

5 Ways to Respond to Your Quiet-Quitting Employees' Cry For Help

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Employers have long received freebies from their workforce. ADP research reveals that employees work an average of nine hours of unpaid overtime every week, amounting to a loss of \$17,726 in annual income. Is there any wonder that Gallup research finds 64% of workers are either not engaged, or worse, actively disengaged with their work?

No, and many burned-out employees are refusing to take it anymore, resulting in “quiet quitting.” This phenomenon spread like wildfire during the summer of 2022, thanks to a viral TikTok video. In the clip, New York musician Zeid Leppelin describes how to quit the hustle mentality and stop going above and beyond at work. Thousands have responded by sharing their own quiet quitting stories – saying “no” to unpaid overtime and refusing to answer work messages off the clock.

Quiet quitting has attracted much attention, with some critics missing the point entirely – accusing their employees of being lazy and “mentally checking out” on their work. But what if leaders acknowledge they have the power to improve the situation for their employees? Here are five ways to respond to quiet quitters by supporting them better:

Related: [8 Ways to Avoid Your Employees Quiet Quitting on You](#)

1. Implement 360 feedback cycles

If we consider quiet quitting a cry for help, leaders should proactively listen to their workforce by introducing 360 feedback cycles. Traditional performance reviews deliver downward feedback from a manager to a subordinate. Managers speak, and employees listen. The problem with this one-way street is that leaders don't get a sense of how their employees are coping or how they feel about the organization.

We can use 360-degree reviews to ask them! This feedback style gathers thoughts and opinions from peers, managers and direct reports, so lower-level employees provide valuable home truths (anonymously, if preferred) about company culture, leadership styles, communication strategies and anything else impacting engagement or productivity.

If 60% of your employees say they're overworked and receive DMs from their manager on the weekends, it's clear you need to support your workers by taking action!

2. Prioritize career mapping

Employees lose enthusiasm when they can't visualize their future at your company. Make it easy for your workers to be excited about coming to work by highlighting an array of career growth and development opportunities.

Career mapping involves building paths across your org chart to show how each individual contributor could earn a promotion or move laterally to a different department. Remember: Not everyone wants to become a manager. But these contributors should still have access to enriching career paths that will add to your company's success.

Be transparent by defining competencies and training requirements for each role, so employees know exactly how to achieve their career goals.

Related: Is Your Employee Development Broken? Here's How to Fix It.

3. Offer flexibility

Flexibility isn't a buzzword; it's an expectation. The pandemic allowed employees to evaluate their priorities and enjoy life outside of work. For some workers, this has meant ditching the commute, having the option to attend their child's school concert in the middle of the day or working from home permanently.

If you're not offering flexible working options, don't be surprised if you lack the support of your staff. While it's challenging to let go of old models, the workplace is evolving, and companies need to change with the times. And flexible working is a win for employers, too, as Gartner research reveals that 43% of workers feel more productive when they can choose their hours and don't have to commute.

Retain your best talent by getting with the program and offering more flexible working arrangements. That might include offering remote positions, compressed hours, frontloaded workweeks or sabbaticals.

4. Model healthy work-life boundaries

If your company culture is full of toxic habits, but you don't know how to break them, look to the top of the tree. Managers are responsible for setting expectations for the team – those who send emails or Slack messages at midnight give the wrong impression. Many “quiet quitters” who've chosen to delete work apps from their phones are simply trying to break the cycle of burnout that starts at the top.

Support your team by creating a clear communications policy

outlining when and how all employees should contact each other during working hours and the expectations for taking a communications break every day and on the weekends.

There's also room for healthier work-life boundaries throughout the working day. If your employees' schedules consist of Zoom call after Zoom call, insist that you build comfort breaks between meetings. You might also implement no-meeting days or switch to asynchronous tools to give employees a break from being constantly "on."

Related: 5 Ways of Ensuring Employee Happiness in Your Business

5. Review employee benefits

Employee perks are the ultimate way to support your workforce. Start by surveying your employees to understand what they want and need from their benefits package – this would work well in a 360 feedback questionnaire. The most popular benefits include health insurance, retirement savings plans, paid time off and student loan repayment assistance. But mental health services, childcare support, pet insurance and fertility benefits are also great ways to acknowledge that your team members have lives outside of work.

Company-wide shutdowns are gaining pace as an employee vacation benefit. The idea is simple: The office closes, and every worker takes the same week of vacation, so employees don't feel stressed about being out of the office. There's zero pressure to check in about work, as nothing is happening. It's an important way to encourage employees to take their full vacation entitlement and enjoy some much-needed rest and relaxation.

Don't wait for quiet quitters to actually quit

Quiet quitting is a relatively new trend, and we have yet to see how it'll develop. But in tandem with the Great Reshuffle, it's not too much of a leap to predict that many quiet quitters will end up jumping ship to be with a more supportive employer.

Once your employees decide to make positive changes to their individual work situations, they're already feeling disheartened. Get ahead of the trend by taking action right now to erase any signs of workplace toxicity, so your company is filled with motivated and rejuvenated employees.

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