

# TOOLS TO ATTRACT & RETAIN TOP TRANSIT TALENT

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## **Introduction**

When it comes to attracting top talent to the transit industry, salary alone may not set an employer above the rest. Instead, many prospective employees are searching for more from companies. Today, more than ever, employees are seeking benefits to satisfy a well-rounded work-life balance.

As representatives from the public transportation sector and members of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program Class of 2018, we researched the benefits and incentives employers can offer to attract and retain the best and brightest talent.

## **Methodology**

Survey participants were asked to complete a short survey consisting of 11 questions. The survey was created through Google forms and shared with industry colleagues through social media and industry organizations. The survey was available for a period of 19 days from February 26 to March 16 and 286 responses were received. The survey was anonymous, but respondents could provide their email address if they wished to receive the results.

The questions asked were as follows:

1. What industry do you work in?
2. What transportation sector do you work in?
3. In what year were you born?
4. What gender do you identify with?
5. Which of the following benefits does your employer offer?
6. What are the top three favorite benefits offered by your employer, listed in order of preference?
7. What are the top three benefits you wish your employer offered?

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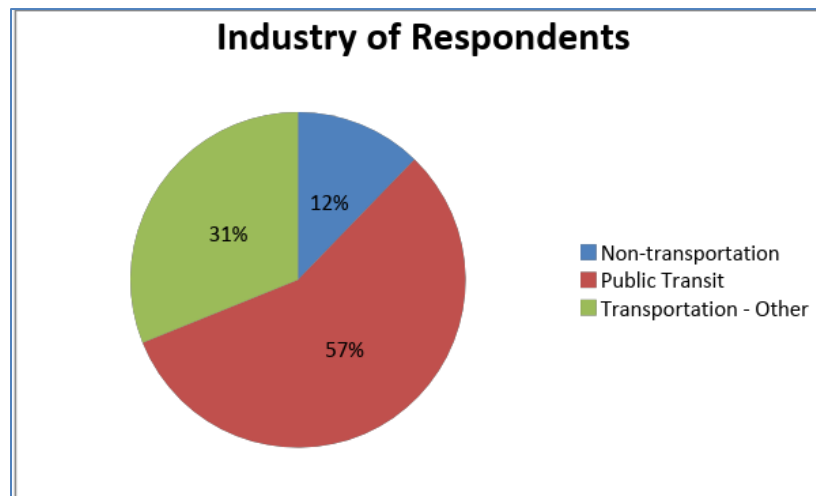
8. What are the top three perks your employer could offer that would make your work day more enjoyable?
9. At what age would you like to retire?
10. Have you ever left a company and taken a job elsewhere because of the benefits offered?
11. If you answered yes to leaving a company due to benefits offered elsewhere, what benefit(s) motivated you to change employers?

### Q1. What industry do you work in?

Question 1 was multiple choice and respondents could choose: Public Transit (passenger rail, bus, paratransit, ferries, etc.); Transportation - Other (roadways/highways, freight rail, waterways, airports, traffic, bike/pedestrian, etc.) or Non-Transportation. Key findings were as follows:

- The largest percentage (57 percent) of respondents work in Public Transit, followed by 31 percent who work in other transportation fields and 12 percent who do not work in the transportation field.

**Figure 1. Industry of Respondents**



### Q2. What transportation sector do you work in?

Question two was multiple choice with four possible answers: Public, private, nonprofit, I do not work in the transportation industry. Key findings for those in the transportation industry were as follows:

- The majority of respondents work in the public sector (60 percent), while very few (2 percent) work in the nonprofit sector
- Of those that work in public transit, 79.6 percent work in the public sector

**Table 1. Transportation Sector Respondents Work In**

Sector	Public Transit	Transportation - Other	Total
Non-profit	3	2	5
Private	30	52	82
Public	129	35	164
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>271</b>

