

Warning Signs of a Checked-out Employee

By Sarah Watson



**It's midday on a Monday.
Do you know where your
employees are?**

**If you do, do you know
what they're doing?**

According to a new study from Mercer, there's a 50 percent chance that any given employee is currently "checked out" or looking for a new job. According to the report, 32 percent of US workers are "seriously considering leaving [their] profession[s] at the present time," and 21 percent are unhappy in their current job and have hit all-time lows in productivity and engagement. Even if your employees are sitting at their desks, they may not be getting anything done.

So, what's the problem? One answer is the economy. If your employees are pulling in the same income they made three years ago, chances are they're unhappy, especially if they've taken on more responsibilities and a heftier workload. Another problem is that many companies

have cut down on benefits and retirement-fund contributions. Other factors, like work environment and office culture, can lead to unhappy workers as well.

The good news is that a solution to employee unhappiness exists, even if your company can't afford to offer pay raises right now. The first step in preventing dissatisfaction and checked-out employee behavior is knowing how to spot the tell-tale signs. Here's what to look for:

Few or no complaints – Don't be fooled: even if your employees aren't voicing any complaints, it doesn't necessarily mean they're happy. While you don't want a workforce of whiners, you do want your employees to feel free to voice their concerns and complaints to you. If everything's quiet on the complaint

Warning Signs of a Checked-out Employee

By Sarah Watson



**It's midday on a Monday.
Do you know where your
employees are?**

**If you do, do you know
what they're doing?**

According to a new study from Mercer, there's a 50 percent chance that any given employee is currently "checked out" or looking for a new job. According to the report, 32 percent of US workers are "seriously considering leaving [their] profession[s] at the present time," and 21 percent are unhappy in their current job and have hit all-time lows in productivity and engagement. Even if your employees are sitting at their desks, they may not be getting anything done.

So, what's the problem? One answer is the economy. If your employees are pulling in the same income they made three years ago, chances are they're unhappy, especially if they've taken on more responsibilities and a heavier workload. Another problem is that many companies

have cut down on benefits and retirement-fund contributions. Other factors, like work environment and office culture, can lead to unhappy workers as well.

The good news is that a solution to employee unhappiness exists, even if your company can't afford to offer pay raises right now. The first step in preventing dissatisfaction and checked-out employee behavior is knowing how to spot the tell-tale signs. Here's what to look for:

Few or no complaints – Don't be fooled: even if your employees aren't voicing any complaints, it doesn't necessarily mean they're happy. While you don't want a workforce of whiners, you do want your employees to feel free to voice their concerns and complaints to you. If everything's quiet on the complaint

front, your employees may be afraid to rock the boat—or they may just not care anymore. Remind your employees that you need to know about problems affecting their productivity at work, and then create an open, comfortable environment for them to do so.

Wasting time – An employee who spends hours on the Internet every day may be an underperformer, or they may just not have enough to do. Make sure your employees have a balanced, fair workload that keeps them feeling challenged and useful. Just make sure not to overload anyone.

Stagnant skills – Are your employees relying on the same skill sets you hired them with? Make sure they're participating in some type of development opportunities to keep them feeling fresh and relevant. To engage fully, employees need to be able to answer the question, "What's in it for me?"

No enthusiasm – Employees should find some enjoyment in what they do, even if their jobs aren't terribly exciting. Let them know how important they are to your company and try to find new challenges for them. Pierre

Omidyar, founder of eBay, understands how crucial enthusiasm is to business success: "You have to really believe in what you are doing, be passionate enough about it so that you put in the hours and hard work that it takes...then you'll be successful."

Too much stress – Watch out for employees who seem to be overworking themselves, trying to handle too many demands and skimping on downtime. Talk about what you can do to relieve some of the strain, and be flexible with timetables and deadlines so you don't lose a solid employee.

Even at an uncertain time in the economy, it's not enough just to have a job. Find ways other than monetary benefits to reward employees who consistently do good work—for example, give them an afternoon off or take them out to lunch.

Remember, every employee is motivated differently. Data derived from assessment tools can help you find out what motivates individual employees and help you retain your best workers.

When it comes to re-engaging a good but bored employee, behavioral traits and motivational drivers

Find ways other than monetary benefits to reward employees who consistently do good work—for example, give them an afternoon off or take them out to lunch.

most often play a major role. Identify the employee's core behavioral traits and figure out their motivators so that, as a manager, you can effectively address a problem with engagement.

If the issue lies more with the manager and you find that an entire department lacks engagement due to a particular management style, it may be time to use a 360-degree feedback tool that allows the team to deliver constructive feedback from direct reports, peers, and the boss. **N**

For more information, please contact John Caspole at [AssessmentSpecialists.com](mailto:JohnCaspole@AssessmentSpecialists.com) or visit <http://www.assessment-specialists.com/about.html>. Profiles International, Waco, TX.

front, your employees may be afraid to rock the boat—or they may just not care anymore. Remind your employees that you need to know about problems affecting their productivity at work, and then create an open, comfortable environment for them to do so.

Wasting time – An employee who spends hours on the Internet every day may be an underperformer, or they may just not have enough to do. Make sure your employees have a balanced, fair workload that keeps them feeling challenged and useful. Just make sure not to overload anyone.

Stagnant skills – Are your employees relying on the same skill sets you hired them with? Make sure they're participating in some type of development opportunities to keep them feeling fresh and relevant. To engage fully, employees need to be able to answer the question, "What's in it for me?"

No enthusiasm – Employees should find some enjoyment in what they do, even if their jobs aren't terribly exciting. Let them know how important they are to your company and try to find new challenges for them. Pierre

Omidyar, founder of eBay, understands how crucial enthusiasm is to business success: "You have to really believe in what you are doing, be passionate enough about it so that you put in the hours and hard work that it takes...then you'll be successful."

Too much stress – Watch out for employees who seem to be overworking themselves, trying to handle too many demands and skimping on downtime. Talk about what you can do to relieve some of the strain, and be flexible with timetables and deadlines so you don't lose a solid employee.

Even at an uncertain time in the economy, it's not enough just to have a job. Find ways other than monetary benefits to reward employees who consistently do good work—for example, give them an afternoon off or take them out to lunch.

Remember, every employee is motivated differently. Data derived from assessment tools can help you find out what motivates individual employees and help you retain your best workers.

When it comes to re-engaging a good but bored employee, behavioral traits and motivational drivers

Find ways other than monetary benefits to reward employees who consistently do good work—for example, give them an afternoon off or take them out to lunch.

most often play a major role. Identify the employee's core behavioral traits and figure out their motivators so that, as a manager, you can effectively address a problem with engagement.

If the issue lies more with the manager and you find that an entire department lacks engagement due to a particular management style, it may be time to use a 360-degree feedback tool that allows the team to deliver constructive feedback from direct reports, peers, and the boss. **N**

For more information, please contact John Caspole at AssessmentSpecialists.com or visit <http://www.assessmentsspecialists.com/about.html>. Profiles International, Waco, TX.