

Working Canadians are Paying a "COVID Tax", with Some Reporting Working More than Ever Before

Hours and stress levels are up, but so are perceptions of productivity and quality of work, ADP Canada survey reveals

TORONTO, May 12, 2021 /CNW/ - A new survey from ADP Canada and Angus Reid reveals that many Canadian workers, especially those working remotely as a result of the pandemic, are paying a "COVID Tax" – the number of additional hours they are working since the start of the pandemic. While this "tax" is impacting 30 per cent of all employed Canadians surveyed, it is significantly higher for remote workers and has increased over the course of the pandemic. Nearly half (44%) of remote workers say they are logging more hours than pre-pandemic times. This figure has doubled over the past year (21% in April 2020 vs. 44% today).

How is the COVID Tax affecting Canadian workers?

Of the 44 percent of respondents reporting working longer hours, one in ten reported working an additional day or more (8+ hours) per week. Comparatively, only 15 per cent reported working fewer hours, while 38 per cent reported no change.

Stress levels are also on the rise. According to self-reported figures, stress levels rose seven per cent over the past year, from 34 per cent in April 2020 to 41 per cent in April 2021. Additionally, the survey found that 46 per cent of remote workers surveyed were feeling less engaged with their work since the start of the pandemic.

"By encouraging employees to take vacation time and regular breaks, to monitor their stress levels and seek support if needed, and by introducing policies for after-hours work or educating on the right to disconnect, employers can help protect the physical and mental health of employees," said Ed Yuen, Vice-President Strategy and Business Development at ADP Canada.

Perceptions of productivity and quality of work on the rise.

Despite working longer hours, 42 per cent of Canadian remote workers are feeling more productive and over a third (37 per cent) have noticed an increase in the quality of their work, a significant year-over-year increase when compared to April of last year, when 19 per cent and 21 per cent of remote workers reported increased quality of work and productivity respectively, as a result of working from home.

The survey also revealed greater recognition for employees' personal responsibilities, as boundaries between work and home have blurred. Over half (53%) of employed Canadians indicated their employer enables them to work a modified schedule when they must fulfill personal responsibilities during work hours.

"After a year of monitoring how workplaces have evolved and responded to the pandemic, it appears that many companies have moved to flexible work hours or hybrid work models," added Yuen. "While many of these policies were a 'perk' a few months back, they are now commonplace. For some, this flexibility seems to have improved productivity and quality of work. Not only has the pandemic brought the workplace into Canadians' homes, it also brought a little bit of their homes to the workplace."

Other Survey Findings

Vaccinations and Mental Health

- 80% of working Canadians believe their employers should play a role in supporting the distribution of vaccines to their employees, and the first thing they identified as a preference is paid time off, followed by onsite vaccination clinics, and, then, information and resources
- 46% of employed Canadians reported their employer instituted initiatives to support mental health and wellness at their workplace during COVID-19. On the contrary, seven-in-ten (69%) said their employer had not instituted any initiatives to help with fatigue related to video-conferencing platforms

Survey Methodology

An online survey of 1501 working Canadians (including those working full and part time) was completed between April 14th and April 15th, 2021, among members of the Angus Reid Forum. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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