

CareerBuilder Survey Reveals This Year's Most Outrageous Employee Excuses for Being Late

CHICAGO, Jan. 26, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Are you chronically late for work? The good news is, you're not alone. According to a new CareerBuilder survey, when asked how often they come in late to work, more than 1 in 4 workers (29 percent) admitted they do it at least once a month — up from 25 percent last year — and 16 percent say it's a weekly occurrence for them — up 3 percentage points since last year.

More than 2,600 hiring and human resource managers (of which, more than 2,300 are in the private sector) and more than 3,400 workers across industries participated in the nationwide survey, conducted online by Harris Poll from November 16 and December 6, 2016.

Most Outrageous Excuses for Being Late to Work

Most of the time when people are late, the excuses are pretty common. But other times, the story gets stranger — which can make it harder to believe. When asked about the most outrageous excuses employees have given them for being late, employers shared the following:

- I forgot it wasn't the weekend.
- I put petroleum jelly in my eyes.
- I had to watch a soccer game that was being played in Europe.
- I thought Flag Day was a legal holiday.
- My pet turtle needed to visit the exotic animal clinic.
- The wind blew the deck off my house.
- I overslept because my kids changed all the clocks in the house.
- I was cornered by a moose.
- My mother locked me in the closet.
- The pizza I ordered was late being delivered, and I had to be home to accept/pay for it.
- The sunrise was so beautiful that I had to stop and take it in.
- My mother-in-law wouldn't stop talking.
- My dad offered to make me a grilled cheese sandwich, and I couldn't say no.

Is it OK to be Late?

Some jobs require adherence to a specific schedule in order to maintain quality service levels and precise hours of operation. Other jobs can be successfully performed with very flexible hours. Nearly 2 in 3 employers (64 percent) and employees (64 percent) believe the concept of "working 9 to 5" is an antiquated practice, but more than half of employers (53 percent) expect employees to be on time every day, and 4 in 10 (41 percent) have fired someone for being late.

Some employers are more lenient than others, however. Twenty-nine percent say they have no problem with the occasional late arrival, as long as it doesn't become a pattern (down from 33 percent last year), and 18 percent say they don't need employees to be punctual if they can still get their work done (up from 16 percent last year). To that end, 69 percent of workers who arrive late will stay later to make up for it — up from 62 percent last year.

In general, the usual suspects are to blame for why employees are late to work: Traffic (49 percent), oversleeping (32 percent), bad weather (26 percent), too tired to get out of bed (25 percent) and procrastination (17 percent).

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,605 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, including 2,391 in the private sector) and 3,411 employees ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 16 and December 6, 2016. Percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions. With a pure probability sample of 2,605 and 3,411, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have sampling errors of +/- 1.92 and +/- 1.68 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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