

Copier Careers® Service & Operations Manager Salary Survey 2019

In 2019, service and operations managers find themselves working at the perilous intersection of abundance and scarcity. While they continue to embrace abundant new solutions, they are frustrated by the scarcity of qualified techs to service those complex products. Navigating the difficult terrain between booming sales and understaffed service teams is *the issue* for service and ops managers as they try to maintain reliable service while they roll out new solutions.

In this year's salary survey, service and operations managers report a modest increase in base salary, with total compensation increasing to just under \$119,000, on average. Nearly 90 percent of survey respondents say they receive bonuses for personal performance and earn stock options. More than half, 56 percent, say they are "satisfied" with their overall compensation, while only 45 percent say they are "satisfied" with their job overall.

As noted in 2018's survey and reflected in 2019's, the lack of overall job satisfaction likely is the result of the scarcity of qualified service techs. On average, service and ops managers report putting in a 68-hour week, partly because of the need to recruit and train techs.

Despite expressing some frustrations with their work, service and ops managers are engaged in their jobs: 100 percent of respondents continue to say they want to work with leading-edge technology, and 99 percent want to be involved in company strategy and setting goals.

2019 Service and Operations Manager Salary Survey

Each year Copier Careers, the only nationwide recruiting firm dedicated exclusively to the Copier Channel, has asked professionals from across the industry about their compensation, job satisfaction and other work-life issues. Responses to this survey reflect the challenges and opportunities that service and operations managers see in the industry. Learn more about [our company's](#) 30-year commitment to recruiting and hiring in the Copier Channel.

2,084

SERVICE & OPERATIONS MANAGERS PARTICIPATED IN OUR 2019 SURVEY

Responses to this year’s survey indicate that service and operations managers remain deeply committed and engaged in their work, but they are also showing signs of stress. Chief among their stressors is the lack of qualified service techs, which can affect the quality of service and ultimately their company’s bottom line. This could explain why:

- 99 percent of respondents say they want “the tools and support to do my job well,” an increase of 10 percentage points
- 98 percent say the “effectiveness of their immediate supervisor” is a concern, up 8 points from 2018 and up 27 points since 2017
- 88 percent want “effective career path planning and support,” an increase of 21 points from 2018

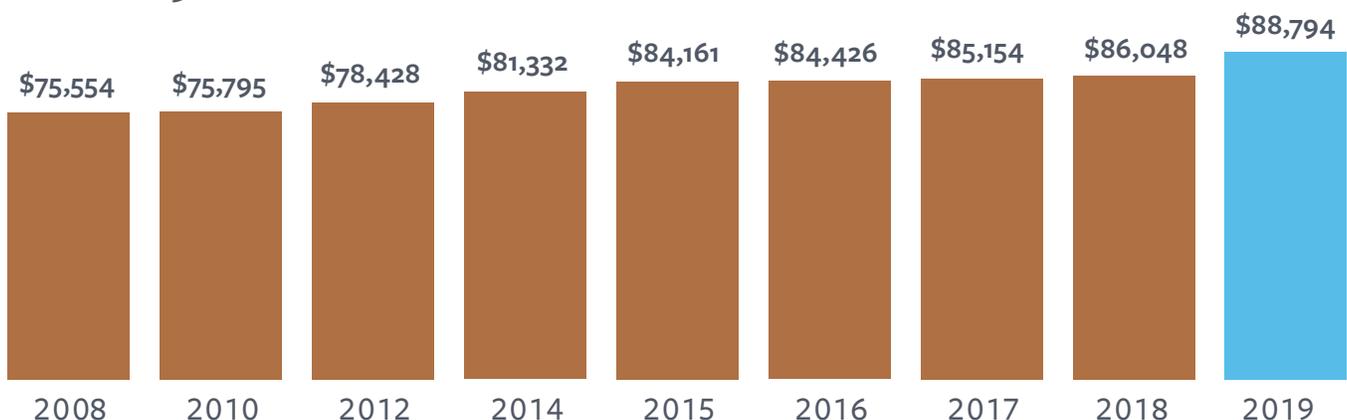
With the current [U.S. unemployment rate](#) at 3.7 percent, many employers are having trouble filling positions. The Copier Channel is also struggling to fill positions for qualified service techs, in a job category where demand has outstripped supply for years.

