

THE STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Part one of our annual survey looks at average wages, staff sizes, and the effects of the economy on the mail center. How does your operation compare?

By Amanda Armendariz

As always, I want to start out by extending a huge “thank you” to those of our readers who took the time to answer our survey questions. I know that you are busy professionals, and the fact that you take the time out of your day to help us benchmark industry wages and standards is appreciated more than you know. So once again, thank you!

This year’s survey results are quite promising in some respects. Wages are mostly up across the board, and not just by a few paltry cents, either. The average hourly wages for many non-managerial staff have increased by a dollar or more per hour compared to 2016’s results, and managerial staff are also seeing substantial increases. Also encouraging is the fact that the average time spent in the mail center is up for all three levels surveyed (managers, supervisors, and staff). I know there are two schools of thought on this (one side says that you need new, younger employees in order to get the newest ideas that lead to success; the other side says that experience equals knowledge, and it doesn’t matter how innovative some ideas are if the employees don’t understand the nuances of the industry). I fall

squarely in the middle: I think that experience is indeed an asset that cannot be overvalued (nor easily replicated), so I’m encouraged to see that the average number of years in the mail center is up. And I also recognize that innovation breeds success, so it’s heartening to see more and more mail professionals seeking out certification and continuing their industry education. To note, almost 54% of managers reported attending local PCC meetings, compared to 38% last year. This networking and sharing of ideas is what will lead to hard copy communications’ continued relevance in today’s increasingly digital age.

Of course, there are some not-so-great results, as well. Last year, almost 20% of our respondents reported sending out more than one million mail pieces a month; this year, it’s barely 13%. And the number of respondents who send out fewer than 50,000 pieces a month (our lowest category) is up to almost 35%, compared to 29% last year. So it’s impossible to argue that mail volumes aren’t decreasing. However, mailers may be sending out fewer pieces, but those pieces that *are* sent out make an impact. And that, ultimately, is what matters.

Until next time!

Mail Center Managers

Male vs. Female



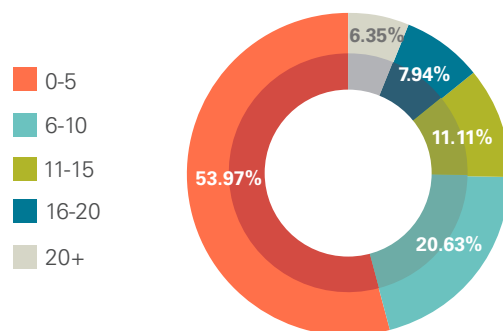
These numbers represent a pretty significant decline in the number of female mail center managers; last year’s survey showed 46% of mail center managers were women.

Show Me the Money

This year, the average salary of a mail center manager was \$66,054. This is a fairly significant jump from last year’s \$57,074.

\$66,054

How many full-time employees (FTE) does each manager supervise?

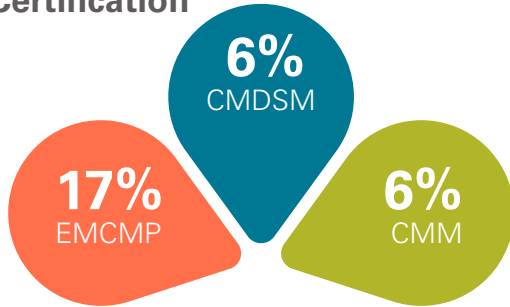


Just like last year, most mail center managers are responsible for a relatively small number of employees. Furthermore, the percentage of managers who are responsible for 20-plus employees is basically half of last year (6.35% compared to 12.16%), which I’m sure eases the managers’ workload substantially! This is especially helpful considering a full 60% of mail center managers have assumed other duties, as well, such as shipping, receiving, and purchasing.

The Effort Pays Off

This year, our respondents reported that their organizations' mail center managers had been in the industry, on average, 20+ years (20.65, to be exact). This is significantly higher than last year's 16.65 years. Perhaps this explains the higher salary compared to 2016 — as in almost any industry, the longer one spends in it, the more likely one is to have a higher salary.

