
2 0 1 4

SERVICE TECHNICIAN SALARY SURVEY



Over the past several years, we've witnessed a dramatic shift in the skills copier service technicians need to be competitive.

As recently as 2011, networking and IT skills were still the exclusive domain of a small group of specialists; today they're a core component of basic professional competence. The hybrid technician—a term we coined in 2012 to describe the new breed of professionals who were combining IT skills with traditional break /fix abilities—has rapidly become the standard as managed services have emerged as major revenue producers. But although these changes have accelerated over the past year or two, they are really just the latest step in the copier channel's ongoing evolution.

4,266

*copier channel service technicians
participated in this year's survey*

“One of the most interesting things about this business is how narrowly it began, and how broad it has become,” says Paul Schwartz, president of Copier Careers, a recruiting firm that has worked within the copier channel for nearly 30 years. “A lot of our clients have roots that go back to typewriters. From there they went on to sell copy machines, which have gradually increased in sophistication to the point that the term ‘copier’ is almost laughably inadequate; today’s copier is a conduit for delivering an absolutely enormous range of business solutions. The evolution of this business, and of the professionals working in it, seems to accelerate with each passing year. We’ve said this many times before, but it has never been more true: now is a really exciting time to be working in the copier channel.”

For the past 12 years, Copier Careers has conducted annual salary surveys of service technicians, service & operations managers, sales reps, and sales managers working in the copier channel. Our surveys provide year-by-year snapshots of how well copier channel employees are compensated, how happy they are in their careers, and how well their employers are meeting their needs and satisfying their interests. This year’s surveys reveal some fascinating trends.

The 2014 Service Technician Salary reflects the responses of 4,266 copier channel professionals—a new record. The survey was conducted online between March 1, 2013 and March 1, 2014 at CopierCareers.com. The respondents are 80 percent male and they work for copier channel employers of all types, including single-location independent dealerships (39%), multi-location regional dealers (24%), national sales & service organizations (9%), OEMs (17%), 3rd-party service organizations (1%),

and IT/Managed Network Services (MNS) providers (10%). That final designation—IT and MNS providers—is a new category we added in 2013. In one year’s time, the number of respondents who say they work for an IT or MNS provider has doubled, from 5 percent in 2013 to 10 percent today.

The average age of a copier technician has fallen in recent surveys, from 36.9 years in 2010 to 35.2 years today. It’s a small decrease, but we believe it may indicate that greater numbers of young people are currently choosing to enter this industry. Another observation: among the copier technicians who took our survey, 73 percent say they expect to change jobs at some point, compared with only 33 percent in 2010. Again, these numbers may signal the beginning of a demographic shift among copier service technicians, though they are also undoubtedly being influenced by the ample employment opportunities now available. As the economy has improved and the number of devices in the field has increased, the need for hybrid technicians has grown substantially.

COMPENSATION

The average salary for a copier service technician grew by more than a thousand dollars since last year, from \$42,031 to \$43,133, an increase of 2.6 percent. This increase is comparable to previous year-over-year increases, which have generally been just enough to keep pace with the cost of living. Adjusted for inflation, technician salaries have remained very stable across the 12-year history of our salary survey.

Although real wages haven’t changed much since the early 2000s, two forms of non-cash compensation have increased substantially: reimbursements for certifications

73%

*of copier technicians
expect to change jobs at
some point in the future*

and employer-sponsored education and training. A decade ago, only 65 percent of technicians reported being reimbursed for certifications and only 39 percent received employer-paid education or training. Today, these figures have jumped to 97 percent and 81 percent, respectively. Employers have clearly found continuing education for technical staff to be a business necessity. This is not surprising given the pace of technological change and the shift many dealerships have made toward solutions-based business models. Offering educational opportunities is also proving to be a reliable way for copier channel employers to retain their current staff.

“Offering training is a great way for dealerships to be competitive in attracting and retaining staff,” says Jessica Crowley, Director of Recruiting for Copier Careers. “Moving to a dealership that can’t or won’t offer ongoing training is not in a technician’s best interest, because the longer a person stays at a place like that, the more out-of-date their certificates will become and the more difficult it will be to keep their skills fresh. For the new breed of copier technician, working with cutting-edge technology has become a major priority.”

TO TRAIN OR TO RECRUIT?

In last year’s salary survey, we reported a major shortage of qualified hybrid technicians. Today, the situation remains unchanged. There are still many more open positions than there are hybrid technicians to fill them, a consequence of what Schwartz calls “the perfect storm” of the Great Recession and the industry’s rapid shift to a managed services business model.

“After the crash in ’08, many dealerships failed to replenish their technician pools. Instead of hiring, they

stretched their existing resources as far as they could, which meant that for a period of three or five years, there were very few new technicians getting hired into the industry. At the same time, all of these new solutions started coming along and selling really well. Before the industry realized what was happening, the number of devices out in the field had far outpaced the amount of technicians available to service them.”

Now that the economy has recovered and the industry is growing, many dealerships would love to hire but are finding it challenging to do so. There are simply not enough technicians to go around. The age-old question of whether it’s better to recruit or to train is barely worth asking anymore. To even begin addressing these growing staffing gaps, dealers must aggressively pursue both tactics.

