Weadock & Associates LLC

Understanding the "Quiet Quitting" Trend

"Quiet quitting" is an emerging trend where workers only do what their job description entails without going above and beyond. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees shifted their views on their work lives, and this has been reflected in movements such as the Great Reshuffle—a mass movement of workers to jobs that meet their demands for things such as more flexibility and better benefits—the shift to remote work and, now, the quiet quitting trend.

Employees who solely complete their job description and no more could continue to be valuable workers. However, employers can consider steps to engage employees and prevent quiet quitting from happening in the first place. To help eliminate the trend's presence in their organizations, employers should focus on effective communication with their employees and methods to enhance employee engagement.

Signs of Quiet Quitting

Research conducted by Gallup found that only 32% of employees are engaged, and 17% are actively disengaged. Employees who are not engaged could be at risk for doing only their job and not going above and beyond. Further, 53% of workers reported they feel burnt out, according to Talkspace's Employee Stress Check 2022 Report. To improve employee engagement and prevent these issues from turning from quiet quitting into actual quitting, employers need to know what signs to look for. Employers should pay attention to employees who are consistently doing the following:

- Not attending meetings that are not mandatory
- Not being as productive as they once were
- Contributing to team projects less
- Not participating in meetings
- Displaying a lack of enthusiasm

It is important to know that there a several reasons an employee may choose to quiet quit. For example, they may simply refuse to do work outside their job description because they feel they are not being compensated for it. While it may not be clear why an employee is choosing to quiet quit, these signs are a good indicator that an employee may be thinking about it or trying to do so.

What Employers Can Do

Quiet quitting is often the result of decreased motivation and burnout. Further, a lack of effective communication between leaders and employees and a general failure of management and organizations can play a role. For example, failures may include a lack of honesty with employees and not delivering on promises. Consider the following ideas to help improve employee engagement and decrease the odds of quiet quitting among employees:

- **Provide clear job descriptions.** Job descriptions let employees know exactly what is expected of them. Employers should review job descriptions to ensure they accurately reflect the duties they expect their employees to perform.
- **Conduct performance reviews.** Performance reviews are opportunities to reward employees for the positive things they have done and inspire them to continue working hard. Without this feedback and indications of appreciation for hard work, such as title adjustments and salary raises, employees could lack motivation and start to feel burnt out and consider quiet quitting. Further, it is important to recognize employees who go above and beyond because they are likely to feel discouraged and decrease their performance if their contributions go unnoticed. Conversely, performance reviews are just as important for underperforming employees because they are opportunities to clearly communicate expectations and work together to correct the behavior.
- **Educate employees on employee handbooks.** Employee handbooks are another tool employers can use to clearly communicate expectations to employees, but they are only truly effective if employees understand them. Employers should take time to educate employees on their handbook and its policies so they can ensure employee understanding.

The handbook should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that expectations are up to date and that organizations are in compliance with current laws.

- **Provide learning and development opportunities.** High employee engagement is crucial to preventing quiet quitting. One effective way to increase engagement is through learning and development initiatives. According to Zywave's 2022 Attraction and Retention Benchmarking Overview, 29% of employers found career development opportunities to be a top priority of workers during the hiring process. Employees who have these opportunities are more likely to remain engaged and stay motivated to try their best at their jobs.

- **Focus on good management strategies.** Effective management is essential to having efficient, happy employees, so it is important to focus on the techniques managers use. Provide resources to managers about effective strategies and meet with them to discuss ways they can improve. Further, consider conducting skip reviews, where employees talk with their manager's manager to discuss feedback or concerns they may have. This will allow the manager to receive helpful feedback that can be mutually beneficial and improve their employees' experiences.

Takeaway

Quiet quitting is the new term for the trend of employees doing only what their job requires without exceeding expectations. Employers should be aware of the trend and that it will impact every workplace differently. Employers should monitor for signs that employees may be disengaging and utilize different strategies to help prevent quiet quitting. In cases where quiet quitting may be negatively impacting the employer and they cannot seem to resolve the issue, employers should ensure compliance with federal and local employment laws before pursuing any termination action. For specific guidance about disciplining employees, employers are encouraged to seek local legal counsel.

Contact Weadock and Associates, LLC today for more information on workplace trends, employee retention and employment laws.