



# MIND THE WORKPLACE

**the  
FAAS FOUNDATION**


**MHA**  
 Mental Health America

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mental Health America (MHA), formerly the National Mental Health Association, was founded in 1909 and is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to helping all Americans achieve wellness by living mentally healthier lives. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, integrated care and treatment for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

**This publication was made possible by The Faas Foundation.**

This report was researched, written and prepared by Michele Hellebuyck, Theresa Nguyen, Madeline Halphern, Danielle Fritze, and Jessica Kennedy.

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# MESSAGE FROM PAUL GIONFRIDDO, PRESIDENT & CEO, MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

Workplace mental health has been receiving increased attention in recent years. It is no wonder why: workplace mental health problems result in as much as 500 billion dollars of lost productivity annually.

It isn't just the financial losses that matter. Overstressed and unhealthy employees contribute to unhappy workplaces. This means that the indirect effects on everyone else – the people who dread coming to work – may not show up in the calculated productivity losses, but contribute to them nevertheless.

Two years ago, in partnership with the Faas Foundation, MHA undertook a project to understand more about the impact of mental health concerns in the workplace. We created an online survey about workplace mental health, and let all interested people participate in it. The thousands who responded do not represent a randomized sample. However, they do reflect the feelings of people who are concerned about their mental health, and the mental health and well-being of their co-workers.

You will see eye-opening results throughout this report.

But for me, the essential question isn't "How bad is it?" but this: "What comes next?" For MHA, here's what comes next: we will be using this information not to criticize any employer, but to help all employers think through how we can make all workplaces mentally healthier.

There will be plenty of opportunities, and plenty of good options. We look forward to continuing to partner with the Faas Foundation to identify and implement these in the coming years. And we look forward to building relationships with other partners to promote their efforts in this area, too.

After all, we're all in this together.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Gionfriddo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'P' at the beginning.

Paul Gionfriddo  
President and CEO  
Mental Health America

# MESSAGE FROM ANDREW FAAS, FOUNDER, FAAS FOUNDATION

The Faas Foundation is pleased to have partnered with Mental Health America (MHA) in helping organizations create psychologically safe, healthy, fair, emotionally intelligent and productive work environments.

We believe that current workplace dynamics are one of the biggest if not the biggest social and economic issues of our time, and as such, presents a huge opportunity to improve the overall wellbeing of employees, their families, the organizations they work for, and the communities in which they live.

A 2016 Harvard/Stanford study revealed that 120 deaths annually may be attributable to workplace stress. When we consider that these are premature deaths, this is a number one killer.

MHA in conducting this research has uncovered the reasons for the significant stress in the workplace, much of which is unnecessary. By understanding this we can find ways for organizations to reduce and ideally eliminate the unnecessary stress factors in their organizations.

Personally I can relate to the devastating impacts of unnecessary stress. Thirteen years ago I had symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder because for eighteen months I was retaliated against for blowing the whistle on a corrupt executive. This horrible experience motivated me to do what I can so that others don't have to experience it, and if they do, how to better handle it than I did.

This report highlights some very disturbing findings which need to be exposed so that employers can better appreciate both the huge risks and the tremendous opportunities.

My ask of you is to circulate the report to everyone you know, and in turn ask them to circulate it to everyone they know.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Faas".

Andrew Faas  
Founder  
Faas Foundation

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mental Health America (MHA) recognizes the psychological impact that workplaces can have on their employees. Millions of employees spend a large part of their day, and lifetime, at work, increasing the effect that workplace environments can have on psychological well-being. MHA's research is part of an ongoing commitment to uncovering workplace disparities and addressing the psychological needs of the workforce.

The Workplace Health Survey measured the attitudes and perceptions of over 17,000 employees across 19 industries in the US. Survey questions were designed to collect data on workplace culture, workplace stress, employee engagement, and employee benefits. Survey findings explored the relationship between workplace health and employee engagement, a concept that has, in recent years, become more measurable, and indicative of workplace stress levels and overall mental health.

Workplace Health Survey findings show that only twenty-one (21 percent) of respondents felt that they were paid what they deserved, while 44 percent of respondents felt that skilled employees were not given recognition. Additionally, only 36 percent and 34 percent of respondents felt that they could rely on supervisor and colleague support, respectively. This perceived lack of support and recognition in the workplace contribute to higher levels of workplace stress and isolation, and are strongly correlated with job dissatisfaction. Survey respondents also reported high rates of absenteeism (33 percent) and work-family conflict (81 percent), as well as increased mental health and behavioral problems (63 percent).

Unsupportive and unstable workplaces fostered psychological distress and contributed to a decline in employee engagement. Among employees with lower levels of engagement, a majority (65 percent) reported that they spent between 31-50 hours a week distracted in their workplace, and 70 percent stated that they were thinking about and/or actively looking for a new job. Low levels of employee engagement were moderately correlated with overall workplace health.

Across industries, those scoring lowest in workplace place health experienced higher levels of job dissatisfaction and insecurity.

The healthiest workplace industries were:

- Healthcare,
- Financial Services, and
- Non-Profit.

The unhealthiest workplace industries were:

- Manufacturing,
- Retail, and
- Food and Beverage.

Workplace perks, such as flexible time arrangements, opportunities for professional development, and open door and relaxed policies had the greatest influence on job satisfaction and employee engagement. Industries that scored highest on workplace health had a higher percentage of respondents stating they received flexible work arrangements, professional development opportunities, and an open door and relaxed work environment. Survey findings also confirmed that workplace perks promoted more positive attitudes and perceptions amongst employees, while increasing engagement and productivity.

Fortunately, for organizations that seek to improve workplace health, the survey's results indicate that a handful of low cost options have a significant impact. Staff recognition and praise matters more than compensation, indicating that improving managements' skills and ability to provide verbal and written support is more meaningful than increasing salaries. Similarly, employees really want to feel valued in their work environment. One opportunity is to explore extra benefits. Companies struggling with high turnover should consider adding flexible work arrangements, professional development, and ways to encourage a relaxed work environment to improve productivity and satisfaction.

# INTRODUCTION: WORKPLACE HEALTH SURVEY

The Workplace Health Survey was launched on June 15, 2015. It was available to the public through MHA's website, as part of our Online Screening Program. The survey included 20 questions that were selected as preliminary measures for workplace environment, workplace stress levels, and employee engagement. Research has shown that one's ability to experience satisfaction in life is correlated with the opportunity to experience satisfaction in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> When we consider that individuals will spend a quarter to a third of their life working<sup>2</sup>, the state of workplaces and its impact on the workforce's mental and physical health is an area that cannot be overlooked.

The Workplace Health Survey collected 17,140 responses in 21 months (June 1, 2015-March 1, 2017). MHA identified three domains associated with workplace health and employee wellness:

- **Workplace Environment:** general workplace conditions or norms that influence how employees perceive their value and contribution to an organization's mission on a day-to-day basis. Workplace Environment analysis included accountability measures, support mechanisms, and systems of reward and recognition.
- **Workplace Stress:** a disruption to an individual's cognitive-emotional- environmental system - by some external environmental demand in the work environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).<sup>3</sup> Workplace Stress questions assessed the impact of stress on employees.
- **Employee Engagement:** the level of commitment and involvement an employee has toward their organization, its values, and goals.<sup>4</sup> Employee Engagement questions considered work investment and emotional attachment to the workplace.

## Additional Analysis

The report provides further analysis of the following topics:

- Unhealthy Workplaces vs Healthy Workplaces compares workplaces that scored highest on our survey against those that scored the lowest;
- Unhealthy Industries takes a look into industries who scored low on workplace health; and
- Organizational Rank and Workplace Health explores how an individual's position in the workplace (e.g. management vs. line staff) results in different experiences in reported outcomes.

## Drawing Comparisons

Survey responses were scored on a 1-5 Likert scale: 1 – Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often, 5 – Always. Inverse scoring was used for negatively worded questions or statements. For example, in the question "I trust my team or coworkers to support my work activities, 1 point is assigned for every "Never" response, and 5 points for every "Always." For the question, "I feel like my company might fire me or let me go at any time," 5 points is assigned to every "Never" and 1 point to every "Always." Lower scores indicate unhealthy workplace. High scores indicate healthier workplace. The final score for each respondent represented the sum of all ratings, while the average was determined by a collective sum divided by all respondents. For industry workplace scores, the collective sum of ratings within each industry was divided by the number of respondents who reported working in that industry.

The top and bottom 10 percent of scores were determined by sorting total scores in ascending order and selecting the top and bottom 10 percent of scores. The **top 10 percent** of scores represented the highest scores and the **healthiest** workplaces, while **bottom 10 percent** represented the lowest scores and the **least healthy** workplaces.

Correlation Coefficients were computed for each question against the overall workplace health score. Question 12 (I tend to work alone because my workplace is unhelpful or hostile) and Question 14 (If things get hard, my supervisor will support me) had the strongest correlation to the overall score,(r= .70 and r= .69, respectively). Question 19 (I get emotional support from at least one person in my office) had the weakest correlation to the overall all score (r=.37). Question 6 (I feel like my company might fire me or let me go at any time) was the only question that was negatively correlated with the overall score (r=-.05).

## **WORKPLACE HEALTH SURVEY QUESTIONS**

The Workplace Health Survey included the following questions and statements:

Individuals were asked to rate each question/statement below using the following scale: **Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always:**

1. My company appropriately deals with co-workers who are not doing his or her job.
2. My supervisor works as hard as everyone else in the company.
3. All people are held accountable for their work, regardless of their position in the company.
4. People in my company are paid what they deserve.
5. People are being unfairly recognized while others with better experience or skills don't get recognized.
6. I feel like my company might fire me or let me go at any time.
7. My work environment is overly focused on trivial activities (e.g., feeling micromanaged or having overly bureaucratic company policies).
8. I'm afraid to go on vacation because I might lose my job or things will fall apart.
9. My employer promotes safe working conditions (including expectations about coming to work in unsafe situations like driving through bad weather or when someone is sick).
10. The stress from my job affects my relationships with my friends or family.
11. I trust my team or coworkers to support my work activities.
12. I tend to work alone because my workplace is unhelpful or hostile.
13. My company has realistic expectations about my workload.
14. If things get hard, my supervisor will support me.
15. I speak poorly about my company (including boss or coworkers) to others (like family and friends).
16. How often are you distracted or find it difficult to concentrate because of your work environment? How many hours per week? (Optional)
17. I spend time thinking about or actively looking for another job. How many hours per week? (Optional)
18. I miss work because of work related stress. How many days per month? (Optional)
19. I get emotional support from at least one person in my office.
20. The frustration or stress from my job causes me to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as drinking or crying regularly.

The survey also collected the following work environment information. Answering these questions was voluntary.

### **How many people work for your organization?**

- 1-10
- 11-50
- 51-250
- 250-1,000
- 1,000+

### **Do you work part-time or full-time?**

- Part-time
- Full-time

### **Which of the following best describes your position?**

- Someone supervises me, I supervise no one.
- Someone supervises me, I supervise one or more people.
- I supervise one or more people; no one supervises me.

