



9 signs

you have a workforce
productivity problem.

introduction.

Several studies from organisations including [Stanford](#) and [Pew Research](#) have shed some light on the factors that can impact your workforce productivity. Answers can range from shifts and work weeks that are too long to employees who aren't happy with their job or even their lives. But you can't address these unless you realise there's an employee productivity problem to begin with.

Here are nine tell-tale signs that worker productivity issues might be the issue behind sluggish processes and other negative outcomes. Even if you believe everything's going well in your ranks, it's a good idea to check in with these types of signs to ensure it's really going as well as you think it is.

1. missing service-level agreements or quotas.

Some signs are more obvious than others. If your production lines aren't able to keep up with contracted demand, you certainly have an issue—and perhaps it's a productivity problem.

Take some time to talk to subject-matter experts, view processes on the frontline and understand how the service-level agreements (SLAs) or other goals were established. You need to answer an important question before you start trying to bring productivity numbers up: Was there overpromising involved upline, or is your workforce simply not meeting a demand it's capable of?

Either way, you have work to do.

But the answer informs how you approach it.

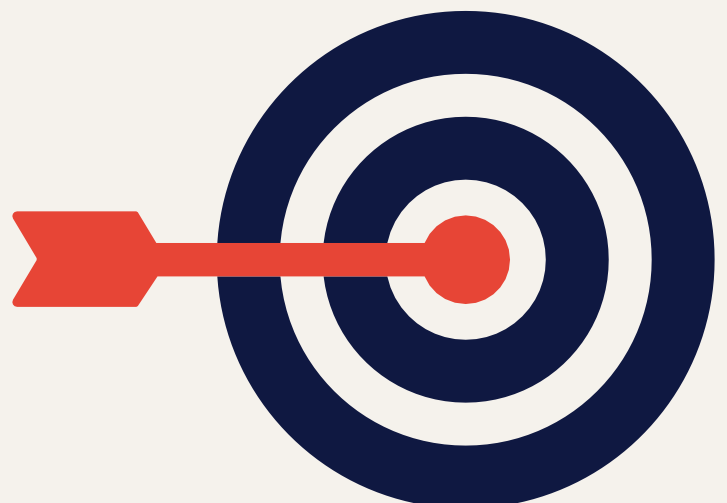


2. employees not meeting individual goals.

Team, department and company-wide goals aren't the only indicators of productivity. Individual team member goals can help you deep dive into productivity. Some examples of helpful information that can come out of this exercise include:

- are a few people not hitting goals?
This can point to a need for some one-on-one coaching or, in cases where someone is simply not doing the work or following instructions, disciplinary action.
- is an entire team missing their goals?
Common reasons for this can include supervisory issues, problems with training or communication, issues in the process or with resources or even a bad actor causing everyone to be less productive.
- are goals an issue at certain times?
This might indicate that people are working excessive hours or that certain shifts don't have the resources they need for efficiency.

Once you figure out why people might not be meeting their goals, take action to better equip them via coaching, stronger workforce management or addressing issues within the process.



3. no clear performance expectations.

Not all productivity issues are related to actual performance metrics. In fact, one of the signs that something could be amiss on your floors or in your supply chain is that you aren't clear on what those metrics should look like.

If workers and teams don't know what they're supposed to accomplish—and why—there's a good chance they're not accomplishing what you need them to. It's important to set business-facing goals and tie those to individual goals or quotas for each person. Then, ensure those expectations are clearly communicated and that everyone understands how what they do drives overall success.

4. you end up over budget.

Costs—especially those related to labour—that exceed expectations can be a sign that productivity isn't ideal. Often the answer to a productivity push, especially in a manufacturing environment, is to throw more people and hours at the problem. So, you might chalk that extra expense up to overtime hours or temp workers.

But according to a Stanford study, workers who are putting in [50 or more hours a week](#) are likely less productive, especially in those last 10 hours. If you're seeing increasing costs to get the same work done, it may be time to look more closely at productivity and processes to find out if you and your teams can work smarter instead of harder (and longer).

5. signs of team member stress.

Burnout and stress aren't just signs you're working people too hard. They could also be symptoms of worker frustration because processes just aren't getting the job done. And if processes are frustrating, you're likely losing productivity somewhere.

Employee wellness, in general, is also important for productivity. Talk to team members to find out if there are wellness issues that you might help address.

6. poor quality or excess errors.

Employee productivity issues lead to unbalanced workloads. Either the burden falls to another worker or team, or the team has to work harder later to make up for lower productivity earlier in the day, week or month. That creates opportunities for error and poor work that can show up down the line or in the final product.



7. team members aren't positively engaged.

Productive team members tend to care about the process, company and end product more than unproductive ones. Whether someone simply doesn't care and is just showing up to punch a clock or you're dealing with employee morale issues, the results can be the same: they aren't engaged and may not be as productive as possible.

