

Do-nothing employees consume good deal of boss' time

By Los Angeles Times

Slacker employees don't pull their weight. But they do a great job attaching it to their bosses.

Managers spend nearly 17 percent of their working hours dealing with poor performers, according to a report from staffing firm Robert Half International. That's basically a full day a week that could have been spent being productive.

And sucking up supervisors' time isn't the only downside to subpar workers, according to the report. Of the more than 1,400 chief financial officers interviewed by Robert Half, 95 percent said laggards can bring down office spirits.

"Bad hires are costly, not just for the drain they place on the budget but also in terms of lost morale, productivity and time," Max Messmer, chief executive of Robert Half, said in a statement.

They're like the human embodiment of a holiday or March Madness, except not nearly as enjoyable. During such periods, productivity slumps as workers become more distracted and take more time off, according to consulting firm Challenger Gray & Christmas.

So how best to avoid bringing aboard Peter Gibbons, the disgruntled programmer made famous from the movie "Office Space"?

First, managers shouldn't try to lone-wolf the hiring process, according to Robert Half. Instead of relying solely on their own instincts, they should ask employees what they're looking for in a teammate.

And supervisors should extend an offer immediately after making a hiring decision to avoid losing promising workers to competitors, according to the report.

Finally, lowball salaries won't get a good worker, according to the study, which reasons that if a company pays employees what they deserve, they're more likely to want to work harder.