

## Be a better remote manager

LINDA WHITE

Seventy-six per cent of Canadian workers believe their manager is doing a good job leading their team from afar. But there's room for improvement.

According to research from Robert Half, employees believe their boss could do a better job of communicating (29 per cent), promoting work-life balance (21 per cent), giving recognition (20 per cent), encouraging career progression (18 per cent), and offering support in difficult situations (12 per cent).

Communicating openly and often will help you better understand and accommodate employees' wants and needs, the global talent solutions firm advises. Showing appreciation for hard work can improve retention, productivity, innovative thinking and loyalty. Consider implementing a formal appreciation program, sharing gift cards for small wins or giving kudos at a team meeting.

Be flexible. Professionals continue to face demands outside of work, irrespective of their location, and may require your support if they need to alter their schedules to prioritize personal responsibilities. To ensure projects stay on track, meet with team members to reprioritize and delegate critical tasks to ensure deadlines are met and nothing gets missed.

Finally, remind employees to use their vacation time and, if possible, to unplug completely.

### Protecting vulnerable workers

The Ontario government will introduce legislation that, if passed, will require temporary help agencies and recruiters to have a licence to operate in the province.

Under the proposed legislation, officers can lay penalties against unlicensed agencies or recruiters or businesses that use an unlicensed operator. The province will also crack down on agencies and recruiters that exploit and traffic domestic and foreign workers.

Numerous temporary help agencies are illegally paying people below the minimum wage and denying other basic employment rights, the province reports. In doing so, they gain an unfair competitive advantage over law-abiding agencies by undercutting rates.

# CAREER BURNOUT ON THE RISE

## Taking time to recharge your batteries may help

LINDA WHITE

If you've become cynical or critical at work, if you're irritable or impatient with colleagues, customers or clients, or if you're using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel, you could be among the growing number of people experiencing job burnout.

The numbers are disconcerting. According to a recent study by LHH (formerly LHH Knightsbridge) and The Adecco Group, the mental health and overall well-being of working Canadians are at an all-time low: 54 per cent of young leaders reported feelings of burnout and three in 10 employees stated their mental and physical health has declined over the past year.

That really comes as no surprise. "The pandemic has been the perfect storm for burnout. You'd be hard pressed to design a more debilitating, mass-scale burnout experience," says CJ Calvert, a Toronto-based professional speaker and author of *Bouncing Back Through COVID-19: Overcoming Burnout a Year into the Pandemic*. (Amazon Paperback and Kindle e-book, March 2021).

### WHAT IS BURNOUT?

"Burnout is the experience of combined physical, mental and emotional exhaustion and it's usually caused by a situation of extended unrelenting stress," says Calvert, pointing to lack of control over the pandemic, lack of warning about its onset and uncertainty about when it will be over.

"The other hallmark is not having appropriate recovery. Even though you're going through stress, you may not be taking time to recharge your batteries."

Burnout can result from various factors, including a heavy workload, long hours and struggling with work-life balance. If ignored or unaddressed, job burnout can have significant consequences, including: excessive stress; fatigue or insomnia; sadness, anger or irritability; alcohol or substance misuse; heart disease; high blood pressure; Type 2 diabetes and vulnerability to illnesses, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Addressing career burnout requires a "two-pronged approach" comparable to two oars in a rowboat, Calvert says. The first part of the strategy involves decreasing the things that cause stress.

