You've likely heard about the latest term to enter the workplace zeitgeist - "quiet quitting" - from any number of sources, including the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. Advocates of "quiet quitting" are largely rebranding and advancing a rallying cry that has, of course, existed for much longer than the last few weeks: that workers should say "no" to additional work without additional pay, and/or not take on additional duties outside of workers' job descriptions. Many detractors view this concept as simply "phoning it in," noting that a lack of commitment will hurt workers' chances for advancement or impact their performance in their current roles. Regardless of one's feelings about this cultural moment (or its staying power in light of economic uncertainty), one must acknowledge the national conversation.

Employers may feel distressed after reading such articles. Managers may picture remote workers twiddling their thumbs at home or emboldened workers doodling in their cubicles while on the clock. But perceptive managers and executives should avoid viewing workers' concerns as nefarious. Instead, employers may want to take a moment to level-set with their employees to ensure mutually beneficial relationships.

The "quiet quitting" concept is reportedly taking hold in large part because workers are trying to re-draw work-life boundaries following the pandemic, the Great Resignation, return-to-office pushes, inflation woes, and other recent phenomena. Many teams are stretched thin given labor market constraints, and remaining workers are taking on wider responsibilities. Employers should evaluate what is working, what is not, and how they can offer support to help combat worker fatigue. Some workers may be looking for a pay or title increase if they have taken on considerably more work during the pandemic. Others may be looking to set stricter boundaries between work and personal time given the blurring that occurred during the pandemic. For exhausted workers, managers may want to encourage use of accrued PTO or utilization of employer-provided counseling services via an Employee Assistance Program. Other solutions may include showing clearer pathways to advancement or setting clearer expectations around work responsibilities. Potential solutions abound, but the key for employers is to use this moment to engage with their workers and figure out what can be done to make the workplace a mutually beneficial environment.

There's a new term for clocking in and doing the bare minimum at work: "quiet quitting." The phrase is percolating through career sites like LinkedIn, where some job coaches and executives are cautioning against the practice, and on TikTok, where workers are going viral by explaining why they're jumping on the quiet-quitting bandwagon. . . . The emergence of
the quiet-quitting phenomenon isn't a fluke, experts say. It is partly a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic, when millions of workers lost their jobs as the disease shuttered the economy. Although most have found new jobs or been rehired, the nation's workforce remains smaller than prior to the health crisis. That is putting more strain on existing employees, who are often asked to do more for the same pay.