

Hourly Employees More Optimistic about Job Prospects than the Economy, Still Struggle to Save

Inaugural Branch Report Finds Over 75% of Hourly Employees Have Less than \$500 Saved for Emergencies

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, JUNE 11, 2019 -- [Branch](#), the mobile-first technology helping hourly employees get ahead financially and professionally, announced findings from its inaugural [Branch Report](#), a look at the financial, work, and lifestyle interests of today's hourly workers. In surveying over 3,000 hourly employees across a variety of sectors including retail, food service, and healthcare, the report found that nearly 70 percent (69.4%) were optimistic about their job prospects, more so than the state of the economy (50.1%).

Hourly workers were twice as interested in using their work experience to earn a promotion at their current employer (31.9%) rather than switching jobs (15.7%), but they were overwhelmingly more likely to turn to their family (39.5%) than their managers (14.6%) for career advice. Over 70 percent of hourly employees (71.5%) also admitted they did not have a LinkedIn profile, just a traditional resume.

"Even with the demand for hourly employees at an all time high and having their pick of employers, more hourly employees are looking to grow within their current company rather than switch," said Branch CEO Atif Siddiqi. "But there's a vast disconnect between employees' career development and their employers. Employers have a tremendous opportunity to retain their employees by providing tools that can help them increase earning potential and financial stability. In seeing the limited financial advancement resources for hourly workers, we've expanded our product to offer more ways to bridge this divide."

Findings also reinforce the challenges hourly employees face in meeting both short-term and long-term financial goals. Over 75 percent of respondents reported less than \$500 saved for their emergency funds (75.8%), with 40 percent of total respondents admitting they had \$0 saved for an emergency. For most hourly employees, basic living costs such as home affordability (58.4%) and utilities (47.1%) were their main concerns. This differed for employees age 50 and over -- 82.2 percent cited medical costs as their top financial worry, followed by retirement (64.3%). Prioritizing retirement grew with age, but male hourly employees across generations considered retirement a financial concern at significantly higher rates than their female counterparts.

"Because earnings are directly tied to the number of hours worked, unstable, unpredictable hours can undermine financial security for workers of all ages," said Dr. Susan Lambert, Associate Professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. "The findings of the Branch survey are consistent with other research indicating that many hourly workers desire more stable and predictable work hours."

Additional findings include:

Financial Concerns

Hourly workers cited affording basic living costs as their top financial concerns -- **over half cited Home/rent affordability** (58.4%) as their top concern, with almost just as many renting (56.6%).

- Just 16.5 percent contributed to a mortgage, while **over a quarter lived with friends or family for free** (26.9%).
- Following Home/rent affordability, **Utility Bills and Groceries were the second and third top concerns respectively** (47.1% and 42.4%).
- Their concern for meeting day to day needs may also be why **almost 80 percent of hourly employees said accessing their pay before pay day would be helpful** (79.6%).

Work Priorities

Beyond higher wages, scheduling stability and flexibility were top factors, with **more than half wanting a stable, predictable schedule** (57%) and almost 40 percent wanting greater scheduling flexibility and control over when they worked (38%). **A positive work culture also ranked high on the list with 49.7 percent** of respondents citing it as a top factor:

- Higher wages - 63.4%
- A stable predictable work schedule - 57%
- Positive work culture - 49.7%
- Scheduling flexibility - 38%
- Supportive managers - 35.7%
- Supportive team members - 32.1%
- Add'l hours of work - 24.1%

Higher wages were also top of mind within their current employment situation, but a promotion at work was a close second. **Hourly workers were twice as interested in using their work experience to earn a promotion at their current employer** (31.9%) rather than switching jobs (15.7%):

- Higher pay - 36.5%
- Promotion at this company - 31.9%
- Gaining work experience to switch industries/ occupations - 15.7%
- Professional development and training - 8.8%
- Employee perks + discounts - 5%
- Qualifying for health benefits - 2.2%

When it came to keeping their resumes fresh, most hourly employees updated them at least once a year (42.5%). Nearly a quarter updated their resumes every couple of years (22.8%) and about half of that updated their resumes every month (11%). While nearly a quarter also said they didn't have a resume (23.4%), **almost three times as many didn't have a LinkedIn profile** (71.5%).

As for their top career advice resources, **family was overwhelmingly their top source** (39.5%), with manager at work a distant second (14.6%):

- Family - 39.5%
- Manager at work - 14.6%
- Internet - 13.6%
- Work colleagues - 12.1%
- Friends - 10.5%
- School - 8.3%
- Career books - 1.5%

Lifestyle Preferences

The survey also dives into how hourly employees spend their time and money outside of the workplace. Among dining preferences, **McDonald's took the crown with nearly half of respondents** (46.6%) citing the golden arches as one of their top three food chains, followed by Chick-Fil-A (39%), and Subway (34.6%). **Walmart outpaced competitors as the preferred place to shop** with 85.6 percent of hourly employees citing the big box retailer as one of their top places to shop, followed by Dollar General (38.6%), and Amazon (35.2%) eeking out Target (35.1%) for third.

For entertainment, **Netflix** was not only hourly workers' favorite entertainment platform, but also the **platform they most likely had a paid subscription** for.

- While they listed YouTube as their second most beloved entertainment platform (69.3%) over Hulu (34.7%), respondents were **more likely to pay for Hulu subscription than YouTube Premium**.
- Snapchat was also listed as among their top five entertainment and social media platforms. Among social media platforms, **Facebook edged out Instagram for top spot (78.2% vs. 77.2%), with Snapchat (72.8%) following a close third**. Twitter (20.8%) and Pinterest rounded out the list a distant fourth and fifth.

To view the full report, please visit: <https://www.branchapp.com/branch-report>

About Branch

Branch is a mobile-first technology that helps hourly workers get ahead financially and professionally. Empowering large employers with the ability to attract and retain the best hourly talent, Branch's platform offers the most seamless way to significantly reduce turnover, overtime costs, and management time. Hundreds of thousands of hourly employees at Fortune 1000 companies use Branch every day.

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