



A Survey of Attitudes of Casino Industry Employees

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Introduction and Methodology

One common element in the public debate over casinos and legalized gambling has been the issue of the quality of casino industry jobs. Few people question that casinos expand the employment base. But for many, perceptions of the employment in the casino gaming industry are based on out-of-date stereotypes that casinos provide low-paying, transient jobs with few benefits. These survey findings show these viewpoints are definitely anachronistic and out-of-touch with the current profile of today's gaming employees from East to West and North to South.

To better understand casino industry employment and how employees themselves view their jobs, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., conducted a nationwide telephone survey among 501 commercial casino employees at American Gaming Association (AGA) member properties. The sample was a representative cross-section¹, meaning that all employees, from housekeepers to pit bosses to C-level executives, had an equal chance of being interviewed. Interviewing was conducted September 4 - 6, 2007. The margin of error for the overall survey population is ± 4.4 percent; it is higher among specific subgroups.

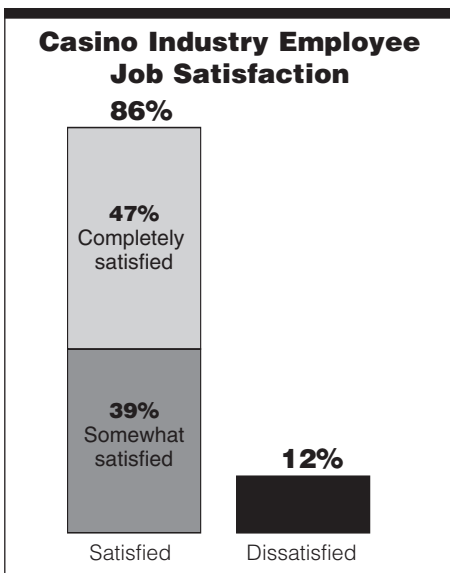
Our survey shows that the vast majority of casino industry employees are exceedingly positive toward their work and their workplace. Casino industry employees see their jobs as opening many doors and allowing them to flourish in different aspects of their lives—earning a good income, increasing savings, reducing debt, continuing their education, buying a home, supporting a family, and giving back to their community. Indeed, the key findings that emerge from this survey paint a picture of an industry that employees see as a growth industry that provides long-term job security and one they are delighted and proud to be a part of.

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¹ See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the sample.

Other key findings:

- Casino industry employees are broadly satisfied with many aspects of their work environment and feel that it is an improvement over past jobs.
- Employees see their casino industry jobs as a step up from their previous jobs.
- The median tenure within the gaming industry is seven years.
- Employees have a mix of short-term and long-term aspirations in the industry, but regardless of their life stage or future plans, employees cite a wide variety of benefits they have derived from their work in the industry.
- Casino industry employment has provided a good living and opportunities for a truly diverse workforce, including a large number of employees of color and workers who were not able to attend college.
- Casino industry employees have pride in the casino gaming industry and would strongly recommend it to others.
- Employees recognize, appreciate and support the casino gaming industry’s efforts to be good corporate citizens and give back to the community.



Overall Employee Satisfaction

Simply put, casino industry employees are overwhelmingly satisfied with their jobs (86 percent), including nearly half (47 percent) who are completely satisfied. By contrast, just 12 percent say they are dissatisfied right now.

Even more significant, perhaps, is how universal this sentiment seems to be. Satisfaction is well over 80 percent among every group of employees: men (85 percent) and women (88 percent); white (84 percent), African American (96 percent), and Latino employees (87 percent); college graduates (86 percent) and employees with a high school education or less (88 percent); employees earning \$30,000 or less a year (89 percent) or more than \$75,000 (91 percent); 18- to 34-year-olds (88 percent) and those age 50 and over (85 percent); and new employees with just a few years’ experience (86 percent) or old hands with more than 10 years in the industry (84 percent). This extraordinarily broad-based satisfaction makes a strong statement about the positive aspects of working in the casino gaming industry.

