

FEWER DAYS OFF, STAYING AT HOME, OR NO VACATION AT ALL?



Most employees look forward to taking a vacation, sometimes for months or even a year ahead. But according to a recent survey appearing on the CareerBuilder website, some workers might have to find other options – including skipping the vacation altogether. The survey shows that 65 percent of employees have taken or are planning a vacation. Though this amount is an improvement over last year's 61 percent, it still pales when compared to pre-recession 2007, when 80 percent of full-time workers had a vacation or were anticipating a vacation that year. Managers, in contrast, still keep days open on their calendars: 81 percent of the managers who participated in the survey either had vacation plans or had already gone on vacation. A little less than one in five employees, at 19 percent, said that a vacation is not financially viable. Nearly a fourth of workers surveyed in 2011 made the same claim, but it's clear that employees continue to feel the effects of the dire economic situation. For this year's survey as well as previous years, around 12 percent of employees have said that they could afford a vacation but have not made any plans. For some employees, not taking a vacation is a matter of time rather than a lack of resources. Fifteen percent of workers sacrificed vacation days in 2011 because there simply was not efficient time to use them. But if workers find any time, a vacation might be feasible, even if it's a little short. In 2007, twenty-four percent of workers opted for vacations consisting of 10 days



or more, but that number has dropped to only 17 percent this year.

So what are the other options? Employees can enjoy a vacation but stay in contact with work. That's what nearly 30 percent did, and that's what 37 percent of managers expected of vacationing workers – though managers specified that it's only expected in the case of a big project or ongoing major issue at the company. Or how about staying at home? Close to 40 percent of workers have taken a "staycation," or are planning on moving no further than their backyard. That's preferable to a family on a vacation without the employee – a necessity, at least once, for 23 percent of workers surveyed. "Managers may be more likely to afford vacations, but they should still be encouraging their employees to use paid time off, even if they are staying close to home," said Rosemary Haefner, CareerBuilder Vice President of Human Resources, in an article posted at the company's site. She added that "workers who maximize vacation time are less likely to burn out and more likely to maintain productivity levels. Heavy workloads and financial constraints can make it difficult to get away from work, but even if you're not traveling far from home, a few days away can have a very positive impact on your health and happiness." The survey was conducted online from February 9 to March 2, 2012, by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder. More than 5,000 full-time U.S. workers and more than 2,000 managers participated.