

# PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

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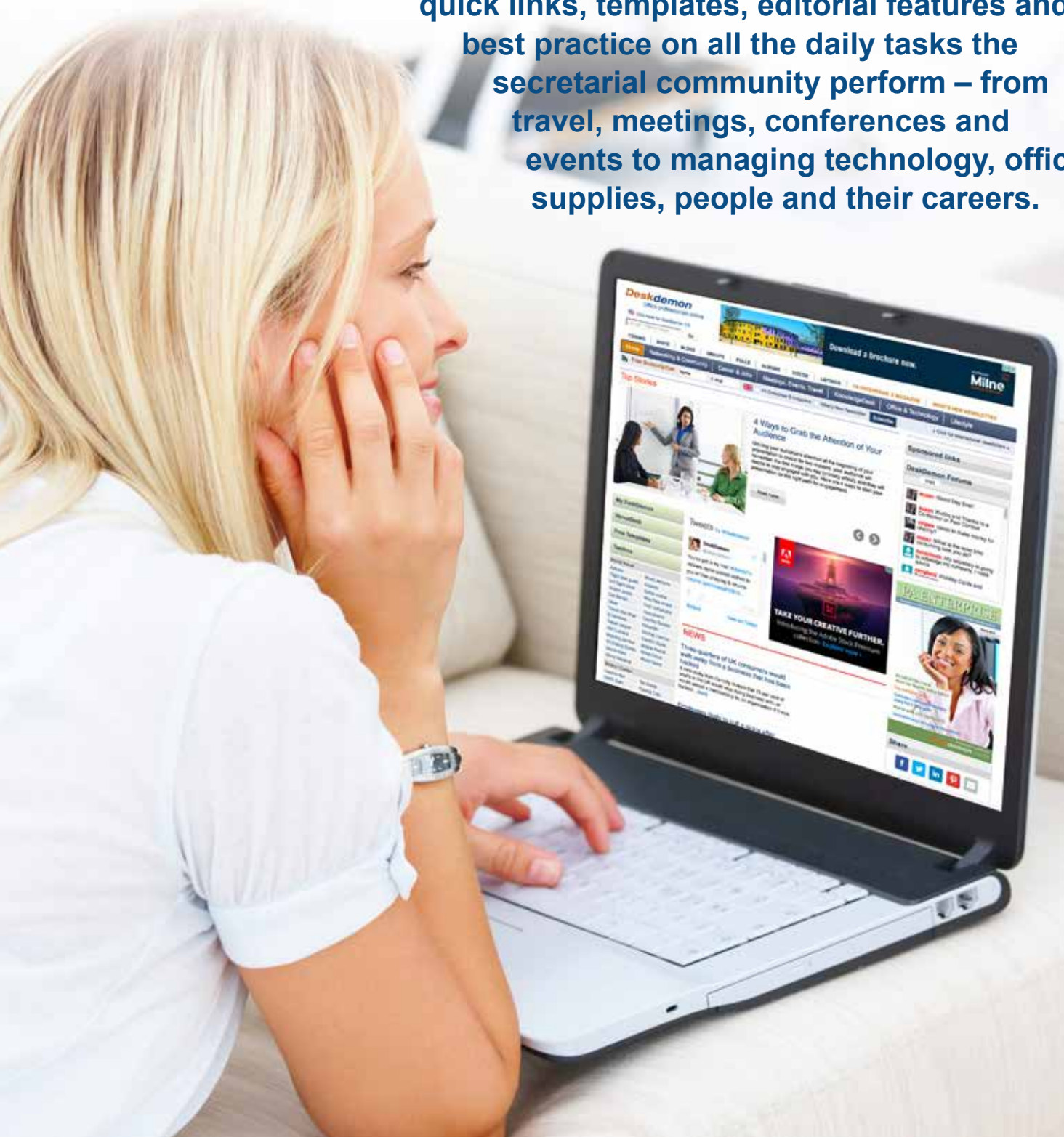
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# Quiet Quitting and how to combat it



*The Great Resignation has been a major buzzword in the UK over the last couple of years. It signifies the trend of workers leaving their jobs to seek improved working conditions, and it has sparked a new phenomenon: Quiet Quitting.*

Essentially, this refers to employees quitting in spirit before actually quitting in reality. Quiet quitters don't work beyond their basic duties and become less committed and engaged with their work. They might continue to fulfill their primary responsibilities but be less willing to engage in team-building activities and increasingly resistant to new projects and challenges.

But this is not only happening in the UK. The phenomenon is impacting work teams across the globe. According to Gallup, 87% of the worldwide workforce are either not engaged or actively disengaged.

This presents new challenges for HR managers. Building company culture and nurturing talent will only become more difficult as employees emotionally dissociate from work.

HR teams must understand the root of the issue in order to combat it. This guide will cover just that, as well as actionable strategies to engage and retain talent.

### What is Quiet Quitting?

The term 'Quiet Quitting' is a concept that's been gaining traction rapidly in the UK.

It is the idea of going to work but only doing the bare minimum to avoid being fired. Employees are physically present but mentally and emotionally disengaged.

When employees disassociate, it can have a massive impact on the success of a company. Factors that give organisations a critical competitive advantage, such as creativity and determination, diminish as a result.

So what can companies do to better understand – and inhibit – the problem?

