

EMPLOYER NEWS 2021

PERRIAM & PARTNERS

ISSUE 25

February 2021



SIX TRAPS ROBBING US OF SPARE TIME

There's an 80 per cent chance you're experiencing "time poverty" so severe it's likely having, at best, some negative impact in your life and, at worst, a number of debilitating consequences.

That's among a series of findings published in *Time Smart*, a new book by Assistant Professor Ashley Whillans, a behavioural scientist at Harvard Business School who combined her latest research with the most recent global studies to conclude "time poverty is at an all-time high".

Let's look at a few of those empirically proven consequences that emerge when people are "always rushed" with "too many things to do and not enough time to do them", beginning with happiness which markedly falls in tandem with productivity. People end up feeling so stressed and so pressed for time they sacrifice exercise and consume easy-to-access (i.e. fattier) food, leading to higher rates of disease and other health complications that predictably ensue.

Without listing every statistic the scholar has detailed, there's merit drawing attention to one that truly encapsulates this phenomenon which is that one in every five employees calls in sick not because they're genuinely sick (and not because they're faking it) but because they're too overwhelmed with everything they have to do.

Or, rather, everything they "feel" they have to do, which leads to the six most common "time traps" from which "no one is immune ... If you're worried this is some kind of first-world problem and that you should just suck it up and deal with it, don't."

The first is technology. The devices meant to save us time by granting us greater control over when we work have had the opposite effect, compelling us to work more than ever since "we carry the office in our back pockets". The leisure periods we used to enjoy are now frequently interrupted by what's known as "time confetti" – lots of little interruptions that appear harmless but cumulatively scatter us, leaving us feeling "even more time impoverished than we actually are".

The second time trap is our cultural obsession with money. We associate the accumulation of wealth with an investment of time when that's "the wrong solution". Scientific evidence conclusively reveals "as wealth increases, so do our feelings of time poverty", which is linked to the third trap – we undervalue time – since the hours we spend looking for a bargain are hours that may have been better spent on activities that don't induce "fatigue and stress".

Busyness is the fourth culprit. For many of us, our career is fundamental to our identity. It's our purpose, generally more so than hobbies, passions, family and friends. Being busy has become a status symbol. It makes us "feel good about ourselves" and so we flaunt our excessive (though not necessarily productive) workhours to our social circle expecting our busyness to impress.

The fifth time trap is we simply dislike doing nothing. In one study, participants preferred to give themselves electric shocks than sit quietly with their thoughts. Out of desperation to combat such idleness, we resort to our smartphones, scrolling mindlessly to avoid sitting mindfully.

Overoptimism is to blame for the sixth trap. "We believe, dumbly, that we will have more time tomorrow than we do today," writes Dr Whillans, resulting in an addiction to saying yes even though meeting these unsustainable commitments is usually achievable only by forgoing rest and relaxation.

To resolve the issue of time poverty, the Harvard researcher recommends initially identifying which of the six traps make you most unhappy. That's the easy part. The challenging part is catching yourself before stepping into the trap which is especially tough because time traps by design are "extremely appealing". We habitually want to get caught.

Source: James Adonis, Sydney Morning Herald



THE MINIMUM WAGE IS INCREASING

The government confirmed that the adult minimum wage will increase, from \$18.90 to \$20.00 per hour on 1 April 2021.

The starting-out and training minimum wage rates will also increase on 1 April 2021, from \$15.12 to \$16.00 per hour.

As an employer, you need to ensure your payroll systems and processes are updated.

All employers and employees should also take note of the minimum wage changes, as it sets a new relative benchmark for pay negotiations.

CONTACT US

Perriam & Partners
Unit 4, 35 Sir William Pickering Drive
PO Box 20 222
Christchurch 8543

Tel: 03 358 3108
Fax: 03 358 3120
Email: reception@perriams.co.nz
Visit us on the web: www.perriams.co.nz



CAN SMEs AFFORD TO IGNORE WELLBEING ANY LONGER?**By: Craig Hudson—Xero**

Opinion:

Sometimes it's easy to let things like employee wellbeing fall down the list of priorities when business owners are so focused on business survival. Especially after a year like 2020.