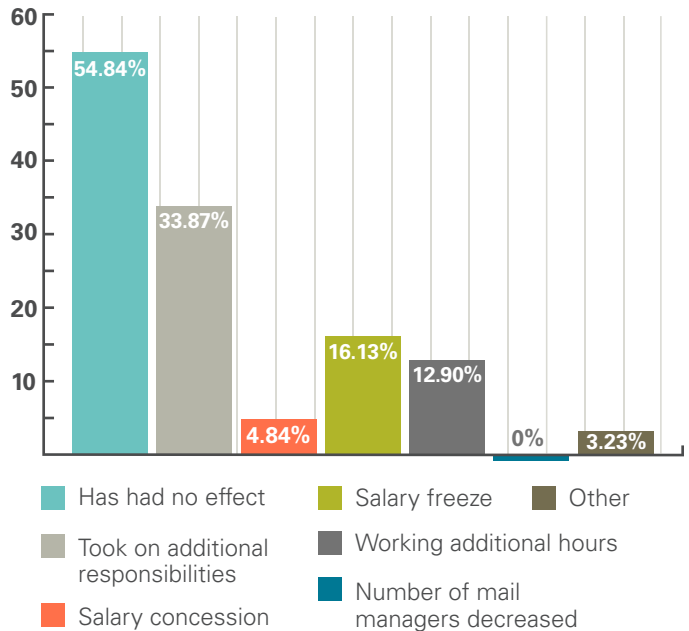
Certification



In our respondents' mail centers, the percentage of mail center managers holding the EMCMP certification increased two percentage points compared to last year, while the number holding the CMDSM certification dropped substantially (10% last year). The number holding the CMM certification held steady at six percent.

