

2012

Service Technician Salary Survey

In 2012, shortage of hybrid techs leads to heavy competition for qualified staff

Over the past several years, the managed print model has altered our industry's landscape in significant ways, re-routing revenue streams and forcing a tectonic shift in the way copier dealerships do business. As dealers have transitioned from selling standalone boxes to managing complex arrays of networked devices, employees in every department have had to adapt their attitudes and their skill sets to the MPS environment.

"We have always said that this is an incredibly stable industry," says Paul Schwartz, president of Copier Careers. "And while that's still true, the technology has brought us to a point where dealerships are having to completely reinvent themselves. From an employment standpoint, this situation is having the most direct impact on the service department. The job description for a copier service technician is in a constant state of flux."

THE 2012 SALARY SURVEY

2012 marks the tenth year Copier Careers has been publishing its annual survey of document imaging service technicians, service managers, and sales managers. With more than a decade of data at our fingertips, we've accumulated a rich record of the changes our industry has seen since 2002. This year's survey reflects the responses of 4,114 copier service technicians who took our online survey between March 1, 2011 and March 1, 2012. As always, the respondents have been mostly male (82%), though the percentage of female service technicians has risen steadily over



the past decade, from a mere 6 percent in 2002 to the 18 percent we see today. About half of the respondents (48%) work for an independent dealership with one location; the rest work for regional dealers with more than one location (22%) or for an OEM (27%). With an average age of 36, most technicians have worked in the industry for around eight years.

Between 2007 and 2011, years marked by recession-induced staff shortages, the amount of time service techs spent on the job increased steadily, summing at an all-time high of 53 hours per week in 2011. Now that dealerships are hiring again, that number has decreased to 52 hours per week, though it is still a far cry from 2002 when the average tech spent only 46 hours working each week. In exchange for all that hard work, techs took home an average of \$41,210 in base pay this year, an increase of \$212 since 2011.

A CONSTANTLY CHANGING JOB DESCRIPTION

One trend we've seen emerge in the past decade is in education: employers are more willing than ever before to provide cash bonuses and reimbursements for technician certifications and training. While only 22 percent of service technicians said they received bonuses for education in 2002, today that figure has risen to 74 percent. The reason is simple: today's techs are required to know much more about a wider variety of technology than their predecessors did.

With MPS now dominating the industry, dealerships are absorbing a wide variety of devices from multiple

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manufacturers into their managed networks, and techs are expected to service them all and ensure seamless integration into the network. As Schwartz says, “MPS has completely changed the job description of a service technician. A few years ago, all that really mattered to most employers was whether a tech was OEM certified. Now, although OEM certification is still important, network certification carries equal or greater weight. The machines are worthless if they aren’t integrated into the network.”

TRADITIONAL TECHS LOSING OUT

For traditional break/fix technicians, the transition to MPS has not been easy, and the people who haven’t managed to keep their skill sets up to date are finding themselves unable to compete in today’s job market. Instead, they’re losing out to “hybrid” technicians who augment solid repair skills with network savvy and a willingness to work on any machine that enters the network. While up to this point many employers have shown some lenience toward traditional techs, the mandate is becoming clearer by the day: move forward or be left behind.

“Techs have to get used to working on any machine, and that includes printers and other peripherals,” says Schwartz. “It’s no longer an option to wait around for the IT guy to show up and solve your network problems—you have to be the IT guy.”

HYBRID TECH SUPPLY CAN’T KEEP UP WITH DEMAND

One lasting consequence of the recession has been that only a small number of new technicians have entered the copier industry over the past five years. In normal economic times, new technicians come up through

the system in predictable numbers, but the system was essentially shut down between 2008 and 2010 when dealerships were unable to take on extra staff. Because this period coincided with the rise of MPS and the demand for network certification in our industry, the number of appropriately-trained hybrid technicians is now in extremely limited supply. The result is a high nationwide vacancy rate for technicians and an extremely competitive hiring environment for employers—for the first time in years, we’re seeing bidding wars take place as dealerships struggle to staff their service departments with MPS-ready techs.

