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Media Contact: [Melissa A. Hicks](#), 484.888.6766

## **C2HR Surveys Reveal Compassionate Compensation Actions** Employers Strive to Protect Workers During Pandemic

**NAPERVILLE, ILL., February 8, 2021** – The Content & Connectivity Human Resources (C2HR) Association’s annual Compensation Surveys highlighted an industry dedicated to compassion and worker stability as technology, media and entertainment companies grappled with the devastation wreaked by the COVID-19 pandemic. The surveys also revealed that 2020 compensation rose modestly prior to the pandemic, but not as much as planned.

Throughout this tumultuous year, survey participants established salary floors, reduced executive pay, offered additional paid time off, extended healthcare benefits, and awarded stipends. They undertook these innovative actions to help their employees and companies survive the crisis.

“As the pandemic unfolded, C2HR provided participants with real-time information concerning its impact on compensation,” said Pamela Williams, CAE, C2HR’s executive director. “This rapid response delivered the compensation data industry employers needed to fine tune their pay practices in light of the exceptional circumstances created by COVID-19.”

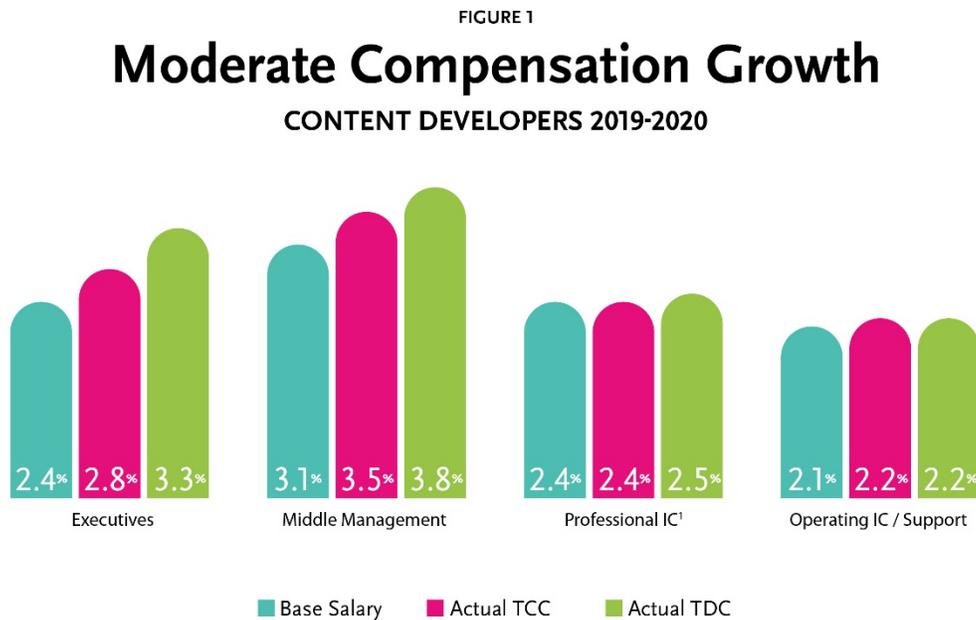
C2HR quickly adapted its processes for collecting annual salary and incentive data. C2HR, through its survey provider, The Croner Company, conducted three just-in-time Pulse Surveys to gather supplemental insights on essential workers, changes to compensation, COVID’s impact on salary budgets and return to office/geographic pay.

Angela Auz, C2HR board member and vice president of human resources for Univision Communications Inc., noted that the timely data collection was vital. “COVID-19 was a disruption to our business and forced us to adapt whatever plans we had in place,” Auz said. “We needed real-time data to shift our priorities, expand our employee offerings and remain competitive

within our industry. C2HR quickly supplied us with the necessary and vital intel that helped keep us ahead of the curve.”

