



Stop Complainers and Energy Drainers Survey Results

This is a summary of the results of a survey conducted to provide raw data for the book **Stop Complainers and Energy Drainers: How to Negotiate Work Drama and Get More Done** (Wiley, March 2013). The survey ended Oct. 18, 2012, had 1071 respondents and was conducted electronically over a four month period. In addition to three questions regarding demographic information, eleven questions were a mix of single-select and multi-select multiple choice as well as open-ended questions and optional comments. Questions were asked about types of Complainers and Energy Drains, specific examples of Complainers and complaints, solutions that work, time spent handling complaints and days of the week people complained. Participants were asked if they had left a job due to Complainers, if they would take a promotion with pay increase which involved working with a chronic Complainer and under what circumstances they could be a Complainer. The following are the results.

* Who complains or bugs you the most during the work day? Please select your top 3 only.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Coworkers or team members			720	67.7 %
Employees who report to you			308	28.9 %
Your boss or people you report to			231	21.7 %
Suppliers / Vendors			117	11.0 %
Clients / Customers			282	26.5 %
Business partners / Contractors			95	8.9 %
Family members or close friends			232	21.8 %
Spouse or girlfriend / boyfriend			125	11.7 %
Other			68	6.3 %
Totals			1063	100%

Included in Other are telemarketers, students, volunteers, citizens, parents, union members, "people I don't know trying to connect on social media," "employees who don't report to me," "my client's employees," "neighbor's loud pets (work in home office)," and "I have no complainers."

* What types of things are they complaining about? Please select your top 3 only.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Job fear and/or pressure to perform			188	17.6 %
Unclear direction or lack of feedback from leadership			328	30.8 %
Too much work to do			387	36.3 %
Deadlines			151	14.1 %
Reorganization or change in work environment			198	18.6 %
New boss			24	2.2 %
Unrealistic demands from clients or customers			235	22.0 %
Incompetent vendors, suppliers or contractors			89	8.3 %
Incompetent coworkers or boss			289	27.1 %
Inadequate pay or benefits			105	9.8 %
Health issues			51	4.7 %
Personal or family issues			239	22.4 %
Not feeling heard or respected at work			183	17.1 %
Just feels good to vent or let off steam			217	20.3 %
Being micromanaged			101	9.4 %
Disagreements with coworkers			169	15.8 %
Other			82	7.7 %
Totals			1064	100%

Included in Other are location of work, "they want to be the boss," current affairs, politicians, economy, lawyers, government, taxes, "silly things," health, sports teams, budgets and inefficiencies.

* In addition to people, what types of things interrupt or drain your energy during the work day? Please select your top 3 only.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Technology challenges			458	43.1 %
Work environment			230	21.6 %
Reading and responding to email, IMs or texts			510	48.0 %
Phone calls & voice messages			224	21.0 %
Meetings / conference calls			378	35.5 %
Company bureaucracy / red tape			385	36.2 %
Bottlenecks / waiting for others to do their jobs			450	42.3 %
Other			91	8.5 %
Totals			1062	100%

Included in Other are travel, cliques, outside commitments, pointless noise, reading, surveys, financial pressure, paperwork, boredom, government requirements, traffic, cancelled and rescheduled meetings.

* How much of your time do complainers, interruptions and/or energy drainers occupy in a week?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
0 to 2 hours			232	21.6 %
3 to 6 hours			495	46.2 %
7 to 10 hours			216	20.1 %
11 to 15 hours			67	6.2 %
16 to 20 hours			32	2.9 %
More than 20 hours			23	2.1 %
No Response(s)			6	<1 %
Totals			1071	100%

This means that 78% of people are wasting *at least* 3-6 hours during the workweek with complainers, interruptions and energy drainers. That is a *minimum* of 1.4 months per year.

What day(s) of the week do you

experience complainers, interruptions or energy drainers the most?
believe this day(s) receives the most.

Please comment below why you

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Sunday			27	2.7 %
Monday			548	55.4 %
Tuesday			220	22.2 %
Wednesday			212	21.4 %
Thursday			224	22.6 %
Friday			274	27.7 %
Saturday			34	3.4 %
Totals			988	100%

Monday was overwhelmingly chosen. After Monday, the other work days were evenly distributed. (Note: Respondents were allowed to select more than one day.)

* How do you deal with a whiner or complainer? Please select your top 3 only.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Ignore them or leave			135	12.6 %
Avoid them			197	18.4 %
Agree and join in the complaining			52	4.8 %
Ask them to stop			46	4.3 %
Just let them vent			604	56.7 %
Redirect their focus			570	53.5 %
Change the subject			211	19.8 %
Keep conversation professional			408	38.3 %
Report them to leadership			13	1.2 %
Listen & try to solve their problem			510	47.8 %
I have no idea what to do			37	3.4 %
Other			78	7.3 %
Totals			1065	100%

Included in Other are "GET ANGRY." "Tell them life isn't fair." "Absorb their complaints which become a weight on my own shoulders." "I have no idea what to do. Coaching; mentoring. Nothing seems to work."

