Q4 Company

Political Conflict at Work Drives Employees to Quit, Perceptyx Study Finds

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One in three employees have experienced conflict that began as a political disagreement and four in five of them are now looking for a new job

TEMECULA, Calif., Sept. 26, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Political disagreements at work are known to cause coworker tension, and a new study from **Perceptyx**, the global leader in employee listening and actioning for a better workplace, has uncovered new, farther-reaching implications.

The survey of 2,300 workers found that about nine in ten have experienced some form of conflict with coworkers, but one in three have specifically experienced recent conflict that began as a political disagreement. These political disputes have a far more negative effect on workers. For instance, compared to workers who encounter general conflict, those who have experienced a political altercation are:

- 5.6x as likely to say their productivity is impacted
- 4.9x as likely to say their mental health is impacted
- 3.5x as likely to say their physical health impacted

What's more, four in five employees who have faced political conflict at work are actively job-seeking — that makes them 1.6x as likely to quit as other employees.

The problem is worse for desk-bound workers, who are twice as likely as their deskless counterparts to have experienced a politics-fueled conflict in the past three months.

Generational differences

Younger generations experience more political conflict in the workplace.

- More disagreements: Gen Z is most likely to have had a political disagreement at work (1.3x as likely as Millennials, 2x as likely as Gen X, and 2.3x as likely as Baby Boomers)
- More discrimination: Gen Z is the generation that is most likely to have experienced bias, prejudice, and/or discrimination in the workplace because of political beliefs (1.2x as likely as Millennials, 1.7x as likely as Gen X, and 5x as likely as Baby Boomers)
- More likely to leave: Gen Z is also more likely to consider looking for a new job because of coworkers' political beliefs (1.5x as likely as Millennials, 2.8x as likely as Gen X, and 6.5x as likely as Baby Boomers)

What employers can do

When an employee feels a conflict has been fully resolved, they are half as likely to plan to quit. However, if there is any lingering tension at all, they are just as likely to plan to quit, as if the argument hadn't been resolved at all. Even when there hasn't been an overt conflict, political differences have an impact: one in five workers overall say they have experienced bias, prejudice, or discrimination because of their political beliefs, and 30% feel just discussing politics at work could have a negative impact on their career opportunities. These effects are mitigated when organizations focus on creating a culture of belonging and psychological safety.

"Firefighting specific disputes won't solve the systemic problem, and preventing them altogether is impossible. While most employees consider politics a taboo at work, the topic still finds its way into workplace conversations, with 37% of people having discussed politics at work in the last year. Plus, we're a very diverse workforce: only three in ten employees believe they share similar political beliefs and attitudes with their direct manager," said Emily Killham, Senior Director and Head of the Center for Workforce Transformation at Perceptyx. "But when organizations create a culture in which employees feel safe and included, healthy disagreements don't spiral into perpetual conflict. Modeling respectful listening and constructive dialog in all aspects of work is crucial."

For more data and insights, download the full report, "**Divided We Work: The Impact of Workplace Conflict from the Break Room to Zoom Rooms**."

About Perceptyx

Perceptyx is the Employee Experience (EX) transformation company, providing enterprise-grade employee listening, analytics, and behavioral science that activates people and delivers business impact. More than 600 global enterprises, including one-third of the Fortune 100, use Perceptyx's multi-channel employee listening, AI-powered recommendations, and personalized coaching to close the loop between insights and action. With an unrivaled technology platform and an in-house team of EX Experts, Perceptyx makes it easy for managers, HR executives, and business leaders to align their key business and talent priorities and drive positive organizational change.

About the Center for Workforce Transformation

The Center for Workforce Transformation, operated by Perceptyx, has a mission to educate and inspire executive leaders, managers, and employees through timely, relevant, and actionable insights about the modern work experience. Via original research, media, industry-focused Consortia, peer groups, and exclusive events, the Center is helping to amplify the practices of the world's leading organizations — driving leader and workforce transformation at speed, at scale, and in sustainable ways.

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