



Combating Impostor Syndrome

human resources employees management

Summary: With more than 50% of employees working remotely these days, a lack of regular face-to-face interaction between workers has led to an increase in what is known as “imposter syndrome,” where people begin questioning whether they are right for their jobs. By stepping up intentional communications with employees, managers can reduce the likelihood of losing good workers to such doubts.

Despite being an Oscar-winning actress, Jodie Foster has often felt like she didn’t deserve the accolades she’s been given for her acting. She believed the academy would figure her out and come to reclaim the award, telling her, *“Excuse me, we meant to give that to someone else. That was going to Meryl Streep.”* Even more ironic, Meryl Streep herself, who holds the record for most Academy Award nominations and Golden Globe nominations, [has also expressed feeling like a fraud](#). She once told reporters that when she begins a new role, she thinks, *“Why would anyone want to see me again in a movie? And I don’t know how to act anyway, so why am I doing this?”*

What may come as a surprise to many executives is that most people have, at some point in their career, felt like imposters who aren’t qualified for the jobs they hold and have somehow pulled the wool over their employer’s eyes — a sentiment that has been on the rise since the pandemic made remote and hybrid work arrangements commonplace.

New Life for an Old Idea

Impostor syndrome was first identified by psychologists in the 1970s after the discovery that most people, at one point or another, have the false feeling that they are underqualified for their job and fear that they will be discovered by colleagues or a boss. Though the idea of impostor syndrome is not new, its prevalence has increased with more hybrid and remote work arrangements, particularly since the isolation of working alone and the absence of regular feedback from colleagues and superiors can lead to confirmation bias, where people may begin to look for signs that support their doubts, and ignore evidence otherwise.

A 2020 study titled “Prevalence, Predictors, and Treatment of Impostor Syndrome: a Systematic Review” found that [roughly 82% of people have suffered from impostor syndrome](#) at some point in their career. Another recent survey from HubSpot found that, of people with a minimum of three years of experience in the field they work in, [88% of employees have experienced impostor syndrome](#). With a recent McKinsey & Co. study finding that [more than 50% of the working population now works remotely](#), it is important for managers to be aware of this problem and look for signs that employees may be experiencing impostor syndrome. Failing to do so can increase the likelihood that employees may leave.

Spotting the Signs

Identifying employees experiencing impostor syndrome can be difficult, as most people suffering from it tend to hide the fact that anything is wrong. Fortunately, there are still steps managers can take to prevent losing employees to impostor syndrome, even when it may not be obvious which people are experiencing it.

- **Watch for indicators of imposter syndrome**, such as self-deprecating comments from employees or signs that an individual is hesitant to speak up and share their own views or input on video conference calls. Employees with imposter syndrome may [brush off praise, downplay compliments, and attribute any achievements to luck](#) or another team member. Setting up short one-on-one meetings to see how employees are doing and feeling is one way to combat such doubts.
- **Use team meetings to boost morale.** Meeting with your team doesn't have to be just about project updates and brainstorming. Asking each person on the team to give a teammate a positive shout-out goes a long way toward boosting each other's confidence and building relationships between employees. It also helps your team see that their work and skills are valued by their peers. If you can encourage all employees to share their thoughts and feedback, this evens the playing field for everyone to join the conversation.
- **Intentionally provide employees with positive and constructive feedback** regarding their performance on a regular basis. When employees do not receive enough feedback, it enhances the likelihood that any doubts they have about their performance or qualifications will take over.

Making it clear to employees that they are not alone in their feelings is important, particularly if managers have had the same feelings and are able to share their own experiences, along with how they overcame those feelings of doubt. Given the prevalence of impostor syndrome, taking some of the above steps is the best way for managers to reduce the likelihood of unnecessarily losing good employees, particularly as more and more employees work remotely.

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ECONOMY & RATES

Rates As Of: 01/13/2023 11:45AM (GMT-0800)

Treasury	Yields	MTD Chg	YTD Chg
3M	4.66	0.24	0.24
6M	4.76	0.00	0.00
1Y	4.66	-0.04	-0.04
2Y	4.21	-0.22	-0.22
5Y	3.60	-0.40	-0.40
10Y	3.51	-0.37	-0.37
30Y	3.62	-0.34	-0.34
FF Market	FF Disc	IORR	
4.33	4.50	4.40	
SOFR	Prime	OBER	
4.30	7.50	4.32	

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