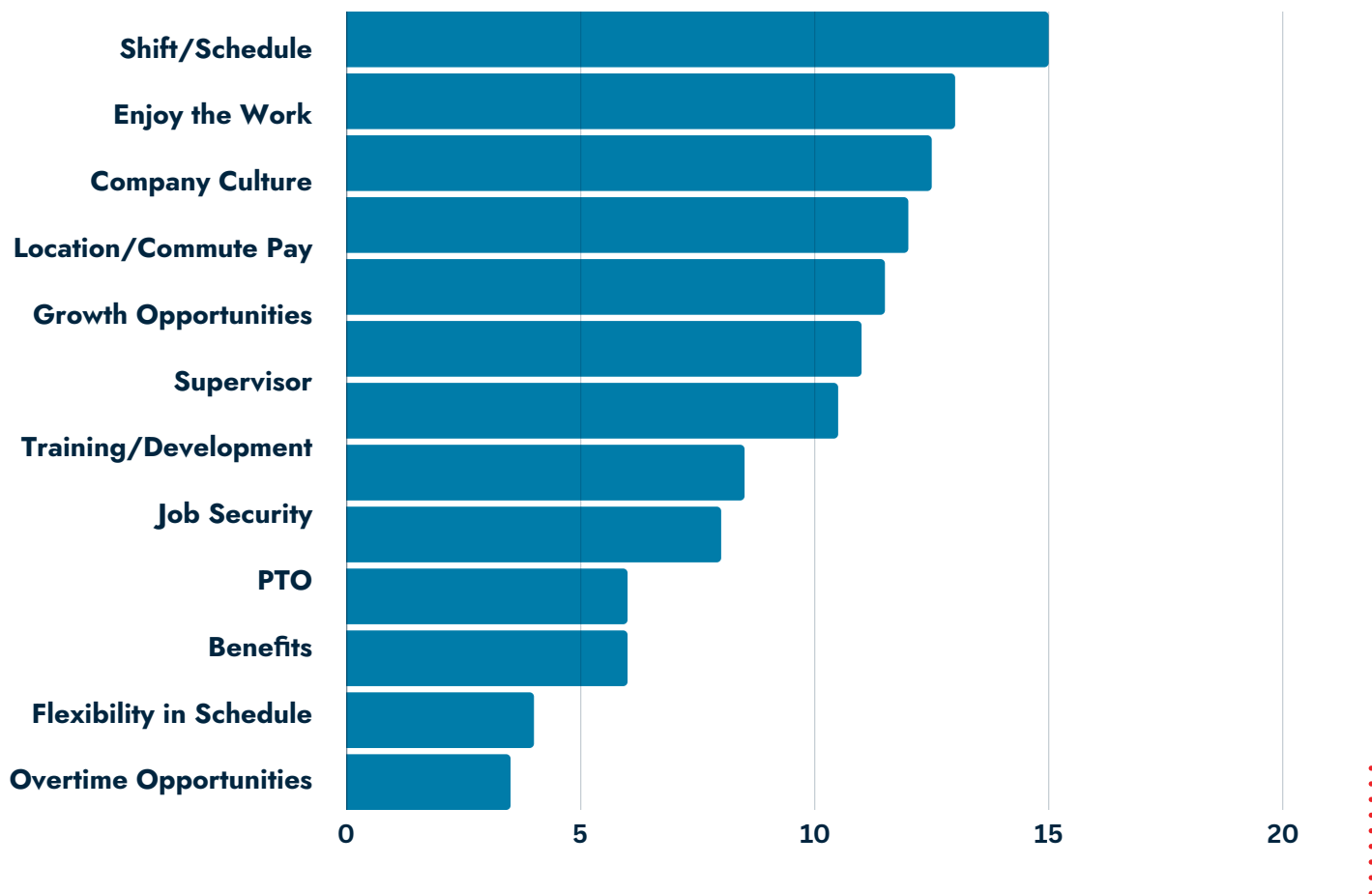
Although the majority of workers are happiest with a 5 day workweek and an 8 hour workday, there is a nuance that deserves attention. When workers were asked which schedule they currently work vs. what they would prefer, we can see that 18% are on a 10 hour shift with a 4-day workweek. This is an arrangement that more than 30% of workers would like to have.



