

One in Four Workers Plan to Work While on Vacation, CareerBuilder.com's Annual Survey Reveals

- 15 percent gave up vacation time in 2007 -

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As workers prepare to enjoy a long weekend and celebrate the official start of the summer vacation season, for some, vacation won't mean being free of the office. A quarter (25 percent) of workers, up from 20 percent in 2007, said they stay in contact with work while on vacation, and close to one in ten (9 percent) said their bosses expect them to be working or at least checking voicemail/e-mail while on vacation, according to CareerBuilder.com's annual vacation survey. Fifteen percent of workers said they gave up vacation days in 2007 because they didn't have time to use them. Nine percent gave up four or more days.

Comparing industries, sales workers (50 percent) lead the industries surveyed in the number of workers planning to check in while away on vacation, followed by 37 percent of both financial services workers and IT workers.

Employers' expectations play a role in worker decisions to stay connected while on vacation. Nearly one in five IT workers (19 percent) said working, checking voicemail and/or e-mail while on vacation is required by their employers, compared to 17 percent of sales workers, 14 percent of workers in the financial industry and 12 percent of those in professional and business services.

The stress of taking vacations may lead some to lie about ease of access at their vacation destinations. Seven percent workers said they have lied to their employers, claiming they couldn't be reached on vacation.

"Taking a vacation is a great way for workers to re-energize themselves and bring fresh ideas back to the table," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources at CareerBuilder.com. "Unfortunately for some workers, getting away can add unnecessary stress to their lives. Twelve percent of workers said they feel guilty when they are on vacation, and 6 percent felt that it could lead to them losing their jobs. If you prepare to be away in advance, your organizational skills may impress your leadership team and allow you to take a truly work-free vacation."

Workers plan to spend their vacations in a variety of ways, including:

- Traveling (36 percent)
- Visiting family and friends (24 percent)
- Resting (20 Percent)
- Catching up on housework (8 percent)
- Running errands (3 percent)

When planning a vacation, Haefner recommends the following tips to make your time off a true break from the office:

1. Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.

Make sure that everyone on your team knows what days you plan to be out of the office as far in advance as possible. Also, keep a journal of a day in your work life and share it with a co-worker who will be covering for you. The journal should have important information such as project contact information, any emergency passwords, etc.

2. Think Big.

If you know that you will be taking a big vacation this year and expect a big project to appear at around the same time, do everything possible to leave as much room between the two events. Projects sometimes run longer than projected, so make sure you build in enough time to your plans so both don't become stressful.

3. Stick to a plan.

In most cases you are going to be away with other people on vacation. If you have to work, schedule a (short) block of time each day to check

in and take care of any important business. Sticking to this plan will allow you the piece of mind of knowing things are fine at the office and will allow your family or friends to schedule activities without having to leave you behind.

4. Teach by example.

If you are the boss, take a vacation and limit your contact with the office. Workers will feel much better getting away and enjoying themselves if they see the boss doing the same.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 6,987 U.S. employees (employed full-time; not self-employed) ages 18 and over between February 11, and March 13, 2008, respectively. With a pure probability sample of 6,987 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.2 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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