“We have always dwelt in this zero-unemployment environment in our industry,” says Paul Schwartz, president of Copier Careers. “There is always stress and pressure on these service managers to find, train and retain a top-notch service team. This tight labor market has made that task more difficult.”

A veteran tech said much the same in an online poll. Even though the industry has had its ups and downs, the tech said it offered a stable, fulfilling career with opportunities for personal and professional growth. But he’s worried about the next generation:

“I went from highly mechanical and some electrical tech to a hybrid tech with several certifications over the years, but there is no one to pass it on to coming up the ranks; it’s a shame, really.”

Average Service & Operations Manager Base Salary 2008-2019



AVERAGE BASE SALARY BY JOB TITLE

	2008	2010	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
All job titles	\$75,554	\$75,795	\$78,428	\$81,332	\$84,161	\$84,426	\$85,154	\$86,048	\$88,794
Service Manager	\$67,739	\$67,008	\$71,010	\$74,553	\$76,267	\$77,411	\$78,035	\$79,304	\$88,946
Regional Service Mgr	\$74,029	\$72,107	\$75,002	\$77,222	\$78,612	\$78,683	\$78,750	\$78,877	\$78,879
VP of Service	\$79,621	\$78,765	\$79,040	\$81,318	\$83,025	\$84,519	\$85,011	\$86,541	\$88,657
Operations Mgr	\$79,063	\$82,105	\$83,887	\$86,657	\$90,037	\$90,037	\$91,320	\$92,066	\$93,167
General Manager	\$77,318	\$78,991	\$83,201	\$86,908	\$89,863	\$91,480	\$92,654	\$93,464	\$94,321

Salary Up, Satisfaction Steady

In 2019, the average annual salary across all job titles for service and operations managers increased 3.2 percent to \$88,794. That is roughly \$12,000 above the [national average base pay](#) for service and ops managers, as compiled by Glassdoor, an online service that gathers job data and listings for business and industry.

In the past year, non-cash bonuses for health benefits, a company car, training, etc., increased only 0.5 percent to a value of \$29,895 (+\$140), bringing average annual compensation across all service and operations manager job titles — including non-cash perks — to \$118,689, an increase of 2.5 percent.

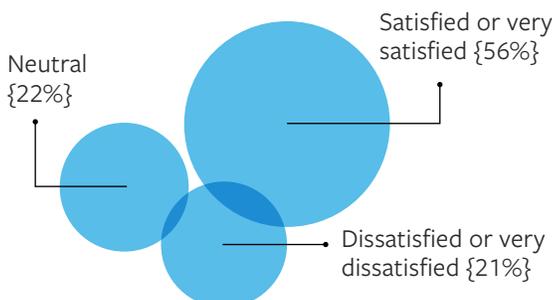
Satisfaction with overall compensation remained about the same, with 56 percent of respondents indicating they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with theirs; 22 percent are neutral on compensation, and 21 percent say they are “dissatisfied.” Similar to last year’s survey, when asked about overall job satisfaction, 45 percent of service and ops managers say they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” 26 percent are neutral on overall job satisfaction and 29 percent say they are “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with their job.

AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION

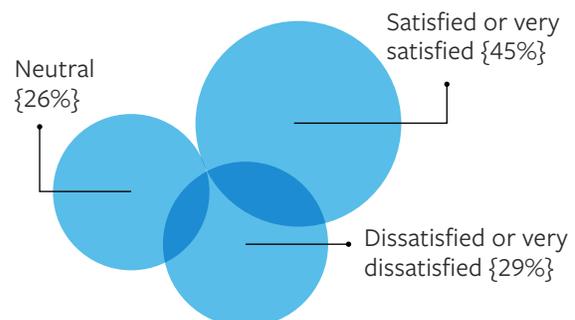
BASE PAY	\$88,794
AVG. BONUS	\$29,895
TOTAL	\$118,689

But even as dissatisfaction increases among service and ops managers, they are in the driver’s seat to resolve it — and it starts with recruiting, Schwartz says. “Here’s the bottom line: If they don’t figure out how to resolve that issue, they’re the ones who have to pay the consequences for it. Because they aren’t going to be able to hit their benchmarks.”