“If I were a dealer, I’d be doing both recruiting and training,” says Schwartz. “I’d be out recruiting the best talent I could find, and at the same time I’d be working hard to bring people up internally, either by having a certified trainer on board or by sending new hires off to school. Even though we recruit for a living, we tell all of our clients that they need to be training their own people, too. It’s the only way to deal with this shortage.”

SATISFACTION

Between the increased knowledge required of techs today and the shortage of skilled staff, we might have expected salaries to rise more than 2.6 percent over the past year. However, in a recent Copier Careers newsletter poll, only 7 percent of 2,600 respondents said a higher salary is a key factor in recruiting hybrid techs. In fact, “Higher salary” came in dead last, behind “More training”, “A service environment that embraces new technology”,

“More responsibility”, and “A better work/life balance”. Some of our readers were surprised by the results. “If you want a really good tech who knows how to network, you have to pay him more than a standard tech,” wrote one commentator. “I was shocked at how few people thought a higher salary was a main motivator,” wrote another.

But while salaries haven’t budged much, one thing that has increased is job satisfaction. Compared to a year ago, 4 percent more technicians say they’re satisfied with their jobs, and 12 percent more say they’re not currently looking for a new job. We chalk these increases up to the satisfaction inherent in a challenge and the natural reluctance to walk away when you’ve got a good thing going.

“Based on the observations of our recruiting team, IT and networking have a lot to do with why techs are becoming happier in their jobs,” says Crowley. “They’re learning new skills and expanding their existing knowledge in new directions as they work with emerging technologies. The career has become much more challenging over the past couple of years, which is really great from a job satisfaction standpoint. The flip side is that it has gotten more challenging for employers to recruit technicians. When people are happy where they are, it takes more than money to convince them to make a change.”

A CANDIDATE’S MARKET

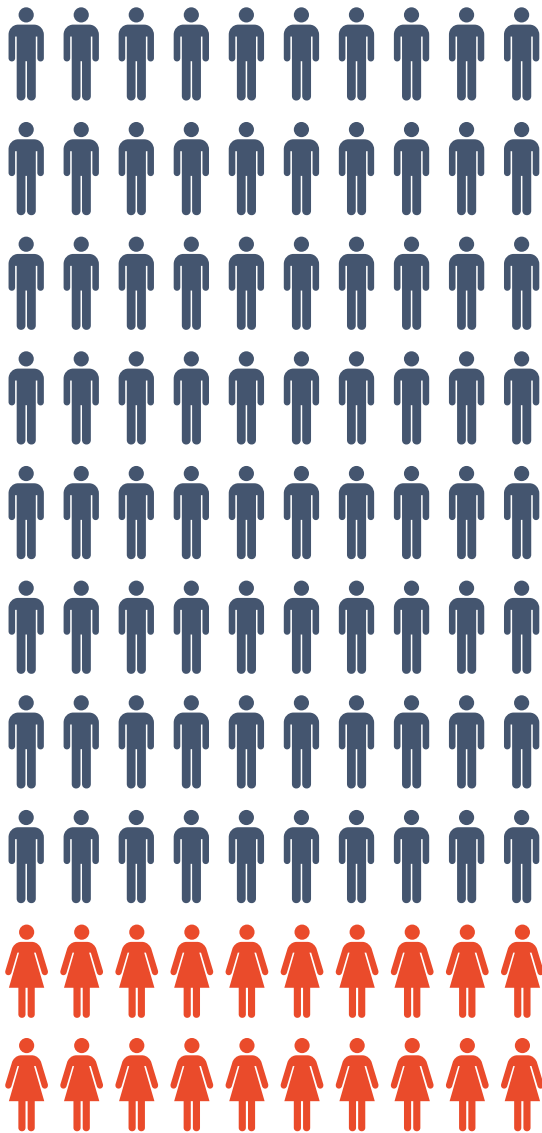
Right now, it’s undeniably a candidate’s market. Technicians with the right mix of IT/networking and break/fix skills hold the upper hand, and they’ll likely continue to do so for several years to come—the current technician shortage will not be easing any time soon. While this is a great situation for qualified candidates, it poses a challenge for employers. Our advice for employers is to do everything they can to stay ahead of their employment needs by proactively recruiting on an ongoing basis. The best strategy is to hire when talent becomes available.

“In this market, we think the most important thing is to be proactive,” explains Schwartz. “You know there’s a shortage of people. You know there’s a shortage of training. So, if you happen to run across a really talented person, even if you don’t have an immediate hiring need it’s probably in your best mid- to long-term interest to bring that person on. Positions that used to take weeks to fill now take months. In an environment like this, the key to avoiding problems is to think ahead and embrace opportunities whenever they come along.”