Sources of Employee Satisfaction

One reason that so many casino industry employees are satisfied at work is that they find so *many* sources of satisfaction. When asked in an open-ended question to name the things they like best about their current job, 98 percent of casino employees volunteer an answer, and their responses reveal that the casino gaming industry holds diverse appeal. The most common responses include interacting with the public (20 percent), salary or wages (16 percent), friendly coworkers (14 percent), being treated well by supervisors (14 percent), a convenient work schedule or flexible hours (13 percent), good insurance or benefits package (13 percent), the ability to use their skills and training (10 percent), and the relaxed, exciting work atmosphere (10 percent).

In reading the verbatim responses to this open-ended question, what is particularly striking is the sense of enjoyment that emerges. Employees do not describe themselves as simply punching a timecard and staring at the clock, or being isolated in a “Dilbert-like” maze of cubicles. The words “fun” and “opportunity” clearly stand out, revealing a picture of a job that is enjoyable, as well as personally and professionally rewarding.

Casino Industry Employment Compared with Past Jobs

Most casino industry employees feel that their current jobs in the casino gaming industry are superior to jobs they have held in other industries. Much of the work force has a good basis for comparison, as 69 percent have previous (or current) work experience outside the casino gaming industry. Among that group, three in five (59 percent) describe their current casino job as a “step up” compared with previous jobs outside the casino gaming industry, while just 11 percent feel their current position is a “step down,” and 28 percent say it is a “lateral move.” Eighteen- to 34-year-old employees (69 percent), women (67 percent), Latinos (67 percent), African Americans (65 percent), and employees with a high school degree or less (64 percent) are especially likely to describe their casino position as a step up.

Employees widely believe that their current job is better than previous positions when it comes to several components of job satisfaction. Solid majorities of casino employees say that their overall satisfaction (63 percent), benefits (63 percent), pay (62 percent), vacation time (61 percent), and opportunities for advancement (57 percent) are better in their current position than they were in past positions. Employees also say they now enjoy more pride in their industry (51 percent), and better job security (51 percent) and retirement security (50 percent) than they have in the past.

“It’s creative. I have the ability to make menus, teach people, and help people grow within this field.”
-Chef

“I like the high level of activity. I like the continuous change. I like that there’s always something going on.”
-Facilities/maintenance manager

“I like the fact that I get to work with different people. I also have fun at my job and make a lot of money.”
-Beverage server

“I like the job opportunities and benefits, and also the atmosphere of the casino industry.”
-Slot attendant

“I would say my co-workers and the benefits. I like that the company cares about their employees and feel my voice can be heard.”
-Porter

“I like that we have job opportunities and a chance for advancement and training.”
-Dealer

Percentage Saying Casino Industry Job Is Better Than Past Jobs in Each Area

Overall job satisfaction	63%
Benefits like health insurance and education	63%
Salary/wages	62%
Vacation/personal time	61%
Advancement opportunities	57%
Pride in industry	51%
Job security	51%
Ability to retire securely	50%

Several groups of employees are able to fill particularly important needs with these jobs. For example, 67 percent of employees with a high school education, along with 64 percent of part-time employees, say they are getting better benefits now than in previous industries.

Notably, no more than 18 percent of employees say they are worse off in any category, meaning that the vast majority of employees see the casino gaming industry as being at least as good as, and generally better than, other industries

in every one of these key areas.

It is not surprising, therefore, that most casino industry employees believe their overall work situation is better than that of other service-sector employees, and better than the work force in general. When asked to consider all aspects of their employment—from pay and benefits to opportunities for advancement to the way they are treated by supervisors—and compare it to other parts of the service sector, such as restaurants or retail, 60 percent of casino industry employees claim their employment situation is better than that of other service-sector workers (37 percent say much better), and just 6 percent feel they are worse off. Similarly, 57 percent of casino employees believe their employment situation is better than that of the rest of the work force in general (29 percent say much better), compared with just 9 percent who feel they are worse off.

Casino Industry Employment: Revealing New Vistas

Employee satisfaction is about far more than the work itself. Casino industry employees tell us that their work in the casino gaming industry has provided a multitude of benefits to their lives.