### The Origins of Quiet Quitting

What we know today as Quiet Quitting is intertwined with The Great Resignation. Both are rooted in the UK workforce becoming increasingly frustrated with being overworked and underappreciated through pay and recognition.

The idea started in the United States where employees took to social media to admit they were giving their bare minimum at work, covering their core obligations and not much else. It has since gained international traction on social media as more and more Gen Z workers speak out about feeling undervalued. Today, one in three UK workers label themselves as quiet quitters, showing up to work to do no more than what's required to get by.

The pandemic has a big part to play in this. Having life put into perspective and new hybrid ways of working tried and tested, an even work-life balance has become more of a priority for workers. However, there are several underlying factors that are also to blame, including lack of employee recognition and inadequate compensation whilst cost of living soars.

The picture may look grim, but there are many tangible ways that HR teams can address the origins of the problem and boost team morale. Continue reading to discover three research-backed strategies to prevent Quiet Quitting from getting a grip on your workforce.

### How Companies are Responding to Quiet Quitting

Many large companies are implementing strategies to address and avoid Quiet Quitting.





SMEs can take inspiration from these case studies and adapt their strategies to suit smaller businesses.

Google has implemented a “20% time” policy which allows employees to spend 20% of their work-week on projects outside of their regular responsibilities. This has been a successful way to keep teams motivated, while also allowing them to pursue personal interests and build relationships at work.

Another example comes from Patagonia, a company best known for its commitment to environmental and social responsibility. They have introduced a policy that encourages employees to spend time on environmental and community projects during work hours. According to Yvon Chouinard, founder of

Patagonia, the best thing a business can do for the planet is to make good products and take care of its employees.

To retain talent, companies are also investing in employee development and career advancement opportunities. For example, Deloitte has created a ‘Leadership Academy’ that offers leadership training and career support for employees interested in progressing and growing.

Many companies are responding to the trend by shifting towards flexible contracts. Remote work, hybrid contracts, no monitoring and flexible hours are some of the most popular types. By providing increased autonomy, teams can more easily balance their work and personal responsibilities, decreasing the chance of quiet quitting.

But case studies can only get you so far. You’ll need to evaluate the specific causes of Quiet Quitting at your workplace and build an employee retention strategy based on these. Try starting with the tips below.

### Employee Retention Strategies to Engage Your Workforce

The first step in managing Quiet Quitting within your team is to identify the main cause of the problem. You can conduct engagement surveys, lead focus groups or have one-on-one conversations to learn about what is not working.

Once you’ve pinpointed these, assess which of the below strategies are best suited to your organisation.

### Redefine Core Job Tasks

Role expansion is a natural part of any employees’ progression, but these changes

aren't always reflected in job descriptions and pay packages.

Managers should identify core job responsibilities and more accurately reflect these in role descriptions and titles. This will ensure employees receive the recognition they deserve and will hold them accountable for tasks and processes that need to be completed.

### Listen, Then Invest

Often, leaders make decisions based on what they think is best for their workforce. But a great leader listens to their employees, understands their true needs and uses their feedback as fuel for change. Staff opinions should guide where money and resources are invested.

This isn't just about showing empathy. Real listening requires employers to collect qualitative and quantitative data to make better decisions. This can be done through eNPS and engagement surveys.

### Offer Flexibility

Flexibility can come in many forms, from working from home and flexible hours to job sharing and sabbaticals. But it's crucial to remember that one size does not fit all. Everyone works differently, so it's vital that leaders understand what flexibility means to each team and design a package that works for all.

### Reduce Workload

Studies have shown that employees who feel overworked are more likely to disengage from their work and seek employment elsewhere.

Reducing workload can help to combat stress, allowing people to focus on one task at a

time and complete their projects to a higher standard; quality over quantity.

One example of a company that has successfully reduced workload without losing productivity is Basecamp. By limiting the workweek to 32 hours and encouraging team members to take regular paid time off, they've increased team satisfaction and productivity whilst lowering turnover rate.

### Build a Positive Company Culture

One practical way to build a positive company culture is to make sure that employee contributions are recognised and rewarded. This could involve setting up a system for employees to nominate their peers for awards, or creating an employee of the month programme.

Promoting open communication and transparency can also help. Encourage employees to share their thoughts and ideas, and actively listen to their feedback.

Foster a sense of community and strengthen team relationships. It is more difficult for people to dissociate themselves when they're emotionally connected to their colleagues. Some effective ways to do this include team-building games, after-work drinks and away days.

It is also important to provide fair compensation and benefits that align with industry standards. Offering competitive salaries and benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans and paid time off can help attract and retain top talent.

# Understanding Gen Z in the Workplace



*By 2025, 30% of the workforce will be comprised of Generation Z, or individuals born between 1997 and 2012. While these young people are often criticised for being digital natives or having radical social values, their progressive nature makes them great assets to any company that values innovation. So what makes Generation Z so brilliantly unique, what can you do to meet these employees' unique needs in the workplace, and how can your organisation benefit from these young workers' strengths.*



## What defines Gen Z in the workplace?

“Generation Z” refers to the group of individuals born between 1997 and 2012. Born in the height of the digital age, Gen Z is known for being tech-savvy, politically progressive, and extremely purpose-driven.

