**Making People Count: a workforce bulletin**

**January 2025**

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# People Management

## When there’s only one way from peak performance

**Source:** Journal of Organizational Behaviour

**In a nutshell:** Even a team as remarkable as Manchester City have been can’t always perform at their peak all the time – even the most-exceptional players crash into their psychological and physical limits eventually. So are demands for 110% every day psychologically, as well as mathematically, nonsensical? In this study a team of researchers, led by Lieke L. ten Bummelhuis, from Simon Fraser University in Canada, investigated. They studied “67 employee-coworker dyads,” over 276 days. They found that working more hours in a day improved performance on the day itself but reduced performance the day after as – although people had the same amount of energy – they slept less and were less resilient. So, rather like [Aesop’s tortoise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tortoise_and_the_Hare) pacing yourself might turn out to be the best strategy after all.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2847>

## Ambiguity and satisfaction

**Source:** The International Journal of Human Resource Management

**In a nutshell:** “I thought you were packing it,” is a scenario common to many married couples culminating in anything from a repeat journey from Llandudno to Conwy and back again (this time with the sun cream) to a dash home so we don’t have to eat soup at the allotment with our bare hands. Not knowing what is expected of you at work is known as task ambiguity; something investigated in this study by a team of researchers, led by Arabella Mühl from the University of Vienna. They studied 795 remote workers over the course of the Covid Pandemic. They found that task ambiguity was source of stress for remote workers and affected how satisfied they were with their work relationships. The remote workers dealt with task ambiguity by clarifying what was expected of them with other people; a process which improved their satisfaction with their work relationships.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2439264>

## Hybrid working and organizational culture. Rancid or Raphael?

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** Organizational culture can range from the exciting fungal discoveries made when someone decides to clean out the kitchen fridge for the first time since the Pandemic to the corporate equivalent of [Raphael’s Transfiguration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfiguration_%28Raphael%29). But how does the presence of a large number of hybrid workers affect it? Gary Cookson has just written a book on it – [*Making Hybrid Working Work*](https://www.koganpage.com/hr-learning-development/making-hybrid-working-work-9781398619326)– and outlines some of the key points in this article. He argues that many employees don’t see the point of being onsite when most of their work can be done remotely. Many experts argue that remote working doesn’t kill culture – it simply reveals it; showing which areas are working, which are not, and where things need to improve. Employers need to focus on what happens at the office that can’t happen remotely focusing on in-person collaboration, opportunities for socialising, and other things that can be difficult to do remotely. Hybrid working can accentuate silos so one option might be to site workers from different teams together when they come into the office. Recent research from Leeds University found that 60% of tasks done in the office were “solo,” work with only 20% actually requiring interaction with somebody else. The Leeds researchers found that working onsite did improve connections and build a stronger social network, but only for people whose jobs required it. For remote workers virtual check-ins and team bonding can help with this. One approach is to organize collaborative work for when people are on site although “many organisations and employees report that onsite working is harmful to productivity if people spend most of their time collaborating, socialising, mentoring and more.”

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/hybrid-working-culture/>

## Bosses’ pet or the petrol station?

**Source:** Personnel Review

**In a nutshell:** In the same way favouritism at work can sound attractive for those benefiting from it, it can leave the rest of the workforce a bit miffed. In this study a team of researchers, led by Sovanjeet Mishra, from the Jaipuria Institute of Management, investigated the links between workplace favouritism and employees holding down more than one job. The researchers studied 251 workers in North India and found that there was a “positive and significant association,” between workplace favouritism and employees’ desire(s) to hold down more than one job. Workplace favouritism led to an increased sense of job insecurity and a feeling that the psychological contract between worker and employer had been broken which made it more likely people would think about additional sources of employment.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-06-2024-0601>