* Under what conditions are YOU likely to become a whiner or complainer? Please select your top 3 only.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Job fear and/or pressure to perform			152	14.2 %
Unclear direction or lack of feedback from leadership			470	44.1 %
Too much work to do			301	28.2 %
Deadlines			94	8.8 %
Reorganization or change in work environment			129	12.1 %
New boss			15	1.4 %
Unrealistic demands from clients or customers			303	28.4 %
Incompetent vendors, suppliers or contractors			142	13.3 %
Incompetent coworkers or boss			332	31.1 %
Inadequate pay or benefits			92	8.6 %
Health issues			45	4.2 %
Personal or family issues			123	11.5 %
Not feeling heard or respected at work			274	25.7 %
Just feels good to vent or let off steam			101	9.4 %
Being micromanaged			235	22.0 %
Disagreements with coworkers			67	6.2 %
Other			75	7.0 %
Totals			1065	100%

Included in Other are tired, being lied to, "I don't complain," Unethical business dealings and unprofessional behavior, financial pressures, duplication of efforts, I'm pleading the Fifth.



Which would you choose:

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
A \$10,000 annual pay raise that requires you to work daily with a chronic complainer			279	26.0 %
Work with people who don't complain at your same annual pay			784	73.2 %
No Response(s)			8	<1 %
Totals			1071	100%

Even in this economy, 73% said they would stay in the same job with the say pay instead of the \$10,000 which requires working daily with a chronic Complainer.



Have you ever left a job because you couldn't stand working with a complainer?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
No			945	88.2 %
Yes. Please comment below if you told someone in authority about the complainer and what action, if any, was taken.			119	11.1 %
No Response(s)			7	<1 %
Totals			1071	100%

Of the 11% of people who said they left their jobs, two-thirds said they told human resources or someone in management. One said satisfactory action was taken in a timely fashion. Others reported telling someone in management and/or human resources didn't work and, in several instances, made the problem worse.

Describe the worst complainer or whiner you have ever worked with. When were they at their worst? Who or what did they remind you of?

There were 608 responses with explanations, words of wisdom and descriptions. For a fun compilation of the descriptions people use for Complainers, see the last page of this report.

Describe your best success story of dealing with a whiner, complainer or energy drainer.

The book uses several of the real problems reported. Respondents' experiences are woven into case scenarios, complainer descriptions and strategies. Quotes, solutions and words of advice are reported. The respondents revealed several surprises about Complainers and how to stop them.



What is your gender?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Male			339	31.6 %
Female			718	67.0 %
No Response(s)			14	1.3 %
Totals			1071	100%

Women responded twice as much as men.



What is your age range?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
18-25			16	1.4 %
26-35			133	12.4 %
36-45			251	23.4 %
46-55			340	31.7 %
56-65			250	23.3 %
66+			66	6.1 %
No Response(s)			15	1.4 %
Totals			1071	100%

Sales, marketing and public relations had the most respondents followed by education and the financial industry. However, Complainers are found in all levels and all industries as indicated by those who took the survey.



Please check the professional field that best applies to your occupation:

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Attorney / Legal			26	2.4 %
Accounting / Financial / Banking			82	7.6 %
Sales / Marketing / Public Relations			139	12.9 %
Education / Academia			104	9.7 %
Manufacturing / Construction / Logistics			34	3.1 %
IT / Technical			71	6.6 %
Engineering / Science			56	5.2 %
CEO / Business Owner / Entrepreneur			67	6.2 %
Healthcare / Medical			54	5.0 %
Insurance / Underwriting / Financial Services			36	3.3 %
Nonprofit / Professional Association			54	5.0 %
Meetings / Hospitality / Restaurant			50	4.6 %
Organization Development / Training / Speaking			31	2.8 %
Property Management / Real Estate			18	1.6 %
Retail			12	1.1 %
Counseling / Psychology / Social Services			12	1.1 %
Human Resources / Staffing			43	4.0 %
Military / Government			19	1.7 %
Travel / Aviation			10	<1 %
Clerical / Administrative			49	4.5 %
Other			95	8.8 %
No Response(s)			9	<1 %
Totals			1071	100%

Other fields indicated are: automotive, religious, transportation, equipment rental, publishing, student, telecommunications, event venue management, water treatment, procurement, consulting, facilities services, architecture, elevator service, A/V and retired.



Presentations • Facilitation • Training
 (972) 416-3652 • www.JourneyOn.com • Linda@JourneyOn.com
 © 2013 All Rights Reserved/Linda Swindling, JD, CSP & Journey On

Here are some of the words people used to describe Complainers.