**What industry do you work in? (Select up to two)**

- -None-
- Academia/Science
- Aerospace & Defense
- Agriculture
- Automotive
- Construction
- Energy
- Financial Services
- Food and Beverage
- Government
- Health Care
- Housing and Real Estate
- Manufacturing
- Non-Profit
- Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology
- Printing & Publishing
- Retail
- Telecommunications & Media
- Transportation & Logistics
- Other

**My employer provides/offers the following benefits (Check all that apply):**

- Tools needed to do my job (adequate work space, a working computer, other supplies)
- Extra time off (vacation, sick, PTO)
- Great insurance benefits
- Other financial perks (401k, short or long-term disability)
- Flexible work arrangements (Teleworking)
- Light amenities (Food/snacks)
- Flexibility in time off during the day (breaks, time to go to the gym, relax, take a nap, or long lunch)
- Competitive wages/salary
- Open door and relaxed work environment
- Opportunities for professional growth

# UNDERSTANDING U.S. WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Workplace Health Survey respondents had an overall mean score of 40 (out of 100), with a median score of 39, indicating that respondents were generally unhappy with the state of their workplace. The Workplace Health Survey was made available along with MHA's online mental health screening tools ([www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org)). Over 70 percent of individuals who took the work health survey were on MHA Screening or on MHA's other mental health related content prior to taking a survey. Lower average scores among users indicate a connection between help seeking behaviors in mental health (looking for mental health resources) and poor workplace satisfaction.

For many of us, a quarter to a third of our lives will be spent in the workplace. On a daily basis, we will spend more waking hours in our workplace than at home, and experience more exchanges with team members than family members. Job satisfaction and levels of productivity depend on work life balance, work demands, work support, and work rewards.<sup>5</sup> Simultaneously, an organization relies on a productive and engaged workforce to remain competitive and meet external demands.

Workplace Health Survey questions on work environments focused on accountability, reward and recognition, and support.

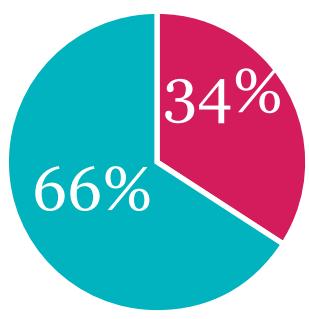
## Accountability and Support

According to survey responses many employees experience a disconnect between themselves and their workplace as it relates to staff management and support. Survey respondents were affected by workload expectations, and reported a lack of support across all ranks in their workplace. Over 70 percent of respondents felt their companies had unrealistic workload expectations. Forty-three percent of respondents reported that their company "Never" or "Rarely" had realistic workload expectations. Additionally, a majority of respondents reported that there was a lack of support across the workplace. Only 36 percent felt they could rely on their supervisors and only 34 percent felt they could rely on their colleagues for support. Support from supervisor and colleagues were strongly correlated with overall job satisfaction ( $r=.70$  and  $r= .64$ , respectively).

Many employees also perceived a lack of fairness in terms of work distribution and responsibility. This perceived lack of fairness is likely to foster additional dissatisfaction with separate and unequal workplace experiences.

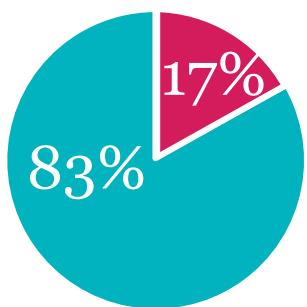
Eighty-three percent of respondents felt that companies had not appropriately dealt with coworkers who did not do their jobs. Forty-nine percent felt that coworkers not doing their job were "Rarely or Never" dealt with appropriately. Only 28 percent of respondents felt that all staff regardless of position were held accountable. Forty-one percent reported that it was "Rarely or Never" the case that all people were held accountable.

I TRUST MY TEAM OR  
COWORKERS TO SUPPORT MY  
WORK ACTIVITIES



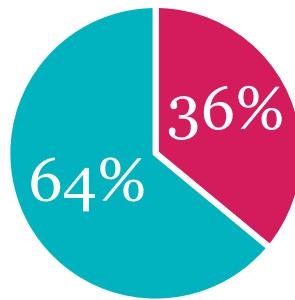
- Always or Often
- Sometimes, Rarely or Never

MY COMPANY  
APPROPRIATELY DEALS WITH  
COWORKERS WHO ARE NOT  
DOING HIS OR HER JOB



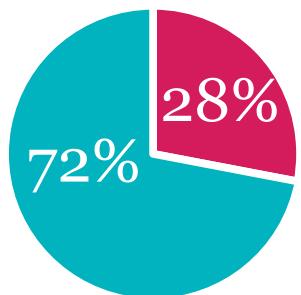
- Always or Often
- Sometimes, Rarely or Never

IF THINGS GET HARD,  
MY SUPERVISOR WILL  
SUPPORT ME



- Always or Often
- Sometimes, Rarely or Never

ALL PEOPLE ARE HELD  
ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR  
WORK, REGARDLESS OF THEIR  
POSITION IN THE COMPANY



- Always or Often
- Sometimes, Rarely or Never

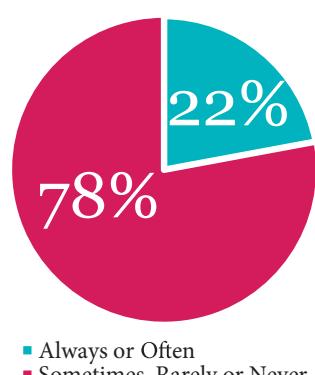
## Reward and Recognition

Research on workplace wellness confirms that work environments that provide positive recognition and reward, and promote professional development generate higher levels of employee engagement, promote quality employee performance and increase organizational stability.<sup>6</sup> The Workplace Health Survey found that only 22 percent of respondents believed that employees were paid enough. Forty-five percent of respondents said that they were “Rarely or Never” paid what they deserved. Seventy-seven percent of respondents believed that skilled employees were not given proper recognition. Forty-four percent of respondents believed that skilled employees were “Always or Often” overlooked.

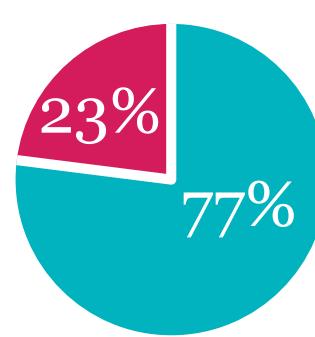
Opportunities for professional development in the workplace allow employees to develop new skills, diversify their work, and experience work autonomy. Seventy-four percent of respondents felt hindered by trivial activities, including feeling micromanaged and forced to adopt ineffective processes to complete their work. **Forty-six percent of respondents reported that they “Always or Often” felt hindered by trivial activities.** Workplace Health Survey findings show the majority of employees feel stagnant, confined, or controlled in their workplaces. Results draw attention to an organizations’ ability to incentivize employees by rewarding their workplace contributions.

Survey findings point to a need for practices and policies that increase employee engagement and professional development. Data show that employees taking the survey perceive a lack of support and recognition in their workplace. Additionally, there is an unmet demand for professional growth through the diversification of skills, and increased work autonomy. The absence of fair pay, recognition and autonomy, and tangible benefits and reinforcements, fosters higher levels of job dissatisfaction.

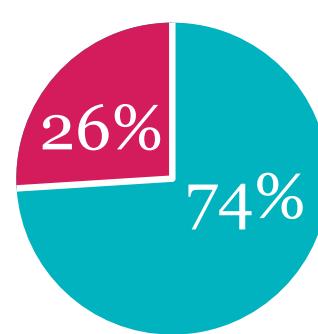
PEOPLE IN MY COMPANY ARE PAID WHAT THEY DESERVE



PEOPLE ARE BEING UNFAIRLY RECOGNIZED WHILE OTHERS WITH BETTER EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS DON'T GET RECOGNIZED



MY WORK ENVIRONMENT IS OVERLY FOCUSED ON TRIVIAL ACTIVITIES (E.G., FEELING MICROMANAGED) OR HAVING OVERLY BUREAUCRATIC COMPANY POLICIES



# MORE THAN JUST TENSION: WORKPLACE STRESS

Work Health Survey questions measuring workplace stress focused on the impact a negative work environment had on a person's ability to do their job, their relationships, and their mental health.

## Absenteeism

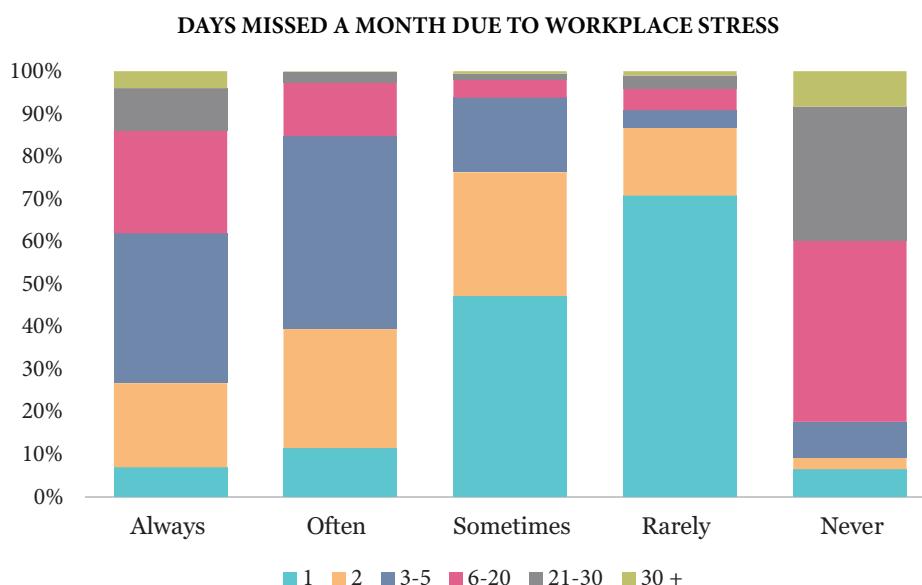
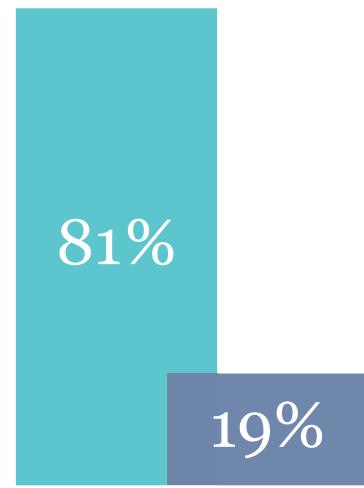
Workplace stress was reported to contribute to higher rates of absenteeism in the workplace. Thirty-three percent of respondents stated they always, often, or sometimes missed work because of stress. Survey respondents were asked how many days a month they missed due to stress.

Within the group of respondents selecting that they "Always or Often" missed work due to workplace stress and reported the number of days missed, 53 percent missed 6 or more days a month. For organizations, higher rates of absenteeism results in lower levels of productivity and performance. Stress-inducing work environments are, therefore, equally as threatening to an organization's stability. A more thorough analysis on the costs of absenteeism and low productivity is provided in the section on the section Cost of Low Employee Engagement.

