

Global Salary Transparency Survey

Employee Perceptions of Talking Pay

United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland



Overview

Talking about pay—or salary transparency—remains one of the most prominent taboos in today’s workplace, but times are changing rapidly. Glassdoor’s Global Salary Transparency Survey found that the **majority of employees (70 percent)** across seven countries (United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Switzerland) **believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction** and an even greater number globally (72 percent) believe salary transparency is good for business.

In the U.S., for example, employers are addressing salary transparency in a number of ways. Whole Foods enables staff to easily look up anyone’s salary and bonus from the previous year.¹ Salesforce conducted an internal audit last year and spent nearly \$3 million to eliminate statistically significant differences in pay.² Buffer, a technology startup, provides a publicly available list of how much each employee makes.³ President Obama recently made headlines around salary transparency by proposing to collect summary pay data in the U.S. by gender, race, and ethnicity from businesses with 100 or more employees.⁴ The topic of salary transparency also remains high on the agenda in the U.K.⁵ and other European countries.⁶

While strides are being made, sharing pay among individuals or companies is still not the norm. One important question to consider is: **How do employees themselves feel about talking pay?**



70% of employees across seven countries **believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction.**

Key Findings

The majority of employed adults (70 percent) believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction.

Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of employed adults believe salary transparency is good for business.

The majority of employed adults (69 percent) wish they had a better understanding of what fair pay is for their position and skill set at their company and in their local market.

Employees' understanding of how pay is determined is divided along gender lines.

Globally, 59 percent of men vs. 51 percent of women believe they have a good understanding of how pay is determined at their company.

In the U.S., 65 percent of men vs. 53 percent of women believe they have a good understanding of how pay is determined at their company.

In Germany, 48 percent of men vs. 38 percent of women believe they have a good understanding of how pay is determined at their company.

Slightly more than one-third of employees (36 percent) say their company discloses salaries internally. In the U.S., France and Germany, employed men are more likely than employed women to say their employer shares information about pay levels within the company. This leads to the question: *How is it that more men report company pay data is available to them? Are they asking different questions?*

In the U.S., 38 percent of men vs. 23 percent of women say their employer shares information about pay levels within the company.

In France, 42 percent of men vs. 23 percent of women say their employer shares information about pay levels within the company.

In Germany, 35 percent of men vs. 20 percent of women say their employer shares information about pay levels within the company.

The majority of employees (62 percent) would be willing to share more information about their own salary if they could do so anonymously.

More than half (56 percent) of employed adults feel they must switch companies in order to obtain any meaningful change in compensation. This is in line with other research showing that more than one-third of the workforce in the U.S. and U.K. planned to change jobs in the first half of 2016.⁷

Questions Addressed in This Survey

- 1 *Do employees have a good understanding of what fair pay is for their job?*
- 2 *Will more transparency around pay impact employee satisfaction?*
- 3 *Will more transparency around pay affect business performance?*

1. DO EMPLOYEES HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT FAIR PAY IS FOR THEIR JOB?

More than one-third of employees (36 percent) lack a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels at their company. Women are less likely than men to have a good understanding of how much people make at their company.

More employed men (59 percent) than employed women (51 percent) believe they have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels in their company.

In the U.S., men (65 percent) are more likely than women (53 percent) to have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels in their company.

In Germany, men (48 percent) are more likely than women (38 percent) to have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels in their company.

Significantly more Canadian employees (71 percent) than those in any other country in the survey say they have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels at their company.





Significantly more employees in the U.K. (61 percent) and U.S. (60 percent) have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels at their company, than employees in Switzerland (49 percent), Germany (43 percent), and France (52 percent).

In the U.K., more employees ages 25-34 (69 percent) than those ages 45-54 (55 percent) have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels at their company.

In Switzerland, more older employees ages 45-54 (58 percent) and 55+ (54 percent) than those ages 35-44 (37 percent) have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels at their company.

