

Pessimism About Their Country is Employees' Pressing Concern, Says New meQ Workforce Well-being Survey

Nov 09, 2023 8:52 AM

US employees are 50% more concerned about their country than non-US employees

meQ survey identifies circles of fear, turnover triggers, and productivity killers

BOSTON, Nov. 9, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Pessimism about their country is at the core of workers' 'circles of fear', according to a new meQuilibrium (meQ) workforce well-being [study](#) which found that three-quarters (75.1%) of the 4,466 members surveyed reported feeling worse when they think about the state of their country.

There was a notable difference between US employees and non-US employees, with eight in ten (79.2%) meQ members in the US feeling worse when they think about the state of their country, compared to about half (55.1%) of their non-US counterparts. Half of all US-based workers (51.6%) expect the situation with their country to get worse over the coming months compared with a third (33.8%) of non-US members.

Other stressors impacting employees include money (45.8%), work (38.7%), and relationships (27.5%). Technology and communications sectors were among the hardest hit by job stress, surging by 91% and 83% year over year, respectively. Another hard-hit group was Gen Z workers under 30, nearly half (48%) reported high job stress, compared with their older peers (32%).

"Uncertainty, pessimism and stress still loom large in the workplace," said Brad Smith, PhD, Chief Science Officer, meQ. "It's essential that employers have access to data that predict risks and identify trends to stay apprised of mounting vulnerabilities within employee populations. Armed with information about these 'circles of fear', HR can better provide needed support and encourage empathetic leadership."

Key Turnover Triggers: Mental Demands, Money, and Opportunity

Retention challenges continue amid a tight labor market. Almost a quarter (23%) of younger workers report being highly likely to switch jobs in the next six months, compared to just 13% of older employees. Understanding the factors behind costly turnover is important in addressing it. Mental demands (34.6%), compensation (32.9%), and opportunity for growth (31.4%) were found to be the top turnover triggers.

Another challenge facing employers is diminished productivity. The [survey](#) sheds light on the factors which drive and diminish productivity. Three clear productivity boosters emerged: autonomy, supportive coworkers, and trusted managers. The biggest productivity killer by far was interruptions, followed by events in the news, and non-work responsibilities like eldercare, family, and household chores.

Supportive Managers and Resilient Employees Hold the Key

No matter the challenge – turnover, diminished productivity, pessimism, or stress – resilience is the key to protecting employee well-being. Resilient employees consistently carry a more positive outlook and are consistently less likely to have a pessimistic outlook about their relationships (-78%), work situation (-57%), financial situation (-57%) and state of their country (-12%).

The [study](#) found that highly resilient individuals are substantially less likely to cite certain factors as churn risks, including:

- mental demands of the job (64% less likely),
- compensation (40% less likely),
- sense of purpose (54% less likely),
- work-life balance with family responsibilities (67% less likely), and
- long working hours (58% less likely).

In addition, the [study](#) identified manager support for mental well-being as among the strongest deterrents of turnover intent. Manager support slashes turnover risk in half, on average, by reducing susceptibility to key exit drivers like burnout and disconnection between work and life purpose.

"Managers have substantial influence on employee well-being," said Jan Bruce, CEO, and co-founder, meQ. "Proactive efforts to train supportive managers and build resilience could pay dividends in shoring up retention and improving productivity."

Methodology: meQuilibrium's Fall 2023 workplace well-being study examined changes in overall wellbeing among a sample of 4,466 meQuilibrium members who completed an online survey in August 2023.

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