



A Survey  
*of*  
Human Resource  
Professionals  
*for*  
Human Resource  
Professionals

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*Executive  
Summary  
Report*

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Prepared by:

*and*



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## About This Report

The past few years have been turbulent times for HR professionals. The economic recession has made their jobs more challenging. This survey assessed how these challenges have affected their personal views of their work and their career.

As a service to the HR community, **Discovery Surveys** and **Gatti & Associates** periodically conduct a survey of HR professionals designed to help HR professionals learn how their views of their own jobs compare to those of others in the human resource field. This report presents the results of the 2010 survey with comparisons to an identical survey we conducted in 2006.

The data was gathered from 645 HR professionals in 2010. Email invitations were sent to approximately 4,500 HR professionals along with a link to an electronic survey. The majority of the respondents are senior HR professionals with more than 10 years experience in the field. There were 545 participants in the 2006 survey. The characteristics of the two samples are very similar. *(See Part 5 for details about the 2010 and 2006 samples.)*

This report also compares the results to the views of the more than 60,000 employees included in the Discovery Surveys, Inc. Normative Database© of employee attitudes based on surveys conducted in more than 80 organizations.

The report is organized into the following five parts:

- Part 1 – How HR Professionals Feel About their Jobs**
- Part 2 – How HR Professionals Feel About their Role in their Organization**
- Part 3 – What HR Professionals Feel are the Most Challenging Aspects of their Work**
- Part 4 – The Career Plans of HR Professionals**
- Part 5 – About the Sample**

The tables below present the views of HR professionals toward selected aspects of their jobs. Our interpretations of these results follow each table.

We hope you find this report to be of value.

Sincerely,



**Bruce L. Katcher, Ph.D.**  
President, Discovery Surveys, Inc.



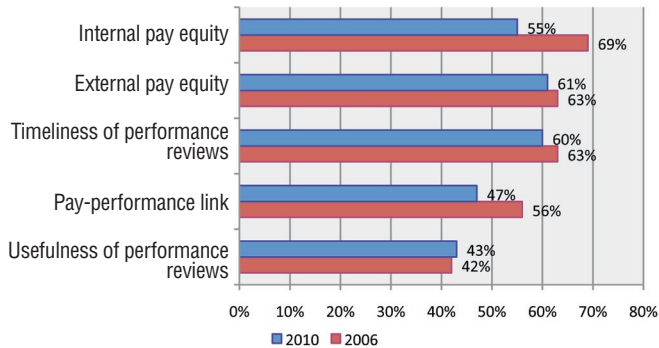
**Bob Gatti**  
President, Gatti & Associates, Inc.

*P.S. The last page of this report describes the professional services provided by our firms.*

# Part 1 - How HR Professionals Feel About Their Jobs

**SUMMARY** – HR professionals are generally satisfied with their benefits, but have mixed views about their pay, their supervisors, and how their performance is reviewed. Their work provides them with a sense of accomplishment, but they are dissatisfied with their work life balance.

**Table 1: The Views of HR Professionals About Their Pay and Performance Reviews**



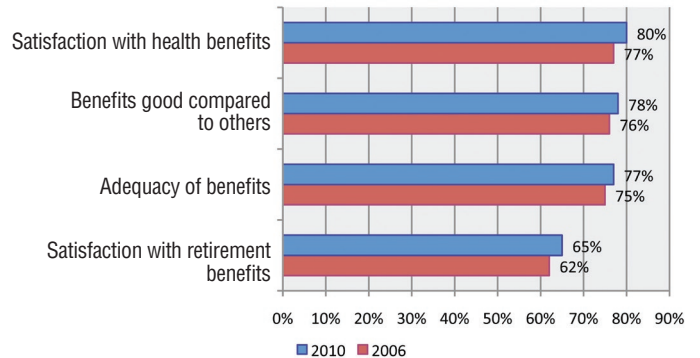
**INTERNAL PAY EQUITY** – HR professionals feel less adequately compensated than their colleagues within their organizations. Only 55 percent are satisfied with how their pay compares to other managers at the same level within their organization. This is a drop of 14 percentage points from 2006.

