

# WORKPLACE DEAL BREAKERS REVEALED

STUDY DEFINES THE LINE BETWEEN ANNOYING AND IRRECONCILABLE FOR U.S. EMPLOYEES

What aspects of work are most likely to get on employees' nerves? More importantly, at what point does it go beyond annoying and into "deal-breaker" territory? If your gut reaction is "it's all about compensation," a recent survey suggests that instinct is wrong. In truth, issues related to advancement and work-life balance elicit the highest emotional response from U.S. employees.

Recently, BambooHR polled more than 1,000 U.S.-based employees to ask why they left previous jobs and rate how annoying various aspects of work are on a scale from "acceptable" to "deal breaker" (1 = acceptable; 2 = somewhat acceptable; 3 = annoying, but tolerable; 4 = considerably annoying; 5 = deal breaker that would make you want to leave). The results show that among the common reasons employees decide to move on, being valued and respected and

maintaining a healthy work-life balance are what matter most.

Managers play a key role in an employee's workplace satisfaction, as not being trusted/empowered by your boss and taking the blame for management's mistakes are two of the leading employee deal breakers, along with workplace inflexibility and required after-hours work. Sure, having a salary that is lower than expected is annoying, but according to the study it doesn't rank as one of the leading irritations. In fact, slights in compensation become increasingly easier to swallow as employees age.

This survey reveals "Tiers of Tolerance" and illustrates that as long as employees' pressing needs are met, they're willing to deal with what they consider to be lesser annoyances.

## KEY RESULTS

The No. 1 reason respondents left their previous job is lack of opportunities for advancement (22 percent).

The top five deal breakers for employees are:

- Your boss doesn't trust/empower you (1 in 4).
- You are expected to work/answer emails on sick days, on vacations and/or after work hours (1 in 4).
- Management "passes the buck" when things don't go as planned (1 in 5).
- Work is not flexible with regard to your family responsibilities (1 in 5).
- You don't get along with your co-workers (1 in 6).

- “You are expected to work/answer emails on sick days, on vacations and/or after works hours” is polarizing, as it is also seen as one of the most acceptable issues (14 percent of respondents marked it as “acceptable”).
  - Men find it more acceptable (1 in 5 men vs. 1 in 10 women), and women see it as more of a deal breaker (1 in 3 women vs. 1 in 5 men).
- Women are more likely to consider “work is not flexible with regard to your family responsibilities” to be an employment deal breaker than men (1 in 4 women vs. 1 in 8 men).
- Complaints related to compensation are highest in the 18–29 age range and steadily decline as employees get older.
  - Conversely, a lack of fringe benefits progressively becomes more of a deal breaker as employees age.
- A positive social atmosphere is important – employees want to get along with their co-workers, but they aren’t looking to be best friends or hang out together on the weekends.
  - While not getting along with your co-workers is one of the leading deal breakers, “Your coworkers don’t interact outside of work” is the most acceptable irritation on the list (more than half of respondents marked it as “acceptable”).
- The age range of 30-44 is disproportionately more annoyed by lack of flexibility when it comes to family responsibilities compared to any other age demographic. These people clearly crave flexibility from an employer.
  - 3 in 4 of those in the 30-44 age range marked “work is not flexible with regard to your family responsibilities” as “considerably annoying” or a deal breaker.
- Manager-level employees accept less flexibility with regard to family responsibilities.
  - 18 percent of managers vs. 27 percent of non-managers marked “You are expected to work/answer emails on sick days, on vacations and/or after works hours” as a deal breaker.
  - 45 percent of managers vs. 52 percent of non-managers marked “Work is not flexible with regard to your family responsibilities” as a deal breaker or considerable annoyance.

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## CONCLUSION

These results illustrate that employees aren’t in it just for the money. They’re in it for the experience— the way a job fits into their lifestyle and meets their social needs. Employers that are aware of, and focus on addressing the issues employees find the most egregious, will have a higher chance of succeeding in attracting and retaining valuable employees.



## ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The June 2014 study collected responses via an online survey from 1,034 U.S.-based individuals who are currently employed, over the age of 18 and located in the U.S. This research was generated by BambooHR.

## ABOUT BAMBOOHR

BambooHR is the leading Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) provider of online HR Software for small and medium businesses that have outgrown spreadsheets. BambooHR’s cloud-based system is an intuitive, affordable way for growing companies to track and manage essential employee information in a personalized Human Resources Information System (HRIS). Now HR managers have more time for meaningful work; executives get accurate, timely reports; and employees can self-serve their time off, using a convenient mobile app. BambooHR’s clients include innovators like Snapchat, SoundCloud, Pinterest, Fab, Freshbooks, Klout, Lyft, Fitbit, and Squarespace, among hundreds of others in over 70 countries worldwide.

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