

Professionals in a Pressure Cooker: Korn Ferry Survey Shows Workplace is More Stressful Than 5 Years Ago

-- More Than a Third of Professionals Say They've Had to Quit a Job Due to Stress --

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Increased work demands, bad bosses and changes in leadership are creating an ever-more stressful work environment for professionals. That is according to a new [Korn Ferry](#) (NYSE: KFY) survey.

The vast majority (88 percent) of professionals say that compared to 5 years ago, the stress level in their workplace is higher, with 51 percent saying it is much higher.

Ninety percent of respondents say they've lost sleep due to work stressors, more than a third (34 percent) say stress has gotten so bad that they have called in sick, and even more serious, 34 percent say they've had to quit due to stress on the job.

The top stressor for professionals on the job, according to the survey, is too heavy of a workload (41 percent) followed by their boss at 28 percent.

"A bad boss and too heavy of a workload often go hand-in-hand," said Bryan Ackermann, Managing Partner, Korn Ferry Advance & Digitized Services. "While it's important to accomplish tasks and achieve organizational goals, it's up to both the employee and their supervisor to manage workloads and focus on what will create the best outcomes, including getting rid of non-effective 'to-do' tasks."

Organizational shifts are also big stressors for professionals, as 93 percent of respondents say a change in top leadership, such as a new CEO or division head, creates additional stress.

"The key to managing through organizational change is to be transparent and open about how it will impact the business and employees -- explain the 'why' behind the changes and what plans are for the future," said Ackermann.

The survey also found work and home stress are intertwined. The vast majority (93 percent) of respondents say stress at work has a negative impact on their personal relationships. Conversely, 74 percent say stress at home has a negative impact on their work productivity.

"Between work, family and other responsibilities, it's no wonder why we live in such a stressed-out environment," said Ackermann. "The key for company leaders is to understand that the mental health of their employees is just as important as their physical health. They must take steps to create a work environment where employees thrive."

About the survey

The Korn Ferry global survey took place in January 2020 and garnered 1,405 responses. (note: due to rounding, responses may not equal 100 percent).

Survey Responses:

Compared to 5 years ago, what is the stress level in your workplace?

Much higher	51 percent
Somewhat higher	37 percent
Somewhat lower	10 percent
Much lower	2 percent

Has stress at your job ever gotten so bad that you've had to quit?

Yes	34 percent
No	66 percent

Has stress on the job ever caused you to call in sick?

Yes	34 percent
No	66 percent

How often do you lose sleep due to work stressors?

Never	10 percent
Occasionally	56 percent
Often	34 percent

What is more stressful?

Too much work	69 percent
Not enough work/feeling I am not adding value	31 percent

How much do you agree that stress in the workplace has had a negative impact on your personal relationships?

To a great extent	46 percent
To some extent	47 percent
To no extent	7 percent

If you had to pick one, what would you say is your biggest stressor at work?

Your boss	28 percent
Co-workers	12 percent
Not knowing how to do your job as expected	13 percent
Too heavy of a workload	41 percent
Low salary	2 percent
Long commute	3 percent

Compared to 5 years ago, what is the stress level in your workplace?

Much higher	51 percent
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Somewhat higher	37 percent
Somewhat lower	10 percent
Much lower	2 percent

If someone or something is stressing you out at work, how likely are you to confide in a co-worker

Highly likely	22 percent
Somewhat likely	38 percent
Somewhat unlikely	20 percent
Highly unlikely	19 percent

If it's unlikely that you will confide in a co-worker about something that's stressing you out at work, what is the top reason?

I'm afraid they'll record me and I'll get in trouble	10 percent
It's none of their business	57 percent
I'm afraid they'll tell my boss or HR	33 percent

How much does a change in organizational leadership (e.g. new CEO or head of your division) impact your stress level?

To a great extent	42 percent
To some extent	51 percent
To no extent	7 percent

Would you agree with the following? Stress at home has negative impact on my work productivity.

To a great extent	20 percent
To some extent	54 percent
To no extent	27 percent

About Korn Ferry

Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm. We work with clients to design their organizational structures, roles and responsibilities. We help them hire the right people and advise them on how to reward, develop and motivate their workforce. And, we help professionals navigate and advance their careers.

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