

# A Quantitative & Qualitative Research Project

## Attitudes and Perceptions of Women About Seeking Employment In the Oil And Natural Gas Industry

Prepared for the American Petroleum Institute, API

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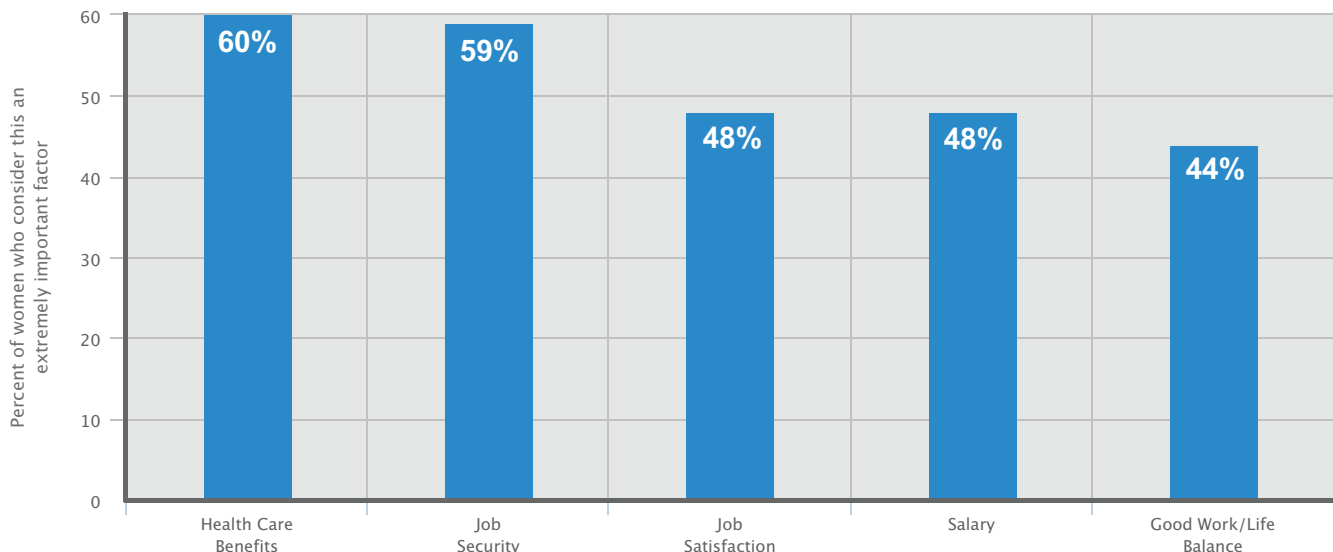


A vast opportunity exists for the oil and natural gas industry to attract, retain, and develop life long careers for women in the industry. Even before hearing any specific information about the industry—positive or negative—**the majority of women (53%) say they are willing to work in the industry.** After hearing benefits and possible tradeoffs, the number of women willing to accept a position with the industry increases.

Women care about salary when considering employment opportunities, and respond well to learning that the average salary in the industry is nearly \$50,000 more per year than the U.S. average—**79% of women say that this higher pay is a convincing reason to take a job in the industry.**

Yet while salary is an important consideration for women when facing employment opportunities, other work factors actually rank higher:

### Most Important Factors to Women When Considering an Employment Opportunity





Based on these factors, the industry is well suited to recruit women and expand its workforce with female employees—in fact, women currently working in the industry feel like they have good benefits and high pay, and they enjoy what they do and appreciate the flexibility their jobs offer. **Yet the overwhelming majority of respondents admit never applying for employment with the oil and natural gas industry**, with only 3% reporting having applied for a job in the industry.

While conventional wisdom may have been that gender and race were the biggest obstacles to considering employment in the oil and natural gas industry, the research indicates that the **#1 obstacle is lack of awareness and understanding of job opportunities and career development** in the industry. Out of the women who had never applied to work in the industry, 63% reported never doing so because they,

- Did not think they had the right background for a job in oil and natural gas (19%),
- Thought the jobs in the industry were outside their field (19%),
- Did not know the industry was hiring (17%), or
- Had simply never thought about it (8%).

In each case, a lack of awareness about what is actually happening in the industry prevented women from applying to work there.

**In order to help combat this obstacle, women suggested that the industry could:**

- Create an education campaign that introduces the industry.
- Showcase women who already work in the industry—generally, it is helpful for women, particularly young women, to know that other women have established a path for them.
- Highlight the sheer variety of job occupations and qualifications for various jobs—women were surprised to learn about the wide range of both blue and white collar jobs available in the industry.

These steps can help women understand how oil and natural gas already impacts their lives, and enable women to see where they might fit in the industry.