However, business success and positive wellbeing are linked, and the latter should be a priority for businesses big and small. Primarily, because positive staff wellbeing creates a solid foundation to drive better business outcomes like increased productivity, which is one of the most important measurements in business.

Simply put, the New Zealand economy will only recover stronger if businesses prioritise wellbeing as a component of productivity. We know that an emphasis on wellbeing is something Kiwi employees are yearning for.

More than a third (36.4 per cent) actively want more wellbeing support from their employer, and 56 per cent of Kiwi employees would make use of a wellbeing and support programme if it was available at their workplace.

The good news? More and more business owners are coming around to appreciate the significance of wellbeing.

We recently organised independent research on New Zealand business owners to gauge their sentiment about wellbeing in the workplace and 54.7 per cent said they have a responsibility to support it, while 52.2 per cent said all businesses should support mental wellness.

Wellbeing is something business owners are proactively considering for 2021, ranking third among their priorities behind only revenue growth and increasing profitability.

More than a third (35 per cent) say increasing the wellbeing of team members is one of the most important things a business should plan for in 2021, while 22 per cent of business owners intend to invest more than usual in staff wellbeing.

But aside from it being the right thing to do, there are tangible, economic benefits to business owners incorporating wellbeing into their 2021 plans.

Just under half (49.6 per cent) of Kiwi business owners believe in a direct link between the wellbeing of their team and the profitability of their business.

Furthermore, 63.8 per cent say people's work environment influences their personal wellbeing, with a renewed focus on fostering a culture focused on wellbeing, psychological safety and belonging.

The notion of a wellbeing-focused workplace being something for entitled millennials is being replaced by a shift in perspective.

These expectations don't derive from a sense of privilege, but a cultural shift in priorities and values - from a generation growing up seeing the stigma of mental health recede and a growth in pragmatic wellbeing practices.

In fact, only 5.1 per cent of small business owners now believe wellbeing is a fad, while just 2.4 per cent say there is no value to the business to grow staff wellbeing.

The challenge facing Kiwi small business owners is understanding how to implement wellbeing into their business. For example, 10.9 per cent of business owners say they would focus on wellbeing if their business was more profitable, while 5.3 per cent report having no idea how to support their team's wellbeing.

Focusing on wellbeing doesn't require revamping your whole way of doing business, and needn't involve a massive overhaul or cost a lot of time or money. It can be about finding simple ways to build a culture and change attitudes towards talking about wellbeing and asking for help.

It may seem like employee wellbeing isn't the most important thing for your business in 2021 but it needs to be a priority. We spend more time at work than anywhere else, so it's important for workplaces to be a space where people feel valued and supported.

Craig Hudson is managing director of Xero NZ and Pacific Islands.

**CONTACT US**

Perriam & Partners
Unit 4, 35 Sir William Pickering Drive
PO Box 20 222
Christchurch 8543

Tel: 03 358 3108
Fax: 03 358 3120
Email: reception@perriams.co.nz
Visit us on the web: www.perriams.co.nz



WAITANGI DAY 2021**MONDAYISATION FOR WAITANGI DAY**

This year, Waitangi Day falls on a Saturday. This means the holiday is moved to the following Monday, which is Monday 8 February.

**REQUIREMENT TO WORK ON WAITANGI DAY**

If your employee normally works on Waitangi Monday 8 February you can only make the employee work or be available on the Monday 8 February, if:

- the requirement to work on public holidays is written in their employment agreement (contract), or
- there is an availability clause and the employee is paid fairly to be available.

Otherwise, an employee does not have to agree to work or being available during Waitangi Monday.