Let’s break down some of the notable characteristics of this new generation of workers:

***Gen Z babies were practically born with iPhones in their hands. These individuals are highly skilled at navigating the internet, digital technology, and social media, as these things have always been a part of their lives, rather than new tools they had to learn to navigate later on.***

Information is highly available to them, and they often use their devices to learn new skills and research topics that interest them.

While Gen Zs are often mocked for their reliance on mobile devices and Apple products or their affinity for Instagram, the perspective that they are “less than” because of their habits or differences is deeply problematic. Older generations were never critiqued to the same degree for taking advantage of the resources available to them.

It’s important to remember that the wristwatch, the printing press, and even sliced bread were all considered newfangled “advances” when they were created. One day, the ubiquitous smartphone will be viewed as an equally archaic invention.

## Diverse, inclusive, and progressive

Generation Z is the most diverse generation in American history. Not only is there more racial, gender, and ethnic diversity in this generation, but more individuals in this age

group also self-identify as LGBTQ+ than ever before.

For these reasons, it should come as no surprise that Gen Zs have more progressive, inclusive values and political leanings than many of their parents and grandparents. These individuals are often extremely passionate about social and environmental justice, fighting for their vision of a safer, more equitable world.

Because of their focus on these values, Gen Zs tend to be intensely purpose-driven, both in their personal and professional lives.

Gen Z employees tend to value DE&I more than employees from prior generations. They seek out workplaces that value individual contributions and expressions, have diversity in leadership, and emphasize the importance of their Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

Many of them are also drawn to companies that care deeply about climate change and monitor their carbon footprints, aligning with their vision of a brighter future and better world for everyone.

## Authentic, transparent, and independent

Generation Z will never be known for mincing their words. Born advocates and activists, these free-thinkers are strong, opinionated, and unafraid to fight for what’s right. They deeply value authentic communication, transparent dialogue, and being able to function independently, especially in professional settings.

Their communication style tends to be concise and informal. 75% of them also prefer to have difficult conversations over text rather than



over the phone.

At work, Generation Z expects clear instructions, direct communication, and regular feedback. They don't appreciate "fluff," corporate jargon, or any form of beating around the bush. They also prefer to work autonomously and don't appreciate any form of micromanagement, often setting very strong boundaries for themselves in the workplace.

**Health and wellness-conscious**

Placing higher value on physical health than Millennials, Gen Xers, or Baby Boomers did at the same age, many Gen Zers choose not to engage in drinking alcohol or smoking tobacco. They were also privy to more consistent, accurate information about nutrition and exercise from a young age, leaving behind the wild yo-yo diets and laughable "health" crazes of previous generations.

Generation Z is also known for speaking openly about struggles regarding mental health, especially depression and anxiety. For many individuals in this generation, the rise in violent crimes, media saturation, the constant barrage of "bad news," the COVID-19 pandemic, and coming of age in such uncertain economic times have all exacerbated underlying mental health issues.

**Pragmatic and focused on finances**

The Gen Z workforce values different elements of their careers than many employees from older generations. These young employees have specific needs at work due to the differences in the world they were raised in. To attract and retain Gen Z employees, employers need to foster a workplace culture that is aligned with their





values and catered to their strengths.

### What are Gen Zs unique needs in the workplace?

The Gen Z workforce values different elements of their careers than many employees from older generations. These young employees have specific needs at work due to the differences in the world they were raised in.

To attract and retain Gen Z employees, employers need to foster a workplace culture that is aligned with their values and catered to their strengths. This can include:

#### Top-of-the-line technology

Because they're digital natives who value convenience, Gen Zers tend to have even higher expectations for technology in the workplace than the millennial generation. These young workers don't like to waste time fumbling with archaic tools or workflows, and often seek out professional settings where they have access to the newest devices and programs.

They also value the automation of menial tasks and often leverage technology to help them work more efficiently and accurately.

In fact, one-third of Gen Z employees expect their employers to provide them with modernized equipment, and one in five say they won't tolerate experiences with subpar technology.

#### Learning and development opportunities

Gen Zers deeply value learning new skills and progressing in their careers. In fact, 76% of Gen Z respondents reported that they're looking for professional training and

development opportunities.

Nearly one in five workers from this generation report being more likely to stay with an employer who offered reskilling, education, or upskilling as part of their professional development planning.

### **Strong employer brand**

Members of Generation Z are more concerned with an employer's brand presence than their Millennial, Gen X, or Baby Boomer counterparts. As job seekers, these young people are more likely to assess a company's social media presence and impact, as well as their values and organisational culture.

It's important for them to take into consideration how a company is viewed by its clients and current employees before deciding to even interview there.

### **Mental health support**

Unfortunately, most of the Gen Zers surveyed reported not feeling like they had adequate mental health support in the workplace.

Less than half of the employees surveyed agreed that their boss helps them maintain a healthy workload. 28% reported that they struggle with their mental health, both in and outside the workplace.

Offering mental health services to employees through your insurance plan can be a great way to make these individuals feel cared for and ensure they have the resources they need to thrive.

### **Alignment with lifestyle and values**

While Gen Zs value job security, they also believe that their career development and success is within their control and dependent

on their actions. While they value professional and financial stability, they're also unafraid of entrepreneurship and taking risks.

Gen Zers often seek out roles or companies that align with their personal values or work toward measurable positive social change. When applying for new jobs, they look for people-first organisations that value the employee experience, fostering a solid work-life balance and deeper job satisfaction.