## Work-Family Conflict

Stress cultivated by unhealthy work environments does not remain in the workplace. It spills into personal spaces, influencing personal relationships. Eighty-one percent of the respondents stated that work stress affected their personal relationships. **Fifty-two percent reported that relationships with friends and family were "Always or Often" affected by workplace stress.** Experiencing problems with outside relationships due to workplace stress was strongly correlated with workplace health ( $r=.62$ ). Considerable work-family conflict threatens individual well-being by contributing to a greater sense of isolation and dissatisfaction, and increase risk for depression and anxiety.<sup>7</sup>

## THE STRESS FROM MY JOB AFFECTS MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY FRIENDS OR FAMILY



## Mental and Physical Health

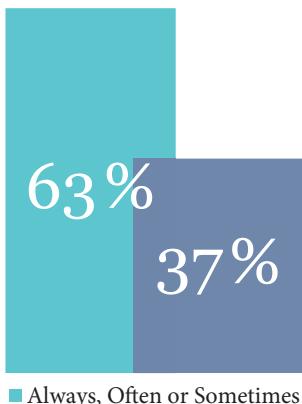
Employees facing mental and physical disruptions in the workplace are also more likely to rely on alcohol or substance use to provide tension reduction.<sup>8</sup> The Workplace Health Survey found that 63 percent of respondents reported that their workplace stress resulted in a significant impact on their mental and behavioral health. More than a third (34 percent) of respondents stated that they “Always or Often” engaged in unhealthy behaviors in response to workplace stress. Engaging in unhealthy behavior due to workplace stress was strongly correlated ( $r=.60$ ) with workplace health. This is significant given that high stress levels and increased substance use lead to decreased employee engagement, sub-optimal performance, and high turnover rates.

Workplace stress also had an impact on employees’ ability to feel integrated or included in their workplaces. Sixty-five percent of respondents reported feeling isolated in their workplace due to an unhelpful and hostile environment. Thirty-five percent of respondents noted that they “Always or Often” were isolated by a hostile or unhelpful workplace.

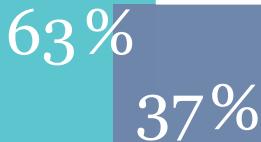
Feelings of isolation, as well as perceiving work environments as unfriendly or lacking support, similarly points to tension between an employee and his/her workplace. It speaks to workplace barriers that might deter an employee from feeling motivated and productive. These barriers also impact mental health by perpetuating feelings of loneliness, discomfort, and dissatisfaction. Working alone because a workplace is hostile or unhelpful is the factor most strongly correlated with overall workplace health ( $r=.70$ ).

Work-related stress is an internal struggle, but has an external source: workplace environment. Some key factors contributing to stress are workloads and work expectations, team relationships, and staff management. Employees that perceive a lack of recognition, support, and structure in their workplace will experience higher levels of stress.<sup>9</sup> Our data confirms that higher levels of stress contribute to increased absenteeism and mental and behavioral health risks.

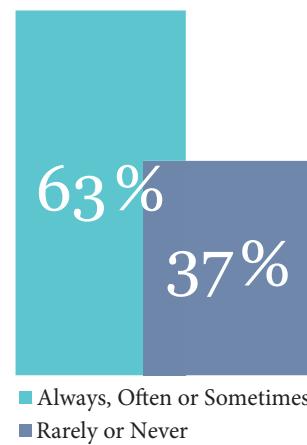
THE FRUSTRATION OR STRESS FROM MY JOB CAUSES ME TO ENGAGE IN UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS SUCH AS DRINKING OR CRYING REGULARLY



I TEND TO WORK ALONE BECAUSE  
MY WORKPLACE IS UNHELPFUL  
OR HOSTILE



■ Always, Often or Sometimes  
■ Rarely or Never



■ Always, Often or Sometimes  
■ Rarely or Never

# PHYSICALLY THERE—MENTALLY ABSENT: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In measuring employee engagement, The Workplace Healthy Survey considered the relationship between employees, their work environment, and their perceptions and attitudes. Survey questions were designed to measure both behaviors and attitudes that would be reflective of levels of investment and degrees of loyalty.

## Workplace Loyalty

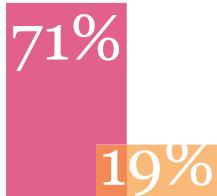
Seventy percent of survey respondents stated that they spoke poorly about their workplace to others, suggesting that many employees held negative perceptions and attitudes towards their workplace. Speaking poorly about the workplace was strongly correlated with workplace health ( $r=.67$ ). The source of this detachment appears to be the perceived absence of organizational support and reward and recognition.

## Distraction at Work

Perceived degrees of disconnect appear to prompt employees to want to end their relationship with their organization. Survey respondents were asked how many hours a week were spent thinking or actively looking for another job using the following scale:

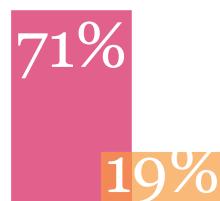
- 0-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- 31-40 hours
- 41-50 hours
- 51+ hours

I SPEND TIME THINKING  
ABOUT OR ACTIVELY  
LOOKING FOR  
ANOTHER JOB. HOW  
MANY HOURS PER  
WEEK? (OPTIONAL)



■ Always, Often or Sometimes  
■ Rarely or Never

I SPEAK POORLY ABOUT  
MY COMPANY  
(INCLUDING BOSS OR  
COWORKERS) TO  
OTHERS (LIKE FAMILY  
AND FRIENDS)



■ Always, Often or Sometimes  
■ Rarely or Never

Survey findings showed that 71 percent of survey respondents were thinking about, or actively looking for new job opportunities. Seventy-nine percent of respondents who reported hours spent, stated that they “Always or Often” spent 11-20 hours a week thinking or actively looking for a job, 83 percent reported “Always or Often” spending 21-30 hours, and 67 percent reported “Always or Often” spending 31-40 hours a week.

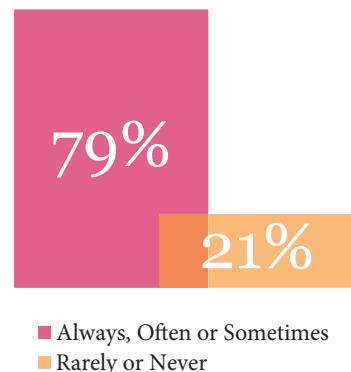
Survey respondents were also asked how many hours a week were spent feeling distracted or finding it difficult to concentrate using the following scale:

- 0-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- 31-40 hours
- 41-50 hours
- 50+ hours

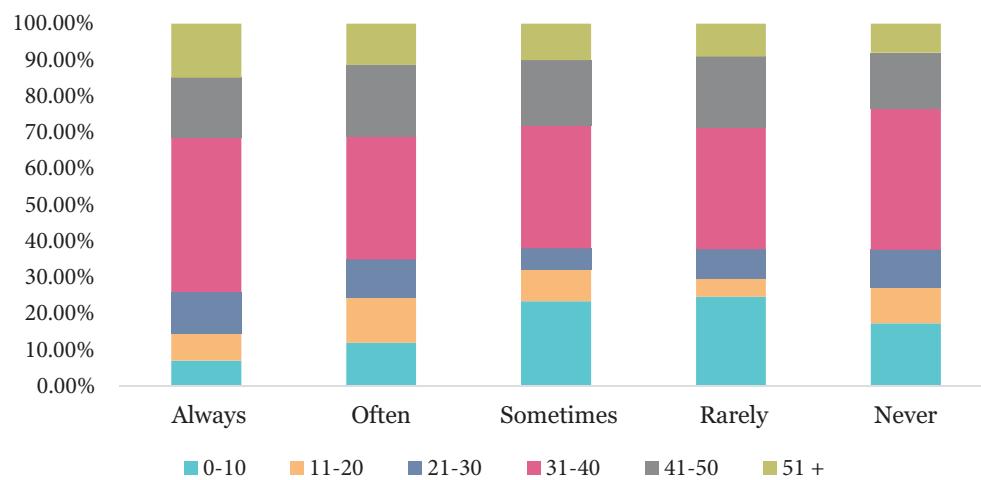
■ Always, Often or Sometimes  
■ Rarely or Never

Forty-six percent of respondents reported “Always or Often” having difficulty concentrating in the workplace and being distracted from their work. Twenty percent of respondents reported 11-20 hours a week, and 22 percent reported 21-30 hours a week. More than a 77 percent of respondents stated that they “Always or Often” spent between 31-40 hours a week distracted at work. The 31-40 hours range had the highest percentage reported. For an organization, these hours translate into loss in productivity and its associated costs.

#### HOW OFTEN ARE YOU DISTRACTED OR FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT?



#### HOURS A WEEK SPENT DISTRACTED OR FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE



# UNHEALTHY WORKPLACES VS HEALTHY WORKPLACES

As part of the survey analysis, workplace wellness scores from the top 10 percent and bottom 10 percent were extracted. The tables below allow for a magnified comparison of the healthiest and unhealthiest workplaces. When reading through the tables, it is worthwhile to evaluate the differences between unhealthy and healthy work environments and differences between rates of each question.

**Based on survey scores The Workplace Health Survey determined the following:**

- The Healthcare, Non-Profit, and Financial Services industries scored highest on workplace health.
- Manufacturing, Retail, and Food and Beverage industries scored lowest on workplace health.

## Workplace Environment

Survey findings drew attention to the perceived leadership style and support that respondents encountered in their respective workplaces. Findings from the Workplace Health Survey showed that employees within healthy workplaces were more likely to perceive that management was contributing equally to workplace activities, and that it recognized and appreciated the work of their employees. In healthy workplaces the presence of a supportive and reliable leadership seemed to translate into a workplace culture that fostered supportive relationships amongst all coworkers. Healthy workplace employees perceived higher levels of coworker support on work activities, matching those of supervisorial support. Conversely, respondents of unhealthy workplaces experienced low levels of support from coworkers, along with supervisorial support.

**TABLE 1**

Unhealthy Workplaces (bottom 10%)	Question	Healthy Workplaces (top 10%)
56%	My work environment is ALWAYS overly focused on trivial activities.	1%
49%	Skilled employees ALWAYS go unrecognized.	1%
48%	My supervisor NEVER supports me during hard times.	1%
43%	Management NEVER deals appropriately with people NOT doing their work.	2%
7%	My company ALWAYS has realistic expectation.	31%
6%	My supervisor ALWAYS works as hard as everyone else.	75%
5%	My supervisor ALWAYS promotes safe working conditions.	72%
7%	I NEVER get emotional support from at least one other person in my office.	35%
2%	People are ALWAYS held accountable.	43%
2%	People are ALWAYS paid what they deserve.	21%
1%	I ALWAYS trust my team will support my work activities.	47%

## Workplace Stress

Compared to unhealthy workplaces, respondents in healthy workplaces experienced significantly less workplace stress. Employees in healthy workplaces were less likely to report that workplace stress affected their personal relationships or that they engaged in risky behaviors due to workplace stress. Additionally, they were significantly less likely to find themselves isolated in response to unhealthy or unhelpful workplace environments. Workplaces with lower levels of workplace stress allow for employees to feel a greater sense of job security and partake less in absenteeism. Survey results indicate that workplace stress is mitigated by a leadership that promotes strong positive work ethics, including a sense of teamwork and responsibility. In healthy workplaces, employees held more positive perceptions and attitudes about their work environments, likely due to these environments being characterized by supportive, reciprocal, and trusting work relationships.