PAYMENT FOR WORKING A PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Employees must be paid for Waitangi Day, if they normally work on Saturday 6 February or Monday 8 February. If they don't normally work on these particular days, they don't need to be paid for Waitangi Day.

Any employee (including a casual employee) who agrees to work on the Waitangi Saturday must be paid time and a half for all hours they work. Any employee (including a casual employee) who agrees to work on Monday 8 February and has not worked on Saturday 6 February, must be paid time and a half, if Monday is a day that they normally would work. If an employee works on both Waitangi Saturday 6 February and Monday 8 February, they only get paid time and a half for one of the days. (See below).

In addition, if the Waitangi Saturday or Monday falls on a day an employee would normally work on the Saturday or Monday, then the employee who works is also entitled to a paid day off at another time (called an alternative holiday or day in lieu).

Even if an employer closes their business on 6 February and/or 8 February, they still have to pay the employees their entitlements for the public holiday. If the employer closes their business on both days, they cannot make their employees take annual leave on one of the days, unless the employer has given the employee 14 days' notice.

GIVING AN EMPLOYEE WAITANGI DAY ENTITLEMENTS

If an employee normally does not work on Waitangi Saturday, they get the public holiday on the Mondayised Waitangi Monday.

If an employee would normally work on the Waitangi Saturday if it was not a public holiday, then they will get their holiday entitlements on that Saturday.

If an employee does not normally work on the Waitangi Saturday, but works on the Mondayised Waitangi day, then their holiday entitlement is transferred to the Waitangi Monday.

SICK OR BEREAVEMENT LEAVE ON WAITANGI DAY

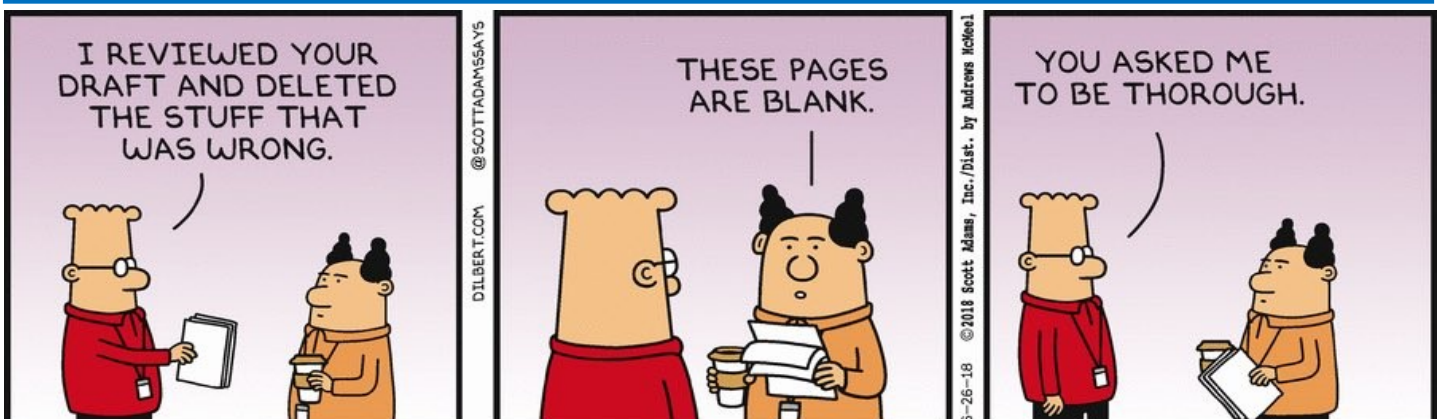
When an employee would have worked on a public holiday but is sick or bereaved, the day is treated as a normal paid public holiday and:

- the employee would be paid their relevant daily pay or average daily pay, but would not be entitled to time and a half or an alternative holiday.
- no sick or bereavement leave is deducted.