**Q3. In what year were you born?**

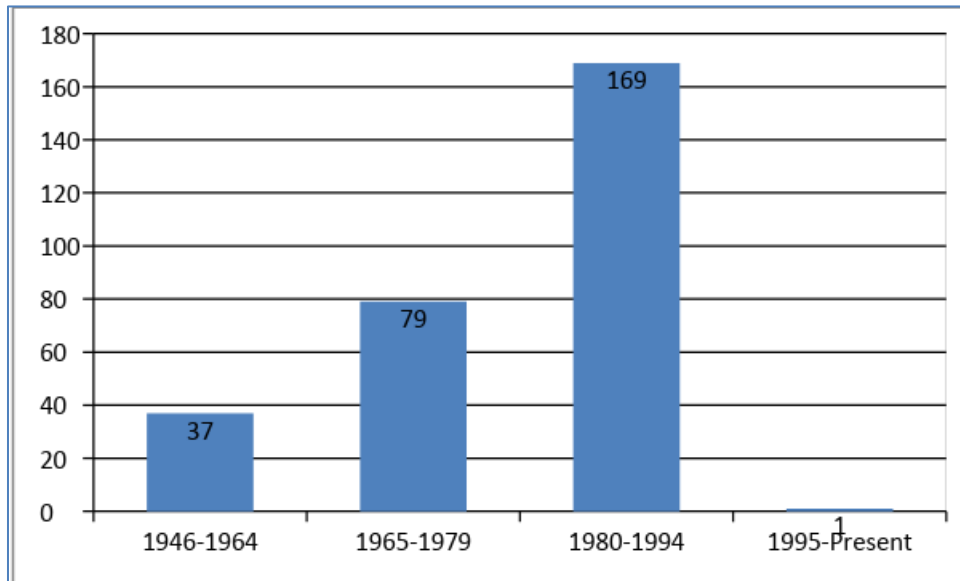
In question three, five ranges were provided based on the five generations currently in the workforce. Table 2 provides a breakdown of each generation and the respective age range and year of birth. Key findings were as follows:

- Majority of respondents were born in 1980-1994 (59 percent), followed by 1965-1979 (27.9 percent). Less than one percent were born in the “1995 – present” age range.
- There were no respondents born before 1946.
- There are no differences in the breakdown of responses between generation and the field.

**Table 2. Generation Chart**

Generation	Years born between		Age range	
	Start	End	Start	End
<b>The Silent Generation</b>	1925	1945	73	93
<b>Baby Boomer Generation</b>	1946	1964	54	72
<b>Generation X</b>	1965	1979	39	53
<b>Millennials</b>	1980	1994	24	38
<b>Gen Z</b>	1995	2012	6	23

**Figure 2. Responses by Year Born**



**Table 3. Generation and Field**

	<b>Public Transit</b>	<b>Transportation - Other</b>
1946-1964	12%	15%
1965-1979	28%	27%
1980-1994	59%	58%
1995-Present	<1%	0%

**Q4. What gender do you identify with?**

- The split between genders was fairly even with approximately 53 percent female and 45 percent male.
- There was no difference between genders and whether they worked in public transportation, transportation –other, or other. When broken down, about nine percent of each gender were in non-transportation, 55-60 percent in public transportation and 30 percent in other transportation fields.
- Males are slightly more likely to work in the private sector than females. Females are slightly more likely to work in the public sector.
- A greater percentage of females were born 1980-1994 (63 percent versus 54 percent).
- A greater percentage of males were born in 1965-1979 (31 percent versus 24 percent) and in 1946-1964 (15 percent versus 11 percent).

**Q5. Which of the following benefits does your employer offer?**

In this question, 25 options were presented including “other.” Respondents were asked to select all that applied. Those responding “other” were asked to write in the benefit.

