

How to block boreout and reignite your career in 2024

Few people are unaware of burnout - the state of extreme stress, exhaustion, and overload that can dramatically affect one's work, personal life and well-being. Less well-known, however, is another sub-optimal state that is prevalent in workplaces across the globe and thankfully much easier to address – the state of boreout.



Image source: RDNE Stock project from [Pexels](#)

Boreout is characterised by low motivation, low challenge, and low interest that can result from having too little to do, too much routine, too little autonomy at work or simply having become too comfortable with the daily work at hand. While it is not as serious as burnout, boreout also has a significant negative impact on quality of life and career prospects, a leadership expert says.

Impact of boreout

“Boreout can lead to reduced productivity, performance, and satisfaction at work, and will most likely affect your happiness, well-being, and fulfilment in life, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration and despondency,” says Advaita Naidoo, Africa MD at Jack Hammer, African executive search firm.

“Boreout happens when you are not optimally using your skills, talents and passions at work. Thankfully, recognising that your lack of engagement at work could be a result of you not living up to your full potential, and is not necessarily a result of other, more challenging problems, is the first step to embarking on a new path towards success,” she says.

Boreout is not inevitable or irreversible, and there are many ways in which you can course-correct to a more fulfilling career path. Additionally, managers and leaders can take an active role in ensuring their teams become more engaged, Naidoo says.

Emphasise engagement

She notes that during this time of year, many employees would have been through a performance review. However, these

reviews are typically retrospective and focus on performance improvement rather than placing emphasis on how an employee might want to be engaged in the new year.



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Chris Blair 18 Dec 2023



“Boreout might sound like a frivolous problem, but it is far from it, and employers should take note. It can lead to lost productivity costs, as bored employees tend to work slower, make more mistakes, or waste time on irrelevant activities.

“It can also lead to employee turnover, as disengaged employees tend to feel dissatisfied, unhappy, or unmotivated at work, and may look for other jobs that offer more challenge, variety, or meaning. Additionally, boreout can affect the morale, culture, and reputation of the organisation. So as the year winds down, this is a perfect time for leaders to assist their teams in formulating a positive vision,” Naidoo says.

Seek new challenges

Boredom is not often spoken about, but it sets in for many over the course of their careers. For burnout, the remedy is to reduce work. For boreout, it is to actively look for ways to ignite your mental flame again, and move towards something new. Even small changes can be energising. To overcome boreout, individuals need to identify new challenges, and leaders can assist in this regard, says Naidoo.

“You can do this by seeking new opportunities, learning new skills, or taking on more responsibility, and asking for ongoing and strategic feedback.”

“The first and biggest hurdle for those who recognise themselves as being in a state of boreout, is to get the ball rolling and build up momentum again. Recognising what’s going on and getting out of your safe, comfortable yet frustrating place by seeking out new opportunities and challenges, is very likely to set you on a new path to success and fulfilment.”

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