QUESTION: I have a good understanding of how people are compensated at all levels in my company

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries	United States	Canada	United Kingdom	France	Germany	Netherlands	Switzerland
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	56	60	71	61	52	43	56	49
 Men	59	65	73	64	55	48	59	50
 Women	51	53	68	55	49	38	52	48
18-24	61	56	79	62	54	56	60	56
25-34	56	64	69	69	45	42	56	48
35-44	52	51	69	59	56	46	54	37
45-54	56	62	73	55	52	43	53	58
55+	55	62	68	55	56	38	61	54
Disagree	36	36	23	28	36	45	34	45
 Men	34	33	22	27	36	45	33	44
 Women	37	40	24	30	36	45	35	46
18-24	34	41	14	31	31	40	33	43
25-34	36	34	27	25	41	42	38	48
35-44	39	45	26	30	38	43	32	53
45-54	33	35	18	30	28	48	35	36
55+	34	30	22	25	37	50	28	37



7 in 10 employees (69 percent) wish they had a better understanding of what fair pay is for their position and skill set at their company and in their local job market.

Significantly more French employees (73 percent) than Canadian (66 percent) or Dutch employees (66 percent) wish they had a better understanding of fair compensation for their position.

Significantly more men in The Netherlands and Canada (70 percent in Netherlands; 71 percent in Canada) than women (59 percent in The Netherlands; 61 percent in Canada) wish they had a better understanding of what fair market pay is for their position.





In the U.K., more younger employees ages 25-34 (76 percent) than older employees ages 45-54 (62 percent) and 55+ (58 percent) wish they had a better understanding of what fair market pay is for their position.

In Switzerland, employees ages 25-34 (82 percent) are more likely than older employees ages 45-54 (60 percent) and 55+ (58 percent) to wish they had a better understanding of what fair market pay is for their position.

In Canada, fewer employees ages 55+ (44 percent) than those ages 25-34 (77 percent); ages 35-44 (71 percent); and ages 45-54 (66 percent) to wish they had a better understanding of what fair market pay is for their position.

QUESTION: I wish I had a better understanding of what fair market compensation for my position and skill set is at my company and in my local job market.

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries %	United States %	Canada %	United Kingdom %	France %	Germany %	Netherlands %	Switzerland %
Agree	69	69	66	69	73	69	66	71
 Men	71	71	71	66	75	72	70	69
 Women	67	66	61	73	70	66	59	73
18-24	74	78	64	77	81	66	68	79
25-34	75	75	77	76	71	70	71	82
35-44	72	66	71	69	82	74	65	73
45-54	65	69	66	62	65	67	66	60
55+	60	62	44	58	69	66	55	58
Disagree	19	24	23	19	11	21	17	19
 Men	19	23	20	22	13	20	18	20
 Women	19	26	27	16	9	21	17	18
18-24	18	15	32	19	2	22	22	14
25-34	16	19	19	19	10	18	13	13
35-44	17	26	20	19	5	17	15	16
45-54	22	26	20	18	19	26	13	31
55+	24	31	35	23	15	20	32	19

Only about one-third (36 percent) of employees say their company discloses salaries internally among all employees.





In Switzerland, only one-quarter (25 percent) of employees say they know their company discloses salaries internally among all employees, while in The Netherlands half (50 percent) of employees say they do.

Employed men are more likely than employed women to say they know their company discloses salaries internally in the U.S. (38 percent of men vs. 23 percent of women), France (42 percent of men vs. 23 percent of women), and Germany (35 percent of men vs. 20 percent of women).

In the U.K., younger workers ages 18-24 (58 percent) and 25-34 (56 percent) are more likely than older workers ages 35-44 (40 percent), 45-54 (39 percent) and 55+ (28 percent) to say they know their company discloses salaries internally among all employees.

QUESTION: I know my company discloses salaries internally among all employees.

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries	United States	Canada	United Kingdom	France	Germany	Netherlands	Switzerland
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	36	31	45	45	33	28	50	25
 Men	42	38	48	47	42	35	52	29
 Women	30	23	41	42	23	20	46	21
18-24	50	45	55	58	42	52	59	38
25-34	41	36	46	56	34	32	53	33
35-44	34	26	48	40	40	31	39	18
45-54	33	31	41	39	30	18	48	22
55+	29	25	37	28	26	22	57	22
Disagree	47	60	40	44	47	48	37	51
 Men	45	57	39	43	43	48	36	48
 Women	49	64	41	44	51	49	38	53
18-24	35	37	37	33	31	34	36	36
25-34	43	57	40	35	42	43	31	54
35-44	51	66	42	47	47	43	43	60
45-54	49	62	40	48	47	57	41	50
55+	51	65	41	63	57	54	30	39

2. WILL MORE TRANSPARENCY AROUND PAY IMPACT EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION?

7 in 10 employees (70 percent) believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction.





