



*Howes, S., Chevron. (2013)*

# Creating a Positive Workplace

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## Abstract

Businesses that have a positive environment will not only boost the morale of their employees, but they will be able to run their businesses more cost-effectively. Creating a healthy workplace atmosphere starts from the top and it is up to management to find the happy medium with their employees to be able to bring down turnover and help their employees feel respected and appreciated. A happy business is a productive and profitable business. Businesses where management allows unhealthy workplace culture to persist enviably suffer unnecessary economic hardships. When employees are subjected to the prolonged stress of an unhealthy workplace, they suffer lasting physical and emotional consequences. Informative research on statistics on unhealthy and healthy workplace environments is being presented to be utilized for the purpose of educating and making recommendations for a future business owner. This research consists of the use of surveys and interviews, as well as primary research with secondary peer-reviewed scholarly sources. The research was conducted over a 5-week period. You will find success-backed strategies that can be used to create a productive, healthy work environment within your future business. The expectation for the enclosed report is to provide strategic recommendations for the organizational changes necessary to create a healthier workplace.



## Introduction

We would all like to think that when we start up a business or enter a place of employment we are creating or entering a positive workplace. For many employees and employers this is not the case, somewhere something goes wrong. We interview to the best of our ability, we entrust our management team to make the best possible decisions when recruiting and overall managing their teams, but when there is a lost link somewhere along those lines we end up with a toxic environment with high levels of stress, unhappy employees, and we see our clients turning towards other business and our profits start to decline.

There is a pervasive workplace toxicity that is happening around the world; the economic and human costs have been well documented. According to a study conducted for the International Journal of Disability Management Research titled, "Employees' Perceptions of the Management of Workplace Stress," demonstrate that the majority of workplace stressors reflect organizational culture, and as such, can and should be controlled by employers (Buys, Matthews, Randall, 2010). These types of ongoing issues can lead to burnout and dissatisfaction for employees. Dissatisfied employees cope with the increased stress by cause absenteeism and tardiness (Anderson, 2001). Employees are experiencing changing job descriptions and unbearable stress with a competitive backbiting atmosphere where every day seems to be a fight for survival. It is the owner's responsibility to make sure their businesses are running properly and it's their lack of attention to employee satisfaction that will ultimately damage businesses.

A toxic and high stress atmosphere has plagued many businesses far and wide causing poor employee morale, high turnover rates, and downward spiraling profits. In most cases we see workplace bullying that is happening within a business due to the high stress and over worked employees. We think of bullying as something that happens when we're children possibly in a schoolyard, or high school but unfortunately bullying is something that happens in the workplace. As mentioned in "Workplace Bullying: Costly and preventable" cited, approximately 72% out of 7,740 participates were found to be upper management who participated in workplace bullying according to the WBI-Zogby U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey" (Wiedmer, 2011). Bullying is not something that our colleagues or clients would be part of, but bullying is something that management has control of and yet has been a part of for many businesses. According to a study conducted for the International Journal of Disability Management Research titled, "Employees' Perceptions of the Management of Workplace Stress," demonstrate that the majority of workplace stressors reflect organizational culture, and as such, can and should be controlled by employers (Buys, Matthews, Randall, 2010).

What's this type of stress doing to our employees? We see that stress can cause a large number of physical and emotional problems for our employees, like this list of following possibilities mentioned in the article "Rest & rejuvenation: managing workplace stress" (Jones, Daigle, 2018):

- Increased cardiovascular issues
- Anxiety and/or panic attacks that can lead to Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Loss of employment resulting in Unemployment
- Family conflict or self-isolation
- Sleep and eating disorders
- Physical changes like hair loss weight gain or loss
- Weakened immune system or psychosomatic illness
- Changes in mood from aggression to loss of interest
- Suicide/death

A positively run business has seen improved profits, low turnover and innovative designs where employees feel safe and want to be more diligent within their workplace. We need to create policies and procedures that will put a stop to wrong doings at work so that our employees know that the businesses they're employed with has a commitment to

their safety without there being retaliation for reporting bad behavior within a workplace (Wiedmer, 2011). These things show commitment to our staff employees who work within a harmonious cohesive workplace will see less stress, longevity within the company, a controlled stress that is used to positively increase output from each employee. These companies are providing a wide variety of training for their employees to inform them of their duties and teaching management on how to keep a well-run team.



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The information that was collected from the primary and secondary research will be informative data that presents the situation at hand and the steps that we need to take to insure that a properly run business that is positive instead of heading down the negative path that so many business owners unfortunately go down. This will help to keep us better informed and give us the tools needed to employ a healthy workplace.

## Methods & Materials

### Primary research

Provided are two forms of primary research; the first consists of interviews with upper management, and an educator. The interviews provide knowledgeable information into successfully securing a healthy workplace by dissecting both adequate and inadequate workplaces. The second form of primary research was employed in the form of a survey with a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The data received from the participants provided a in depth look at what's happening within a workplace, which will provide accurate data from environments riddled with stress and toxicity as well as feedback from the participants to discover what makes for a pleasant workplace.

### Survey (Appendix A)

Primary research was employed by a twenty-six-question survey via Google Forms. The survey was distributed amongst twenty-six individuals using Whatcom Community College's (WCC) canvas program to Technical Writing students of Dr. Klausman's class. The survey was also sent out to a few diverse Whatcom county residents through social media as well as email. A total of twenty-six respondents of diverse race, sex, and industry level participated; age was not asked of participants due its irrelevance. The questionnaire's focus is to deliver data providing the positive's and negative's experienced within a workplace to find out what makes it such, and to provide informative instruments into creating a positive workplace.

### Interviews (Appendix C)

Three interviews were conducted for the primary research (*See Appendix C*); the interviews were done with the Senior Technical Consultant of Blue Yonder, an Educator of twenty-five years, and a District Manager who's worked within the service and retail industry for over twenty years with a background of business consulting, human resources, and has been utilized to positively increase employee morale and increase profits. It is important to gather all possible information the three very different fields of industry to provide accurate data of how each differs from one another. The interviews give insight on how some businesses approach workplace toxicity and stress.

### Secondary Research

The secondary research methods used peer-reviewed scholarly journals through ProQuest, video sources through YouTube, articles through Harvard Business Review, an article from the New York Times and the WA State Labor and Industries website. All resources to be used in obtaining crucial information to support the research results provided. The focus of the data search was to find sources that related toxic workplaces, bullying and negative workplace atmospheres, along with positive workplace atmospheres and how to accomplish positivity within the workplace. All resources were carefully hand-picked and thoroughly read and examined to be able to deliver the most authentic evidence to give highly informative data to create a positive workplace.

# Workplace Survey Results

The data collected from the survey reveals current issues in the workplace and can be utilized to make positive changes. *Appendix B* shows all twenty-six survey questions and answers. The 26 individuals surveyed represent a wide range of experience. *Figure 2* displays experience levels of the individuals surveyed; 81% of the questions were closed-ended, and 19% were open-ended questions, as seen in *Figure 1*. The survey data was collected by using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and graphs from Google Documents.

## SURVEY QUESTION FORMAT

■ Closed-ended ■ Open-ended

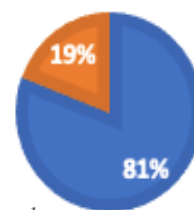


Figure 1

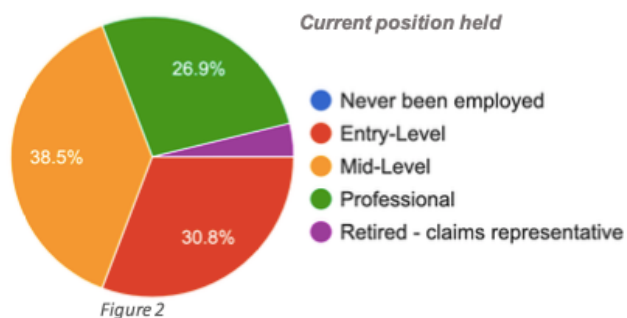


Figure 2

### Longevity

As seen in *Figure 2*, the majority of responders (38.5%) work within mid-level positions. While 30.8% have entry-level employee positions and 26.9% hold professional positions. The majority of the responders at 30.8% have been working within their current businesses for more than 5 years. *Figure 2b* displays the amount of time respondents have been

with their current company. This information is important because it provides a clear picture of the inner workings of the company. Longevity within a company offers more time for employees to consistently experience how their business environment will be operating on a day to day basis. Of the twenty-six surveyed, 53.8% of employees are unsatisfied or somewhat satisfied with the businesses that they work for.

