

# Despite Being Burnt Out, U.S. Employees Are Still Happy with Hours

By Chris Metinko | 07/07/15 - 11:21 AM EDT



NEW YORK ([MainStreet](#)) — Brian Kearney commutes more than two hours from his home in New Jersey to his job at a digital marketing agency in New York City for work.

While the commute and long hours would make some hate [work](#), Kearney has the opposite outlook of his work.

“I absolutely love my job and am very happy,” said the 24-year-old. “I’m usually very burnt out by Thursday of each week, but my company offers flex-time — which allows employees to start/end his or her workday two hours earlier or later.”

Feeling burnt out, but being happy, isn’t unique to Kearney. According to the new Workplace Index from Staples Advantage — the business-to-business division of **Staples** — 53% of American employees report feeling overworked, but a large majority (85%) is still motivated and happy at work.

“The definition of work itself is [changing](#),” said Ira Wolfe, president of employee assessment firm Success Performance Solutions. “We don’t live in a 9-to-5 work world anymore.”

Wolfe said the ability to remotely do one’s job and the growth of globalization mean that the demand for work and the delivery of work are constant.

“Obviously some jobs require you to be present, but it is evolving quickly,” Wolfe said. “So the first reason that people ask for flexibility is because they can.”

Neca Smith, consultant and therapist specializing in workplace [stress](#), said that flexibility and control is one of the reasons for workers who feel burnt out but nevertheless happy.

“With flexibility over the work schedule, there is an element of control by the employee even though there may be more work or hours involved,” Smith said. “Feeling as though you have more control over your working day can actually decrease work-related stress.”

Also, if employees are given more flexibility by their [employers](#), it establishes a sense of trust, Smith added.

“As a consultant, I've found that employee morale is often higher on teams where staff feels appreciated and trusted, even if there are caps on salaries or limited growth opportunities within the organization,” Smith said. “Employees who are trusted, often want to go above and beyond — which may lead to burn-out.”

The workplace also may be mirroring society in general, Wolfe said. Now that Millennials make up a third of the workforce, the labor market is changing, and young adults no longer graduate high school or college, get a job, buy a home, settle down and start a family.

“While education may be up, homeownership amongst the young is way down,” Wolfe said. “They remain single and unattached longer. That means mobility is up because when a new opportunity arises, they don't have a home or family tying them down.”

Wolfe said that flexibility even affects [Baby Boomers](#) now, as they look to take more time off for grandchildren, travel or other leisure.

“Baby Boomers want to continue working but don't want to be tied to a desk or job either,” he said.

Victoria Betancourt, founder of cleantech staffing firm Coneybeare, said because so much work is now conducted via the Internet, there is less and less need for a brick-and-mortar office, giving employees their desired flexibility.

“Working from home gives people more flexibility,” Betancourt said. “I believe that because people have to be trusted, they are increasingly judged on performance metrics alone, and no one cares what time they started or stopped working.”

Betancourt said if employees are paid based on performance metrics, rather than "putting in the time," often people will be more [motivated](#) to act in the interest of the company.

“After all, if you can do your work from home, or from the beach, you don't mind what day it might be,” she adds. “If you have to catch up on the weekend because you took off early on Tuesday so see your child's soccer game, there is a sense of fairness and being trusted, which leads to greater job satisfaction.”