

Talent Retention in the Age of Quiet Quitting: Rethinking Employee Engagement and Motivation

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Abstract

This Research Paper traces the growing dilemma for companies of keeping hold of their best people at a time of 'quiet quitting'. It examines the reasons why, in a post-COVID world, organizations will have to rethink the way they think about motivating and engaging employees in an environment when employees very well may "be there" but not be there. But the book is not just a deep dive into the causes of disengaged workers; it has academic explanations about how meaning, autonomy and community can be fostered in the workplace. Drawing on a review of the literature, the survey and evidence on the workplace, the research hopes to offer practical advice for attracting and retaining staff in today's work.

Introduction

What we're all starting to see is a real epidemic of what's called quiet quitting," said Claire Wasserman, the founder and chief executive of Ladies Get Paid, a young professional women's organization that has grown from 5,000 members to 70,000 in the last year. But instead of moving towards the exit through the doors, the term silent quitting describes the moment that workers check out mentally and emotionally from their position, climbing the ranks but distorting the responsibilities, the work and the excellence that had gone with it without applying the same level of enthusiasm or effort they used to in the past. This is a matter that has a great bearing on the effectiveness and stability of the workforces in firms.

A quiet quitting is the cliché of these latter-day reports, and it describes the emotional withdrawal workers feel when the way they work is cut off from their emotional value system (or they are undervalued). This misfit is sometimes visible, but commonly results in under performance, obstruction and low morale. For corporate America, that means they have to understand the root causes of quiet quitting and re-envision how they can engage employees around something beyond pay, job titles or mechanical performance reviews to generate a values and mission-driven raison d'être.

Objectives

This study aims to:

Why Workers Don't Go the Extra Mile: A profile of the specific reasons that some workers disengage and stop going above and beyond.

Decoding New Workforce Motivations: To find out what motivates people to remain in the workforce today, factors that can include flexible hours and telecommuting, among other reasons.

Identifying the pulse of employee engagement and strategies for implementation: Trying to understand how the existing tactics work at employee engagement and how they are effectively helping in disengagement.

Identify the mismatch between employees' wants and what organisations offer: Create a delta between employee needs and employer offers in the area of recognition, learning and flexibility.

SOLUTIONS FOR KEEPING TALENT: To craft a well-reasoned solution that is actionable for companies - a way to give companies specific tactics and tools to cultivate an environment in which employees jump in, roll up their sleeves and reduce turnover.

Literature Review

Employee engagement in the workplace today, looks a lot different than it used to. On the other hand, a number of other dimensions like work-life-balance, job autonomy, belongingness are also considered to be responsible in the retention process (Gallup2014). They're no longer just drivers who get cash-bonuses and job-titles, they're after that feeling of psychological safety, they're yearning for growth—in their personal and professional lives and they want to be a part of something that makes them bigger than who they are.

According to Deloitte's Insight (2024) report, employees are more likely to stick with an organization that treats them well and holds them in high esteem, and share the company's purpose. Flexible work environments, tuition reimbursement, career pathing — even that is something the organization desires from job satisfaction. But it's evident that if businesses hope to fend off the quiet quitting phenomenon, they are going to have to meet these expectations as they advance toward greater flexibility in work practices.

Methodology

Methodology This research is mixed-methods; this paper reports both primary and secondary data. An online questionnaire was shared among working professionals across professions, responses are presented demonstrating what they feel about motivation and engagement, and where they feel disengaged/trapped in job. The second sources were a reports, academic research, and job market studies, ranging from years 2021 to 2024.

Charts and graphs displayed high-level employee motivation, retention and organizational challenges for better presentation of the information. This discovery enabled us to see patterns in both employee satisfaction's driving factors and how to best get them engaged.

Findings

Understanding Quiet Quitting

“Quiet quitting” is a term that has crept into the discourse on new workplace dynamics. While passive forms of disengagement like silent quitting are characterised as silent and employees nominally show up to work, they no longer go the extra mile (discretionary effort) or achieve non-mandated tasks at work. Such behaviour often results from an employer undervaluing or overworking an employee.

