Burnout! 4 main causes of employee stress, and what you can do about it

You've put in the long hours to build a relationship with your team, and to better understand their strengths, weaknesses, motivators and goals for the future.

While these are all key components to a successful relationship with your staff, it's for naught if you can't proactively prevent employee burnout—a phenomenon that 77% of respondents to a recent study conducted by Deloitte said they have experienced at least once in their careers.

Here are some of the common contributors to employee burnout, and how you can work to prevent it, before your valued employees start scouring job boards for a new opportunity.

Ask about their stress level. An unmanageable workload is one contributor to employee burnout, but Deloitte's study indicates that the real driver of burnout is less about long hours, and more about the stress and frustration that an employee feels on the job.

If an employee frequently voices concerns about workplace culture, internal systems and processes that hinder their performance, or has challenges with peers they need to collaborate with to do their job, they could be headed for burnout.

When employees voice concerns about their work or the state of projects to which they've been assigned, ask them to share specific aspects of the perceived roadblocks.

Do processes handicap productivity? Does poor planning make a project difficult to complete? Is the employee being asked to manage tasks that aren't in his skillset? Once you understand exactly what is leading to the employee's stress, you can better offer support that will help the employee find positive solutions to minimize the frustration.

Lead by example. Mobile devices, instant messaging and email have led to a 24/7 workplace mindset, and an expectation that employees are always "on the clock." While some projects may demand engagement outside of working hours, when and how you communicate with your team sets the tone for how your team perceives the work culture.

If you like to use Sunday morning or late evenings to catch up on emails to your team, for example, stick to your routine—just don't hit send until the actual workday arrives.

Talk about how they spend their time (and how they want to). Employees can be highly passionate about their work, and still suffer from workplace burnout if other contributing factors like unrealistic deadlines or expectations, lack of recognition from management or toxic relationships with others in the company are present.

Losing any employee can wreak havoc on your team's culture and productivity, but the loss of a passionate employee can be a missed opportunity from which your team never recovers.

When you have employee one-on-ones and team meetings, ask specific questions about what they're working on, and how you can lend support. Inquire about how much of their workweek is spent cultivating the skills they want to hone for professional development, and how much of their workload involves tasks they feel passionate about performing.

You can't remove every mundane task or frustrating project from their plate, but you can minimize the burnout potential that comes with them by assigning employees projects that allow them to think creatively, and gain exposure to new ideas, skills and teams.

Be as invested in them as they are to their work. By definition, a critical piece of your role is to manage, lead and support your team. In the report "Real-Time State of Employee Engagement," conducted by Office Vibe, 64% of respondents said they don't get enough praise or encouragement from their manager, and 34% said they had to wait more than three months to get feedback from one. (Not surprisingly, more than half said they wouldn't recommend their workplace to a friend, and don't feel that their employer is concerned with their professional development or growth.)

If you can't find the time to truly understand what your team is doing and how they feel about it, you're only doing half of your job.