

More Than Half of Workers Feel They Need a Vacation More Now Than in the Past, CareerBuilder's Annual Survey Finds

- Healing economy makes workers more comfortable taking time off -

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With the official start of summer vacation season just days away, workers are planning to take time off and they are feeling more at ease about it. More than half (56 percent) of workers say they are more in need of a vacation in 2010 than they have been in past years. Additionally, 36 percent say they feel more comfortable taking a vacation in 2010 than in 2009 due to an improving economy. This is according CareerBuilder's annual vacation survey that was conducted from February 10 through March 2, 2010, among more than 4,800 workers.

Many workers have vacations on their radar screens and are planning to be away from the office longer. Sixty-four percent of workers say they have already taken or plan to take a vacation this year, up slightly from 63 percent in 2009. Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) plan to take a week off this year, up from 19 percent last year. Twelve percent plan to be gone two weeks or longer. Nearly one-third of workers say they won't be taking a vacation this year, with 21 percent indicating they still can't afford it.

Taking a vacation may not mean being completely unhooked from the office. Nearly half (49 percent) of employers say they expect employees to check in with the office while they are away, with 37 percent indicating it'll be necessary only if they are working on a big project or there is a major issue going on with the company. One-quarter (25 percent) of workers say they plan to contact the office at least once while on vacation, regardless of what they are working on.

"It is good news that workers' anxiety around taking vacation time appears to be lessening this year compared to last," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources at CareerBuilder. "Now workers need to follow through and actually utilize their full vacation benefits; 15 percent reported that they didn't use all of their allotted time last year. Utilizing time off to recharge batteries is even more important today as staffs have shrunk over the last 18 months and workers are dealing with added responsibilities and pressure."

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

1. Get it on the calendar today - Today companies are operating with smaller staffs and having more than one person out of the office can negatively impact productivity. Be flexible and work with your co-workers to schedule vacation time before booking anything.
2. Train a coworker - Before you leave, start recording important information, key contacts and any deadlines that will come up while you are gone and give it to a coworker who you have trained to fill in for you while you are gone. Remember to return the favor to the coworker, when they take vacation.
3. Schedule a set work time while on vacation - While it's best to leave the office at the office, if you must do work, set limits and boundaries for yourself and your co-workers. Don't let activities on vacation be interrupted by work.
4. Lead by example - If you are a supervisor, you should go through all the steps of planning and executing a successful vacation away from the office. That way, your workers will be more comfortable doing the same.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder among 4,803 U.S. workers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government) and 2,778 U.S. employers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government); ages 18 and over between February 10 and March 2, 2010 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. employees or employers, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 4,803 and 2,778 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.41 percentage points and +/- 1.86 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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