*How long have you been employed?*

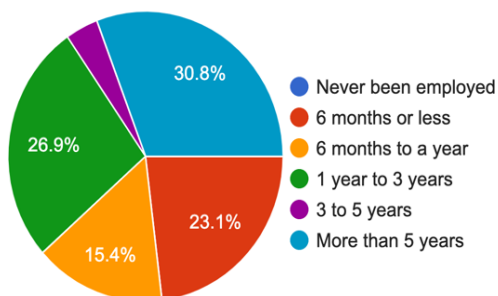


Figure 2b

### Workplace Bullying

A common problem that individuals face today is workplace bullying which was revealed by

question 7 of the survey. A majority of the respondents answered that 42% have experienced or witnessed bullying or some type of harassment happening within their workplace. *Figure 3* breaks down the source of bullying. This shows that the dissatisfaction respondents expressed can be a main cause of poor communication and harassment within their workplace.

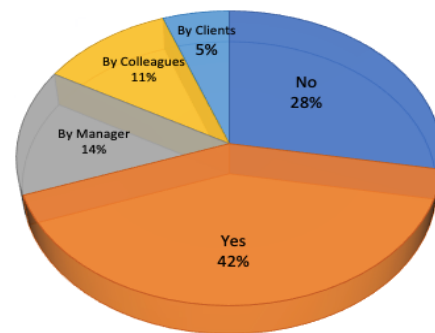


Figure 3

### Let's Communicate

Communication is key to providing a positive team atmosphere and a well-run business. Without proper communication between colleagues and management a business is not at its maximum profitability capacity due to the high turnover and profits being wasted on double work being completed and/or multiple emails being transmitted to clarify the miscommunication.

Miscommunication can lead to inaccurate or null completion of projects within the workplace; this can lead to colleagues and clients experiencing high levels of stress, resulting in colleagues or management becoming aggravated and then lashing out with hostility and verbal abuse. As we see in *Figure 4*, 20 out of 25 (80%) respondents say that they have experienced poor communication within their workplace, with 40% saying they have experienced verbal abuse and 48% hostility. Lost communication can cause workplace backbiting and drama that can lead to employees feeling bullied and harassed. We then see from the survey that rumors and gossiping are at a high 64% with 16 respondents saying they have experienced some type of backlashing within their workplace and 48% experienced Bullying. With only a small percentage of respondents (8%) saying that they had none of this activity happening to them, two respondents out of 26 is very concerning.

**Have you ever experienced the following while at work?**

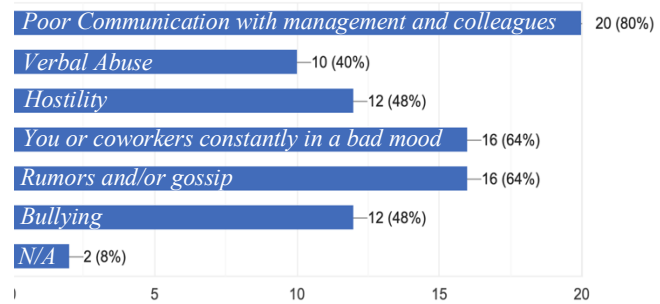


Figure 4

### Deal with it

When there is a loss of communication, a domino effect begins thus breaking down the stability of the company. Bullying, verbal abuse and backbiting are poor communication tactics that create a toxic workplace. This can leave individuals feeling high stress, anxiety, and depression that can lead to other issues like suicidal

thoughts and alcohol or drug dependency. The survey data in *Figure 5* shows alarming results from the question asked if respondents had ever experienced any of these symptoms due to workplace stress or unhappiness. An alarming 76% said they had experienced anxiety, 20% said they had received PTSD which was five out of the 25 who responses, and 36% said they had felt depression due to their workplace. There are 3 respondents out of 25 that said they've experienced suicidal thoughts while 5 respondents said they've experienced none of the above. How the majority of our

**Have you ever experienced any of the following due to workplace stress and/or unhappiness? (Mark All that apply)**  
25 responses

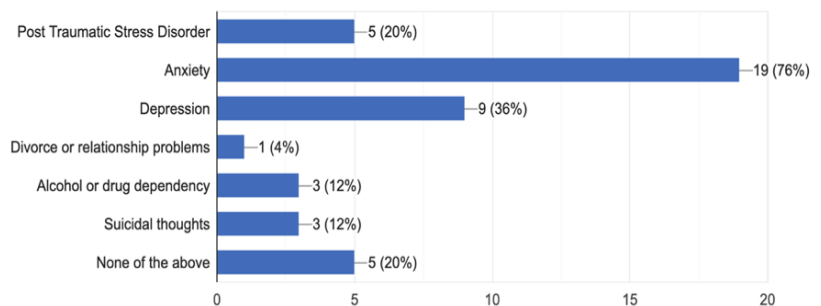


Figure 5



respondents deal with having to put up with such negativity at their workplace is by calling off and pretending like they are ill. The survey data shows that 60% of respondents dealing with their unhappiness at work by pretending

What's the stress level of your current or last job?  
26 responses

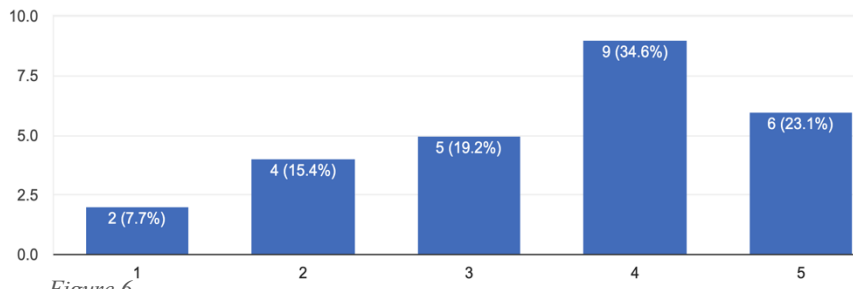


Figure 6

to be ill and calling out from work and 28% had quit their jobs. (See question 15, appendix B). Work overload has a lot to do with the amount of stress that builds at workplaces. In Figure 6 we see that a majority of respondents showed high levels of stress due within a workplace. During question 16 respondents were asked if their job duties often strayed from their job descriptions, the respondents answered with 34.6% agreeing and only 30% disagreeing while 34.6% were neutral (See appendix B).

### Safety First

No one should feel unsafe at work. 19.2% of respondents feel they are physically not safe nor protected. This is an astounding revelation that business owners should prioritize. Figure 7 shows that the majority of employees feel safe within their workplace and 5 out of 26

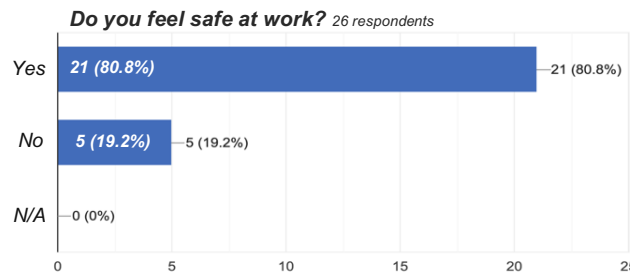


Figure 7

respondents saying that they feel unsafe. It is undermining if we can say that 5 respondents are “just five”. Often the few are ignored, and changes are not made because the numbers are not in their favor. To feel unsafe within a workplace is unacceptable and should never be felt by anyone. Within a positive workplace, employees need to feel safe and be able to trust that they can confide in their management and Human Resources Management (HR), for

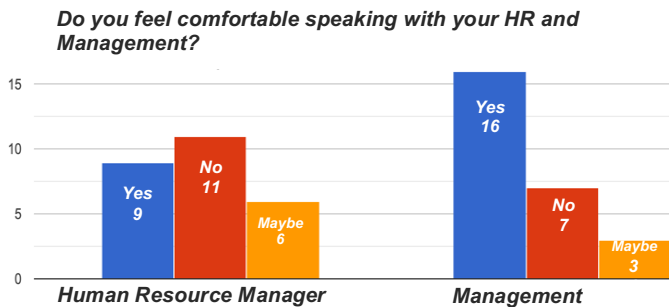


Figure 8

assistance and have the reassurance that they will not be retaliated against in any way. As shown in Figure 8, respondents stated they felt comfortable speaking to their Human Resource Manager and Manager. The data showed that a majority of individuals felt comfortable speaking with their manager and a majority of individuals felt uncomfortable

speaking with their HR department. Human resources should be a place where problems get resolved and a safe place where employees can turn to when they need assistance; like management the Human Resource Manager plays a vital role in taking

responsibility for how a business environment becomes, they can either change it for the better or keep the business on a downward spiral adding to their turnover costs and fighting unemployment and legal claims by the dozens.