Due to this, some members of Gen Z value mission-driven, interesting work over less fulfilling jobs with higher salaries.

### **What are some common challenges of managing employees from Generation Z?**

Just as Gen Z employees bring unique strengths to the workplace, they also bring their own unique, varied set of challenges. Understanding these challenges can help managers tailor their leadership styles to better manage young employees. Some common sticking points may include:

#### **Desire for more praise or validation**

Because of the culture Generation Z was raised in, many of them are used to being praised for their participation in activities rather than "winning." This was a conscious effort orchestrated by Gen X parents to help their children build self-esteem and feel included without the constant sensation of being under pressure to perform.

However, because of this mindset, many Gen Zers are used to more praise or validation than other generations and may seek this out in professional settings.

#### **Need for professional autonomy**

Because they so greatly value individuality



and self-expression, many Gen Z employees also deeply value professional freedom and autonomy. They tend to feel most at ease when they can be independent and fully express their ideas and creativity. Gen Zers are particularly sensitive to being micromanaged in any way.

### Accustomed to simplicity and instant gratification

Because they grew up in a digital world with so much available at the touch of a button, Gen Zers are used to seamless experiences and instant gratification.

Because of this, some employees from this generation may come across as entitled or impatient simply because they're accustomed to a much faster pace of life. However, this can also have upsides, as these employees are very sensitive to wasting time and like to work as efficiently as possible.

### Less company loyalty than any previous generation

Members of previous generations were more inclined to stay with companies for longer

periods. In the prior world of work, this was seen as a choice with high esteem and often had a lot of benefits for the employees, such as pensions and other perks.

However, now that these benefits are no longer as common, many younger employees switch jobs every few years, which enables them to earn at a higher level than staying put and waiting for promotion cycles.

Constantly seeking better-paying jobs empowers them to create and sustain a better sense of financial security in today's uncertain economic landscape.

### Wrapping Up

Attracting Gen Z employees begins with deepening your understanding of their working styles, values, and professional expectations.

However, since every business and individual is unique, polling or employees as a group or speaking to them individually can help you tailor strategies to your team and organisation.

While Generation Z's defining traits and preferences are often mocked or looked down upon, members of this diverse generation can be great assets to any organisation when provided with the tools they need to thrive.

By arming yourself with knowledge on how to meet the needs of these young workers, you'll be able to build mutually beneficial professional relationships.

This will help your team attract Gen Zers who can help you stay aware of emerging trends, explore fresh ideas and opportunities, and stay nimble in an ever-evolving world of work.

# How Gen Z are changing the way people speak at work



*Workplace environments have become more casual in the last five years, and employees believe Generation Z workers are responsible. A study from Barclays LifeSkills, an initiative from Barclays Bank, has revealed that 71% of workers in the United Kingdom believe the younger generation is changing the formality of language in the workplace.*

The survey predicts that formal phrases and sign-offs - such as “Yours truly,” “Yours sincerely,” and “To whom it may concern” - may be extinct from the workplace within the next 10 years.

Unsurprisingly, social media was cited as a reason for changing workplace language. While 39 per cent of people over the age of 55 believe that social media has had the biggest impact on changes in communication, just 24 per cent of people aged 18 to 24 agreed that social media is to blame for evolving language.

When it comes to popular email signatures,

like “Yours truly” and “Yours sincerely”, over a third of UK workers surveyed described these phrases as old-fashioned. Instead, nearly half of Brits have exchanged these closings for “Thanks!” and “Thanks so much” because it’s deemed as more friendly.

While “Ta!” has also become a popular sign-off, 29 per cent of workers see it as being a bit too familiar. The phrase “Hiya!” has also divided opinion - with 42 per cent considering it friendly, 36 per cent as casual, and 26 per cent thinking of it as too familiar.

Perhaps a reason for the change in workplace communication is because online messaging

applications are widely used in offices, especially as companies offer their employees the ability to work remote. Apps like Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Google Chat offer users more options to express their feelings and share their individuality with emojis and GIFs.

Gen Z is nearly twice as likely to use these instant messaging platforms at work, compared to 54 per cent of workers aged 55 and over, who prefer to use email because it's considered more professional. However, 40 per cent of Gen Z-ers believe that email limits their ability to demonstrate their personalities.

“Our research shows that the next generation are clearly going to make their mark on the workforce when it comes to how we communicate,” said Kirstie Mackey, head of the Barclays LifeSkills initiative. “The shift to more personable language is a positive one, however it's important to demonstrate an understanding of social etiquette in the workplace, which does differ from school or university.

“Striking the right balance whilst still displaying your personality through your communications is key,” she added.

Dr Laura Bailey, senior lecturer in English language and linguistics at the University of Kent, said: “Changing norms in the workplace are reflected in the language younger employees use, and the way communication has changed in general. Email threads and instant messaging platforms have become blended into ‘conversations’ where formal openings and sign offs might feel out of place.

“For the older generation, letter-writing etiquette might be drilled in enough that it is instinctive in any written communication,” she continued. “Whereas for Gen Z, social media

has driven linguistic change and sped up the spread of language trends.”

There's no question that Gen Z has already begun making an impact on the workplace, from making bigger demands for salary transparency to dressing more casually in the office. Most recently, a poll revealed that young adults may take two weeks to feel confident in a new job.

