

## 'Job Hugging' Signals Shift in Worker Priorities

Employee Benefits News | Jimmy Nesbitt | October 28, 2025



**Key Insight:** Discover how "job hugging" shifts retention from loyalty to survival-driven behavior.

**Supporting Data:** 75% of workers expect to remain in the same job for at least two more years.

**Forward Look:** Prepare for rising "quiet quitting" risks and demand for expanded benefits and upskilling.

**Source:** Bullets generated by AI with editorial review

Increased fears over job security have led to a new trend in the workplace: Employees are putting off career moves. While on the surface lower turnover seems like a positive for employers, it can also present some challenges.

Nearly half of employed workers say they are staying in their current positions longer than they otherwise would for comfort, security or stability, according to data from Monster. Seventy-five percent expect to remain in the same job for at least two more years.

In a time of "job hugging," employee engagement can dip, as workers feel like there are fewer opportunities for upward mobility. There's also a risk of quiet quitting, with employees doing the bare minimum to keep their jobs.

"Workers are holding on tighter than ever, but not because they're complacent — because they're cautious," says Vicki Salemi, a career expert at Monster. "Job security and stability have become emotional safety nets. The new loyalty is about survival, not necessarily satisfaction."

But as workers prioritize comfort and stability over ambition and change, benefit managers can make the most of a high-retention environment, Salemi says. To address their main concerns around job security, pay and benefits, leaders should be providing opportunities to upskill and change positions, even if it's just a lateral move.

"It's important for employers to actively ensure that their workers are engaged, are challenged and provided with opportunities to learn and hone new skills," she says.

### **How benefits factor in**

Having a competitive benefits package can also play a critical role in keeping employees motivated, as it shows that their employer cares and sees value in them, Salemi says. Bolstering offerings through expanded health insurance coverage, additional mental health support and more paid time off can motivate employees to bring their best selves to work.

"Employers can easily look at their PTO policy and say, 'We're going to add a certain number of days a year for mental health, or we're going to offer more flexibility, more remote work ...'," Salemi says. "I think there's a variety of ways that employers can really let employees know that they're examining their benefits to expand them and make them better and more robust."

Salemi suggests exploring other expanded benefits, like tuition reimbursement, elder care and fertility treatments.

### **No end to the trend**

According to Monster's survey, more than half of workers believe job hugging is more common in 2025 than last year. Nearly two-thirds expect the trend to grow even more in 2026.

Staying put in a job can offer peace of mind but that also comes with some emotional and financial tradeoffs, the survey found. Examples include missing out on higher pay, burnout from lack of change and limited career advancement.

It's important for companies to put their best foot forward because at some point workers will start actively looking for new opportunities, Salemi says. "Just because they're not leaving doesn't mean they're not passively looking. They might just be more cautious, more trepidatious and a little bit slower to pursue an opportunity."

### **Preventing quiet quitting**

With job hugging on the rise, there's also an increased risk of quiet quitting in which employees aren't engaged and doing the bare minimum to get by.

To combat this, Salemi suggests looking at salaries as a first step. Make sure workers are paid market value, and if there are budget constraints, consider quarterly bonuses or performance-based bonuses.

With the holidays coming up, planning events, like luncheons or other inclusive opportunities to recognize teams for their achievements can help boost engagement. Low morale can be contagious, but "it changes the other way if workers start getting more engaged and they're more involved," she says.

"I think it's in the best interests for an employer to have workers who are engaged, satisfied and productive."