TABLE 2

Unhealthy Workplaces (bottom 10%)	Question	Healthy Workplaces (top 10%)
68%	Stress ALWAYS affects my personal relationships.	1%
49%	ALWAYS feel that they might be fired or let go at anytime	1%
44%	I'm ALWAYS afraid to go on vacation because I might lose my job or things will fall apart.	1%
20%	NEVER miss work because of stress.	78%
2%	NEVER engage in risky behavior.	64%
1%	NEVER faces isolation from hostile work environment.	64%

## Employee Engagement

Organizational leadership can reduce low levels of employee engagement by promoting agreeable, reliable, and fair workplace practices. Survey respondents within the unhealthiest workplaces reported that they were experiencing isolation in the workplace and did not receive support from supervisors and coworkers to a higher degree. These respondents were more likely to search for new job opportunities and become disengaged from the workplace. While high-turnover rates are a cause for concern, a disengaged workforce is also damaging to the workplace. Employees that are not engaged tend to hold negative perceptions and attitudes towards their workplace. Negative attitudes towards the workplace denotes indifference towards workplace goals and strategies. Internally, this can have an impact on workplace morale and productivity, externally on an organization's reputation.

TABLE 3

Unhealthy Workplaces (bottom 10%)	Question	Healthy Workplaces (top 10%)
48%	ALWAYS actively looking for work.	1%
1%	NEVER speak poorly about my company.	54%
1%	ALWAYS find it difficult to concentrate in my work environment.	52%

# UNHEALTHY INDUSTRIES: HOW DID THEY SCORE?

In scoring survey responses, the Manufacturing, Retail, and Food and Beverage Services industries were scored as the Unhealthiest workplaces.

## Who They Are

An estimated 40 million employees are employed in workplaces that the Workplace Health Survey scored as unhealthy.<sup>10</sup> They are employees that are the backbone of economically relevant industries. Consider these facts: (a) the manufacturing industry is estimated to contribute over trillion dollars to the economy;<sup>11</sup> (b) 16 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from retail consumption and is one of the major industries with the highest employment;<sup>12</sup> and (3) restaurants, the larger part of the Food and Beverage Services industry, are expected to produce \$700 billion in sales, and have employed half of adults at some point in their lives.<sup>13</sup> Despite playing a key role in our economy, employees within Manufacturing, Retail, and Food and Beverage Services face difficult workplace experiences.

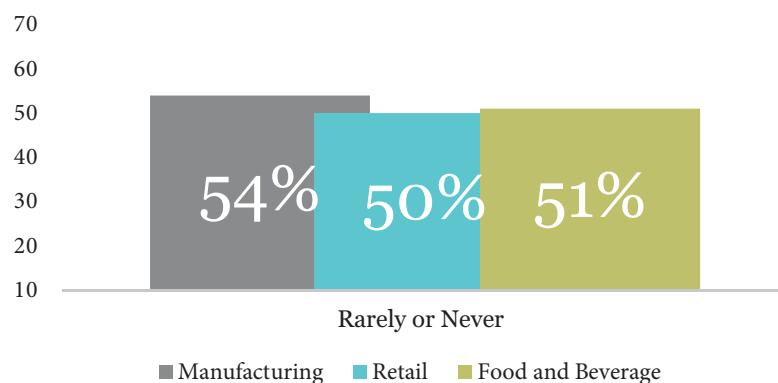
## Accountability and Reward and Recognition

On measures of accountability, 48 percent of Manufacturing, 46 percent of Retail, and 44 percent of Food and Beverage respondents felt that coworkers were “Rarely or Never” held accountable for their work. Fifty-four percent of Manufacturing, 50 percent of Retail and 51 percent of Food and Beverage respondents reported that their company “Rarely or Never” dealt with employees not doing their job. Dissatisfaction over systems of recognition and reward was high across all three industries. **Fifty-one percent of Manufacturing respondents perceived that skillful employees were overlooked; this was the case for 52 percent of Retail respondents and 49 percent of Food and Beverage respondents.** On compensation for their work, 43 percent of Manufacturing respondents reported that they were “Rarely or Never” paid what they deserved. This was higher for Retail and Food and Beverage respondents, with 52 percent and 51 percent reporting that they “Never or Rarely” got paid what they deserved, respectively. The results within Manufacturing industry can be likely explained by The Bureau of Labor Statistics, which notes that median weekly earnings in Manufacturing are \$200-\$300 higher than those in Retail and Food and Beverage.

## Workplace Stress

Individuals in the Manufacturing industry reported the highest rates of workplace stress. Fifty-eight percent of Manufacturing respondents stated that work stress “Always or Often” impacted their personal relationships. Retail and Food and Beverage respondents trailed behind only slightly with 56 percent and 50 percent, respectively. Job security appears to be a contributor to work-related stress across these industries with greater insecurity found within the Manufacturing industry. Thirty-eight percent of Manufacturing respondents state that they “Always or Often” felt a constant fear over losing their job, followed by 36 percent of Retail and 28 percent of Food and Beverage respondents. Additionally, 31 percent of Manufacturing, 37 percent

MY COMPANY APPROPRIATELY DEALS WITH COWORKERS WHO ARE NOT DOING HIS OR HER JOB



THE FRUSTRATION OR STRESS FROM MY JOB CAUSES ME TO ENGAGE IN UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS, SUCH AS DRINKING OR CRYING REGULARLY



of Retail, and 38 percent of Food and Beverage respondents were “Always or Often” afraid of going on vacation for fear of losing their job or having things fall apart. These results may highlight that employees in these industries are reacting to a valid threat that technological advancements are presenting. These advancements have resulted in machines replacing workers, and increased accessibility to online services and products, contributing to higher levels of stress and job insecurity.

Employees in the unhealthiest workplaces are not coping well with workplace stressors. Forty-two percent of respondents in Manufacturing, 39 percent of respondents in Retail, and 38 percent of respondents in Food and Beverages reported “Always or Often” experiencing isolation in the workplace. In response to the survey question on engaging in risky behavior to cope with stress, Food and Beverage respondents led the way with 43 percent of respondents stating that they “Always or Often” engaged in unhealthy behaviors to cope with workplace stress. Higher rates in Retail (41 percent) and Food and Beverages (43 percent) compared to 38 percent in the Manufacturing industry may be attributed to these industries drawing in younger populations who are more inclined to engage in risky behaviors. One nationwide survey showed that Food Service workers had the highest rate of heavy drinking across any occupation. Additionally, this study identified work stress, low-income, younger, and high turnover positions as relevant risk factors.<sup>14</sup>

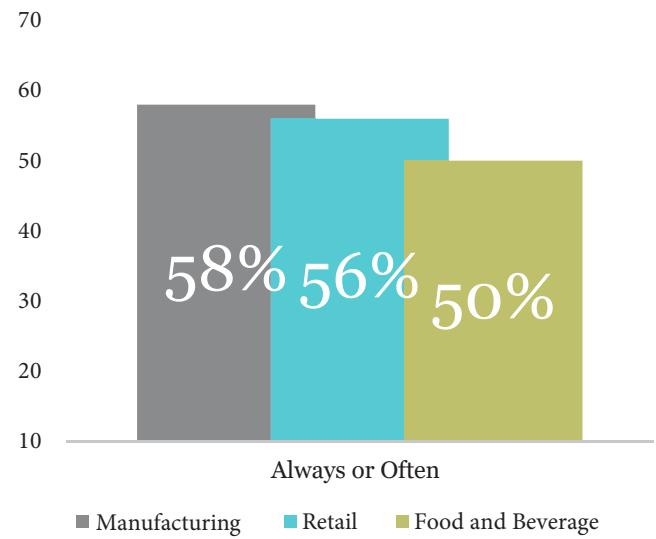
## Employee Engagement

Employees within these ‘unhealthy’ industries are disengaging in response to increased job dissatisfaction and workplace stressors. Employees were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards their work place, feel inhibited by their work environment, and have a strong desire to sever their workplace relationships. Fifty-two percent of respondents in Manufacturing, 52 percent of respondents in Retail, and 53 percent of respondents in Food and Beverage reported “Always or Often” speaking poorly about their company. Employees in all three industries also reported low levels of productivity due to workplace culture. Fifty-four percent of Manufacturing respondents, 45 percent of Retail respondents, and 46 percent of Food and Beverage respondents, reported that their work environments “Always or Often” made it difficult for them to concentrate.

More telling is the percentage of respondents who were actively looking for new employment. Around 50 percent of respondents across all three industries reported “Always or Often” thinking about or actively looking for a job.

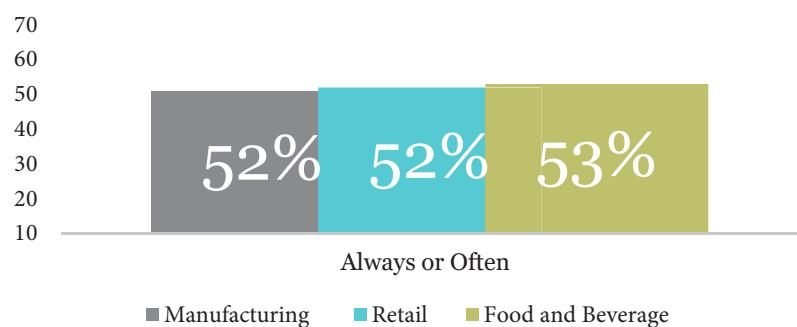
An effective response to these trends requires a close consideration of both internal (work environment) and external (industry stability) factors. The loss of this workforce can result in high costs due to high turnover rates and low productivity, and have larger economic and social implications (increasing rates of unemployment and ill-equipped workforce).

THE STRESS FROM MY JOB AFFECTS MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY FRIENDS OR FAMILY



Higher rates in Retail (41 percent) and Food and Beverages (43 percent) compared to 38 percent in the Manufacturing industry may be attributed to these industries drawing in younger populations who are more inclined to engage in risky behaviors.

I SPEAK POORLY ABOUT MY COMPANY (INCLUDING BOSS OR COWORKERS) TO OTHERS (LIKE FAMILY AND FRIENDS)



Employees in all three industries also reported low levels of productivity due to workplace culture. Fifty-four percent of Manufacturing respondents, 45 percent of Retail respondents, and 46 percent of Food and Beverage respondents, reported that their work environments “Always or Often” made it difficult for them to concentrate.

I SPEND TIME THINKING ABOUT OR ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB



# ORGANIZATIONAL RANK AND WORKPLACE HEALTH

How employees perceive their workplace is said to be heavily impacted by their organizational rank, with Senior and Mid-level employees holding more positive views on workplace practices and culture.<sup>15</sup> The Workplace Health Survey categorized respondents as Executive, Mid-level, or Frontline based on their supervisorial responsibilities. Out of over 14,000 respondents, 582 (4 percent) were identified as Executive, 4,820 (34 percent) as Mid-level, and 8,655 (62 percent) as Frontline.

## Accountability and Fairness

Among Executive, Mid-level and Frontline employees, there were statistical differences in relation to accountability and work distribution. Twenty-one percent of Executive employees felt that their company “Always or Often” dealt appropriately with workers who were **not** doing their jobs, while this was the case for only 16 percent of Mid-level and 18 percent of Frontline employees. Thirty-one percent of Executive employees felt that their organizations equitably held their employee accountable for their work. This was the case for 25 percent of Mid-level employees and 27 percent of Frontline employees. On issues of accountability, Mid-level employees serve as liaisons between Executive and Frontline employees. The slight difference in this measure might be indicative of insight middle managers have about accountability discrepancies in companies. On perceptions of fairness within the workplace, the percentage of Executive, Mid-level, and Frontline employees who felt that their supervisors shared in work responsibility was similar at 54 percent.

