

Your tour guide through the employment jungle of plastics and packaging!

25+
YEARS OF
SERVICE



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Overview

Friday, November 20, 2015 10:20 AM

Founded 1989 by Dennis Gros

The firm has maintained a constant presence as a specialist in recruiting for the **plastics manufacturing industry USA**.

Additional market: machinery for plastics processing

Expanded to "**packaging**" (primarily plastic packaging, which is an overlap of plastics) in 2003

The business provides professional service to manufacturing companies involved in plastics or packaging, of recruiting individuals whose experience and ability is rare.

Typically, a client has an immediate need to hire.

Aggressive involvement with industry associations and trade shows, and with the trade publications.

Known for our vivid presence at industry events:



Set up for sale

Friday, August 18, 2017 10:06 AM

Create a chain of credibility with the buyer

Free Posting

Industry affiliations

References

Knowledge of the industry

Personal phone calls

Meeting at trade shows or events

Personal visit at the client's office

Audience

Monday, July 31, 2017 8:45 PM

Website audience about 3000 sessions per month

Newsletter 24,600 subscribers after July purge

LinkedIn groups

Machinery for Plastics and Packaging: 6400

Sustainable Packaging Tips & Topics 677

Plastics & packaging jobs 213



Your tour guide through
the employment jungle
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For immediate release

Plastics Compensation Down, Employee Optimism Up

APRIL 18, 2017—Despite the continuation of a three-year decline for average plastics compensation, plastics professionals are optimistic about the future, according to the 2017 Plastics Salary and Trends Survey, which reports earnings for the previous calendar year. Average total cash compensation (salaries plus bonuses and incentives) decreased 1% to \$112,740 in 2017.

1,351 plastics professionals shared details about their 2016 compensation in the 2017 annual salary survey, conducted by Gros Executive Recruiters and the Society of Plastics Engineers.

Average base salary dropped 2.1% to \$96,804. Although the third successive year of negative numbers, the downward trend in total compensation is moderating. Last year's survey showed an overall dip of more than 3% in base salary.



Survey participants expect a more lucrative future, however. 71% of survey respondents received a raise in the past 12 months – up from 2016 (66%), and 77% expect their base salary to increase this year. More than half of respondents (57%) also expected their bonuses or other incentives to repeat in 2017, with only 10% anticipating a decrease in incentive compensation.

Of the compensation decline shown in this year's survey, Dennis Gros, president of Gros Executive Recruiters expanded, "It may not be bad news. We're picking up more participants in the under 35 age group, and with tenure of five years or less. Those workers typically earn less. It's refreshing to see our industry accept new professionals. We're going to need their enthusiasm and energy!"

Russell Broome, managing director of Society of Plastic Engineers added, "There are external influences that tend to make me lean more on the optimistic side for employment in the plastics industry...We are entering a very manufacturing friendly environment with less regulation. This coupled with the fact we are entering another NPE cycle is critical in supporting continued growth predicted by the survey." Consistent with recent years, about two-thirds (64%) of managers predicted their employees' compensation will increase by 1-3% in 2017.

Of both the probable raises and expectations from plastics professionals, Gros added, "Raises are anemic, in the range of 1-3%. That's what employers are offering, and that's all employees expect at this time. But I predict a bolder attitude as we move through 2017."

Employee loyalty remains high though, with 72% satisfied with their current employment.

Additionally, 70% of respondents agreed with the statement, "My company is a great place to work." Ultimately, despite minor decreases in compensation, the plastics industry sees the future as bright, and employees are optimistic about their growth opportunities in 2017 and onward.

A detailed report of the full survey will be available in an upcoming issue of Plastics Engineering magazine produced by SPE. Members of SPE can obtain a copy of the 2017 survey, with detailed information, by logging into their accounts at <http://www.4spe.org>.

THE SOCIETY OF PLASTICS ENGINEERS is the premier source of peer-reviewed technical information for plastics professionals. Founded in 1942, SPE has become the recognized medium of communication among scientists, engineers, and technical personnel engaged in the development, conversion, and application of plastics. www.4spe.org

GROS EXECUTIVE RECRUITERS is an executive recruiting headhunter firm serving companies and individuals as the marketplace of professional career opportunities in packaging and plastics. The firm was founded by Dennis Gros in 1989 and is headquartered in Franklin, TN.

www.GrosRecruiters.com

FEATURE ARTICLE | MAY 25, 2017

Compensation edges northward for packaging pros

As older pros retire, Millennials in the packaging workforce focus on money and technology.

By Jim Butschli, Features Editor

The saying, "Slow and steady wins the race," is associated with Aesop's "The Tortoise and the Hare" fable. Yet, it's also applicable to total compensation, as reported by packaging professionals responding to the annual Salary Survey.