The survey of 1,000 18 to 25 year olds also found that Gen Z workers spend eight days worrying about their new role before they even start, expressing concerns about not fitting in with the team or not knowing what to do in their position. Many young workers turn to social media for advice when starting a new job or apprenticeship, with TikTok proving the most useful.

However, recent graduates entering the workforce had their college experiences interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to virtual classes and online internships. As a result, many Gen Z-ers are now taking courses in order to brush up on their work skills.

According to a report from the Wall Street Journal, companies, universities, and recruiters have begun training new hires on developing their soft skills - common interpersonal skills or traits that allow workers to interact harmoniously with others in the workplace. At these training facilities, Gen Z workers will receive training on how to maintain eye contact and take pauses during conversations. Other major companies are also informing young workers on appropriate office culture, such as workplace dress codes.

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# Work smarter, not harder: 15 tips for making it real



*You put in hard work each day, and you know it. Your body knows it, and most certainly, your mind knows it. Maybe you've thought about how many projects you're taking on or how long your commute is to work. Maybe you're getting things done, but it's taking all your energy. You aren't afraid of working hard. But you aren't sure if you can keep finding ways to work even harder. Have you wondered if there's a better or more effective way?*



If you want to get somewhere without going down the path of burnout, it might be time to consider if you could be working smarter, not harder.

### I work hard, but how could I work smarter?

Most of us could be more efficient. Over time we develop bad habits or keep doing tasks one way even though we have the tools to do them an easier way.

But when you think about working smarter, before you jump to efficiency, pay attention to effectiveness. What is the outcome you're trying to achieve and is there a better way to get there?

Depending on your role, you might not have control over the best way to get to an outcome — maybe your manager requires you to fill out an overcomplicated form every day instead of sending a quick IM. Even if you don't control all of your work, to work smarter, you should periodically at least ask the question: Is there a better way? Is there anything I can stop doing?

### Thrive in your workplace

Connect with our Coaches to build stronger workplace relationships and cultivate a culture that drives success.

### Why working smarter is a good idea

Your time and energy aren't things you should waste. Working smarter values your energy and optimizes your time. It helps you spend less time burning your energy and more time saving it for other important things.

Plus, it makes you a more efficient worker. You know what tasks need to be accomplished in what order and the best strategies to use to complete them.

Here are four other benefits when you start working smarter, not harder:

**1 It makes time for more rest:** When you work smart, you rest smart, too. It gives you more time for all sorts of types of rest. That might involve meditating, practicing mindfulness, or even taking a nap. Short naps have been found to strengthen your memory, improve your mood, and boost your creativity.

**2 Helps to reduce or recover from burnout:** Burnout zaps your energy levels and harms your mental health. But working smarter enables you to be mindful of your energy to recover or reduce burnout. Working smarter shows you how to connect with your values, what's meaningful to you, and your goals.

**3 Improves your work-life balance:** Rather than work longer hours and be consumed by your professional life, working smarter carves out time for your personal life. Working smarter is a great time management practice that allows for more balance in your life and hitting deadlines on schedule.

**4 Boosts your work motivation:** After a few days of working smart, the difference will be hard to ignore. Your motivation will increase because you'll be more productive and feel positive about your work. You'll see what this new strategy is doing for you, motivating you to set new goals and continue your growth.

## 15 tips to work smarter, not harder

A coach can be a great asset to work with you to discover what strategies work best to help you meet your goals, eliminate unnecessary tasks, and optimize your workflow. In the meantime, we've compiled these 15 tips on working smarter for you to try.

### 1. Say goodbye to multitasking

Having too much on the go can make it seem like you're accomplishing a lot, but it also spreads you too thin. Your cerebral cortex only pays attention to one thing at a time. Multitasking strains your cortex as it tries to focus your energy and attention on too many different things.

Abruptly switches tasks away from the quality of your work because you're too busy changing to focus on new things. You won't as be effective if you can't devote enough focus and energy to each task.

When you find yourself jumping from one task to another, try slowing down with some deep breathing. Deliberate decision-making will allow you to focus on one task and resist the urge to bounce to another mid-stream. This takes practice. Understand that you'll work more efficiently when you focus on one task at a time, even if it feels like you'll accomplish more.

### 2. Complete tasks in batches

Tackling your tasks in batches can keep your momentum rolling. This way, you'll be focused on one task at a time.

Be proactive and schedule parts of your day for repetitive tasks. For example, answer all your emails during the scheduled time of day instead of whenever they arrive in your inbox. A strategy to use to help you with this is time

blocking, which involves dividing your day into smaller blocks of time.

That way, you'll know when you have time to answer emails or organize yourself. When you receive an email, you can know it'll be handled later in the day. This will limit interruptions during your important tasks, and you'll find a better rhythm in your structured workflow.

### 3. Take breaks

Even if you're feeling overwhelmed with everything on your to-do list, it's still important to take breaks. Your attention span wears out after focusing for too long, so make sure you schedule downtime in your workday. During your breaks, make sure you get up to stretch, drink water, and have a snack.

This type of scheduling requires good time management skills, too. Setting time limits on how long you'll work on a specific task and pre-schedule breaks can feel stressful, but these boundaries will benefit your productivity.

