

# Dealing with 'quiet quitting' at work

The term "quiet quitting" has become a buzzword these days. For those who aren't familiar with it, it refers to an employee's attitude of putting in less effort into his/her work. The employee does his/her job by putting in the minimum effort to avoid being fired.

This could be due to personal and psychological reasons – employees may want to achieve better mental health, for instance. Many believe this approach reduces burnout and sets healthier work/life boundaries. Since Covid-19, surveys show that many employees now value a good work-life balance far more than older generations.

Some employers, however, may have trouble accepting this change. They may have a poor impression of employee productivity and a tendency to fault-find or wonder what has caused this attitude. This is especially true when the company

is understaffed. At the same time, some employees may need some freedom and space to show what they can do based on their experience, passion and knowledge. But they may not see such chances, especially with dominant bosses.

So what needs to change in an organisation to ensure employees not only stay but contribute at their fullest potential?

First and foremost, employers should acknowledge the challenges people might face that cause them to slow down. There must be reasons they are stressed or overwhelmed. Being kind is easier said than done, but that is how rapport is built and improved. Bosses could try to make their staff feel comfortable in their presence by listening to what they want say and trying to empathise with them.

Also, it is best to acknowledge hard work publicly as well as pri-

vately. Take time to appreciate employees and they will return the favour in a thousand ways.

It is also important that management establishes a system of work where employees can understand how bosses work at their best so employees can do the same.

Consider setting up rules about work behaviour that applies to everyone in the organisation, including bosses. This could begin by reviewing official – or even unofficial – procedures and expectations about how everyone works, when they need to be available and what they are expected to achieve.

For example, is it organisation policy to expect everyone to respond to text messages and emails 24/7? Could that be changed to allow "silent periods", when no responses are expected and everyone knows to wait until the next day?

Surveys show that quiet quitting cuts across demographics and could be on the way towards becoming commonplace. Rather than viewing this practise as completely damaging, employers need to reflect on what sort of system and atmosphere they currently have at the workplace. Is the office environment positive? Is the work culture transparent and efficient? Is there a support group in place to help employees with any issues?

At the end of the day, we know it works both ways. Things can only improve when everyone works together as a team. Quiet quitting – it can be good at times, but it can also be an indicator of a problem at the office.

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