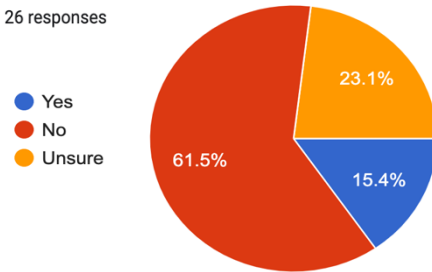
### ***Team building and incentive programs***

Team building exercises have been proven to be helpful within a workplace to bring together a positive and effective workplace. Question 17 of the survey asked our respondents if their employer had offered any type of team building exercises. *Figure 9* shows that the majority of respondents (61%) had not received any exercises within their companies while only 15.4% had said yes and 23.1% of respondents were unsure if their employers even offered any type of team building exercise. Along with team building exercises some businesses move in the direction of creating incentive programs to help build morale and have employees work towards a goal that they themselves will profit from.

Question 18 of the survey was an open-ended question so that the respondents could give us more information about the type of incentive programs offered within their businesses. Out of the 26 respondents asked there were only 19 responses total. Of the 19 responses we received 2 that said their workplaces offered 401k programs, 2 others answered employee of the month type programs and another two respondents answered review raises. 13 respondents answered that there were no incentive programs offered to them

(See appendix B for detailed answers).

Does your company offer team building exercises?  
26 responses



*Figure 9*

### ***Improving ourselves and the things that make them stay***

What can a business do to keep their employees? Survey questions 24-26 allow respondents to anonymously and without fear of retaliation, offer suggestions on how their employers can improve the workplace. Employees want to see stability within their careers, along with gratitude and support. The majority of the feedback received states that employers need to “value” and “respect” their employees, “support” and “care” about them, “reward the good” and make ramifications for the low performers; “favoritism” and “bullying” should never happen within a workplace. An employer who can properly listen to its employees by having integrity will be respected and will have long lasting loyalty from his or her employees. Below are respondent quotes:

***“I wish my employer would do more things to unite the employees as a team. Also, to take action when a complaint is made about a manager instead of just waiting and hoping the problem fixes itself”***

***“Yes, employers need to always have a plan for desired tasks to come to fruition, rather than asking for the moon and leaving it up to us to pull it down. As an educator, in order to accomplish my job, I spend my nights, weekends and holidays so that I can do all that admin desires. We keep getting more and more piled onto our plate when the school district***

***cuts funding. Students suffer because time is getting pulled from teaching. Teachers are looked at as slacking off when we are not able to do everything that has been added. We are an occupation that is always changing with no limits”.***

***“I had a good Operations Manager which kept me wanting to return to work. Someone who listened and would have trust in my decisions as much as I had in hers, which made work a lot easier”.***

Building trust within companies through positive communication can bring on diligent, efficient and happy employees that are less stressed and enjoy their jobs. This survey which focuses on current workplace issues is a starting point in reconciling problems that affect the profitability of a company.



Leif, E. (2018)

## Discussion

### Multitasking leads to stress

It's all too typical to hear within an interview that the employer is looking for a multitasker, someone who can work well under stress and be able to have a well-trained mind that can jump from one task to another. Employers will even go so far as to provide multiple monitors to employee's desktops, so they increase efficiency. Multitasking is not a talent and should not be encouraged on the job because it causes employees to split up their time, thus not giving 100% to the tasks at hand. This is where we see work overload happening in which employees are feeling overly stressed and overwhelmed with the amount of work given needing to be completed within such a short timeframe (Anderson, 2001). In survey question 16 we had 34.6% agree that they're duties stray from their job descriptions and another 34.6% felt natural about it happening; with that being said the employees who are given tasks that are straying from their current job descriptions are multitasking and not giving 100% to their current job descriptions. When this situation occurs, we start to see a trend in stress building within the workplace, as seen in *Figure 6* of the survey, 34.5% participants answered that they feel stressed at work, and in *Figure 5* it shows that 76% felt workplace anxiety. Multitasking can lead to all different types of stress which in turn will lead to verbal abuse caused by colleagues and management because they are not receiving what they need to complete their jobs. It can also lead to losing money for the business due to repeated emails going back and forth trying to clarify instructions and mistakes being made.




Phillips, A. (2016) Ashtonweed.com

### Stress

Not all employers see stress as a negative factor in the workplace, some businesses feel that stress can be just the right type of motivation to push employees into doing just enough work to keep their heads above waters. Mentioned in "Managing workplace stress in a dynamic environment", I refute the statement that "not all stress is necessarily bad... Managers need to distinguish between positive and negative stress" (Anderson, 2001.), (Largo-Wright, 2011). The article "Rest & rejuvenation" mentions how harmful job stress is to an individual and can lead to on the job injuries and poor health. Jones, & Daigle go on to say that "early warning signs of job stress as headache, sleep

disturbances, difficulty in concentrating, short temperament, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction, low morale. Additional warning signs include trouble concentrating, Fatigue, anxiety or irritability, alcohol or drug use, overeating or loss of appetite, workplace incidents and workplace violence" (Jones, & Daigle, 2018). After prolonged amounts of stress we see the effects happening to employees physical well-being and start to see increased heart problems, family problems, health complications, financial problems, weight gain, difficulty sleeping, depression, cognitive issues, sleep problems, PTSD, inability to work, financial problems, fatigue, changes in moods & eating habits,



loss of interests, alcohol and drug abuse, hair loss, increased accidents, and avoidance, and even death (Jones, & Daigle, 2018).

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

Workplace stress can be seen by the body as trauma which can in turn cause Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). For many unfortunate employees who have held positions within a toxic workplace PTSD is a result of their trauma scars. “Employees with PTSD suffer from flashbacks, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, an excessive vigilance” (Stergiopoulos, Cimo, Cheng, Bonato, Dewa, & Stergiopoulos, 2011). Those who are diagnosed with PTSD typically find it difficult to return to the place where their trauma happened, this means that they would not be able to return to the type of work they were doing before and for some they are unable to work in general due to the trauma they received from their employer. In Figure 5 on the results page we see that 20% of respondents had PTSD from a workplace, this indicates that we are not seeing zero which is very disturbing. There seems to be a high number in respondents that said they received anxiety from their workplace, but 20% had PTSD, I can’t help but understand the difficulty in receiving a diagnosis from a licensed to test psychologist. It isn’t a test that that every therapist is licensed to offer their patients and those who are receiving state medical will either have an extremely limited resource for this test or none at all depending on availability. To do an observation I contacted as many health providers as I could contact using my Google search for psychiatrists and therapists, I was referred to one licensed psychiatrist who wanted to charge \$250 for a consultation and another \$150 per visit; the third visit would have allowed me to take the PTSD test. This is not an option for many individuals who have lost their income due to PTSD. Another resource I was referred to the local Seamar health clinic. When I was able to get a hold of Seamar I was told that I would have to wait in line outside and it was first come first serve. This is also not an option for someone who has PTSD because some of the symptoms from PTSD are that the individuals do not handle large crowds well due to “increased startle response” (Stergiopoulos, Cimo, Cheng, Bonato, Dewa, & Stergiopoulos, 2011).

### **Stress on a business**

Stress can also cause devastating affects to a business, as mentioned in the article “Managing workplace stress in a dynamic environment”, this type of unnecessary environment can be detrimental to a business where we see more call-offs. Jones, & Daigle reported that “According to the survey of 800,000 workers in over 300 companies, the number of employees calling in sick because of stress tripled from 1996 to 2000. An estimated 1 million workers are absent everyday due to stress” (p.14. 2018). With this we will see a lower output with inefficiencies within their business and employees not having trust for their management or the business they work for. These types of ongoing issues can lead to burnout and dissatisfaction for employees. Dissatisfied employees cope with the increased stress by cause absenteeism and tardiness, as mentioned in Managing workplace stress in a dynamic environment. Anderson, 2001). We find that employees are getting overly bogged down with ever changing job descriptions and instead of acting managers who lead by example we see delegations in the way of full workloads to take the weight off of the higher ups. When

workplace stress conflicts with productivity it can be a tough lesson for employers to learn. In the article *Workplace Bullying: A Sad Reality, Too Costly to be Ignored*, it states, “Employers have to pay for workplace bullying in the form of increases in the turnover, expenses of recruiting replacement personnel, absenteeism of employees with resultant work loss and decreased productivity and increased litigation cases” (Ali, 2019).