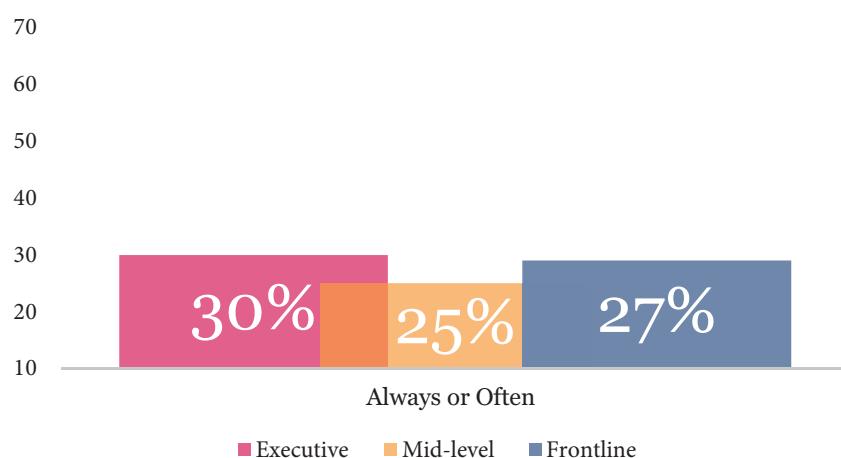
## Recognition and Reward:

Greater differences showed up on questions of recognition and reward. Forty-five percent of Frontline employees felt that skilled employers were not recognized. Mid-level perceived this to a lesser degree at 43 percent, while only 36 percent Executive employees believed this to be true. In reviewing responses on fairness in wage compensation—a tangible reward, employees fell within in the same range. Only 25 percent of Executives, and 21 percent for Mid-level and Frontline employees felt that employees “Always or Often” got paid what they deserved. This dissimilarity on the issue of expressive recognition rather than financial compensation could mean that the former carries a much greater value, and its absence is more impressionable.

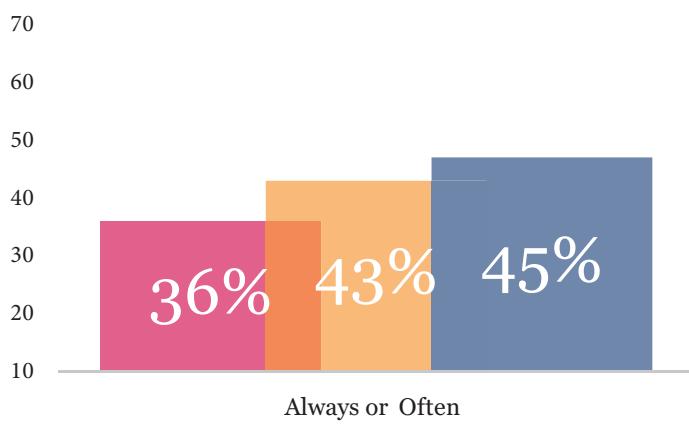
## Workplace Stress

The effect on workplace stress was felt across all ranks with 57 percent, 56 percent, and 50 percent of Executive (E), Mid-level (M) and Frontline(F) employees, respectively, stating that job stress regularly affected their personal relationships. Higher percentages for Executive and Mid-line may be reflective of greater work responsibilities and time commitments associated with rank. Contributing to workplace stress trends were

ALL PEOPLE ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR WORK,  
REGARDLESS OF THEIR POSITION IN THE COMPANY



PEOPLE ARE BEING UNFAIRLY RECOGNIZED WHILE OTHERS WITH BETTER EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS DON'T GET RECOGNIZED (E.G. PRAISE, PROMOTION)



the unrealistic expectations of workload that more than 40 percent of all employees felt companies held. Forty-five percent of Executive respondents, 47 percent of Mid-level respondents, and 42 percent of Frontline respondents reported that their companies “Rarely or Never” held these expectations.

Frontline employees experienced the highest levels of absenteeism in response to workplace stress (12 percent), but rates amongst Executive (9 percent) and Mid-level (8 percent) were not too far behind. In addition to absenteeism, workplace stress made employees more inclined to “Always or Often” participate in risky behavior to cope. Across all staff, around 35 percent reported that workplace stress resulted in unhealthy behaviors. How employees cope with stress can be reflective of a lack of emotional and professional support inside and outside of the workplace. Thirty-eight percent of Frontline workers chose to regularly isolate themselves from their hostile and unhelpful environments, compared to 32 percent of Executive and Mid-level employees. The data is reflective of the manner in which workplace stress creates a wedge between employees and their family and friends, and stems from a disconnect between company expectations and reality.<sup>16</sup>

Under these circumstances employees do not perceive a support network that could mitigate the mental and physical impact of workplace stress. This is confirmed by a third of Executive (32 percent), Mid-level (30 percent), and Frontline (33 percent) employees who reported that they “Rarely or Never” receive support from supervisors during hard times, and the 29 percent, 27 percent, 32 percent of Executives, Mid-level, and Frontline employees, respectively, who did not trust their coworkers to support their work environments.

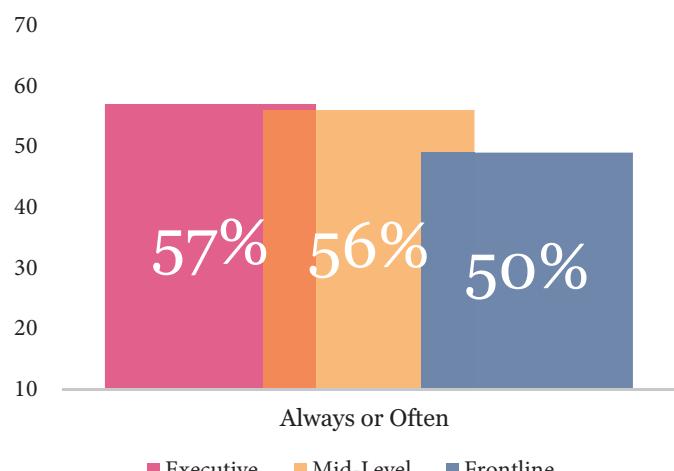
## Employee Engagement

High-stress, low-support work environments impacted employee engagement to a notable extent across ranks, but hit hardest amongst Frontline employees. Employees detachment from work and their organization was reflected in their negative perceptions of the workplace. Forty-six percent of Frontline employees reporting that they consistently spoke poorly about their workplace to friends and family. This was the case for only 41 percent of Mid-level and 34 percent of Executive employees. Additionally, greater steps were being taken by Frontline employees to cut ties with their workplace with 43 percent reporting that they were actively looking for a new job, compared to 37 percent of Mid-level employees and 33 percent of Executive employees.

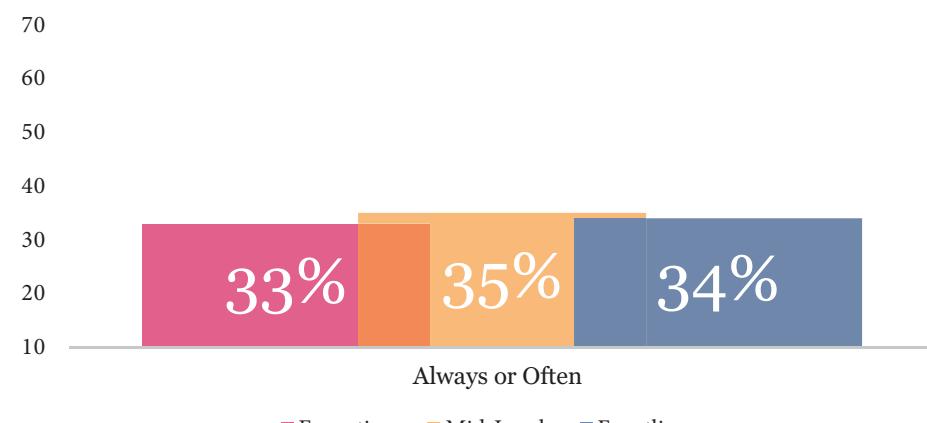
The survey data shows that regardless of rank, there are similar trends in attitudes towards workplace demands, work practices, and perceived levels of support. A notable percentage of all employees hold a negative view on their workplace wellness and stability, and are experiencing high levels of workplace stress. Reactions to these circumstances vary in degree, but appear to be strongest amongst Frontline workers.

Frontline workers may be given less incentive to remain loyal to, or emotionally invested, in their organization. Overall,

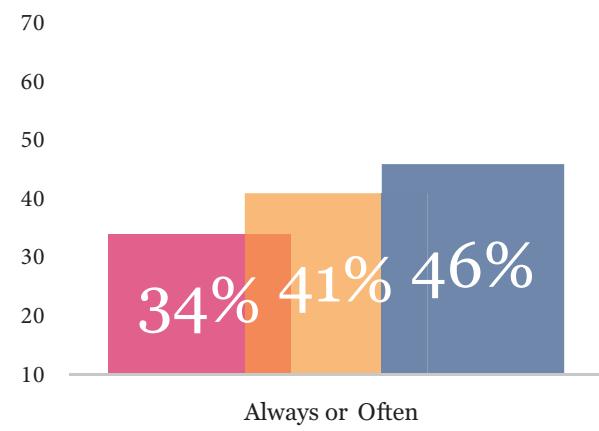
**THE STRESS FROM MY JOB AFFECTS MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY FRIENDS OR FAMILY**



**THE FRUSTRATION OR STRESS FROM MY JOB CAUSES ME TO ENGAGE IN UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS, SUCH AS DRINKING OR CRYING REGULARLY**



**I SPEAK POORLY ABOUT MY COMPANY (INCLUDING BOSS OR COWORKERS) TO OTHERS (LIKE FAMILY AND FRIENDS)**



there is a decline in job satisfaction and declining levels of productivity that can have larger psychological, social, and economical implication.

### Does Rank Matter?

Further analysis was conducted to determine whether supervisory status influenced the response to each questions. P-values that are less than 0.0012 are indicative of significance at the 0.05 level (95 percent confidence interval).

Organizational rank was said to have NO impact on how respondents answered the following questions:

- My supervisor works as hard as everyone else in the company. (p= 0.01666)
- The frustration or stress from my job causes me to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as drinking or crying regularly. (p= 0.01806)

### I SPEND TIME THINKING ABOUT OR ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB



Supervisory status influenced respondents' answers to 18 out of 20 survey questions. The following four questions are measures with the highest differences in responses between Executives, Mid-level managers, and Frontline staff.

- People are being unfairly recognized while others with better experience or skills don't get recognized. (p=1.458e-14)
- The stress from my job affects my relationships with my friends or family. (p=< 2.2e-16)
- I spend time thinking about or actively looking for another job. (p=< 2.2e-16)
- My company has realistic expectations about my workload. (p= 2.477e-13)

This data indicates that Executive, Mid-level, and Frontline employees experience the workplace in differing ways. Whether an employee believes that their workplace cultivates accountability, provides recognition and reward, or promotes employee engagement may depend on their organizational rank.

Top-bottom implementation of workplace policies and practices may prove to be ineffective if the varying needs and expectations of organizational cohorts are not identified. Strategies for improving workplace health must examine accountability measures, as well as identify key contributors of workplace stress at every level.

