

How Can You Tell If Your Employees Are “Quietly Quitting”

Special Report



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“Quiet quitting.” It’s a term you’ve probably heard in the past few weeks thanks to a new TikTok video featuring disaffected employees describing their experiences in rebelling against what they see as the oppressive HR system. But while the term is new, the behaviour is anything but. It occurs when employees deliberately disengage from work without actually abandoning their job. The idea is to do only the bare minimum needed to collect their paycheque. Quiet quitters

show up around 9 AM and leave the second the clock strikes 5. They don’t care about, and often despise the company, customers and people they work with.

Fundamentally, quiet quitting is a social phenomenon rooted in generational attitudes, burnout, family responsibilities and, above all, employee mistrust of employers to manage their workload and provide fair compensation. To ultimately resolve it,

companies must support employees' mental health, promote work-life balance, reward productivity and increase engagement.

But that will take time. In these troubled times, employers need to know what

they can and can't do to crack down on their own employees who might be engaging in quiet quitting.



Is Quiet Quitting Just Cause to Terminate?

The short answer is no.

Explanation: Barring a contract or collective agreement, you can always fire any employee at any time and for any cause, including no cause at all. But unlike in the U.S. where employment is at will, under Canadian law, employees who are fired without cause are entitled to termination notice or wages in lieu of notice, as well as vacation and other amounts due under employment standards laws; they may also be in line for what's called "common law" notice to compensate them for the damages they suffer as a result of being wrongfully dismissed.

Of course, you don't have to pay these amounts if termination is for just cause, that is, conduct that

violates the employment contract and irreparably and fundamentally undermines the trust on which the employment relationship is based. But quiet quitting doesn't rise to that level since employees are performing their job duties. In other words, while you might hope and even expect employees to do more than the bare minimum required for the job, you probably don't have just cause to terminate them if they don't.

When It Might Be Okay to Terminate Quiet Quitters



While mere refusal to do more than the bare minimum may not be just cause, there may be other circumstances or behaviours that do cross the line.

1. Failure to Meet Performance Standards

You can always discipline and terminate employees for poor performance, provided that you can demonstrate that:

- You have clear, specific and measurable performance or productivity standards for the position;
- You effectively communicated those standards to the employee;

- The employee didn't meet the standards;
- You warned and gave the employee a fair opportunity to meet the standards; and
- You consistently terminate other employees who don't meet those standards.

2. Violation of Social Media Policy

Quiet quitting takes on a totally different dimension when employees brag about

it on social media. It's well established that what employees post about their jobs, whether on- or off-duty, isn't privacy-protected. What matters is whether:

- The communication harms the company or its reputation;
- It's clear which specific company and/or individual the post refers to; and
- The company has a clear social media use policy.

3. Violation of Off-Duty Conduct Policy

Quiet quitting can also be grounds for termination under an off-duty conduct policy if it:

- Hurts the company's reputation;
- Undermines the employee's ability to do the job effectively;
- Makes co-workers unwilling, unable or reluctant to work with the employee;
- Constitutes a serious breach of the Criminal Code; or
- Makes it hard for the company to properly carry out "its function of efficiently managing its works and efficiently directing its working forces."

4. Absenteeism

Doing the bare minimum means

showing up for work on time every day. Unexcused absences, including doing the job from home without proper permission to telecommute, is legitimate grounds for discipline, based on the terms of your [attendance policies](#). For these same principles, you can also discipline employees for engaging in [time theft](#).

Takeaway:

Firing employees for not doing anything more than the job requires will be problematic. However, you can and must insist that all employees comply with all of your HR policies. Recognize that the same scorn, contempt and selfishness that causes employees to engage in quiet quitting may also lead them to violate workplace policies that may constitute just cause to terminate. Last but not least, adopt a written policy condemning quiet quitting at your organization.

How Can You Tell If Your Employees Are “Quietly Quitting”

The first part of effective response to “quiet quitting” is recognizing when your employees are engaging in it. Here are 20 telltale signs to be on the lookout for as an employer:

1. Productivity and output declines
2. Employee stops scoring recordable metrics upon hitting their monthly target or quota
3. Employee doesn't come to meetings
4. Employees who miss meetings don't reach out to ask what they've missed
5. Employee is less active in meetings
6. Normally cooperative employees become argumentative
7. Normally argumentative employees become passive
8. Employee no longer suggests new ideas
9. Employee stops volunteering for assignments
10. Normally proactive employee stops taking initiative
11. Employees disappear
12. Employees claim they're busy any time you try to talk to them
13. Employees delay or don't respond to emails
14. Employees stop sending emails
15. Normally social employees start keeping to themselves
16. Unexcused and excused absences increase
17. Previously cooperative employees refuse to cover or pick up shifts for their co-workers
18. Employees who used to be team players resist teamwork
19. Employees hand in assignments late
20. Employees who used to stay late now leave the moment their shift ends