Results from the 2017 survey, which examine annual compensation earned in 2016, reveal that the weighted average of combined salaries, incentives, bonuses and commissions for U.S. respondents increased 3.9% overall to \$119,710. But the past year's gains weren't enjoyed by all.

Conducted by the Institute of Packaging Professionals and *Packaging World* magazine, the 2017 Salary Survey was developed in cooperation with Gros Executive Recruiters, with Kane Consulting tabulating and summarizing the results.

An important differentiation is that these total compensation figures represented domestic responses only. Respondents from foreign countries reported an average income of \$88,420. Weighted total earnings overall, including foreign and domestic respondents, were \$116,910, up from \$112,720 in 2015.

Although overall incomes grew modestly from last year's numbers, workers in the 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups enjoyed a boost of more than 11% in this latest survey. On the other end of the financial spectrum, 35 to 44-year-olds reported pay cuts averaging 3.7%.

This year, 64% of respondents expected to earn more than last year, with 28% believing they'll earn the same income this year. Only 8% anticipated earning less in 2017 than in 2016.

With incomes moving in a positive direction, 71% of respondents felt either somewhat or very secure regarding job security satisfaction. Only 15% said they were either a little worried or very worried. During the past year, 85% remained at their current job. Of course, job stability projections are also dependent upon national and global geopolitical market complexities.

Overall job security was reflected in that only 25% of respondents will possibly seek a new position in 2017. Only 13% said they were either currently looking or definitely looking for a new job. In another telling sign: In 2016, 85% of respondents reported they did not change jobs.

Among some of the survey information nuggets were the following:

- Corporate management incomes were at the top of all job function categories at \$169,025, with structural design pros at the lower end at \$77,632. Purchasing and production functions enjoyed the greatest income gains from 2016 to 2017, rising 16.6% and 15%, respectively.
- A considerable gender gap existed among this year's survey respondents. Here, males reported a rise in income of \$5,000 from 2016 to \$121,773 in 2017, while females experienced an average drop of \$386 to \$98,956 in 2017.
- A huge income discrepancy in educational experience was shown, with pros earning a post-graduate or PhD degree reporting a 27.6% leap to \$128,839. Meanwhile, high school grads acknowledged incomes sank 14.3% to \$87,059.
- Packaging workers reaped financial benefits in the past year regardless of whether they worked with an end-user or supplier firm. Supplier pros reported average earnings of \$130,080 (a 4.2% increase from the previous year), compared to \$114,446 (up 5.3%) for end-user employees.
- Among respondents, 41% worked for a company that sold food products/services, followed by 28% selling medical products, 26% pharmaceuticals, 26% beverages, and 25% cosmetics/personal care offerings. For this question, respondents could select multiple goods and services.
- Engineers, at 32%, made up the bulk of survey respondents, followed by R&D (19%), marketing/sales (15%), and corporate management (11%).

Respondents express job needs

The survey asked respondents, "What do you feel is the ONE thing you need to make you a better packaging professional?" Many respondents sought additional educational and training opportunities, greater management communication, and often more time and resources to complete projects. Among the responses were the following:

"Keep up to date with the latest developments in terms of packaging design, materials, and equipment so I can implement new ideas at my job."

"Greater visibility on the industry landscape globally (challenges, opportunities, and regulatory changes)."

"A more well-rounded education in multiple industries around packaging—logistics, distribution, supply chain, marketing, and purchasing."

"Better understanding of the labeling regulations for medical and pharmaceutical products."

"More job opportunities for highly experienced packaging engineers."

"Need to understand the end-user requirements, product protection, machinability, and regulations for new product development."

"More exposure to trade shows and conferences to keep up to date with new and emerging technologies."

"Additional knowledge in sustainability and innovation as they apply to my specific packaging field."

"Better IT tools that cross responsibilities and divisions; better resources—more staff, time, and project communications."

"More opportunities to benchmark other professionals and how they have solved various packaging problems."

"Make more connections to others in my industry outside my current company to share experiences and expand my knowledge."

"Lateral thinking, meaning the ability to apply technologies from other industries to packaging."

"Getting back into the workforce—lots of interviews but nothing has stuck so far."

"With digital printing and technology advancements, I would like to be able to better prepare myself to be on the forefront of the changes."

"Management support. That only comes through education of my managers, and that depends on how receptive they are to learn, so documentation is key."

"Better purchasing support to keep costs competitive."

"An online library of technical materials and guides. My background isn't packaging, and there aren't enough online resources with quick and easy access."