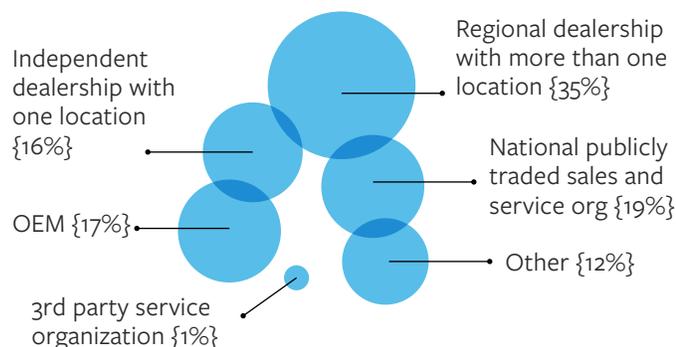
Satisfaction With Compensation Package



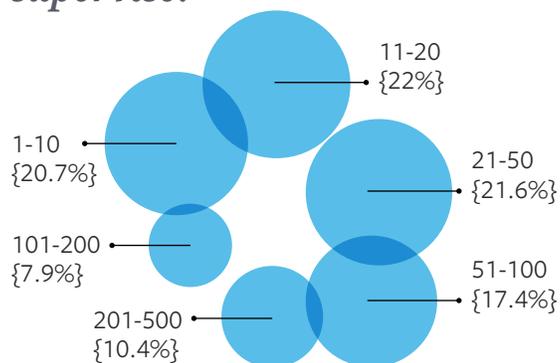
Overall Satisfaction



In which industry segment do you work?



How many people do you supervise?



The Same but Different

Service and operations managers who took this year’s survey report working in industry segments in almost identical proportions to last year’s survey. The largest segment, 35 percent, work in regional dealerships with more than one location, an increase of 1 percent.

Also like last year’s survey, the proportion of how many employees and contractors they supervise remains almost evenly split across categories. There was a slight increase in those who supervise 101-200 people, now 7.9 percent, and in those who supervise 21-50 employees, 21.6 percent.

Another increase in this year’s survey is the number of hours service and ops managers report working each week. On average, their workweek increased to 68 hours in 2019. That is two hours more than in 2018 and 10 hours more than in 2014. “We believe the increase of time at work is directly related to the time spent recruiting and ultimately that becomes a job satisfaction issue,” says Jessica Crowley, business development manager and senior recruiter at Copier Careers.

“Creating bench strength and trying to find people makes up a big portion of their frustration and takes a good portion of their time,” Crowley says.

For many service and ops managers, the effort to find and hire qualified candidates has become a chicken-and-egg situation. Schwartz recalls a recent interaction with a service manager whose “No. 1 priority” was hiring technicians.

“We found technicians, but he waited so long to get back to us that the candidates all took jobs somewhere else,” Schwartz says. “He explained that his problem was he didn’t have time to interview the technicians because he was out pulling service calls — because he was short technicians.”

Even with the frustrations of filling jobs on their teams, the average tenure of service and ops managers ticked up slightly to 12.9 years, with the overall average of time at their current job at 9.9 years. Asked how long they plan to stay in their current position, respondents said six years, an increase of two years over 2018’s survey.

AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK

2006	49
2008	51
2010	52
2012	52
2014	58
2016	60
2017	61
2018	64
2019	68

AVERAGE YEARS IN COPIER INDUSTRY

2004	23
2006	25
2008	23
2010	25
2012	23
2014	19
2016	13
2017	12.9
2018	12.7
2019	12.9

“They know the weight of their responsibility. All the solutions their company sells have to be provided and managed by their department. Without service there is nothing to sell.”

Delivering a Job Well Done

In this year’s survey, service and operations managers identified the same top non-cash/indirect cash rewards as in 2018, including 99 percent who said they receive health benefits and have a company car or car allowance. In 2019, 81 percent of respondents say they have a company-paid phone, and 81 percent are reimbursed for certification and/or further education and training.

In 2019, the top-ranked reasons for earning bonuses are the same as in past years, but the percentage of those receiving the bonuses has increased. For example, 88 percent of respondents receive bonuses for personal performance, an increase of 10 points over 2018. Those receiving company profit sharing is at 81 percent, up 4 points; those receiving certification/training bonuses increased to 78 percent, up 7 points; and 77 percent say they received bonuses for project milestones, an increase of 10 points from 2018 and 19 points from 2017.

