

'Great Disconnection' poll: almost two-thirds of Irish workers "disengaged"

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An alarming 63% of employees reportedly feel disengaged from their workplace – amidst companies "struggling to form a post-pandemic work culture which is fit for a hybrid world", according to recruitment specialists, Robert Walters.

The findings suggest that Ireland is facing a 'Disengagement Crisis' with almost half of white-collar workers claiming that their workplace has become "unrecognisable" in the past 12 months, Robert Walters says.

High staff turnover (54%), less people coming into the office (49%), and a subsequent decline in team socials (43%) being the main drivers, it says.

Alongside these findings, Robert Walters found that "a gloomy economic outlook" was held by 32% of respondents, while the appeal of moving abroad (28%) is causing employees to disconnect from the workplace – investing less of their personal selves and opting to simply 'get their head down' and 'the work done.'

"NOT CUTTING IT"

Suzanne Feeney, Country Manager of Robert Walters Ireland, said she was "somewhat surprised to see the findings", especially given the investment made by employers into workplace culture over the past 3-5 years, "as well as the more recent focus on luring workers back into the office".

"What is apparent here is the traditional tactics used to build a lively, inclusive, and social workplace culture are simply not cutting it. The hybrid-working world and subsequent decline in office attendance is having a detrimental impact on employee engagement and companies must act fast to keep employees engaged and attract the best professionals," she asserted.

The consultants say that disengaged employees present an issue not only to Ireland, but to the global community: "Recent statistics from Gallup show disengaged workers are costing the global economy \$7.8 trillion in lost productivity. Also released was the global average of worker engagement which stands at 20%, a figure Ireland trails behind at 13%."

COUNTER-OFFERS RIFE

Both employment and foreign investment in Ireland are at record highs, but the poll finds that employers are “still nervous about losing employees and offering disengaged employees pay hikes in order to retain them”.

Ms Feeney said that despite many employers giving “midyear pay reviews to increase engagement and retention, this really is a short-term remedy”.

She said that much greater focus needs to be given to the wider topic of employee engagement, which “should no longer be considered as a ‘buzz word’ or an intangible, immeasurable HR concept that is a ‘nice to have’.”

“Employee engagement is a key driver of motivation, commitment and productivity in the workplace – in a business sense employers need to appreciate that it really does impact the bottom line,” she added.