Where Does Shift Choice Rank in Importance?

Working a desirable schedule remains the most important factor for workers when looking for a new job and the top reason for staying at the one they have. The relevance of total compensation and even culture pales in comparison. Having full time work on the right shift outranks pay, benefits, overtime, culture, and growth opportunity as the deciding factor for most supply chain workers.

Most Important Factors When Looking for a Job



Insight 2 | Pay Motivation

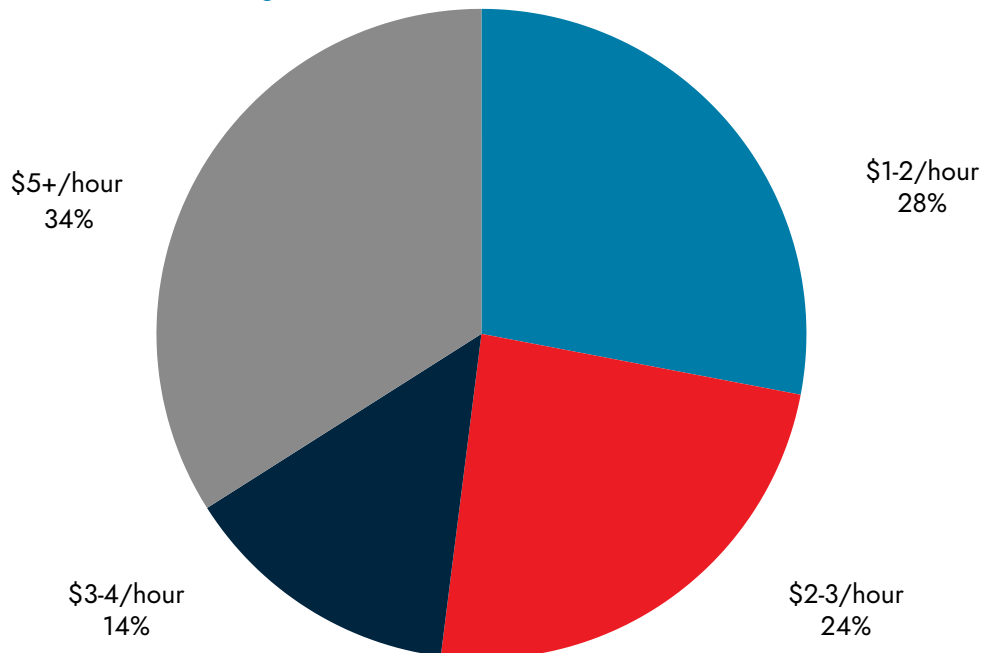
While shift was clearly more important than compensation in determining the desirability of a job, employees are still paying close attention to the amount on their pay stub. It is among the top 5 factors that workers consider when seeking a job (although work enjoyment, culture, and location trumped pay in the most recent survey).

As with most hourly positions, getting more value for the time they are putting in just makes sense to industrial workers. This creates a risky situation for employers who want to keep talent on board in a competitive market.

What Level of Wage Increase Can Tempt Workers Away?

It's not surprising that supply chain workers can be wooed to another employer with the promise of a \$5/hour bump in pay. However, more than 1 out of 4 workers would make the change for as little as a dollar or two per hour.