**EXTERNAL PAY EQUITY** – 61 percent feel they are paid fairly compared with HR professionals in other similar organizations. This is a strong result. It is more than 10 percent higher than the Discovery Surveys norm which indicates that HR professionals feel better about their pay vis-à-vis other organizations than do employees in general.

**PAY-PERFORMANCE LINK** – HR professionals feel the link between their pay and their job performance is good, not excellent, and getting worse. 47 percent say there is a clear link. This is higher than the Discovery Surveys norm but dropped 9 percentage points from 2006.

**PERFORMANCE REVIEWS** – Many HR professionals feel the performance reviews they receive from their own supervisors are not very useful. Only 43 percent feel they are useful to them. This low result is similar to what we have found in past studies.

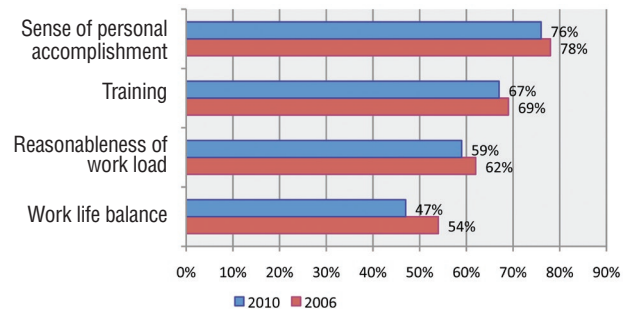
**Table 2: The Views of HR Professionals About Their Benefits**



**BENEFITS** – HR professionals are satisfied with the benefits they receive from their organizations. A strong 77 percent of HR professionals feel the benefits they receive are adequate for their needs and the needs of their family. Also, 78 percent feel their benefits are good compared to those offered by other similar organizations.

**Health benefits are viewed more positively than retirement benefits.** Although 80 percent are satisfied with the health care benefits they receive, only 65 percent are satisfied with their own retirement benefits.

**Table 3: The Views of HR Professionals Toward Selected Aspects of Their Jobs**



**SENSE OF PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT** – HR professionals feel fulfilled by their work. A very strong 76 percent say their job provides them with a sense of personal accomplishment. This is higher than we find for employees in general.

**REASONABLENESS OF WORKLOAD** – HR professionals feel relatively good about their workload. 59 percent feel their workload is reasonable. This is also higher than we find for employees in general.

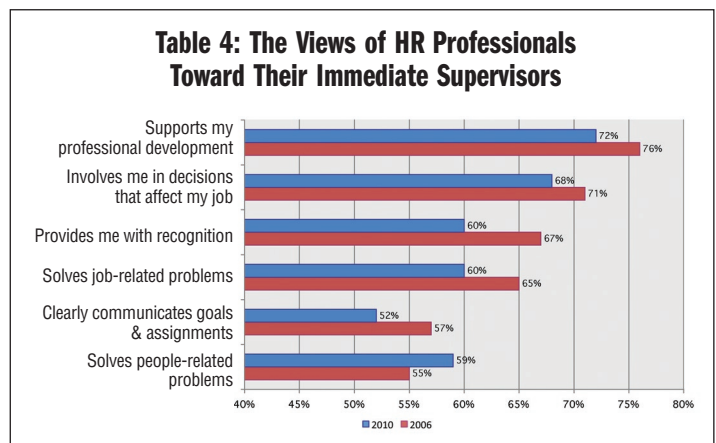
(Part 1 continued on next page)

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**TRAINING** – *67 percent feel they have received the training they need to do their job well.* This is a surprisingly good result given the decline in training budgets for many organizations during the past few years. This result is more than 10 percentage points higher than the Discovery Survey norms indicating that HR professionals feel better about the training they receive than do their employees.

**WORK LIFE BALANCE** – *Only 47 percent are able to balance their work life and their personal life to their satisfaction.* This declined 7 percentage points since 2006 and is lower than we find for employees in general. Doing more with less has become the mantra in many organizations and this is undoubtedly true for HR professionals. Although they feel their workload is reasonable, many are working longer hours.

