

2011 SERVICE MANAGER SALARY SURVEY

For copier service managers, 2011 has been a year of stress and frustration

For many copier professionals, the past few years have been a time of mounting stress and frustration. At every level, employees have been working longer hours for lower compensation, trying their best to maintain efficiency and profitability during uncertain economic times.

"Dealerships are just stretched really tight right now," says Paul Schwartz, president of Copier Careers. "Everyone is doing more with less, especially in the service department."

What began as temporary staff shortages during the worst of the recession has become, for many dealerships, a long-term state of affairs, and one that's growing more problematic by the day for the managers in charge of these departments.

"Right now, service managers are having a difficult time keeping their people happy and their departments productive," says Schwartz. "The stress is taking a toll on everyone. The good news is that dealerships are finally starting to hire new techs again, and that's helping to relieve some of the pressure."

The 2011 Salary Survey

Since 2000, Copier Careers has conducted an annual survey of document imaging professionals to determine how well they're compensated, how happy they are in their jobs, and how well they rate their employers. This year's Copier Careers Service Manager Salary Survey reflects the responses of 1,621 service managers who took the survey between March 1, 2010 and March 1, 2011. A diverse group of professionals, they work for

dealerships of all sizes and have widely varying levels of responsibility, with some managing fewer than 10 people and others overseeing more than 500.

Salaries vary substantially depending on job title. The highest earners are the Operations Managers, with annual salaries averaging \$83,492. They're followed by General Managers (\$80,332), VPs of Service (\$78,140), Regional Service Managers (\$74,219), and Service Managers (\$70,002). The average annual salary among all job titles is \$77,237, an increase of \$1,442 since 2010.

One common thread among these professionals is tenure. The average service manager has worked in the industry for nearly 26 years, and has spent the previous 16 at his or her current company. These men (89%) and women (11%) are among the last of the cradle-to-grave employees, with most of them expecting to finish out their careers in their current positions.

To the disappointment of some, these last years on the job are likely to be anything but calm. Between the rocky

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economy and the evolution of managed print services and managed networks, the next decade will be characterized by continued uncertainty and constant technical hurdles.

managers surveyed say they're either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with all aspects of their jobs, and many say they're open to new employment opportunities. This year,

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New Business Models Require New Skills

According to Schwartz, the weak economy and the managed services business model have combined to create a perfect storm of unpredictability for today’s service managers.

“These managers are overseeing service departments during a challenging economic period,” Schwartz says. “At the same time, the industry is evolving at a rapid rate. It isn’t totally decided yet how managed print services, managed networks, and the traditional copier service department are going to end up meshing.”

These changes are putting significant pressure on service managers to rethink the way they run their departments.

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Dealerships have clearly taken notice and are making efforts to encourage their service leadership to keep their skills fresh. Ten years ago, only 5 percent of service managers reported receiving bonuses for certification or training. Today that number has grown to 45 percent, and we can expect it to keep increasing as the managed service model trickles down to the smallest dealerships.

Late Career Job Change?

This accumulated tension and uncertainty is putting significant strain on job satisfaction. One-third of service

30 percent of respondents report that they’re actively searching for new employment, 69 percent say they’re passively searching, and only 1 percent say they’re not looking for a new job at all.

Historically, there is little turnover among service managers. Despite the high numbers of people who say they’re currently in the market for a new job, it’s unlikely that many of them will actually leave their employers.

Though most service managers are genuinely frustrated with their current situations, the big problems that plague them now—understaffed service departments, the weak economy, and the managed services learning curve—are rampant throughout the industry. Signing on with a new employer may provide a change of scenery; however, it’s unlikely to deliver the kind of substantial relief service managers are seeking.

Today’s Challenge, Tomorrow’s Opportunity

If the past few years have taught us anything, it’s that uncertainty and change are inevitable. Service departments are transforming rapidly, and what seem like setbacks today may actually be something else entirely: growing pains.

As the economy recovers and the managed services model matures, the experience of managing a copier service department is bound to change. It may not get any easier. In fact, it’s almost certain to become more complex. But for service managers who are able to see opportunities instead of problems, whatever changes occur are bound to be for the better.

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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. Visit www.CopierCareers.com for the [expanded version of this salary survey](#), featuring additional commentary and four pages of bonus graphs.