On a personal and professional level, the vast majority of employees say they have earned a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment (76 percent), and developed new job skills (75 percent).

Employees cite several family and community benefits as well. Most important among them, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of employees say they have been able to get better health care for their family since they began working in the casino gaming industry, including several populations that tend to be chronically underinsured in other segments of the work force, such as employees with a household income of \$30,000 or less (71 percent), those with no college education (70 percent), and even part-time employees (63 percent). This is a significant benefit at a time when 44 million Americans are uninsured and the ranks of the uninsured continue to swell.

% Able to Achieve Each Goal By Working in Casino Gaming Industry

Professional Achievements	
Develop a sense of satisfaction/accomplishment	76%
Develop new job skills	75%
Family And Community Achievements	
Get better health care for your family	69%
Develop new social networks	67%
More opportunity to be involved with their kids	62%
Move to a better neighborhood	55%
More opportunity to be involved in community	53%
Financial Achievements	
Increase your savings	65%
Put money away for retirement	64%
Reduce your level of debt	60%
Buy a home or condo	52%

Other family and community benefits that employees have seen since they began working in the casino gaming industry include developing new social networks (67 percent), being more involved with their children (62 percent)², moving to a better neighborhood (55 percent), and being more involved in the community (53 percent).

Finally, employment in the casino gaming industry has allowed a large number of employees to improve their financial situation substantially. Two-thirds of all employees have been able to increase their savings (65 percent) and put away money for retirement (64 percent), as have a fair number of employees with household incomes of \$30,000 or less (56 percent increase savings, 52 percent put away money for retirement). Three in five (60 percent) employees have been able to reduce their level of debt since they began working at a casino, including 70 percent of part-time workers. Perhaps most strikingly, more than half (52 percent) of all employees have been able to realize the American Dream of homeownership as a result of their work in the casino gaming industry, including 63 percent of Latino employees and half (51 percent) of those with no college education.

These findings may be the most impressive in the whole survey because they indicate how connected these people are to the best elements of American society. It is more than just having a good job and good benefits, it is how they relate to their family, their neighbors and their community. These are solid citizens with a real stake in the American way of life. They are living large in the best part of life and not in the marginal shadows of their community. There are probably few other industries that enable those with less formal education to do as well and to be as involved in their community.

Career Outlook

Not surprisingly, these employees are much more invested in working in this industry than common perceptions would suggest. They are anything but transient. The median tenure within the casino gaming industry is seven years. Fully 42 percent of employees have worked in the industry longer than 10 years, and 30 percent of employees have been with the same company for more than a decade.

Looking ahead, the vast majority (77 percent) of casino industry employees believe they will still be working in the casino gaming industry two years from now. And nearly half (48 percent) say they will definitely (20 percent) or probably (28 percent) still work in the casino gaming industry for the next 10 years. Interestingly, part-time (46 percent) and full-time (48 percent) employees are equally likely to say they will keep their job 10 years or longer.

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² Results shown only among employees who have kids under 18 in their household.

It is understandable, therefore, that the majority of casino industry employees say they consider their employment to be a career (9 percent) or a “position that could lead to a career” (45 percent), rather than “just a job” (44 percent). College graduates (60 percent), those earning more than \$50,000 (60 percent), and salaried employees (69 percent) are more likely than others to say their current employment is or could be a career. Yet even part-time employees are more likely to think of their position as part of a career (53 percent) than just a job (45 percent).

Pride In the Casino Gaming Industry and Corporate Citizenship

One final theme that emerges from the survey is the sense of pride that many employees feel as a result of working in the casino gaming industry. Asked directly, 77 percent of casino industry employees say they are proud to work in the industry, including 40 percent who feel a great deal of pride in the industry.

Employees point to several industry accomplishments as fostering that sense of pride. While many employees feel pride in casinos’ role as economic engines (23 percent), employees’ biggest source of pride is the industry’s efforts to act as good corporate citizens (27 percent).

Indeed, 80 percent of employees believe that “casinos act responsibly, are good corporate citizens, and look out for the interests of their customers,” compared with just 15 percent who believe that “casinos do not act responsibly, are not good corporate citizens, and take advantage of their customers.”