**SUPERVISION** – *The supervisors of HR professionals are doing a better job of solving people-related problems than they did in 2006.*



*HR professionals are less positive than they were in 2006 about their supervisors.* They are less positive about how well their immediate supervisors support their professional development, provide them with recognition, solve job-related problems, and communicate goals and assignments to them.

*The supervisors of HR professionals are becoming more participative and less directive.* A strong 68 percent say their supervisors involve them in decisions that affect their job, but only 52 percent say their supervisors clearly communicate goals and assignments.

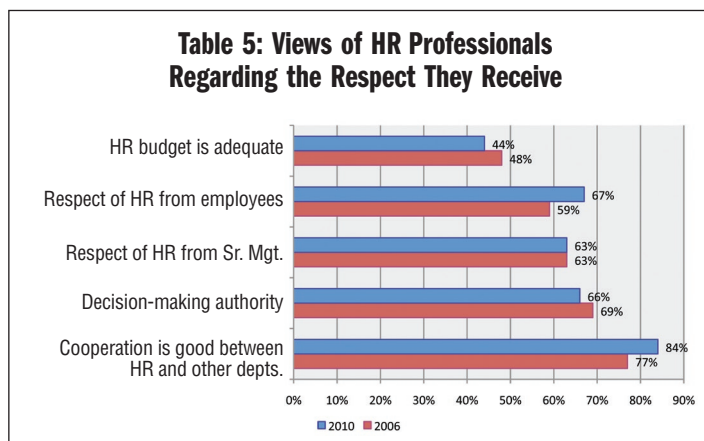
## Part 2 - How HR Professionals Feel About Their Role In Their Organization

**SUMMARY** – HR professionals are receiving more respect from employees in their organizations and departments are cooperating with them more. HR professionals believe that they are contributing to the mission of the organization, but their budgets are less adequate and senior management does not view them as strategic partners.

**BUDGETS** – *HR professionals are less satisfied with their budgets.* Only 44 percent believe their HR budget is adequate.

**COOPERATION WITH HR** – *Cooperation between HR and other departments is improving.*

**RESPECT** – *The respect that employees show to HR is also improving.*



**CONTRIBUTION TO THE MISSION** – *A strong 87 percent of HR professionals feel their work contributes to the overall mission of their organization.*

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**DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN – However, HR professionals do not feel they are viewed as strategic business partners.** Only 59 percent (down from 63 percent in 2006) feel the perspective of the human resource function played a major role in the development of the strategic plans of their organization. Also, only 60 percent believe HR is viewed as a business partner in their organization.

**WHY HR IS NOT VIEWED AS A STRATEGIC PARTNER – Almost half of those who do not believe HR is viewed as a strategic partner say senior management views HR as merely a support function.** Others say HR is not considered a strategic partner because HR is not valued, technical knowledge is valued more by senior management, and HR has not asserted itself enough.



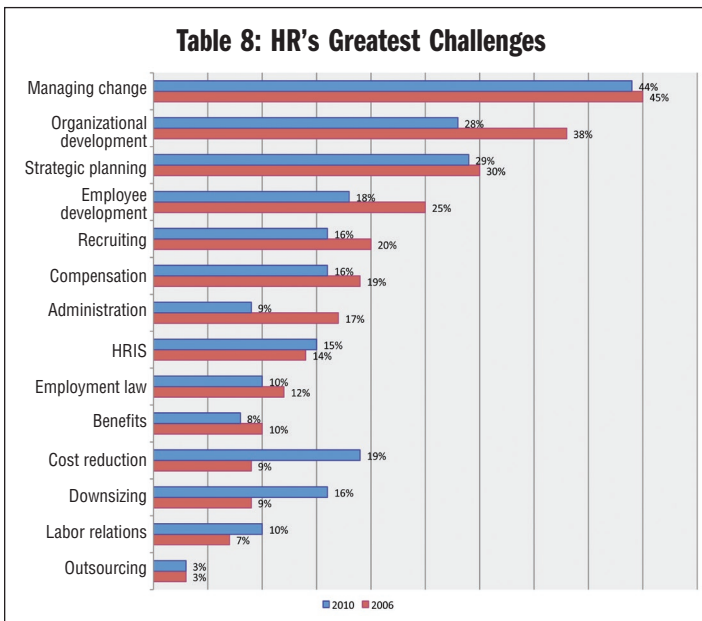
## Part 3 - What HR Professionals Feel are the Most Challenging Aspects of Their Work

