

Bad Company Culture:

10 RED FLAGS + HOW TO FIX IT



Employee happiness in 2023 was even lower than at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Goodbye, Great Resignation. Hello, **Great Gloom**.

However, just because employees aren't leaving in droves compared to recent years, companies should always prioritize boosting retention. A proactive way to do this is by monitoring the health of your organization's culture. After all, investing in employee wellbeing isn't just the right thing to do—it's also good for business.

Otherwise, you risk all the ways employee dissatisfaction dings the bottom line, including low morale, decreased productivity, absenteeism, and costly turnover.

Here's how to spot the warning signs of toxic work culture, along with practical strategies for turning things around this year. Combined with **BamboohR®**, you can leverage these strategies to start collecting and acting on authentic employee feedback, track satisfaction scores, launch targeted employee experience and performance initiatives, and establish your organization as a great place to work.

The Top 10 Signs of Bad Company Culture

The sooner you notice negative cultural trends, the sooner you can right the ship. Here are some common red flags to look out for:

1. Core Values Aren't Defined

When a **company's core values** are unclear or nonexistent, it creates confusion among employees about the organization's identity and principles. Employees may not understand what's expected of them or how to be in service of the company's mission. This ambiguity can lead to different people or departments making contradicting decisions, hindering the development of a strong company culture.

2. Managers Don't Follow Core Values

Simply put, having company values on paper isn't enough—they must be embodied by your people leaders. Employees can become disheartened when leadership has a "do as I say, not as I do" mentality. This lack of accountability can lower morale and may drive employees to also disregard the company's core values, allowing toxic work behaviors to spread.

3. Candidates Aren't Accepting Job Offers

Interviews are a two-way street, with candidates assessing not only the role but also the workplace environment and growth opportunities. They may turn down a job for various reasons:

- Lack of transparency during the hiring process
- Salary range below the industry average
- Limited **benefits**

- Misalignment between their working style and their potential supervisor's **management style**
- Ambiguous company values

If prospective hires frequently decline job offers, there's likely a disconnect between the company's projected image and the actual work culture.



4. New Hires Don't Stay Long

Companies have just **44 days** to make a good first impression on **new hires**. According to a recent survey by **Qualtrics**, 39% of employees who have been in their jobs for six months are already planning a quick exit as they tend to have lower levels of engagement, wellbeing, and inclusion compared to more tenured employees.

5. Employees Have Poor Work-Life Balance

Flexible hours have become a more common perk thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of remote work. However, if employees are consistently racking up overtime because of an expectation or necessity to work during lunch breaks, nights, or weekends just to keep up with their workload, it's a recipe for **employee burnout**.

6. Absentee Rates Are High

It's inevitable for employees to miss work occasionally. From feeling ill to dealing with family emergencies, life happens. However, **frequent tardiness or absences** may indicate underlying issues such as poor management or working conditions, leaving employees feeling less engaged and motivated to contribute to the company's success.

Aside from difficulty finding coverage for absences the day of, there can be harmful long-term consequences such as distrust between employees and managers and lower customer satisfaction, damaging the employer brand.

7. Employees Don't Feel Appreciated

Failing to acknowledge or reward top performers for a job well done can lead to decreased motivation, productivity, and loyalty. In fact, a recent Gallup survey reports employees who don't feel adequately recognized are **twice as likely to say they'll quit** within the next year.

8. Gossip Runs Rampant

It's a red flag when gossip is common in the workplace. Rumors and negative talk can quickly erode trust, damage relationships, and create a hostile work environment. After all, it would be understandably challenging for employees to focus on their work if they're constantly anxious about colleagues whispering behind their backs.

9. Employee Net Promoter Scores Are Low

Your **Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS)** is the difference between the number of people who would recommend your company as a great place to work and those who wouldn't. A low eNPS indicates that many employees are unsatisfied and potentially looking to leave.

Don't have BambooHR Employee Satisfaction with eNPS?

You're missing out on important data and happy employees. BambooHR Employee Satisfaction helps you measure it with Employee Net Promoter (eNPS) scoring.

[Try it Free](#)

10. High-Performing Employees Don't Stick Around

High turnover among key employees or leaders is cause for concern, as it suggests they didn't see a future with the company. What's more, the resulting skill gaps can have negative ripple effects on productivity, team morale, and the company's overall performance.

Get the Definitive Guide to Company Culture

Want a vibrant workplace that supports employees and helps your organization achieve its goals? Our guide offers a step-by-step plan for leveling up your company culture.

[Download Your Free Copy](#)

How to Change Bad Company Culture

On the bright side, bad company culture can be healed. While putting a band-aid on the problem can be tempting, the key to creating lasting change is identifying the underlying issues and taking strategic action. Here are some ways to get back on the right track:

Lead by Example

Once company values have been defined, managers and leadership should set an example for employees to follow. For instance, one of our [values here at BambooHR](#) is Enjoy Quality of Life.

