# Why the 'big lie' of hard work fuels the great resignation



In recent years, many have observed a significant shift in attitudes toward work, culminating in what has been termed the "Great Resignation." Financial expert Vincent Chan has recently delved into this trend, articulating three primary reasons why many individuals perceive a diminishing desire to engage in traditional work. His insights present a compelling critique of modern workplace dynamics, underscoring the growing disconnection between employee efforts and rewards, as well as the impact of corporate culture on job satisfaction.

At the heart of Chan's argument is what he calls the "big lie" surrounding hard work. He posits that while hard work has historically been perceived as a pathway to success, many contemporary workers feel that their labours go unrecognised. Chan illustrates this point with the story of unmerited promotions rooted in nepotism rather than meritocracy, fostering a sense of frustration among diligent employees. This perception is supported by data indicating a widening chasm between worker productivity and wage growth, a trend that has persisted since 1979. Preceding this, many workers benefitted from the so-called "Golden Age" of employment, when increased productivity was directly correlated with improved remuneration. The disillusionment prevalent in today’s workforce can thus be traced back to a systemic disregard for truly meaningful compensation based on individual effort.

Moreover, Chan highlights the detrimental effects of toxic work environments, which have surfaced as a predominant factor in driving employee disengagement. Research indicates that a toxic corporate culture can predict employee attrition 10.4 times more accurately than compensation. Elements such as favoritism, poor communication, and an overall lack of respect create atmospheres conducive to mental health issues and burnout. These environments not only compromise employee wellbeing, but also deter engagement, with nearly half of employees in certain studies reporting they would accept lower pay for a healthier workplace. As Chan underscores, such conditions provoke a question many employees now ask themselves: "Why continue working in a space that undermines my mental and emotional health?"

The third element Chan articulates is the financial landscape confronting younger generations. Despite earning more nominally than their parents, individuals today grapple with inflated costs of living and persistent student debt, considerations that would have been less pressing for previous generations. The emergence of the Cost of Thriving Index starkly highlights this shift; it reveals that while in 1985 a typical male worker could afford essential expenses in around 30 weeks of pay, today that same worker requires nearly 53 weeks. This reality captures a distressing truth: many individuals are not just labouring under their professional duties but are compelled to take on secondary jobs or overtime just to navigate their everyday financial obligations.

As sentiments of disillusionment continue to pour in, organisations are urged to rethink their approaches to employee relations. Data shows that low engagement is more prevalent than ever, with only 20% of employees globally feeling connected to their work. This disconnect not only affects individual productivity but can lead to costly turnovers for companies, as replacing disengaged workers can cost upwards of twice their salaries. The slow, yet critical shift toward cultivating healthier, more inclusive work environments may prove essential in reversing current trends of attrition and dissatisfaction, as companies strive to retain talent amid this modern workforce shake-up.

In light of these analyses, it becomes clear that the fabric of today’s work culture is in urgent need of re-evaluation. By addressing systemic issues of recognition, toxic cultures, and financial strains, there lies an opportunity for a more engaged, satisfied, and ultimately productive workforce.

### Reference Map

1. Core focus on the "Big Lie" regarding hard work and unrecognised efforts.
2. Discussions on toxic work environments and their impact on employee retention.
3. Analysis of financial challenges faced by younger generations.
4. Emphasis on the need for organisations to promote positive work cultures and improve employee engagement.
5. Insight into the broader implications of employee dissatisfaction on turnover and productivity.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://in.benzinga.com/personal-finance/25/05/45337894/vincent-chan-discusses-the-three-reasons-nobody-wants-to-work-anymore-nowadays-it-just-feels-like-a-slap-in-the-face> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/toxic-culture-is-driving-the-great-resignation/> - An analysis of over 170 cultural topics in companies during the Great Resignation reveals that a toxic corporate culture is the strongest predictor of employee attrition, being 10.4 times more influential than compensation. Factors contributing to toxic cultures include failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; workers feeling disrespected; and unethical behavior. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving employee retention and organizational health.
* <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-11/what-s-driving-the-great-resignation-toxic-culture-is-a-bigger-driver-than-pay> - A study analyzing over 1.4 million Glassdoor reviews across 38 industries found that toxic workplace culture is 12.4 times more likely than compensation to predict employee attrition. This underscores the significant impact of organizational culture on employee retention, highlighting the need for companies to foster positive work environments to reduce turnover.
* <https://www.cfo.com/news/employees-compensation-toxic-work-environment/714109/> - A survey by INTOO and Workplace Intelligence indicates that 35% of employees would accept lower pay for a job free of workplace toxicity. Factors such as favoritism, office politics, gossip, ignoring feedback, and disregarding work-life balance contribute to toxic environments, leading to decreased engagement and productivity.
* <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/351545/great-resignation-really-great-discontent.aspx> - Gallup's research reveals that low employee engagement is a significant factor in the Great Resignation, with only 20% of employees globally being engaged. Disengaged employees are more likely to leave, and replacing them can cost between half to two times their annual salary, emphasizing the importance of fostering engagement to retain talent.
* <https://www.eane.org/whats-the-number-one-reason-employees-quit-a-toxic-work-environment/> - Research indicates that toxic corporate culture is the leading predictor of employee attrition, being 10.4 times more influential than compensation. Contributing factors include failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; workers feeling disrespected; and unethical behavior. Addressing these issues is essential for improving employee retention and organizational health.
* <https://www.theconversation.com/quiet-quitting-and-the-great-resignation-have-a-common-cause-dissatisfied-workers-feel-they-cant-speak-up-in-the-workplace-190390> - Research on 'organizational silence' shows that workers often fail to speak up about issues or suggest improvements, leading to disengagement and contributing to phenomena like quiet quitting and the Great Resignation. Factors such as fear of economic consequences, social exclusion, psychological pain, and physical harm deter employees from voicing concerns, highlighting the need for organizations to encourage open communication.