Exhausted frustrated and searching: Engaging burnout as a path to embracing balance

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ABSTRACT:

At present, we have fve generations all co-existing in the workforce, with different ideals, motivators, and work styles competing for attention and recognition. Int O t O t O to O tiowith the O leadership creates a powerful dynamic of challenging boundaries for those seeking the survival of healthy professional lanes.

KEYWORDS: Adaptability, Mindfulness, Self-awareness

INTRODUCTION

We have been working and living in an ever-increasing demanding environment for decades. Extended and increasing responsibilities and pressures have exacerbated emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion. Combining the increase in workplace demands with the past two years of COVID restrictions, it is not surprising that people are feeling overwhelming moods of fatigue, frustration, and dissatisfaction with their state of life.

These moods reverberate in our workplaces, personal lives, and even relationships. According to forbes reports that the statistics are noteworthy:

- · Increased reports of Burnout
- Over half (52%) of survey respondents are experiencing Burnout in 2021—up from the 43% who said the same

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and individual well-being and united to cause physical and psychological challenges.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Burnout is an occupational phenomenon resulting from unmanaged, chronic workplace stress. The WHO further expounded

the workforce into an imbalance of needs and demands.

Digging into the data more, The Great Resignation is resonating in specific areas and reasons:

- Resignation rates were highest among those employees between the ages of 30 to 45
- Resignation is highest among mid-career employees
- Resignation is highest in the healthcare and technology felds
- The impact is more significant on mid-career employees
- Increased workloads/responsibilities, hiring freezes, and other demands- employees have reached their breaking points.
- Serious consideration of overall work and life goals.

In between expectations and demands, our society revisited the search for greater meaning in their work and better treatment in the workplace. This refective period has led to yet another outcome, now called quiet quitting. Employees are considering their careers, salaries, and how they are treated at work. Supplementing the above negative feelings, according to the Pew Research Center survey, the three top reasons Americans quit their jobs are lack of advancement opportunities, low pay, and disrespect.

Workplace culture and values play a significant role in the well-being of employees, and choices are made in various conditions. Quiet quitting is the latest workplace catchphrase, and while descriptive, it exposes the root cause of a more significant crisis in our workplace- burnout. Quiet quitting has been described as a rebellion against the culture of giving above and beyond what a job requires. Quiet quitting does not mean an employee has left their job. Instead, they have reduced their eforts and duties to those requirements within their prescribed job description to circumvent additional duties and extended work hours. These employees seek to complete their core duties while setting boundaries to improve work-life balance but choose to do it without directing attention to their choice. Quiet quitting can be one way for employees to cope with degrees of Burnout and alleviate stress. However, quiet quitting could also signify that an employee is not happy in their position or is experiencing symptoms of burnout. It may also mean they are ready to change positions or looking for another job. This awareness could serve an organization as an intervention point to intercede and demonstrate genuine care and conversations about the employee experience and organizational culture around expectations and occurrences (Moss J, 2021).

Several variables contribute to quiet quitting, such as unrealistic expectations, lack of support, and lack of appreciation for employees, as well as toxic workplace environments. The more prevalent attitude on expressions of quiet quitting is the rejection of one's professional work

having the priority standing in your life. As an employee, you should be mindful of going above and beyond in your role. Many employees invest additional time and e fort into a position with the hopes and expectations of recognition, rewards, and possible promotions. However, those times have dissipated, and the reward, for most, is not there. Shifting from that realization, according to Organizational psychologist Ben Granger, quiet quitting is also considered a pathway for employees to protect their mental and physical health in a toxic work environment.

While the pandemic brought forward the possibility of choosing work/life balance as a priority, it certainly has impacted the workforce and workplace culture. The impact of social restrictions and the shift to the remote workforce required individuals to have more time to consider the quality of their professional experiences and the impact on their work-life balance . Results vary, but the consensus is that priorities have shifted from career demands to a greater focus on quality of life.

