

# 2011

## SERVICE TECHNICIAN SALARY SURVEY

As economy recovers, copier techs demand better pay, less stress

**T**hough economic recovery is still uncertain in many segments of the economy, the copier industry is forging ahead. According to Copier Careers, a recruiting firm dedicated exclusively to serving the document imaging industry, hiring has increased significantly over the past few quarters. After dozens of months of hiring freezes, copier dealerships are once again growing and taking on new staff.

"The recession did not hit the document imaging industry as hard as other industries," says Paul Schwartz, president of Copier Careers. "Nevertheless, many employers developed a reluctance to hire new people. At a certain point, doing more with less became the norm, especially on the service side. Now, that's slowly beginning to change."

### The 2011 Salary Survey

Since 2000, Copier Careers has conducted an annual survey of copier service technicians, service managers, and sales managers 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 Technician Salary Survey reflects the responses of 4,063 service techs who took the survey between March 1, 2010 and March 1, 2011.

Eighty-four percent of the respondents were male, with an average age of 37.2 years. More than half of them work for an independent copier dealer with one location, a quarter work for a regional dealer with more than one location, and the rest work either for an OEM (19%), a national sales and service organization (4%), or a third-party service organization (1%).

The majority of this year's respondents were field service technicians (65%), with senior lead techs and team leaders filling out the rest of the roster. On average, these techs have worked in the copier industry for 7.9 years, and have spent six of those with their current employers. Based on the way they answered this year's questions, however, it looks like many of them won't be sticking around much longer. Despite rising salaries, job satisfaction is on the wane and many techs are beginning to explore new job opportunities.

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### Salaries Up In 2011

The year's big news is that, for the first time since 2007, salaries have risen significantly. Last year, the average tech took in a base salary of \$39,998. This year, that number was \$40,998, an increase of a thousand dollars. Average bonuses also increased this year, from \$3,699 to \$4,120. While these pay increases weren't huge, they were certainly welcome after four years of stagnation.

Unfortunately, these increases in cash compensation were accompanied by decreases in benefits. The percentage

of techs receiving health benefits has fallen for the second straight year; the percentage receiving a 401(k) match has fallen for the fifth consecutive year. For those who lost these benefits, net compensation may in fact be lower this year even with a spike in take-home pay.

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**Stress Takes a Toll on Satisfaction**

Nine years ago, techs were working an average of 46 hours per week, plus a few more on call. That number has risen steadily over the past decade, and this year it came in at an all-time high of 53 hours—an increase of 15 percent since 2002. Techs are now more overworked than they’ve ever been before. Over the past few years, despite these long hours, techs have generally reported high levels of satisfaction. During the darkest days of the recession, any job was better than no job at all, even if it did work you to the bone. This year, however, attitudes are beginning to shift.

Our survey measures two types of worker satisfaction: satisfaction with compensation and satisfaction with all aspects of the job. Both have fallen since last year. Though satisfaction with compensation remains fairly high, with 50 percent of respondents either satisfied or very satisfied, less than a third of technicians say they’re satisfied with all aspects of their jobs. The era of gratitude seems to be winding down as techs begin to focus more closely on the overall quality of their jobs.

“We got through the recession, and now people are adding new employees and filling positions,” says Schwartz. “Techs are saying, ‘We’re exhausted. We did what we had to do to help our companies through the recession. But enough is enough—we need a break.’ Doing more with less is finally starting to catch up with employers, and companies that can’t deliver some relief to their people are going to see some attrition.”

**Greener Pastures?**

Indeed, as the job market becomes more fluid, many techs are considering a change in employer. The percentage of people who say they’re looking for a new job has increased 21 points since 2010. Though this figure is much lower than it was prior to the recession, it undoubtedly signals a change in technician attitudes.

And why are they thinking about leaving? It all boils down to three main factors: burnout, uncertainty, and money. “I’m seeking less stress”, “I want greater job stability,” and “I’m seeking higher compensation” rank as the top three reasons why this year’s techs are

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looking to change jobs. Employers who can address these needs will likely be able to hang onto their techs; employers who fail to do so are liable to lose them.

“Eighteen months ago,” says Schwartz, “we would call techs about a job opening and they wouldn’t even consider talking to a new potential employer out of fear that their current employers would find out and they’d lose their jobs. Now, things are changing and people are willing to talk. Techs are still grateful to have their jobs, but they’re ready to explore new opportunities.” -CC

**Want more?**

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

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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. Learn more about our commitment to the industry at [www.CopierCareers.com](http://www.CopierCareers.com).