

# Viewpoint

Business First welcomes letters to the editor

Send op-ed questions or ideas to Editor Shea Van Hoy at [svanhoy@bizjournals.com](mailto:svanhoy@bizjournals.com)

## OPINION

# A perfect storm — the biggest workplace issue is being ignored

**D**ysfunctional decision-making and decision fatigue. Employee turnover. Position vacancies going beyond 90 days. Career paths and growth plans aren't communicated to your employees. Leaders lacking work/life balance and on the verge of burnout. Low engagement. Change resistant employees and systems. Lack of innovation in problem-solving. Fear of making a mistake. First-time managers lacking people leadership skills. Unrealistic project timelines are the norm. Your people are overworked. Poor internal communication. Low trust and sense of belonging.

These are some of today's most common workplace issues. And what do all these issues have in common?

It's perfectionism. Yes — perfectionism.

So, what does perfectionism have to do with dysfunction in the workplace? Everything. It is the dysfunction in the workplace.

What is perfectionism? Let's bring it back to how it shows up in ourselves. It's when you hustle for your self-worth. It's when you do things for love instead of from love. It's when you please, overcommit, experience imposter syndrome, obsessively think, criticize yourself over a mistake, procrastinate, have unrealistic expectations of yourself and others, and avoid difficult conversations.

Ninety-two percent of people are struggling with some form of perfectionism — and if it's impacting your people at this high of a rate — it's having the same impact on your workplace, your culture and your performance.

Let's think about the leader that sends emails to his team at 9:30 p.m., with the instructions to "ignore until the next day." Let's be real — your employees are not able to ignore that email and now they are thinking about it all night instead of being present with their families.

This is perfectionism. And it's impacting your ability to create work/



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“Perfectionism is all around you at work. And yet still — no one is talking about it.”

life boundaries for your people and avoid the low performance/burnout cycle.

Let's think about the colleague that has been avoiding the difficult performance conversation with her direct report. She's afraid of upsetting this person and fears the possibility they could quit her team.

This is perfectionism. And it's impacting your internal talent pipeline, performance management, and relationships between members of your team.

Think about the team member who sends an email to her leadership team, and after sending the email she realizes there was a typo. She obsesses about it all day, criticizing herself, and fearing judgment from her leadership team.

This is perfectionism. And it's impacting your team member's confidence and productivity.

Perfectionism is all around you at work. And yet still — no one is talking about it. Eighty-five percent of workplaces have cultures of perfectionism (up nearly 20% since 2020), according to The Hardin Group's research on the impact of perfectionism in the workplace.

We need to do something about this now. Perfectionism is impacting your employee's productivity by 61%, their ability to innovate by 66%, their relationship-building by 72%, and



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their confidence by 62%.

So where do we go from here? Well, first it's time to embrace the fact that perfectionism has likely made its way into your organization. And second— the faster you embrace this, the faster you will get ahead of your competitors.

The next thing to do is assess your cultural norms — look at your norms around performance management, decision-making, communication systems, inclusion and belonging, onboarding, offboarding, change management, product innovation, sales and training. Pick one area and do an assessment of how perfection could be holding you back.

The only failure here is to do nothing. Be open to doing things differently.

Imagine a world where you are leading with excellence, you have trust and open communication, a shared vision of success, trust and belonging, clear roles and expectations, high performance and productivity, effective conflict management, collaboration and innovation, diversity of thought, clear decision-making lines, recognition and appreciation, adaptive and resilient leadership, and it's a fun and fulfilling environment.

This is a perfection-free workplace. And it's possible for you and your organization.

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