

CareerBuilder Study Reveals Top Ten Productivity Killers at Work Employers Share Most Unusual Things They Caught Employees Doing When They Should Have Been Working

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CHICAGO, June 12, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- What causes workers to waste the most time at the office? Texting? Surfing the Web? Chatting with co-workers around the water cooler? New research from CareerBuilder identifies behaviors that employers say are the biggest productivity killers in the workplace. The study also highlights some of the strangest things employers have caught employees doing while on the clock.

View infographic [here](#).

The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from February 10 to March 4, 2014, and included a representative sample of 2,138 hiring managers and human resource professionals, and a representative sample of 3,022 full-time, private sector workers across industries and company sizes.

Not surprisingly, personal use of technology is one of the leading culprits behind unproductive activity at work. One in four workers (24 percent) admitted that, during a typical workday, they will spend at least one hour a day on personal calls, emails or texts. Twenty-one percent estimate that they spend one hour or more during a typical workday searching the Internet for non-work-related information, photos, etc.

Behaviors of co-workers, meetings and other factors are also creating obstacles to maximizing performance. When asked what they consider to be the primary productivity stoppers in the workplace, employers pointed to:

1. Cell phone/texting – 50 percent
2. Gossip – 42 percent
3. The Internet – 39 percent
4. Social media – 38 percent
5. Snack breaks or smoke breaks – 27 percent
6. Noisy co-workers – 24 percent
7. Meetings – 23 percent
8. Email – 23 percent
9. Co-workers dropping by – 23 percent
10. Co-workers putting calls on speaker phone – 10 percent

Employers also shared real-life examples of some of the more unusual things they've seen employees doing when they should have been busy working:

- Employee was blowing bubbles in sub-zero weather to see if the bubbles would freeze and break
- A married employee was looking at a dating web site and then denied it while it was still up on his computer screen
- Employee was caring for her pet bird that she smuggled into work
- Employee was shaving her legs in the women's restroom
- Employee was laying under boxes to scare people
- Employees were having a wrestling match
- Employee was sleeping, but claimed he was praying
- Employee was taking selfies in the bathroom
- Employee was changing clothes in a cubicle
- Employee was printing off a book from the Internet
- Employee was warming her bare feet under the bathroom hand dryer

"While many managers feel their teams perform at a desirable level, they also warn that little distractions can add up to bigger gaps in productivity," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder. "It's important to be organized and designate times to work on different deliverables. Minimize interruptions and save personal communications for your lunch hour or break. It can help put more time and momentum back into your workday."

Nearly three in four employers (73 percent) have implemented some measures to mitigate productivity killers at work. Tactics include:

- Blocking certain Internet sites at work – 36 percent
- Prohibiting personal calls or personal use of cell phones – 25 percent

- Monitoring emails and Internet usage – 22 percent
- Scheduling lunch and break times – 19 percent
- Allowing people to telecommute – 14 percent
- Implementing an open space layout instead of cubicles – 13 percent
- Limiting meetings – 12 percent
- Restricting use of speaker phones if not in an office – 11 percent

Haefner offers the following tips to avoid wasting time on the job:

1. **Organize and prioritize** – De-clutter your workspace and clearly lay out your game plan for the week. What do you need to accomplish each day? How much time will each project take? Which projects have the highest priority?
2. **Limit interruptions** – Incoming calls and co-workers dropping by to chat about their weekend can break your concentration and eat up time. Block off a conference room to work on a project to avoid distractions at your desk. Read your email at intervals instead of opening each one as soon as it comes in. Consider telecommuting on certain days.
3. **Avoid unnecessary meetings** – Don't set aside an hour to meet about an issue or initiative that can be addressed with a quick phone call. Politely decline the meeting invitation and follow up with the organizer.
4. **Get personal on your own time** – Whether you want to call a friend, take advantage of an online sale or post a picture of your dog on your social profile, do it during your lunch hour or break time or after work.
5. **Communicate wisely** – Don't spend 20 minutes crafting an email to the person sitting in the next cubicle. Save time by picking up the phone or walking over to your colleague's desk.
6. **Don't delay the inevitable** – Finding other things to do so you can put off a less preferred project will only end up wasting more time. Don't procrastinate. Dive in and tackle the task at hand.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,138 hiring managers and human resource professionals and 3,022 workers (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) ages 18 and over between February 10 and March 4, 2014 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With pure probability samples of 2,138 and 3,022, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have sampling errors of +/-2.12 and +/-1.78 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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