Not attending meetings

Arriving late or leaving early

Reduction in productivity

Less contribution to team projects

Not participating in planning or meetings

Lack of passion or enthusiasm

Before The Great Resignation, Burnout, and behaviors were already present within the work environment but labeled differently and isolated to individual choices rather than considered a symptom of the organizational culture. A pandemic, a shift in demands, and a lack of authentic connection with others have resulted in individuals seeking better experiences and treatment as a workforce. Burnout, Great Resignation, and Quiet Gr, for J0st

SHRM (2016) shared insights from their data collection to suggest this phenomenon has been a growing concern:

- 52% of U.S. of ce workers report being stressed at work on a day-to-day basis
- 60% report that work-related pressures have increased over the past fve years
- 95% of the H.R. leaders report employee burnout to the inability to retain staf
- 46% of employee burnout is responsible for half of workforce turnover
- 662 million vacation days unused in 2016

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE TREATMENT:

Regarding an organizational spotlight, Burnout has several areas that factor into the contributions. The threat of dissatisfaction and behaviors associated with quitting and Burnout impact an employee's physical and mental health to a significant degree that it can fnancially in tuence an organization. From the employee perspective, unclear or unrealistic expectations are contributing factors that have an immense contribution to Burnout. However, other concerns, such as unfair treatment, unmanageable workloads, or instability, play a significant role in Burnout. As it relates to the presence of bias, favoritism, and mistreatment during the work experience, it can increase the possibility of experiencing at work. It can make it 2.3 times more likely for an employee to experience Burnout. Employees express Burnout via work-related behaviors such as job dissatisfaction, professional mistakes, absenteeism, or sharing an intention to give up the profession. The results can manifest in energy reduction and feelings of hopelessness, cynicism, and resentment. All these elements impact one's professional, personal, and social life. In addition to the above, Burnout can also make an individual more susceptible to health concerns (Maslach C,2016).

DISAPPOINTED IN THE LACK OF INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL: Burnout impacts many aspects of the economy. According to the World Economic Forum, the costs associated with Burnout, via the pathway of turnover and lower productivity, resulted in the loss of \$322 billion annually to the global marketplace. The power of Burnout has many systems from which to impact negatively. It can negatively impact a business, ranging from an individual performance concern to decreasing morale, leading to employee turnover. Burnout has three forms: overload burnout, lack of development or under-challenged Burnout, and lastly, neglect.

OUR CALL TO ACTION: Deloitte published a study in 2020 illustrating the positive impact an organization can have on investing in employees' mental health. At its core, by investing in well-being, there was a financial beneft to the organization, not only in productivity but in reduced turnover.

To stress the impact burnout is causing, one only needs to look at frontline industries for the shock. In healthcare commerce, errors stemming from Burnout cost hospitals and clinics around \$20 billion annually, resulting in approximately 100k deaths.

Gallup and Harvard Business Review present additional impact estimates of Burnout within the business community (2022):

\$125-\$190 billion a year in healthcare spending just in the United States

2 out of 3 Full-time workers experience Burnout on the job

Simply calling out the efect on the human capital, Burnout also shocks the organization. Employees impacted by Burnout are an expense to the organization. Anna Verasai with The H.R. Digest calculates:

Cost of replacing entry-level employees: 30% to 50% of their annual salary

Cost of replacing midlevel employees: 150% of their annual salary

Cost of replacing high-level or highly specialized employees: 400% of their annual salary

While the above recommendations are reasonably straightforward and convey compassion and care for the employees, there are efforts to create that shift in the organizational culture to ensure Burnout is acknowledged and resources committed to value the well-being of each employee in addition to the financial performance and sustainability of the organization. To stress the impact burnout is causing, one only needs to look at frontline industries for the shock. Within the healthcare industry, errors stemming from Burnout cost hospitals and clinics around \$20 billion annually, resulting in approximately 100k deaths.

The pandemic sent a clear message that employees want and expect an environment that is holistic and balanced towards fairness and reasonable deliverables that focus on avoiding Burnout and supporting work-life balance. Burning out and commanding jobs that disregarded boundaries played a significant role in employees quitting and choosing family over-demanding jobs. These global and economic workplace issues directly impact our local societies and communities. Well-being must be a part of the organizational culture of the company. Burnout is not only just an individual matter, but the impact of Burnout impacts the individual, their performance, and the more prominent possibility of many employees experiencing Burnout due to a toxic workplace environment. Creating a norm of wellbeing within an organization's culture provides purpose, guidance, and expectations of engagement and treatment within the workplace. When well-being is a priority of the

organization's culture and provides resources for employees to live healthier lives, employees invest in better self-care.

Overall, organizational culture is essential, and it is equally significant