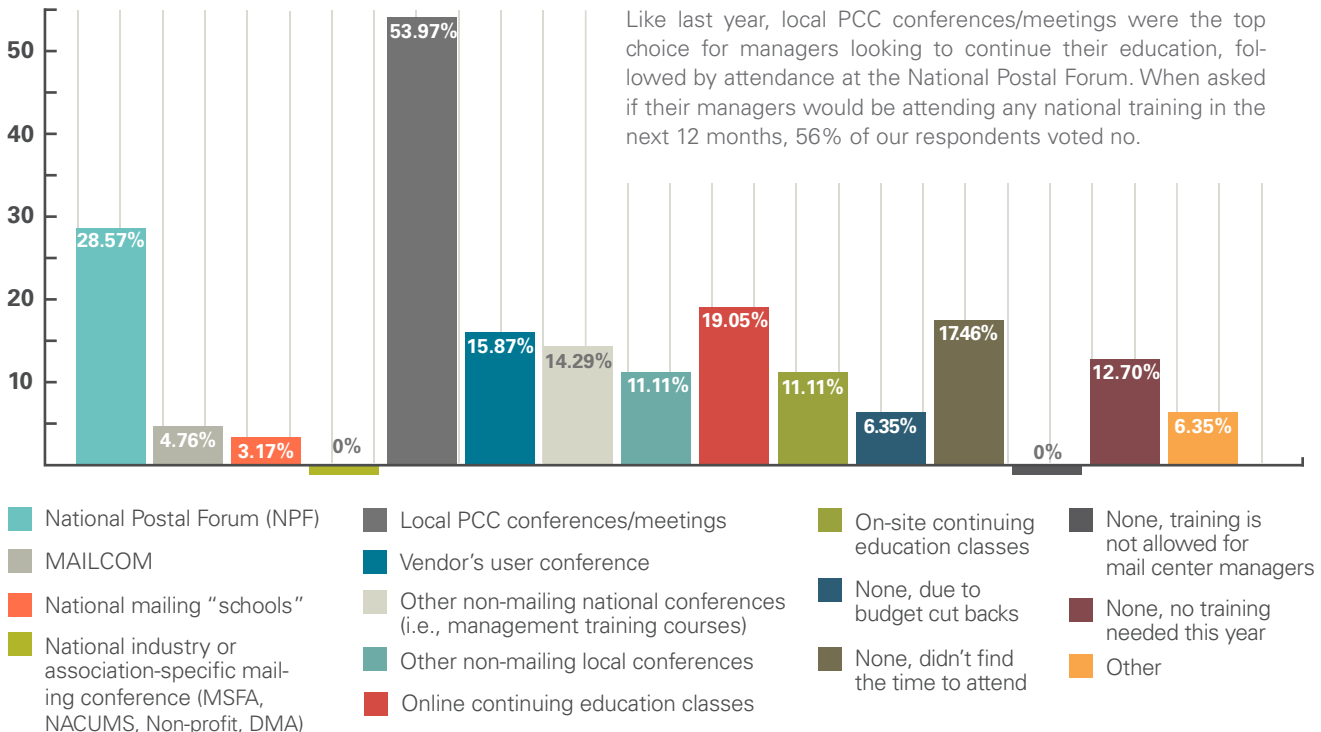
The Economy

The good news is, more managers this year reported that the economy has had no effect on their operations (almost 55% this year compared to 2016's 50%). And the number of respondents reporting experiencing the especially negative aspects (such as salary concessions and freezes) are down, which is always a good sign.



Continuing Education

For those mail center managers who sought out continuing education opportunities, here are some of the most popular ways they chose to stay engaged.



Like last year, local PCC conferences/meetings were the top choice for managers looking to continue their education, followed by attendance at the National Postal Forum. When asked if their managers would be attending any national training in the next 12 months, 56% of our respondents voted no.

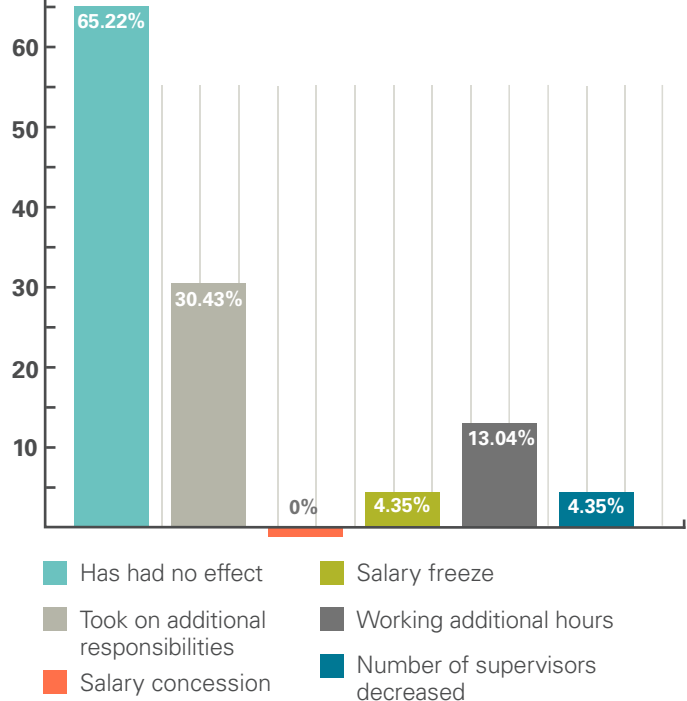
Supervisors

It's a pretty even split (49.21% yes, 50.79% no) as to whether our respondents' mail centers have supervisors or not. This is quite a drop from last year, when 59% answered in the affirmative. Sixty-nine percent of supervisors are male, an increase from last year's 65%. These supervisors are not as likely to hold certifications as mail center managers are, and for those who do, the EMCMP is the most common at 20%.

Supervisor stats:

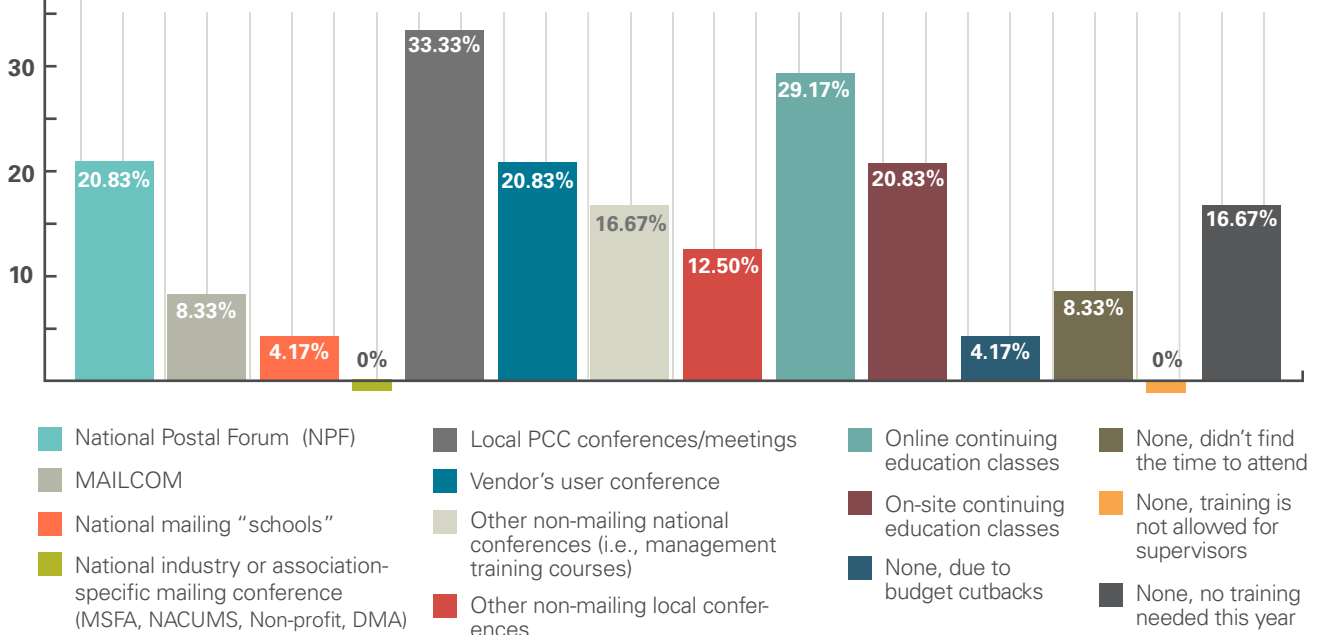
- ▶ On average, these supervisors oversee an average of eight employees (compared to nine in 2016).
- ▶ The average salary is \$54,429 (up significantly from last year's \$49,480).
- ▶ They have been in the industry an average of 15.45 years, an increase from last year's average of 13. Perhaps, like with the mail center managers, this explains the higher salary.
- ▶ Seventy-one percent of supervisors oversee other departments or functions, such as shipping & receiving, inventory control, etc.

Supervisors and the Economy



Continuing Education

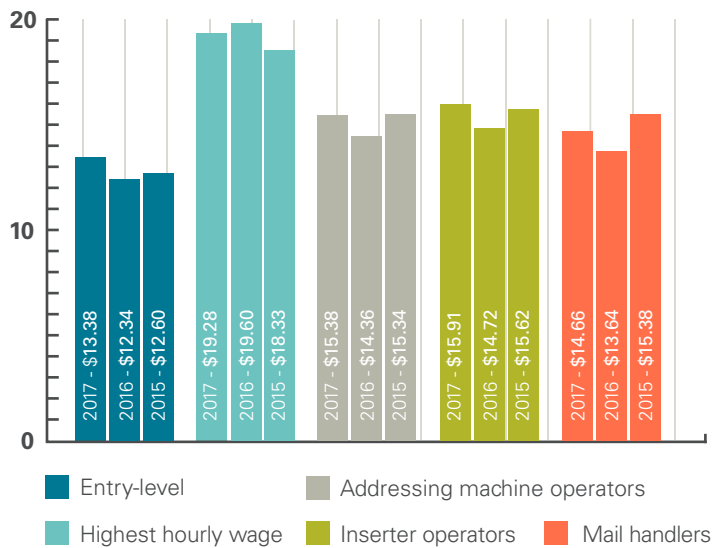
As with the mail center managers, local PCC conferences and meetings were the most popular way to engage in continuing education, although not to the same extent. For supervisors, the spread is much more even, with online classes enjoying more popularity than they did with managers. Seventy-one percent do not anticipate their organization's supervisors attending any national training in the next 12 months.



Staff

This year, mail center staff seems to be a 60/40 split, with the majority of the staff being men. On average, they have been employed in the mail industry for 11 years. Twenty-one percent are represented by a union, and while this number seems a bit low at first, it's definitely an increase compared to last year's eight percent.

Average Wages of Mail Center Staff



Staff and the Economy