Pay Increase to Switch Jobs



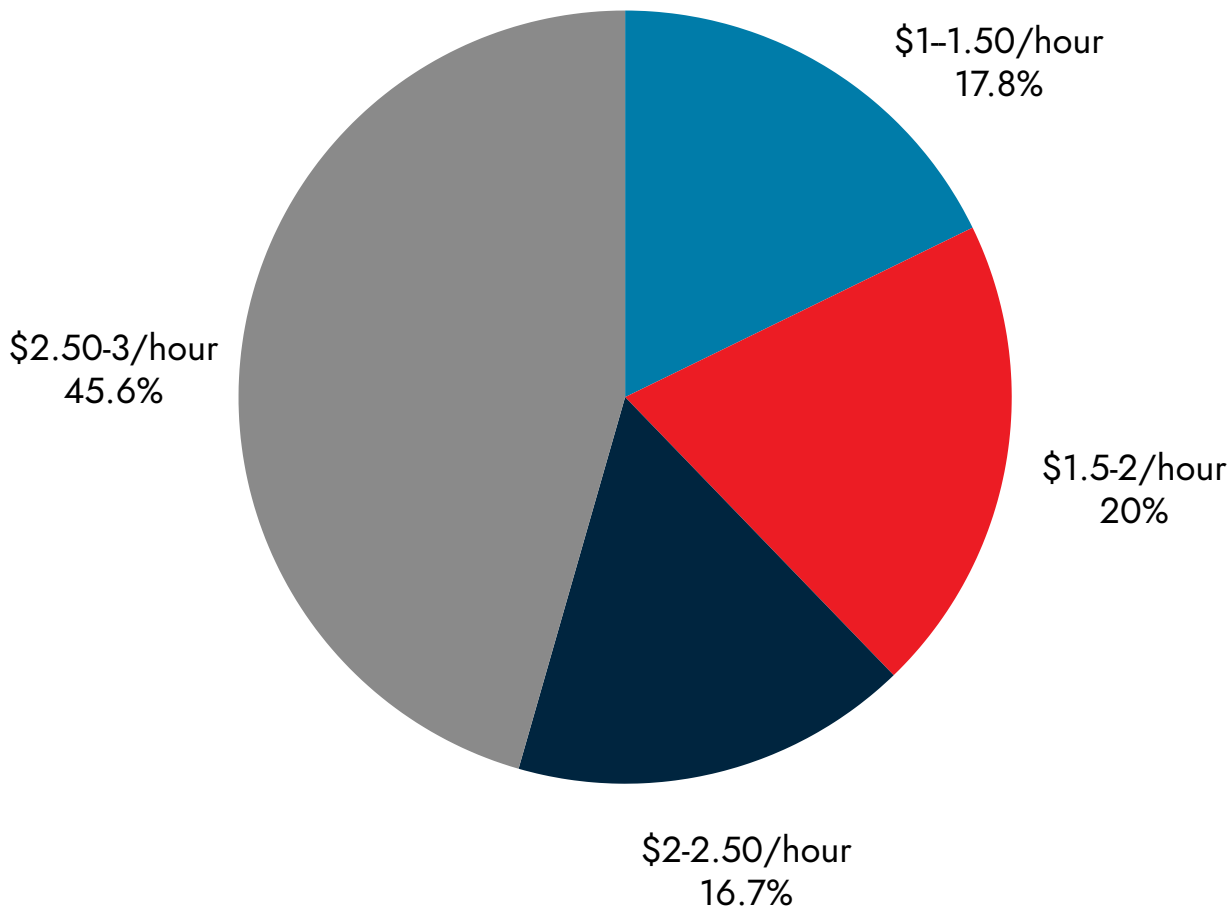
A few thousand dollars a year in compensation is a substantial incentive for hardworking industrial employees to seek out another job. This is one indication that employers must pay close attention to maintaining competitive pay rates.



What Does It Take to Move Workers to a Different Shift?

While a dollar an hour pay increase is enough to persuade a worker to consider taking a different job, using pay as an incentive to move to a new shift is a somewhat higher hurdle. Only 16% of workers would be willing to move to a less desirable shift for a \$1-1.50 hourly pay raise.

Pay to Move Shifts



In contrast to 2023 when 14% of workers said they would refuse to switch shifts for any amount of money, 100% of respondents this year would be willing to permanently change to a less desirable shift for an increase of \$3/hour. However, these workers are still at high risk of seeking a different job if they can find a better deal elsewhere. As we will see in upcoming graphs, quality of life is increasingly important for today's workforce.



