

Quiet hiring: What it means for employers and employees

By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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'Quiet quitting' has been an HR buzzword for about a year now and is used to describe employees who refuse to do more than the bare minimum of their job description... but what about 'quiet hiring'? What is it and what does it mean in organisational terms?



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Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr's Nadeem Mahomed defines 'quiet hiring' as the "deliberate avoidance of hiring new employees by leveraging your available resources and skill sets with the employees that you do have."

Simply put, it will see employers expand the job description and workload of a current employee to fulfil a necessary operational requirement.

So what does this mean from a contractual point of view?

Mahomed says that while contract provisions allow for the altering of or addition to job descriptions as and when an employer deems it necessary, there are limitations.

Make it official

"[It] is important to obtain some sort of mutual agreement with the employee on what this enhanced role is going to be," he urges. He further recommends that this is put in writing, either as an addendum to the original employment contract or a signed amendment to the job description.

When increasing the responsibilities of an employee, it's vital to ensure they have the necessary skills to perform these additional duties. "If you identify a gap [in their skill set], it will be important then to upskill the employee in order for them to competently do their job," Mahomed continues.

In this way, upskilling is seen as part of the organisation's retention strategy where the employee benefits from developing or acquiring new skills, while adding value to the company.

When expecting an employee to take on a greater workload, Mahomed says employers must ensure that the worker actually has the capacity to adequately perform in this new function.

Employers will need to gauge whether their demands are attainable or impossible, as this new arrangement may well require the worker to sacrifice more personal/family time. Maintaining a balance between the employee's mental wellness and employer expectation is essential, Mahomed advises.

Benefits and conditions

"Be clear upfront on whether this enhanced portfolio, these additional tasks and requirements that you're expecting from the employee will receive an added remuneration or if there are any other added benefits that this will entail," says Mahomed.

If this new arrangement is only temporary, he continues, it is also important to be transparent as to how long the employee will be required to fill this role, as well as what will happen once this period ends.

Another point that will need to be discussed is whether this will impact any current working conditions or patterns - for example whether remote or hybrid workers will need to spend more time in the office and whether extended hours will be necessary.

"Keep in mind that if the employee earns below a statutory income threshold, that there are overtime implications in respect of payment or remuneration," Mahomed concludes.

While quiet hiring may seem a simple solution to a fill gap in an organisation's workforce, employers really do need to consider all of these factors before asking a current employee to step in.

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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