Quiet Quitting & Productivity Policy

As labour becomes scarcer, HR directors face the challenge of ensuring maximum productivity from all employees. That's why quiet quitting, or the phenomenon of doing just the minimum necessary to avoid getting fired and collect a paycheck, has become such a pressing concern for employers. Although it's a complex problem requiring long-term and systematic changes, the first step is to address the issue head on by including a statement of company principles against quiet quitting. Here's a template you can adapt.

1. MINIMUM PERFORMANCE & PRODUCTIVITY STANDARDS

ABC Company expects all employees to meet high productivity standards. Time management, teamwork, efficiency, cooperation, and effort all contribute to

an employee's productivity. The standards leading to high productivity include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consistently reporting to work and leaving work according to your work schedule;
- Fully engaging in the work while on paid time/not misusing work time;
- Meeting deadlines;
- Asking for assistance when necessary;
- Assisting others with information, knowledge, time, and resources;
- Being prepared to give extra time when necessary;
- Responding positively to unanticipated overtime needs;
- Limiting unscheduled absences;
- Notifying supervisors as soon as possible of unscheduled absences in accordance with



department procedures;

- Learning and using technology and databases for maximum efficiency;
- Being prepared for meetings;
- Starting meetings on time and ending on time;
- Avoiding unnecessary interruptions of others at work;
- Following-up on activities that have been delegated;
- Following Company systems and procedures;
- Minimizing the need to conduct personal business during work hours

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

All employees will be held accountable for meeting these standards in accordance with the terms of the ABC Company Performance Management Policy and Performance Improvement Planning framework.

3. POLICY & EXPECTATIONS

Being employed at ABC Company is more than just a job. While it might sound trite,

“ **If you are not satisfied with your job or no longer trust ABC Company to meet its terms of our common pact, we ask you to come to us.** ”

ABC Company management regards all of our staff, from CEO to the most junior level of employee, as a team working toward a collective goal, excellence and achievement. We also firmly believe and strive to make it such that the rewards of excellence and success are shared by all team members. For that reason, we hire only individuals we believe will buy in to our shared mission. Employment with ABC Company is a bond of trust:

- ABC Company trusts that you will commit yourself to your job and invest the time, effort and energy

necessary to help the team and yourself achieve excellence; and

- You trust ABC Company to manage your workload, pay you fairly and respect your life and commitments outside work.

4. QUIET QUITTING

The concept of “quiet quitting,” or doing only the minimum work and putting in the minimum hours to meet your job description and earn a paycheck, is a repudiation of that common trust. If you are not satisfied with your job or no longer trust ABC Company to meet its terms of our common pact, we ask you to come to us. If we cannot resolve the problems together, we will work with you to make the transition to another position, either with ABC Company or another company.

Performance Management

It's crucial to have a performance management policy to hold employees accountable and empower them to achieve maximum success. Here's a template you can adapt.

1. POLICY

ABC Company is committed to providing an environment where all employees understand the impact of their contributions on the achievement of Company goals and are provided the opportunity for ongoing personal growth. In pursuit of this commitment, ABC Company has implemented a performance management system to empower employees to have greater input to their personal career progression and enable managers to better identify, recognize, and reward individuals based upon an agreed set of criteria.

2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The ABC Company Performance

Management Process consists of a four-phase cycle, as described below:

Phase 1: Planning

During the planning phase, individual goals and objectives are set for the performance period. Such goals are based on the principles of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time based) to increase employee motivation and commitment to goal attainment, leading to greater performance and productivity.

Phase 2: Managing

Because the performance cycle spans several months, it is important for managers and employees to keep track of key performance highlights and challenges that occur during the year. Regular communication between the manager and employee is critical during the managing phase of the performance

management cycle. Through formal and informal conversations, both parties will be kept advised on progress towards the successful completion of goals and expectations. These discussions also enable managers to provide timely feedback and coaching as the year unfolds. These notes will also help immensely when it's time to prepare the annual review.

Phase 3: Reviewing

At the conclusion of the evaluation cycle, the manager will meet with

the employee to conduct the annual performance review based on the SMART goals set during the planning phase and ongoing communication/feedback that has taken place during the managing phase.