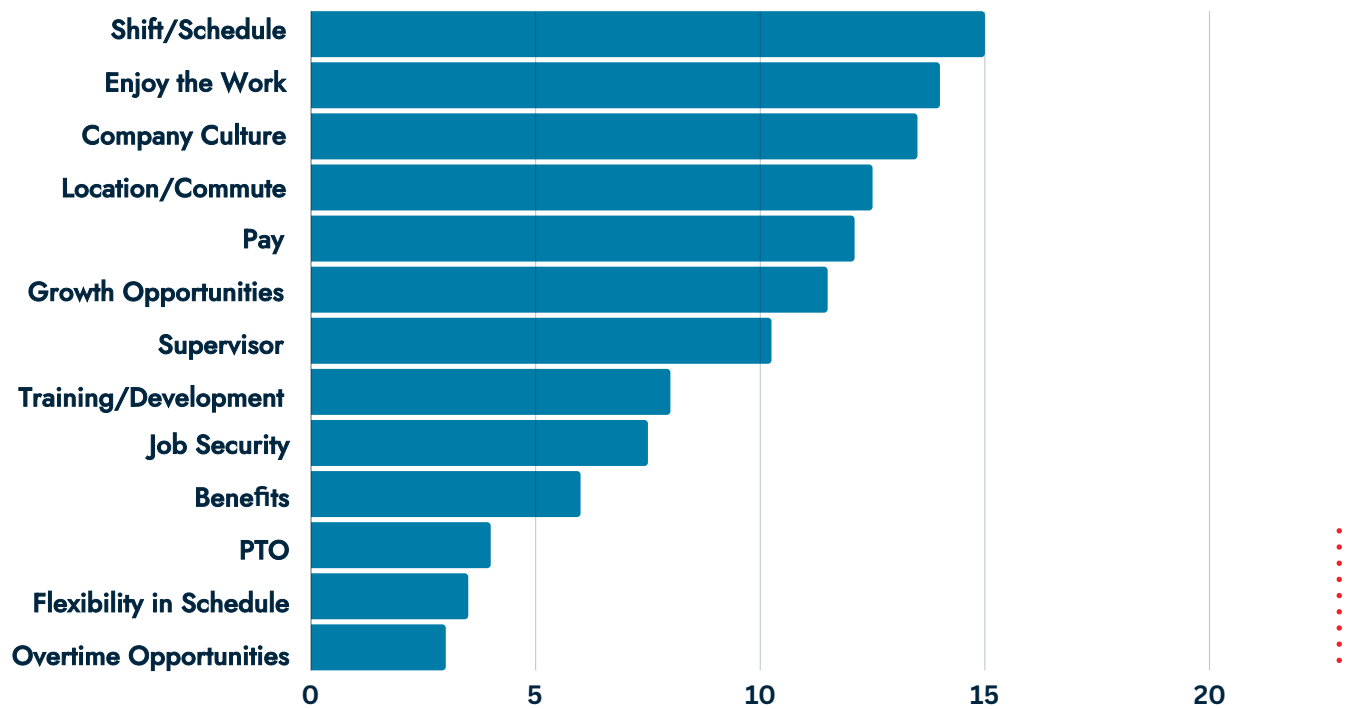


Insight 3 | Retention Factors

While pay did make the top 5 factors in considering a new job, it ranked as less important in retaining employees. Consistent pay increases came in #7 on the list of priorities for employees in deciding to stick with an existing job. And, while overtime is desirable for the extra cash, it is becoming less of a driver now. Compared to a year ago, overtime opportunities dropped from #3 to #13 in order of importance for retention.

Having a desirable shift ranked at the top of the list, just like last year. Workplace culture, having an enjoyable job close to home, and reporting to a good supervisor were all more important than pay. Taken together, these leading priorities are a good indication that quality of life and the ability to maintain work/life balance are stronger drivers of retention than compensation.