"Management recognition that experienced packaging specialists are not just another easily replaceable 'human resource' but are knowledge bases in themselves."

"A better understanding of the various equipment used in the industry and how they are categorized by both [their] manufacturers and end users."

Salary Survey reveals 'compensation highlight awards'

A clever perspective based on takeaways pertaining to packaging compensation and job issues follows, from Dennis Gros, President and founder of Gros Executive Recruiters:

What not to do award: Become a consultant. Compensation was down 13.3%! How did we get so many consultants? Corporate managers looked at a meager 1.8% compensation increase, and decided to quit their jobs and become self-employed.

Go large or go it alone award: Packaging employees of companies with less than 10 employees saw a 10.2% increase in compensation. Employees of companies with more than 50,000 employees enjoyed a 10.1% increase.

The we made more award: Goes to production employees, who achieved an increase of 15% in this year's survey. How? They made more money by making more stuff.

The move south award: In our recruiting work, we often discuss relocation with candidates. Lately the area in highest demand is the South Central region, citing temperate climate and lifestyle issues. But the region also seems to pay off financially, as packaging professionals in the South Central reported a 20.8% increase in compensation.

The credentials award: Goes to packaging professionals with advanced degrees, who reported 27.6% higher earnings in the 2017 survey. Unfortunately, many had to use the raise to repay their student loans!

The bright eyes and open minds award: Goes to workers in the categories of 3-5 years and 6-10 years of experience, who reported income increases of 10.6% and 13.0%, respectively. Those just ahead of them in seniority, with 11-15 years of experience, paid for it, because they reported a decrease in compensation of 2%.

Three key predictions for 2017

Gros also analyzed three key factors to watch for in today's job market:

- 1. Art becomes task.* As gray hairs retire, they will be replaced by short-tenure Millennials who are emotionally detached but equally effective in jobs that can be condensed into a series of tasks. How? Step-by-step apps will guide new workers through the intricacy of each task. Management will need to create the process flow diagrams that will enable on-the-job training.
- 2. The year of the raise.* The year 2017 will see job growth accelerate faster than the number of people who are available for the jobs. Expect to see upward pressure on salaries in the fourth quarter.
- 3. Ping pong? Grow up!* Game rooms will shrink or disappear from trendy employment cocoons. Employees want money instead.

PW SOURCE: <https://www.packworld.com/article/trends-and-issues/business-intelligence/compensation-edges-northward-packaging-pros>

Competition

Friday, November 20, 2015 11:18 AM

Who competes for the same dollars?

- LinkedIn, social sites, job boards
- In-house recruiting departments
- RPO services based in India
- Reluctance of employer to spend money on recruiting
- Perception of professional recruiting as a high-price option

Fee philosophy

Thursday, July 13, 2017 11:04 PM

Charge for the SERVICE of recruiting, not merely for the placement result

Charge for what you can control, not what the client controls

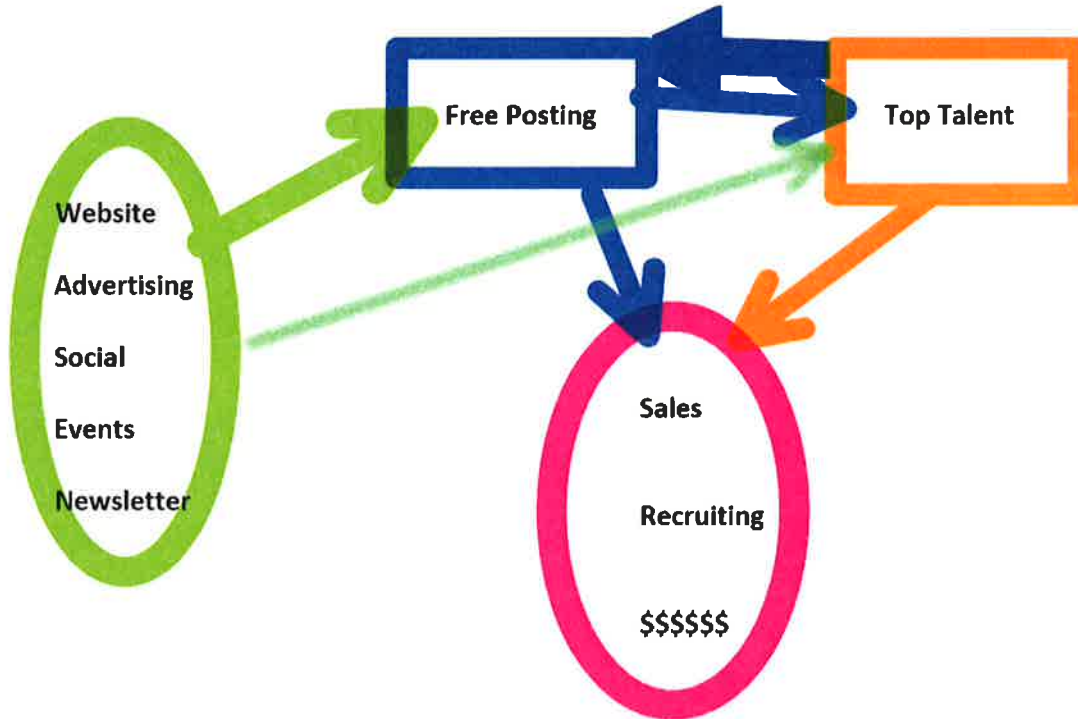
We control	Client controls
Target list	Timing (delay)
Presentation	Job appeal
Candidate Roster	Choice of #1 candidate
Recommendation of offer	Terms of Offer \$\$
Communication	Acceptance

