

The unexpected rise of 5 new employee archetypes

 By [Kerry Morris](#)

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So much has changed, hasn't it? I noticed it in myself one day at the office when I stormed out unannounced in a rage of intolerance, stomping my heels at devil speed - just to get the hell out. I noticed it again in myself when I couldn't stay focussed for more than 67 seconds on a particular topic or work draft, without having to turn my attention to something else - forgetting intermittently what I was doing 67 seconds ago. First, I thought it was just me - I had lost the plot. But then, as the 'Levels' kept changing and curfews kept shortening and the hard months rolled on by, I noticed similar behaviour patterns in my colleagues.



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New ways, weird habits and even warning-worthy attitudes from the least suspecting employees in the office were quickly exploding and clouding my better judgment. The writing was on the wall: our work-way has flipped, and there's a new archetypical edge emerging from the ashes of our Covid-19 catastrophe: they're a little edgy, or a little weary, or a little over-focussed or a little under-focussed, or too cavalier, or too ballsy or too fearful – and guess what? One of these types is you. And me.

Here's what I know, from what I've seen - and as leaders of businesses, you should take care to know this too. Introducing ... the five new employee archetypes that have emerged through Covid-19 – and my personal tips on how to recognise them, work with them, lead them and improve upon them for the greater good of our working economy, and our sanity.

Five new employee archetypes every company should be conscious of:

1. The Late Bloomer (Low input, high surprises)

These are the tardy-but-not-on-purpose ones. Their time management sucks. They're always late, unapologetically. You'll find them tripping into the boardroom and the online call. They're up late at night, they're trailing behind on deadlines and they're blaming online schooling for all their dropped balls. Life for them is no picnic – but somehow -

through the grace of who knows what – they manage to pull it off. They deliver exceptional work. Three days late – but exceptional. It's a conundrum.

The personality crisis: Procrastination

The actual crisis: Time management

How to lead The Late Bloomer: Draw up a weekly task list with them. One that manages your weekly expectations, and supports their focus and direction.

#LateBloomer Hack: If you're a Late Bloomer - draw up a weekly (maybe daily) to-do list and divide it into a personal and professional column. No more than four priority tasks per column. Do them.

2. The Tab Slayer (always on, never on point)

They have 52 tabs open, their mom is on speed dial, their family WhatsApp group pings all day, they'll send 27 email responses in just under 4.2 minutes, and delegate 20 tasks in one morning. Disguised as overachievers, this is a classic case of quick fire, all smoke. The boss is kept happy, the clients are well managed, but the work ain't done. Too many tabs, too much wasted energy on the wrong things.

The personality crisis: Distraction

The actual crisis: Priority Management

How to lead The Tab Slayer: Cut out the emails – at least for a few hours. Develop them into a habit of talking on the phone. Three-minute conversations as opposed to drafting 20-minute emails will save time and focus - and will produce the right things done the right way.

#TabSlayer Hack: If you're a Tab Slayer - close 52 of your tabs. Like right now. Shut off your email – and get to work.

3. The Kill Joy (eye roll activity)

All news and no real facts. Sadly, this one's the office downer. Everything they discuss has to do with Covid-19 stats, and the things they saw on Facebook; they'll tell you what happened, how it happened and how many people died because it happened. Every negative story in the press – this is where you'll find it; including the one about the cousin three times removed that died of the C word, and why everyone who doesn't take ivermectin is doomed. Previously known as a "wet blanket" or "Office Drama Queen" – the Kill Joy takes the toxicity up a few notches with their conversation heavily dipped in misfortune, funerals and ICU. A new-age display of 'stuck on the problem, not the solution.' Enough said.

The personality crisis: Negativity

The actual crisis: Fear-led performance

How to lead The Kill Joy: gently, and with love. Empathise with their fear and remind them that joy still exists in the world. Also, send them on a Happiness Course.

#KillJoy Hack: If you're a Kill Joy - turn off the news. Stop reading Facebook (if just for a day). Write down one positive thing every day for the next 30 days - and share that with your colleagues rather.

4. The Load Shedder (previously known as The Slacker)

The lights are on but nobody's home. You'll often feel like you're in the waiting room with this employee. A certain numbness prevails. They take too long to finish any project; too long to get you any answers; too long to share their Zoom screen and generally too long to finish a sentence. Often, they'll blame their slackness on "Covid-19 brain" but truly, this output is a direct result of fear-based performance. Fear can render us sluggish and debilitates us in our performance. Fear can also manifest into sorrow and depression. This arche tends to feel safer living in the oblivion of life, rather than facing the reality of it. As a result, their coping mechanisms suffer, and their work suffers too.

The personality crisis: Overwhelm

The actual crisis: Inability to cope

How to lead The Load Shedder: Empathy is key. Spend more sessions with them, understanding their lack-lustre for their jobs, and their life. Find ways to encourage their confidence, and/or move them to another portfolio.

#LoadShedder Hack: If you're a Load Shedder - Raise your hand and ask for help. Identify which areas in your job are dragging you down or feel overwhelming. Discuss these with your line manager as a means to a solution.

5. The Bullet Train (high input, high output, big crash)

Make some room – this employee type is coming at you faster than a speeding bullet. They work hard. Too hard. Always seen banging away at their laptop – working from the office, in the car, at the doctor, at the kitchen nook. They are masters of excellence and get their work done in record time. They over produce and over deliver. An employer's dream, right? Wrong. This fast-tracking, die-hard is edging for a fatal fall from grace. This is our 'avoidance worker': they're using their work as a crutch to avoid the pandemic, avoid change, avoid their sadness, avoid themselves. They'll quite happily lose themselves in the work, until they burn their wicks to nothing. They have few friends at the office (if at all) and their over-performance is perceived as competitive and solo-ist (spoiler alert: they're also the most likely to resign when nobody sees it coming; coupled with a one-way ticket to India and a commitment to changing the world). Honestly, the most dangerous type of all the types! To be monitored closely.

The personality crisis: Volatility

The actual crisis: Avoidance

How to lead the Bullet Train: Move out of their way ... and observe the warning signs. Do not take work away from them – they're work junkies! Your best deal here is to watch, and whisper. Open the discussion gently about performance overload and the risks of burnout. Show you care - invest in their wellness; send them to a wellness forum or a breathing workshop or a few good coaching sessions.

#BulletTrain Hack: If you're a Bullet Train – woah, put the brakes on babe. Nobody's coming for you. Try discipline your time at work and schedule an 8am-5pm bullet proof day; find smarter ways to fill up your after-hours like reading a book, practicing yoga or visiting a friend.

ABOUT KERRY MORRIS

Kerry Morris is the CEO of South Africa's award-winning recruitment and labour services agency, Tower Group. A recognised leader of trade and industry, spanning a career of 20 years, Kerry's extensive experience in human capital engagement sets her apart as one of South Africa's leading front runners for key-quality human resources, and an advocate for empowering women in business.

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