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Ford Responds to Quiet Quitting in a Big Way

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By Heather Nezich, courtesy SBAM Approved Partner ASE

As set forth in an internal email and first reported by the *Wall Street Journal*, Ford has implemented a new response to underperforming employees – what many call, quiet quitters. They can either choose to leave with a severance or be placed on a performance enhancement plan (PEP).

Employees with at least eight years of service and a record of continually declining performance are eligible for this new program. The catch is – those who choose the performance enhancement plan will not receive the severance if they do not progress and achieve the goals set forth in the plan. They would be terminated without a severance or any continuation of benefits. In an interview with *Fortune*, a Ford spokesperson stated, “We want to help those that go through this, but employees must be serious and fully committed.”

This shouldn't come as a surprise to the employees it affects, as they would have been meeting with managers about their performance in regular one-on-one meetings. The change in policy was made in order to make it easier for managers to work with underperforming employees. They can now offer the employee a quicker exit with a severance based on years of service or the option to opt into a 6-8-week performance plan that includes an intensive training program.

In the past, the employees didn't have the option to leave with a severance and were automatically placed into a performance enhancement plan. The goal of this new policy is to help prevent those employees who know they are struggling and don't feel they would be successful in a PEP to avoid a long, drawn-out performance plan likely to end in termination.

In an interview with *The Detroit News*, Ford spokesperson Marisa Bradley stated, “Ford is looking at all aspects of the business to support its transformation including how employee performance is managed. Recently, updates were made to simplify the U.S. separation programs in the U.S., to reflect market practices and internal feedback. This includes an option to exit voluntarily rather than experience the performance improvement process. These changes give employees choice and improve the overall experience.”

Many are praising Ford for taking a stand against quiet quitters. Corporations are no longer tolerating low performance. They are also being praised for allowing those who might just be in a position not right for them or who know they need to move on, to leave with dignity and some financial security.

We will likely see more programs like this arise as workforce and employer expectations change and evolve. Employers are finding innovative ways to ensure they have an engaged and productive workforce. They are realizing the effects that an unengaged, unproductive workforce have on the bottom line.

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