Experiment with different breaking techniques until you find what works for you, like the Pomodoro technique — 25 minutes of work followed by a five-minute break. Regardless of how long you pause, you're doing your performance and well-being a favor.

### 4. Block your calendar

Carving out time in your day to dedicate to work keeps you organized and limits distractions. Be mindful of how you schedule your day and any possible distractions that could come your way.

Are you a morning worker, but a daily meeting interrupts your flow? Do your coworkers come to you with questions while you're in the middle of something? Use one of the many



tools for managing your calendar, scheduling focus time, and blocking notifications. Then, honor your calendar.

### 5. Start tracking your time

It's a good idea to get to the root of when and where your productivity plummets. Spend a few days tracking your time with apps like Time Doctor or Reporter to review what sites you visit when you wander off. Moving forward, this will help you see what apps you need to silence notifications from and stay away from while working.

There might also be a pattern in your distractions — like when you're trying to work through lunch — that might motivate you to adapt your schedule. Once you see patterns in your time, you can try substituting other good habits, like a quick stretch or a glass of water, that gives a mini-break without derailing

your productivity.

### 6. Schedule tasks based on your energy levels

Figuring out when you're the most productive and energised to work is an effective way to work smarter. Forcing yourself to work when your brain is tired won't produce good work. It'll only make you dread your tasks even more.

If you work better in the morning, schedule the important tasks that demand a lot of energy. Working to your strengths and not against them will help you get more done and feel more motivated.

### 7. Turn off notifications

You don't need to have your Facebook or Twitter notifications coming in while you're trying to work. It only takes your focus away from the important tasks at hand and wastes

time. And if you're waiting for a response to a message, you might have more difficulty concentrating.

Turning off notifications to apps that aren't work-related increases your productivity. Most smartphones have Do Not Disturb functions that limit notifications or DownTime, which keeps you off social media or unproductive apps during selected hours.

### 8. Enjoy the outdoors

When you find yourself at a standstill with work, it's helpful to have a change of scenery. You can't do your most important work if you feel trapped inside. Getting outside for some exercise relieves stress, calms you, and centers your focus. If you have extra time over your lunch break, try walking to the nearest park and breathing fresh air. Your mental well-being will thank you.

### 9. Adjust your attitude

We all have bad days. Focusing too much on the negative aspects of work can distract you from being productive. It's important to pick yourself up and remind yourself what you're here to accomplish. Thinking about the positives in your day-to-day life can give you a better attitude when working. What are you grateful for today?

### 10. Make a routine and stick to it

Getting into a good groove of working each day is easier if your day starts smoothly. If your morning routine begins with making your bed and washing your face, you're still preparing for a day of smart working.

Create a list of things you want to get done the next day each night, and organize it by morning, afternoon, and evening. On average,

it takes 66 days to build a habit.

### 11. Enhance your communication skills

Strong communication skills go a long way, whether you're an independent contractor, an entrepreneur, or a CEO. Improving your communication skills won't just benefit you, either.

A coworker or boss who can communicate effectively saves everyone time, including their own. You pay more attention to clear and concise communication, which also helps your decision-making abilities.

Start by actively listening to people and sticking to one topic at a time. When sending emails or instant messages, keep your information short and to the point. With less time spent answering or asking questions, you'll accomplish more.

### 12. Keep your to-do list manageable

Adding an unrealistic amount of daily tasks to your to-do list can lead to disappointment when they go unfinished. Keeping your list short makes it more manageable and more useful.

Try to prioritize no more than five tasks that you need to complete. Anything after that is a bonus. This way, you'll finish your day satisfied that you've finished all your important tasks. Plus, making your to-do list more manageable allows you to slow down and be more purposeful with your work. You won't need to take shortcuts or rush to accomplish an impossible list.

It also helps to plan your work several days in advance. At the beginning of each week, look at what's coming up and make a plan. Schedule important tasks that require more



### 14. Learn how to say “no”

Are you a people pleaser? Do you love to help people every time they ask for it? Sometimes when you always say yes to others, you put your own needs second.

Learning how to say “no” or even “not right now” will help you prioritize your energy and focus. If you have a tight deadline,

you must put your work before supporting others. This isn't to say you should never help your coworkers, but recognize when your work takes priority.

effort and thinking in your most productive hours each day. Save the less demanding routine tasks for the rest of the day. Your prioritized tasks will receive your best energy.

And those busy, routine tasks might be candidates for elimination if there is software or automation that can handle them. Consider investing some time into improving those processes.

### 13. Do work that you enjoy

It may be stating the obvious to say do what you love, but it makes all the difference. Choosing projects that you feel passionate about motivates you to do your best. It also makes work feel less effortful. Of course, not every job can be your favorite, but adding in work you love will give you something to look forward to each day and positively impact your mental health.

Reflect on what aspects of your work empower you and make conscious choices to pursue them. If that means changing jobs, it might be time to make the switch.

### 15. Ask questions early on

Rather than wait until the last minute to ask your questions or seek guidance, jump on it as early as possible. It helps you identify and solve problems you might encounter later on.

Plus, you don't want to exhaust yourself trying to solve it alone if you know your manager could help you with it. That way, you'll complete tasks faster and not waste time trying to find solutions. If it's a question about a repetitive task or something you often do, it'll also help your future efficiency.

### The bottom line

Remember: implementing these tips to work smarter won't change your life overnight. Practicing these smart working strategies takes time, and you have to experiment to find what works for you before sticking to it.