Casino industry employees give the industry high marks for corporate citizenship because they have seen first-hand the many steps their employers have taken in this arena. More than four in five employees say their companies have worked to prevent underage (87 percent) and problem (84 percent) gambling and donated money to community and charitable organizations (84 percent). Three-quarters (76 percent) report that their company

organizes opportunities for employees to volunteer in the community. Two-thirds match employees’ charitable contributions (68 percent) and open up their facilities for charitable events (65 percent). And more than half (56 percent) are aware that company executives have served on boards of community and charitable organizations.

One final (and perhaps the most telling) indicator that encapsulates employees’ high level of job satisfaction and pride in the industry is the fact that if employees had a close friend or relative looking for a job, 83 percent would recommend that they apply for a job in the casino gaming industry.

Actions Employees Say Their Employers Have Taken

Taken steps to prevent underage gambling	87%
Donated money to community or charitable organizations	84%
Taken steps to prevent problem gambling	84%
Organized opportunities for employees to volunteer in the community	76%
Offered to match donations that employees make to charity	68%
Used facilities to host community or charitable events	65%
Had executives sit on boards of local community or charitable organizations	56%

Appendix A: Profile of Casino Industry Employees Sample

Demographic and Household Characteristics

Sex		Educational Attainment	
Men	54%	Less than high school	12%
Women	46%	High school graduate	37%
Age		Some college/vocational/AA	34%
18 to 29	21%	4-year college graduates	15%
30 to 39	22%	Total Household Income	
40 to 49	23%	\$30,000 or less	27%
50 to 59	19%	\$30,000 to \$50,000	29%
60 and over	12%	\$50,000 to \$75,000	21%
		More than \$75,000	11%
Marital status		Race/ethnicity	
Married	48%	White	53%
Single	28%	Hispanic ³	20%
Living with partner	6%	African American	11%
Separated/divorced/widowed	14%	Asian	7%
Parents		Other	5%
Child <18 in household	35%		
Employment Characteristics			
Job Status		State of Employment	
Full time	89%	Nevada	56%
Part time	11%	Mississippi	10%
Pay Structure		New Jersey	8%
Salaried	21%	Louisiana	5%
Hourly	77%	Missouri	5%
Work Schedule		Indiana	4%
Differing shifts	18%	Illinois	3%
Same hours every week	80%	Iowa	2%
Tenure		Job Type	
Years with company (median)	4	Food/beverage	23%
Years in industry (median)	7	Dealer	17%
Union Membership		Corporate/front office	10%
Labor union member	18%	Housekeeping/custodial	9%
Employer		Supervisors	6%
Harrah's	42%	Security	5%
MGM MIRAGE	35%	Maintenance/technician	5%
Boyd	9%	Cashier	4%
Penn National	6%	Reservations/front desk	4%
Isle of Capri	4%	Bellman/porter/steward	4%
Ameristar	4%	All other	13%

³ Survey interviewers were bilingual, and 7 percent of respondents completed the survey in Spanish.

About Hart Research

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., is one of the leading survey research firms in the United States. In operation for more than 30 years, the firm has conducted well over 5,000 public opinion surveys and has administered and analyzed interviews among more than three million individuals. Hart Research also has undertaken more than 5,500 focus group sessions.

Hart Research's client list reflects virtually all major facets of society: business and organized labor, education and health care organizations, media and the journalistic community, public interest groups, as well as politics and government. The firm has done work on every continent except Antarctica.

Peter D. Hart, the firm's CEO, has studied public opinion toward gaming issues for more than three decades, and has partnered with Republican pollster Frank Luntz to conduct the American Gaming Association's annual "State of the States" survey since 1999. In addition, since 1989, Mr. Hart, in conjunction with a Republican partner, has been conducting the public opinion surveys for NBC News and The Wall Street Journal.

The data and comments presented in this white paper are solely those of the authors and do not represent the positions of the American Gaming Association. The AGA assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions in these materials.



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