SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The 2009 Benchmark/Executive Surveys Overall Practices Report contains data from 803 US companies in the high-technology industries. This report is a comprehensive reference tool for evaluating company programs and comparing your practices to other survey participants. The results are reported by organization revenue to show how practices vary based on company size.

Adjustments to base salary structure midpoints averaged 2.8 percent this year, down from 3.3 percent in 2008. Next year's adjustments are projected to be even smaller at 2.5 percent, most likely due to smaller salary increases attributed to the current economic environment. Larger firms are more likely to use formal salary ranges and to adjust their salary range midpoints annually. Smaller companies reported bigger changes in midpoint compared to larger firms. The online Quarterly Summary of Industry Trends (QsIT) Report includes current salary increase budget/spending data.

The percent of companies offering new-hire (sign-on) bonus awards decreased slightly this year to 81 percent compared to 84 percent last year. The level of new college graduate hiring also decreased this year, to 54 percent from 59 percent in 2008. Larger companies continue to report more new college grad hiring activity than smaller companies. About 73 percent of companies offer formal or informal internships in various functional areas, which is similar to data from the previous year. About 87 percent of companies offer employee referral bonuses, down from 89 percent last year. The average referral bonus this year was $1,740 for technical positions (close to the $1,800 in 2008) and $1,520 for non-technical positions (about the same as $1,550 in 2008).

The percent of companies with some form of variable pay (formal, company-wide or discretionary) has increased slightly from 90 percent last year to 92 percent this year. Eighty-nine percent of companies offer a formal bonus plan to their employees, up from 86 percent last year. The percent of total non-sales US employees eligible to receive a formal bonus plan award has also increased from 66 percent to 68 percent. However, the percent of companies that actually awarded bonuses in the last 12 months has decreased from 91 percent in 2008 to 88 percent this year. The percent of companies with a company-wide/profit-sharing plan has declined from 25.5 percent last year to 22 percent this year. Company-wide/profit sharing bonuses were granted at 76.5 percent of companies, down 10 percent from last year. The median company-wide/profit sharing plan paid 4.5 percent of salary last year, down from five percent in the previous year. Discretionary bonuses were provided at 92 percent of companies with a plan (95 percent in the prior year).

This year, about 81 percent of companies using equity compensation allow for the use of stock options; roughly 67 percent allow the use of restricted stock/units (compared to 83 percent using stock options and 64 using restricted stock/units last year). Approximately 83 percent of new hires (78 percent in the prior year) and 46 percent of continuing employees (same as last year) received options at companies with revenue of less than $200 million while 23 percent of new hires (33 percent in the prior year) and 15 percent of ongoing employees (21 percent in the prior year) received options at companies with revenue of more than $1 billion.

The Organization Measurement section shows similar trends from prior years with smaller companies reporting a larger percentage of their population to VP- and Director-levels. HR department staffing levels are also similar to prior years with an average of 1.7 percent of the company headcount, which is approximately one HR staff member for every 59 employees.