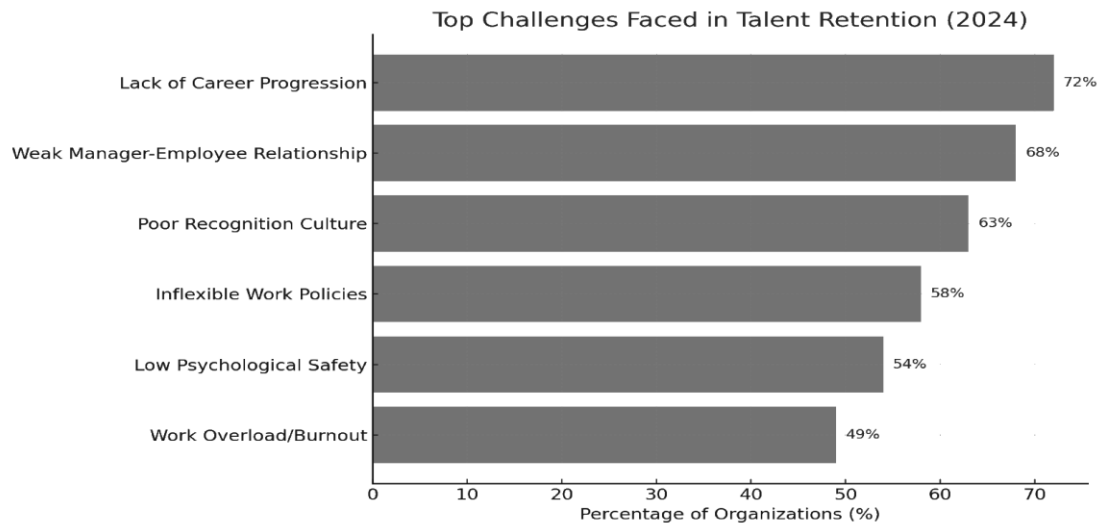
And the damage silent quits inflict is huge — culture-draining, team-destroying, productivity-sapping. “If you have employees that aren't mentally and emotionally engaged, you essentially have a human version of a milling machine,” he said, “They're physically there working but they're technically out to lunch in terms of being sold on your company's mission.” I will also add:(as if it weren't obvious enough here)Passive resignation is when you are so deeply unhappy with the cellmate/jail of the roommate you are openly calling "Life" on the daily, no matter how your strain of the Udder don't look like chains--it's roiling away.

MOTIVATION THEORIES BRIEF PERSONALITY CHAFF PSYCHOLOGY SCALES Personality: 5 Factor Model (McCrae & Costa, 1997), PCI (Eysenck, 1957) Trait: BIS/BAS (Carver & White, 1994) And Sensitivity to Reward and Punishment (Torrubia et al., 2001) Reinforcement preference model (Corr & McNaughton, 2000) Multi-faceted model of reward (Berridge, 2001) BAS, Behavioral Activation System; BIS, Behavioral Inhibition System.



This is what you will typically encounter with these theories of motivation that seem to have been around a long time explaining what motivates people in the workplace that isn't grounded in something more traditional like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs or Herzberg's Two-Factor theory. But the post-pandemic digital age is rendering those models increasingly obsolete. Today's workers care less about the old standbys of money and job security and more about autonomy, psychological safety and the meaning of their work. For instance, in Maslow's theory, people's motivations are centered on fulfilling basic bodily needs rather than pursuing higher order goals, such as those associated with self-actualization. But in a connected, work-from-anywhere world, flexibility and autonomy mean a lot to so many employees, in no small part because they do help to drive a sense of control in managing their work-life balance. This new way of looking at things, inevitably, implies the review of the classic motivations and the acknowledgment of a much more radical model of involvement of the workers. Here are more military-related articles Why Engagement Matters Most Now

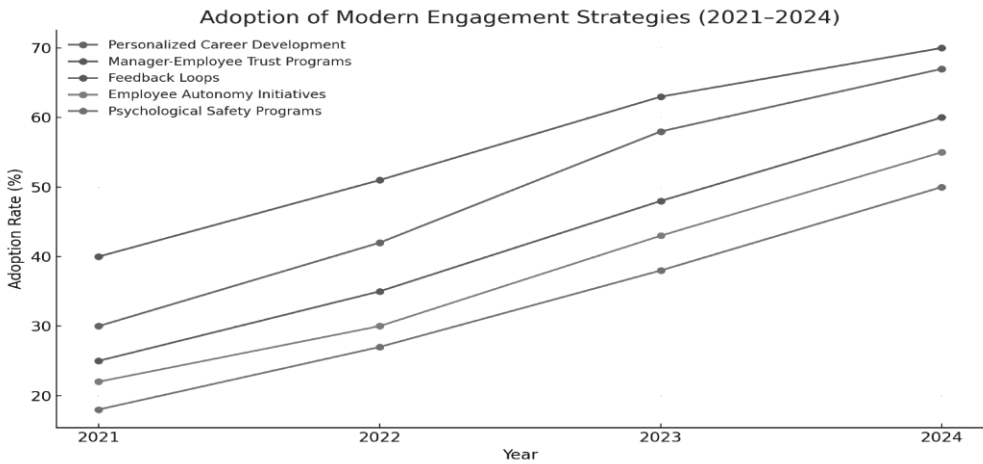
This study demonstrates the importance of employees' involvement in their individual performance as well as in the profitability of the organization. In line with this, involved employees are also more productive, call in sick less often and are less likely to leave their company. Perhaps one of the most significant findings in this Gallup report was that companies with a more engaged workforce are 17% more productive and have a 21% higher profit than companies with lower scores.



Staff engagement becomes even more effective in a world of silent quitting. When you wire people to how they really want to contribute, they're not even phonein' it in, and they're punchin' the clock. Retention can go down with employee well-being, career growth, and recognition-driven engagement and high team morale etc.