According to Schwartz, the only solution is time and training. “Right now, we simply need more people to come up through the technician ranks. Because demand is so high and supply is so low, we’re going to see dealerships bringing in new people from outside the industry and investing the time and the money to train them in. There is no other way to deal with this shortage.”

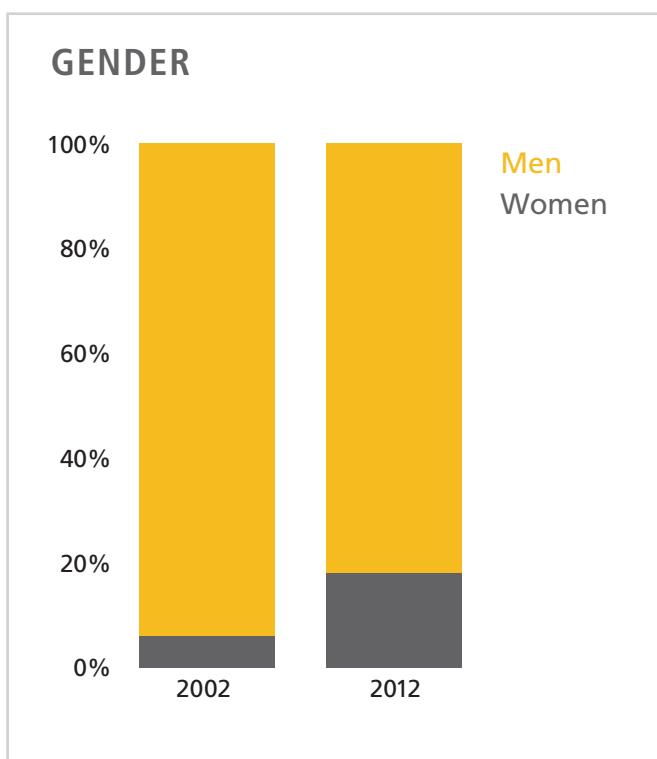
A BRIGHT FUTURE

Though the shortage of hybrid technicians is causing financial and operational pain for many dealerships, it’s great for the technicians themselves. Current techs with the necessary skill sets are in unbelievably high demand, and new techs entering the industry are poised to take advantage of excellent on-the-job training at a time when the career has never been more challenging or more rewarding. “This is the biggest change I’ve seen in the industry since Copier Careers was founded 25 years ago,” says Schwartz. “Thanks to MPS, the career path of a service technician is changing at light speed. For the people who can keep up with the changes, it’s going to be a very exciting ride.” **—CC**

Demographics

4,114 service technicians participated in the 2012 salary survey. The average technician is **36** years old, has worked in the industry for **8** years, and has been with his or her current employer for **6** years.

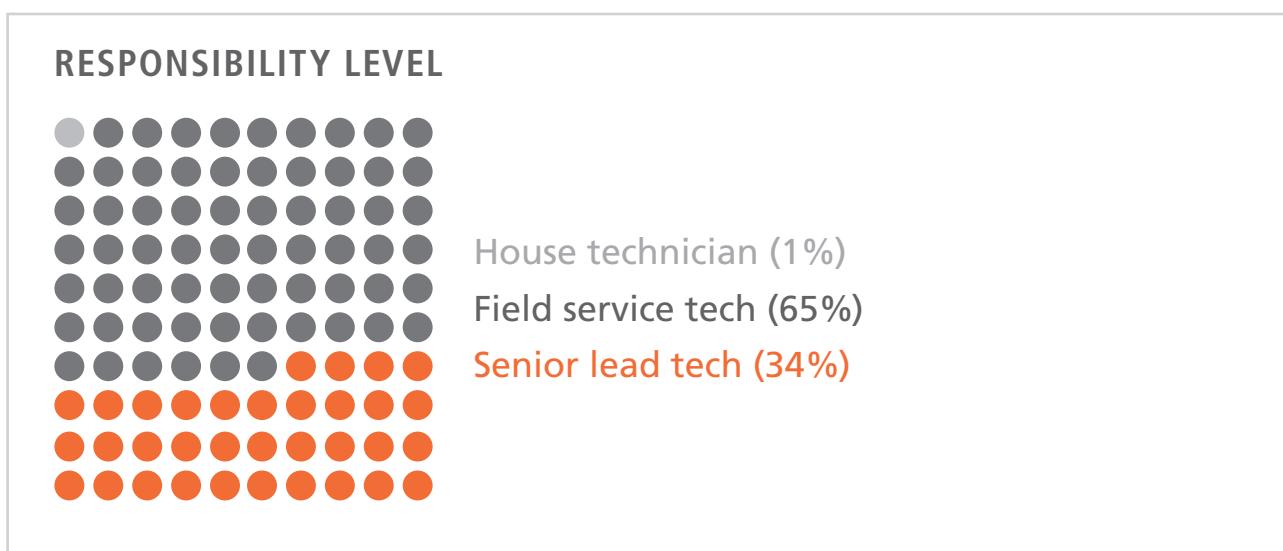
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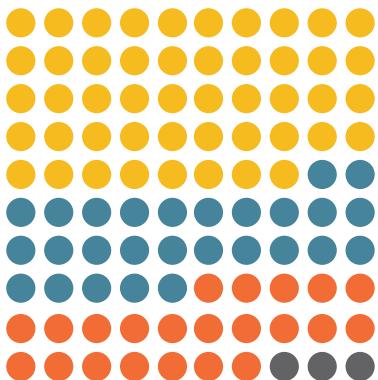
Over the past decade, the number of female service technicians working in the document imaging industry has increased from **6** percent to **18** percent.