More employees in The Netherlands (82 percent) than any other country surveyed believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction.

In the U.S., employed men (73 percent) are significantly more likely than employed women (64 percent) to believe salary transparency is good for business.

Employed men are more likely than employed women to believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction in the U.S. (73 percent of men, 64 percent of women).

QUESTION: I believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction.

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries %	United States %	Canada %	United Kingdom %	France %	Germany %	Netherlands %	Switzerland %
Agree	70	69	76	74	66	62	82	66
 Men	72	73	80	73	70	65	82	65
 Women	68	64	72	74	62	58	81	68
18-24	74	78	76	77	77	70	74	65
25-34	70	73	81	79	55	52	83	68
35-44	70	65	79	68	74	63	83	61
45-54	69	64	67	73	63	64	87	64
55+	72	67	77	70	69	66	77	78
Disagree	22	26	18	17	22	30	11	27
 Men	22	24	17	19	22	29	12	30
 Women	22	29	20	15	22	32	10	23
18-24	19	14	6	15	23	26	18	31
25-34	20	21	14	12	21	39	9	26
35-44	22	29	19	21	19	30	7	29
45-54	24	32	26	20	24	28	9	31
55+	22	30	20	18	24	25	17	15





More than 3 in 5 employees (62 percent) would be willing to share more information about their salary if they could do so anonymously.

French employees are less willing (56 percent) than employees in every other country to share more information about their salary if they could do so anonymously.

In the U.S., employed men (69 percent) are more likely than employed women (61 percent) to be willing to share more information about their salary if they could do so anonymously.

QUESTION: I would be willing to share more information about my compensation with others if I could do so anonymously.

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries %	United States %	Canada %	United Kingdom %	France %	Germany %	Netherlands %	Switzerland %
Agree	62	65	63	63	56	58	66	65
 Men	65	69	63	65	59	62	70	66
 Women	59	61	64	60	51	55	60	64
18-24	70	69	79	76	62	56	66	75
25-34	65	76	69	67	45	55	76	70
35-44	62	67	61	67	63	58	63	56
45-54	58	60	61	54	48	64	63	62
55+	59	55	53	49	64	58	61	67
Disagree	27	29	26	24	26	33	22	28
 Men	26	27	28	24	27	32	21	27
 Women	27	32	24	24	25	34	24	29
18-24	21	27	5	17	19	39	22	23
25-34	26	19	25	27	28	37	16	25
35-44	29	27	31	23	28	33	23	33
45-54	28	37	27	24	29	28	23	31
55+	28	37	30	27	21	30	29	22

More than half of employees (56 percent) feel they must switch companies in order to obtain any meaningful change in compensation.





This sentiment is significantly stronger in France (64 percent) than in other countries surveyed.

Employed adults under the age of 55 in the U.S., Canada, U.K., France, and Germany are more likely to feel they must switch companies in order to obtain any meaningful change in compensation than employees over the age 55 in these countries.

In the U.S., 57 percent of those ages 25-34, 58 percent of those ages 35-44, and 53 percent of those ages 45-54 feel they must switch companies in order to obtain any meaningful change in compensation, compared to just 32 percent of those ages 55+.

QUESTION: I feel I must switch companies in order to obtain any meaningful change in compensation.

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries %	United States %	Canada %	United Kingdom %	France %	Germany %	Netherlands %	Switzerland %
Agree	56	49	51	57	64	57	56	56
 Men	57	49	50	59	62	56	59	60
 Women	54	48	52	53	65	57	52	52
18-24	57	42	59	65	69	43	60	53
25-34	63	57	63	62	69	56	62	69
35-44	60	58	48	62	72	64	49	64
45-54	53	53	48	47	61	64	49	48
55+	43	32	32	43	48	49	70	36
Disagree	32	44	38	27	22	32	31	33
 Men	33	46	40	28	70	34	31	29
 Women	32	42	35	27	18	29	32	37
18-24	31	40	34	21	9	51	28	39
25-34	28	42	28	30	10	29	30	29
35-44	31	34	44	28	19	28	39	27
45-54	33	44	38	26	29	28	36	37
55+	40	57	50*	33	33	38	18	41

3. WILL MORE TRANSPARENCY AROUND PAY AFFECT BUSINESS PERFORMANCE?

The majority of employees (72 percent) believe salary transparency is good for business.

Significantly more employed adults in The Netherlands (84 percent) than in any other country believe salary transparency is good for business.