## The beautiful game or park the bus?

**Source:** Journal of Organizational Behaviour

**In a nutshell:** Football managers tend to divide into two camps. The pragmatists are happy to sneak a 1-0 win, catching teams on the break and “parking the bus,” with ten men behind the ball thereafter – see Gareth Southgate, Jose Mourinho, and Sam Allardyce among others. The aesthetes on the other hand, preach the beautiful game with flowing football, and teams playing out from the back even if it leads to a 6-5 defeat – see Pep Guardiola, Ange Postocoglou and Russell Martin. In management terms the former is known as prevention focus – avoiding bad things happening – whereas the latter is known as promotion focus (actively seeking out good things). In this study a team of researchers, led by Onne Janssen from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, attempted to see which approach generated the most creativity. They found that leaders who set “maximal goals,” – emphasizing gains, advancement, and aspirations – significantly enhanced their followers’ creativity by “boosting their promotion focus and intrinsic motivation for creativity.” However, leaders who set minimal goals – emphasizing loss avoidance, security, and duty fulfilment – tended to suppress creativity among their followers due to “an increased prevention focus and a propensity to conform to the leader’s directives. How this translates to a wet Tuesday night in Stoke with the big number five going up for a corner is anybody’s guess.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2853>

## Does Lean come up with the goods?

**Source:** Journal of Health Organization and Management

**In a nutshell:** Does Lean (the Japanese management method which attempts to eliminate waste and unnecessary work) come up with the goods for employees? In this study a team of researchers, led by Mustafa Nal, from Kutahya Health Sciences University in Turkey, attempted to find out in a study of 1,207 Turkish health workers. They found that Lean leadership reduced people’s perceived workload and led to increased job satisfaction. There was also a sequential effect in which Lean leadership’s reduction of perceived workload led to increased job satisfaction.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-08-2024-0330>

## Quashing quiet quitting

**Source:** Human Resource Management

**In a nutshell:** In this study, *Silencing quiet quitting: crafting a symphony of high-performance work systems and psychological conditions* a team of researchers, led by Promila Agarwal, from the Indian Institute of Management, investigated how managers can strike up a sweet tune from the instruments at their disposal. 422 people took part in the study which found that [high performance work systems](https://www.rostoneopex.com/blog/what-is-a-high-performance-work-system), psychological meaningfulness, and psychological availability each reduced the amount of [quiet quitting](https://www.investopedia.com/what-is-quiet-quitting-6743910) on the part of employees. High-performance work systems led to more psychological meaningfulness and availability, which, in turn, led to less quiet quitting.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22275>

## Is there a downside to high-performance work systems?

**Source:** Personnel Review

**In a nutshell:** Also looking into high-performance work systems were a team of researchers, led by Jiawei Yu, from the National University of Malaysia. They found that high-performance work systems could cause psychological strain which, in turn, led to emotional exhaustion. However having a good relationship with your supervisor – leader-member exchange – reduced the likelihood of employees feeling psychological strain, therefore reducing emotional exhaustion.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-06-2024-0541>

## Hiding or sharing?

**Source:** The International Journal of Human Resource Management

**In a nutshell:** “We haven’t had any toilet paper since Jean left. She was the only one who knew how to order it,” might stimulate newspaper sales at the hospital shop but could also be regarded as a somewhat sub-optimal way of going about things. There are any number of reasons why people don’t share knowledge: spite, thoughtlessness, inability to envisage life going on without them, or just never quite getting round to it. In this study Muhammad Shujahat, from the University of Essex, led a team of researchers investigating some of the issues. They found that job demands encouraged knowledge hiding, whereas job resources reduced it.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2442081>

## Going astray on the plateau

**Source:** Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology

**In a nutshell:** Walking the northern part of the South-West Coast Path the most laborious section was not the cliffs of Exmoor, or the ascent and descent of [Great Hangman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hangman_cliffs), but the seemingly interminable trudge through the flat terrain of [Braunton Burrows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Braunton_Burrows) where the nature on display did little to compensate for the topographical monotony of the landscape. In much the same way reaching a career plateau can be far less motivating than the ups and down associated with more dramatic phases of one’s working life. In this study Jun Zhao, from Zhongan University of Economics and Law in China, led a team of researchers studying career plateaus in 244 people from 58 different work teams. At an individual level “job content,” plateaux were associated with counterproductive work behaviour, but this relationship was weakened if people had been allowed to craft (modify to their own interests) the job. At a team level hierarchical plateaux were associated with team counterproductive work behaviour via the team becoming alienated but this effect was ameliorated by teams being able to take part in decision-making.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.70003>

