

The State of Workplace Injustice Report

A Fact Sheet of Workplace Injustice in America

Introduction

American workplaces haven't kept pace with the changing workforce. Leaders and managers continue fostering environments that lack dignity, respect, and equal opportunities for advancement. With insights from 600+ respondents nationwide on how injustice affects employee productivity, team performance, and organizational behavior, the report uncovers the hidden financial and social costs that are impacting the U.S. Workforce.

Key Findings

- **Costly Consequences:** Toxic workplaces cost U.S. employers a staggering \$917 billion annually due to turnover & disengagement (937 Strategy Group, 2024). 66 percent of all employees experienced injustice in the previous year. 23% experience at least once a month.
- **Underrepresented Groups Disproportionately Affected:** LGBTQ+ and disabled employees experience more frequent injustice, negative workplace outcomes, and lower engagement. Racial minorities are more afraid to speak up about injustice for fear of losing their jobs.
- **Financial Impact of Injustice:** Injustice contributes to disengagement, turnover intentions, and counterproductive workplace behaviors. Undermining behavior, for example, leads to 12% of turnover intentions, costing organizations billions. **Silence Doesn't Help:** Half of those experiencing injustice don't report it, likely due to discomfort or lack of trust in the organization's response. Organizations need to create safe spaces for reporting.
- **Inaction is Detrimental:** Only 17% of reported injustices are addressed by the organization, while 83% go unaddressed by US Employers. Most inaction stems from a perceived lack of care or concern for the employee's experience.

Defining Workplace Injustice

Injustice is defined as unwelcome verbal and/or physical conduct, including inappropriate behavior such as racist remarks, crossing personal boundaries, insults, unwelcomed sexual advances, and suggestive comments that can cause harm or distress to individuals in the workplace. It encompasses behaviors of Incivility, Bullying, Ostracism, Abuse/Aggression, Undermining, Failed Allyship, Harassment, and Bystander Behavior, which all contribute to creating a harmful and disruptive work environment.

How Workplace Injustice Shows Up

- **Disrespect:** Demeaning colleagues, insults, interruptions, and lack of consideration negatively impact employee well-being and performance.

- **Supervisor Mistreatment:** Harshness, lack of consideration, and unethical behavior from supervisors can lead to distrust, fear, and job seeking.
- **Ostracism:** Social exclusion from projects, discussions, or activities leaves employees feeling unwanted, isolated, and unimportant.
- **Discrimination:** Underrepresented groups face offensive behavior, unequal treatment, and exclusion, leading to lower well-being and job seeking.

Cost to American Employers

- **Productivity:** Counterproductive Workplace Behaviors: Examples of counterproductive workplace behavior include intentionally delaying work, using sick days when not sick, intentionally breaking rules, pretending to be busy, and talking negatively about the company.
- **Turnover Intention:** Turnover intention refers to an employee's likelihood or intention to leave their current job. Injustice-related turnover costs American employers \$339 billion annually, with \$112 billion in direct costs (recruiting, background checks, drug screenings) and \$227 billion in indirect costs (knowledge loss, productivity).
- **Employee Disengagement:** Employee disengagement is feeling disconnected and demotivated at work, leading to low energy and a lack of value in their work. Examples include mentally quitting on the job or losing focus while working. This can lead to increased safety incidents, a reduction in production quality, and poor customer service. Employee disengagement costs American employers \$607.7 billion annually, with significant financial implications due to workplace abuse and undermining.

Recommendations for US Employers

- **Increase Reporting:** Organizations must make reporting injustice easier and more comfortable for employees. Multiple reporting channels outside the supervisory chain can be helpful.
- **Take Action:** Simply responding to reported injustices is crucial, regardless of the specific action taken. Ignoring the issue sends a negative message to employees.
- **Proactive Measures:** Develop plans to prevent injustice and address recurring issues. Investing in training for managers, supervisors, and leaders on respectful behavior and bystander intervention can be valuable.
- **Raise Awareness:** Organizations should aim to increase awareness and encourage reporting of failed allyship to address and prevent such behaviors effectively.

Economic Impact

- **Turnover Costs:** Injustice is a significant driver of turnover, costing U.S. organizations an estimated \$339 billion annually due to direct and indirect costs.
- **Disengagement Costs:** Disengaged employees cost organizations 34% of their annual salary. Our study found that 18.2% of employees experience regular disengagement, a significant financial burden.

- **Total Impact: \$917 Billion Economic Impact to US Employers** - \$777.9 billion due to employee disengagement, with an additional \$136.8 billion directly attributable to turnover tied to workplace injustices.

Authors of the Report

[The State of Workplace Injustice Report](#), commissioned by [Anton Gunn](#) and [937 Strategy Group, LLC](#). Anton Gunn is a keynote speaker and leadership and workplace culture expert, his motivation is to help leaders build diverse, high-performing teams in a world-class workplace where no one wants to quit and everyone thrives because the organization's leaders are someone everyone will admire.

Conclusion

Workplace injustice is a pervasive problem with serious consequences for employees, organizations, and the U.S. economy. Organizations can create healthier, more productive workplaces by prioritizing respect, fostering safe reporting practices, and taking action against injustice.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

- 686 working adults responded to the survey.
- The average Salary of the respondents is \$55,793
- Average age: 37
- 50% female
- 63% with five or less years of tenure
- 15% with a disability
- 19% part of the LGBTQ+ community
- Ethnic/Racial Breakdown:
 - Caucasian/White: 70%
 - African American/Black: 12%
 - Asian: 8%
 - Hispanic: 6%
 - Multiracial: 3%
- Tenure:
 - 3-5 Years: 26%
 - 1-2 Years: 23%
 - 6-10 Years: 20%
 - 11-15 Years: 8%
 - 7-12 Months: 8%
- Gender:
 - Male: 49%
 - Female: 50%
 - Non-binary: 1%
- LGBTQ+ Community Affiliation:
 - Part of LGBTQ+ Community: 19%
 - Not part of LGBTQ+ Community: 81%