



Stressed at Work? Survey Shows Europeans Have It Worse

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Kelly Services World@Work Survey measures workers' stress pulse

TROY, Mich., July 12 -- Think the American workplace is stressful? Be glad you're not in Europe, a comparison of recent survey data by Kelly Services suggests.

Among thousands of respondents in the first-ever Kelly Services World@Work Survey, 11.7 percent described their work as "extremely stressful."

However, when the issue of stress was addressed in a Kelly Services Europe@Work Survey, a total of 27.1 percent of European respondents reported that their work was "far too stressful" or "too stressful" - more than double the percentage of U.S. respondents.

"Workplace stress can be viewed in both a positive and negative light," said Carl Camden, President and CEO of Kelly Services, one of the world's leading staffing solutions organizations. "Many workers seek challenge in their jobs, and stress can be seen as a positive factor indicating important and responsible tasks. However, workplace stress can also be associated with a demanding boss, lack of personal control, fatigue and poor relationships with workplace colleagues. What we can hope for is a balance, so that our work can be stimulating and challenging without leading to worry and overwhelming pressure."

Despite the feelings of the group who are extremely stressed, American workers generally seem to be able to keep stress from getting out of hand. Altogether, 25.6 percent of respondents - 30.6 percent of the men and 23.7 percent of the women - described their work as "somewhat stressful but manageable," while 34.3 percent said theirs was "stressful at times but not always."

And then there are the lucky ones - the 18.6 percent who say their workplace is "rarely stressful" and 5.2 percent who say theirs is "not stressful."

The survey also suggests a strong association between workload and stress. Of those who described their current workload as "heavier than you prefer," more than one-third (38.4 percent) also said their work was "extremely stressful." Among those who described their current workload as "lighter than you prefer" or "about right," a large proportion (38.7 percent and 23.8 percent, respectively) said their work was "rarely stressful" or "not stressful."

Long hours also appear to turn up the stress levels.

More than one-third (35.4 percent) of those who are on the job 50 or more hours a week said their work was "extremely stressful," compared with only 15.6 percent of those who work 41 to 50 hours. At the other extreme, large numbers of those who worked 40 hours or less a week said their work was "rarely stressful" or "not stressful" - 32.9 percent of those working up to 30 hours and 28.9 percent of those working 31 to 40 hours.

"The traditionally strong American work ethic seems to be alive and well, but with more hours on the job comes additional responsibility and increasing levels of stress," said Camden. "However, it's also notable that about a quarter of the working population feels only negligible on-the-job stress and most American workers seem to be finding a way to strike a manageable life- work balance."

Kelly Services World@Work Survey focuses on several aspects of working life and results will be published throughout 2006 of current findings.

About Kelly Services

Kelly Services, Inc. (Nasdaq: KELYA, KELYB) is a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Troy, Mich., offering staffing solutions that include temporary staffing services, staff leasing, outsourcing, vendor on-site and full-time placement. Kelly operates in 30 countries and territories. Kelly provides employment to more than 700,000 employees annually, with skills including office services, accounting, engineering, information technology, law, science, marketing, light industrial, education, health care and home care. Revenue in 2005 was \$5.3 billion. Visit <http://www.kellyservices.com>.