“The solutions available these days are increasingly varied and complex,” Crowley says. “Service and ops managers need to understand the intricacies of those solutions so their departments can provide the best solutions for their clients. The responses also show that they are being rewarded for their efforts to learn the latest solutions.”

Schwartz added: “They know the weight of their responsibility. All the solutions that their company sells have to be provided and managed by their department. Without service there is nothing to sell.”

In recent years, service and ops managers have expressed increasing frustration about providing high-quality service as the pool of qualified techs has dwindled. This could explain the increase in the hours they work to cover all the bases, as they scramble to recruit technicians and retain current staff.

“It not only affects them, but it affects the people on the team, in that they want to create a good culture,” Crowley says. “They have to be able to implement solutions in order for their team to be successful. If they don’t have the support of ownership and VPs, it’s going to be a continual struggle and create turnover in their department.”

In an online poll, one service tech described the pressure inside his organization: “What we need is more support and management. When we are busy, management is nowhere to be found. We haven’t grown in years. We have some of the best techs around, but we are all the same techs that were here 10 years ago.”

TOP NON-CASH/ INDIRECT CASH REWARDS

1. Health benefits
2. Company car/car allowance
3. Company-paid phone/allowance
4. Certification reimbursement
5. Further education/training

TOP REASONS FOR EARNING BONUSES

1. Personal performance
2. Company profit sharing
3. Certification/training
4. Project milestone completion
5. Signing bonus

What matters most about your job?



Increasing in importance



Rethinking What Matters Most

In every salary survey, we ask respondents to identify which seven factors from a list of 37 variables are “most important to your job.” This year, service and operations managers have shaken up the list a bit. Base pay has slipped from No. 2 to No. 7, indicating that other issues weigh more heavily on job satisfaction for service and ops managers.

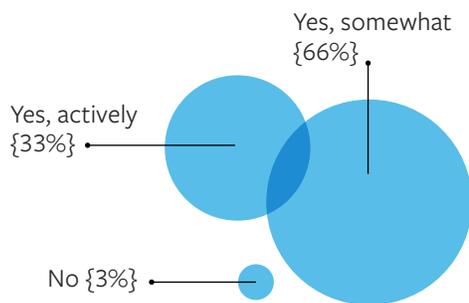
In 2019, all respondents pointed to “the ability to work with leading-edge technology” and “benefits” as the things that matter most to them. “Having the tools and support to do my job” moved to No. 2, with 99 percent of respondents identifying it as a top concern, an increase of 10 points. This year, 90 percent or more of the respondents ranked a dozen variables as important.

Having a “company-provided laptop” is important to 91 percent of respondents, a decrease of 6 points, which moved it out of the Top 7. Of the variables that increased in importance, many involve having the tools and leadership to succeed:

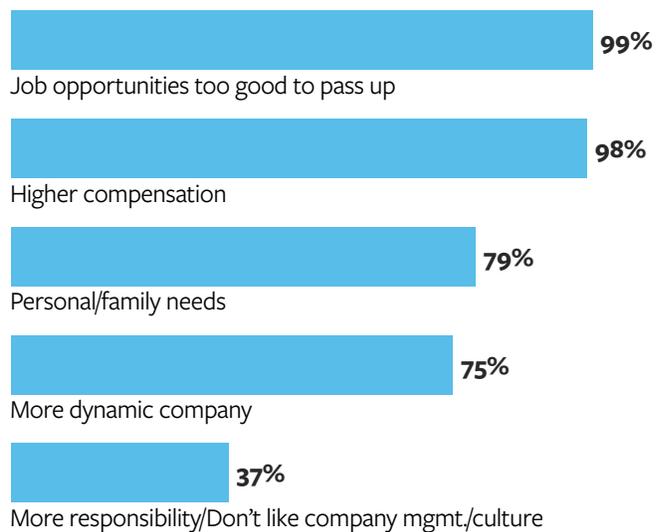
- 99 percent want the tools and support to do their job well, an increase of 10 points
- 98 percent are concerned about the effectiveness of their immediate supervisor, up 9 points
- 95 percent are watching the financial stability of the company, an increase of 4 points
- 79 percent want to know their work is important to the company's success, an increase of 2 points (up 28 points since 2017)
- 72 percent want a commitment across the company to quality work, up 4 points (13 points higher since 2017)

“There is a new generation of service managers coming into the industry, bringing fresh ideas and rethinking what they need to get the job done,” Crowley says. “They know how vital this industry is, and they want the training and flexibility to effectively deliver solutions and help the company's bottom line. It's clear that their drive to satisfy their clients is what matters most.”

