

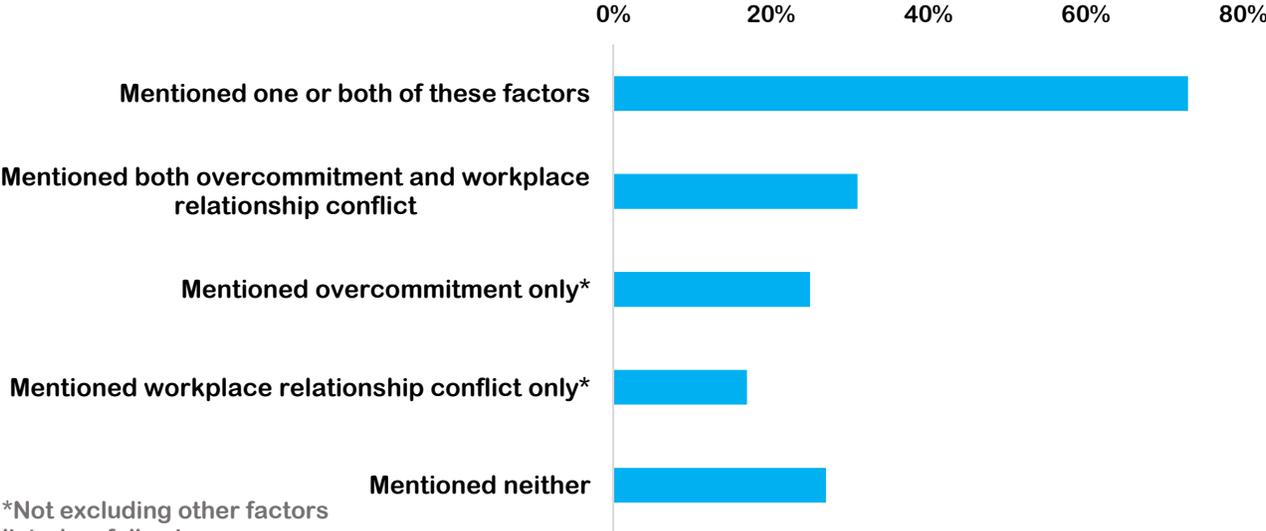
# TEN YEAR STUDY: TWO DOMINANT CHALLENGES FACING WORKERS PRIOR TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Overcommitment and workplace relationship conflict were the two most-cited challenges workers faced: 73% of all workers cited either overcommitment, workplace relationship conflict, or both; 31% said they struggled with both. These findings reflect data gathered from March 2010 – March 2020, the ten years between the end of the Great Recession and the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

July 8 2020, from RainmakerThinking

From March 2010 – March 2020—the ten-year span between the Great Recession and the COVID-19 Pandemic—RainmakerThinking asked open-ended questions of more than 10,000 workers from 84 different organizations in a wide range of industries, from 37 different countries, though predominantly from the United States. When asked, “What is the most difficult challenge you face when it comes to doing your job?” two answers emerged more than any other: overcommitment and workplace relationship conflict. (Because answers were provided as free-form narrative responses, most respondents mentioned more than one difficulty. As such, percentages do not total 100%.)

**Responses mentioning overcommitment and/or workplace relationship conflict when asked, "What is the most difficult challenge you face when it comes to doing your job?"**



\*Not excluding other factors listed on following page

### **The #1 Challenge Cited—Overcommitment**

More than half of responses—**56%**—cited some form of **overcommitment** as a significant challenge impacting an individual’s ability to carry out their day-to-day work. Responses defined as relating to overcommitment included such phrases as: “Not enough time in the day,” “Too much to do with not enough time,” “Lack of time,” “Competing priorities,” “Understaffing,” “Unrealistically high expectations with insufficient resources,” and “Work-life balance.”

### **The #2 Challenge Cited—Workplace relationship conflict**

Nearly half of responses—**48%**—cited some form of **workplace relationship conflict** as a significant challenge. Responses defined as relating to workplace relationship conflict included such phrases as: “People with bad attitudes,” “Conflict on the team,” “Different personalities,” “Unmotivated colleagues,” “Colleagues not willing to pull their weight,” “A need for better communication at all levels,” “My boss makes it difficult to do my work,” “Management makes it difficult to do my work,” “I’m required to answer to too many people,” and “Difficulty holding others accountable for their part of the work.”

In overlapping responses, nearly one third—**31%**—of all respondents mentioned **both overcommitment and workplace relationship conflict** in their responses, forming a significant plurality among those who mentioned more than one challenge. Altogether, **73%** of responses mentioned either both overcommitment and workplace relationship conflict, or at least one of those factors.

Among the 27% who mentioned neither, many other factors were mentioned. These other factors were, in addition, also mentioned in answers from the 73% of respondents who cited overcommitment and/or workplace relationship conflict.

These other factors are, in descending order:

- Specific policies, rules, regulations, or administrative requirements
- Compensation and benefits
- Equipment, IT, or specific systems
- Workspace, location, or working with others in remote locations
- Career path or growth opportunities
- Insufficient information to perform duties as required
- Change, uncertainty, or unclear/shifting priorities
- Insufficient training or development
- Cultural differences

## **THE STUDY**

This study is based on RainmakerThinking's analysis of written responses to open-ended questions collected via survey from 10,371 individual respondents between March 2010 and March 2020. The data reflects respondents from 37 countries (primarily the United States,) in 102 unique surveys conducted in 84 organizations. These organizations represent a range of private businesses, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and associations. Respondents were encouraged to provide up to two answers to these open-ended questions, and many respondents mentioned more than one factor. As such, percentages assigned to response data are not quotients of 100% totals. This data was selected for analysis from the ongoing workplace research conducted by RainmakerThinking since 1993.

Industries reflected in the data selected for this study include:

- Accounting
- Agriculture
- Automotive
- Beverage
- Biotech
- Construction
- Consumer products
- Education
- Electronics
- Engineering
- Entertainment
- Finance
- Fitness
- Food service
- Government
- Graphic design
- Healthcare
- Hospitality and hotels
- Human services
- Information technology
- Insurance
- Law
- Law enforcement
- Long-term and palliative care
- Manufacturing
- Media
- Military
- Non-profit

*Industries cont'd.*

- Pharmaceuticals
- Real estate
- Restaurants
- Retail
- Software programming
- Staffing
- Storage
- Technology
- Transportation
- Truck trailer transport
- Utilities

## **ABOUT RAINMAKERTHINKING**

RainmakerThinking, Inc. is a management research, training and consulting firm and the leading authority on generational issues in the workplace, founded in 1993 by best-selling author Bruce Tulgan.

They continue to lead three longitudinal workplace studies:

- **The Generational Shift in the Workforce** (since 1993): Monitoring the impact of generational change
- **Leadership, Management, and Supervision** (since 1995): Cataloguing management challenges and the best tools and techniques for solving those challenges
- **Human Capital Management** (since 1997): Cataloguing best practices in staffing, recruiting, selection, performance management, rewards, retention, succession planning, and leadership development

More than 500,000 individuals from hundreds of different organizations have participated in their research since 1993.

Based on these ongoing studies, they have provided custom research, training, and consulting services for more than 400 different organizations ranging from the United States Army to Wal-Mart.