

BenefitsPro

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Most employees don't feel respected



Many employees who don't feel respected by their employer will leave the company. Photo: Getty Images.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Aretha Franklin is not the only one looking for respect, according to a Harvard Business Review study of nearly 20,000 employees worldwide.

Being treated with respect was more important to employees than recognition and appreciation, communicating an inspiring vision, providing useful feedback — even opportunities for learning, growth, and development. Employees who feel respected by their leaders reported:

- Fifty-six percent better health and well-being.
- 1.72 times more trust and safety.
- Eighty-nine percent more enjoyment and **job satisfaction**.
- Ninety-two percent greater focus and prioritization.
- More meaning and significance.
- More committed to staying with their organization.
- Greater engagement with the company.

Despite this obvious benefits, 54 percent of employees said they don't receive regular respect from their leaders.

“Our studies reveal that without respect, even if people want to perform well, they can't,” said Christine Porath, associate professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. Lack of respect takes a toll on the bottom line.

“Nearly everybody who experiences workplace incivility or feels disrespected responds in a negative way,” she said. “Employees are less creative, and **many leave**. About half deliberately decrease their effort or lower the quality of their work.”

Incivility also damages **customer relationships**.

“Our research shows that people are less likely to buy from a company with an employee they perceive as rude,” Porath said, “whether the rudeness is directed at them or at other employees. Witnessing just one short negative interaction leads customers to generalize about other employees, the organization and even the brand.”

Porath offers three recommendations for businesses seeking to turn things around:

- “First and foremost, they need to promote a culture of respect. That starts with recruiting and selecting for civility.”
- “Leaders also need to be role models for civility. One surefire way to communicate how much you value civility is to directly evaluate and reward it during performance reviews.”
- “Finally, leaders need to correct bad behavior. Impolite behavior must be dealt with swiftly. After all, respect pays.”

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