



## say it with Mr Zloty

### HAVE FUN WITH MR ZLOTY

Two entrepreneurs were comparing notes on the difficulties of running a small business. "I started a new practice last year," the first one said. "I insist that each of my employees take at least a week off every three months." "Why in the world would you do that?" the other asked. "It's the best way I know of to learn which ones I can do without," the first one replied.

### READ AND LEARN

**This time we deal with absenteeism, presenteeism and hidden health related costs for companies.**

#### Presenteeism phenomenon.

Presenteeism, as defined by researchers is not about malingering i.e. pretending to be ill to avoid one's duties or **goofing off** on the job, for example surfing the internet when one is supposed to prepare a presentation. The term refers to productivity loss resulting from real health problems.

The research on presenteeism assumes that the employees do not take their jobs lightly; that most of them need and want to continue working if they can. These are people who **hang in** there when they get sick and try to figure out ways to carry on despite their symptoms. Presenteeism is usually more common in tough economic times when people are afraid of losing their jobs. If every employee stayed home each time a chronic condition **flared up**, work would never get done.

#### Ailments typical for presenteeism.

Many of the medical problems that result in presenteeism are by their nature relatively benign. More serious illnesses generally force people to stay home, often for extended periods. Research on presenteeism focuses on chronic or episodic **ailments** such as seasonal allergies, for instance, **hey fever**, asthma, migraines and other headaches, back pain, arthritis, gastrointestinal disorders and depression.

The majority of companies' direct health-related costs are generated by heart disease, cancer and other progressive conditions that require expensive medical care and drugs.

However, the illnesses people take with them to work, even though they incur far lower direct costs, usually account for a greater loss in productivity because they are so **prevalent**, so often go

untreated and typically occur during peak working years. Those indirect costs have long been largely invisible to employers.

#### Quality, quantity and illness.

Illness effects both the quantity and the quality of work. People might work more slowly and might make more, or more serious mistakes. Untreated allergies may **impede** concentration; gastrointestinal disorders and irritable bowel syndrome result in persistent distraction; depression causes irritability and fatigue which **hinder** employees' ability to work together.

#### Costs and illness.

According to studies in recent years depression set United States employers back well over \$30 billion a year in reduced performance at work. Pain, no matter what the cause, will always translate into lost time at work. Pain conditions such as headaches, arthritis and back problems cost almost \$50 billion a year in reduced employees' performance.

Most recent studies confirm that presenteeism is far more costly than illness-related absenteeism or disability. It has been estimated that the on-the-job productivity loss resulting from depression and pain is roughly three times greater than the absence-related productivity loss attributed to these conditions.

#### Stay home or show up dilemma.

It has been found that less time is actually lost from people staying home than from them showing up but not performing at their game. Although the findings are still controversial, presenteeism appears to cost companies substantially more than they spend directly on medical treatment and drugs. Such findings are still academic until a company takes a close look at the effects of illness on the productivity of its own workforce.

Productivity, always an **elusive** concept, is particularly difficult to measure in today's post-manufacturing, **widgit-sparse** economy, in which so little we produce can be counted. Many assessment tools are currently in use, each looking at reduced productivity from a slightly different angle. For example, average productivity loss resulting from migraine ranges from 4 to 5%, chronic back pain between 5 and 6%, depression between 7.5 and 8%.

Give it a thought as an employer or an employee. Now match the underlined words and expressions from the text with their definitions

	A. To obstruct or delay the progress of something
	B. a small mechanical device or a gadget; occurring rarely
	C. runny nose – result of an allergy, usually occurring in spring
	D. be inactive, lie down on the job

E. difficult to define or describe
F. physical or mental disorder, especially a mild illness
G. to reoccur, to start up, to pop up
H. to remain in the face of obstacles, to stay or go on despite difficulties
I. widely or commonly occurring, existing, accepted, or practiced.
J. to retard or obstruct the progress...synonym: hinder

KEY: 1D, 2H, 3G, 4F, 5C, 6I, 7J, 8A, 9E, 10B

**COMMUNICATION SKILL PILL**

**Absenteeism can lead to all sorts of problems and conflicts. When the conflict appears, you can use a great variety of phrases and expressions to stay diplomatic and assertive. Let's try.**

**In the sentences below, one phrase does not fit in the sentence:**

- ..... **that you can't come on time, I'd like you to stay longer.**  
a. Given; b. Seeing; c. Having
- ..... **a small compromise?**  
a. What would you say to; b. Would you be willing to; c. How do you feel about
- ..... **we introduced a more rigid policy on truancy?**  
a. What if; b. Supposing; c. How about
- I'm ..... **something like a day or two off.**  
a. looking at; b. thinking of; c. saying to
- ..... **that the whole production will stop when you are away?**  
a. Are you telling; b. Do you mean; c. Are you saying
- We think we can .....with that.**  
a. make; b. work; c. go

KEY: 1c, 2b, 3c, 4c, 5a, 6a

**COLOUR UP YOUR ENGLISH**

**This time you'll have a chance to colour up your English with expressions you can use to talk about problems at work and losing job.**

Match the idioms on the left with their definitions on the right.

	a) to receive a large payment on leaving the company
	b) to accept a decrease in one's salary
	c) to fire somebody
	d) to be dismissed from your job
	e) to be very busy
	f) to economize, to try to spend less money
	g) a job that has no chance of promotion or advancement
	h) in danger of losing one's job

KEY: 1g, 2a, 3b, 4f, 5c, 6h, 7e, 8d

**Now complete the following sentences with the idioms above in the correct form.**

- She wasn't able to finish the report as she was ..... with other work.
- Tim ..... when they found out that he'd lied about his qualifications.
- She left the company because she was very ambitious and had no perspectives in that .....
- Lucky you! You won't have to find a job very quickly with such a huge ..... you've received!
- I've noticed lately Tom's been more conscientious about the accuracy and quality of his work, he must have been warned that his job was .....
- We have been forced to ..... on expenses during these severe economic times.
- The telephone workers were forced to ..... after the strike.
- After the argument with CEO, Sam was given his .....

KEY: 1. snowed under, 2. got the sack, 3. dead end job, 4. golden handshake, 5. on the line, 6. cut corners, 7. take a pay cut, 8. marching orders

**MORE FUN WITH MR ZLOTY**

- A company, feeling it was time for a shakeup, hires a new CEO. This new boss is determined to get rid of all the lazybones from the company.
- On a tour of the facilities, the CEO notices a guy leaning on a wall.
- The room is full of workers and he wants to let them know he means business!
- The CEO walks up to the guy and asks, "And how much money do you make a week?"
- Undaunted, the young man looks at him and replies, "I make \$300.00 a week. Why?"
- The CEO then hands the guy \$300 in cash and screams, "Here's a week's pay, now GET OUT and don't come back!"
- Feeling pretty good about his first firing, the CEO looks around the room and asks "Does anyone want to tell me what that goof-off did here?"
- With a sheepish grin, one of the other workers mutters, "Pizza delivery guy from Domino's."



**DZIAŁ SZKOLEŃ DLA FIRM**

ZASIĘG OGÓLNOPOLSKI  
UL. PANDY 13 LOK. 5  
02-202 WARSZAWA  
TEL/FAX 022 824 23 93

**SZKOŁY JĘZYKOWE**

Centrum  
ul. Widok 19  
00-026 Warszawa  
tel/fax 022 825 11 11

Ochota/Szcześliwice  
ul. Włodarzewska  
02-384 Warszawa  
tel/fax 022 822 61 68

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