### Moderate Pay Growth

Unlike last year when the industry experienced robust salary and bonus gains, compensation increases were modest in 2020 and reflect raises made prior to the pandemic. Content development executives saw total direct compensation (TDC) rise 3.3% (compared to 6.9% in 2019). Middle management TDC grew 3.8%; professional individual contributor (IC) 2.5%; and operating IC/support 2.2%. (TDC includes base salary, bonus, and stock incentives.) (See Figure 1)



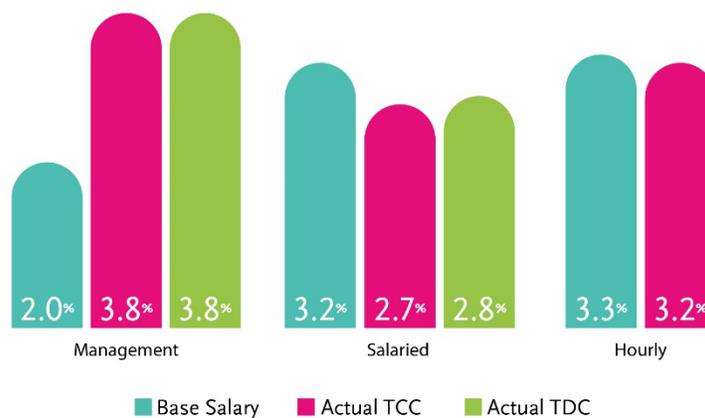
SOURCE: 2020 C2HR COMPENSATION SURVEYS  
(1) DATA FOR PROFESSIONAL IC EXCLUDES SENIOR PRODUCER, PRODUCER AND ASSOCIATE PRODUCER POSITIONS.

A similar situation played out among connectivity providers. In 2020, management TDC rose 3.8% (compared to 5.3% in 2019); 2.8% for salaried employees; and 3.2% for hourly personnel. (See Figure 2)

The smaller increases are the result of consolidation, especially among content developers, said Hali Croner, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of The Croner Company, the research and compensation consulting firm that conducted the surveys for C2HR.

“The mergers and acquisitions resulted in reorganization, layoffs and turnover at content developers,” said Croner. In their wake, salaries fell as less expensive talent was retained. “Following all of the shake-ups, compensation now feels more stable,” Croner added.

FIGURE 2  
**Moderate Compensation Growth**  
CONNECTIVITY PROVIDERS 2019-2020



SOURCE: 2020 C2HR COMPENSATION SURVEYS

### Smaller Pay Growth in 2021

The surveys also revealed that the pandemic will exacerbate slower compensation growth in 2021, especially among content developers, which were hit harder by closures. Prior to lockdowns, content developers anticipated spending 3.1% on their 2020 merit pay budgets. Instead, the merit budget fell to 2.3% in 2020, and content developers expect their 2021 merit budgets to average 1.8%. (See Figure 3)

“Some content developers intend to slow 2021 increases,” explained Croner. “The goal is to manage pay while keeping people in their jobs.”

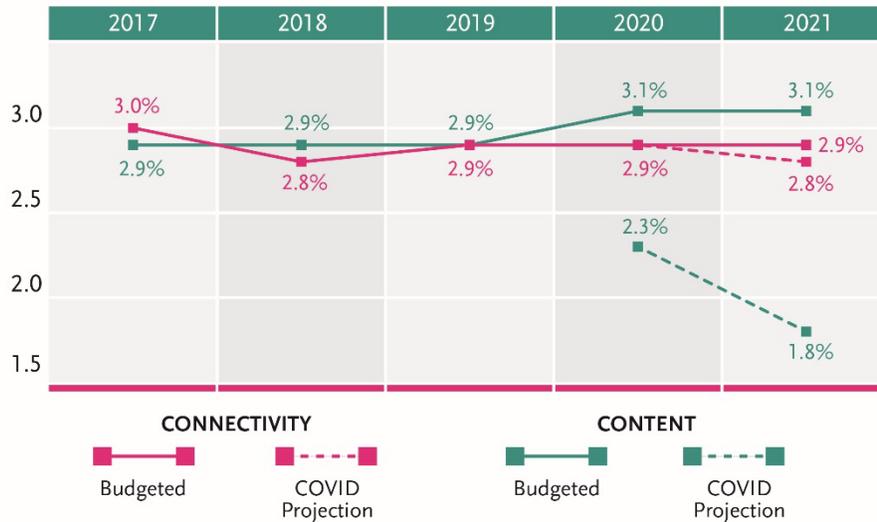
Connectivity providers generally met their 2020 merit budgets of 2.9%. The pandemic had less impact on them, due to increased demand for broadband as the country spent more time at home. The surveys also show that 2021 connectivity merit increases will drop slightly to 2.8%. Keep in mind, however, that the 2021 figures are averages and scale from zero to 3.5% increases.

