

Industry News

Increased Workload, Workplace Pressure and Stress Taking Toll on Workers

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Workloads and associated stress are increasing in the workplace while employee morale, motivation and endurance are declining, according to a survey of business leaders and work-life experts conducted by WFD Consulting.

Employee stress and workload have increased substantially in the past 12 months, according to the survey conducted in March. Eight out of 10 respondents reported that managers' and employees' workloads have increased, along with employee stress. At the same time, half of respondents reported that employee motivation, energy and endurance have all decreased.

The demand for immediate action and rapid turnarounds contributes to the escalating work pressure; two-thirds of respondents reported an increase in expectations concerning speed of execution. The expanding global workplace also contributes to increased pressure, with about half of respondents reporting that the demands of managing globally have increased.

Fewer than half (45 percent) of respondents reported that workloads in their organizations are reasonable and only one-third (32 percent) said their organizations have eliminated most low value, unnecessary work, a key factor contributing to workload and overwork. Respondents identify "inadequate staffing to meet work demands" as the biggest factor driving excessive workload. Other factors include "conflicting priorities" and "poor communication and coordination among different functions."

Forty-four percent of respondents report that their companies have taken action to address workload issues or eliminate low-value work. The most common actions include: work prioritization to focus on a few critical needs, process improvement and re-engineering projects to shorten cycle times and increase efficiency, and outsourcing of non-priority and low-value work.

Organizations that recognize the impact of workload pressure are responding with resources to build employee resilience and help manage stress. Companies are encouraging the use of flexible work options and enabling teams to self-manage their workloads. Many are more actively promoting their EAPs, health and wellness programs and fitness centers. Another key action has been leadership communication to employees, especially on the financial state of the organization, and support to make use of available programs.

The survey was administered online using SurveyMonkey to work-life, diversity and talent leaders; business-unit heads; and academic experts. The 103 respondents came from a variety of industry sectors, including financial services, pharmaceuticals, professional services, technology, higher education and governmental and not-for-profit organizations.

For more info: <http://www.wfd.com/news/register-wst.html>