## But is a mid-career crisis a middle-class luxury anyway?

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** Is moaning about work really a middle-class luxury? Well, partly, yes; at least according to new research, led by Ying Zhou, from the University of Surrey. The researchers found “that highly skilled workers, such as managers or professionals including lawyers and accountants, had a higher probability of experiencing a “mid-career crisis” or a period of low job satisfaction,” than lower-skilled workers in the same age group. The study used data from more than 100,000 workers and found that mid-career turbulence could stem from more middle-class workers having higher expectations of their career. For middle-class workers career satisfaction had its nadir when they reached their forties.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/skilled-workers-most-likely-to-have-career-crises/>

## How do people cope with illegitimate work?

**Source:** Personnel Review

**In a nutshell:** The phrase “any other duties as appropriate,” can cover any number of eventualities from handing out meat pies from the back of a van to escorting furniture deliverers round a hospital or carrying a display board and some posters on a bus to a leisure centre in Winsford; and that’s just one NHS librarian. Some work can be deemed to be more appropriate than others though, and that which is seen to be as far from the range of justified expectations as the [Kuiper Belt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuiper_belt) is from the centre of the Solar System is known as illegitimate work. In this study a team of researchers, led by Bao Cheng, from South-Western University of Finance and Economics in China, investigated it in a study of 313 workers from 20 different enterprises. They found that workers who were high in general self-efficacy used problem-focused coping and improved their “adaptive performance,” in handling illegitimate tasks. However, those who were lower in self-efficacy relied on emotion-focused coping leading to lower levels of adaptive performance.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-06-2024-0583>

## When ethics meets Machiavellianism

**Source:** Personnel Review

**In a nutshell:** In this study Promila Agarwal, from the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad and Arup Varma from Loyola University in Chicago, investigated what happens when ethical leadership and ethics-oriented human-resource management clash with [Machiavellians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machiavellianism_%28psychology%29) in the workplace. They studied 364 workers and found that whereas ethics-oriented human-resource management *did* moderate the relationship between Machiavellianism and unethical behaviour, ethical leadership did not. In other words, whilst you can still adopt the Paddington approach to leadership, it’s a good idea to have a few P45s tucked away along with the marmalade sandwiches.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2024-0481>

## When Sergeant Wilson trumps Captain Mainwaring

**Source:** Personnel Review

**In a nutshell:** Viewed objectively there’s no reason on earth for Cristiano Ronaldo to be humble. He’s fought his way up from difficult beginnings to become one of the greatest footballers the world has ever seen, and won nearly every major honour in the game. Most of the rest of us, of course, have plenty to be humble and self-deprecating about, including those in positions of leadership. In this study Songbo Liu and Xi Wang, from Renmin University in China, investigated the effect of self-deprecating leadership on subordinates’ ability to learn from failure. They studied 342 people, working in 61 different teams and found that leaders with self-deprecating humour created more “task reflexivity,” which, in turn, led to subordinates learning more from failure. This relationship was stronger when the match between the values of the leaders and their subordinates was closer.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2023-0901>

## Surface acting and slippery slopes

**Source:** Journal of Organizational Behaviour

**In a nutshell:** Though not the most gymnastically gifted I feel I would be a useful addition to the Team GB gymnastics squad should eye-rolling be added to the list of events alongside the pommel horse, parallel bars, and floor exercises. Certainly when people walk into the office at 4:25 on a Friday afternoon asking if I’ve got time to do a training session. Not rolling your eyes in this situation is known as surface acting (better) and not even feeling like rolling them is termed deep acting (best). In this study a team of researchers, led by Gordon M. Sayre, from Emlyon Business School in France, examined why people choose surface acting over deep acting when the former tires you out more in the long run. They concluded that this was because surface acting cost fewer resources in the short-term but ran the risk of leading to a downward spiral with each instance of surface acting making people more tired, leading them to do more surface acting in the future. However “low-effort activities like relaxing after work allowed employees to slow the loss spirals from surface acting.”