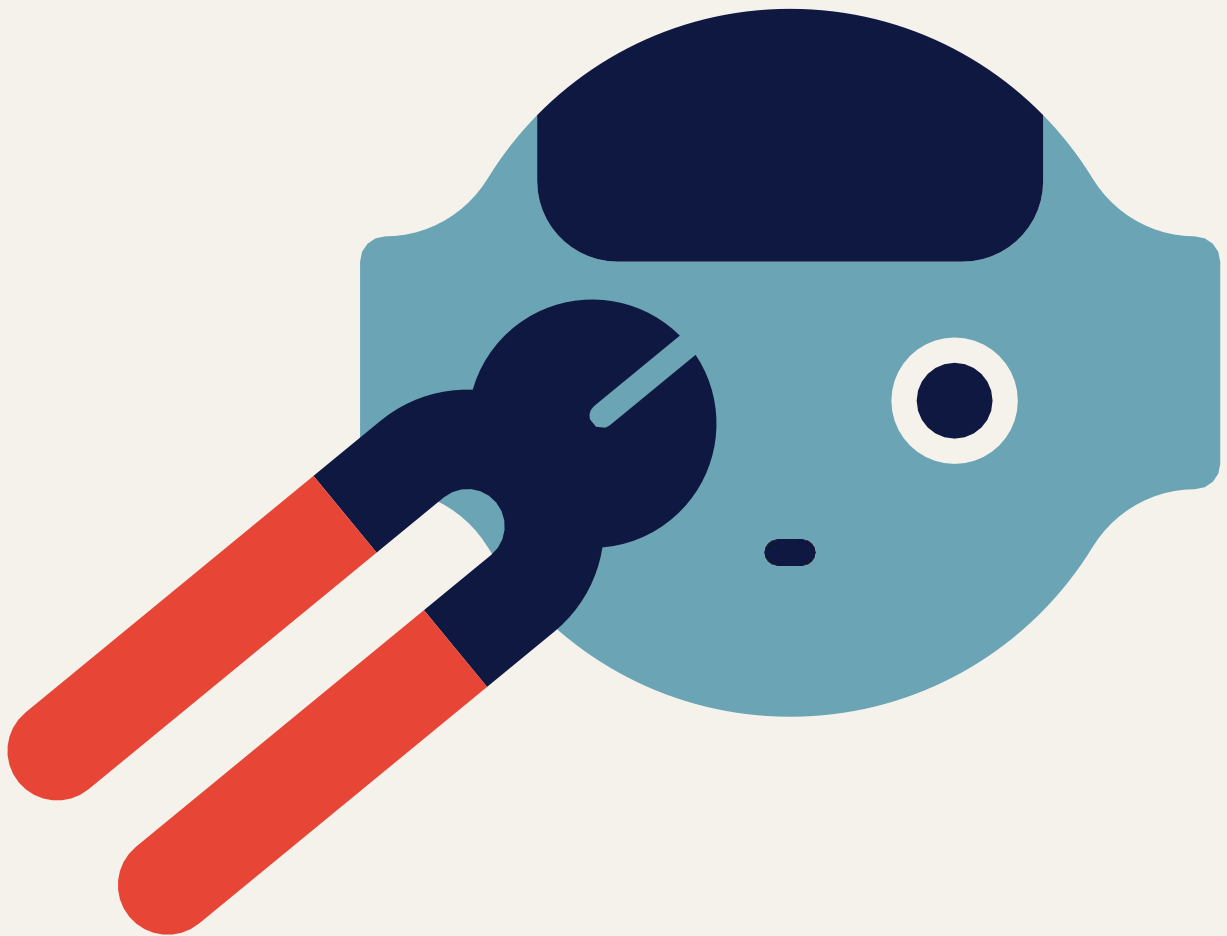
Certainly, not everyone's a go-getter. But if you don't have any standouts on your team, you may want to look more closely at productivity.

8. absenteeism is high.

If people are missing a lot of work and that's why production numbers are down, you could be dealing with a problem of absenteeism. People call in for a variety of reasons, including health issues, being uncomfortable with work culture, burnout and simply being bored with their jobs. Addressing overall worker well-being and taking time to talk with your employees about what they want and need from their jobs can help you begin to solve these issues.

9. bottlenecks keep occurring.

Bottlenecks can kill productivity, and they're often an issue of process or machinery. However, some bottlenecks occur because of worker productivity. Before you assume the problem is with workers, check machines and other inputs for potential workflow issues. But be aware that bottlenecks and low productivity often go hand-in-hand.



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Whether you've ruled out productivity issues and decided you simply need more feet on the ground or you could use some high-powered HR management support, Randstad can help.

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