

Frontline managers report lowest job satisfaction in workplace survey

First-time leaders are feeling underprepared and unsupported



Insurance News

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Feb 12, 2025 / Share



Frontline managers are reporting the lowest levels of job satisfaction and career confidence compared to other leadership roles, according to [The Nation's Wellbeing Report](#) by consultancy firm Human Synergistics.

According to Corinne Canter (pictured above), head of consulting at Human Synergistics, many frontline managers struggle with the transition into leadership.

“The first step into leadership is often the hardest. People are often promoted into manager roles because of their task effectiveness, but leadership requires a different skill set. Many frontline leaders are left to figure it out on their own,” Canter said.

Among the 24,374 frontline managers surveyed, only 44% felt their organisation provided adequate support. They also rated their ability to handle stress lower than any other level in the workplace hierarchy, including individual employees and senior executives.

The study found that stress levels remained high even at the executive level. Of the 1,165 CEOs surveyed, 38% did not rate their ability to manage stress highly, while 16% described themselves as under pressure. Only 56% felt well-supported by their organisation.

Despite these challenges, job satisfaction was highest among CEOs, with 83% saying they were satisfied or close to it. In comparison, only 55% of non-management employees reported similar levels of satisfaction.

Stress management capabilities might have improved with seniority, but gender differences remained. Women across all levels of leadership reported lower satisfaction with their ability to manage stress than men. However, they were also more likely to feel supported by their organisations compared to their male counterparts.

Industry-specific trends also emerged. Employees in the mental health sector reported some of the highest levels of job satisfaction at 73.4%, but were among the least confident in their ability to manage stress at 41.5%. Meanwhile, workers in industries such as engineering and insurance reported the lowest levels of job satisfaction.

“Research shows strong links between how we think and our satisfaction with our job, organisation, work relationships and personal well-being. That’s why we measure learnt thinking and behaviour. We know that some styles lead to long-term effectiveness, while others don’t,” Canter said.