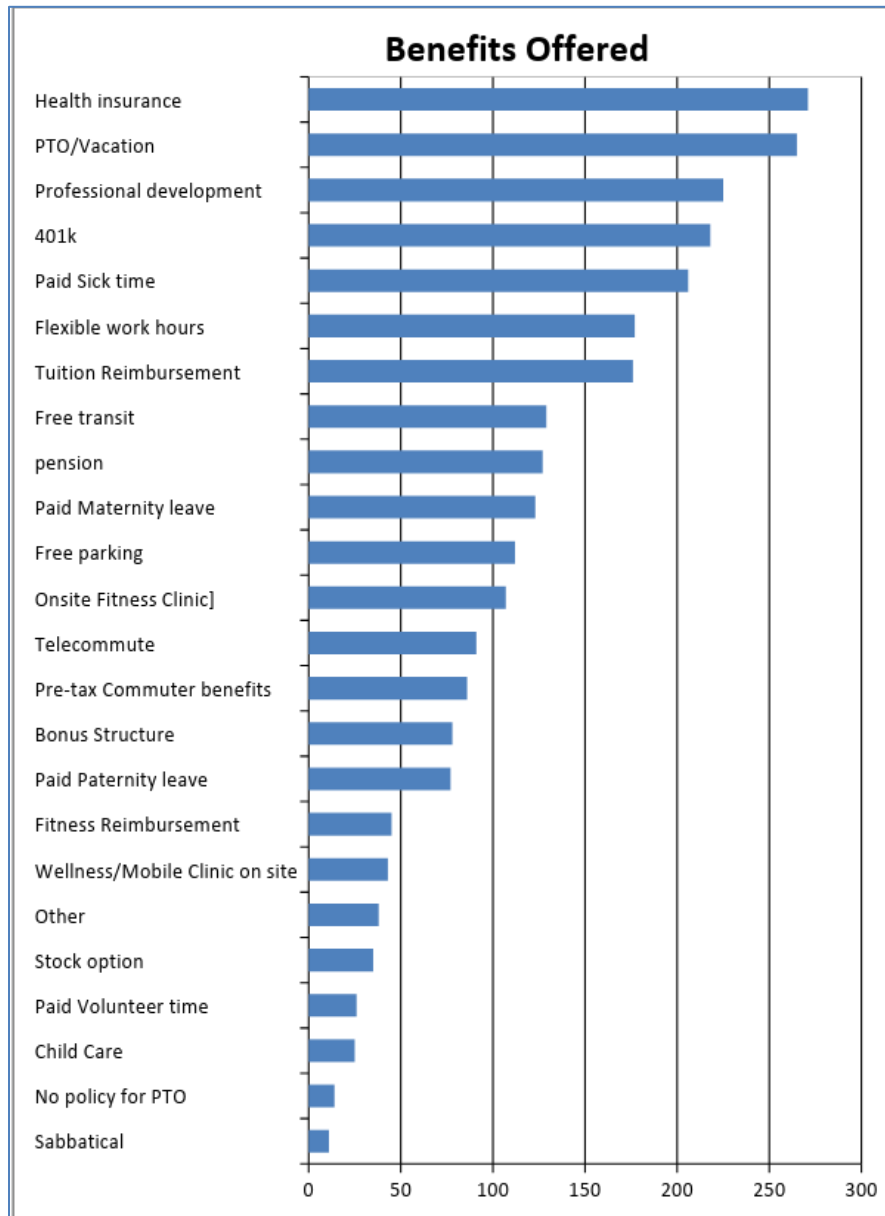
Key findings were as follows:

- The top benefits offered were health insurance (94 percent) followed by Paid Time Off (PTO)/vacation (92.7 percent).
- Seven of the benefits had 50 percent or more stating that they received them. Those seven benefits, include: Tuition reimbursement, flex hours, paid sick time, 401K, professional development, PTO/vacation, and health insurance.
- The benefits least likely offered were free gas (2.8 percent) and sabbatical (3.8 percent).
- Broken down by sector, the non-transportation sector trended very similar when it came to the top-two and bottom-two benefits, compared to all the others. However, this sector was less likely to offer a pension, flexible work schedule, free transit, onsite fitness, professional development, and tuition reimbursement. The non-transportation sector was likely to have bonus structures, paid volunteer time, no policy for PTO, free parking, and maternity and paternity leave.
- The private industry (public transit and transportation-other) was more likely to have a 401K and stock options, but less likely to have a pension. The private industry is also more likely to have telecommute options, flexible work, professional development and pre-tax commuter benefits, but less likely to have free parking or transit. In terms of health benefits, the private sector was less likely to have maternity/paternity leave, paid sick time, and health insurance.

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- The public sector was the opposite of what the private sector offered in terms of benefits with the exception of the top two benefits (health insurance and PTO/vacation) and the bottom two (sabbatical and free gas). Public transit is less likely to offer a 401K and more likely to have a pension and stock options. The public sector rarely offers bonuses. The public sector is less likely to have flex schedules, telecommuting and professional development.

Figure 3. Benefits Offered



**Table 4. Benefits Available by Sector**

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Non-Transport</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>
401k	76%	78%	89%	60%
pension	44%	19%	11%	58%
Stock option	12%	15%	28%	4%
Bonus Structure	27%	44%	49%	13%
Flexible work hours	62%	48%	66%	51%
Telecommute	32%	33%	40%	23%
Paid Volunteer time	9%	19%	7%	7%
PTO/Vacation	93%	81%	88%	82%
Paid Sick time	72%	78%	48%	73%
No policy for PTO	5%	30%	4%	2%
Sabbatical	4%	0%	5%	4%
Pre-tax Commuter benefits	30%	7%	43%	24%
Free transit	45%	7%	10%	61%
Free parking	39%	48%	26%	40%
Free gas	3%	0%	1%	4%
Health insurance	95%	96%	84%	86%
Wellness/Mobile Clinic on site	15%	7%	6%	17%
Onsite Fitness Clinic	37%	26%	22%	43%
Fitness Reimbursement	16%	11%	9%	17%
Paid Maternity leave	43%	52%	38%	37%
Paid Paternity leave	27%	37%	21%	25%
Child Care	9%	4%	4%	10%
Professional development	79%	56%	84%	69%
Tuition Reimbursement	62%	48%	50%	59%
Other	13%	11%	6%	14%

