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professionals are getting them. That's according to the results of the annual Holiday Bonus and Hiring Survey from staffing firm Accounting Principals.

**Isaac M. O'Bannon** • Oct. 31, 2017

When it comes to holiday gifts from your boss, nothing says Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, or Happy Kwanzaa like a stack of green cash. Even Festivus revelers will have one less thing to add to their list of grievances. Well, there's good news and not-so-good news when it comes to year-end bonuses.

Holiday bonuses for accounting and finance professionals are going up, but fewer professionals are getting them. That's according to the results of the annual [Holiday Bonus and Hiring Survey](#) from staffing firm [Accounting Principals](#).

The good news: Companies that give bonuses are anticipating an average increase in value by a whopping 66 percent this year. That means those who get a bonus are seeing the average anticipated holiday bonus rise to \$1,797, compared to \$1,081 in 2016 and \$858 in 2015.

Unfortunately, the number of U.S. human resources or hiring managers who say they plan to give monetary holiday bonuses is down to 63 percent this year, from 75 percent in 2016. And, of course, not all employees at those firms will receive bonuses.

The Accounting Principals Holiday Bonus and Hiring Survey polled more than 500 U.S. HR and hiring managers, and explored company holiday rewards and hiring trends. The survey results provide valuable insights for today's employers and job seekers as we enter the holiday season, and as the fight for talent becomes fiercer.

Although over one third of respondents noted their organizations were not planning to give out bonuses this year, many of these companies are still giving payouts to their employees in other forms. The biggest reason listed is that their company

intends to provide other employee perks throughout the year (39 percent). For the

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notable increase in organizations providing charitable donations in lieu of bonuses, as some organizations aim to align their goals and values closer to their employees.”

No matter an employee's situation, HR and hiring managers say there are ways to increase your likelihood of receiving a bonus, such as:

- Staying more motivated throughout the year (56 percent, compared to 54 in 2016)
- Being more positive or upbeat (49 percent, compared to 45 in 2016)
- Volunteering to take on additional job duties (42 percent, compared to 34 percent in 2016)
- Reminding the company of their accomplishments (42 percent, compared to 23 percent in 2016)
- Asking their boss for a bonus directly (33 percent, compared to 15 percent in 2016)

“Employers who are giving bonuses, are being more generous with their payouts this year,” added Alexander. “Employees who ask their boss directly for a bonus are twice as likely to be successful in that request than last year, so making proactive, bold moves in 2017 could pay off, but one always needs to approach these conversations with care.”

The survey also examined how HR and hiring managers are approaching 2018 planning during the holiday season. Over half (59 percent) of respondents noted their typical hiring process lasts more than one month, compared to 46 percent in 2016. On average, 2017 is seeing an uptick in the overall length of the hiring process, now taking eight weeks, a full two weeks longer than in 2016.

While holiday bonuses and incentives are a good way to retain top talent, companies who take too long to choose the right candidate lose out on the potential for recruiting the best talent. To be successful long-term, HR and hiring managers must make the hiring process more efficient, while also offering year-end incentives like

bonuses and extra paid time off during the holidays to keep these talented employees

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