What Do IT Professionals Most Want in Their Careers?

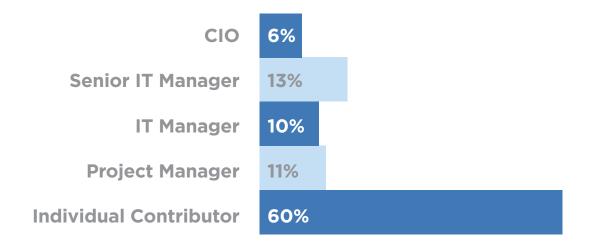## 2015 Survey Results and Analysis

Survey Purpose

This survey, conducted from May through August 2015, asked what IT professionals most want from their careers.

We received responses from 268 IT professionals at all stages of their career. Of the survey respondents, 60% self-identified as individual contributors, making the results most reliable for them.

Breakdown of participants by job title/role.

Role	Percentage
CIO	6%
Senior IT Manager	13%
IT Manager	10%
Project Manager	11%
Individual Contributor	60%

1

One Question, Sixteen Choices

Of the following items, pick your top three choices for what you most want from your professional career.

1st	2nd	3rd	
○	○	○	**I want a promotion**
○	○	○	**I want more free time**
○	○	○	**I want to be appreciated**
○	○	○	**I want to run a bigger group**
○	○	○	**I want to be more influential**
○	○	○	**I want less stress in my work life**
○	○	○	**I want greater professional development**
○	○	○	**I want to work on interesting technology projects**
○	○	○	**I want to attend more industry events**
○	○	○	**I want a seat at the table**
○	○	○	**I want bigger professional challenges**
○	○	○	**I want to run a portion of the company**
○	○	○	**I want to make more money**
○	○	○	**I want more respect**
○	○	○	**I want to spend more time with my family**
○	○	○	**I want to learn new things**

Respondents were required to choose just three items from the sixteen choices provided and to rank them. The purpose: To "force" a real choice and to find out what really matters to respondents.

Sixteen Choices, Four Categories

The sixteen options provided fell into four distinct categories of personal and professional ambition. This was done in order to get a sense of both the respondents' big-picture career desires and their personal preferences about work.

1 **Financial Reward & Career Advancement**
   a. I want to make more money
   b. I want a promotion
   c. I want bigger professional challenges
   d. I want to run a portion of the company
   e. I want to run a bigger group

2 **Recognition & Influence**
   a. I want to be appreciated
   b. I want more respect
   c. I want a seat at the table
   d. I want to be more influential

3 **Professional Development**
   a. I want greater professional development
   b. I want to learn new things
   c. I want to work on interesting technology projects
   d. I want to attend more industry events

4 **Quality of Life**
   a. I want less stress in my work life
   b. I want to spend more time with my family
   c. I want more free time

Key Takeaways

① **"Making more money" was the overall most frequently selected individual choice (for either 1st, 2nd or 3rd place).**
- However, this choice was selected less by respondents as they advanced in their careers.
- Indiv. Contributor: 17.5%; Project Mgr: 14.9%; IT Mgr: 12.8%; Sr IT Mgr: 12.9%; CIO: 12.5%

② **"Working on Interesting Technology Projects" was the second most frequently selected choice.**
- IT Managers selected this choice significantly more than average (16.6% vs 11% avg).
- CIOs selected this choice significantly less than average (4.1% vs 11% avg).

③ **"Less Stress" was the third most frequently selected choice.**
- Project Managers and Individual Contributors selected this choice significantly more than average. (10.3% and 9.7% vs 5.1% avg).
- CIOs selected this choice significantly less than average. (2% vs. 5.1% avg).

④ **As respondents advanced in their careers, they moved from wanting Professional Development to wanting greater Recognition and Influence.**
- Individual Contributors cared most about Professional Development, while CIOs were least interested in it (30% vs 18.7%).
- CIOs cared most about Recognition and Influence, while Individual Contributors were least interested in it (39.5% vs. 17.3%).
- That said, there was a substantial 8.5 point increase in Senior IT Managers' desire to build professional skills.