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2859>

## When a little trust goes a long way

**Source:** Journal of Health Organization and Management

**In a nutshell:** Accosting a shifty-looking man in a suit hanging around outside the office and greeting them with a rather too assertive “Hello. Can I help you?” only for them to turn out to be the Chief Exec popping down for a cosy chat is the stuff of nightmares. But does trust in management have a beneficial effect on the ground? That was what [Decha Dechawatanapaisal](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Decha%20Dechawatanapaisal), from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand investigated in this study. Decha Dechawatanapaisal found that trust in management and shared vision led to a feeling that the values of managers and workers were in line, which, in turn, led to greater work engagement. This effect was greater when employees were more resilient.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-09-2024-0367>

## Over-qualified and under helpful?

**Source:** Journal of Health Organization and Management

**In a nutshell:** With universities churning out more and more graduates, increasing numbers of young people are finding out the hard way that a BA in Politics doesn’t necessarily equip you for dispensing the 482 different options available from the average coffee shop. Far better, perhaps, to get the baristas to run the country instead. But what effect does overqualification have when it comes to nursing? That was what a team of researchers, led by Anna Bochoridou, from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, investigated in this study. They found that “nurses’ perceived overqualification affects their silence toward patient safety, which in turn leads to reduced levels of service behaviour.” However, this relationship only held true when the level of praise from patients was low.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-12-2023-0366>

## Gossip, guilt, and goodness

**Source:** Personnel Review

**In a nutshell:** In this study Hongdan Zhao and Yunshou Ma from Shanghai University studied the paradoxical benefits of negative gossip in a sample of 394 Chinese workers. They found that negative gossip reinforced the gossipers own moral self-image (“We’re good people who would never do that”) but also created a sense of guilt, both of which led to an increase in helping behaviour.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2024-0316>

# Recruitment

## Job interviews. When some robots are better than others

**Source:** The International Journal of Human Resource Management

**In a nutshell:** Giving robots “personalities,” can be a tricky business. [C3PO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-3PO), for instance, turned out to be a latter-day Jeeves, whereas [Marvin the Paranoid Android](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvin_the_Paranoid_Android) lapsed into depression. In this study a team of researchers, led by Céline Clavel, from Paris-Saclay University, investigated the difference between candidate’s experiences of being interviewed by two different types of AI robots. One type had been programmed to try and achieve more intimacy with the candidates whereas the other had not. 94 people took part in the study which found that the robots programmed to exhibit a “multimodal expression of intimacy behaviours,” led to reciprocal intimacy and a “positive user experience.”

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2440784>

## Disabled workers. This Wheel’s On Fire or Stuck in the Middle with You?

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** It would be hard to think of a more successful disabled person than Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson with enough Paralympic medals to send prices soaring on the London Metal Exchange, and a well-deserved place in the House of Lords for her contributions to civil society after her athletics career. Yet her Twitter feed is a constant stream of humiliation and distress as she’s left behind by buses, forced to crawl off trains, and stranded on the wrong side of platforms. “Do better Britain,” might be the logical conclusion to all these unfortunate events but does life get any better for people in wheelchairs once they arrive at the office? UK mobility retailer CareCo has been looking into this issue and found that many workplaces are inaccessible, failing to provide ramps or lifts for wheelchair users. Many offices have very few parking spaces with an even smaller number set aside for disabled people. Those with mobility issues were “often treated differently or believed to be not as capable as others,” and inflexible working hours (which, apart from anything else allows disabled people to avoid the rush hour) were also seen as a barrier to employment.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/research-highlights-barriers-to-work-for-people-with-mobility-needs/>

## Frozen eggs. When why is the most important question

**Source:** The International Journal of Human Resource Management

**In a nutshell:** One of the more unusual perks offered by some organizations is the removal of women’s eggs so they can start a family when they meet the right person/finish the fourth-quarter corporate strategy. But does this really work to attract people? In this study a team of researchers, led by Andrew Keyes from California State University, attempted to find out. They found that if an organization was described as supportive an offer of egg-freezing was attractive, whereas if an organization was described as competitive the offer was off-putting as people thought it was a sign that the organization would exploit them.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2440773>