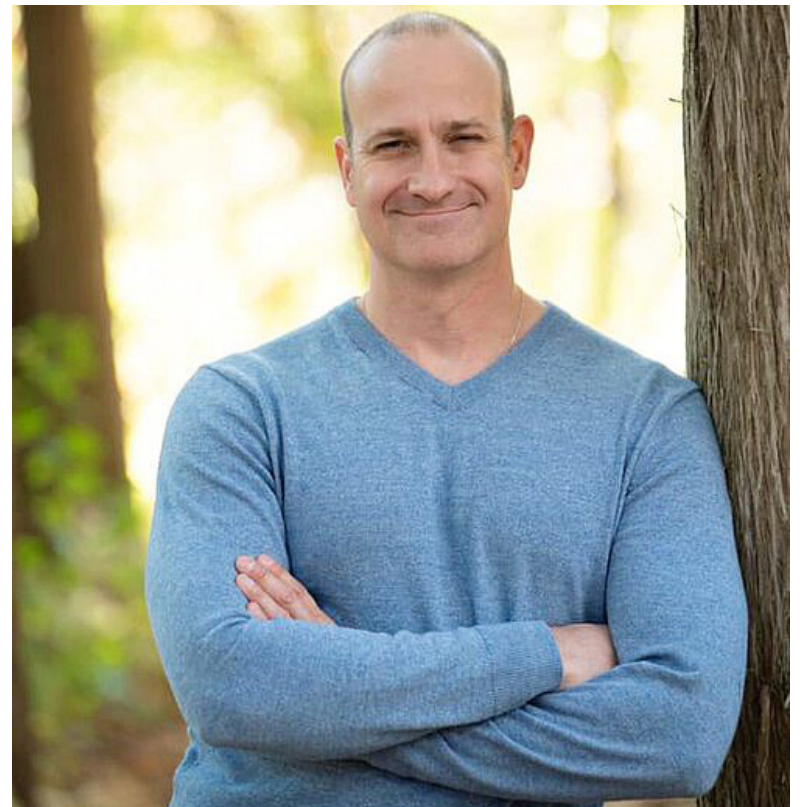
"When a lot of things that are causing stress are out of our control, it's a common mental habit to think there's nothing we can control, which is wrong," he says.

Ask yourself this question: 'What part of this situation can I control?' with an emphasis on the word 'part' because you can't control the lockdown, but you can control part of your experience. "Start to use your creativity with what part you could control," he says. That might be reaching an agreement with your colleagues to not send or respond to emails during a specified time period in order to protect one another's need to recharge.

### PRIORITIZE WELL-BEING

The second part of the strategy is about taking care of both your physical well-being and your mental and emotional well-being. Most people know the benefits of getting a good night's sleep, eating healthfully, drinking water and exercising regularly. "The trick is to do the things you know you should do when you're tired and unmotivated," says Calvert.

The solution? Make the action simple to do. If you want to drink more water, have water at your desk so you don't have to get up to get it.



Take "joy breaks" throughout the day for your own mental well-being, author CJ Calvert recommends. **SUPPLIED**

If you want to exercise more, make it short and as enjoyable as possible, such as turning on a favourite song, closing the door and dancing for three minutes.

"It's far more powerful if you make it a daily habit," says Calvert. "Pick the same time, the same exercise and keep it really simple to do."

When it comes to looking after your mental well-being, he recommends sprinkling "joy breaks" – short activities like stepping outside to get some fresh air and sunlight, reading, watching a funny video, stretching or deep breathing – throughout your day. He also encourages you to set aside a few hours every week for a favourite hobby, such as gardening, woodworking or hiking, so you have something to look forward to in order to recharge your batteries.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health also recommends reaching out to others rather than withdrawing, which contributes to feelings of hopelessness and depression. Try to find something in your work that you feel is interesting and helps you gain more of a purpose and value.

## Signs, symptoms of career burnout

If you're burnt out from work, you might feel drained and tired most of the time and may be experiencing physical symptoms like backaches and headaches. You might have trouble sleeping and start to become reclusive. You may have difficulty getting things done and may even feel like calling in sick to work more often than you should. Your confidence may be affected.

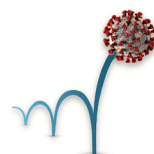
Stress and burnout may be related, but there are differences in how they manifest. Generally, someone who is stressed tends to be over-reactive and hyperactive, whereas burnout presents more as disengagement and produces a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, with loss of motivation and hope. It can also lead to depression and detachment.

Seek professional help if burnout has morphed into a mental disorder such as a mood or anxiety disorder.

Source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

### BOUNCING BACK Through COVID-19

Overcoming Burnout A Year into the Pandemic



**CJ CALVERT**  
Author of *Living an Exceptional LIFE*