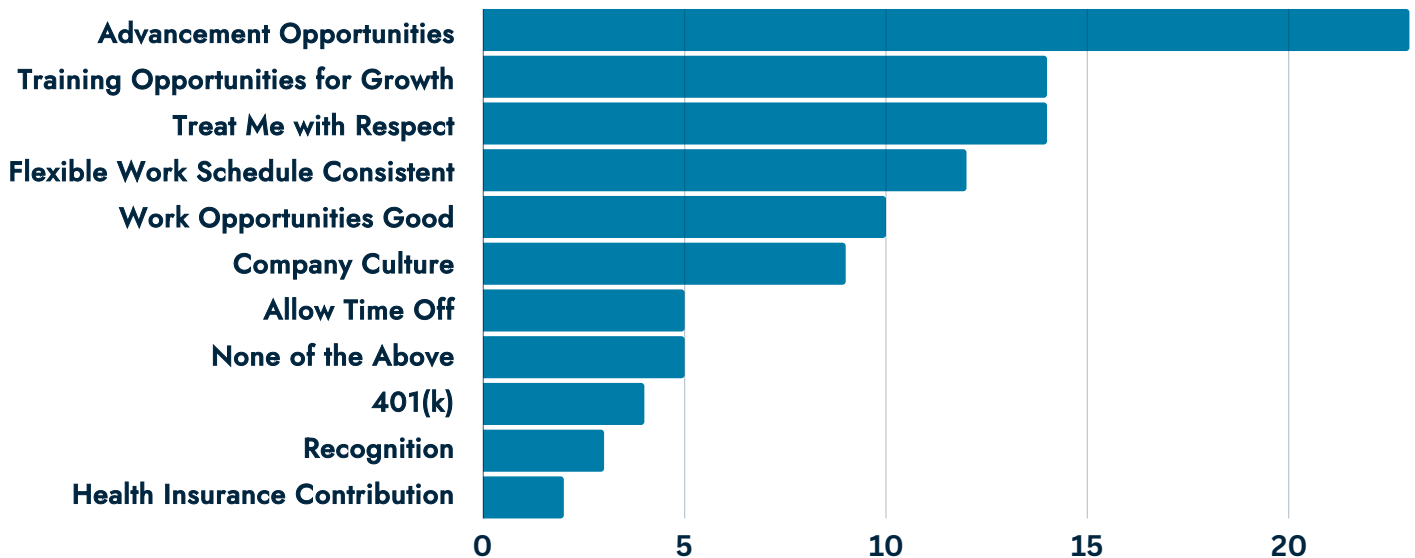
Reasons for Keeping Existing Job



What Can Employers Do to Earn Loyalty?

Other than table stakes like competitive pay, what do workers say is important for keeping them on the job? Career advancement was #1 for 23% of respondents and training opportunities for 14% of respondents. Being treated respectfully and having flexibility also ranked as key factors for employees thinking about their long term potential.

Earning Employee Loyalty



Naturally, workers also want to be treated with respect. This raises an important question. What does respect mean to YOUR team members? Does it mean acknowledging their need for work/life balance and doing your best to honor requests for time off? Does it mean developing managers and supervisors to have good communication skills? Does it mean seeking regular feedback instead of making top down decisions with no advance warning?

Being diligent about having a culture of respect is one way supply chain companies can become employers of choice.

Insight 4 | Attrition Factors

As in the last two years, layoffs remain the top reason for leaving a position. This year is no different. Major players in manufacturing and logistics reported substantial layoffs in 2024. In October, Boeing announced plans to cut its workforce by 10% (17,000 jobs). In news shared by Intelligence, General Motors began a layoff round of almost 1,700 workers in September. Amazon announced the closure of a fulfillment center in Chicago as well as plans to cut 14,000 manager positions, while UPS announced layoff plans for 12,000 employees.

Large scale layoffs represent an opportunity for smaller manufacturing and logistics companies to capture experienced talent. There may also be a second wave of quitting following these major layoffs, creating an even more robust talent pool over the short term. This is because burn out from too much work is among the top three reasons for leaving a job right now.

Companies considering layoffs should weigh the risk of such a move causing overburdening of the remaining team. As a reason for quitting, burnout jumped from the least likely reason for quitting last year all the way up to #3 this year. Unfortunately, long term overwork may drive away remaining, highest value employees. Sometimes, the trade off of keeping workers and eating short term profit losses outweighs the risk of facing talent shortages when work picks up again.