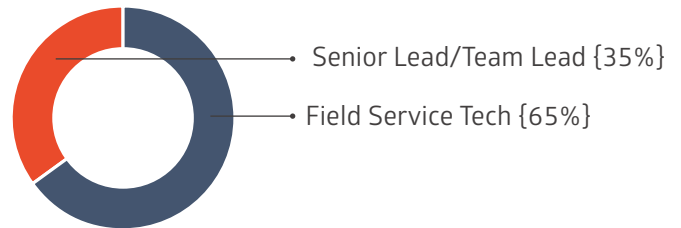
Demographics

Of the 4,266 copier technicians who participated in this year's survey, 80 percent are male and 20 percent have supervisory responsibilities of some kind. The average tech is 35 years old and has spent around eight years working in the copier channel.

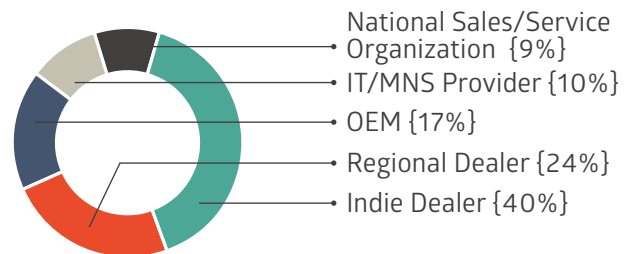
GENDER DISTRIBUTION



RESPONSIBILITY LEVEL



INDUSTRY SEGMENT



AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK

2004	50
2006	51
2008	51
2010	52
2012	52
2014	50

AVERAGE YEARS AT CURRENT COMPANY

2004	5.5
2006	5.8
2008	5.1
2010	5.8
2012	6.0
2014	6.5

Compensation

Compensation for copier channel techs increased by 2.6 percent over the past year, from \$42,031 to \$43,133. The percentage of technicians who are compensated for certification or education and training has increased steadily over the past decade.

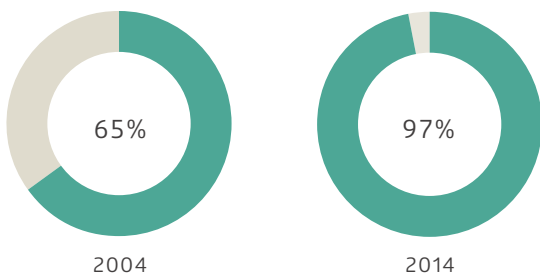
AVERAGE SALARY, 2002-2014



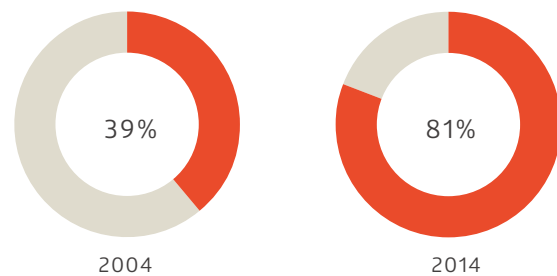
SATISFACTION WITH COMPENSATION



CERTIFICATION REIMBURSEMENT



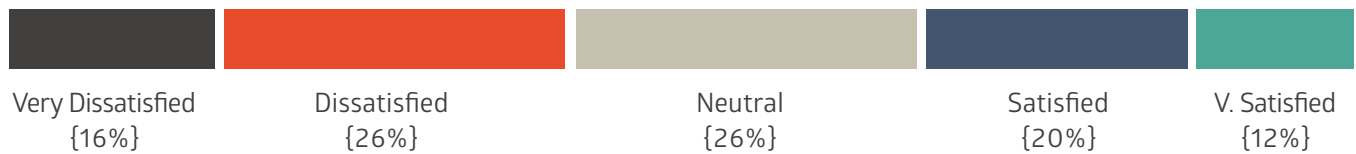
EMPLOYER-PAID EDUCATION & TRAINING



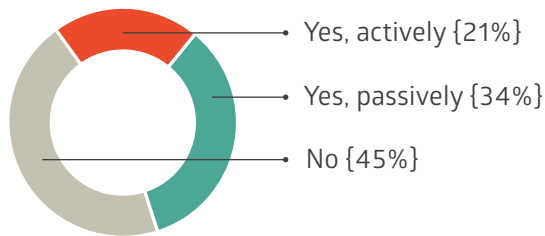
Satisfaction

Over the past year, job satisfaction among copier service technicians has been on the rise. During the same period, the percentage of people who say they're looking for a new job has decreased.

OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB?



MOST IMPORTANT JOB-RELATED FACTORS

1. Base pay
2. Benefits
3. Job stability
4. Having the tools & support to do a good job
5. Working for a company that values IT
6. Financial stability of company

TOP REASONS TECHS SEEK NEW EMPLOYMENT

1. Seeking less stressful job
2. Desire higher compensation
3. Job market opportunities are too good to pass up
4. Seeking greater job stability
5. Moving to a new geographic area

About Us

Copier Careers is a recruiting firm dedicated exclusively to helping copier channel employers find experienced service techs, copier sales reps, managers, controllers, back office staff, and MPS/MNS experts. Learn more about our commitment to the industry at www.CopierCareers.com or call 888-733-4868 to talk to a recruiter.

Copyright 2014, Copier Careers. All rights reserved.