WAITANGI DAY AND ANNUAL HOLIDAYS

If the employee is in the middle of their annual holidays during Waitangi Day, and Waitangi Saturday or Monday is a day they normally work, they will get paid for one Waitangi holiday, and this is not deducted from their annual holidays. (See number 4 above – and note this is a must and cannot be contracted out of.)

Source: Employment.govt.nz



HOW TO MAKE NEW STAFF MEMBERS FEEL PART OF THE ORGANISATION

For new employees, those early days in your organisation can be more of a test of survival than a time of growth and development. Often new staff members are thrown into the workplace and expected to succeed with little support and it is no wonder many of them become disillusioned. How newcomers progress depends on many variables, but research shows that the help they receive in the early days from management and colleagues makes all the difference.



BEGIN THE FAMILIARISATION PROCESS IMMEDIATELY

Instigate procedures which will enable new staff members to become familiar with important features of the organisation and its administration. For example, newcomers should:

- Undertake a guided tour of the company, particularly those areas with which they will have most contact, such as the office, staff facilities, reprographics room, storeroom.
- Meet formally and socially with staff colleagues, especially those with whom they will be working closely.
- Read relevant documents, such as staff handbook, policy guidelines, safety instructions, annual reports, and the like.
- Be briefed on procedures, including office or factory routine, record-keeping, assessment, channels of communication, committee structures, and staff development.

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ATMOSPHERE

What is needed are managers and experienced staff members with a commitment to being available to help newcomers as needed. Those who unite to meet the needs of beginners develop in that process structures of collegiality and collaboration that will also serve the organisation in other ways. Foster a warm climate of support.

EXPLAIN THE JOB

Outline the exact work to be done and how the work fits into the overall activities of the workplace. Do not make it sound too difficult at first and don't overburden the new arrival with information and rules. Provide tasks that at first are readily accomplished to ease the recent arrival into the new job.

APPOINT A MENTOR

An experienced employee who is asked to serve as mentor or buddy for the new arrival provides the newcomer with friendship and open access to a colleague's expertise. Consider the support the mentor can provide:

- Teaching the newcomer about the job through coaching, conversations and demonstrations.
- Guiding the newcomer through the unwritten rules of the organisation and in recognising group norms.
- Advising about the quality of expected work and the nuances of company policies and procedures.
- Counselling the newcomer if stressed, lonely or in conflict with others.
- Sponsoring or giving stature to the newcomer in negotiations with others.
- Role modelling by providing an image of the effective professional or worker to which the newcomer can aspire.
- Validating over time the newcomer's goals and aspirations.
- Protecting the new arrival by being a buffer to the hazards of the company.
- Motivating by providing feedback and encouragement.
- Communicating openly with the newcomer so that all the other behaviours can be effective.

SCHEDULE VISITS TO OTHER AREAS OF THE WORKPLACE

Once the employee has established reference points as to what it is like to be a worker in your organisation, then structured visits to other departments can be scheduled to enable the newcomer to observe how experienced employees handle specific issues and tasks.

VISIT THE NEWCOMER'S WORKPLACE REGULARLY

Practical advice from experienced colleagues during the early days is best based on the newcomer's own experience. Therefore, arrange for regular visits with the aim of helping and working alongside, rather than judging or inspecting, the new employee. Give genuine feedback.

PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFIED AREAS OF NEED

Research reveals that beginning employees commonly face similar problems in a new work environment. Work with your newcomers to pinpoint and remediate their specific areas of need, whether they be personal or professional.

MAKE THEM FEEL IMPORTANT

Most newcomers feel uneasy, nervous and out of place at first. Take time to greet them personally on their first day. Show an interest in them. Make them feel the company genuinely needs them. Ask questions and invite questions. Be sincere.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Show interest in the employee's progress through, firstly, formal sessions to review progress and to address concerns and, secondly, through informal discussions in a relaxed setting. Be generous with your comments, supportive, honest and sensitive, and let newcomers know their efforts are appreciated.