**SUMMARY – Issues involving organizational change (i.e., managing change, organizational development, and strategic planning) pose the greatest challenges to HR professionals.** Downsizing and cost reduction have become more challenging. HR professionals find their work to be more emotionally draining and tiring than in the past.

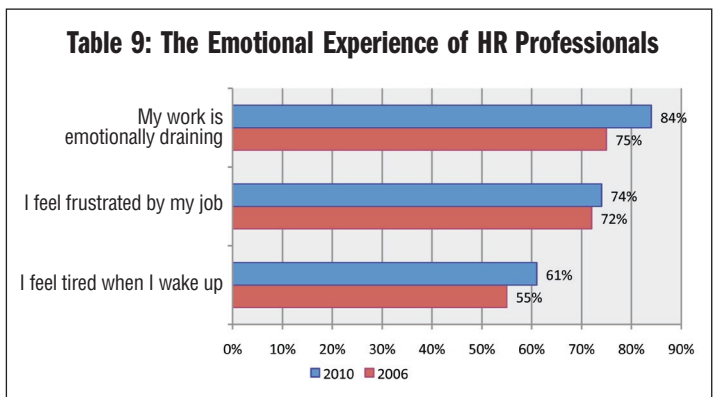
**LEAST CHALLENGING PARTS OF THE JOB – Aspects of the HR job that were once viewed as challenging are less challenging now.** Outsourcing, labor relations, benefits, and administration are the least challenging aspects of the HR job.

**MORE CHALLENGING THAN IN 2006 – Not surprisingly, saving money has been a more challenging aspect of the job of HR professionals.** Cost reduction and downsizing are more challenging in 2010 than they were in 2006.

**LESS CHALLENGING THAN IN 2006 – Recruiting and developing employees have taken a back seat.** Organizational development, employee development, recruiting, and administration are less challenging now for HR professionals than they were in 2006.



**MOST CHALLENGING PARTS OF THE JOB – Activities related to change continue to be the most challenging aspect of the job for HR professionals.** Managing change, organizational development, and strategic planning were the most difficult challenges HR professionals faced in both 2006 and 2010.

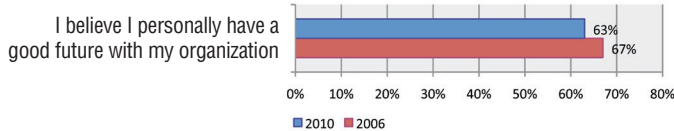


**THE EMOTIONAL STATE OF HR PROFESSIONALS – HR professionals find their work to be increasingly draining and frustrating.** The challenging economy is taking a toll on HR professionals. 84 percent say their work is emotionally draining (up from 75 percent in 2006), 74 percent feel frustrated by their job, and 61 percent (up from 55 percent in 2006) feel tired when they wake up in the morning to face the day.

# Part 4 – The Career Plans of HR Professionals

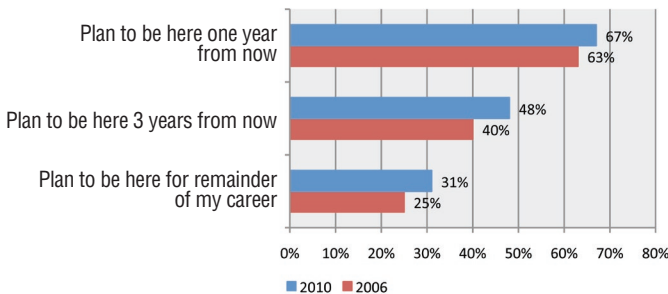
**SUMMARY** – HR professionals are feeling less confident in the security of their positions and less optimistic about the prospects of landing employment outside of their current organization.