## Recruiting

In Walter Smit’s YouTube video he talks about how there are two methods to hiring employees one is a “Y method” which means they are “self-propelled employees”, the other is an “X type” which is someone you will have to dangle a carrot in front of to get them to do their jobs (Smit, 2017). Employers start businesses recruiting the most adequate employee for the job, but sometimes they do not notice that the individual is wrong for their business. Screening for bullies in our recruiting process, as mentioned in “Workplace bullying: a sad reality, too costly to be ignored” (Wiedmer, 2011). With that



Moritz, K. (2017) *rewire.org*

being said we are also not screening our employees to make sure that they are the right fit, we need to ask them the right questions about themselves; their likes and dislikes. We sometimes rush through the interview process just to put a body in the field and this is where we come up with the wrong fit for the job. Occasionally the wrong fit equals bullies that will break-down your business as they weed out the great employees that

are seen as threats. Backbiting starts to happen, and we end up with a toxic workplace. As mentioned in Green-Wilson’s article on the “5 myths about bullying in the workplace”, bullies look to sabotage high performers and damage the workplace (p. 54). These individuals look to “isolate and exclude, and disempower their targets” (Green-Wilson, 2015). Bullying within a workplace can also have devastating legal ramifications. Laws created for our state are not only put in place to protect us, but they are there to protect businesses as well and this is something that poorly managed businesses take advantage of. Toxic businesses take the laws into consideration when handling particular situations like verbal and physical abuse towards employees behind closed doors or over the phone where there are no witnesses; it is very difficult to prove and according to Washington State Labor and Industries “Bullying in general is not illegal in the U.S. unless it involves harassment based on race/color, religion, national origin, sex, age (over 40), marital status, disability, sexual orientation/gender identity, Veteran/military status or any other protected class” (W.A., Labor and Industries). If you are not in the class mentioned, you will have a difficult time proving your case to an attorney. Along with workplace overload, secret threats we are asking employees to “save evidence” of the “threatening letters, comments or emails” and to “seek guidance” in the way of attorneys and therapists (Ali, 2019). There is enough stress going around to ask someone to fight their one source of income.

## **Your Responsibility**

As business owners it is your responsibility to be diligent about the situations that are happening within the workplace and forthcoming with the position you are recruiting for and that actual tasks at hand. Recruiting is crucial so that each business finds the right fit for their business, whether it be X or Y type. We need to be upfront about the day to day duties that the employee will be tasked with. Many times, this is not the case and employees are left struggling. Within a healthy atmosphere we see business owners and management caring about the well-being of their employees with consideration of their family-life balance, health and abilities to do the job. In question 26 of the survey the data presented us that employees need to be valued to be able to run a proper business. Putting anti-bullying policies and repercussion procedures into place for our team to feel more protected and comfortable while in our workplace is something that all businesses should be required to have legally. We as a State are not at the place where our laws can come into place when an individual is bullied but we should have laws within our own businesses, we make the rules and we make the atmosphere. A well-run establishment consists of training programs so that all employees are well trained to do their jobs as well as trained on handling tough situations within a workplace. In *Figure 9* the data showed that 61.5% of respondents said they were not offered team building exercises. We will also see a collaborative team environment which motivates and builds up their staff; employees working together to help each other succeed instead of backbiting and gossiping or holding one another down.

## **Appreciate your team**

A positive work environment will also have a healthy workplace atmosphere within the building walls where employees have a “pleasant and maintained” environment to work in along with being “cared for and provided support” (Leif, 2018). Many individuals we find that nature is something that soothes stress and anxiety, an open space with windows and plant life within the building to give it a naturistic feel. Employees need to be healthy as well, so they depend on adequate benefits to take care of themselves as well as their family, this is another form of the company showing appreciate for their staff. Incentive programs are something that should be happening to reward employees for the jobs that they’re doing. We saw in question 19 of the survey that most respondents did not receive incentive programs and if they did it was something menial or not for their positions. In figure 8 we saw that 11 respondents did not feel comfortable with speaking to their human resources management which is something that is very debilitating for a business. Human resources are the man resource for all employees to go to when feeling uncomfortable within a business. In the article “Workplace Bullying: costly and preventable” Wiedmer mentions who employees need a trusted resource to turn to when things are unpleasant within a workplace (p. 40). Management needs to encourage and strengthen employees, put a stop to negativity within the workplace. It is managements responsibility to eliminate a toxic workplace and put together tools to utilize and create a better environment. In the article “Proof that positive work cultures are more productive” Seppala explains that we need to have trust and loyalty within our business because if we do not, it can lead to “50% of voluntary turnover” within our company (Seppala, 2015). We see in large companies that they are using strategic programs to build a positive and more successful business. In the article, “Mindfulness

in the workplace benefits and strategies to integrate mindfulness-based programs in the workplace” it introduces a program that General Mills and Aetna have been cultivating within their companies to create less stress which is “Mindfulness”, the program sends the attendees on a six-day retreat to find personal growth and emotional resilience. These companies have seen an increase of “\$3,000 per employee” and “2,000 per employee” towards their health care costs (Antanaitis, 2015). Businesses need to have investments and trust within their employees, we see in the interview with the Senior technical manager of Blue Yonder that he has received trust from his company by the ability to work remotely which lessens the burden on his family, also, from the results of on question 24 of the survey that employees need to have that freedom and flexibility within their workplace.

### What a positive workplace can do for your business

When you have a positive workplace, you will see more efficient employees with a



Summerton, D. (2019) [davidsummertonconsulting.co.uk](http://davidsummertonconsulting.co.uk)

healthy workplace morale. Colleagues assisting one another to accomplish an end goal in helping the business move forward productively. “It increases positive emotions and well-being. Improves people’s relationships with each other and amplifies their abilities and their creativity. It buffers against negative experiences such as stress, thus improving employees’ ability to bounce back from challenges and difficulties while bolstering their health. And, it attracts employees, making them

more loyal to the leader and to the organization as well as bringing out their best strengths. When organizations develop positive, virtuous cultures they achieve significantly higher levels of organizational effectiveness — including financial performance, customer satisfaction, productivity, and employee engagement” (Seppälä, & Cameron, 2015). Businesses will see more loyal employees and as shown in responses to question 24 of the survey the respondents answered that they appreciated a supportive manager and someone who would listen to them, which in turn left them wanting to return to work. When we appreciate our employees, they will have more appreciation for the businesses they work for.



## Summary

Within this recommendation report examples are given to combat concerning issues within a workplace. The information is nationally prevalent for businesses across the country. Employees are dealing with work overload, stress, bullying, anxiety, and health issues due to a negative workplace. As a new business it is important to get off to a good start from the recruiting phase to running a business on a day to day basis. We need employees to help run a business, and they treated properly, with the right tools for success. Out of 26 respondents, only 6 indicated that they have had any type of incentive or appreciation type of program associated within their business. Along with that the data pointed out that there were 5 individuals out of 26 that do not feel safe within their workplace. Although, 5 may seem like a small number but if you think about it, there should never be anyone who feels unsafe in their workplace. We are speaking about work, not a war zone.

This report commanded knowledge of crucial data from secondary sources found on ProQuest, the WCC library page. Additionally, sources that were utilized were from YouTube, the New York Times, and the Washington State Labor and industries site. The information found within the peer-reviewed articles urged employers to take action against bullying, toxic workplaces, and gave in depth details about what the repercussions were of these issues being active within a workplace. Informative methods and tools were provided to be utilize as a business on how to battle stress in the workplace and have a healthier environment. The additional resources provided data showing how we could create a better business for our employees, and what we should be changing within our business to make it more comfortable for our employees. The secondary research provided concerning information on what's happening today within businesses but also gave us tools to combat those issues.

Primary research data was collected by surveying 26 individuals from Whatcom Community College's (WCC) along with a few diverse Whatcom county residents through social media as well as email. The questionnaire's focus is to deliver data providing the positive's and negative's experienced within a workplace to find out what makes it such, and to provide informative instruments into creating a positive workplace. Three interviews were conducted to be included in my primary research. The interviews were done with the Senior Technical Consultant of Blue Yonder, an Educator of twenty-five years, and a District Manager who's worked within the service and retail industry for over twenty years with a background of business consulting, human resources, and has been utilized to positively increase employee morale and increase profits. The interviews were to give insight on how some businesses approach workplace toxicity and stress. The data received from both the questionnaire and the interviews lead us to believe that there needs to be a dramatic change within the workforce to prevent overworked and stressed employees. I have included ways to tackle these issues in the recommendation page.