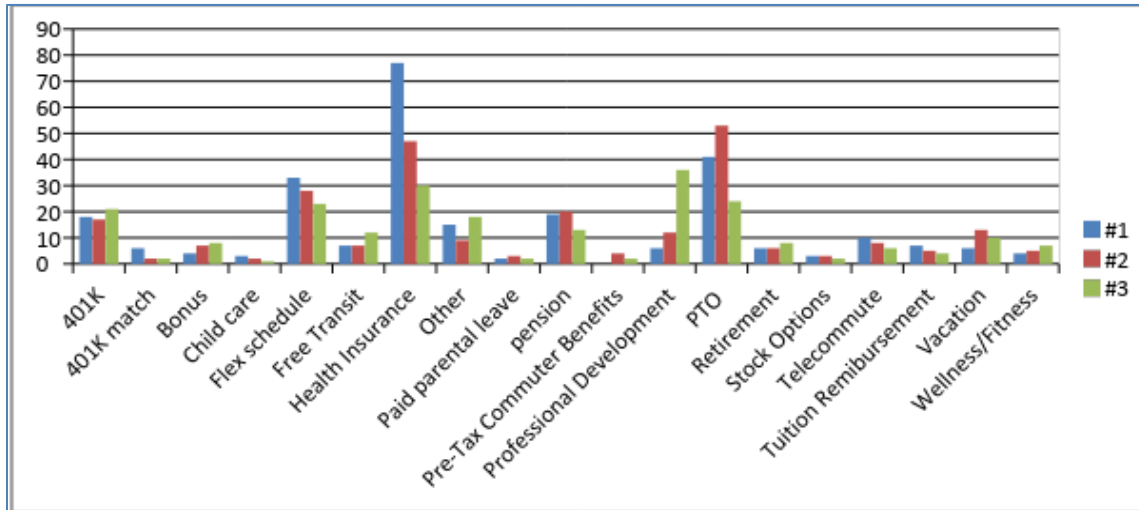
**Q6. What are your top three favorite benefits offered by your employer?**

In this question, respondents entered their top-three benefits in order of preference. The responses were then categorized into 20 categories. Those responding “other” were asked to write in the benefit. Key findings were as follows:

- The benefit rated most often was health insurance (77 respondents), followed by PTO (41), and flex schedule (33).
- The number two benefit cited was PTO (53), followed by health insurance (47), and flex schedule (28).
- The number three benefit cited was professional development (36), followed by health insurance (30), and then PTO (24).
- Collectively, the most common top three favorite benefits were health insurance (58 percent), PTO (44 percent) and flex schedule (31 percent).

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Figure 4. Top Three Benefits by Ranking



- Of those who selected benefits available in Question 5, 57 percent listed health insurance as one of the top three, followed by flex schedule (47 percent), PTO (45 percent) and pension (41 percent) (Table 6).
- By generation, the highest response for each was health insurance followed by PTO.
- The older the generation, the more important 401K, bonus, free transit passes, pension, and vacation time became. As the generation became younger, these benefits were less important.
- The younger the generation, the more important flex schedule, and professional development were than to the older generations.

Table 5. Top Three Benefits Listed by Generation

Benefit	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994	1995-Present	Total
401K	13	15	28	0	56
401K match	0	2	8	0	10
Bonus	6	5	8	0	19
Child care	0	2	4	0	6
Flex schedule	4	21	59	0	84
Free Transit	5	7	14	0	26
Health Insurance	24	44	84	1	153
Other	5	16	20	0	41
Paid parental leave	0	1	6	0	7
pension	10	17	25	0	52
Pre-Tax Commuter Benefits	0	1	5	0	6
Professional Development	5	11	41	0	57
PTO	15	27	72	2	116
Retirement	4	6	11	0	21
Stock Options	1	4	3	0	8
Telecommute	4	7	13	0	24
Tuition Reimbursement	1	3	12	0	16
Vacation	6	10	12	0	28
Wellness/Fitness onsite	3	6	8	0	17
Sick Time	4	4	7	0	15