# COST OF LOW EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement stems from feeling valued, having a sense of job security, and receiving support in the workplace.<sup>17</sup> In the absence of any of these, most employees will be unable to remain invested in their work and workplace relationships. Many survey respondents reported that their workplaces overlooked skilled employees, did not pay what employees deserved, and lacked collegial and supervisorial support. If work conditions are considered predictors of employee engagement, then many of the respondents from the Workplace Health Survey are at risk of disengaging or have already disengaged.

## Losses in Productivity

According to a Gallup study on employee engagement, “disengaged workers had 37 percent higher absenteeism, 49 percent more accidents, and 60 percent more errors and defects”, contributing to \$450-500 billion a year in losses in productivity.<sup>18</sup> Workplace stress has been noted as a key contributor to low employee engagement. High levels of stress often result in emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to “deviant” behaviors like missing work, increase hostility towards other staff and management, and entertaining workday distractions.<sup>19</sup>

Thirty-three percent of survey respondents reported missing work because of workplace stress. For 35 percent of respondents, the days “Always” missed amounted to three and five days a month, while close to a quarter (24 percent) reported “Always” missing 6-20 days. Ten percent of respondents reported missing 21-30 days. When workplace stress was not resulting in absenteeism it still had significant impact on employee’s engagement with their workplace and work.

Workplace environments that are hostile or unhelpful can make it difficult for employees to engage with their work. Along with hostile workplace environments being strongly correlated with overall workplace health ( $r=.70$ ), the amount of time spent distracted or unable to concentrate was also correlated ( $r=.62$ ). Thirty-five percent of respondents reported being distracted fewer than 30 hours a week; 65 percent reported being distracted for more than 30 hours a week. While it is expected that employees will experience some distraction in the workplace, there is cause for concern over the high number of hours that employees *self-reported*. A Gallup study on employee engagement showed that employee engagement levels have remained stagnant in recent years, with an estimated 70 percent of employees not working to their full potential. This stagnation has been primarily attributed to a disconnect between employees and workplace environment and practices.<sup>20</sup> Data from the Workplace Health Survey confirms that many employees experience work environments that are hostile or unhelpful (63 percent) and find that their productivity is affected.

## Cost of Employee Turnover

Employee engagement increases productivity and reduces high turnover rates. Voluntary and involuntary turnover rates have direct and indirect costs for companies. The cost of replacing one employee is estimated to be about 20 percent of their salary, but can increase to 50 percent for various positions. Organizations must invest in replacement costs such as vacancy advertisement, screening applications, testing and interviewing, etc. Additionally, there are costs associated with orienting and training new employees.<sup>21</sup> High turnover rates also cause a decline in workplace productivity, as they demand a shift in the distribution of work while new hires are recruited and trained. Less quantifiable is the impact that high turnover rates have on workplace morale. Losing senior staff means losing knowledge and experience that could serve as a source of guidance and support for newer staff. Transient workplaces also foster less collegiality, increasing employee isolation,

**35%**  
of respondents  
“Always” miss 3-5  
days a month because  
of workplace stress

**65%**  
of respondents reported  
being distracted more than  
30 hours a week due to a  
hostile work environment

disengagement, and turnover.<sup>22</sup>

Actively looking for new jobs denotes a severed relationship between an employee and their workplace. These are individuals who have “checked out,” are more likely to change jobs when new opportunities arise, and have little regard for the impact on the organization and other employees. Forty percent of survey respondents reported that they were “Always or Often” looking for new job opportunities, while another 30 percent reported doing it “Sometimes.” This data reveals that, at any given moment, 70 percent of employees are taking steps towards leaving their workplace. Whether its salaried or hourly employees, these trends have serious financial implications.

## ENGAGEMENT AS A PROFIT FOR ALL

### Role of Leadership

Improving employee engagement requires an organization’s leadership to allocate time and resources to accurately measure and assess employee engagement within their organizations. Employee engagement metrics should measure attitudes and emotions, to give a clearer understanding of what motivates an employee.<sup>23</sup> Perceptions about one’s contribution to the workplace, and the recognition (or lack thereof) they receive has a huge impact on their level of engagement. Within every industry and organization, its leadership can begin to identify where the disconnect lies, and implement practices and policies that may address them.

### Employee Engagement Strategies

For smaller organizations or contracting industries, some strategies may not be financially or structurally feasible, but employee engagement can be fostered through varying means. Regardless of sector or size, employee engagement strategies should consider both organizational goals and values as well as employees’ opinions and needs. Research shows that leaders that adopt an engaging leadership style, and understand their employees, as well as their clients, will drive engagement and productivity.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, data from the Workplace Health Survey shows that many organizations are rejecting this leadership style and healthy workplace practices. Seventy-five percent of respondents in workplaces that scored as healthy noted that they experienced open door and relaxed work environments, compared to 7 percent of respondents in unhealthy workplaces.

Organizations that have responded to high turnover rates with employee engagement strategies have shown an increase in productivity (21 percent) and profitability (22 percent).<sup>25</sup> Engaged employees have higher levels of attentiveness and proactivity, resulting in a decline in workplace accidents (41 percent) and quality performance mishaps (41 percent).<sup>26</sup> Employee engagement practices have also shown to significantly reduce absenteeism (37 percent)<sup>27</sup> and turnover rates (25 percent-65 percent).<sup>28</sup> In avoiding these costs, organizations experience more financial growth, which can feasibly cover the costs of workplace benefits.

**Employee engagement  
increases productivity  
and profitability  
by over**

**70%**

**of respondents were  
thinking about or  
actively looking for a  
new job**

**20%**

# WORKPLACE PERKS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

Workplace perks/benefits have been identified as key factors that influence working conditions, and are predictors of employee engagement and workplace stress levels. Research on workplace perks confirms that perks incentivize employees, boosting productivity and improving workplace morale. Organizations offering perks that exceed basic benefits (insurance and office benefits) create a work environment that convey an interest in attracting and retaining its employees.<sup>29</sup> As part of the Workplace Health Survey, survey respondents selected all perks accessible to them in their workplace, an analysis of this information determined which benefits/perks were linked to higher or lower workplace wellness scores –i.e. benefits/perks that contributed the most to workplace health.

## Across industries, the following perks were associated with the healthiest workplaces:

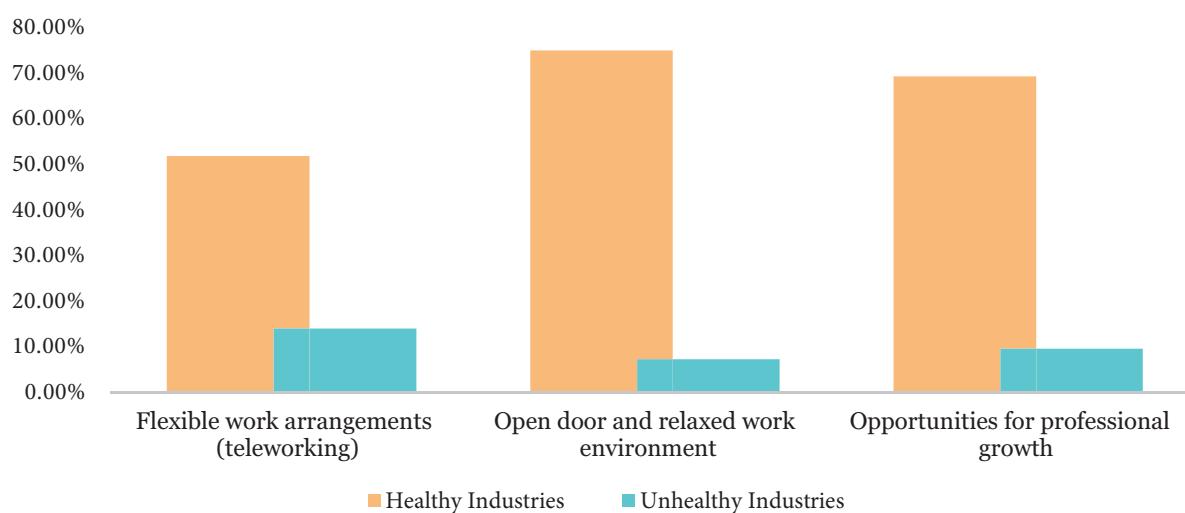
- Flexibility Work Arrangements/ Workday Flexibility: Flexibility in structuring your work schedule to allow for personal demands and needs.
- Open door and relaxed work environment: accessibility to management; two-way communication (feedback) is encouraged.
- Opportunities for professional growth: trainings to enhance company knowledge and employment skills; increase responsibilities/duties; continuing education.

Flexible workday arrangements and professional development perks are employee-centered perks. Flexible work arrangements allow for employees to determine the work schedule that works best for them, while professional development improves employee competency. In offering these perks, workplaces can retain a skilled workforce that is productive, while fostering higher levels of engagement and self-efficacy. Despite being employee-centered, the availability of workplace perks reaps benefits desirable to employers.

## Impact of Workplace Perks on Employees

In offering perks, organizations can provide employees with autonomy and reward and recognition, and have a significant impact on the perceptions and attitudes held by employees. The Workplace Health Survey showed industries that scored higher on workplace health (Healthcare and Non-Profit) had a higher percentage of respondents stating they received flexible work arrangements and professional development opportunities, and experienced open door and relaxed work environments (in addition to several other perks). **Fifty-two percent of employees in healthy industries enjoyed flexible work arrangements, 75 percent reported open door and relaxed work environments, and 69 percent was offered professional development opportunities.** Conversely, only 14 percent of respondents in industries that scored lower on workplace health reported

KEY WORKPLACE PERKS RECEIVED



that they received flexible work arrangements, 8 percent an open and relaxed work environment, and 10 percent opportunities for professional development. Survey data confirmed that respondents in healthy industries also spent fewer hours searching for new employment. Additionally, respondents within the Healthcare and Non-Profit industries were also more inclined to state that their work environment consisted of more trusting and supportive relationships.

