

IT Staff Suffering From Sharp Rise in Stress Levels in 2015

Submitted by: GFI Software

Wednesday, 6 May 2015

GFI Software's fourth annual independent IT Stress study reveals stark increase in IT professionals suffering from workplace stress, unpaid overtime pressures and work/life imbalance

London, UK – 6 May 2015 – GFI Software™ (<http://www.gfi.com>) today released the findings of its fourth-annual independent IT Admin Stress Survey, revealing a large jump in the number of IT professionals feeling both the impact of job-related stress and a desire to quit their current job due to stress. The study found that 88% of those surveyed are experiencing workplace stress, while almost 90% of respondents are actively considering leaving their current IT job due to workplace stress and dissatisfaction with working conditions, up from 68% in 2014.

For the fourth year running, high workplace stress levels for IT professionals are dramatically impacting both employees and employers. These impacts are illustrated by increases in those staff looking to find another job, and in those working increasing amounts of unpaid overtime to cope with workloads. A growing number of IT staff are also experiencing substantial disruption to their personal lives as a result of work demands.

The independent blind study was conducted by Opinion Matters among 205 UK IT administrators in companies of 10 or more people. The survey gauged respondents' stress levels at work and revealed their opinions on their main stressors, as well as how their stress level compares to that of friends and family and how it affects their personal and professional lives.

Key findings from the survey include:

- 88% of all UK IT staff surveyed consider their job stressful – up from 67% in 2014
- Nearly half (47%) have missed social functions due to overrunning issues and tight deadlines at work, up from 36% in 2014
- A further 37% also report missing time with their children due to work demands imposing on their personal time
- Nearly one third (32%) of IT staff regularly lose sleep due to work pressures
- The number of respondents experiencing stress-related illnesses increased slightly to 17%, down from 19% in 2014
- Nonetheless, a further 15% continue to report feeling in poor physical condition due to work demands, the same as last year

Management and users

Pressure and unreasonable demands from management clearly emerged as the biggest contributing factor to

workplace stress, but was down considerably from last year. In 2015, one third (33%) of those surveyed singled out management as their biggest point of stress, down from over 50% last year. Up considerably on last year was stress caused by the users that IT staff look after, jumping from 11% to 21%. In fact, in this year's study, GFI Software saw rises across all sources of stress, resulting in a more distributed set of responses. One consistent response over the last four years: lack of staff, remaining constant with around 10% of respondents citing this as their primary cause of stress.

Work pressures on relationships

The 2015 stress study revealed a disappointing rise in the number of respondents reporting that a relationship or friendship had failed or been severely damaged due to work commitments intruding on personal life. Over 26% experienced this in the last year, up from 16.5% last year and a new high in the four years of the survey.

"Even in an industry like IT that's well-known for being extremely stressful and highly demanding of its workforce, the findings of this year's IT Stress Survey makes for worrying reading. The 2015 results clearly show a substantial deterioration of the work/life balance and job satisfaction among the UK's IT workforce. This is concerning reading at a time when the IT sector is playing such a pivotal role in the growth of the UK economy," said Sergio Galindo, general manager of GFI Software.

"Smart employers understand that an over-stressed and unhappy workforce means less productivity, and the higher levels of illness, mistakes and staff turnover directly related to stress can significantly impact the bottom line. Investing in worker happiness and in systems to simplify the job of the IT department is often far cheaper than replacing over-stressed or unhappy staff," Galindo added.

Unpaid overtime

Along with the rise in stress and worker unhappiness, this year's survey revealed a jump in the amount of unpaid overtime required by IT staff to meet deadlines and manage deployments. 40% of those surveyed work up to five unpaid hours of overtime a week, with a mean average of 7.3 hours a week of unpaid overtime worked – the highest in four years. The 48-hour maximum working week set down in the EU Working Time Directive is therefore often exceeded by a large number of those surveyed.

"Employers can do much more to ease the pressures on the IT department, and at the same time benefit the wider business. Realistic IT budgets and staffing headcounts make a huge difference in both workplace happiness and productivity, for example, as does automating mundane and time-intensive tasks such as resetting passwords, patching computers and servers and looking for network vulnerabilities," said Galindo.

Things are better in the US

This year's figures are in contrast to the US, where the same survey revealed slightly lower levels of stress, with 78% of those surveyed stating they are stressed at work – broadly in line with the previous year. The number of people looking to change jobs is also lower than the UK, at 81% - but higher than the previous year in the US, when an already high 78% of those surveyed were actively looking for a

new job. As with the UK, users are becoming an increasingly problematic part of an IT professional's job, with 22% of those surveyed in the US citing them as the biggest source of stress. However, 27.5% pointed to the always-problematic management as their biggest source of stress – lower than last year and lower than the UK.

A copy of the full survey results and infographic can be found at:
<http://www.gfi.com/pages/IT-Stress-Survey-2015?adv=13512&loc=127>

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About GFI Software

GFI Software™ develops quality IT solutions that enable businesses to monitor, manage and secure their networks with minimal administrative overhead. Serving an expanding customer base of tens of thousands of companies, GFI focuses on scalable communications and security platforms comprising network security, web management, anti-spam, patch and vulnerability management, faxing and archiving solutions. GFI is a channel-focused company with thousands of partners worldwide. The company has received numerous awards and industry accolades, and is a longtime Microsoft® Gold ISV Partner.

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