

One in Two U.S. Employees Looking to Leave or Checked Out on the Job - Talent Management magazine The Business of Talent Management

<http://talentmgt.com/articles/view/one-in-two-u-s-employees-looking-to-leave-or-checked-out-on-the-job/>

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Half of all U.S. employees are really not happy, according to Mercer's new "What's Working" survey, conducted over the past two quarters among nearly 30,000 workers in 17 countries, including 2,400 workers in the U.S.

The consulting company's survey found that nearly one in three (32 percent) U.S. workers is seriously considering leaving his or her organization, up from 23 percent in 2005. Meanwhile, another 21 percent are not looking to leave but view their employers unfavorably and have rock-bottom scores on key measures of engagement, a term that describes a combination of an employee's loyalty, commitment and motivation.

"The business consequences of this erosion in employee sentiment are significant, and clearly the issue goes far beyond retention," said Mindy Fox, a senior partner at Mercer and the firm's U.S. region leader. "Diminished loyalty and widespread apathy can undermine business performance, particularly as companies increasingly look to their workforces to drive productivity gains and spur innovation."

Employee concerns about work are pervasive, reflecting an evolving employment deal that they have seen as a series of takeaways, plus further cuts made during economic tough times:

- Only 43 percent of U.S. employees believe they are doing enough to financially prepare for retirement – down from 47 percent in 2005, and just 41 percent believe their employers are doing enough to help them prepare, up slightly from 38 percent.
- Sixty-eight percent of employees rate their overall benefits program as good or very good, down from 76 percent in 2005, while 59 percent say they are satisfied with their health care benefits, down from 66 percent.
- Base pay is the most important element of the employment deal, by a wide margin, but U.S. workers show lower satisfaction with base pay (53 percent satisfied, down from 58 percent in 2005).
- Despite improvements, scores for career development and performance management remain low. Just 42 percent of employees agree that promotions go to the most qualified employees in their organization, up from 29 percent in 2005, and 46 percent agree that their organization does an adequate job of matching pay to performance, up from 33 percent.

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As a result, overall scores are down consistently across key engagement measures while intention to leave is up across all employee segments, with the youngest workers most likely to be eyeing a departure – 40 percent of employees age 25–34 and 44 percent of employees 24 and younger.

According to Fox, an effective employment deal includes both how the deal is defined and how it is delivered.

“Employees see a 'disconnect' between what employers are promising and what they are delivering,” she said. “Organizations should re-examine their deals – both the traditional and non-traditional elements – then support them with effective administration and consistent, authentic communication that fosters a sense of belonging and helps employees make better rewards choices and career decisions.”

Jason Jeffay, a senior partner and global leader of Mercer’s talent management consulting, said, “Without question, employers face significant challenges in raising engagement but they can be overcome by making the right trade-offs and investments in the employment deal, while enhancing leadership skills and managerial effectiveness on the front line.”

“Often, a change in mood or sentiment is not spotted until it becomes a full-blown issue,” said Pete Foley, a principal at Mercer and employee research consultant. “Employers must periodically take the pulse of their own employees to identify their specific areas of concern and link employee opinion to outcomes such as productivity and retention.”

Source: Mercer