EINPRESSWIRE

Workers Who Stay Out of Fear Do the Bare Minimum at Nearly Twice the Rate of Those Who Stay by Choice

New Founder Reports survey shows that today's low quit rates may be masking a quietly disengaged workforce

HARRISBURG, PA, UNITED STATES, July 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Quit rates are near their lowest level in a decade, a number often read as a sign of a stable workforce. A new survey from Founder Reports suggests otherwise. When workers stay because leaving feels too risky, most stop putting in real effort.

Founder Reports surveyed 1,000 US-based employed adults about why they stay in their jobs, how worried they are about AI, and how much effort they put into their work. The central finding is a sharp divide between two groups that look identical on a retention report. Among workers who stay in their jobs because leaving feels too risky, 70% say they do their defined job and nothing beyond it, or even less. Among workers who stay because they want to, that figure drops to 38%.

The fear-driven group is not small. Counting workers who stay out of risk along with those who stay for a combination of reasons, 47% say fear of the job market is at least part of why they remain, slightly more than the 45% who stay purely because they want to.

A belief that effort no longer pays off runs alongside the behavior. More than a third of all workers (36%) agree that working harder won't shield them from layoffs or AI, so there's little point in going above and beyond. Among those who stay out of fear, that rises to 55%.

AI concerns also impact the situation. Roughly 39% of workers are at least moderately concerned that AI could eliminate or reduce their role within the next few years. Among those concerned about AI, 49% believe effort is pointless, compared with 27% of those who aren't worried about AI. Reported effort levels between the two groups differ by only about six points, suggesting that AI drives attitude well ahead of behavior.

The full report includes complete cross-tabulations, generational breakdowns, and the study methodology. It is available at founderreports.com.

About Founder Reports

Founder Reports is a business intelligence platform for modern founders, leaders, and operators. The publication produces original research and data-driven reporting on the trends shaping work, management, and business today.

Marc Shorb
Founder Reports
info@founderreports.com
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn
