Personal & Sustainable Strategies to Prevent Work-Related Burnout

/\*

Purpose: To introduce your work. Include a clear title, your name, degree, minor, date, course, and anything else (e.g., picture/illustration) that will bring the reader into your written work.

\*/

By: Gabriel Smith-Dalrymple

Major: BA of Applied Computing / Minor: Consciousness & Creativity

October 25, 2020

CSS 496

Table of Contents

[Introduction 3](#_Toc56364393)

[Background 3](#_Toc56364394)

[Methodology 3](#_Toc56364395)

[Results 4](#_Toc56364396)

[Before/After the Workday 4](#_Toc56364397)

[During the Workday 4](#_Toc56364398)

[Outside of Work 4](#_Toc56364399)

[Conclusion 4](#_Toc56364400)

[Limitations 5](#_Toc56364401)

[Future Work 5](#_Toc56364402)

[Bibliography 5](#_Toc56364403)

# Introduction

The software development industry has changed how it creates software, by focusing more and more on the client, with the results of that being more projects completed, and a better environment for the customer. While the process of developing software has radically evolved over the years, the practice of it moves at a glacial pace.

In 2018 the turnover rate in the technology industry was 13.2% beating out each and every industry, including the retail and consumer products industry [1]. Drilling down into the data some professions of the tech industry are at turnover rates as high as 23.3%, while retail salesperson, the highest turnover rate in the retail industry, peaked at only 19.3%.

When conducting any research on an industry wide problem it is important to understand that while work-related burnout affects every person, profession, and industry differently, there are two industries that at the top:

* Computer Games: Out of all the technology industries this has the highest turnover rate at 15.5%.
* Computer Software Development: Computer software makes up a large portion of the technology field and still has a turnover rate of 13.3%.

The key difference between the high turnover rate in the technology field verses most of the other fields is that when someone leaves a role in the technology field, they get another job in the technology field, rather than moving to a different industry like most other industries.

Having someone leave a role in the technology industry to take another role in the technology field may not seem too bad at the start, the problems start to arise when you look at how it takes on average around a month to hire a new developer [2], and it takes about six months to become fully proficient at a new role [3]. With that in mind you’re looking at around seven months of a less than optimal performance from the employee, and if you have an employee that is transitioning because of work-related burnout it is possible to extend that duration even longer since work-related burnout already impairs a person’s ability to perform their best.

Speaking of work-related burnout, it is important to define what I am using as my definition of work-related burnout, “when your work begins to negatively affect other parts of your life; personal, family, health, mental health”. Dr. Christina Maslach, the person who coined the term “burnout”, uses this definition of burnout, “a psychological syndrome involving emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment...” [4]. Another way to think about work-related burnout is when you are in a state where your work efforts are as likely to result in problems for the company, as they are benefits, and a lack of caring which one it is.

# Background

/\*

Purpose: To explain your work in relation to other work that's been done. In general, this requires you to:

* Summarize previous relevant work (could be research, but not necessarily), relevant applications, other activities related to your work.
* Explain how your work builds on, expands on, reflects, differs from, etc. the other work.
* As you discuss your work, you use the present tense.
* Be sure to CITE all your sources and include them in your Bibliography.

\*/

This project is an exploratory study to look for emerging patterns in how burnout affects software development professionals.

# Methodology

/\*

Purpose: To explain your methodology and/or architecture so clearly that others in the field can both understand it and replicate or borrow your process. This requires you to:

* Describe methodology, design, and data collection strategy to allow others to replicate your results.
* Articulate your customer requirements (these ought to be reflected in the goals of your project)
* Describe quality metrics and target values so that you can reason about the quality of your results!
* Narrate key junctures in the decision-making process, including the rationale for the major design decisions you made, and why these were advantageous!
* Describe any alternatives you considered, and explain why these were ultimately rejected in favor of your design choice!
* Explain how you plan to measure your results based on the desired!
* quality as you discuss your work, you use the present tense.

\*/

# Results

/\*

Purpose: To present your results of your method/design/architecture. Specifically, this means that you:

* Explain/Demonstrate the results of your work (how successful you were in meeting your goals and achieving the desired level of quality)
* Acknowledge, detail, and attempt to explain any unexpected or surprising results!
* Explain how you results measured against your quality desired!
* As you discuss your project, you use the PAST tense, since it's done and you're discussing what happened (past tense).

\*/

## Before/After the Workday

* “Commute to work” by taking a walk around the block.
* Have a dedicated start/end time.
* Don’t work off the clock.

## During the Workday

* Don’t accept non-emergency meetings or calls after a specific time.
* Normalize the practice of turning your camera off and on
* Use the appropriate software (MS Teams vs. Discord vs. Zoom vs. etc.)

## Outside of Work

* Use your vacation days and take some time off.
* Don’t be afraid to use your sick days as mental health days.
* Have a dedicated work area.
* Invest in a quality pair of headphones.
* Be realistic: It’s progress not perfection.
* Go on an adventure!

# Conclusion

/\*

Purpose: To reflect on your work and offer “next steps”. This means that you:

* Summarize the key results and takeaways (lessons) learned in your work. Use this as a section to be self-reflective about your work and your learning and to discuss the implications of your results beyond this moment.
* As you discuss your work, you use the PAST tense, since it's done and you're discussing what happened (past tense).

\*/

## Limitations

/\*

* As separate bullets, acknowledge and discuss limitations of your work for the field and/or research area.

\*/

## Future Work

/\*

* As separate bullets propose areas for future work.
* Here, you could use the future tense to refer to your work or what could be done in the future.

\*/

# Bibliography

Campbell, Dustin. Interview. Conducted by Gabriel Smith-Dalrymple, 12 October 2020.

[2] BinarCode. “What Is the Average Time It Takes to Hire a Software Engineer?” *BinarCode*, www.binarcode.com/blog/what-is-the-average-time-it-takes-to-hire-a-software-engineer/.

[1] Booz, Michael. “These 3 Industries Have the Highest Talent Turnover Rates.” *The 3 Industries with the Highest Turnover Rates | LinkedIn Talent Blog*, 15 Mar. 2018, business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2018/the-3-industries-with-the-highest-turnover-rates.

[3] Codementor. “Here's How You Should Onboard New Developers.” *Medium*, Medium, 26 Dec. 2017, medium.com/@CodementorIO/heres-how-you-should-onboard-new-developers-3adbd715dbc1.

[4] Maslach, Christina, and Michael P Leiter. “Understanding the Burnout Experience: Recent Research and Its Implications for Psychiatry.” *World Psychiatry : Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)*, John Wiley and Sons Inc., June 2016, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4911781/.