

DO EMPLOYEES NEED A VACATION FROM THEIR VACATION?

New Randstad Work Watch Survey Takes A Look At Today's Vacation Realities

ATLANTA, May 20, 2009 — Ask almost anyone working these days and they'll tell you that the current economic conditions have, at one time or another, been the cause of a little bit of stress in the workplace – it's no longer the elephant at the water cooler. But a new Randstad *Work Watch* survey of full-time employed adults reveals an unexpected, perhaps surprising, cause of employee stress – taking time off for a vacation.

It's not going on vacation, it's coming back

When asked what they found difficult about taking time off from work for vacation, 77 percent of those who find something difficult about taking vacations stated it was the first day back in the office after vacation. An even higher number of Generation X and Mature employees agreed with this sentiment. The last day in the office before vacation was selected as the next most difficult thing. Interestingly, Generation Y employees, more so than any other, seem to find it hard to relinquish their responsibilities.

% Who Think Something Is Difficult About Taking Time Off For Vacation	Total	Gen Y 18-34	Gen X 35-44	Boomers 45-54	Matures 55+	Male	Female
First day back in the office after vacation	77	74	84	70	84	74	80
The last day in the office before vacation	44	44	46	43	43	41	47
Giving up control of my projects/work/responsibilities	30	35	32	28	19	31	30

A big part of preparing for time out of the office revolves around making sure an employee's roles and responsibilities are being managed while he or she is out of the office on vacation. The Randstad survey disclosed that 43 percent of full time employees who have a boss and/or co-workers find preparing them to be stressful; this jumps to 55 percent for Generation Y employees. Perhaps coming as no surprise, neither Boomers (64 percent) nor Matures (74 percent) find it stressful to prepare a boss and/or co-workers for their time out of the office.

How a boss and/or co-worker are prepared revealed some interesting results. While respondents overall seemed to prefer face-to-face meetings and providing a contact number (55 percent each) over sending an email updating the status of projects (43 percent), this trend varied by workforce generation.

% Who Prepare A Boss and/or Co-Workers For Vacation	Total	Gen Y 18-34	Gen X 35-44	Boomers 45-54	Matures 55+	Male	Female
Held face-to-face meeting to review projects, answer questions	55	62	53	54	47	60	49
Provided a contact number where I could be reached	55	53	57	50	64	54	57
Sent an email providing a status update on work	43	54	46	36	28	45	40

So what can be done to alleviate some of the stress – millions of emails, a desk piled high with reports and paperwork and a full voicemail inbox – that comes with the first day back in the office from vacation? “It’s really a matter of organization and priority setting,” stated Eric Buntin, managing director for Randstad US. “Many of today’s employees may very well have more on their plates than ever before, but the pressure to pick up right where you left off before vacation is more times than not self-imposed. Unless you have a mandatory deliverable or immovable deadline, your first day back in the office can be quite productive if you use your time wisely.”

Buntin suggests the following tips for making your first day back from vacation productive and stress free:

- **Get a Head Start** – go through your email inbox the day before you return to the office. After deleting the junk mail, scan for emails addressed to you from your boss and clients, assigning priority for follow-up upon your return to the office. This will create a more focused environment once you arrive to work the next morning.
- **Ask for a Status Update** – if you work on a team or have staff that reports into you, ask someone to send you an email updating you on your projects. By doing this before you get into the office, you’ll have a head-start on your first-day priorities.
- **Be an Early Bird** – arrive before normal office hours to ensure you get some quiet time to prioritize your to-do list and review and return voicemail messages. Once co-workers begin arriving, chances are you’re more likely to engage in conversation and be met with distractions.
- **Take Your Boss To Lunch** – taking your boss to lunch on your first day back gives you time to catch up on projects and discuss important matters in a one-on-one atmosphere.
- **Gas Up** – be sure your car has a full tank of gas so you don’t have the added stress of stopping at the gas station on your way into work which can sometimes alter your morning routine.

Additional interesting Randstad Work Watch survey findings include:

- Fifty-three percent of those surveyed say they have made vacation plans during work hours; this jumps to 61 percent for Generation Y employees
- Women (59 percent) are more likely than men (49 percent) to make vacation plans at work
- Fourteen percent of Generation Y employees said that finding out their absence was not missed was a difficult part of taking time off for vacation
- An overwhelming 70 percent of full-time employees surveyed stated they are out of “work mode” as soon as they leave the office for vacation
- Twenty-two percent of Generation X full-time employees say they are never fully in vacation mode

For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Holly Richmond at holly.richmond@msslworldwide.com or 404.877.5533

Abbreviated Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Randstad from May 11 to May 13, 2009 among 2,065 adults ages 18 and older, of whom 842 are full time employed adults who ever take vacations from work. Results were weighted as needed to reflect the composition of the U.S. population of adults ages 18+ using targets for region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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