[betterup.com](https://betterup.com)

# 35 things to consider doing when you're bored at work



*Depending on the nature of your job, you may occasionally find that you're bored at work. This may be because you've completed all your tasks or you don't have a new client at the moment. Either way, it's important to remain productive so you feel motivated, creative and collaborative and can continue to help your organisation succeed. In this article, we explain why being bored at work can be a problem and provide you with a list of things you can do to use your spare time productively.*

### Why is being bored at work a problem?

There are several reasons why you may want to avoid becoming bored at work. Most notably, boredom can lower your motivation and negatively affect the satisfaction you may have with your job. If you're bored at work, you may have a hard time focusing on tasks once you have something new to work on, and it can also impact the professional relationships you have with your co-workers. However, by finding things to do that are productive and which can help with your job, you may feel more useful and valuable to your organisation. Your employer may also notice your initiative and appreciate your effort to be constructive throughout your workday.

### Things to do when you're bored at work

Review this list of things you can do at work to combat boredom:

**1. Ask for more work.** One of the first things to try if you're bored at work is asking your employer for more responsibilities. This shows them that you're diligent and have a strong work ethic, and it may even introduce you to a task you really enjoy.

**2. Check your emails.** If your email inbox has a lot of messages, you may discover tasks or

priorities that you previously overlooked.

**3. Organise your work area.** Whether you have a section of a desk or an entire office to yourself, you can take the time to organise and clean the area you work in. This can include digitising documents, organising files or simply cleaning your desk and removing unwanted items.

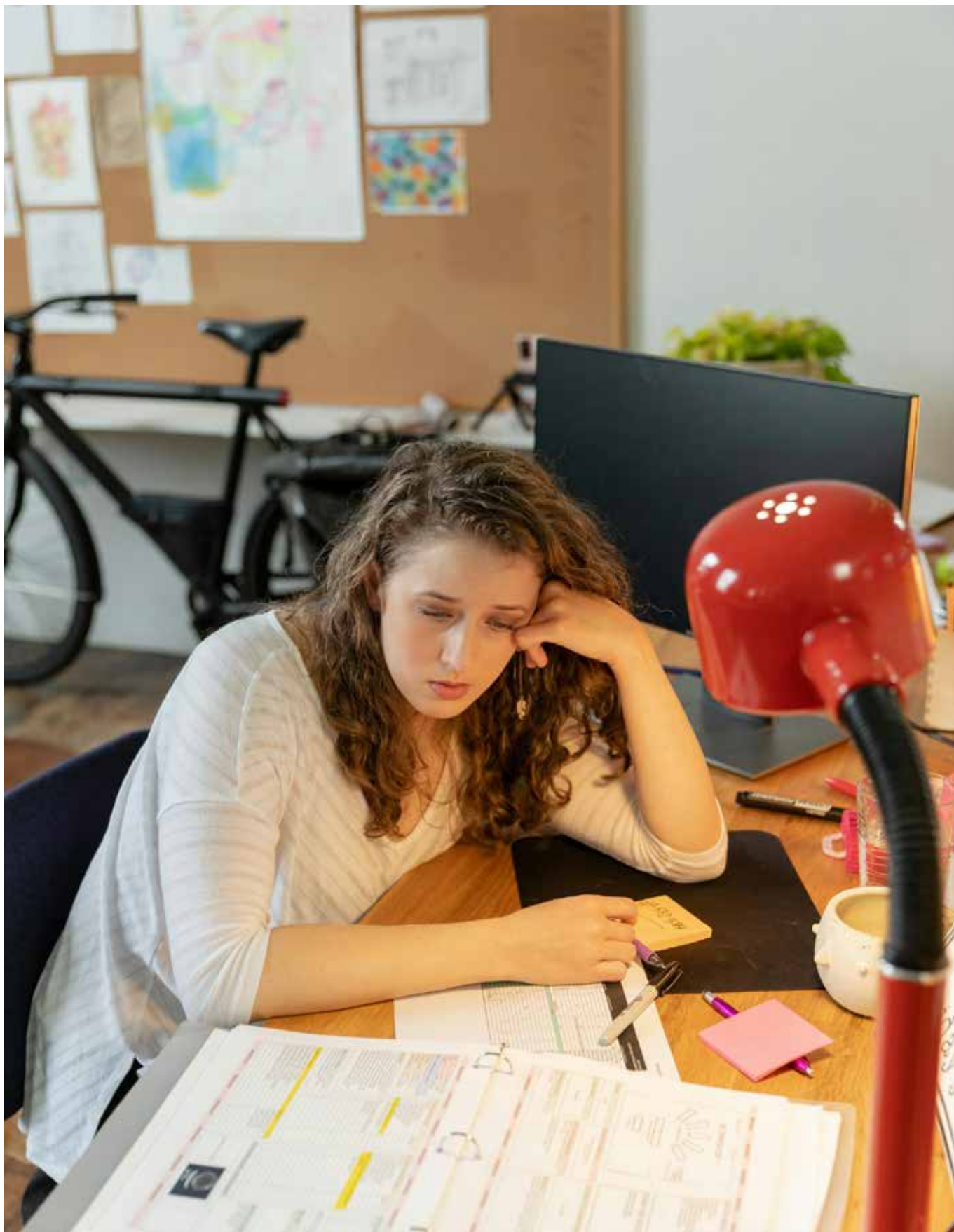
**4. Reach out to clients.** If you haven't heard from certain clients in a while, you can take the time to write to them or call them. This shows that you're committed, and it might lead to more work for you and your company.

