

HOW TO IDENTIFY A NIGHTMARE WORKPLACE

1 Interview at the beginning or end of the day.

Arrive early for your morning interview and observe the workers as they arrive. Slouching, pouting, and dejected expressions indicate low morale. Note whether workers acknowledge the receptionist with a smile and a greeting or are oblivious to the receptionist. With an interview at the end of the day, observe if large numbers of workers leave promptly at quitting time, which may indicate a bored, clock-watching staff. Large numbers of people working late, however, may indicate that employees are overworked and deadlines are unrealistic.

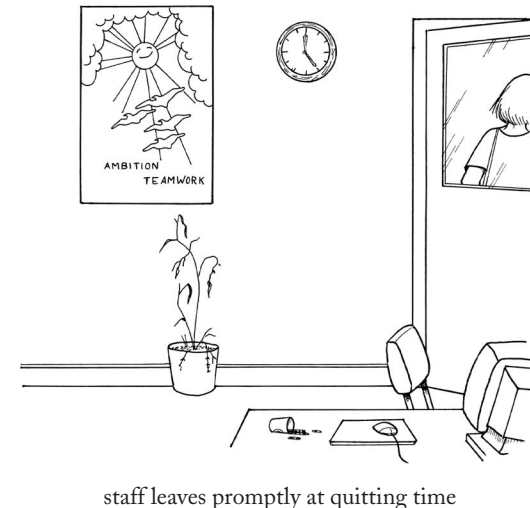
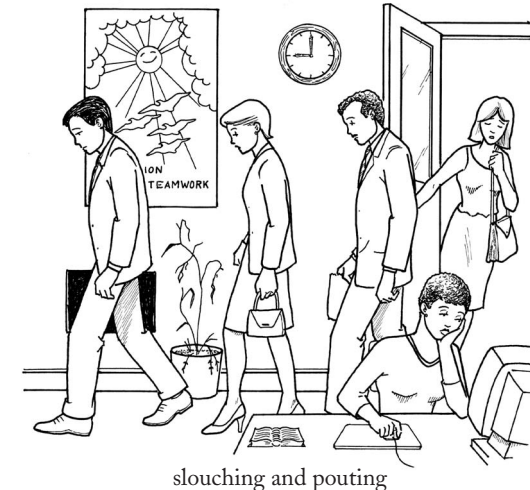
2 Examine the bathrooms.

Are the bathrooms clean? Is there enough toilet paper? Are paper towels strewn about the floor? Lack of attention to these small details may indicate a lack of respect for the workplace and lack of attention to larger details.

3 Monitor the air quality.

Does the work area have natural light and outside air? Is the environment quiet? Is the air too hot or too cold? Are there any rancid or chemical smells? Is smoke billowing from any vents or machinery? Are

Signs of a Troubled Workplace



workers sniffing or sneezing frequently? All of these are indicators of poor air quality or a “sick” workplace.

4 Look for signs of a troubled workplace.

- Lack of personal photos on desks—only motivational images of rowers and bears catching salmon
- Droopy eyelids obscuring the whites of the workers’ eyes
- Multiple sandwiches (partially eaten) and cans of soda at workstations
- Employees sleeping, doodling, or fist-fighting at meetings
- Employees with their foreheads on their desks, fists pounding the desktops
- Outdated or no-longer-manufactured candy in the vending machine
- Brown water in the cooler
- Flickering or humming fluorescent lights
- Music playing through speakers in the ceiling
- “Warning: Hazardous Waste” signs
- Groups of workers whispering
- Individual workers whispering to themselves
- Groups of workers silently praying
- Office layout based on slave ship rather than feng shui
- Carpet stains that could be coffee, could be blood

If you observe three or more of the above danger signs, you may have discovered a nightmare workplace.

5 Evaluate.

Is this the job for you?