**Table 6. Top Benefits by Age Group Broken Down by Percent That Listed It as A Top 3**

Benefit	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994
401K	35%	19%	17%
401K match	0%	3%	5%
Bonus	16%	6%	5%
Child care	0%	3%	2%
Flex schedule	11%	27%	35%
Free Transit	14%	9%	8%
Health Insurance	65%	56%	50%
Other	14%	20%	12%
Paid parental leave	0%	1%	4%
pension	27%	22%	15%
Pre-Tax Commuter Benefits	0%	1%	3%
Professional Development	14%	14%	24%
PTO	41%	34%	43%
Retirement	11%	8%	7%
Stock Options	3%	5%	2%
Telecommute	11%	9%	8%
Tuition Reimbursement	3%	4%	7%
Vacation	16%	13%	7%
Wellness/Fitness onsite	8%	8%	5%
Sick Time	11%	5%	4%

**Q7. What are the top three benefits you wish your employer offered?**

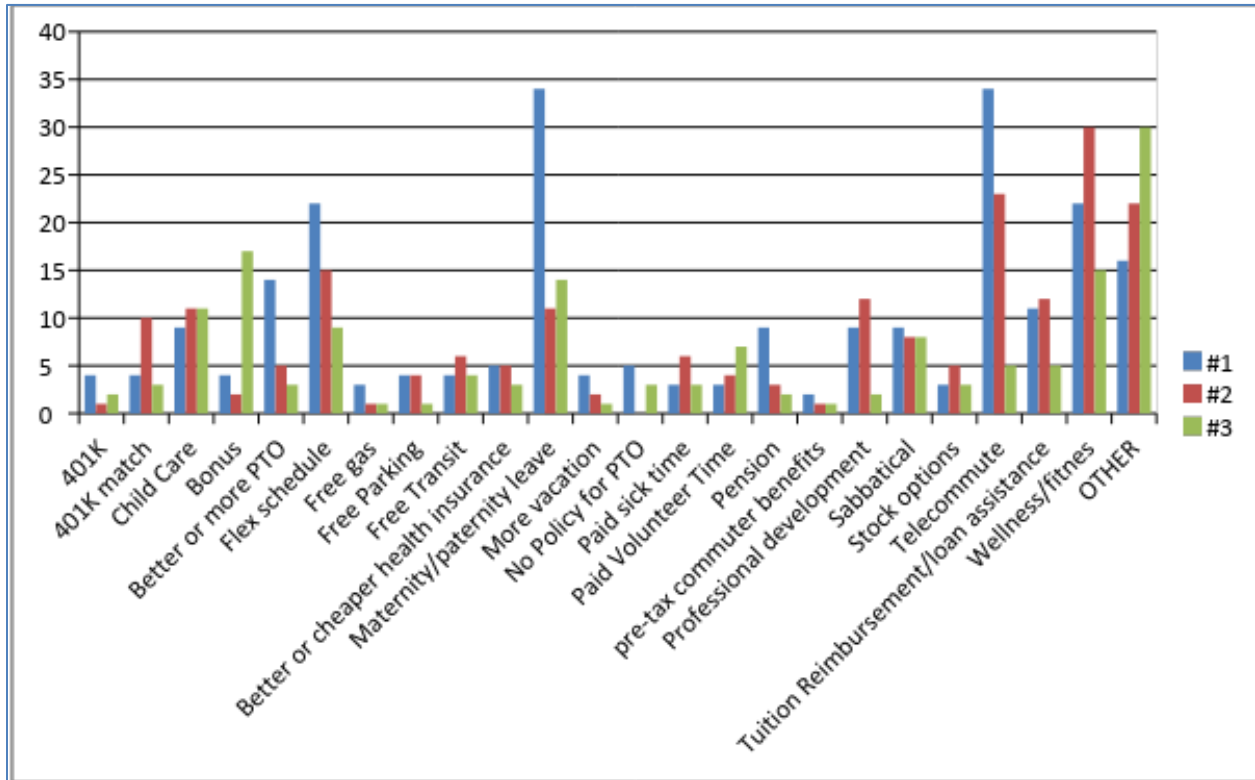
In this question, respondents entered in their top three benefits they wished their employer offered (in order of preference). The responses were then categorized into 20 categories including “other.” Those responding “other” were asked to write in the benefit. Key findings were as follows:

