

Walking the Work/Life Tightrope - Results

The 2012 annual CareersinAudit.com survey continued our previous research into why audit and accountancy professionals from around the world change jobs and asked for your views on achieving the all-important work-life balance.

Survey Overview










Number of respondents: 1,231







Launch date: 14 May 2012






Close date: 18 Jun 2012







The results from the survey are presented below question by question.

Section 1: Your Career









1. What is your current position?			
Graduate:		5.8%	72
Auditor:		21.0%	259
Senior:		19.9%	245
Manager:		18.7%	230
Senior Manager:		9.5%	117
Partner:		1.2%	15
Financial Controller:		3.1%	38
Financial Director or CFO:		1.4%	17
Other (<i>please specify</i>):		19.3%	238
<i>Free text answers</i>			

2. How long have you worked in the audit or accountancy profession?			
Less than 6 months:		6.0%	74
1-2 years:		7.9%	97
2-5 years:		24.7%	304
5-10 years:		28.8%	355
10-20 years:		22.5%	277
20+ years:		10.1%	124

3. How long do you envisage you will stay in the profession?			
Less than 6 months:		5.4%	66
1-2 years:		10.8%	133
2-5 years:		23.2%	286
5-10 years:		21.9%	269
I'll stay in the profession for the rest of my career:		38.7%	477

4. If less than a year, what would you like to do instead?			
Start a new career:		29.3%	118
Set up my own business:		31.3%	126
Spend time with my family:		7.4%	30
Study:		14.6%	59
Go travelling:		9.7%	39
Other (please specify):		7.7%	31
<i>Free text answers</i>			

5. If you answered 'start a new career' what would this be?			
<i>Free text answers</i>			

6. If you received a promotion at work, what position would you move into?			
Senior:		16.2%	199
Manager:		30.6%	377
Senior Manager:		19.6%	241
Partner:		5.6%	69
FD:		2.4%	30
CFO:		6.3%	78
Other:		5.8%	72
Other (please specify):		13.4%	165
<i>Free text answers</i>			

Section 2: Stay or Go?

7. When will you be actively looking to find a new job?			
Immediately:		34.4%	423
Less than 6 months:		15.2%	187
6-12 months:		16.2%	200
1-5 years:		24.5%	301
5+ years:		5.3%	65
I can't see myself ever leaving this company:		4.4%	54
Other (please specify):		0.1%	1
<i>Free text answers</i>			

8. If you are or will be looking for a new job, please state the main reason why			
I haven't been promoted or received a pay rise:		21.2%	236
I want to work abroad:		28.5%	318
I want to work in-house or in a different industry sector:		12.7%	141
I want to set up my own business:		6.2%	69
I don't get on with my boss:		2.4%	27
I don't like the company culture:		9.2%	102
Other (please specify):		19.8%	221
<i>Free text answers</i>			

9. How will you look to find a new job?			
Recruitment agencies:		n/a	833
Job boards:		n/a	539
Newspapers/magazine job ads:		n/a	470
Contact my own professional network:		n/a	531
Social media e.g. LinkedIn:		n/a	617
Professional body websites e.g. ACCA:		n/a	492
Other (please specify):		n/a	46
<i>Free text answers</i>			

10. What could your company offer to make you stay?			
Pay rise or promotion:		35.5%	389
Better work-life balance:		15.2%	166
Better benefits:		7.1%	78
Better training:		2.8%	31
Provide classes to learn a different language:		0.2%	2
Move me to a different team:		4.4%	48
Option to relocate internationally:		14.2%	156
Pay for me to further my education or gain a professional qualification:		4.7%	52
Nothing, my mind is made up - I'm leaving:		15.8%	173

11. Do you think your company is doing enough to help with your career development?			
Yes, my company does enough already:		38.7%	477
No, my company could provide more training, coaching and support:		32.4%	399
No, I think career development is fairly low on the list of my company's priorities:		28.8%	355

12. If 'No', what support should your company start providing?

Free text answers

13. Would you consider moving abroad for your next job?			
Yes:		79.5%	979
No:		20.5%	252

14. If 'Yes', which region would you prefer?			
Africa:		2.7%	26
North America:		16.7%	162
South America:		3.0%	29
Asia:		6.7%	65
Australia/New Zealand:		13.5%	131
Eastern Europe:		2.1%	20
Western Europe:		21.6%	210
Middle East:		14.0%	136
United Kingdom:		14.8%	144
Other (please specify):		4.8%	47
Free text answers			

15. What would be your main reason for moving to this region?			
Better climate:		4.6%	44
Better career progression:		31.0%	296
Better salary:		14.5%	139
Better work-life balance:		23.1%	221
I need a change:		18.0%	172
Other (please specify):		8.8%	84
Free text answers			

