

Bulletin Board: Workers less motivated on gloomy days

by Amy_Winter

Weather may have an effect on employee performance. Ten percent of workers said they are usually less productive on gloomy days, according to CareerBuilder, who surveyed more than 6,000 workers. Twenty-one percent checked rain as negatively affecting their character.

Weather can also impact employees' moods and interactions in the office. Thirty-two percent of workers said they feel more cheerful when it's sunny outside, while 12 percent tend to be more sad and angry on gloomy days.

Compared to men, women are more likely to call in sick or feel less productive due to bad weather. Twenty-five percent of women admitted to missing work because they didn't want to travel in rough weather, while only 18 percent of men claimed to do the same.

"Nearly one-third of workers say they tend to be in a happier mood when it's sunny or warm outside," said Rosemary Heafner, vice president of human resources for CareerBuilder.com. "If you're in a happy mood, you're typically more motivated and have more pleasant interactions with co-workers.

"Employees especially those in areas where the weather can get particularly gloomy for days on end - could benefit in terms of better productivity and office relations by finding ways to lighten the mood."

For more information, visit www.careerbuilder.com

SOFT SKILLS IN DEMAND

There is good news for college graduates without a degree in business, engineering or computer science. Many job opportunities exist for liberal arts and writing majors as well, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc., a global outplacement organization. Graduates with soft skills, demonstrated by communicating ideas, thinking critically and responding in a positive manner to feedback, are in demand for many companies.

"Reflecting the shift toward a more global and diverse business environment, soft skills are becoming even more critical for succeeding in complex environments where managers must evaluate and organize information, identify risks and gaps, and effectively direct their diverse staffs," said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of the company.

"Employers know that if they find a worker with a solid foundation of soft skills, he or she can be taught the more technical aspects of the job. Soft skills, on the other hand, are much more difficult to teach."

Many new grads aren't prepared for the demands of employers; therefore, more than four out of 10 companies will have a hard time filling graduate openings this year, according to a study from the Association of Graduate Recruiters. A study of Fortune 500 oil companies and retail associations said essential soft skills include enthusiasm, drive, creativity, critical thinking, initiative and oral communication.

"Recruiters are looking for how well you will be able to establish a rapport with co-workers, and they are looking for confident, assertive and concise speakers," said Challenger. "Demonstrating leadership skills and the ability to construct dynamic teams are more important now than ever to proving your long-term value."

Graduates with degrees in liberal arts, social sciences or English can apply for a wider range of positions in the job market. For example, English grads can pursue careers in journalism, technical writing or publishing as well as teaching and writing. And their ability to write, communicate and solve problems qualifies them to look for jobs in public relations, social work, marketing and financial services.

"The biggest challenge for those graduating with concentrations in liberal arts, history, English or social sciences is overcoming their own misconceptions and underestimates about the value of their degrees and the demand for their talents," said Challenger.

Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. provides the following academic degrees with possible career paths:

- English: public relations, advertising, nonprofit administration, marketing.- Liberal arts: sales, marketing, consulting, human resources.- Political science: public relations, marketing, consulting, information analysis.- History: researcher, journalism, information management, insurance.- Sociology: advertising, sales, human resources, public relations.

For more information visit www.challengergray.com.

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