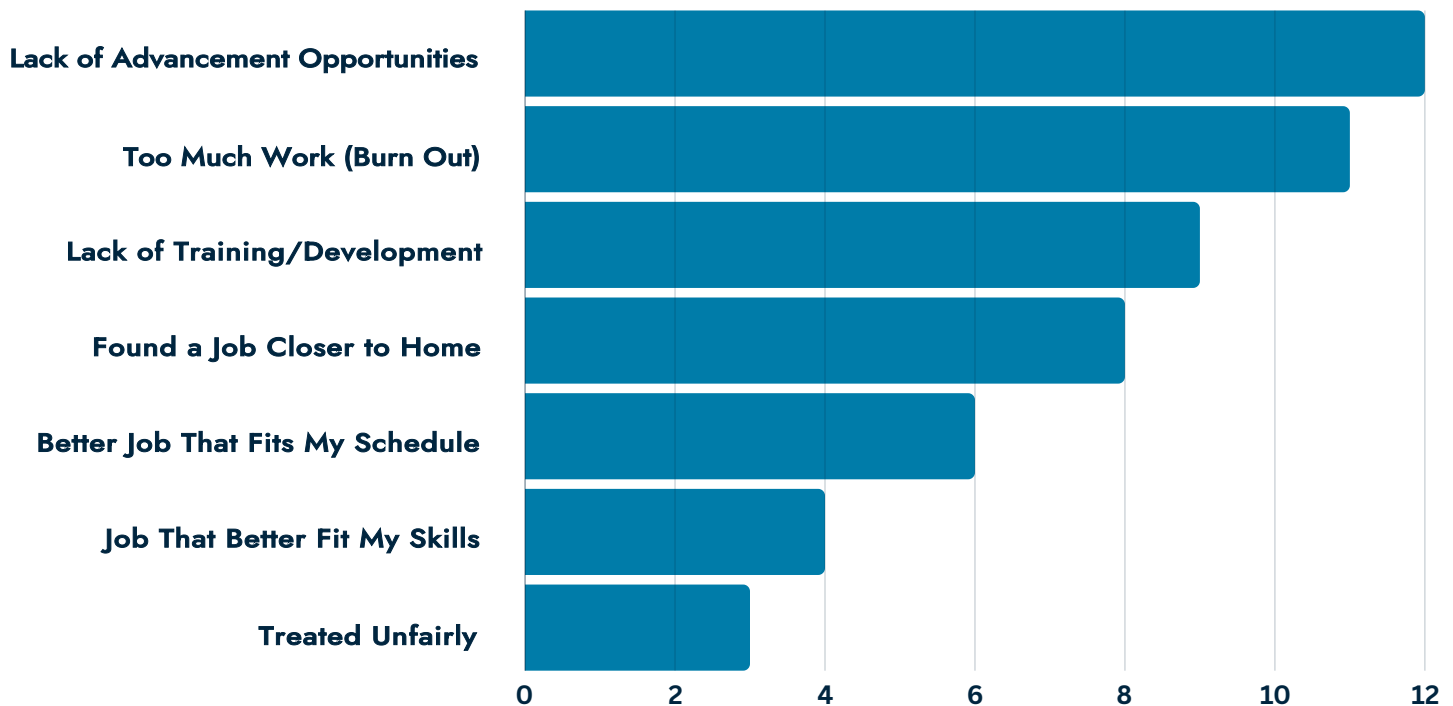
Other Factors Leading to Employee Departures

Lack of advancement, training, and development were other key factors causing talent churn for supply chain companies. Quitting because of poor treatment was not very common, but leaving due to being "ignored" or not given the opportunity to grow is a much more common issue.

The takeaway is clear. Industrial workers want to develop new skills, rise through the ranks, and maintain a healthy work/life balance. If they feel stuck or overburdened and underappreciated in your organization, they won't stay for the long term.

Reasons for Leaving Last Job

Respondents reported being laid off as the most common reason for leaving their previous job. Other than layoffs or termination, here were the other most common reasons given.



