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The vast majority of people are happy in there work - they just don't know it!

Research carried out by international experts at the world famous Harvard Business School has discovered that people are far more content when engaged at work, even if they complain about it, than if they had nothing to do.

"People generally like to be occupied and kept busy but they also need to believe that their efforts are appreciated and to enjoy the whole work experience," said Gordon Mowat of Glasgow-based business consultancy Aspire Management Services.

"If people are happy at work and made to feel that the work they do is important then they are far more likely to become totally absorbed by it and therefore more productive.

"No employer wants a workforce that is constantly clock-watching. The idea is to keep people busy without them being stressed out so that time passes quickly and apparently effortlessly".

Mr. Mowat, whose firm coaches a variety of small, medium and large sized companies across Scotland to help them generate sustainable wealth claims that something as simple as having a radio on during the day can generate a relaxing atmosphere conducive to increasing productivity.

"There is a lot of research being carried out at the moment on a concept called flow which is the experience of being engaged in what we are doing, completely immersed in the activity." said Professor Tal Ben-Shahar, a psychology lecturer at Harvard Business School.

"You experience flow when you look at your watch and realise three hours have gone by and you haven't even noticed it or someone calls your name and you don't hear it.

"We've found that people who experience flow are generally happier as well as being more productive and creative. It's been described as a peak experience which meets peak performance. It's what athletes call being in the zone."

Recent studies have found that people are far more likely to experience flow when they are at work than anywhere else.

"The finding suggests that people should be at least as happy if not happier going to work rather than partaking in other activities," said Professor Ben-Shahar.

"Despite experiencing more flow at the workplace than elsewhere people just don't look forward to work. If given the choice between work and leisure time most people choose leisure time.

"It's to do with a negative perception in our culture about what work can give us, we equate work as a chore and leisure with freedom. That produces a perception and we know from a lot of research that perception matters at least as much as the experience itself."

According to Gordon Mowat, who has helped numerous businesses improve productivity and profitability through better management techniques, a happy workforce is a productive one.



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”There has been a considerable amount of research which has shown that employees dissatisfied with their jobs are far more likely to take days off sick,” said Mr. Mowat.

”Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state. People with low job satisfaction are more likely to experience stress, have low self-esteem and suffer from depression leading to long-term health problems.

“Employers need to recognise and tackle job dissatisfaction problems as soon as they arise if they want to save a lot of time and money in the future.

”If people find work boring, repetitive or stressful they are not going to perform at their best. Alternatively if people enjoy their jobs, feel appreciated and included as part of a team they are going to go that extra distance which can make the difference between success and failure for a business,” said Mr. Mowat.

Ends

Gordon JH Mowat CA is Director of Aspire Management Services

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