

# Do Your Employees Hate Their Jobs?

The following is a recent article by CNBC's Kelli Grant. I can't remember the last time we published a complete article like this, but

I thought it was so illuminating that it should be shared... just in case you missed it in the news cycle.

*Just 30 percent of employees are engaged and inspired at work, according to Gallup's 2013 State of the American Workplace Report, which surveyed more than 150,000 full- and part-time workers during 2012. That's up from 28 percent in 2010. The rest ... not so much. A little more than half of workers (52 percent) have a perpetual case of the Mondays—they're present, but not particularly excited about their job. The remaining 18 percent are actively disengaged or, as Gallup CEO Jim Clifton put it in the report, "roam the halls spreading discontent." Worse, Gallup reports, those actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. up to \$550 billion annually in lost productivity.*

No wonder companies have been looking for ways to make workers happier.

*One trend that has taken off is cushy office perks, said management consultant Bob Nelson, author of "1,501 Ways to Reward Employees." For example, Google — which has topped the Fortune and the Great Place to Work Institute's annual list of 100 Best Companies to Work For in four of the past seven years — boasts a roller hockey rink and nap pods, among other amenities, at its Mountain View, Calif., headquarters.*

*Such benefits are attractive, particularly to younger workers. "They're often looking for things they can brag about to their peers," Nelson said. But experts say companies would do better to focus on more intangible benefits. "There's a lot of research out there that says, although it depends on the employee, the perks come out as less important as job satisfaction," said Randy Allen, the associate dean of Cornell University's Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management.*



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*In other words, free massages or beer on tap in the office kitchen don't make up for having a boss who's a jerk, work tasks that aren't stimulating or a role that doesn't allow you to grow.*

*"If you don't have those fundamentals, the perks aren't going to fix it," Allen said. "You may keep them for a while, but at some point they're going to leave."*

*Maybe sooner rather than later. Those perk-hunting millennials only stay at a given job for a little more than a year, Nelson said, versus an average 4.4 years for all workers.*

*Not surprisingly, a pay raise can also help. "Salary is always going to be a big factor," said Allyson Willoughby, general counsel and senior vice president of people for GlassDoor.com. But not by a long shot — in site data, workplace culture is a close second in job satisfaction.*

*A pay raise may still not be enough, in the long term, to keep workers happy if there are underlying problems, Allen said. It's more likely to make a difference for hourly workers who make a low wage than for higher-income workers whose salaries comfortably cover their cost of living, she said.*

*What actually lands many companies high satisfaction ratings and a place on "best workplace" lists is often a culture that encourages workers to voice opinions and work together—and that rewards those efforts, said Willoughby. "These are companies that have figured out a good way to take the pulse of their workforce, and understand what's working and what's not," she said. "They're putting together that whole package that makes people happy."*

*That makes for better perks, too—ones that employees specifically asked for, like flexible working hours, or bonuses that reward productivity. "You're driving the performance that allowed it," Nelson said, "rather than creating a culture of entitlement."*

*There's some indication that bosses are bringing back those kinds of earned perks. Last year, 72 percent of employers awarded incentive bonuses, according to salary data site PayScale.com. In 2010, just 53 percent did so.*

*Companies' policies and training efforts now more often emphasize collaborative management styles and teamwork, said Allen. Hiring managers have also begun focusing more on picking employees who work well with a variety of people, rather than those who just bring a specific skill set to the table.*

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The critical question for you, then, is this; “What specifically have you done, or are you doing, to create a motivating environment in your organization?” If you are a business owner, company president, or for that matter, a team leader, YOU are the key. Unless you are in the role of individual contributor, your attitudes, skills, and knowledge around getting results with and through others makes the difference in whether your employees hate their job.