## Recommendation

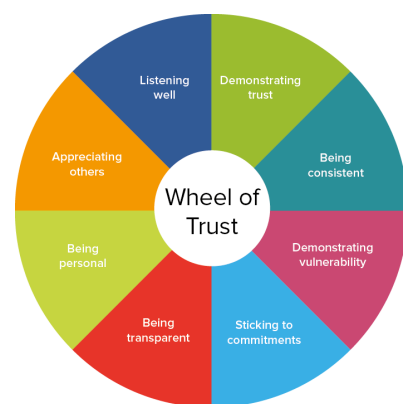
Within the research of the following report, there are a few recommendations that have been compiled to be able to run a positive workplace and handle any type of negativity that may enter your business. It is very vital that a business be healthy to be profitable and upstanding. The following information is to be utilized and employed within your business to see a positive start to a new business.

- **Appreciation for your team**

A positive work environment will also have a healthy workplace atmosphere within the building walls where employees have a “pleasant and maintained” environment to work in along with being “cared for and provided support” (Leif, 2018). Many individuals we find that nature is something that soothes stress and anxiety, an open space with windows and plant life within the building to give it a naturistic feel. Employees need to be healthy as well, so they depend on adequate benefits to take care of themselves as well as their family, this is another form of the company showing appreciate for their staff. We saw in question 19 of the survey that most respondents did not receive incentive programs and if they did it was something menial or not for their positions. Employers need to show progression to employees by promoting within the company and giving raises or bonuses. Another way to appreciate your employees is by speaking with them; have conversations to find out if they’re happy where they’re at. Working with employees on their availability and time off requests is another way to appreciate your employees and look out for their best interests. Some employees have a difficult time working weekends due to childcare or other factors, don’t just dismiss their needs, speak to them and find out what their needs are and how you can meet them in the middle.

- **Trust within the management staff of your business and give them the tools to succeed.**

Businesses need to have investments and trust within their employees, we see in the interview with the Senior technical manager of Blue Yonder that he has received trust from his company by the ability to work remotely which lessens the burden on his family, also, from the results of on question 24 of the survey that employees need to have that freedom and flexibility within their workplace. In figure 8 we saw that 11 respondents did not feel comfortable with speaking to their human resources management which is something that is very debilitating for a business. Human resources are the main resource for all employees to go to when feeling uncomfortable within a business. In the article “Workplace Bullying: costly and preventable” Wiedmer mentions who employees need a trusted resource to turn to when things are unpleasant within a workplace (p. 40). Management needs to encourage and strengthening our employees and put a stop to negativity within



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the workplace. In the end it is everyone responsibility to eliminate a toxic workplace and put together tools for your management team and you as a business owner to utilize to create a better environment. In the article “Proof that positive work cultures are more productive” Seppala explains that we need to have trust and loyalty within our business because if we do not, it can lead to “50% of voluntary turnover” within our company (Seppala, 2015).

- **Create team building exercises**

We see in large companies that they are using strategic programs to build a positive and more successful business. In the article, “Mindfulness in the workplace benefits and strategies to integrate mindfulness-based programs in the workplace” it introduces a program that General Mills and Aetna have been cultivating within their companies to create less stress which is “Mindfulness”, the program sends the attendees on a six-day retreat to find personal growth and emotional resilience. These companies have seen an increase of “\$3,000 per employee” and “2,000 per employee” towards their health care costs (Antanaitis, 2015).

- **What type of business are you wanting to own?**

In the end it is ultimately our own decision to create the type of business we would like to own along with the environment that we create. We can offer a vast majority of incentive programs for our employees, offer them resources to help with any type of issues that may come up from stress, to bullying, to just being able to talk to someone. Knowing your employees and understanding their happiness is the key to success and longevity with your staff. We need to create a peaceful environment that is not overrun with negativity and stress with multitasking and forgotten job descriptions. We need to respect our staff, along with their personal time and give them be thankful to them, because as you chose them to work for you, they chose you to work for and there is no better excuse to do right by them than that.

*“Be a listener, ask questions, and never stop learning. Once a business is started it is never done growing, it has such potential to become something bigger; to do this we need to have motivated employees who enjoy their jobs and who promote their place of employment, and to do that we have to take proper care emotionally and physically of our employees. Make sure they have proper insurance, create a positive and esthetically comfortable location for them to work in. You need to know your employees, the work they do on a daily basis and encourage ideas. I train my staff to become better at the job than I am, to be better at sales, managing, working with the software, and knowing the departments, sites, and products they’re working; this encourages growth. Respecting their time and give realistic goals that they have been properly trained to accomplish so that they aren’t at the office 24/7”.*

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## Appendix A: Survey Questions

**1. Sex:** Male - Female - Prefer not to say - Other

**2. Ethnicity:** Your Answer

**3. Current position held (if not employed, last position held):**

Never been employed - Entry-Level - Mid-Level – Professional - Other:

**4. How long have you been employed? (If not employed how long were you employed at your last place of work):** Never been employed - 6 months or less - 6 months to a year - 1 year to 3 years - 3 to 5 years - More than 5 years

**5. How many hours do you work a week (if not currently employed, please refer to your last career):** Temp - Part-Time Employee - Full-Time – Salary - 15 or less - 16-25 - 26-35 - 36-40 - 41-50 - 51-60 - 61+

**6. Are you satisfied with your current employer?** - Yes – No – Somewhat – Unsure - Never been employed

**7. Have you ever been, or have you ever witnessed harassment or bullying at work?** By whom: No - Yes, Myself - Yes, Colleagues - By Upper Management - By Colleagues - By Clients/Customers

**8. My upper management is (Mark all that apply):** Invested in me – Supportive - Motivates me - None of the above

**9. Have you ever experienced the following while at work? (Mark all that apply):** Poor Communication with Management and/or Coworkers - Verbal abuse – Hostility - Yourself or coworkers constantly in a bad mood - Rumors and/or gossip – Bullying - None of the above

**10. Have you ever experienced any of the following due to workplace stress and/or unhappiness? (Mark All that apply):** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder – Anxiety – Depression - Divorce or relationship problems - Alcohol or drug dependency - Suicidal thoughts - None of the above

**11. Have you ever done any of the following because of workplace stress or unhappiness? (Mark all that apply):** Called in sick when you were not really ill - Saw a doctor or psychologist for workplace stress - Consistently arrived at work late - Purposely cost the company money (waste, time theft, taken supplies, etc.) - Taken anti-depressant, anti-anxiety (SSRI) meds - Quit your job - None of the above

**12. Have you ever felt any of the following due to workplace stress or unhappiness? (Mark all that apply):** Felt disillusioned with your company/manager/colleagues - Felt like giving up or stopped caring about your job - Felt fear or retaliation for expressing your concerns about your workplace environment - Felt held back by upper management or colleagues - Felt like your workplace environment got in the way of your productivity - Felt dread about having to go into work. - None of the above

**13. Have you ever worked at a business that made you feel (Mark all that apply):** Excited to go to work - Proud of the place you work - Like you played a vital role within the company – Valued - Professionally nurtured and encouraged - Respected

**14. Have you ever worked for a business that demonstrated the following (Mark all that apply):** Encouraged work, life, balance - Promoted personal and professional growth - Asked and listened to honest feedback about workplace issues - Regularly

checked for employee satisfaction - Address disruptive employees swiftly - Celebrated and encouraged employee success

**15. My workplace has a positive atmosphere:** Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree - Strongly agree - Other:

**16. My job duties often stray from my job description:** Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree - Strongly agree

**17. I'm satisfied with my job security:** Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree - Strongly agree

**18. Does your company offer team building exercises?** Yes – No - Unsure

**19. What type of incentive programs does your company offer?** Your answer

**20. Do you think your salary is fair and equal?** Yes – No – Unsure – Fair - Equal pay compared to others with the same position – Fair - Equal pay compared to others with the same position

**21. What's the stress level of your current or last job?** None – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 - Extremely High