Section 3: Work-Life Balance

16. On average how many hours a week do you work?			
Less than 30 hours:		2.8%	35
31-39 hours a week:		9.3%	114
40-49 hours a week:		52.2%	642
50-59 hours a week:		25.7%	316
60-70 hours a week:		7.8%	96
More than 70 hours a week:		2.3%	28

17. Have your working hours increased over the past 12 to 18 months?			
Yes, by at least 1-2 hours a week:		16.4%	202
Yes, by at least 2-5 hours a week:		21.8%	268
Yes, by at least 5-10 hours a week:		13.6%	167
Yes, by more than 10-15 hours a week:		5.0%	62
No, they've stayed the same:		37.6%	463
No, they've reduced:		5.6%	69

18. If 'Yes', has an increase in working hours had a detrimental effect on your health?			
Yes:		52.8%	410
No:		47.2%	366

19. If 'Yes', which of following effects have you noticed?			
Stress:		n/a	370
Feel under more pressure:		n/a	286
Low energy:		n/a	279
Missed hospital appointments:		n/a	34
Significant weight gain/loss:		n/a	151
Increased drinking:		n/a	36
Insomnia:		n/a	121

20. If you have suffered health issues due to increased working hours, what did your company do to offer support?			
I was allowed time off work:		15.6%	86
They supported my sick leave:		20.9%	115
They provided or offered a coach/counsellor:		2.4%	13
I was too scared to tell my company as I thought it would have a negative impact on my career progression:		16.2%	89
My company did not offer support:		37.1%	204
Other (please specify):		7.8%	43
Free text answers			

21. How would you describe your work-life balance?			
Too much work, not enough time spent at home:		50.7%	624
About the right work/home balance:		46.6%	574
Too much home, not enough time spent at work:		2.7%	33

22. Do you think your career progression would be hindered by giving greater priority to personal interests/family?			
Yes, a little:		47.6%	586
Yes, a lot:		22.6%	278
No:		29.8%	367

23. When you are on holiday, how often do you check your phone or computer for work emails?			
All the time:		10.9%	134
Hourly:		4.9%	60
At least once a day:		39.2%	482
Every 2 days:		9.5%	117
Every 3-4 days:		7.5%	92
Every week:		6.8%	84
I turn all work communications off - a holiday is a time to completely tune off from work:		21.3%	262

24. Does your company encourage you to use up all of your annual leave?			
Yes:		64.5%	794
No:		35.5%	437

25. Have you ever been prevented from attending any of the following because of work?			
Funeral:		4.4%	54
Important school event for child:		6.2%	76
Birthday party:		6.6%	81
Christening:		1.0%	12
Wedding:		5.8%	72
Family holiday:		13.1%	161
I have always been able to get to important events:		57.8%	711
Other (please specify):		5.2%	64
Free text answers			

26. If you freed up 10 hours a week of your working life, how would you want to spend it?			
With family/friends/partner:		48.3%	595
On own sport/hobby/interests:		24.3%	299
Relax and watch television:		4.1%	51
Study:		14.5%	178
Spend it at work:		0.5%	6
Home improvements:		2.7%	33
Sleep:		2.4%	30
Other (please specify):		3.2%	39
<i>Free text answers</i>			

27. Of the following, which country's accountants do you think are best at managing their work-life balance?			
France:		11.3%	139
Germany:		9.1%	112
Italy:		4.3%	53
Netherlands:		8.4%	104
Russia:		0.7%	9
Spain:		5.2%	64
Sweden:		12.9%	159
UK:		19.4%	239
USA:		14.1%	173
Other (please specify):		14.5%	179
<i>Free text answers</i>			

28. Which of the following professions do you believe has the best work life balance?			
Accountants:		7.1%	87
Doctors:		5.3%	65
Lawyers:		4.0%	49
Investment bankers:		4.4%	54
IT professionals:		7.7%	95
Surveyors:		6.5%	80
Teachers:		60.9%	750
Other (please specify):		4.1%	51
<i>Free text answers</i>			

Section 4: Personal Information

29. About you			
Male:		69.1%	833
Female:		30.9%	372

30. Where do you live?			
Africa:		12.5%	150
North America (incl. USA & Canada):		7.0%	84
South America:		2.0%	24
Asia:		17.3%	208
Australia/New Zealand:		3.8%	45
Eastern Europe:		11.9%	143
Western Europe:		15.8%	190
Middle East:		8.9%	107
United Kingdom:		14.6%	175
Other (please specify):		6.1%	73
<i>Free text answers</i>			