Represent the CLIENT in the marketplace, instead of representing the CANDIDATE

Free Services

Friday, November 20, 2015 11:00 AM

Top Talent and Free Posting



Free posting of jobs on our website, available to employers in plastics and packaging
Generates new business leads

- 1 in 20 employers on Free Posting converts to a paying client.
- Translated value of each free posting averages \$525.

Making phone ring

Thursday, August 17, 2017 8:54 AM

Make the client come to us

Want to hear: How do we engage your services? We can answer, "Here's how we work..."

Current recruiting plans:
[http://GrosRecruiters.com/
recruiting-plans](http://GrosRecruiters.com/recruiting-plans)

Business model

Friday, November 20, 2015 10:45 AM

Advertising: "Pay no more than necessary to tour the employment jungle" refers to our menu of services at various rates.

Customers of our Budget Plans are offered an opportunity to upgrade to more extensive recruiting plans

The sales style has been primarily a relationship sales model, akin to attorney or CPA. Low volume, high dollar transactions. Close working relationship with each client.

Pricing is based on two categories of products:

BUDGET EXCURSIONS

--Quick turns--Require medium level of effort to fulfill

- Free Posting: Our entry level service designed to attract prospective clients to our site.
- Top Talent: Contingency fee of 20% based on hiring. We post summaries of "Top Talent" in the plastics and packaging industries, and hiring managers respond by asking for an introduction. When they hire, we charge.
- Candidate Discovery: 30 days of advertising in behalf of a client's job opening. Fee \$3500
- Source & Select: 30 days of advertising plus recruiting plus screening. 12% of realistic first-year compensation, in two payments: one-half when you authorize us to begin; we earn the remainder at the start of employment.

Creative variations

RECRUITING PLANS

--extremely time intensive--

requires professional skill of an experienced "project manager" (recruiter)

Three rate categories: 18%, 24%, 30%

- Incremental: 18% with initial payment, progress payment, and final payment. Typically yields a fee of \$18000. Our involvement with client typically lasts 6 to 10 weeks.
- Engagement: 24% with initial payment and final payment. Requires significant time investment. Our involvement with client typically lasts 10 to 16 weeks. Typically yields a fee of \$24,000.
- Retained: 30% with initial payment, progress payment, and final payment. This plan includes at least one visit to the client's site. Our involvement with client typically lasts 10 to 16 weeks. Typically yields a fee of \$30,000+

During 2015 we directed our clients toward Engagement.

Words that cost or make us money!

Instead of	Try this:	Typical use:
contract	order form	helping a prospective client buy our services
contract	following up our conversation	email <i>subject</i> line
contract	recruiting options	email <i>subject</i> line
contract	recruiting plans	email <i>subject</i> line
contingency	Referral authorization	client negotiation
Job Order	Recruiting Project	everywhere!
upfront payment	progress payment	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	initial payment	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	initial investment	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	service charge	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	...in 2 parts or ...in 3 parts	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	first 7% is due when we...	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	payment for our services	(implies we're earning the money)
upfront payment	when I do ___ an invoice is generated for ___	helping a prospective client buy our services
upfront payment	down payment	helping a prospective client buy our services
need your signature	your autograph; verify; approve; your OK; your consent, your authorization, your endorsement	order form
jobs or opportunities	career opportunity; position; career step	discussing job with potential candidate
Required or must-have	"...is a plus"; "preferred"	job description
frequent job changes	"advance in employment"	resume, and presentation
frequent job changes	"in order to move up, he had to move out"	resume, and presentation
guarantee	our follow up services	order form. note: we don't own, manufactur
screen resumes	evaluate applicants, review candidates, consider pote	proposals and reports to client
second payment	progress payment	helping a prospective client buy our services