“While the pandemic impacted our business in a variety of ways, it was not a significant factor in how we approached developing our compensation plans for 2021,” noted Nick Dunlap, vice president, executive compensation, Charter.

FIGURE 3

## Merit Budgets Impacted by COVID

### SALARY ADJUSTMENT BUDGET<sup>1</sup>



(1) CRONER SALARY BUDGET SURVEY AND WORLDATWORK. MEAN MERIT INCREASE ONLY.  
 \*COVID PROJECTION\* SALARY INCREASE BUDGETS INCLUDE ZEROS.

### Adapting to Changing Times

As the pandemic surged, C2HR’s Compensation Surveys helped companies adapt by identifying positions deemed essential. In June 2020, 72% of participants had classified essential workers, which included broadcast techs, installation service and maintenance personnel, information technology specialists, front line employees, production workers, and news and critical infrastructure personnel.

Three companies offered additional compensation to essential workers, including stipends, meals, parking and ride-share services. Another 15 of the respondents are considering incentives for customer-facing employees such as front counter and payment representatives and employees who enter customer’s homes, such as installation and repair technicians.

For example, Charter accelerated the announcement of the company’s strategy to increase its minimum wage to \$20 per hour in 2022. As part of that commitment, it provided a \$1.50 per hour wage raise to hourly field operations and customer service employees. Charter’s previous minimum wage commitment was \$15 per hour and was implemented in 2018.

“The increase also recognized the important work these employees perform in ensuring that our customers continue to receive critical connectivity services during the COVID pandemic, given these services are essential for teleworking and remote learning,” said Charter’s Dunlap.

Most organizations (52%) implemented or are considering adjustments to base salaries. The most prevalent changes were reducing executive salaries, eliminating increases this year and reducing increases in 2021. “When the business was at risk, executives took pay cuts,” Croner noted.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic had significant impacts on employment. C2HR’s year-end Pulse Survey disclosed that 66% of companies implemented or are considering furloughs, layoffs or reduced hours. Of those, the majority have implemented layoffs. To reduce the impact on employees, some companies implemented rolling furloughs in which employees were off 1 week a month, until workload resumed. (See Figure 4). In addition, 40% have implemented or are considering hiring freezes.

### **Constancy and Compassion: Cornerstones of Compensation**

In spite of the uncertainty, constancy was the cornerstone of compensation. “The surveys highlighted real caring for employees,” said Croner. “If companies didn’t have to make compensation changes, they didn’t.”

When they did, it was often to maintain employee pay. For example, 61% adapted sales incentives (or plan to), most often providing a salary floor or lowering targets to stabilize pay for sales personnel. In addition, 63% intend to pay the same sales awards as last year. (See Figure 4)

New benefits offered in response to the pandemic emphasized this culture of caring. “We encouraged flexible schedules to accommodate the immediate and abrupt shift to employees’ work and home lives converging, extended healthcare benefits for furloughed employees, offered access to a relief fund to employees suffering financial hardships, and modified our 401K plan to allow for COVID-related hardship distributions,” Auz reported.

Among C2HR Pulse Survey respondents, 45% added benefits beyond those provided by the CARES Act. New benefits included work-from-home stipends, matching gifts for charitable donations, increased time off, free telemedicine visits and no cost-sharing for COVID-related treatment.

