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ADRIANUS HITIJAHUBESSY, TOMMY MARTIN, INDRA SJURIAH,  
GIOVANNI UMBOH, HARSHET LUNANI, AND HEINRICH VINCENT.

By Olly Riches

# Managing Millennial Burnout in Indonesia

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**We have heard** it before – this burnout that appears to be unique to millennials. Some may argue it could happen to anyone concurrently juggling work, relationships, education, social-media culture and parenthood at some point in their lives, so what makes the millennial burnout different? Their mindset.

Millennials were raised with more parental involvement than any other and optimised to enter the working world with the best possible tutors and tools. They were instilled with the notion that hard work and self-optimisation would lead them to a better life. Millennials are also the first generation that grew-up using social media as a major communication tool. Since they were raised to self-optimize for success, this social media culture



In Indonesia, there are a lot of gaps in training and development for leaders, and it is still not seen as an investment area for companies. We have come across candidates who are unsure about moving to a leadership role. They don't think they will get the support, training, and professional development opportunities required to become successful leaders. Employers need to understand that these new managers are not only getting to know their new responsibilities but also learning to manage people, people with different personalities, levels of emotional maturity and working styles. Therefore, investment in this area is vital for a sustainable business.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the millennial burnout has been elevated to a new level. Millennial managers tend to feel even more overwhelmed when they have to support others during such trying times, so much so that they neglect their own well-being.

Michael Page Indonesia's Talent Trends 2022 report titled 'The Great X' found that millennials experienced the highest stress levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. 50% of millennials say that their stress levels at work had gone up during the pandemic. That is not to say that the other age groups are not stressed, but they are less stressed when compared to millennials.

Millennials managers tend to take the brunt of the hit when companies reduce headcounts or react slowly when implementing changes and new processes needed to succeed during the pandemic. Those in middle management end up overworking to fill gaps and feeling overwhelmed due to unclear communication from senior leaders. In other words, prone-to-burnout millennials become even more likely to burn out as they need to step up and support an already-wearied workforce.

On the flip side, the pandemic has helped people realize that their well-being is more important than work. While the well-being "gurus" may have been advocating this for many years, it took the pandemic for people to truly understand what it meant to prioritise their well-being and happiness.

Our report findings revealed that 66% of millennials would sacrifice a better pay and benefits package for better well-being. This is not to say that people would not be attracted to high salaries. It means that if given a choice to



creates a new set of stressors as they compare their milestones against that of their peers.

Stress at work usually stems from various factors such as toxic company culture, unrewarding work, overwhelming workload and a lack of ownership, and prolonged exposure to these elements leads to work burnout. Millennials are mostly in their thirties and have been in the workforce for six to 15 years. At the workplace, many are middle managers. They toggle between supervisors and supervisees, which adds more stress to the regular stress levels of the average worker.

Managing people may seem like a natural next step on the career ladder, but it isn't. Larger organisations provide people management training and support for employees moving into managerial positions, but many times, smaller companies and local conglomerates tend to skip this crucial step.

OLLY RICHES IS THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF MICHAEL PAGE IN INDONESIA

choose between two jobs, one that offers more money and one with better company culture and employee experience, candidates would choose the latter.

Work burnout becomes inevitable when people continue to work or think about work after official work hours, and try to solve all their problems by themselves. They need to start sharing their challenges and issues with their managers. That can be more challenging than it sounds. It's a brave first step. Often, employees do not feel comfortable speaking up because they do not feel that they can talk about such things at work. They don't want to come across as "weak" or "less". The onus thus falls on the employer. Companies need to set the tone, lead with empathy and create a culture where people feel safe to speak up, especially during the pandemic.

Before a millennial employee, or any employee for that matter, gets pushed to the brink of burnout, organization should seek feedback regularly to find out what is working and what is not. Take the time to listen and show sincere interest in their needs, challenges and aspirations. These would help employers understand how to support their employees to do their jobs well and take appropriate steps to improve any situation.

Sometimes, a change of environment or role is the remedy. Companies can consider moving employees to another department or role within the organisation. Needless to

say, before doing that, employees should be assessed for job suitability.

On top of that, companies need to demonstrate that they also prioritise employees' well-being. They should encourage their employees to take breaks and even get away on vacations, to create that work-life balance.

Companies must also not neglect millennials' career advancement plans, aside from prioritising their well-being and offering support and professional development. Despite being stressed out, millennials are still very much looking for career advancement. 85% of respondents from our report findings said they want a change in career, role or industry, while 52% are looking for career progression.

While there is still much to be done to help prevent millennial burnout in Indonesia, many companies have stepped up to support this group of employees.

Around 43% of millennial respondents for our report said that their employers had made extra efforts to help them manage heightened stress levels during the pandemic. While 52% believe their employers care about their well-being and happiness, and 46% said that their employers took active steps to ensure work-life balance.

It takes a multi-pronged approach to address millennial burnout in Indonesia. If that feels overwhelming, companies can keep the strategy simple: Listen with empathy and follow with appropriate actions. **F**



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