- The top benefit most people wished they had was tied at telecommuting (34 respondents) and better maternity/paternity leave (34), followed by flex schedule (22) and wellness/fitness (22) such as an onsite gym, clinic, fitness reimbursement, other (16).
- The number two benefit people wished they had was fitness (30) such as an onsite gym, clinic, fitness reimbursement, followed by telecommuting (23), flex schedule (15) and other (22).
- The number three benefit people wished they had was bonus (17), wellness/fitness (25) such as an onsite gym, clinic, fitness reimbursement, better maternity/paternity leave (14).
- Collectively, the answers that were most common were maternity/paternity leave (25 percent), wellness/fitness (28 percent) flex schedule (19 percent).
- For those that listed “other,” answers ranged greatly but better/more central locations, casual dress code, free food/snacks or a better cafeteria, recognition for work well done, better pay, the ability to get promotions and move up, and wellness clinics onsite were listed more than once.



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Figure 5. Top Three Benefits Wished Offered



- Older generations were more likely to want a pension and PTO than the other generations.
- Younger generations wanted paternity/maternity leave benefits, telecommuting, wellness/fitness and a flex schedule when compared to their counterparts in the oldest generation based on the percent that responded.

Table 7. Top Three Benefits Wished Existed Listed by Generation

Benefit wished existed	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994	1995-Present	Total
401K	2	2	3	0	7
401K match	1	4	12	0	17
Child Care	1	7	23	0	31
Bonus	3	8	12	0	23
Better or more PTO	3	3	16	0	22
Flex schedule	1	8	36	1	46
Free gas	0	0	5	0	5
Free Parking	0	1	8	0	9
Free Transit	0	3	11	0	14
Better or cheaper health insurance	3	7	3	0	13
Maternity/paternity leave	0	11	47	1	59
More vacation	0	4	3	0	7
No Policy for PTO	2	1	5	0	8
Paid sick time	2	2	8	0	12
Paid Volunteer Time	4	6	4	0	14
Pension	5	2	7	0	14

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Benefit wished existed	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994	1995-Present	Total
Pre-tax commuter benefits	1	0	3	0	4
Professional development	3	5	15	0	23
Sabbatical	2	8	15	0	25
Stock options	1	1	9	0	11
Telecommute	6	16	39	1	62
Tuition Reimbursement/loan assistance	2	6	20	0	28
Wellness/fitness	7	15	45	0	67
OTHER	5	16	47	0	68

Table 8. Top Benefits Wished Was Available by Age Group

Benefit	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994
401K	5%	3%	2%
401K match	3%	5%	7%
Child Care	3%	9%	14%
Bonus	8%	10%	7%
Better or more PTO	8%	4%	9%
Flex schedule	3%	10%	21%
Free gas	0%	0%	3%
Free Parking	0%	1%	5%
Free Transit	0%	4%	7%
Better or cheaper health insurance	8%	9%	2%
Maternity/paternity leave	0%	14%	28%
More vacation	0%	5%	2%
No Policy for PTO	5%	1%	3%
Paid sick time	5%	3%	5%
Paid Volunteer Time	11%	8%	2%
Pension	14%	3%	4%
pre-tax commuter benefits	3%	0%	2%
Professional development	8%	6%	9%
Sabbatical	5%	10%	9%
Stock options	3%	1%	5%
Telecommute	16%	20%	23%
Tuition Reimbursement/loan assistance	5%	8%	12%
Wellness/fitness	19%	19%	27%
OTHER	14%	20%	28%

- The most desirable benefit based on the top three respondents stated they received and the top three they wished they received (Table 9) shows older generations desired benefits such as health insurance, PTO and a pension or 401K. In the 1965-1979 age bracket the most desired benefits were health insurance and PTO. In the 1980-1994 generation, the most desired benefit was a flex schedule, followed by PTO, health insurance and other.