**22. Do you feel safe at work?** Yes – No - Never been employed

**23. Do you feel comfortable speaking with your Human Resource Manager and Manager?** Yes – No - Maybe

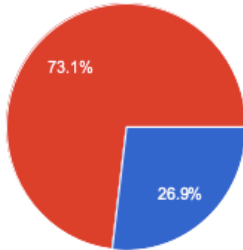
**24. What do you enjoy about your place of employment (What's your employer doing correctly)?** Your answer

**25. What are your dislikes (how can your employer improve)?** Your answer

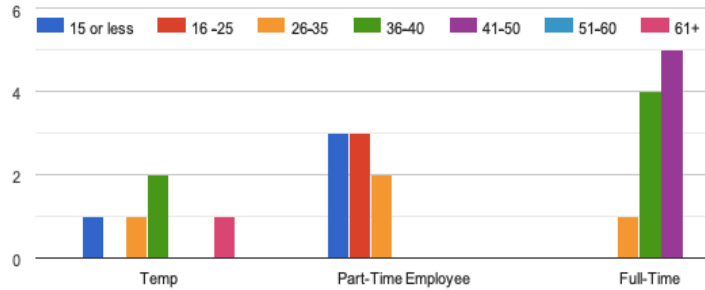
**26. Is there anything that you would like future business owners to be aware of?** Your answer

# Appendix B: Survey Results

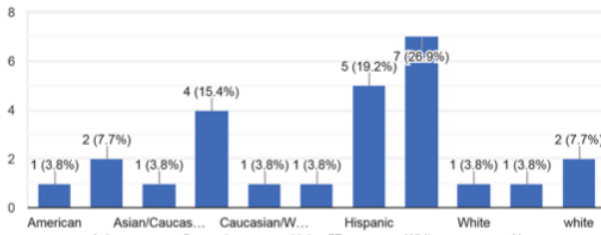
**Question 1: Sex**  
26 Respondents



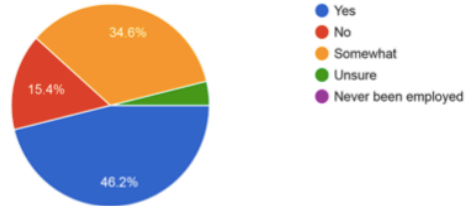
**Question 5: How many hours do you work a week (if not currently employed, please refer to your last career)**



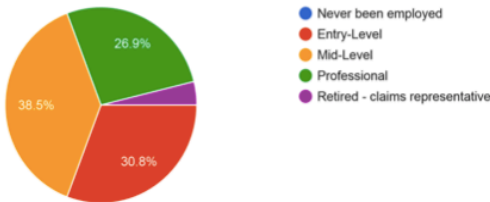
**Question 2:**  
26 responses



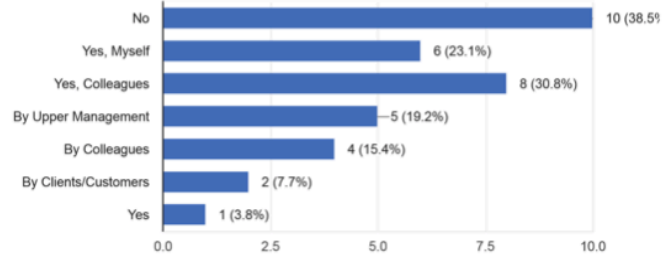
**Question 6: Are you satisfied with your current employer? 26 respondents**



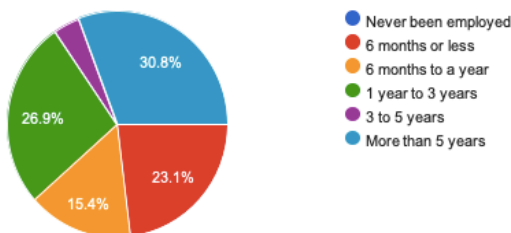
**Question 3: Current position held (if not employed, last position held). 26 respondents**



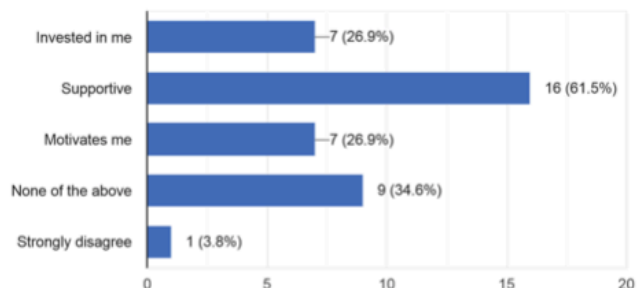
**Question 7: Have you ever been or have you ever witnessed harassment or bullying at work? By whom? 26 Respondents**



**Question 4: How long have you been employed? (If not employed how long were you employed at your last place of work). 26 respondents**



**Question 8: My upper management is (Mark all that apply): 26 Respondents**

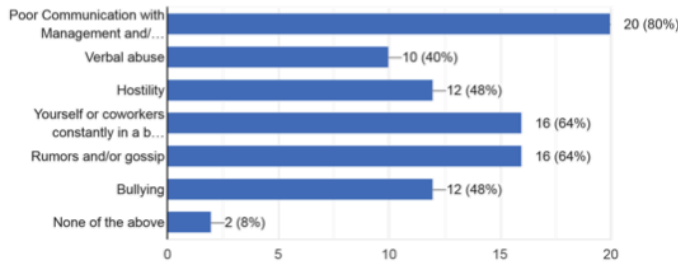




### Question 9

Have you ever experienced the following while at work? (Mark all that apply)

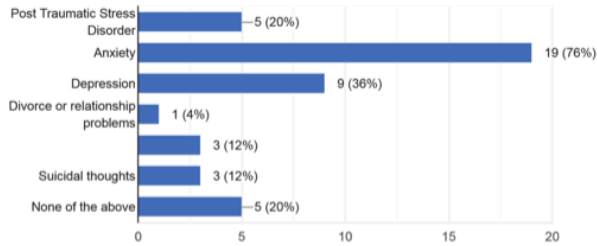
25 responses



### Question 10

Have you ever experienced any of the following due to workplace stress and/or unhappiness? (Mark All that apply)

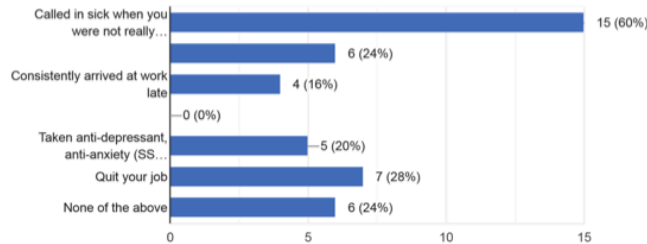
25 responses



### Question 11

Have you ever done any of the following because of workplace stress or unhappiness? (Mark all that apply)

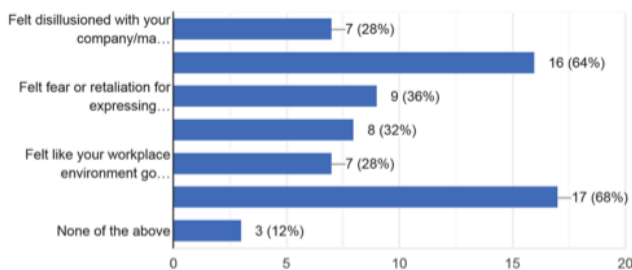
25 responses



### Question 12

Have you ever felt any of the following due to workplace stress or unhappiness? (Mark all that apply)

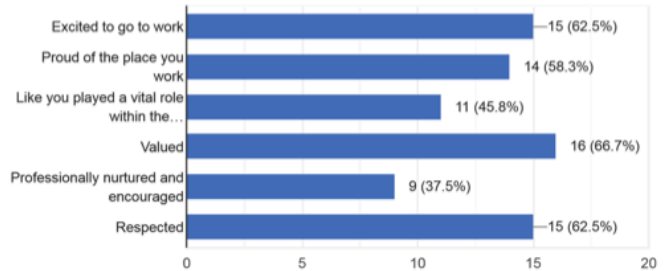
25 responses



### Question 13

Have you ever worked at a business that made you feel (Mark all that apply):

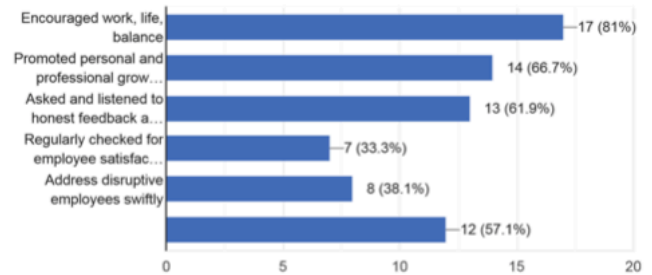
24 responses



### Question 14

Have you ever worked for a business that demonstrated the following (Mark all that apply):

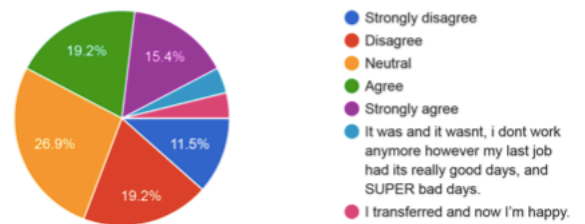
21 responses



### Question 15

My workplace has a positive atmosphere.