**Table 10: HR Professionals' Views of Their Future in Their Organization**



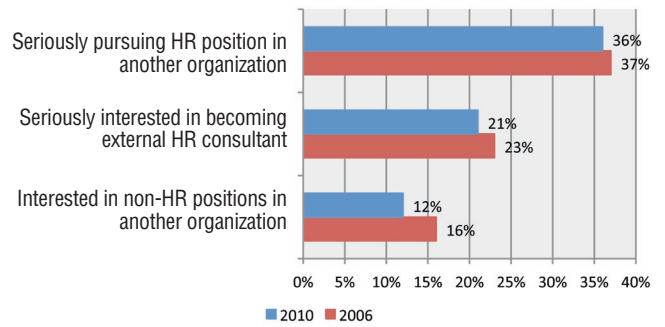
**PERCEPTION OF FUTURE IN CURRENT ORGANIZATION** – *HR professionals have less confidence in their career potential at their current organization.* The turbulent economy has brought career uncertainty to HR professionals. Only 63 percent, versus 67 percent in 2006, feel they have a good future in their current organization.

**Table 11: Turnover Intentions of HR Professionals**



**TURNOVER INTENTIONS** – *HR professionals are planning to stay longer with their current organization longer than they were in 2006.* Due undoubtedly to the tight job market, compared to 2006, fewer HR professionals are planning to leave their current organization in one year, three years, or in their career.

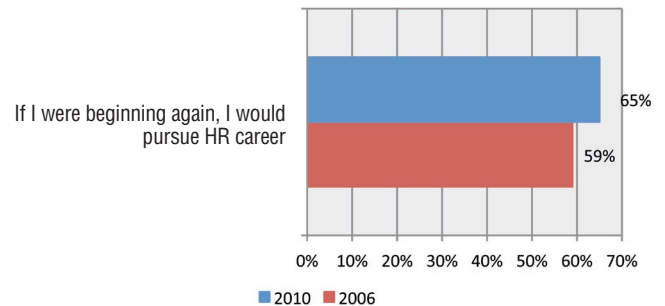
**Table 12: Career Plans of HR Professionals**



**IMMEDIATE CAREER PLANS** – *Some HR professionals are pursuing other opportunities.* 36 percent are looking for HR positions in different organizations and 21 percent are interested in HR consulting.

**STAYING OR LEAVING THE HR FIELD** – *Most of those who are interested in making a change intend to stay within the HR field.* Only 12 percent are interested in non-HR positions in another organization.

