Workers are losing their chains --- High *staff turnover* is costly

Workers are *in a phase of* being *footloose* and *fancy-free*. The proportion of Americans leaving their jobs *voluntarily* is *at a 17-year high*. A survey by Gallup in 2017 found that around half of American employees were hoping to leave their current job.

footloose	自由自在的	fancy-free	无忧无虑的
voluntarily	自愿，以自由意志	at a 17-year high	达到 17 年来的新高
staff turnover	人事交替率	in a phase of	在…阶段

High turnover is not great news for employers. Nick South of the Boston Consulting Group says a certain amount of *churn* is good for bringing fresh blood into a company. But anything over 20% a year can be *disruptive*. Even in low-skilled jobs, replacing workers can be expensive. The post must be advertised; managers spend time interviewing; new workers take a while to *learn the ropes*.

churn	搅拌	disruptive	破坏性的
learn the ropes	懂行，弄清门道		

So how can companies *hang on to* their staff? Technology can help managers to spot particular individuals who might be planning to quit, and to *head off* the problem with some well-chosen words of encouragement or improved benefits; some *Silicon Valley* firms are looking into this approach. One academic paper looked at the language people used when communicating with colleagues, and how closely they *cleaved to* the linguistic style of their organizations.

hang on to	紧紧抓住	head off	阻止
Silicon Valley	硅谷	cleave to	坚持，忠于

The survey looked at over 10m emails exchanged over five years at an American tech firm. It found that new employees who were slow to learn the corporate *lingo* were more likely to get fired, and that *long-lasting* employees who veered away from the culture in their messages were more likely to quit for another job. But this raises the prospect of managers using artificial intelligence to *comb through* employees' emails. Instead, to make an old-fashioned suggestion, they could just stop by their desks for a chat.

lingo   行话，术语   long-lasting   永久的

comb through   仔细搜寻

My job consists of basically *masking* my *contempt* for the assholes in charge, and at least once a day retiring to the man's room, where I *fantasize* about a life that doesn't so closely *resemble* hell. A recent study found that keeping US employees was harder than ever, but this trend is not just American. Other studies show that 60% of people in Hong Kong don't enjoy their jobs, and the level is higher in Singapore and Malaysia. As for the mainland well, a Zhaopin survey showed that many white collar workers were dissatisfied with few promotion opportunities, and young workers are harder to keep than ever. *Prioritizing* creativity and flexibility over high salaries.

Wait, what the hell are those people doing? What company is this? Can we at least get some sad looking workers? That's better.

We've covered stories about how AI is being used to select and interview job applicants, and also review performance. Now tech companies are working on algorithms to detect, through inter-company emails, unhappy employees who might quit. But what if, this exact AI managing of humans is what makes us unhappy? Technology promised to give us the *4-day-work week* years ago, but instead, we just got more done and more was expected of us. Today's workers produce as much in one day, as *the pre-computer generation* did in the same industry in a week. But if your experience is increasingly being treated as a piece of data for an AI, Would you be happy?