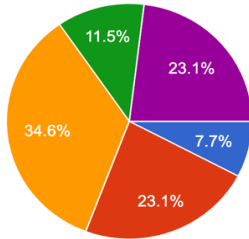
26 responses



**Question 16**

My job duties often stray from my job description.

26 responses

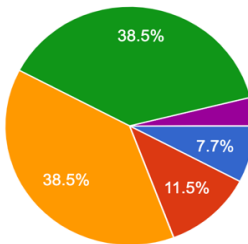


- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**Question 17**

I'm satisfied with my job security.

26 responses

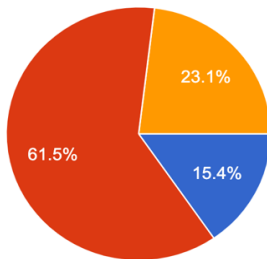


- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**Question 18**

Does your company offer team building exercises?

26 responses



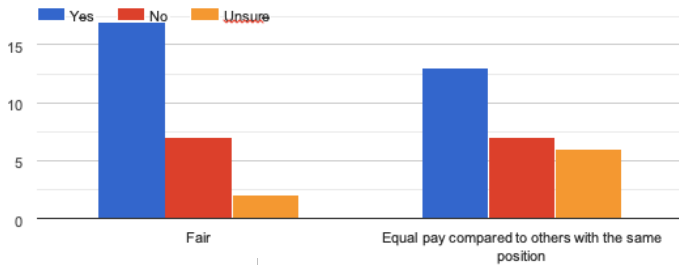
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*Question 19: What type of incentive programs does your company offer?*

1. None
2. N/A
3. 401K
4. none as far as I know.
5. \$5 Woods coffee card for entry level employees who go over and above, but it's really only for employees who are favored by management.
6. Commission if sales goals are reached.
7. None
8. Employee of the Month. Employee of the year.
9. 401K
10. Bonuses for New Patients and Quarterly Reviews (raises).
11. I don't know.
12. None
13. none.

### Question 20

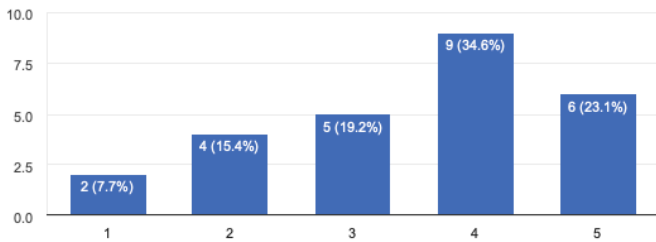
Do you think your salary is fair and equal?



### Question 21

What's the stress level of your current or last job?

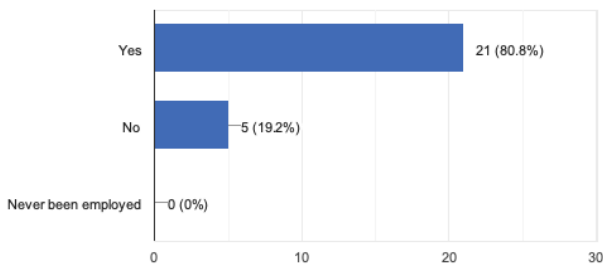
26 responses



### Question 22

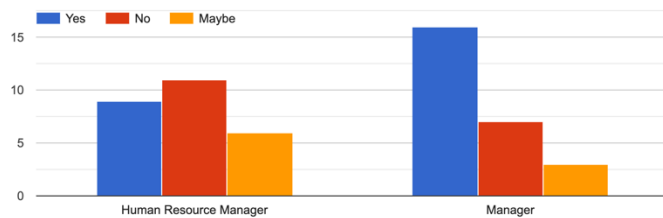
Do you feel safe at work?

26 responses



### Question 23

Do you feel comfortable speaking with your Human Resource Manager and Manager?



### Question 24: What do you enjoy about your place of employment (What's your employer doing correctly)? 26 Responses

1. They're all chilled out and understand life
2. Some flexibility in hours
3. I used to work at BPL, so I guess the fact of helping the community.
4. I have the freedom to leave the office whenever I want but still need to be out working.
5. Supportable
6. I enjoy teaching.
7. My pay is higher than minimum wage. I got a \$2 raise in less than 6 months of work.
8. Allows me to offer ideas and uses them often.
9. I had a good Operations Manager which kept me wanting to return to work, Someone who listened and would have trust in my decisions as much as I had in hers which made work a lot easier.
10. What's the deference
11. My patients
12. Helping people
13. I enjoy talking with the people I work with. They all genuinely care about me and each other.
14. I have a good manager who agreed to lessen my hours when I told her my anxiety was getting too much during shifts.
15. 401k Benefits
16. Client
17. Not a good place to work
18. I am constantly being praised for my hardwork even though I just started working there
19. Stability
20. Job position gives me freedom with little supervision
21. I can self pace
22. Depending on which employer
23. Office manager
24. opportunity to grow
25. My manager consistently checks in with me to make sure that my work and school balance is okay and has been very flexible with my schedule and made sure I'm liking my position
26. nothing

**Question 25: What are your dislikes (how can your employer improve)?** 26 Responses

1. More hours available
2. No upward mobility
3. nothing that I can think of
4. They're allowing toxic individuals to stay employed and removing the hardworking employees. They are paying pretty fair rates.
5. Help us keep a consistent work schedule.
6. Admin adding to my responsibilities without giving me resources and the time I need to be successful.
7. The lack of communication between employees and management
8. Being more considerate about the daily work timeline. Leaving on time versus having to stay for an unknown length of time until the work is done. I would appreciate more predictable hours in a work day.
9. When force was needed and terminations needed to be done I think we could have (as a company) worked on better punishments for work place violations of employees.
10. Hispanic
11. Dealing with low performers.
12. LISTEN – staff properly
13. I wish my employer would do more things to unite the employees as a team. Also to take action when a complaint is made about a manager instead of just waiting and hoping the problem fixes itself.
14. Communication mostly
15. Nothing
16. Management
17. Unequal pay and harassment
18. I do not think we talk enough about having a positive workplace.
19. Lack of Work/Like balance
20. Higher pay rate
21. I wish they would be more collaborative
22. Not taking favorites
23. Better communication
24. Better communication and understanding
25. I think a big thing my employer could improve is communication during the time of this pandemic. Obviously there are going to be a lot of changes and adjustments and to make that clear and vocal to the employees is so important
26. not enough direction

**Question 26: Is there anything that you would like future business owners to be aware of?** 17 Responses

1. no
2. Be understanding but not a doormat
3. Reward your employees for their hard work and dedication. Promote within the company. Educate, work with and train up your employees.
4. Yes, Employees need to always have a plan for desired tasks to come to fruition, rather than asking for the moon and leaving it up to us to pull it down. As an educator, in order to accomplish my job, I spend my nights, weekends and holidays so that I can do all that admin desires. We keep getting more and more piled onto our plate when the school district cuts funding. Students suffer because time is getting pulled from teaching. Teachers are looked at as “slacking off” when we are not able to do everything that has been added. We are an occupation that is always changing with no limits.
5. Value the employee, without them there would be no business.
6. It is important to give positive feedback to let the employee know if they are doing well. If they are not doing well, it is important that the employer is available for questions or to have further training provided.
7. That no matter how hard you try nothing will be perfect, that each day and each step lightly because nothing will ever be the same twice.
8. Deal with bully type supervisors. It hurts employee moral and productivity.
9. Be HONEST, listen to employees, do not overwork staff
10. idk
11. Care about ypur employees
12. People with kids are more mentally stressed balancing work/like, need support options!
12. Respect your employees!! It's so important to foster and lean into positivity
14. Pay attention to all your employees not just a few
15. Care about your employees because without them you cant run a business
16. teens struggling to balance life

## Appendix C: Interview

Interviews conducted via phone; the first interview being from a Senior Technical Consultant at Blue Yonder. My second interview via phone was with an Educator of 25 years, and the third interview was with a Division manager who has worked within retail and service industries for over twenty years. The identity of the interviewees is kept private to protect the individuals from any legal ramifications that may present itself, their answers are in taupe, red, and blue.