## Does the skills gap start at Watford Gap?

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** The Learning and Work Institute has just releases a new report – [*Worlds Apart*](https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/worlds-apart/)– which claims that the UK has larger skills gaps between different areas of the country than most other nations in Europe. Two-thirds of Londoners, for example, have a degree, compared to just a third in Greater Lincolnshire. In the West Midlands 27% have no GCSEs, compared to only 9% in West London. Learning and Work forecast that by 2035 71% of Londoners could have a higher-education qualification, compared to only 29% in Hull and East Yorkshire. However, even when people in lower-skilled areas do graduate they often move to a small number of cities such as London, Leeds, Bristol, and Brighton. The Government is planning on publishing a post-16 skills strategy and on reforming the apprenticeship levy but if you want to escape soya lattes, vegan chocolate, and Guardian readers you might still have a few years to move to Hull while property prices are still cheap.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/regional-skills-gaps-learning-and-work-institute-worlds-apart-report/>

## Blissful in Barnes but broke in Burnley

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** As a keen reader of *Country Life* I often find myself fantasizing about rectories in Hampshire, or estates in the Cairngorms where a day’s deer-stalking can be followed by a night in front of a roaring log fire and a few frames in the billiard room. Those capable of acquiring such properties seem a different breed – species even – to the threadbare librarian gingerly cycling around the potholes on the B5076 every morning. The [Centre for Cities](https://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Cities-Outlook-2025.pdf) thinktank have been examining gaps in wages between different parts of the country. They found that average annual salaries in London were nearly £20,000 higher than in the places with the lowest pay such as Burnley, Huddersfield, and Middlesbrough. In fact, only seven places outside London and the South East had salaries above the national average: Leeds, Warrington, Derby, Swindon, Bristol, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh. “Places with the highest pay such as London and Cambridge have more than twice as many cutting-edge firms and three times as many cutting-edge jobs – in sectors like biotech and AI – as low-pay towns and cities such as Burnley, Huddersfield and Middlesbrough.” However, half of the 10 places with the highest average wages also ranked in the 10 least-affordable housing markets. The top five cities for highest wages were: London; Slough; Crawley; Reading; and Cambridge. The bottom five were: Burnley; Huddersfield; Exeter; Middlesbrough; and Doncaster.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/regional-inequality-centre-for-cities-2025/>

## Turning out talented. Is it farewell or work well?

**Source:** Human Resource Management

**In a nutshell:** For a footballer being identified as talented can lead either to dialling it in as you try not to get injured before your big money move to Real Madrid, or being praised for your loyalty whilst having a trophy cabinet as empty as interstellar space (see Harry Kane and [Matt Le Tissier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Le_Tissier)). But how does it affect those of us plugging away at more humdrum professions? That was what Anna Sender from Lucerne University, and Marion Eberly, from the University of Washington Tacoma, attempted to find out in this study. The researchers studied 352 workers over two years, 45 of whom had been identified as “talents.” The researchers found that the talents had “lower workgroup identification than their non-talent peers, but [that] this did not lead to higher turnover intention.” Talents with low workgroup identification *and* low embeddedness did have a higher turnover intention, whereas those with high embeddedness were no less likely to leave than the non-talented.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22279>

## Is recruitment becoming an uphill struggle?

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** LinkedIn found that 61% of UK workers intend to look for new roles in 2025, but that over half (54%) of job-seekers and nearly four-fifths (79%) of HR professionals think that the hiring process has become more difficult. 41% of candidates say they are applying for more jobs than ever, but that they are not hearing back from employers as much. However, 42% of HR professionals say that fewer than half of applicants meet the role requirements, and 23% say that they spend three-to-five hours daily looking at applications. HR professionals said that their top challenges were finding people with the right technical skills (49%) and soft skills (42%).

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/hiring-challenges-reported-as-applicant-numbers-grow/>

# Wellbeing

## Do physical jerks make you happy at work?

**Source:** Journal of Happiness Studies

**In a nutshell:** Having cycled to work, arriving often cold, and frequently damp, I’m not wild about the prospect of doing PE once I get there – replete as it is with memories of lost socks, towel-whipping, and socially-awkward showers. Those who either drove in, or loved PE – possibly both – are keener on the whole idea though and in this study a team of researchers, led by Anne Courbalay, from the Institut de Formation en Education Physique et en sport d’Angers in France, led a team of researchers investigating the effects of a physical activity programme at work. 111 people took part in the study. 54 did the exercise programme and 57 formed a control group. The group which took part in the exercise programme showed increases in their “general affective wellbeing,” and had significantly higher “momentary positive affective states,” with significant decreases in “momentary negative affect.”