Phase 4: Rewarding

Employees will receive merit rewards for meritorious performance, which may include increases to their annual base pay. Performance increases will be differentiated between employees based upon their overall performance ratings, with top performers receiving higher pay increases.



3. GOAL SETTING

At least two performance goals are required for all employees with the recommended average being between two and four goals. Supervisors/Managers and employees will establish performance goals and enter them into an online system. This system will allow both employees and their managers to update and track progress on the goals throughout the year. An employee's overall rating will be based both on progress on reaching established goals and performance in the competency areas described below.

4. COMPETENCIES

All employees will be provided feedback in the areas of Attendance & Punctuality and Honestly & Integrity. They will also be rated on a five-point scale (Exceptional, Strong, Satisfactory, Needs Development, and Unsatisfactory) on the following six competencies:

4.1 Decision Making

Able to analyze situations fully and

accurately and reach productive decisions. Consults appropriate parties when necessary and identifies the key concerns and/or issues that need to be addressed to make the best decision possible.

4.2 Effective Communications

Able to express ideas in a clear, concise, and effective manner, whether speaking or in writing. Uses correct grammar and sentence structure in communications. Is a good listener, even when differing viewpoints are expressed. Openly shares information and keeps all relevant parties updated.

4.3 Interpersonal Relationships

Builds and maintains effective working relationships with others- both internal and outside the organization. Takes a positive and productive approach to resolving any conflicts which may arise. Exemplifies commitment to the ABC Company core value of respect- treating everyone with fairness, compassion and dignity.

4.4 Job Knowledge

Demonstrates the professional, administrative, supervisory, and/or

technical knowledge required to perform the job successfully. Continuously strives to further improve job knowledge. Serves as a reliable resource for other employees regarding areas of expertise.

4.5 Producing Results

Assignments/projects are consistently completed in a timely manner with the desired level of quality and quantity. Follows up on the outcome of work efforts to ensure desired results.

4.6 Service Excellence

Makes excellent customer service a top priority and constantly seeks to improve customer service. Is responsive to changes in what customers want and need. Delivers on promises made to customers and follows up appropriately.

5. ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR MANAGERS

Classified staff managers/supervisors will also be rated on the following three competencies:

5.1 Cultivating Workplace Diversity

Ability to understand, appreciate, and

use the unique contributions of staff in various cultures, nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, genders, ages, points of view, etc.

5.2 Leadership

Ability to work with a group to set its objectives and agenda, generate allegiance to those objectives, and guide and motivate their achievement. Articulates the end results needed and allows people to exercise initiative and discretion without micromanaging. Enforces standards/rules fairly and consistently and leads with courage.

5.3 Staff and Career Development

Addresses learning, training, and career development needs of individuals, teams, or organization. Works with employees to establish job and career development goals. Provides accurate, timely feedback including annual performance review.



6. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The following roles and responsibilities will be assigned in connection with Performance Management:

6.1 HR

HR is the Responsible Officer for and will have the authority to implement this Policy with responsibilities to develop procedures or other supplementary information and apply appropriate interpretations to clarify the Policy provided that the interpretations do not result in substantive changes to the underlying Policy.

6.2 Manager

[Insert title] is authorized to establish and is responsible for local procedures necessary to implement the Policy and has the authority to initiate revisions to the Policy.

6.3 Manager

[Insert title] is authorized to ensure that policies are regularly reviewed, updated, and consistent with other ABC Company policies.

Quiet Quitting Stats & Facts

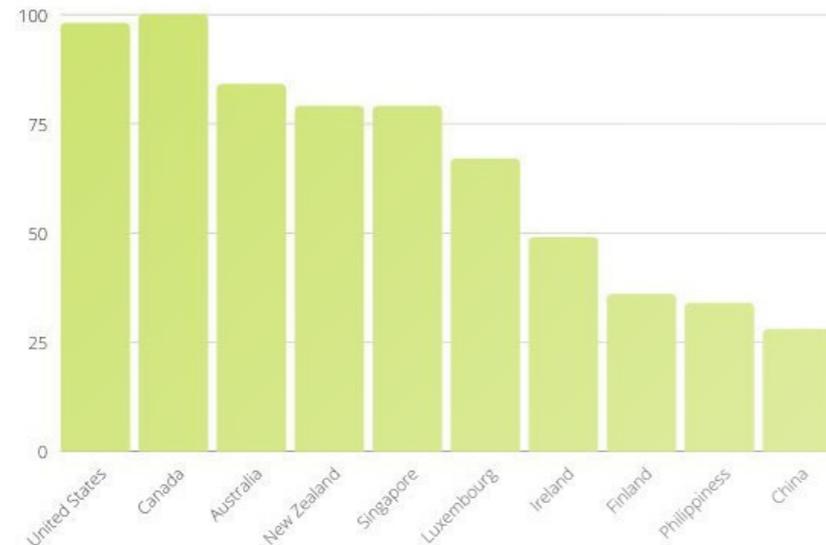
1. Up to 67% of US employees and 85% worldwide could be quiet quitting

