

# Smart technology causes work overload

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Smartphones and tablets mean people can access their work emails at any time.

Excess workload has been identified as the biggest barrier to better performance in The Great New Zealand Employment Survey 2013, and one of the key reasons people are working harder is better technology such as smartphones.

Of the four barriers to performance asked about in the survey, 53 per cent of people said the top one was excessive workload, and 63 per cent confirmed that technology resulted in them doing more work than they

used to.

However, The Great New Zealand Employment Survey 2013, conducted by Clarian HR in association with Massey University, also revealed that only 25 per cent of managers and employees felt that technology had a detrimental effect of their personal life.

Managing director of Clarian HR, Clare Parkes, says that indicates that while people feel technology is resulting in them spending more time on the job and that they're increasingly expected to be available after their usual hours of work, they don't resent it because it also gives them flexibility and can lead to greater efficiency.

"For a number of years work/life balance, and our attitude to it, has been changing and technology has definitely had an impact. People can now work remotely, or from their phones and deal with several matters before they even arrive at the office, giving them a sense of satisfaction," says Ms Parkes.

"The danger is if this balance tips and rather than feeling their extra work secures their future, it prompts them to look at moving on to a job that will allow them to keep the work/life balance they prefer, and put the phone away while watching their children's sports game."

Interestingly, 58 per cent of people expected the turnover rate in their organisation would stay the same in the coming year, and 53 per cent believed their organisation would not replace staff that left, another indication of increasing workload for those who remain.

Professor Jane Parker, from the Massey University School of Management, says the average employee turnover rate of 11 to 20 per cent should ring alarm bells for employers.

"International studies show that, depending on the industry, it can cost up to 200 per cent of a person's salary to replace them due to their performance waning once they decide to start looking, the cost of recruitment, time without a replacement, and time spent training the replacement. Then there can be issues, and resources may need to be devoted to improving a 'person-organisation' fit in the case of some hires," says Professor Parker.

Clare Parkes elaborates: "Job satisfaction is not surprisingly the dominant predictor of turnover intentions, and in this year's survey we found that work engagement along with organisational resilience and a fun workplace were the most influential factors on how much satisfaction people have in their jobs.

"The effect of these on job satisfaction was surprising, but when unpicked it's easy to understand. If organisations have a culture where people feel equipped to do their jobs without any resulting stress, and can have fun along the way, then their job satisfaction will increase and their intention to leave decrease."

The survey also showed that one of the key bugbears for people is still how they are engaged with their organisation and how their organisation is engaged with them. This year 78 per cent of people said engagement matters in their organisation, with over half (51 per cent) saying it matters a lot.

However, only just over half (53 per cent) of respondents believed employees in their organisation were engaged.

This, and the fact that 42 per cent of people felt performance reviews weren't utilised at all, highlighted an ongoing problem with organisations in that they don't address staff engagement effectively, says Professor Parker.

"Clearly, performance reviews and/or staff surveys are often still a once-a-year survey that highlights problems but not always solutions. Engagement needs to become a 'way of working' instead, so that managers know how to continue to engage staff every day. There's much potential, therefore, for performance reviews to be used more effectively – not least in terms of their frequency but also with a view to helping to predict future employee performance."

It's not all bad news though. The Great New Zealand Employment Survey 2013 revealed that people are more positive about the future overall. Seventy per cent of people believed their firms are performing better than or as expected in the current economic conditions, and the majority (61 per cent) had received a pay increase over the past year.

Other findings include:

- Managers report significantly higher results across all the major areas surveyed including – work engagement, turnover intentions (less likely to leave), [job satisfaction](#), job performance, happiness, and leadership styles as well as fun workplace, organisational resilience and communication climates.
- Although 48 per cent of all respondents reported that diversity management was important to their organisation, only 20 per cent of respondents believe that their organisations manage it well. Similar to 2012 results, there seems to be an unawareness of the significance of diversity in future-proofing organisations as we continue to experience a shortage of talent, an ageing demographic and immigration policies that could constrain our ability to increase our talent pool from overseas.

The Great New Zealand Employment Survey is a 180° view of the world of employment. It is the only independent employment survey in New Zealand that interviews both the employer and employee and brings

together all the necessary benchmark data needed to understand the world of [work](#) in New Zealand. The data was analysed by Massey University.

Provided by Massey University

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