Salary.com’s Survey Methodology for CompAnalyst Market Data

CompAnalyst Market Data is comprised of data from hundreds of commercially available, top-tier surveys as well as local, industry, and association surveys. These surveys are derived of 100 percent employer-reported information and are updated on a monthly basis. Salary.com Certified Compensation Professionals collect, analyze and compile this information to deliver Salary.com’s copyrighted market pricing database.

We fully scope CompAnalyst Market Data to reflect pay practices that are specific to a selected industry, organization size, and geography. We adhere to World at Work standards in the selection and use of compensation surveys.

Each survey is reviewed year-over-year for data integrity by Salary.com’s team of Certified Compensation Professionals (CCP). If a survey no longer meets our rigorous standards, it is struck from our library. New surveys are added only if they meet our requirements. Using our proprietary method much like a compensation consultant would do for a client, we analyze the information from these sources and publish a Salary.com market price for each job that is represented in CompAnalyst Market Data. In addition, we’ve developed rigorous data auditing practices, both automated and manual to ensure the consistency and integrity of each data point.

Here are the detailed steps and processes we use to price jobs with CompAnalyst Market Data:

1. Survey selection

The first step in market pricing is to determine reliable sources of relevant information. Salary.com uses only those sources that we determine are reliable and meet the following criteria.

- The survey sponsor is reputable.
- The original source of the raw data is employers, not individuals or recruiters.
- The participant group must be an adequately sized sample and must remain reasonably stable year over year.
- The data within the same survey is relatively consistent year over year.
- Each job description provides enough detail to ensure a proper match.
- All data analysis and reporting techniques are consistent with accepted statistical methods.
- Data reported must be consistent with Survey Safe Harbor Guidelines.
- The effective dates of the data must be current.
- There is ample availability of scoped data to provide accurate insight on the effect of industry, size and location on pay.
2. Matching process

To make the best use of survey data, our analysts and consultants must carefully match existing jobs to each survey’s jobs. The Salary.com compensation team uses the following principles to conduct job matches with salary surveys:

- Match based on job content and descriptions, not job title.
- Consider only those jobs that are at least a 70 percent match.

3. Proper analysis and interpretation of survey statistics

Furthermore, our compensation consultants analyze the data in the following manner:

- Ensure common terms such as "mean" are used consistently from one source to the next.
- Review the dispersion of the data through a standard deviation, interquartile range, or other means.

4. Calculation of market composites

The following are standard practices in developing market composite data from salary surveys.

- Age the data to a common date.
- Apply specific aging factors based on market trends by industry, job level, and geographic location.
- Use market sources such as budget surveys and year-over-year increases in median pay from single survey sources as guidelines in developing aging factors.
- Use multiple survey sources from different publishers to assure data independence and to reduce any inherent biases in survey participant pools.