**Table 9. Most Desirable Benefits by Generation**

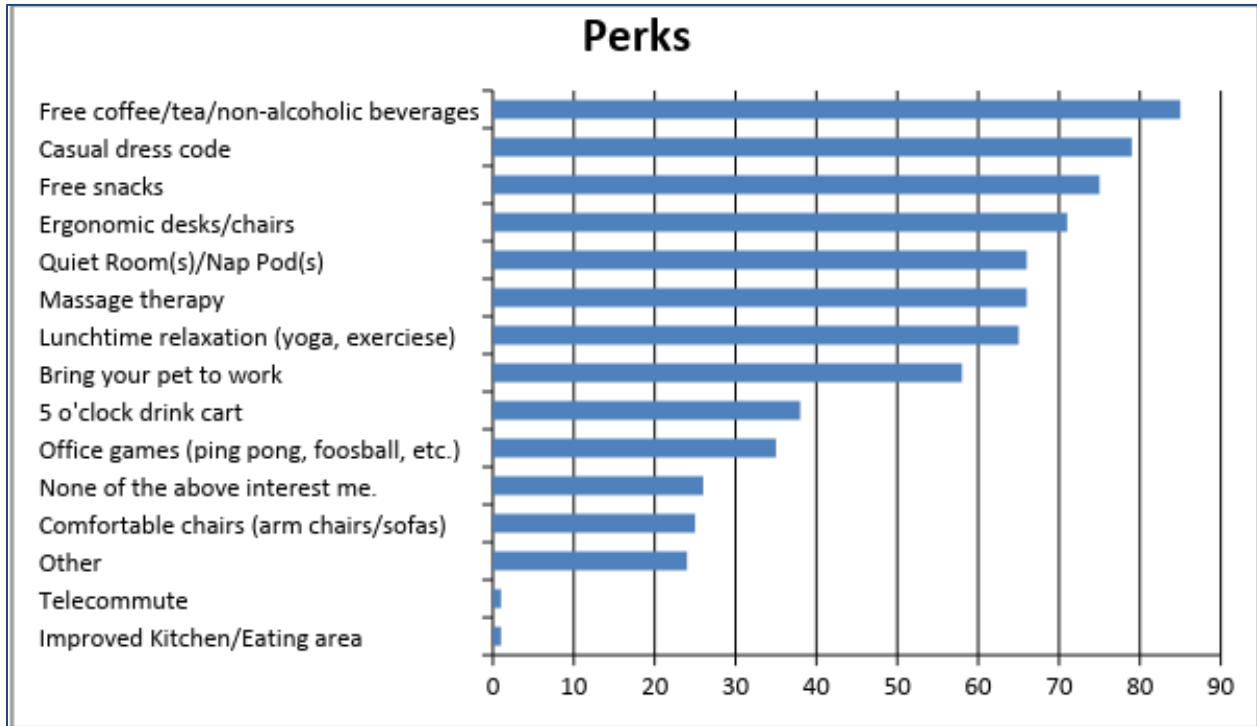
<b>Benefit</b>	<b>1946-1964</b>	<b>1965-1979</b>	<b>1980-1994</b>
401K	40.5%	21.5%	18.3%
401K match	2.7%	7.6%	11.8%
Child Care	2.7%	11.4%	16.0%
Bonus	24.3%	16.5%	11.8%
PTO	48.6%	38.0%	52.1%
Flex schedule	13.5%	36.7%	56.2%
Free gas	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Free Parking	0.0%	1.3%	4.7%
Free Transit	13.5%	12.7%	14.8%
Better or cheaper health insurance	73.0%	64.6%	51.5%
Maternity/paternity leave	0.0%	15.2%	31.4%
More vacation	16.2%	17.7%	8.9%
No Policy for PTO	5.4%	1.3%	3.0%
Paid sick time	16.2%	7.6%	8.9%
Paid Volunteer Time	10.8%	7.6%	2.4%
Pension	40.5%	24.1%	18.9%
pre-tax commuter benefits	2.7%	1.3%	4.7%
Professional development	21.6%	20.3%	33.1%
Sabbatical	5.4%	10.1%	8.9%
Stock options	5.4%	6.3%	7.1%
Telecommute	27.0%	29.1%	30.8%
Tuition Reimbursement/loan assistance	8.1%	11.4%	18.9%
Wellness/fitness	27.0%	26.6%	31.4%
OTHER	27.0%	40.5%	39.6%
Retirement	10.8%	7.6%	6.5%

**Q8. What are the top three perks your employer could offer that would make your day more enjoyable?**

In this question, respondents selected their top three perks an employer could offer to make the workplace more enjoyable. There were 13 possible selections including “other.” Those responding “other” were asked to write in the benefit which included telecommute and improved kitchen/eating area. Key findings were as follows:

- The top three responses in order were: free coffee/tea/non-alcoholic drinks (85 respondents), casual dress code (79), and free snacks (75). This is the same across all three generations.
- The 1946-64 generation had the largest response of “none of these interest me.”
- Massage therapy was the only perk identified by 20 percent or more of each generation.