A Gallup report states that only 15 percent of employees are actively engaged at work, which means up to 85% could be quiet quitting. The numbers are a little better for the US, with 33% of employees engaged at work, approximately twice the worldwide average.

Perhaps surprisingly, the rate of employee engagement in Western Europe is very low, at 10% and only 8% in the United Kingdom. All of these numbers have been on a steady decline over the last decade.

2. Canada is #1 in the world for quiet quitting activity

Quiet Quitting Activity by Country



What is Quiet Quitting?

Quiet quitting is a form of employee disengagement where team members stop going above and beyond and fulfill the bare minimum job requirements to keep their jobs.

source: <https://teambuilding.com/blog/quiet-quitting-statistics>

With the US as a baseline, here is how other countries deviate:

- US: 2% lower
- Australia: 16% lower
- New Zealand: 21% lower
- Singapore: 21% lower
- Luxembourg: 33% lower
- Ireland: 51% lower
- Finland: 64% lower
- Philippines: 66% lower
- China: 72% lower

There are possible explanations for these data trends around work culture, employee benefits, social security, work-life balance and more.

“ **...79% state that more recognition by managers and leaders would result in higher engagement and job performance.** ”

3. Quiet quitting leads to worldwide company losses of up to \$1.5 trillion each year

The Conference Board produced a study on workplace engagement. This study found that quiet quitting cost US businesses \$450 to 500 billion annually, and could be up to \$1.5 trillion worldwide.

4. 79% of employees report they would stop quiet quitting if given more recognition

These stats on employee engagement from Octanner show that employees expect acknowledgment or recognition for their efforts after completing a project. Of these employees, 79% state that more recognition by managers and leaders would result in higher engagement and job performance.

5. In the US, 47% of employees just want to make ends meet

A report on workplace data by Pew Research shows that 47% or nearly half of all US employees believe that work is just way to pay the bills. This number would correlate with quiet quitting, since

a lack of purpose or motivation at work is aligned with decreased engagement and productivity.

6. 73% of Canadian employees are considering resignation

Up to 73 percent of CDN workers are considering leaving their jobs, which is data that closely correlates with quiet quitting.

The primary motivation for switching jobs is money. Nearly 74% of Millennial and Gen-Z employees would take a pay cut to work at their dream workplace.

7. The [#quietquitting](#) hashtag on LinkedIn has 389 followers

With all the discussion of quiet quitting, there is a relatively low number of people following #quietquitting on LinkedIn.



Additional Materials

The Trifecta of Engagement: The Organization, the Manager, and the Employee

The Human Capital Institute (HCI) and Achievers partnered to develop an original research report exploring how employee engagement is fundamentally created and sustained through three key elements, the Trifecta of Engagement—the organization/senior leaders, the manager, and the employee. Independent of one another, none of these groups can build and support employee engagement on their own. Rather, there must be a collective effort among all three in order to drive engagement. To read more and download the PDF, please click below.

[Download it here](#)

Is Moonlighting Without Permission Just Cause to Terminate?

Don't let employees compete or use company time for their personal businesses. Moonlighting can be a tricky issue for HR. While you want to be supportive of full-time employees who must work multiple jobs to make ends meet, moonlighting can also take a toll on energy and productivity. In a worse-case scenario, it can even compromise your business, especially if the employee's second job happens to be running his/her own business. Read more by clicking below.

[Download it here](#)

Social Media Privacy and Discipline: Workplace Challenges

More than ever before we live and work digitally, and so our online private and work activities intersect in constant and unforeseen ways. This recorded webinar will discuss workplace management, compliance and disciplinary considerations for this digital age. To find out more information and watch the recording, please click below.

[Download it here](#)

Time Theft Policy

With labour in short supply, HR directors face the challenge of getting maximum productivity out of the employees they have. Perhaps the greatest obstacle standing in the way of that challenge is time theft. Download our template you can adapt to legally crack down on time theft at your company. Download the PDF below.

[Download it here](#)

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