

A third of employees in SA have quit their job because of their boss

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CareerJunction released its latest research highlighting the strain between South African workers and their bosses. The survey explored the relationship between workers and their direct line managers and the impact (positive or negative) this has on their work and personal lives.



While people want to be able to turn to their managers for help, guidance, career growth and motivation, it turns out that many South Africans have unhealthy relationships with their bosses, which is having a detrimental effect on work morale and productivity as well as employees' personal lives.

"My boss is very autocratic and is reluctant to change and involve others in the decision-making process. He fails to create harmony in the workplace."

Trust and approachability seem to be obstacles and big contributing factors toward so many quitting their jobs as a direct result of skewed relationships with their boss. The majority of respondents said that they don't trust their boss and roughly half said they feel confident about approaching their boss with work difficulties.

"I resigned from my previous job because of the owner that handled people like trash. I didn't want to leave, and I loved my work, but he never gave me leave or cared about my well-being after everything I did for his business."

Playing fair

The most unacceptable behaviour cited was managers who played favouritism (44%) and took credit for work that was not their own (13%). Over a third of managers requested that employees work overtime without pay, 30% denied them a pay rise and 25% unexpectedly denied a worker's holiday/leave.

Not dealing with work or personal issues has its consequences, so it is no surprise that 27% of employees say they have nightmares, 18% seek mental health support and 12% drink heavily because of their boss's behaviour.

It also might explain why over 50% of employees never want to socialise with their boss.

"Very greedy, steals sales and takes credit for other people's ideas. Loves playing mind games and playing people

against each other. His way or the highway.”

Work vs life

Over 55% said that they would never invite their manager to a personal life event such as a wedding or birthday party. Only 9.3% said that they would. For those who said they would invite their boss, a wedding came out tops at 64%. The reason? 40.8% said they liked their manager on a personal level.

“He loves to swear at people, is a bit short-tempered and he is always right even when he is wrong. We call him Mr Always Right.”

Only 16% reported that they were friends with their boss with nearly half saying they would actively avoid their boss outside of work. The majority said they wouldn't discuss their personal lives with their boss.

Only 11% rated their bosses' character as “awesome”.

Career development

58% of respondents said that they would never follow their current boss to a new company. This comes as no surprise as employees have no faith in their manager's competencies or character. Only 13% thought their boss had the perfect competencies to do their job well.

“Incompetent, lacks management skills, absolutely no vision, no planning skills, cannot delegate or structure.”

Despite issues with their managers, most respondents have career aspirations to become managers themselves one day. Better pay could be the main motivator. 93% of respondents said that they would accept a job offer even though it involved people management responsibilities. 24% said that they were more than likely to apply if management of people was involved. Only 3% said they would not apply for jobs where managing people was a requirement.

Top fixes ranked

When asked to rank the top five important practical things that a manager can do to enable a good working relationship with employers, the results were pretty clear.

1. Provide clear performance/objective indicators.
2. Provide specific feedback about my work.
3. Create a learning/development programme.
4. Have a clear job description.
5. One-on-one meetings.

“Yes, we are friends, but I also know that I work for her and that I need to keep up my performance. I feel that if bosses or managers just remember that their employees are people too and trying to improve their lives, a lot more employees will be happier.”

Conclusion

It's not all bad news for local managers. A serendipitous insight revealed by the survey was that managers can take solace in the fact that workers agreed that being a boss is stressful (73%) and also admitted that their managers acknowledged their hard work as employees (61%).

It remains a painful truth that managers need to up their game in terms of looking after their staff if they wish to retain them.

Over 3,000 responses were collected from this survey. Learn more about [CareerJunction here](#).

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