



20 Action Steps to Address

BURNOUT IN THE WORKPLACE



Workplace burnout:

»» 2021's biggest occupational hazard

In March, a Microsoft study reported that 54% of US workers are actively burned out at work. Workplace leaders are no longer thinking about how to prevent employee burnout, but how to *address* it — **it is already here.**

We've identified 6 key areas where companies can make a big impact on employee burnout:

- *reassessing expectations*
- *employee autonomy*
- *workplace rewards*
- *recognition and appreciation*
- *diversity*
- *psychological safety*

Use our 20 tips to target these action areas, address burnout in your organization, and get your employees back to thriving.



Demand overload

» Reassess expectations

Between the demands of hybrid-remote work, a global pandemic, and an always-on society, worker morale and mental health are at risk.

In 2020, the average
workday lengthened
by nearly

1 hour

source: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w27612>

Here's how to fix it:

- **Block meeting-free times for deep work.** Back-to-back meetings can lead to burnout fast. Prevent it by mandating 90-minute windows of time throughout each week to give your team time for the deep work that makes them more productive.
- **Relieve pressure to participate socially.** After-hours events are great for building connections between team members — but after a long day of work (especially for remote workers), they can feel like another burden. Even though you want the participation, keep social events optional.
- **Make burnout a regular agenda item.** In 1-on-1 check-ins or quarterly performance reviews, add the topic of burnout to the agenda. Ask workers how they're doing, and use this time to raise and solve issues related to workload, priorities, and work-life balance.

Lack of control

» Increase autonomy

Feel like everything is spinning out of control? Your employees do, too. Fix this by creating elements of work-life your employees can control.

Hybrid workers are
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in one setting.

- **Increase the flexibility of work hours.** Flexible schedules allow employees to integrate their work into the rest of their lives, and have been proven to be a valuable perk, a morale boost, and a retention-saver.
- **Offer remote opportunities permanently.** According to [Gallup](#), hybrid workers are 60-80% more engaged than those who work entirely in one setting. They also register higher levels of well-being.
- **Work with different communication styles.** Roll out a company-wide personality test, such as Myers-Briggs or Insights, to learn about employees' preferred communication styles. (Bonus: Learn more about using the [Enneagram test for managers](#).)
- **Extend new challenges.** In 1:1's, be sure to ask forward-thinking questions that communicate a desire to invest in the team member's future, such as, *"Which new projects would you be excited to reach for this quarter?"*

All work, no reward

» Offer rewards that support employees' lives

Workplace rewards like gift cards and certificates are nice, but they won't prevent burnout. Instead, offer meaningful rewards that help employees put more non-work time back into their busy lives.

9.8

million working mothers in the U.S. are suffering burnout

source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/03/millions-of-working-mothers-in-the-us-are-suffering-from-burnout.html>

Try subsidizing activities that boost mental health, such as:

- **Encourage time off.** Consider [switching sick days to “wellness days”](#) and urge workers to take advantage of them to recharge.
- **Incentivize exercise.** One [recent study](#) examined the effects of regular exercise on workers suffering from burnout. Incentivize physical wellness by offering access to a local gym, virtual group classes, or a company-wide fitness challenge..
- **Find ways to help at home.** Caring for children while trying to work from home is a fast track to burnout. Try offering a meal prep subscription, an errand service like TaskRabbit, or gift cards for take-out delivery.
- **Reward with therapeutic care.** Offer rewards that include services like chiropractic care, acupuncture, or massage, which can be a gamechanger for employee mental health.

Disconnected workplace

» Increase recognition and appreciation

Too little appreciation leads to thoughts like, “*What’s the point? Nobody cares anyway.*” Prevent burnout with recognition and appreciation that combats burnout and boosts morale.

#1

reason people
leave jobs is limited
recognition and praise

source: <https://www.kazoohr.com/resources/library/science-of-employee-recognition-and-rewards>

Foster a sense of recognition with these tips:

- **Practice milestone celebrations.** One burnout-fighting tool is simply making sure team members know that someone sees and appreciates their efforts. Don’t let accomplishments, no matter how small, pass you by — notice and cheer loudly in a [social recognition feed](#)!
- **Make sure praise is heard.** Meaningful recognition is timely, specific, and tied to impact. Check out our tips for how to give [great employee recognition](#), and encourage team members to offer focused, peer-to-peer praise by providing an easy to use [platform](#) for kudos and hi-fives.
- **Build a culture of gratitude.** Make part of your everyday for peers and leadership to say thank you. [Learn how we can help.](#)

Lack of fairness

» Invest in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DE&I)

With or without a global pandemic, being a [working mother](#) or minority at work contributes to burnout. How can we help?

60%

of men and women of color report burnout from being on guard against workplace bias

source: <https://www.kazoohr.com/resources/library/why-recognition-and-rewards-program>

- **Don't ask Black employees to help solve your diversity problems.** Instead, look outside of your organization for help. Create company-wide forums and Q&A sessions to educate large groups, and bring in experts if needed.
- **Create a diversity strategy.** Becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization won't happen overnight; commit for the long haul. Need a framework? Check out our [Roadmap for Ending Unconscious Bias in the Workplace](#).
- **Give women job security.** According to McKinsey, women's jobs have been 1.8X more vulnerable to the pandemic than men's jobs. Invest in pay equality, female leadership, childcare subsidies, and flexible work schedules.

Value conflicts

»» Psychological safety



Politics might be polarized, but the workplace shouldn't be. Foster [psychological safety](#) with these tips.

3 in 10

workers feel their opinions count at work.

<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236198/create-culture-psychological-safety.aspx>

- **Create increased personal connection.** The more personally connected we are to our coworkers, the less likely we are to experience burnout. Make the most of these opportunities by using Brené Brown's tips to [honor the emotions](#) of team members, creating a culture in which it's normal for employees to voice how they're feeling.
- **Offer training on healthy feedback.** In order for a team to perform at its highest levels, all employees must be equipped to have difficult conversations, to help others grow, and to learn from mistakes.
- **Embrace change management.** The first step in guiding your team towards healthy change is to communicate early and consistently. This will not only minimize the fear we all feel around change; it will also align your team for the future.

We believe companies flourish when their employees are both aligned and inspired. This only happens when employees find meaning and growth in the work itself, and when employees feel appreciated by and connected to their colleagues and company.

To achieve this, companies need to turn outdated approaches to performance management, recognition, and engagement on their heads. They need to adopt a new way that's continuous, manager- and employee-led, and people-first.

We believe this vision is not just possible — it's critical to the future of work. And, it's made possible by Kazoo.

Helping people-first companies create amazing employee experiences.



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