

Every aspect of this small story is repeated millions of times throughout the country. I've heard it over and over in every industry. We can't find workers. The ones we do have don't know anything. If they do know something, they don't know how to actualize that knowledge in productivity. If they produce, it's according to their terms, not the needs of the firm.

Another thing is just how entitled people under 35 years of age are. Everything in the office has to be just right, not just the temperature in the room but the coffee, the chair, the positioning of the window, all colleagues, and so on. They're just looking for excuses to complain, and the complaints are nonstop, about everything. There's a vague sense in the office that everyone is potentially litigious.

What an environment! Is it any wonder that companies are having a hard time getting people back to the office? Only half or so have been so persuaded. In many cities across the country, this has led to empty downstairs, with very low foot traffic compared with the past. That means that ancillary enterprises—restaurants, shops, bars—aren't doing well either. There's a very real possibility in the future that many once-bustling tall buildings will fall into disuse and eventually be torn down.

Much of this mess was kicked into high gear during lockdowns. Workers discovered clever ways of pretending to do work while receiving vast sums in stimulus payments. Do that for two years, and you never go back to the old ways. When you do go back, you do so only with anger, resentment, cynicism, and an underlying bitterness at the world.

This pretty well describes vast portions of the U.S. workforce today. The problem is the huge decline and fall in the work ethic. It's so ubiquitous that we hardly see it anymore, but it's everywhere.

This is why bars and restaurants can't stay open too late. They can't find the workers who are willing. This is why your car sits for weeks at the mechanic shop. This is why your favorite stores no longer carry what you used to buy, or, if they do, it's only intermittently and in a much smaller package.

It's why your sheets are no longer changed in a hotel, why no one can fix your air conditioning, and why, this winter, your street may or may not be plowed. It's why you wait on hold for hours for tech