

2020

LUBES'N'GREASES

ABNRESOURCE  
recruitment redefined

# WORKPLACE TRENDS REPORT



## Welcome

Sound hiring and personnel management are always important to the success of a business. In the past few years, however, in our conversations with people around the lubricants industry, it's apparent that staffing has become more challenging – and therefore more critical. Many companies talk of difficulty attracting young workers, and many worry about a disproportionate number of older employees who are approaching retirement. Their looming departure amplifies the need to hire effectively, as well as to retain existing employees.

During such times, this report can be a helpful tool. It is based on a survey that Lubes'n'Greases conducted for the first time this year in cooperation with ABN Resource, an executive search consultant focusing specifically on the lubricants, additive and base oil industries, asking Lubes'n'Greases subscribers on six continents to share their feelings about their jobs and the lubricants industry.

Here you'll gain insights about the types of training desired by workers who are new to lubes – and how their preferences compare to industry veterans; about the industry disruptors that most concern lab and technical workers as compared to those in sales and marketing; the factors that would most likely entice a manager to leave their job versus those in non-managerial roles; and for these and

other questions the differences between responses from men and women.

We are pleased to offer this and other information to companies and human resources departments in hopes that it will help them succeed in the challenging job of attracting and retaining workers.

Lubes'n'Greases would like to express its appreciation to ABN Resource, who partnered with us in every phase of this project, from conception to development of the survey and analysis of results.



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**2020 Workplace Trends Report**

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## Executive Summary

Lubes'n'Greases has been surveying workers in the lubricants industry for two decades, but this year's project – the basis of this report – differs from those of previous years and was conducted with a different purpose: to gather data about the sentiments and concerns, preferences and career-related interests of those employed in this industry.

That represents a significant expansion from previous efforts. The surveys that we conducted from 2000 through 2018 gathered information about salaries of three key positions in the lubricants industry – plant managers, sales and marketing managers and laboratory or technical managers. Most of those surveys were conducted semi-annually and were focused on the United States; in 2017 we surveyed professionals in Europe. The purpose of those surveys was to provide snapshots and trendlines about compensation for people in those positions – information of interest to people in those positions and those aspiring to them, as well as human resource officials.

For this year's project, our target audience shifts more fully to H.R. officials and departments. Although it once again gathered information about financial compensation, the core of this survey was 11 generally qualitative questions aimed at gauging how respondents felt about their employment in this industry. The purpose of these questions was to gather insights that will be of use in employee recruitment and retention.

We also broadened this year's survey to include subscribers on six continents and non-managers as well as managers.

The section titled "How Do People Feel About the Lubricants Industry and Their Job?" presents results for the qualitative questions and the pattern of responses for several of those questions was largely consistent across all or most groups of respondents. For example, comfortable majorities of all groups expressed high levels of confidence in the industry, and most indicated they were happy in their positions; the exception on the latter question was middling results for non-managers and respondents earning salaries of \$50,000 or less.

Interesting work was by far the most popular answer for a question on what people like about this industry, and

large majorities said they expect to remain in their current position for at least two years. Better salary and opportunity for progression were the most common answers about what could entice respondents to switch jobs. A skills shortage and the impacts of new legislation were the most popular concerns across most groups.

Significant discrepancies appeared in responses to some questions, for example ones about the types of training and support that respondents said would be helpful. Groups of respondents differed about whether they were most frustrated by the industry being slow to adapt or slow to train or by a lack of opportunity for progression.

The next section, "What to Make of the Data and Some Insights on Recruitment and Retention," includes analysis by recruiting and human resources professionals in- and outside the industry. They and other sources also discuss staffing issues that employers face. These sources confirmed that the lubricants industry, like others, faces a skills shortage that stands to worsen. Part of the solution, they said, is to do a better job of hiring young workers, which is discussed in "Young Workers: Finding and Keeping New Talent." "What to Make of the Data" also concludes that it is just as important to understand and address the concerns and interests of more experienced workers for purposes of hiring and retaining them. Sources said that companies should strive to exercise all-around best personnel practices – from offering competitive salaries, to showing opportunities to progress and giving workers more flexibility.

"Gender Trend Insights: Women Rising, but Slowly" discusses gender-related staffing issues. It notes that women continue to be under-represented among lubricant industry workers and concludes that this means they could be tapped to help meet personnel needs. However, employers need to understand their interests, including desire for better pay and progression, as well as flexibility.

"Salaries: U.S. and Canada versus Western and Central Europe" compares salaries in those regions for different levels of workers in different parts of the industry. The results consistently show higher levels of compensation for respondents in the U.S. and Canada. ♦



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