

HR Insights

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Understanding the Quiet Hiring Trend

HR professionals have likely already heard about “quiet quitting,” where employees put no more effort into their jobs than necessary, and “quiet firing,” where employers or managers slowly pull back employee duties instead of outright firing them. Now, there’s another phrase gaining traction in workplaces: “quiet hiring.”

While the term for it is new, quiet hiring isn’t necessarily a new concept. Given the ongoing talent shortage and a looming recession, more companies are exploring this trend to fill jobs and address priorities. This article explores the quiet hiring trend, its benefits and ways employers can leverage the talent strategy.

What Is Quiet Hiring?

Quiet hiring is when companies upskill existing employees and move them to new roles to fit business needs. It’s proven to be an efficient, cost-effective way for employers to snag in-demand talent without going through traditional external hiring channels. Quiet hiring addresses an organization’s immediate needs while not technically doing any new hiring.

An organization may already quietly identify and reward current workers who consistently exceed expectations and objectives. But forward-thinking organizations use quiet hiring to identify their own peak performers and promote them to avoid relying on external hires for open key positions. It is also used to acquire new skills and capabilities without adding new employees.

About 80% of workers in the United States say they have been “quiet hired,” according to a recent Monster survey. Furthermore, 63% of workers view

quiet hiring as an opportunity to learn new professional skills. Career advancement opportunities, in turn, are helping employers retain employees. Even though it might seem like an organization may gain the most from quiet hiring, employees can benefit from this latest trend by securing a raise or promotion or developing new skills. In this way, quiet hiring gives power back to employees who want to move forward in their careers and be rewarded for exemplary workplace performance. The quiet hiring strategy is gaining traction since it benefits both employers and employees.

How Can Employers Quiet Hire?

Whether they know it or not, many organizations already engage in quiet hiring. However, some are being deliberate about it. Savvy companies like Google are already leveraging quiet hiring as a core component of their recruitment strategy. It’s expected that other companies will follow and look within to fill open or critical roles.

In many cases, organizations are not necessarily doing hiring freezes or layoffs, but they may be slowing down their hiring. Despite changes in hiring paces, organizations still have financial goals and business objectives to meet. Quiet hiring is rising to the top as a way for employers to work best with the talent that they currently have and make adjustments as needed for organizational success.

Consider the following ways that organizations are hiring quietly:

- Focusing on internal talent mobility to address business priorities
- Moving employees—temporarily or permanently—into different roles or responsibilities
- Upskilling employees to meet organizational needs
- Leveraging short-term contractors or gig workers to bring in additional talent

Although internal mobility is often seen as a positive for workers, employers should keep in mind that some employees may interpret quiet hiring as being told that their regular job—what they were initially hired for—isn't particularly important at the moment. This transparency is even more critical if an employee's move is permanent and the old responsibilities are not backfilled.

Supervisors and managers can help address these concerns by clearly articulating why the new project or department is crucial to organizational success. Regardless of the decision to quiet hire, it's vital for employers to ensure employees feel valued and part of something bigger. If these extra steps aren't taken, current employees may feel undervalued and start looking for other career opportunities outside the organization.

Summary

Quiet hiring allows employers and managers to hone in on employees who are already going above and beyond in their daily work and proving they have what it takes to excel in a given role. As with any trend or strategy, quiet hiring will impact every workplace and workforce differently. Many organizations already take part in this strategy. However, some employers may need to look closer at their current workforce to better meet organizational goals and objectives.

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