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-021-00489-9>

## Don’t make a crisis out of your DRAMMA

**Source:** Journal of Happiness Studies

**In a nutshell:** If, as Shakespeare maintained “all the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players,” then some people tend towards the Jim Carrey end of proceedings – “oh my God, somebody’s used the last of the milk up,” – whereas others are more like Roger Moore “bit of bad news I’m afraid old chap, my mother’s died.” Never one to leave a good acronym unused, psychologists have now inserted more DRAMMA into proceedings; this time as an abbreviation for detachment, relaxation, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation – six psychological needs for “optimal functioning.” In this study Miika Kujanpää [sic] from Tampere University in Finland, led a team of researchers investigating how the DRAMMA model played out, so to speak, at work. The researchers found that relaxation, detachment, autonomy, and mastery had the most consistent effects on optimal functioning.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-020-00247-3>

## When happiness spills over

**Source:** Journal of Happiness Studies

**In a nutshell:** In this study Piotr Bialowolski and Dorota Weziak-Bialowolska, from Harvard University, investigated the links between life satisfaction and work satisfaction in a study of 216,573 people. They found that life satisfaction and job satisfaction were positively and reciprocally related but that life satisfaction influenced job satisfaction more than job satisfaction influenced life satisfaction.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-020-00273-1>

## Charging up, or caving in?

**Source:** Journal of Happiness Studies

**In a nutshell:** “How do you stop a rhino from charging?” goes the pick of the jokes my eight-year-old daughter recently treated us to; “Unplug it!” People are – at least notionally – more complex than rhinoceroses though, and in this study Eva Garrosa, from the Autonomous University of Madrid, led a team of researchers investigating people’s recharging after work. 117 service-sector workers took part in the study which found that work incivility was a “predictor of daily emotional exhaustion.” Optimism increased employees’ energy, and decreased emotional exhaustion and negative affect at night. Optimism also reduced the damage work incivility did to employees’ positive mood at night. Psychological detachment from work predicted increased energy at night and reduced the negative effects of role stress and work incivility. Relaxation was found to reduce emotional exhaustion and increase positive mood in the evening.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-022-00570-x>

## How a stitch in time saves nine months off with depression

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** Lots of us are teetering on the edge one way or another but it’s only when we fall off completely that we get any attention. But is there a different approach when it comes to mental health at work? In this article Stuart Cheesman, from employee-recognition specialist O.C. Tanner argues there is. Whilst managers often use specialized services such as employee-assistance programmes and mental-health first-aiders they fail to tackle issues such as: insensitive managers; conflict within teams; not being allowed to switch off; and feeling unappreciated. The first step is to try and understand how workers are feeling at present by asking them whether they’re happy with how they’re being managed; whether they get on with their teammates; whether they feel the organization cares for their wellbeing; and whether they feel a valued member of the team. Most employees want to feel their work has meaning and contributes to an over-arching purpose, and most want to have opportunities to grow, both personally and professionally. Oher elements that foster a thriving culture include: a modern leadership approach; a focus on wellbeing; and frequent and meaningful recognition.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/tackling-mental-health-with-a-culture-first-strategy/>

## Working parents feel the strain

**Source:** Personnel Today

**In a nutshell:** A new survey, from community and workplace nursery provider, Bright Horizons, has found that 29% of working parents feel very stressed (32% of women, and 26% of men). Only 18% reported very low stress and eight out of 10 of those reporting high levels of stress said it made it hard for them to focus at work. The figures had got worse since a similar survey at the beginning of 2024. 65% of men, and 62% of women said that they had experienced a childcare breakdown affecting their work, whilst for those whose responsibilities included looking after adults 79% of men and 80% of women were affected. People reported a drop in employers’ flexibility and an increase in the number of people saying their role or employer did not allow flexible working. The most popular forms of flexible working were flexitime and a flexible working location.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/working-parents-stress-modern-families-index-2025-bright-horizons/>