For example, Charter implemented a COVID flex-time policy, which provided 3 weeks of additional time off in 2020 for all employees. “This flex-time could be used for COVID-related issues, such as taking care of a family member who is sick,” explained Dunlap.

“It’s been a time of great changes, and we’ve only seen compensation changes when companies absolutely needed to make them,” said Croner. “The industry’s kindness, sensitivity, and generosity have been quite positive.”

FIGURE 4

# COVID-19 Response

RESPONDENTS BY PERCENTAGE

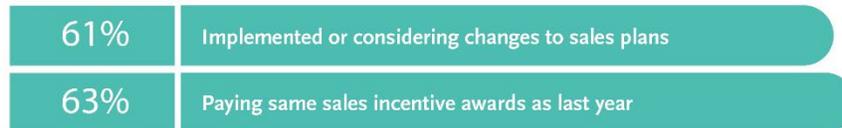
## EMPLOYMENT



## BASE SALARIES



## SALES INCENTIVES



## BENEFITS



SOURCE: DECEMBER 2020 C2HR PULSE SURVEY

### Methodology

C2HR's 2020 Compensation Surveys included 50 participants. Companies included 13 connectivity providers and 37 content developers (**see the attached 2020 participant list**). The survey results are industry-specific, providing an in-depth analysis of pay practices for roughly 173,195 incumbents, including both exempt and nonexempt positions ranging from technicians to top executives. The participants submitted data reflecting 2020 budgets, base compensation figures, amenities and benefits. This year, the Compensation Surveys also included two Pulse Surveys to gather data on pandemic response and an Essential Worker Survey.

### ABOUT C2HR

Content & Connectivity Human Resources (C2HR) is a professional association serving 4,300 members from 50 companies spanning the technology, media and entertainment sectors. C2HR provides industry-specific analytics, information and resources, as well as networking and educational opportunities. Its signature initiatives include the [C2HR Annual Compensation Surveys](#) and the [C2HR CON](#). For more information, visit [www.C2HR.org](http://www.C2HR.org).

## 2020 C2HR Compensation Surveys Participants

### Connectivity Providers

Altice USA, Inc.  
Armstrong Group  
AT&T  
Cable One, Inc.  
Charter Communications, Inc.  
Comcast Cable Communications, Inc.  
Cox Communications, Inc.  
General Communications, Inc. (GCI)  
Google Fiber  
Mediacom Communications Corporation  
RCN Telecom Services, LLC  
TDS Telecom  
WOW! Internet, Cable & Phone

### Content Developers

A+E Networks  
Altice USA, Inc.  
Amazon.com, Inc.  
AMC Networks Inc.  
BBC Studios Americas, Inc.  
Charter Communications, Inc.  
Crown Media Holdings, Inc.  
Discovery, Inc.  
Disney Direct-to-Consumer & International  
ESPN, Inc.  
Fox Corporation, Reporting for: Fox  
Fox Corporation, Reporting for: Fox  
Business, Fox News and Fox Sports  
Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
INSP, LLC

ION Media Networks, Inc.  
Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
Madison Square Garden Company  
MLB Network  
National Basketball Association  
National Football League  
NBCUniversal Media, LLC, Reporting for:  
NBC  
NBCUniversal Media, LLC  
Public Broadcasting Service  
Qurate Retail Group, Reporting for: HSN  
and QVC  
Riot Games, Inc.  
Sony Pictures Entertainment, Reporting for:  
Sony Pictures Television  
Starz (A Lionsgate Company)  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day  
Saints  
The E.W. Scripps Company  
Viacom Media Networks  
ViacomCBS Inc., Reporting for: CBS  
ViacomCBS Inc.  
Walt Disney Television, Reporting for: ABC  
Walt Disney Television, Reporting for:  
Disney Channel, Disney Junior, Disney XD,  
Freeform, FX, National Geographic and  
National Geographic Wild  
WarnerMedia, LLC, Reporting for: The CW  
WarnerMedia, LLC  
World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.

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