For companies with a similar value, leadership can model **healthy work-life balance** by encouraging hybrid or remote work, refraining from sending emails during non-working hours, and taking paid time off to recharge and encouraging employees to do the same.

Create Open Communication Channels

Often, issues like high absenteeism and turnover result from employees' pent-up frustration. Instead of scrambling after the fact to figure out what went wrong, take a proactive approach.

Encourage transparency and provide multiple avenues for employees to voice their concerns, ideas, and feedback without fear of retaliation. For instance, each manager could host weekly team meetings, one-on-ones, and office hours to address any issues early on. With an **open-door policy**, employees will feel heard, contributing to higher job satisfaction.

Additionally, don't forget to communicate promptly and openly with prospective employees throughout the **hiring process** to improve your job offer acceptance rate. Setting clear and correct expectations can also reduce new-hire turnover as candidates' on-the-job experience lines up with what they were told to expect during the interview process.

Encourage Continuous Learning

Investing in **professional development opportunities** shows candidates, new hires, and more tenured employees that your organization is committed to their growth and success. Offerings can include (but don't have to be limited to) traditional methods like workshops or conferences.

Here are some other engaging options to consider:

- **Hackathons or innovation days:** Host events where employees can work together on solving specific challenges, brainstorming fresh ideas, or building prototypes.
- **Lunch and learns:** In these relaxed settings, employees can learn from thought leaders in your industry about top trends and best practices. Alternatively, lunch and learns can be an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning about different company experiences and skills.
- **Professional development time:** Allow employees to spend a percentage of their work time on efforts they think would benefit the company. For instance, **Google's "20% time"** has led to several innovative breakthroughs and revenue-generating products like Gmail and Google Earth.



Recognize and Reward Achievement

Employee appreciation can be a low-cost yet highly impactful strategy for **boosting morale**, engagement, and retention. Simply put, people want to know that their efforts day in and day out are valued. However, it's key to personalize the acknowledgement.

For instance, some people might love a public shoutout, while others might be more comfortable with a private message. As for rewards, have new hires fill out a "get to know me" survey to find out their favorite snack, store, activity, etc. Then when the time comes to celebrate their achievements, surprise them with something that proves you've been paying attention, like a gourmet gift basket or gift card to a novelty store.

Address Conflict Constructively

Establish a zero-tolerance policy for workplace gossip to maintain a respectful and positive atmosphere. It's helpful to reframe conflict as an opportunity for personal and professional growth, not to air personal grievances. Here are some **conflict resolution tips** to keep in mind:

- **Address the issue face-to-face** as written communication can easily be misconstrued.
- **Stay focused on the issue** at hand and avoid bringing things up from the past.
- **Take a pause** if needed and resume when both parties are in a clear headspace.
- **Collaborate and compromise** to find a mutually beneficial solution.



Gather Powerful Insights, Create a Better Employee Experience

Don't leave your company culture to chance. With accurate, reliable employee surveys in BambooHR, you'll gain the insight you need to prevent burnout, improve morale, and stop premature turnover in its tracks.

[Get a Free Demo Today](#)

Regularly Gather Feedback—and Take Action

Always consult with the heartbeat of your organization—your employees.

Change is often challenging. However, getting their buy-in will likely make employees more invested in being part of that change, helping cultural shifts stick. There are many **ways to source employee feedback** to accommodate different personality types. Some people may feel more comfortable in a one-on-one meeting with their manager, while others may prefer an open discussion in all-hands meetings.

For organization-wide feedback, HR should regularly distribute anonymous surveys so employees can be honest without fearing repercussions. Take their feedback to heart and implement necessary changes to earn their trust and increase engagement.



Get to the Heart of the Matter with BambooHR

When it comes to revamping company culture, taking shots in the dark just won't cut it. If you want happier employees who'll stick with you for the long haul, BambooHR has all the tools you need to take a data-driven approach.

For instance, **Employee Satisfaction with eNPS®** uses AI to analyze and organize anonymous employee feedback in seconds to save you hours of work. With a clear breakdown, you can quickly see what areas the company excels in and what changes employees would love to see.

What's more, **Employee Wellbeing** tools help you get a pulse on your people's overall emotional health. Surveys with research-backed questions put accurate data at your fingertips to improve relationships.

And that's just the beginning of what you can leverage with BambooHR. To learn more about how you can elevate your employee experience, **get your free demo today.**

* Net Promoter, NPS, and the NPS-related emoticons are registered trademarks, and Net Promoter Score and Net Promoter System are service marks, of Bain & Company, Inc., Satmetrix Systems, Inc. and Fred Reichheld.



An Award-Winning, Complete HR Platform

In BambooHR, everything works together to help you manage data and benefits, hire talent, run payroll, and help employees thrive. Best of all, it's easy and intuitive for busy HR teams!

[Learn More Today](#)

 bambooHR®