Employed adults in Germany (65 percent) and France (66 percent) are less likely than those in The Netherlands (84 percent), U.S. (72 percent), Canada (74 percent) and the U.K. (76 percent) to believe salary transparency is good for business.





In Canada and Germany, employed men (79 percent in Canada; 71 percent in Germany) are more likely than employed women (68 percent in Canada; 58 percent in Germany) to believe salary transparency is good for business.

In the U.S., younger employees ages 25-34 (77 percent) and 35-44 (75 percent) are more likely than older employees ages 45-54 (63 percent) to believe salary transparency is good for business.

Older Swiss employees ages 55+ are significantly more likely than their younger counterparts between the ages of 45-54 (62 percent) to believe salary transparency is good for business.

QUESTION: I believe salary transparency is good for business.

(Base: Employed full-time/part-time)

	All Countries %	United States %	Canada %	United Kingdom %	France %	Germany %	Netherlands %	Switzerland %
Agree	72	72	74	76	66	65	84	70
 Men	74	74	79	76	68	71	85	68
 Women	70	71	68	76	63	58	83	72
18-24	80	76	71	83	86	77	82	82
25-34	74	77	75	80	64	63	86	73
35-44	72	75	74	77	70	63	82	64
45-54	68	63	70	72	58	68	84	62
55+	71	70	77	69	63	59	89	79
Disagree	20	22	19	18	19	26	7	25
 Men	20	22	17	18	20	24	9	27
 Women	20	22	22	18	18	29	4	22
18-24	15	13	14	16	12	22	14	18
25-34	18	17	19	15	19	24	4	23
35-44	20	20	18	17	17	29	9	27
45-54	23	31	22	20	22	25	7	33
55+	21	26	20	20	23	28	3	16

Summary

Employees want more salary transparency: Most employees (69 percent) wish they had a better understanding of what fair pay is for their position and skill set at their company and in their local market. Most employees (70 percent) also believe salary transparency is good for employee satisfaction. What does this mean? For job seekers, they should research salaries as much as possible when considering a new job or when negotiating pay with a new or current employer. If salary information is not found through research, don't be afraid to ask about pay. For employers, they should take a look at how pay is determined and communicated to current and prospective employees. By making pay information available, it can help impact recruiting and retention rates as employees and job candidates have made it clear they want to work for companies where pay transparency is embraced.

Employees are willing to share pay information: Employees are glad to do their part toward pay transparency too; more than 3 in 5 (62 percent) indicate they'd be willing to share more information about their own salary if they could do so anonymously. What does this mean? Sites like Glassdoor can be used by both job seekers and employers to share, gauge and understand pay information and should be referenced and used during all phases of salary negotiations and further understanding fair market value for specific jobs and companies in different regions around the world.

Salary transparency can help business: More transparency around salary may have a positive impact on business performance, according to employee sentiment. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of employees believe salary transparency is good for business. What does this mean? Employers may want to consider the risk of losing talent when there is less transparency around pay levels and how pay is determined: Nearly half (49 percent) of employees feel they must switch companies in order to obtain a meaningful change in compensation.

FULL METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online within Canada, Switzerland, Germany, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of Glassdoor from October 1-5, 2015 among 8,254 adults ages 18 and older, among which 2,049 are in the U.S., 1,057 are in the UK, 1,019 are in The Netherlands, 1,029 are in France, 1,029 are in Germany, 1,018 are in Switzerland, and 1,053 are in Canada. Furthermore, among all countries, 4,300 are employed full-time/part-time, 930 are employees in the U.S., 531 are employees in the UK, 486 are employees in The Netherlands, 605 are employees in France, 630 are employees in Germany, 628 are employees in Switzerland, and 490 are employees in Canada. All responses noted are from adults who are employed part-time / full-time. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact pr@glassdoor.com

¹ <http://www.businessinsider.com/whole-foods-employees-have-open-salaries-2014-3>

² <https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2016/03/equality-at-salesforce-equal-pay.html>

³ <https://open.buffer.com/transparent-salaries/>

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/29/fact-sheet-new-steps-advance-equal-pay-seventh-anniversary-lilly>

⁵ <http://www.payscale.com/career-news/2016/03/how-the-uk-plans-to-close-the-gender-pay-gap>

⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-160_en.htm

⁷ <http://huntsman.com/as-employees-seek-job-changes-hr-heads-look-to-improve-retention-rates/>