Are you looking for a new job?



Why are you looking for a new job?



As technology has changed the industry, everything from the number of hours worked to how sales and service work together has changed for people working in the Copier Channel. As changes bring flux to their work, respondents say that instead of staying with one business or dealer for a career, they now plan to stay at their current job for only four to six years.

Fully 99 percent of the service and operations managers who responded to this year's survey say they are "actively" or "somewhat" looking for a new job. An equal percentage say they are looking because of "job opportunities too good to pass up," and 98 percent of respondents say they are looking for "higher compensation."

"Changes in ownership also can be a big motivator for staff to consider other opportunities," Schwartz says. "The industry is in the midst of a generational change. The service and ops managers who helped the industry evolve are retiring. With Copier Channel businesses in high demand, we are also seeing a similar shift in ownership, with many recent mergers and acquisitions."

Recently, these ownership changes are due to at least one of the following:

- The owner wants to retire but doesn't have a succession plan in place
- The business has struggled to evolve, and to survive, it must merge with a company that has evolved
- Ownership gets an acquisition offer too good to pass up and sells the business

Along with all the other changes in the industry, service and ops managers are also faced with refining how they price their costs, Schwartz says. "Every time they offer a new solution, they have to adjust pricing, too. It's the same for techs as their compensation and bonus structure evolves."

Those pricing decisions fall to service and ops managers. The complex decisions require keen analytical skills and involve developing a pricing and remuneration structure that sustains profitability while keeping employees and customers satisfied. Lack of support in doing that work could also cause service and ops managers to consider their employment options.

"If they are charged with creating great results, they need to gain the knowledge and skills to reach benchmarks and help the company thrive," Crowley says. That is why respondents seem very interested in "effective career path planning and support," "having the tools to do their job well," and "involvement in forming company strategy."

In 2019, service and ops managers again are giving their employers a failing grade on recruiting and retaining staff; 63 percent of respondents rate their company's ability to attract employees as "poor" or "totally unsatisfactory." They give slightly higher marks for employer's efforts to retain talent, with 52 percent of respondents rating that "poor" or "totally unsatisfactory." For more insights, take a look at our white paper, ["Recruiting Roadblocks."](#)

“The industry has always been evolving... It is so much more sophisticated than simply printing or making copies — the modern office can’t run without these comprehensive solutions.”

In 2019, Copier Channel businesses are still evolving. They have grown along with new technology and adapted to the industry’s changing landscape of solutions and services. The break-fix days are fading into memory, and high-tech solutions are the business at hand.

“The industry is evolved,” Schwartz says. “The industry has always been evolving. It’s not the same industry it was 10 years ago, let alone 20-plus years. It is so much more sophisticated than simply printing or making copies — the modern office can’t run without these comprehensive solutions.”

That means the Copier Channel faces a fundamental question: How it will continue to grow, prosper and adapt in what is now an almost completely solutions and IT-based business?

Schwartz says he would bet on the leadership and problem-solving abilities of service and ops managers to answer that question.

“Service and operations managers helped make this industry what it is today, and they will be part of shaping it for years to come,” he says. “We are very confident in their ability to innovate, implement and deliver consistent solutions and generate profit for the business.”

In the evolved marketplace, great service has never been more important. Businesses of every stripe depend on the Copier Channel’s IT solutions and services, which ratchets up the need for dealers to provide top-notch service. To reach that standard, service and ops managers need to build, train and retain a bench of qualified service techs.

“That’s where we can help,” Crowley says. “At Copier Careers, we are focused on recruiting and building teams to meet the demands of this dynamic industry. Our specialty is finding candidates with a level of sophistication, business savvy and the ability to collaborate across specialties — and grow with the industry.

“As the industry changes, we also are growing and changing to find the right candidates at the right time,” she says. “When you think about it, finding the sweet spot for bringing new talent to the industry is really the next step in the Copier Channel’s amazing evolution. We love the challenge.” -CC

Stay Tuned for Our Next 2019 Salary Survey

December Sales Representatives Salary Survey

In Case You Missed It

[2019 Copier Tech Salary Survey](#)

[2019 Sales Manager Salary Survey](#)

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

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