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## Coming Storm: Spherion 2009 Emerging Workforce Study Reveals Ongoing Disconnects Between Employers and Workers

*Many Workers Are Dissatisfied and Express Desire for Strong Company Reputation and Mission*

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla., October 20, 2009— Historically high unemployment rates and a weak economy have not significantly impacted employees’ career priorities and expectations according to a comprehensive study of U.S. employers and workers released by Spherion Corporation (NYSE: SFN) today. While workers still have high expectations of what their employers should be doing to retain them, the study shows that employers continue to have differing opinions about what keeps employees committed to their jobs, including financial compensation, benefits, work/life balance and growth potential. As a result, only 24 percent of workers say they are very satisfied with their growth and earnings potential at their current employer and 27 percent say they are very satisfied with their compensation levels.

“Despite the significant changes that U.S. employers and workers have witnessed over the past few years, we see that there has been surprisingly little change in how both perceive the workplace and the employer-employee relationship,” says Roy Krause, Spherion® president and CEO. “The fact that the results haven’t shifted significantly is indicative of an interesting trend we’ve been following over the last 12 years - that workers’ perceptions of their own situations and expectations of their employers aren’t largely impacted by the economy.”

Krause continued, “This continuing disconnect could mean that as soon as job creation starts up again, employers who haven’t focused on retention could face high levels of turnover as workers seek positions at employers that offer them greater workplace satisfaction. It is imperative that HR executives realize that the actions they take during a downturn, will impact the bottom line and potential growth of their organization in an upturn.”

### Low Satisfaction and Differing Views on Retention

Not surprisingly, given the current economic condition (and for the third consecutive study), financial compensation and benefits packages continue to be the most important factors in a worker’s decision to stay with or leave an employer. However, other crucial factors such as growth potential and work/life balance also play a major role in their decisions. Employers, on the other hand, have very different thoughts on what drives employee retention, as they believe management climate, supervisor relationships and company culture are the driving forces. Workers also continue to express low rates of satisfaction with each retention driver, further exacerbating the disconnect.

#### Drivers of Retention

<u>Employer View</u>	<u>Worker View</u>	% Very Satisfied
1. Management climate	1. Benefits	37%
2. Supervisor relationship	2. Financial compensation	27%
3. Culture & work environment	3. Growth & earnings potential	24%
4. Benefits	4. Management climate	36%
5. Financial compensation	5. Time & flexibility	36%
6. Growth & earnings potential	6. Culture & work environment	34%
7. Time & flexibility	7. Supervisor relationship	43%
8. Training & development	8. Training & development	26%

### Company Reputation and Mission Important to Candidates and Employees

The study results also highlight the importance of company reputation and a clear strategy/mission to today's workforce. In fact, employees within an organization that have a clear mission and follow through on that mission are much more likely to refer a friend to their employer than one without (52 percent vs. 31 percent). The impact on worker satisfaction is significant as well:

<u>Workers very satisfied with:</u>	<u>Employer has clear mission AND follow-through:</u>	<u>Employer DOES NOT have a clear mission:</u>
Supervisor relationship	60%	24%
Management climate	55%	16%
Benefits	51%	15%
Culture and work environment	52%	14%
Growth and earnings potential	39%	7%
Financial compensation	41%	12%
Training and development	42%	7%
Time and flexibility	52%	16%

"A company's reputation is clearly important in the minds of both candidates and employers and that's why the most innovative companies are actively managing their reputation - both externally and with their own employees," Krause said. "The difference in satisfaction and likelihood of referrals for companies that clearly state their mission and then consistently follow-through with their stated mission shows that workers are looking and watching everything that companies say and do through all channels."

Krause continued, "Employers that don't manage their mission, reputation and message face serious backlash from their constituents which could have a long-lasting impact on their perception in the marketplace as well as among their own workforce."

### Additional Results from the 2009 Spherion Emerging Workforce Study:

- Only 13 percent of employers are doing more to retain workers, while 30 percent are actually doing less than in previous years - according to employees.
- 54 percent of workers do not believe they are paid what they are worth
- One in ten workers (11 percent) voluntarily changed jobs in the past year
- 74 percent of workers say their jobs mean more to them than just making a living
- 69 percent of workers say they plan to retire at age 65 or older
- 94 percent of workers say that a company that offers work/life balance options is more attractive to them, yet only 35 percent are very satisfied with their ability to maintain work/life balance and 25 percent are very satisfied with what their employer currently offers them
- 52 percent of employers say that keeping employment costs under control is a top priority now
- 40 percent of employers are very satisfied with the quality of their full-time workforce
- 53 percent of employers say workforce planning for skills and talent are major initiatives and only 21 percent believe planning for diversity is a major initiative
- 58 percent of employers believe referrals deliver the best candidates to their company
- Only 24 percent of employers have a formal social media/networking policy in place

For additional information on the 2009 Spherion Emerging Workforce Study, visit [www.spherion.com/emergingworkforce](http://www.spherion.com/emergingworkforce).

(more)

### **About the 2009 Spherion Emerging Workforce Study**

More than 12 years ago, Spherion® consulted with international polling firm Harris Interactive to launch the Emerging Workforce® Study, a research initiative designed to provide a comprehensive portrait of changes in the American workforce in the context of on-going social and economic events. Spherion® has continued to track and study the changing attitudes of the American workforce and the resulting implications for U.S. employers through subsequent studies conducted in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

### **Methodology**

The Spherion Emerging Workforce Employer Survey was conducted by phone and online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Spherion between February 18, 2009 and March 6, 2009 among 306 Human Resources Managers. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

The Spherion Emerging Workforce Employee Survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Spherion between February 4, 2009 and March 16, 2009 among 2,519 employed adults aged 18 and older. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

### **About Spherion Staffing Services**

Spherion Staffing Services is a leading recruiting and staffing provider that specializes in placing administrative, clerical, customer service and light industrial candidates in temporary and full-time opportunities. As an industry pioneer for more than 60 years, Spherion Staffing Services has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in a multitude of industries throughout our network of offices across the United States and Canada.

Spherion Staffing Services is a division of Spherion Corporation (NYSE:SFN), which operates a family of specialty brands providing strategic workplace solutions in professional recruiting, outsourcing, managed services and contractor compliance programs, technology services and general staffing. For more information, please visit [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com).

### **About Harris Interactive**

Harris Interactive is the 13th largest and one of the fastest-growing market research firms in the world. The company provides innovative research, insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for The Harris Poll, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its North American, European and Asian offices, and through a global network of independent market research firms. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).

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