### Interview 1: Blue Yonder, Senior Technical Consultant

Q: Does Blue Yonder provide any training programs for its employees? If so, what kind?

A: Blue Yonder provides so many training courses. When you're first hired you will have a ninety-day training program that consists of meeting new hires, learning the systems, and learning how to become a team player.

Q: Do you have work related stress?

A: The stress comes in many different forms from customer questions and trying to answer them when you're jumping into the job and you haven't been fully through the training yet. I still have stress when trying to answer some questions that I don't know. It can also be stressful when I have to travel too much mixed with long hours during time away from my family.

Q: How is harassment and bullying tolerated at your company?

A: There is zero tolerance for bad blood within the company. There isn't a place for it here. If you expect to come into this company with that attitude, you will be figured out right away and tossed out of the company.

Q: How does this job differ from your last place of work?

A: Blue Yonder listens to their employees and my last place of work did not, they were very unappreciative. I work less hours at this job compared to the last. In my last job they would always throw more at me without knowing what I was doing, with that type of environment the workload gets lost, the work description gets lost; just piling more work on. I remember being on a seventeen-hour long client call on a holiday and received no appreciation for doing the job. The work environment is so much better now. It isn't cutthroat, everyone here helps everyone to succeed. There is a sense of job security, which there was not at my last place of work, and I had worked there for twenty years.

Q: What makes it such a positive place to work?

A: The work environment. It's a large corporation so there's no childish behaviors like in some of the businesses that I was used to. This company pushes teamwork, and the company's president is active within the company, helping employees and making sure they're successful. The push to know your job is big and they back up what they say. There is no out of office for us or our customers, there is only employees backing others up, for example, if I'm on vacation then another employee picks up where I leave off, we're all responsible for one another's success. I also really enjoy the lack of having to drive in traffic to work because I can work from home. This job also allows my wife to work so I can take care of our son. This job has relieved so much stress.

Q: What are the benefits of working at Blue Yonder?

A: Benefits, Training, Working from home, competitive pay. They give you two weeks off at the end of the year. Gym memberships, perks at work: discounts and point program

to buy things. Twice a year: vacations and corporate days to meet families. Lots of business travel and great accommodations.

## **Interview 2: Educator of 25 years**

Q: What are the training programs like at the school you work for?

A: Useless. Training is provided just for namesake, to say employers have done their job by offering the information to employee's, but the training is not training it is very limited and leaves employees feeling clueless. We have the code of ethics but that is only enough to keep employees in line just enough to not lose their licenses. Nepotism is horrible here and the family members are given the jobs before they're posted, with this happening it leaves other teachers left out and unable to work which is a risk to lose their license.

Q: What's your job like?

A: No support, no follow through, the workload is not properly divided nor are they following job descriptions. We have impossible goals and tasks given, long hours, no family life balance. No tools to help do the job, we have to come up with our own curriculum. Inability to communicate to upper management to ask for help. Tasks are being given to employees which are then handed to other employees without delegation but rather just dumped on other employees.

Q: What are you coworkers like?

A: Very competitive. They don't like to share ideas; they keep things to themselves and do not do anything to help others succeed. Most of them are more interested in posting work online to make more money or on the side tutoring than they are in getting students to learn. They speak about each other behind their backs, gossiping. I see teachers speaking down about students and that they have no compassion for their students. Watching other teachers eating large lunches in front of less fortunate kids who are unable to eat; it's heartbreaking.

Q: What's the stress like?

A: Over the top scale of 1 to 10 = 10

Q: How does affect your home life and work?

A: At work I'm composed and hide it because I'm around kids; I unload at home. I try to decompress, and I just need quiet time and to be alone, by myself. I can't sleep due to the reoccurring thoughts of the workload; the worry of if I can meet deadlines is what causes my eating habits to decline, sleeping and anxiety. Eating is something that I spare due to my workload.

Q: What keeps you from quitting and just walking away?

A: If I'm not working, I lose my teaching degree unless I'm continuing my own education towards my teaching degree. But the main reason I can't just walk away is that I care about my kids that I'm teaching, and the investment that I put into the job. I want to be there for the kids to help them and make a difference in their lives. I provide snacks for students who are unable to do so, less fortunate kids who are unable to have food at their homes and provide snacks for snack times, I know I can provide that for them.

## **Interview 3: Division Manager: 20-year consulting, retail/service industry**

Q: Do you enjoy what you do?

A: I enjoy what I do very much. I enjoy creating a positive and fun place to work for my team as well as enjoying the gratitude and loyalty of my team and my clients.

Q: What's the stress level like for the industry you're in?

A: The stress is very high and can be overwhelming. If you do the work and manage your time, you can use stress to your advantage. At times I feel that I can accomplish the same task that was asked but in a more efficient way and completing a task the way it was asked can take longer, I think that is what causes stress to become very overwhelming.

Q: How do you keep a positive outlook?

A: Knowing that I am doing this for my family, my team, and working towards bettering companies that I am brought into. These companies are asking for help because they've noticed a trend of deteriorating profits and turnover. It's an excellent start for a business, to want to take action, it shows respect for their employees, clients and business itself.

Q: How do you motivate your team?

A: Respect for your team, be diligent about how they're trained. Individuals have different learning styles, which need to be taken into consideration when creating training manuals. Ask for innovative ideas from your team to help improve the business, never dismiss someone's ideas; these individuals are the ones who work in the field every day, they know how to make positive changes within the business. It's important to speak to your employees, find out if they're happy within the business or department that they're in, if not, find out how this can change. It could be as easy as transferring them to a different department or site. If you have an employee who chooses to work for you instead of accepting a few dollars more working for a competitor, then you know you're doing something right.

Q: You said you have to manage your time well, how do you do this?


A: My method has changed a few times over the years, but I did find something that works pretty well within a fast paced and demanding environment. I call it a task list diary; I jot down all of the tasks that I need to get done and place due dates. I leave enough time between tasks so that I can take on any emergencies that come up within the day. With this method it has enabled me to get back to clients at an increased rate along with completing my daily tasks. The diary helps me to see how much time I'm spending on a project and gets me home on time.

Q: How do you suggest companies create a family life balance?

A: I think it boils down to better understanding what you have tasked your employees with on a daily basis, their job description. Also, making sure that your management team is delegating correctly and not pushing their work off on others which cause employees to work extended hours and exhausting your team and your budget. Listen to your employees, allow them to have their time off and if there's noticeable stress, understand the signs and take action. Making an environment where families are welcome to visit can be a positive impact for the team.

Q: Do you think a positive environment is 100% recruiting?

A: Recruiting has a big part in it but not everything. Businesses need to put time and effort into their recruiting, and you will obtain the type of employees you need for the business to grow in the right direction. Ask questions in the interview where the



individual can offer more about their likes and dislikes, what they're looking for, and their end goal. Find out what makes this business and manager a good fit for them; what do they respect in a manager. You want to give them an example of what their day to day process looks like when they work for your company instead of sugar coating it. Tell them what will be challenges and what the great things are. I have seen so many businesses where they avoid answer questions like "what's my day to day routine like?" This inevitably ends in failure for both the company and individual. Being honest from the start is always going to give you a positive outcome. A positive environment has so many attributes, recruiting is only the beginning. You need to listen to your employees, be ethical, have respect for them, have integrity, be empathetic. Without them you don't have a company.

**Q: What do you suggest companies do to steer clear of within their workplace?**

**A:** I have seen more than my share of bullying within a company that it's very problematic for our society to function properly. One can literally feel the heaviness in the air when they step into a toxic business. I think a good way to steer clear of situations like this is to make sure everyone is pulling their weight. There needs to be absolutely zero tolerance for bullying, and it is the managers responsibility to take action against bullying. When we see this happening morale goes down and good employees start leaving. Tasks need to be properly and ethically delegated, job descriptions need to be upheld and changed whenever need be with employee understanding and approval. Accountability, not pointing the finger in another's direction, respectable communication between management and employees, having a wonderful human resource manager. No favoritism, and always give credit where credit is due, encourage and motivate team-members. We need to make everyone responsible for their selves and the success of their teammates.