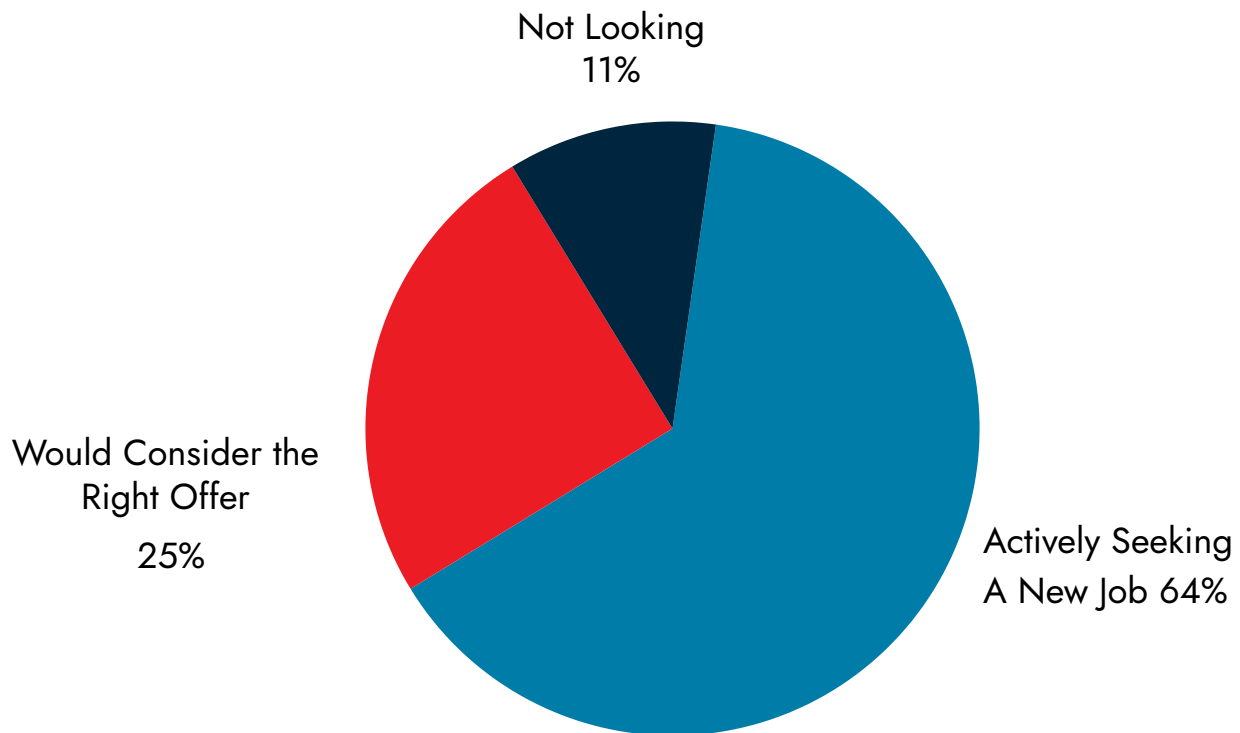


Attrition Risk Remains Extremely High

According to the latest data, 64% of industrial workers are actively looking for new jobs. An additional 1 out of 4 would be open to new opportunities if presented. This total percentage has risen from 84% to 89% since 2023. Passive job seekers are a particularly attractive target for acquisition by growing manufacturing and logistics organizations seeking proven talent.

This begs the question: What are you doing to protect your people from being poached?

Attrition Risks





Market Analysis from Total Talent Resources

The 2025 Supply Chain Workforce Survey returned critical insight into the evolving priorities of candidates in the manufacturing and logistics industries. Competitive pay is important, but it is no longer sufficient to attract and retain talent. Offering desirable shifts on reliable schedules and cultivating employee growth in a positive culture are much more important drivers of success.

Surprising Finding: Culture Far Outranks Pay Today:


In a stark contrast to previous years, pay was rarely listed as a top priority in selecting a new job in the most recent survey. This doesn't mean that pay is unimportant, but more likely reflects that more supply chain employers are offering competitive pay and there is less of a difference in pay between one employer and another.

Employers must find other differentiators to make themselves stand out. For example, factors like organizational culture can be expressed through talent branding that focuses on brand advocacy on the part of existing employees. Job candidates actively research potential employers online to gauge culture fit before accepting a position. This means Google reviews, social media sharing, and other activities that highlight the enjoyable work environment and team spirit can be very helpful in attracting the best talent.


Make informed decisions as you develop your workforce plan.

Reach out to Total Talent Resources for a full market review of the regions in which you operate.

Contact Us

 (630) 836 2200

 info@totaltalentresources.com

 4S 100 N. Route 59, STE 17
Naperville, IL 60563