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19 percent of respondents say they supervise between one and ten employees. The rest have no supervisory responsibilities.



WHO DO YOU WORK FOR?



- Indie dealer with one location (48%)
- OEM (27%)
- Regional dealer (22%)
- Other sales or service organization (3%)

HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE?

24 or fewer	14%
25–50	25%
51–100	20%
101–500	21%
501–1,000	7%
1,001–5,000	9%
5,001–10,000	4%

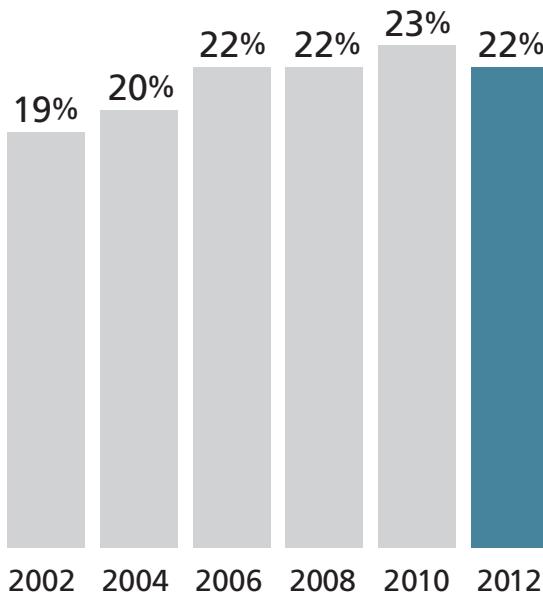
70 percent of survey respondents work for either an independent dealership with one location or a regional dealership with multiple locations. 27 percent work for an OEM.

An overwhelming 73 percent of the technicians who participated in the survey say their companies do a poor or totally unsatisfactory job attracting new employees. Once people get hired, however, the outlook is brighter: 66 percent say their employers do a fair, good, or very good job retaining employees.



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PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO ARE OEM TRAINED



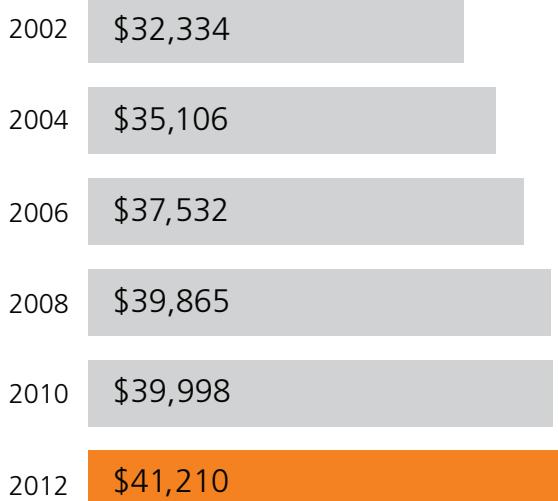
WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION?