### When Workplaces Perks are Absent

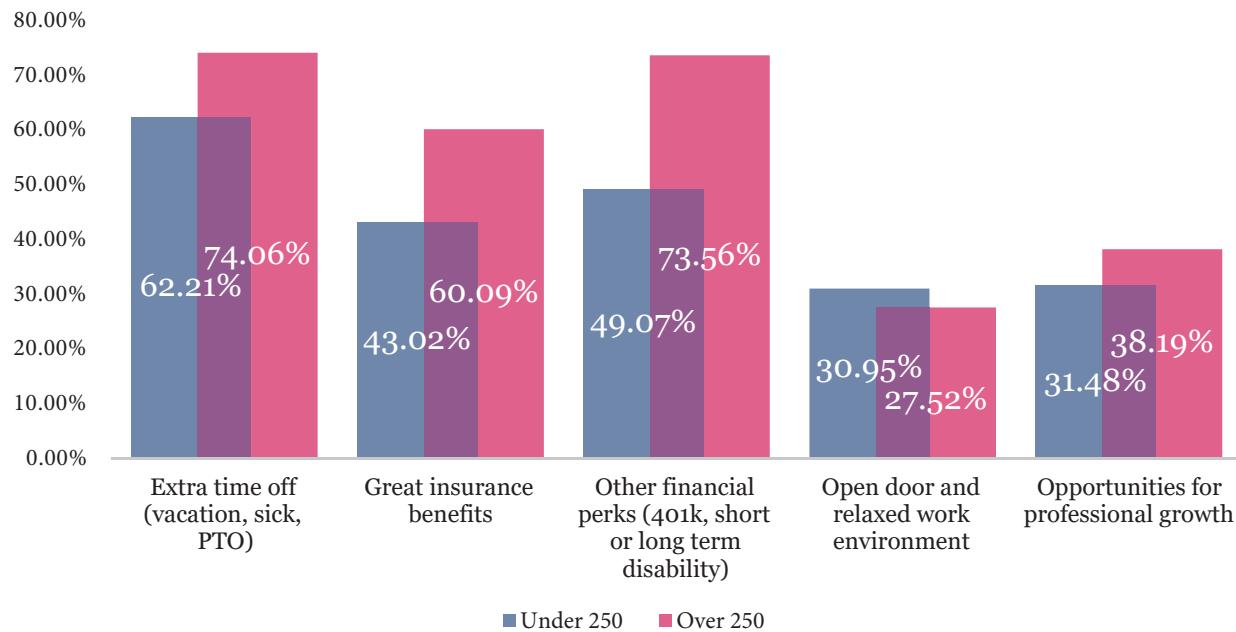
Findings from the Workplace Health Survey show that traditional work models that embrace job-centered vs. employee-centered practices may be fostering unhealthy workplaces and negatively affecting job satisfaction, productivity, and performance. Industries scoring low on workplace health had a significantly lower percentage of respondents who stated they received workplace perks. This group was also more likely to experience higher levels of workplace stress, perceive lower levels of workplace support, and show higher risks for low engagement and retention (Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 on pages 11 and 12).

Despite the correlation between these workplace perks and job satisfaction and productivity, many industries surveyed lacked professional development plans, did not have flexible workday policies, and/or did not encourage an open and relaxed work environment. **Only a third or less of all respondents, across all industries surveyed, reported receiving these perks.** Most respondents therefore make up a workforce that is at risk of experiencing low morale and productivity, and a growing dissatisfaction with management and their workplace.

## IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE PERKS

Whether small or large, business performance and profitability relies on employee engagement. By ensuring that business strategy plans include workplace perks, organizations can reduce any workplace instability resulting from low levels of employee engagement.<sup>30</sup> The Workplace Health Survey showed that larger organizations (250+) were more likely to offer professional development opportunities, comprehensive insurance packages, financial benefits (401K), and extra time off. Thirty-eight percent of respondents who reported working for larger organizations (250+) stated that they received professional development opportunities, 60 percent received comprehensive insurance benefits, 74 percent were offered financial benefits, and 74 percent received extra time off. Only 31 percent of respondents from smaller organizations (<250) were offered professional development opportunities, 43 percent comprehensive insurance, 49 percent financial benefits, and 62 percent extra time. Organizational size and thus resources allows for more professional growth opportunities and the procurement of competitive rates with insurance and financial agencies.

ORGANIZATION SIZE AND WORKPLACE PERKS



Conversely, respondents in smaller organizations (<250) were more likely to be afforded an open and relaxed work environment, and despite reporting that their work activities could feel trivial, they were more likely to feel that they received

proper recognition for their work. Twenty-five percent of respondents from small organizations “Rarely or Never” felt that skilled employees were overlooked, compared to 18 percent of respondents from larger organizations.

It may be less feasible for smaller organizations to offer financial perks, but the Workplace Health Survey findings show that non-financial perks are more important than financial compensation, can foster positive attitudes and perceptions, and increase employee engagement. This is significant given that 65 percent of respondents reported working in smaller organizations.

Overall, results from the Workplace Health Survey confirm that employees are motivated by an increased trust from management, more control over their work/schedules, and accessibility to job skills and responsibilities. Workplace challenges can be turned into opportunities by incentivizing employees with workplace perks, particularly those determined to have the largest influence on workplace health.

### **Industry Perks: Not one size fits all**

Industries where a high percentage of respondents said they were offered paid sick time had a higher percentage of respondents who took 1-2 days monthly due to workplace stress, e.g. Academic (53 percent), Non-Profit (59 percent), and Financial Services (52 percent). Industries in which these workplace benefits were less likely to be offered had a lower percentage of respondents taking a similar amount of time off, e.g. Construction (37 percent), Food and Beverage (43 percent), and Publishing and Printing (42 percent). This demonstrates that for many, taking time off may pose a greater financial burden and additional job insecurity, on top of having less support from their workplace. For shrinking industries, these factors may result in increased workplace stress because work cannot be assumed by someone else.

Manufacturing and Automotive industries had the highest percentage of respondents who reported being distracted due to unhelpful and hostile environments, 60 percent and 56 percent, respectively. These are two industries that have been hit hardest by technological advancements replacing workers. They were also much less likely to report that their workplaces offered flexible time arrangements, an open and relaxed work environment, and opportunities for professional growth. Amongst these respondents there appears to be a greater demand for job security and professional support, most likely in response to perceived changes within their industries.

Respondents within the Aerospace and Defense, Manufacturing, and Printing and Publishing industries were most likely to be looking for new job opportunities, 44 percent, 41 percent, and 38 percent, respectively. Within these industries employees were also less likely to experience flexible work arrangements and open and relaxed work environments. Across all perks, competitive wages were reported the lowest offered perk in each industry. For some companies, increasing wages may not be feasible. In this case, leaders should consider changes through alternative perks such as creating an open work culture, offering flexible work arrangements and accommodations, or offering opportunities for increased work responsibility. Survey responses indicate that these particular benefits promote more employee engagement and satisfaction than traditional financial incentives.

# APPENDIX A: WORKPLACE HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS

The Workplace Health Survey was comprised of 20 questions measuring workplace health using the following domains as a framework: work environment, workplace stress, and employee engagement. The survey was made accessible on MHA's website as part of their Online Screening Program. Survey questions were required, while additional demographic questions were voluntary.

Over 17,000 surveys were completed, the results of which are analyzed in this Appendix. The purpose of the Workplace Health Survey was threefold: 1. Collecting data on the attitudes and perceptions held by employees towards their workplace; 2. Measuring the state of workplace health across industries and drawing comparisons; and 3. Identifying key factors affecting workplace health and employee engagement and wellness.

## SURVEY RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

How many people work for your organization?	Count	%
<b>Under 250</b>	<b>9,215</b>	<b>64.95%</b>
1-10	1,966	21.33%
11-50	3,892	42.24%
51 – 250	3,357	36.43%
<b>Over 250</b>	<b>4,973</b>	<b>35.05%</b>
251 - 1,000	1,910	38.41%
Over 1,000	3,063	61.59%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14,188</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Do you work part-time or full-time?	Count	%
Full-time	11,782	83.18%
Part-time	2,383	16.82%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14,165</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Which of the following best describes your position?	Count	%
I supervise one or more people, no one supervises me.	581	4.13%
Someone supervises me, I supervise no one.	8,655	61.58%
Someone supervises me, I supervise one or more people.	4,820	34.29%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14,056</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

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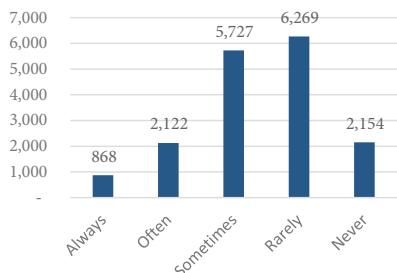
What Industry do you work in?	Count	%
Academia/Science	1,275	9.08%
Aerospace & Defense	144	1.03%
Agriculture	127	0.90%
Automotive	201	1.43%
Construction	277	1.97%
Energy	166	1.18%
Financial Services	584	4.16%
Food and Beverage	1,220	8.69%
Government	1,294	9.22%
Health Care	3,184	22.68%
Housing and Real Estate	142	1.01%
Manufacturing	495	3.53%
Non-Profit	1,360	9.69%
Pharmaceutical & Biotechnology	193	1.37%
Printing & Publishing	113	0.80%
Retail	1,349	9.61%
Telecommunications & Media	430	3.06%
Transportation & Logistics	295	2.10%
Other	2,714	19.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,039</b>	<b>81.92%</b>

My employer provides/offers the following benefits:	Count	%
Tools needed to do my job (adequate work space, a working computer, other supplies)	11,000	80.54%
Extra time off (vacation, sick, PTO)	9,028	66.10%
Great insurance benefits	6,663	48.78%
Other financial perks (401k, short or long term disability)	7,850	57.48%
Flexible work arrangements (teleworking)	3,629	26.57%
Light amenities (food/snacks)	4,022	29.45%
Flexibility in time off during the work day (breaks, time to go to the gym, relax, take a nap or long lunch)	3,715	27.20%
Competitive wages/salary	4,341	31.78%
Open door and relaxed work environment	4,045	29.62%
Opportunities for professional growth	4,598	33.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,658</b>	<b>79.70%</b>

# SURVEY RESULTS: SURVEY QUESTIONS

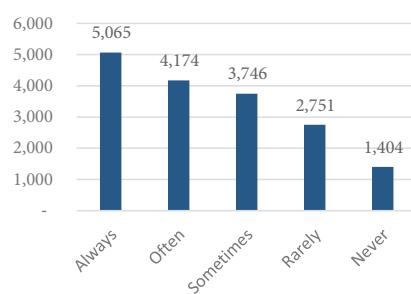
## QUESTION 1

MY COMPANY APPROPRIATELY DEALS WITH COWORKERS WHO ARE NOT DOING HIS OR HER JOB



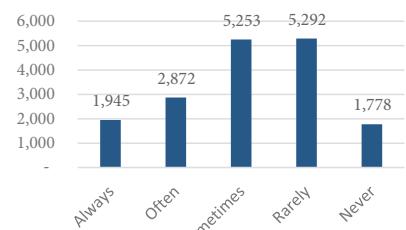
## QUESTION 2

MY SUPERVISOR WORKS AS HARD AS EVERYONE ELSE IN THE COMPANY



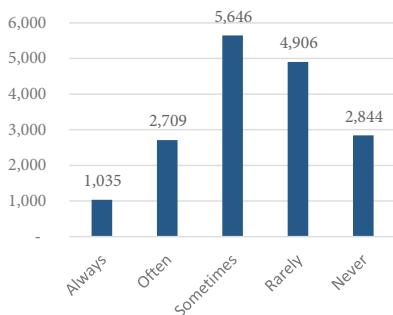
## QUESTION 3

ALL PEOPLE ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR WORK, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POSITION IN THE COMPANY



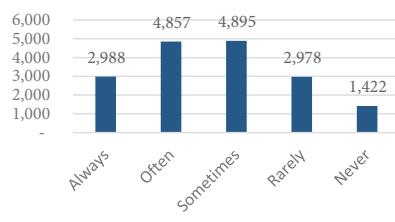
## QUESTION 4

PEOPLE IN MY COMPANY ARE PAID WHAT THEY DESERVE



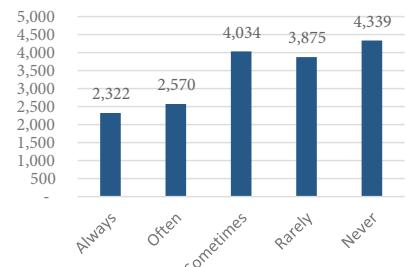
## QUESTION 5

PEOPLE ARE BEING UNFAIRLY RECOGNIZED WHILE OTHERS WITH BETTER EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS DON'T GET RECOGNIZED (E.G. PRAISE, PROMOTION)