**5. Read the news.** By keeping yourself updated on what's happening in the world, you can broaden your mind. You might also see a news story that's relevant to your industry.

**6. Redecorate your area.** Redecorating your area could include changing your desktop wallpaper or repainting your office. Ask your employer for permission before doing anything major, but this may also give you the opportunity to engage with those who have also finished their work tasks for the day.

**7. Do some CPD.** There may be a course, webinar series, or extra reading you've been







wanting to do to further your career. Using your free time at work to undertake some continuous professional development may help you stay motivated at work and shows management you're intrinsically motivated.

**8. Socialise with your colleagues.** You can use your spare time to talk to your co-workers and bond with them. By becoming closer to those with whom you work, you might enjoy working at your current place of employment even more.

**9. Check industry publications.** Almost every industry has its own publications, be it a physical magazine or online blog. Reading these can help you gain valuable information about your field.

**10. Go for a walk.** Getting up and stretching your legs can reinvigorate you and help pass the time. If another colleague has run out of things to do, you can suggest taking a walk together to socialise.

**11. Exercise.** If a walk isn't enough, you might consider taking some time in your day to exercise. Some workplaces might even encourage this, offer discounted or free memberships to local gyms or arrange group yoga sessions for the office.

**12. Meditate.** Having some quiet time for yourself at work can be a good opportunity to meditate and collect your thoughts. If you haven't tried it before, you can use guides and videos available online.

**13. Pick up lunch.** If you're bored but see that your colleagues are busy, you can offer to go out and pick up lunch. This gives you something to do while also helping others.

**14. Go out for lunch.** You might consider

having lunch at a local restaurant or similar establishment if there's enough time. Make sure to check with your employer that this is acceptable, and you can even suggest that some colleagues join you.

**15. Take paid leave.** If you believe that the lack of work is going to continue, use some of your paid leave to take a few days off. Even a single day off can help you relax and return to work with renewed energy.

**16. Seek new clients.** If your business serves clients, you can use the time to try finding new ones. This is a great display of initiative and can have positive repercussions for the business and your career.

**17. Make a to-do list.** Even though there's little to do, you may be aware of upcoming tasks. Plan for these and prepare anything that you might need to be successful.

**18. Listen to a podcast.** Podcasts can be a great way to learn something interesting. You may even be able to find an industry-specific podcast that can help you develop new skills.

**19. Assist your colleagues.** Others in your office may have too much work to do. You can use your free time to help them, which can reduce their stress and help you bond with them.

**20. Plan your career.** You probably have some long- and short-term career aspirations. Use your free time to plan for these and work out how to make them happen, such as planning how you intend to negotiate a salary increase or promotion.

**21. Update your portfolio.** If you've completed new projects recently, you can update your portfolio to reflect this. You can

also use this time to review your portfolio and identify areas for further development.

**22. Learn a new skill.** There's always something you can learn that's relevant to your job. Spare time gives you a great opportunity to seek training in new skills, which can also boost your career prospects.

**23. Find new efficiencies.** There may be several processes in your line of work that are inefficient. You can use your spare time to look into ways of improving or streamlining these processes, which can help you with future work.

**24. Plan your weekend.** If you haven't done something new in a while, this is a good time to look into new ways to spend your weekend, as long as doing so doesn't interfere with your work responsibilities. Research activities and events in your area, and find something new that you'd enjoy doing in your free time.

**25. Expand your vocabulary.** Communication skills and fluency can be valuable in almost any type of work. Dictionary sites often have words of the day, and you can learn to incorporate these into your own vocabulary.

**26. Make tea or coffee.** If you're bored, you can offer to make tea or coffee for your colleagues if they're too busy to do so themselves.

**27. Run office errands.** In addition to making tea or fetching lunch, there might be other errands that your colleagues need to do. If they don't have the time, you can offer to do them yourself, which can strengthen workplace collaboration.

**28. Start a blog.** You can make use of your experiences and ideas to start a blog.

Consider writing posts for your workplace, and later, ask your manager what they think.

**29. Propose an initiative.** You might have your own ideas about ways to improve the workplace. If you have the time, talk to your employer about your ideas and volunteer to put them into practice.

**30. Ask for a review.** Get in touch with your hiring manager or immediate superior and ask them what they think of your performance. You can use this information to work on areas for improvement.

**31. Learn a new language.** Learning a new language can broaden your mind and acquaint you with new cultures. This can be a valuable skill, especially if your company has branches or operations in other countries.

**32. Update your CV.** Consider keeping your CV up to date, as you never know when a new opportunity might present itself.

**33. Create a reading list.** This can be either a personal one for what to read at home or a list of interesting books or publications that can help in your line of work. You can also ask your colleagues for suggestions.

**34. Update your software.** It's common to dismiss software updates when you're in the middle of work. You can make use of your extra time to ensure that everything is up to date so your computer can operate at its full potential.

**35. Do something nice.** If you want to bond with your colleagues, do something nice for them they may not expect. This can be something simple, like buying a box of chocolates for the office or taking care of someone's tasks for them.