HS diploma	55%
Some college	13%
OEM training	22%
Tech/trade school	10%

Over the past decade, the percentage of OEM-trained techs who’ve taken our survey has hovered close to the current year’s number, **22** percent.

Salary

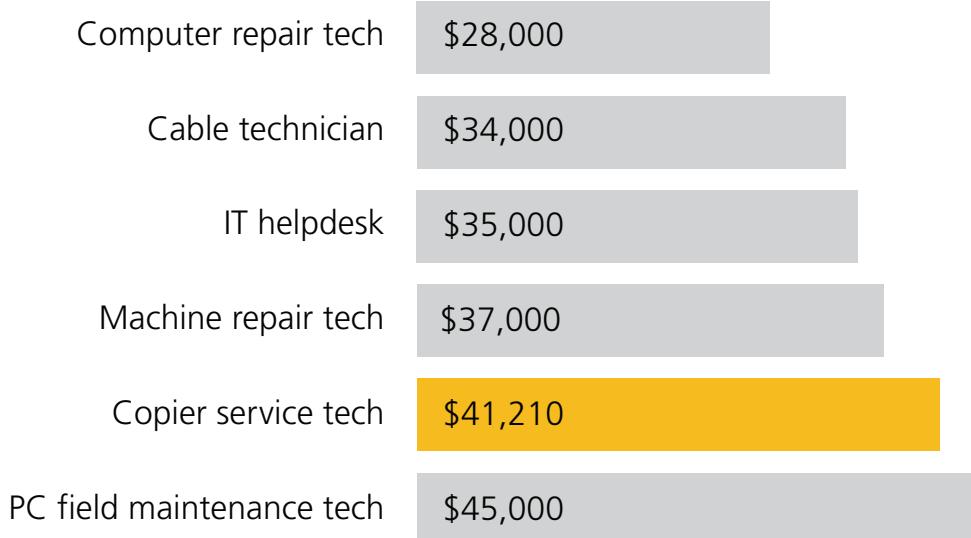
