

## Hey! What's New? 2025-81

### It's 8 PM, and Yes, You Are Working

A blog on the Korn Ferry webpage notes that new data shows a spike in work meetings after 8:00 pm. Does the trend reflect a “crisis mode” at firms today?, it asks.

For employees at every level – from entry level to management to senior leadership – nighttime work is fast becoming a workplace norm, the blog says. “Indeed, meetings scheduled for 8 PM or later are up 16% so far this year, according to new work-trend data. If it isn't a meeting, it's a message: An average of more than 50 messages are sent or received after work hours, and 29% of employees check email, chat, or text after 10:00 pm.”

The blog goes on to explain that experts say most of this has nothing to do with people putting off work until the evening, which was once common among remote workers and during the pandemic. “This is less about remote work and more about firms constantly operating in crisis mode,” says Karrin Randle, senior principal in Korn Ferry's Culture, Change and Communications practice.

Indeed, whether it's an emergency meeting to address a surprise resignation, an overseas call to discuss a client issue, or a videoconference about a potential trade war disrupting supply chains, many leaders and managers say they feel like a new crisis arises as soon as they've put one out. To be sure, according to the data, 48% of employees and 52% of leaders feel work has become “chaotic and fragmented.”

“To some degree, of course, there can be logical and practical reasons for occasionally working in the evening,” the blog points out. “Client conferences and team calls between time zones are common in the global remote economy, representing one-third of all meetings. Workers still highly value flexibility, and situations do still arise, both at work and home, that require catching up at night. And studies show that some night owls are more efficient and productive in the evening, in part because there are fewer distractions.”

But, it goes to say, “experts point to the current job market and corporate culture as bigger factors. As leaders across industries push a performance agenda of ‘do more’ while also lauding AI's potential to replace workers, employees are worried about their jobs.

“There's a lot of fear about layoffs that is leading people to always be ‘on,’” says Colleen Cox, a principal at Korn Ferry specializing in organizational strategy. JP Sniffen, practice leader in Korn Ferry's Military Center of Expertise, agrees: Having to catch up on work at night, he says, is a natural byproduct of organizations flattening leadership by eliminating multiple layers of management. “The repercussions of pushing more work on people is that they can't fit it all into a regular workday,” he says.

For Randle, every after-hours meeting, message, or minute is “a cultural decision in disguise.” According to the blog, “many leaders still equate long hours with commitment and loyalty, rewarding those who put in extra time with promotions, raises, and bonuses. Others believe that since they work long hours themselves, their employees should too. Some experts worry that both of these approaches can lead to issues ranging from burnout to disengagement to turnover.”

Randle advises leaders to think about hours worked in the context of strategy. “For instance, is scheduling late meetings furthering your global strategy and driving results? If the meeting is low value, can it be moved or eliminated? She says leaders can also model better work-life balance by publicly logging off or by measuring success not by hours worked but by engagement and impact. For most people, late meetings and a sense of being constantly plugged in don’t enable success.”

For more, see [It’s 8 PM, and Yes, You Are Working.](#)