

How to Find the Best Workplace for Your Payroll Career

Finding a new payroll job is not unlike dating. To make the relationship work, you and your new company should be well matched in areas such as style and personality. Whether you're an active or passive job candidate, here are seven factors to look for when assessing potential employers and planning your next steps in your payroll career:

1. An engaged communication style

If you've ever worked for a company where information seldom trickles down to the staff level, you understand how frustrating a poor or nonexistent communication style can be. When evaluating potential workplaces, note how responsive they are to your messages. Do you have to wait days or weeks to hear back, or do your emails and phone calls get returned within a few hours? How's their tone — curt and hurried, or friendly and respectful? An organization's poor communication style can lead to low morale among staff and a high turnover rate.

2. A good work-life balance

To attract top talent, companies are offering an assortment of perks that encourage employees to take care of themselves and spend more time with their families. And that makes perfect sense: The happier workers are, the more productive, creative and loyal they're likely to be. As you research potential workplaces, take a good look at their job postings and website. Are they proud of their generous vacation policy and flexible scheduling? During the interview, ask hiring managers how the company helps employees balance work and personal life with policies such as telecommuting and flextime.

3. The right opportunities

You want to be part of an organization that will invest in your future as a payroll professional. When speaking with hiring managers, ask what they offer in terms of [professional training](#). Do they help pay for [certification](#) exams and payroll association fees? Will they allow you to take continuing professional education (CPE) courses on company time? Do they provide mentoring opportunities? Employers that value their workers typically put strong emphasis on professional development.

4. A suitable city

Sometimes landing a top payroll job requires moving to another area. [Finding the right city](#) depends on your priorities. To help you weigh your options, Robert Half has put together a comprehensive [list](#) of all U.S. major cities — ranked by factors such as career prospects, quality of life, cost of living and cultural diversity. If you're in a position to relocate, doing so could give your professional and personal life a boost.

5. A compatible culture

Do you like fast-paced and challenging assignments, or do you prefer predictable and steady work? Is your preference to hang out after hours with colleagues, or are you more comfortable with well-defined professional boundaries? The best workplace is the one where you can feel at home each day, and where you're a respected part of the team.

6. Similar values

Robert Half's recent study on [working happy](#) finds that organizational pride is one of the most powerful drivers of job satisfaction. People feel good about their role when they believe in what their employer is doing, such as improving the lives of their customers and making their community a better place. If you don't believe in the mission of your company, you will have a hard time supporting it with your best efforts.

7. Above-average wages

Of course, money can't buy happiness, but not having enough leads to stress, disgruntlement and eventually your departure for greener pastures. The best workplace for your payroll career is one that recognizes your payroll skills and compensates you fairly for it. Check out our Salary Guide and [Salary Calculator](#) for starting salaries in various payroll positions. Then don't be afraid to [negotiate your starting salary](#).

The job market is healthy for payroll professionals, so you can afford to be selective about your next employer. Don't settle for so-so when you can land the job — and workplace — of your choice.

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