



Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
February 2023

Quiet Quitting Is Loudly Showing Managers a New Perspective

By Ekuia Hagan

In recent weeks, “quiet quitting” – doing the bare minimum and dodging accountability in the workplace – has surfaced as a top workplace issue.

Entrepreneur Arianna Huffington made headlines for her LinkedIn article on the subject, writing “[quiet quitting] means just going through the motions, accepting a lack of engagement, joy, and purpose in our work as a long-term solution to burnout. That’s the version of quiet quitting we need to quit.” Countless articles have described the phenomenon and now, the alternative approach for management, “quiet firing,” has taken hold.

The concept has detractors and advocates. However, I believe the public discourse is missing the point. Quiet quitting has always been prevalent in the workplace; it was just hidden in plain sight. Some workers have always felt demotivated but kept it to themselves while scraping by on the bare minimum.

In research published by Erin Reed in Organization Science in 2015, Reed interviewed employees at a top consulting firm to find out the workplace dynamics in a notoriously intense company. Reed discovered that workers who admitted that they didn’t work 80 hours a week weren’t highly regarded by their bosses. However, among those who pretended to work 80 hours a week, their bosses thought they were dedicated. In other words, it paid off to look and act busy.

Although quiet quitting is not new, the vast attention on the topic has made the message louder. The workplace is changing, and in order for managers to succeed, they must pay attention. The challenge is to encourage productivity and still generate results while recognizing the needs and motivations of employees. I believe there are boundaries that can protect employees’ mental and physical health and still encourage high performance.

Do not confuse misery for boredom.

There are sensational outlets taking stories told on TikTok at face value, thinking workers are simply getting a suntan, watching Netflix, and generally doing zero work at all. The truth is likely more boring: Workers are still working, but just doing it in a manner to get by and keep their minds healthy. Rather than being for or against it, management should think about why this is happening. This new generation of workers, and the generations that will come after, are showing that they will not let work lives get the best of them.

Do not make long hours the goal.

A 2021 World Health Organization (WHO) study found long working hours increased deaths from heart disease and stroke. Managers need to catch up with what research is showing. Society is long past the time when work was defined by clocking in and clocking out. Stanford researchers have shown that employee productivity decreases significantly after around 55 hours a week, such that workers who put in 56 hours a week produced about the same output as those who clocked 70 hours.

More hours no longer means more output. Managers should work with employees to set goals that transcend the long-hours mentality. The WHO study urges a call to action: Governments, employers, and workers need to

Continued on the next page.

 **First Choice Health**®



(800) 777-4114



www.FirstChoiceEAP.com

Your EAP service is free, confidential and available 24/7 to help you balance your work, family, and personal life.

work together to agree on (work-hour) limits to protect the health of workers.

Understand multifaceted definitions of success.

Managers need to understand that each person has their own definition of success. For some employees, it may be inner peace and good health. Others may define success as earning money or climbing the ladder. That's not to say everyone should practice quiet quitting, or the extreme forms of it. Definitions of success are ever-evolving. Each worker should define their own version of success rather than adhering to what others think and managers should help employees develop a roadmap to attain that version of success.

Times are changing in workplaces and managers need to take steps to address motivation issues at the root cause. Rather than being in one camp or the other regarding quiet quitting or quiet firing, managers can strive to achieve worker happiness and productivity.

References:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shifting-workplace-dynamics/202210/quiet-quitting-is-loudly-showing-managers-new-perspective>