**Table 13: HR Professionals' Views of Their Career Choice**



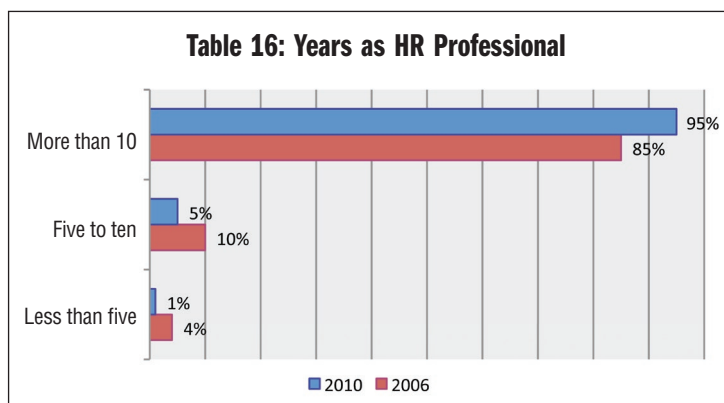
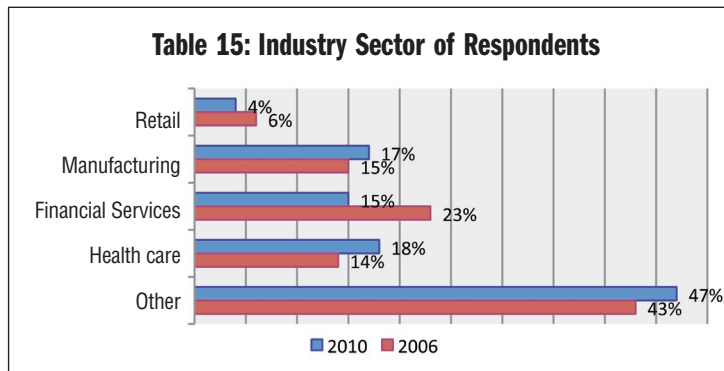
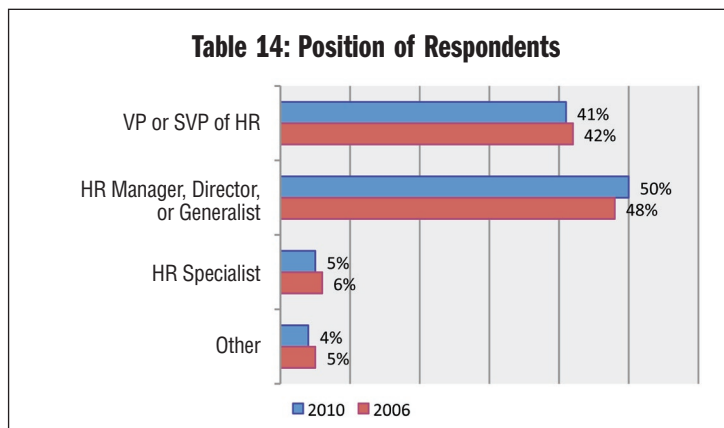
**SATISFACTION WITH CAREER CHOICE** – *HR professionals are feeling better about the soundness of choosing HR for their career.* 65 percent, versus 59 percent in 2006, said that if they were beginning their career again, they would choose the field of human resources.

## Part 5 – About The Sample

**SUMMARY** – The samples in 2010 and 2006 are very similar. The respondents to both surveys were primarily senior-level HR professionals with more than 10 years experience in the field of human resources.

- 91 percent are VPs, SVPs, Managers, Directors or Generalists versus 90 percent in 2006.
- 100 percent have more than 10 years of experience in the HR field versus 95 percent in 2006.

The specific characteristics of the 2010 and 2006 samples are shown in the 3 charts below.





## About Discovery Surveys

Since 1993, Discovery Surveys, Inc. has provided strategic consulting based on high quality, customized research using web, paper, telephone, and focus group methods.

We have conducted surveys for more than 100 organizations including: Alcoa, BBN Technologies, Delta Dental Plan, Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, Invensys, Johnson & Johnson, the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Mayo Clinic, Revlon, Sodexo, Textron Systems, Timberland, Tufts University, and W.R. Grace.

## Employee Surveys

Understanding the views of employees is critically important. We conduct customized employee survey programs that provide an objective understanding of the views of employees about communication, management, supervision, pay, benefits, career development, training, and quality. Our normative database of employee attitudes helps our clients gain a better understanding of the views of their employees.

## Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Satisfied customers are the most important assets of any organization. Our customized customer satisfaction survey programs help our clients improve customer satisfaction, retain valuable customers, improve the quality of their products and services, identify what is most important to their customers, assess how well their staff is serving customers, and understand the differences between the views of their A, B, and C customers.

To discuss how we can help you better understand and improve the views of your employees and customers, contact:

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## About Gatti & Associates

Founded in 1985, Gatti & Associates is an executive search firm specializing exclusively in the search and placement of Human Resources professionals, nationwide.

Our mission is to help organizations meet key business challenges through the recruitment of exceptional HR talent. Over the past 26 years we have filled over 5,000 positions in industries such as financial services, technology, retail, biotechnology, consumer products, manufacturing, health care, education, and consulting services.

Our deep knowledge of both the HR discipline and the HR community, coupled with our understanding of the requirements of corporate environments, results in successful searches that are executed in a timely and cost-efficient manner. The Gatti & Associates staff averages more than 15 years of service with the firm.

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