**Figure 6. Top Perks Respondents Wish Employers Offered**



**Table 10. Top Perk Respondents Wish Employers Offered by Generation**

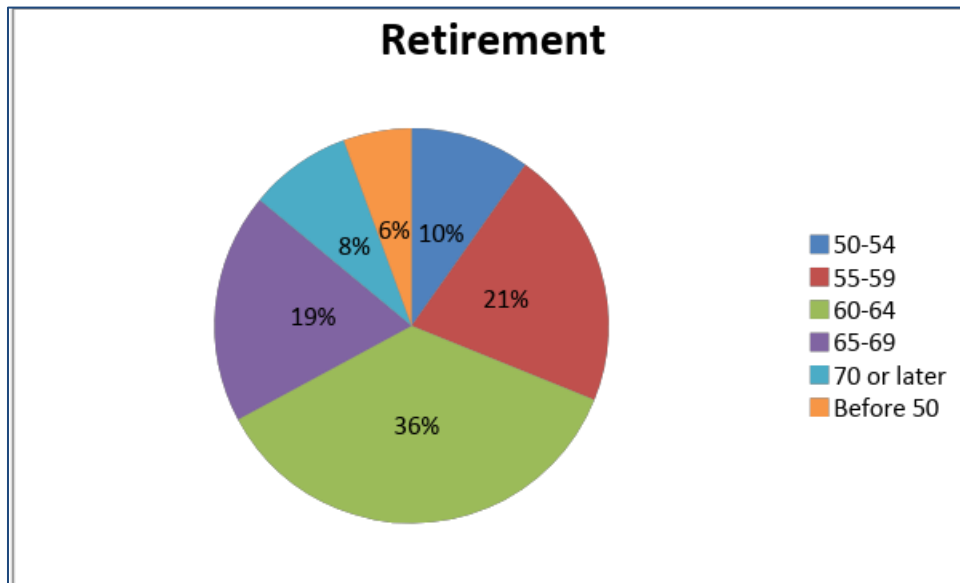
Perk	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994
Bring your pet to work	11%	16%	24%
Casual dress code	19%	30%	28%
Comfortable chairs (arm chairs/sofas)	3%	10%	9%
Ergonomic desks/chairs	19%	23%	27%
Free coffee/tea/non-alcoholic beverages	24%	30%	31%
Free snacks	16%	28%	28%
Improved Kitchen/Eating area	0%	1%	0%
Lunchtime relaxation (yoga, exercise)	14%	16%	28%
Massage therapy	22%	25%	22%
Office games (ping pong, foosball, etc.)	16%	8%	14%
Quiet Room(s)/Nap Pod(s)	16%	23%	24%
5 o'clock drink cart	5%	14%	15%
None of the above interest me	22%	8%	7%
Telecommute	0%	1%	0%
Other	11%	6%	9%

**Q9. At what age would you like to retire?**

In this question, respondents selected the age they would like to retire. Key findings were as follows:

- The largest percentage (36 percent) wanted to retire between the ages of 60-64.
- By the age of 64, two-thirds of respondents would like to be retired.
- Females wanted to retire earlier than males.

**Figure 7. Preferred Retirement Age**



**Q10. Have you ever left a company and taken a job elsewhere because of the benefits offered?**

Key findings were as follows:

- One-quarter (25.9 percent) have left a job due to benefits.

Row Labels	No	Yes
1946-1964	68%	32%
1965-1979	75%	25%
1980-1994	76%	24%

**Q11. What benefits motivated the change?**

Key findings were as follows:

- Common benefits included: better health insurance, more PTO/vacation, and more pay.

### Conclusions & Additional Information

Different generations in the work force value different benefits and are motivated by different factors. When modifying or implementing new programs it is important to remain flexible and agile whenever possible to provide a range of opportunities, which meet the variety of needs and desires present in the workplace. For additional information refer to the following resources:

Pew Research Center

[Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force](#)

Ernst & Young

[Global Generations: A global study on work-life challenges across generations](#)

Deloitte

[2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey](#)

LinkedIn

[LinkedIn Top Attractors](#)

Harvard Business Review / Fractl

[The Most Desirable Employee Benefits](#) & [Employee Benefits Study](#)

Tangible and Intangible Cost of a Vacancy

<https://www.ere.net/cost-of-vacancy-formulas-for-recruiting-and-retention-managers/>

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