ANNUAL BASE SALARY



The average copier service technician took home a base salary of

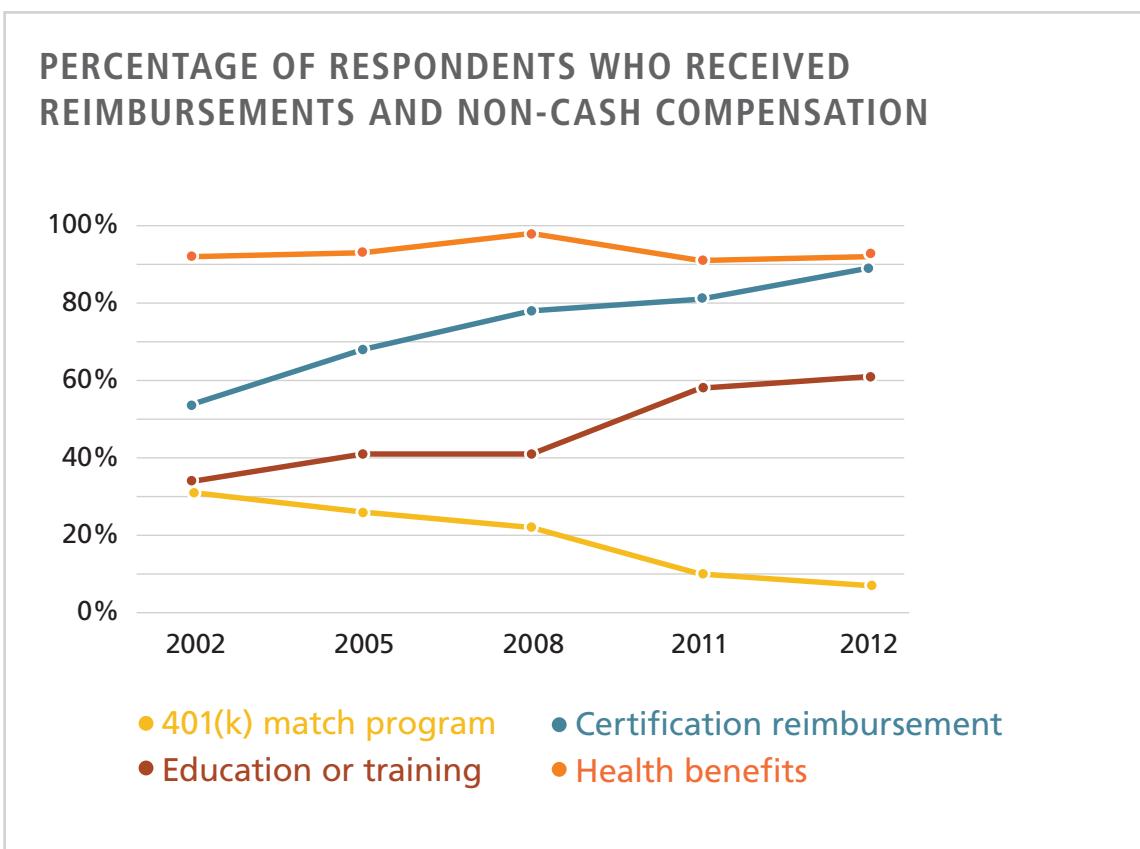
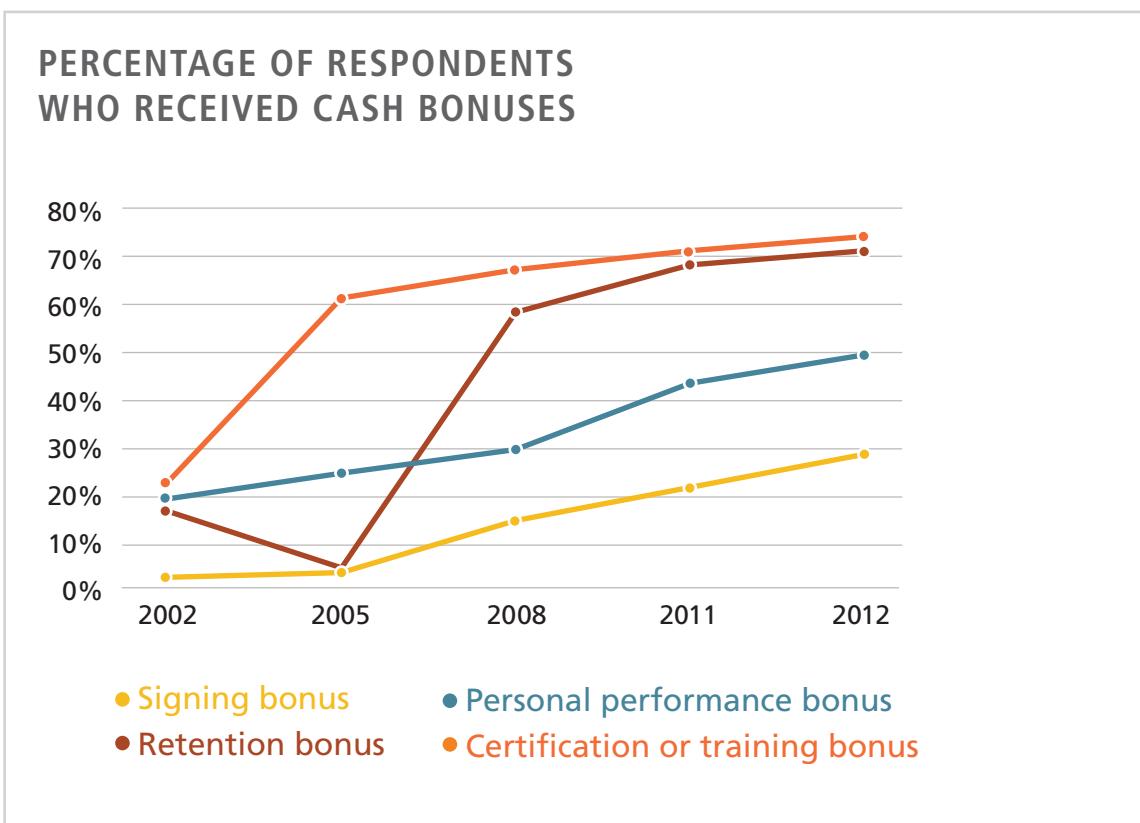
\$41,210
this year, with hybrid techs and other specialists often commanding more.