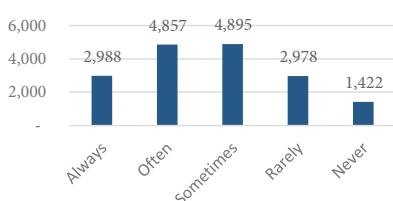
## QUESTION 6

I FEEL LIKE MY COMPANY MIGHT FIRE ME OR LET ME GO AT ANY TIME



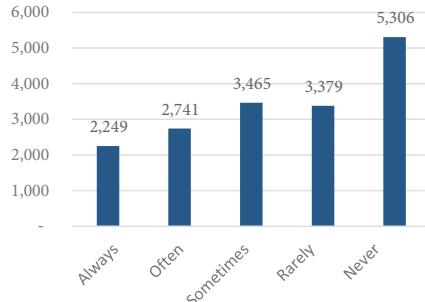
## QUESTION 7

MY WORK ENVIRONMENT IS OVERLY FOCUSED ON TRIVIAL ACTIVITIES (E.G. FEELING MICROMANAGED OR HAVING OVERLY BUREAUCRATIC COMPANY POLICIES)



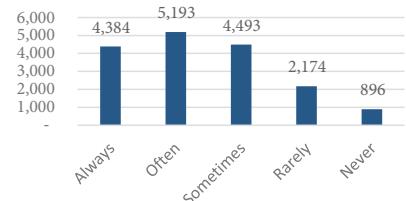
## QUESTION 8

I'M AFRAID TO GO ON VACATION BECAUSE I MIGHT LOSE MY JOB OR THINGS WILL FALL APART



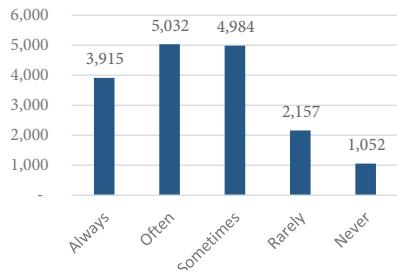
## QUESTION 9

MY EMPLOYER PROMOTES SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS (INCLUDING EXPECTATIONS ABOUT COMING TO WORK IN UNSAFE SITUATIONS LIKE DRIVING THROUGH BAD WEATHER OR WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK)

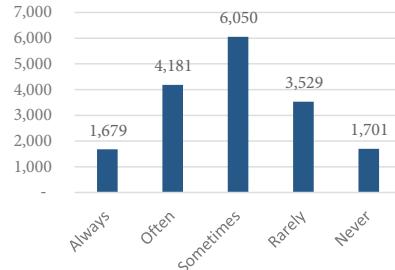


**QUESTION 10**

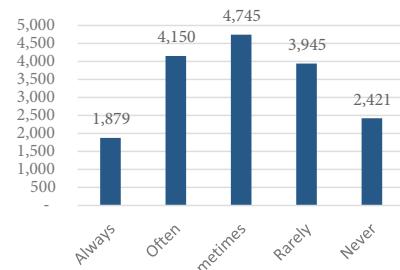
THE STRESS FROM MY JOB AFFECTS MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

**QUESTION 11**

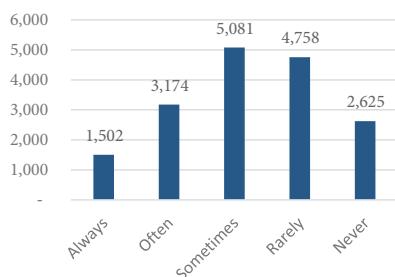
I TRUST MY TEAM OR COWORKERS TO SUPPORT MY ACTIVITIES

**QUESTION 12**

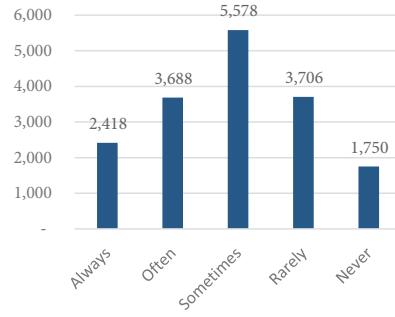
I TEND TO WORK ALONE BECAUSE MY WORKPLACE IS UNHELPFUL OR HOSTILE

**QUESTION 13**

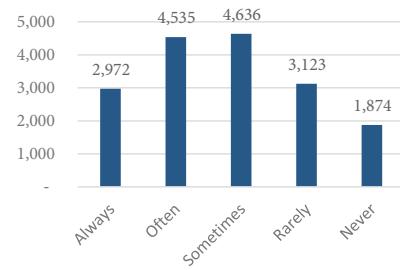
MY COMPANY HAS REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT MY WORKLOAD

**QUESTION 14**

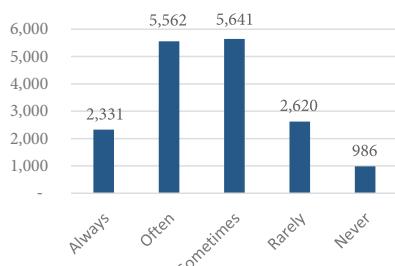
IF THINGS GET HARD, MY SUPERVISOR WILL SUPPORT ME

**QUESTION 15**

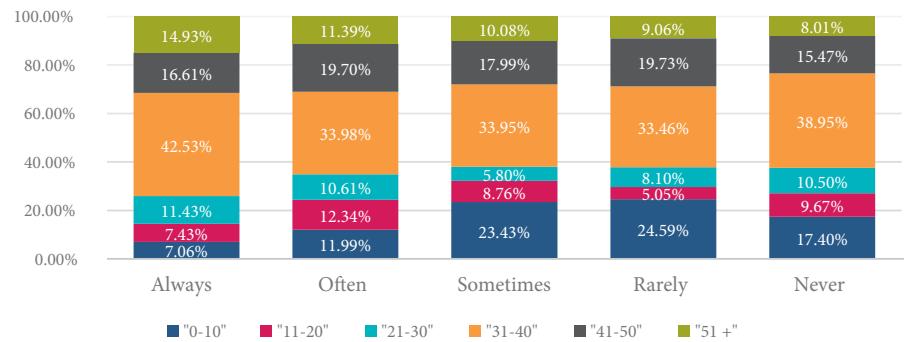
I SPEAK POORLY ABOUT MY COMPANY (INCLUDING BOSS OR COWORKERS) TO OTHERS (LIKE FAMILY AND FRIENDS)

**QUESTION 16**

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU DISTRACTED OR FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

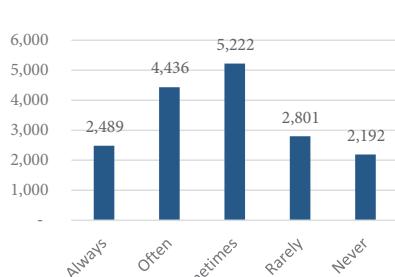
**QUESTION 16**

HOURS A WEEK SPENT DISTRACTED OR FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE



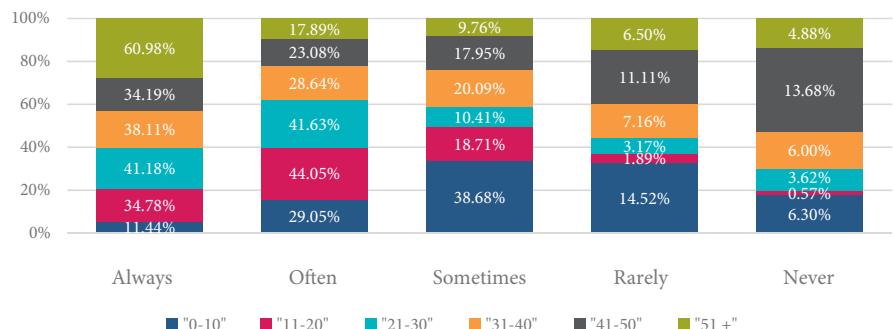
#### QUESTION 17

I SPEND TIME THINKING ABOUT OR ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB



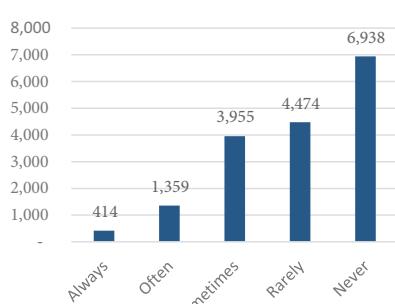
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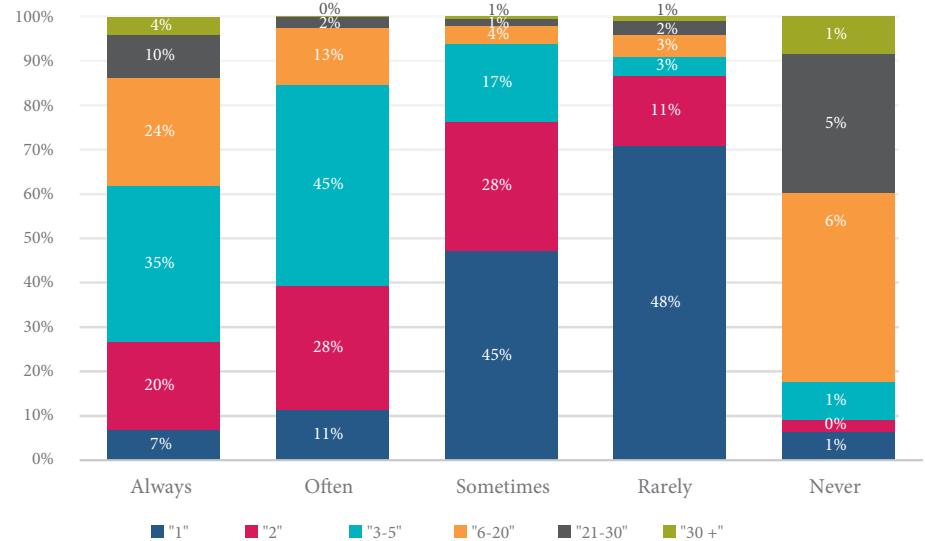
#### QUESTION 18

I MISS WORK BECAUSE OF WORK RELATED STRESS



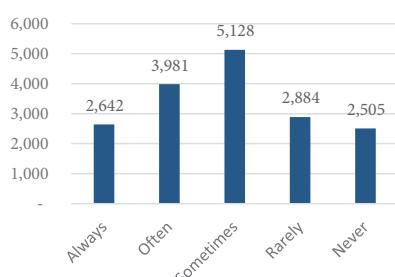
#### QUESTION 18

DAYS MISSED A MONTH DUE TO WORKPLACE STRESS



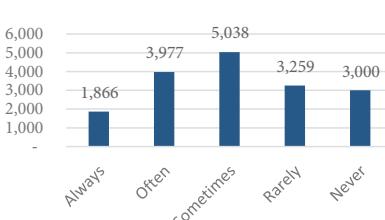
#### QUESTION 19

I GET EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN MY OFFICE



#### QUESTION 20

THE FRUSTRATION OR STRESS FROM MY JOB CAUSES ME TO ENGAGE IN UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS, SUCH AS DRINKING OR CRYING REGULARLY



# ENDNOTES

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17. J., Anitha. "Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance." *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management* 63.3 (2014): 308-23.
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