⑤ **Individual Contributors and Project Managers stated a clear desire for Quality of Life ahead of Recognition and Influence.**
- Specifically, Project Managers increased their desire for more free time by 3.6 points, and Individual Contributors increased their desire for less stress by 4.2 points.
- Overall, Quality of Life" choices were less frequently selected by respondents as they advanced in their career.
- Indiv. Contributor: 24.01%; Project Mgr: 24.1%; IT Mgr: 14.1%; Sr IT Mgr: 12.9%; CIO: 8.3%

⑥ **The biggest change over previous year's survey?**
Senior Managers feel the need for greater professional development.

⑦ **"Attending Industry Events" continues to be perceived as the least valuable form of professional development.**

4

Overall Results

Top Five Choices for All IT Pros

#1 **I want to make more money (47.7%)**

#2 **I want to work on interesting technology projects (35.1%)**

#3 **I want less stress in my work life (25.7%)**

#4 **I want to learn new things (25.3%)**

#5-*tie* **I want greater professional development (23.5%)**

#5-*tie* **I want to be appreciated (23.5%)**

Bottom Three Choices for All IT Pros

#14 **I want a promotion (7.8%)**

#15 **I want to attend more industry events (4.5%)**

#16 **I want to run a bigger group (4.1%)**

The top and bottom choices were determined based on the sum total of all first, second, and third choices from all participants combined.

Results By Role

Top Three Choices

I want...	CIOs	Sr Mgrs	IT Mgrs	Proj Mgrs	Ind Ctrbs
to make more money	1	1	2	1	1
a seat at the table	2	3			
to be appreciated	3		3		
to work on interesting tech projects		2	1	3	2
to learn new things				2	
less stress in my work life					3

Bottom Three Choices

I want...	CIOs	Sr Mgrs	IT Mgrs	Proj Mgrs	Ind Ctrbs
to attend more industry events	16	16		15	14
to run a bigger group	15		15	16	16
less stress in my work life	14				
more respect		15			
a promotion		14	16		
more free time			14		
a seat at the table				14	15

Results By Category

	CIOs	Sr Mgrs	IT Mgrs	Proj Mgrs	Ind Ctrbs	Total
Financial Reward & Career Advancement	**33.3%**	**30.5%**	**29.4%**	**25.2%**	**28.5%**	**29.4%**
I want to make more money	12.5%	12.9%	12.8%	14.9%	17.5%	**14.1%**
I want a promotion	6.2%	1.8%	1.2%	2.2%	2.7%	**2.8%**
I want bigger professional challenges	6.2%	8.3%	6.4%	4.5%	4.6%	**6%**
I want to run a portion of the company	6.2%	4.6%	7.6%	3.4%	2.5%	**4.8%**
I want to run a bigger group	2%	2.7%	1.2%	0%	1.2%	**1.4%**
Recognition & Influence	**39.5%**	**27.7%**	**24.3%**	**19.5%**	**17.3%**	**25.7%**
I want to be appreciated	10.4%	5.5%	10.2%	10.3%	7.2%	**8.7%**
I want more respect	8.3%	1.8%	3.8%	2.2%	3.5%	**3.9%**
I want a seat at the table	12.5%	10.1%	5.1%	1.1%	1.6%	**6.1%**
I want to be more influential	8.3%	10.1%	5.1%	5.7%	4.9%	**6.8%**
Professional Development	**18.7%**	**28.7%**	**32%**	**31%**	**30%**	**28.1%**
I want greater professional development	6.2%	10.1%	8.9%	5.7%	7.6%	**7.7%**
I want to learn new things	8.3%	6.5%	3.8%	12.6%	8.9%	**8%**
I want to work on interesting tech projects	4.1%	11.1%	16.6%	11.4%	11.8%	**11%**
I want to attend more industry events	0%	0.9%	2.5%	1.1%	1.6%	**1.2%**
Quality of Life	**8.3%**	**12.9%**	**14.1%**	**24.1%**	**24%**	**16.7%**
I want less stress in my work life	2%	7.4%	5.1%	10.3%	9.7%	**5.1%**
I want to spend more time with my family	4.1%	2.7%	7.6%	8%	7%	**5.9%**
I want more free time	2%	2.7%	1.2%	5.7%	7.2%	**3.8%**

Percentages were based on the sum total number of selections
divided by the total number of selections for each choice.

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