HOW DO COPIER TECHS SALARIES COMPARE TO OTHER IT CAREERS?



*Salary comparison data courtesy of Indeed.com

Bonuses & other compensation

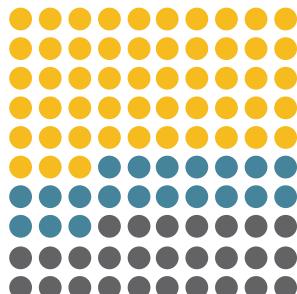


Satisfaction

Although the majority of service technicians say they're either satisfied or very satisfied with their compensation, fewer than **30** percent say they're satisfied with their jobs in general.

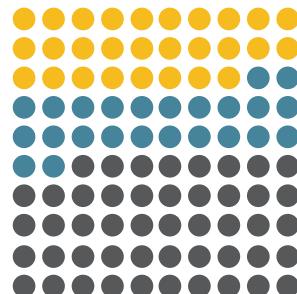
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SATISFACTION WITH COMPENSATION



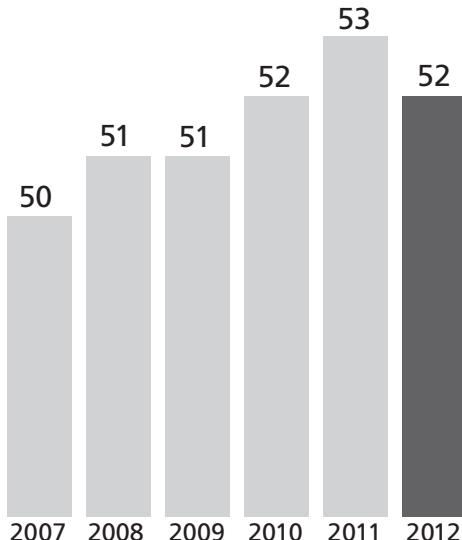
Satisfied (45%)
Neutral (28%)
Dissatisfied (27%)

SATISFACTION WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE JOB



Satisfied (28%)
Neutral (24%)
Dissatisfied (48%)

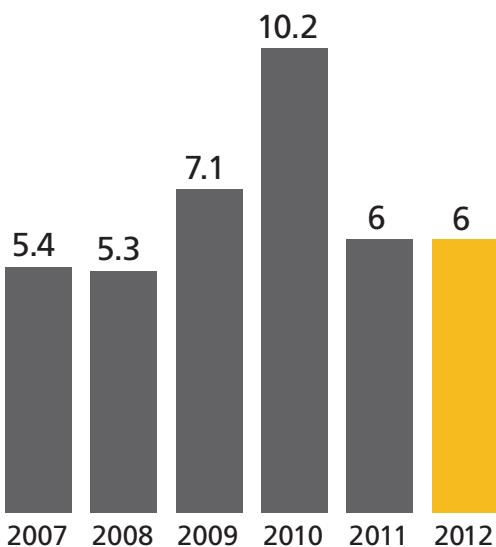
AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS WORKED



Over the past decade, the number of hours technicians spend on the job has risen steadily, from **46** hours in 2002 to **52** hours today. Until the supply of hybrid techs can catch up with demand, these long hours are likely to continue.

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YEARS YOU EXPECT TO STAY WITH YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER



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Since 2010, the amount of time technicians expect to stay with their current employers has fallen from **10.2** years to **6** years.
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ARE YOU CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB?

Yes, actively	26%
Yes, somewhat	35%
No	39%

TOP 5 REASONS SERVICE TECHS ARE LOOKING FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT

1. Seeking a less stressful job
2. Want higher compensation
3. Are seeking more job stability
4. Job market opportunities are too good to pass up
5. Want to move to a different geographic area

About us

Copier Careers is a recruiting firm dedicated exclusively to helping independent copier dealers find experienced service techs, copier sales reps, managers, controllers, back office staff, and MPS experts. Learn more about our commitment to the industry at www.CopierCareers.com.

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