**[Quiet quitting is really a cry for help. Don’t ignore it](https://www.fastcompany.com/90824928/quiet-quitting-employee-engagement-mental-health" \o "Quiet quitting is really a cry for help. Don’t ignore it)**

Here are 3 ways HR leaders can reengage the quiet quitters and get their heads—and hearts—back in the game.

Quiet quitters have been called slackers and coasters. They’ve set boundaries, demanded work-life balance, and steadfastly stuck to their job descriptions. But make no mistake, this isn’t a passing TikTok trend. More than half of U.S. employees consider themselves to be quiet quitters, according to a recent Gallup poll. And if that loud, wake-up call isn’t enough, employers are still contending with the [Great Resignation](https://www.fastcompany.com/90755559/millennials-are-driving-the-great-resignation-theyre-also-working-harder-because-of-it), or the 47 million and counting workers who have left their jobs in the wake of the pandemic.

This combined mass of dissatisfied employees has started a long overdue discussion about what’s driving America’s workforce to disengage. Now, it’s up to companies to understand the root causes of this deep dissatisfaction and to create remedies through a holistic approach. Here are three key ways HR leaders can counter the quiet quitting trend and engage or reengage employees.

**FIND OUT WHAT’S DRIVING THE DISENGAGEMENT**

Today’s workforce is struggling with a litany of anxiety-inducing uncertainties, including but not limited to rising inflation, increased workloads, market volatility and elusive child/elder care resources. With a pandemic not quite in the rearview mirror and a recession lingering on the horizon, employee stress is skyrocketing. According to an [American Psychological Association](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/special-burnout-stress) Work and Well-being survey of 1,501 workers across industries, 79% said they had recently experienced work-related stress. And there’s no sign of that stress subsiding.

Most employees are contending with mental, physical, and financial stresses, all of which are intertwined and feed off each other. While rising healthcare costs and mental wellness have been at the forefront of late, a recent PwC survey found that finances rank as the biggest source of stress for employees. According to [PwC’s](https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/business-transformation/library/employee-financial-wellness-survey.html) survey respondents, anxiety about financial wellbeing impacts mental health, sleep, self-esteem, physical health, relationships at home, as well as productivity and attendance at work.

The Great Resignation underscores the same employee struggles. According to[Pew Research](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/03/09/majority-of-workers-who-quit-a-job-in-2021-cite-low-pay-no-opportunities-for-advancement-feeling-disrespected/), people left their jobs in 2021 primarily due to low pay, lack of opportunities for advancement, feeling disrespected at work, childcare issues, lack of flexible hours, and inadequate benefits. The upshot: Employees disengage or resign when they don’t feel valued, supported, and respected. It’s up to the company to ensure they do. By analyzing the root causes of disengagement, C-suite leaders and HR teams can discern the gaps in their company’s support systems and address them holistically in a way that provides personalized support to employees.

**FORTIFY COMPANY CULTURE**

A strong culture is the cornerstone of an engaged workforce. People want to work in a supportive, positive, and nurturing environment. So, by leading with empathy and fostering a culture of care, companies have a much better chance of not only keeping employees on board, but also keeping them engaged.

The path to a positive company culture starts with consistent and transparent communication. Focus on actively listening to employees in order to understand their priorities, challenges, and concerns. Check in regularly and respond with targeted support based on what you’re hearing. By consistently engaging in conversations and soliciting feedback, you may discover new and better ways to motivate and support your workforce.

Inclusivity is another pillar of a robust company culture. If employees feel like they’re valued members of a team, they’re more likely to actively work toward common goals. According to[BrightPlan’s 2022 Wellness Barometer Survey](https://www.brightplan.com/2022-wellness-barometer-survey), one-third of employees do not feel completely safe and comfortable at work. By finding ways for employees to connect with one another, companies can nurture belonging. Strengthening these relationships may result from creating opportunities for positive interactions, such as team-building activities or employee resource groups (ERGs). ERGs can help boost social wellbeing through voluntary, employee-led collaborations that are based on common interests, stages of life, or demographics.

To take your company culture a step further, you also need to meet your employees where they are in their life’s journey. For example, younger employees are likely navigating student debt and seeking guidance as they potentially work through loan forgiveness, thanks to recent legislation. Older employees may be more focused on retirement planning. And mid-career workers are likely grappling with sending their kids to college or finding elder care. Acknowledge generational and cultural differences as well as individual needs while delivering tools, resources, and support tailored to employees’ current needs.

**PROMOTE HOLISTIC WELLNESS**

Company-supported wellness is no longer a nice-to-have, it’s a must-have. Mental wellbeing, physical health, and financial wellness are inextricably linked and vital to employee engagement and the company’s sustainability. Employers and HR leaders who address holistic wellness through competitive Total Rewards and comprehensive benefits will boost employee productivity and, by extension, bolster the overall health of the company.

The last few years have taken a serious toll on mental health. Thankfully, a proliferation of mindfulness apps and online therapy options have emerged to help employees navigate anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. A silver lining of the pandemic may be that HR teams now have a vast amount of tools and resources at their fingertips for addressing mental wellness. Benefits like stress management training, mental health days and EAPs can go a long way in improving employees’ overall wellbeing.

By delivering employer-subsidized healthcare, companies can strengthen the collective wellbeing of their workforce. Because medical costs have long outpaced the rate of inflation, now is the time to reduce that burden on employees. Promoting preventative care, such as annual wellness checks and subsidized gym memberships, is integral to keeping employees healthy. By providing telehealth services and offering health savings accounts (HSAs) paired with an employer contribution, companies can further help employees stay healthy without having to shoulder often unanticipated medical costs.

Financial wellbeing is also top of mind for today’s workforce. Employees are not just asking employers for help with comprehensive financial support, they’re demanding it. In a[TIAA](https://www.tiaa.org/public/pdf/2022_financial_wellness_survey_final_results.pdf) study, over 50% of employees say employers have a responsibility to help employees improve and/or maintain their financial wellness. A good place for HR leaders to start: basic financial literacy. Offer easy-to-digest and actionable educational resources, so that employees have a good foundation for personal money management. Then, help employees set financial goals and a path to achieving them. Consider providing investment tools as well as access to fiduciary financial planners so that employees can establish and grow their wealth. As you help guide your people toward their goals, take each individual’s life stage or unique situation into account so that every employee and their family has the right tools to achieve long-term financial success.

To remedy disengagement, companies must find the best ways to support and value their employees. By understanding employee struggles, fortifying a positive workplace culture, and nurturing holistic wellness, HR leaders can drive engagement of their workforce. By doing the right thing, the company will not only help those quiet quitters feel heard and valued, but also attract new talent and bolster employee engagement. This approach provides a clear pathway to a healthier and happier workforce.

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