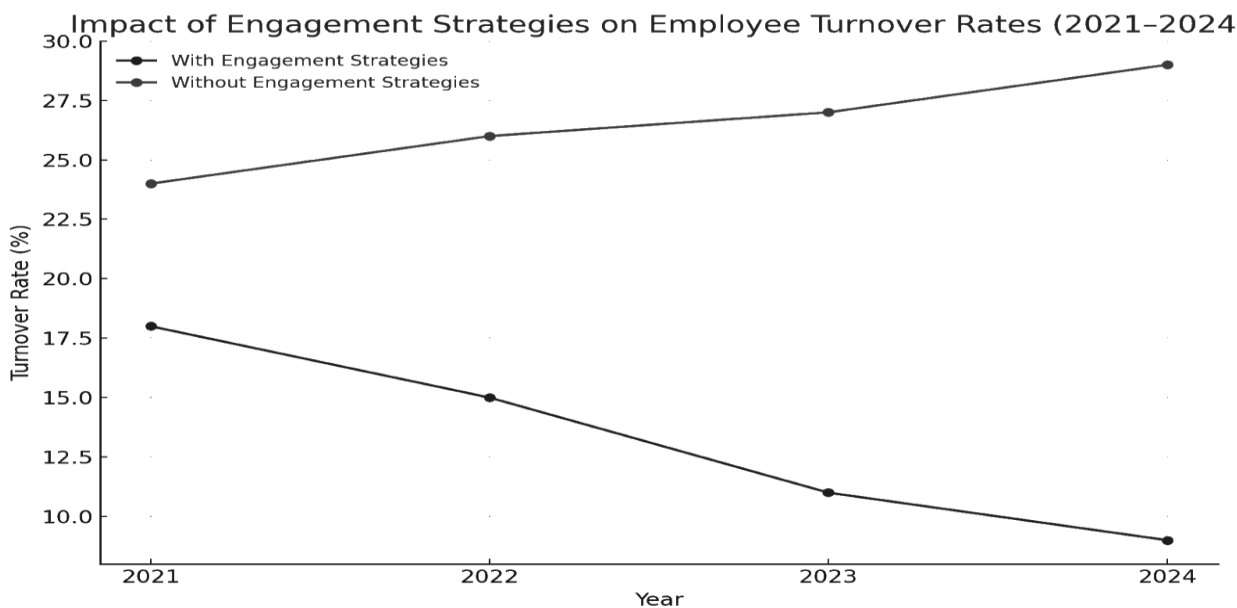
Constructing what fuels the modern-day worker

Today, employees are no longer motivated by the pay purse or title push. It’s all about the perks and passion of the company culture work. Studies have shown that employees today value psychological safety, mental health, learning and flexibility more than traditional perks.



An entire chapter about the immense value of flexibility — in remote work, with flexible hours — should be penned in the history books. SHRM (2024), note that employees with adequate time for personal duties are also less likely to leave employer’s employ while doing a good job. Especially now with COVID-19 and the reassessment of work life balance.

Moreover, if companies do offer this type of professional development for employees — as in training, career advancement tracks and a mentor — they can up the odds the employee stays. Aspiration Employees are looking for more than just something to do, they want to make sure their professional aspirations are in sync with their personal aspirations.



Here are the top 10 things you need to concentrate on to motivate your employees in the years to come.

Here are the top ten reasons, that most recent to come off the backs of the workers:

Work-life balance

Recognition and appreciation

Career progression

Job security

Autonomy

Flexibility

Sense of purpose

Compensation and benefits

Professional development

Workplace culture

What is perhaps less murky is that the discussion about what can make work a place of fulfillment, purpose and reward is increasingly shifting from something the organization's leaders own to one that employees are caring about most. Employers who dismiss these drivers could find well-performing employees quietly "quitting" — reporting for work but hunting for a job at a company that better aligns with their values.

Existing/Changed Modalities of Interaction

In order to address this rise of the silent quit, organizations began adopting new engagement strategies for mental health support, real-time feedback loops, personalized career plans and a broader array of learning and development opportunities. Such initiatives are proven to decrease employee disengagement and aid staff retention as a whole.

Then there are some of the newer forms of staff engagement such as personalised CPD or a feedback loop that are increasingly popular right now. 20 (Q20.asia) McKinsey & Company (2023) data shows that companies with a strong engagement program have a significantly lower turnover, so there's no doubt engagement can pay off and produce a loyal and dedicated workforce.

Conclusion

But in the age of the silent quitter, organizations must reposition how they engage and develop talent and in so doing lock in retention and engagement. There are traditional tools that you rely on to attract and keep staff that won't cut it in the same way that they did- you must change as well and particularly in a time when work/life balance, flexibility and purpose all work in just as much to job satisfaction.

They can reduce disengagement and keep their best by making engagement experience more human, caring and recognition, safety and agility. Quitting quietly is tough, but it's a tough that can be beaten.

Recommendations

Invest in better managers that actually have the emotional intelligence to hold up their teams.

Build a culture that encourage openness and inclusion, and respects diversity, where you can discuss work and personal topics.

Flexibility in work that lets employees balance their work and their life.

Double down on personalised job path for employees and create opportunities for personal growth and progression.

Support rewards and recognition initiatives, which helps to recognise success and achievements and make sure staff feel rewarded and more likely to stay.

Encourage and support ongoing learning and growth with training and mentoring.

References

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