



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

The original outplacement company

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Fantasy Football and Workplace Productivity

MORE THAN 22 MILLION WORKERS PLAY FANTASY SPORTS; SHOULD EMPLOYERS BE WORRIED?

CHICAGO, August 29, 2013 – With the opening kick-off of the National Football League exactly one week from today, many of the estimated 25 million Americans participating in fantasy football have already completed their drafts. However, this is little solace for the nation's employers who can expect the fantasy sports enthusiasts in the office to spend at least an hour of work time managing their teams each week during the 13- to 17-week season.

While virtually impossible to estimate the impact of fantasy football team management on overall productivity, global outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. notes that the latest government data indicate that average hourly earnings for non-farm, private-sector employees was \$23.98 in July.

“This means that every hour of unproductive work time, whether it's spent managing a fantasy football team or shopping for anniversary presents, costs an employer \$23.98. That is not a very big deal when you are talking about one person, but when you multiply it across the roughly 23 million working Americans who are playing fantasy football, it starts to add up,” noted John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

It adds up to \$551,540,000, to be precise (23,000,000 X \$23.98). Multiply that figure across the typical 15-week fantasy football season and it totals \$8,280,000,000.

“Of course, these numbers are total conjecture, since we do not know how many fantasy football participants are employed or how much above or below the national average they earn. We also don’t know how much time they spend each week managing their team at the office or if they do, at all. In order to uncover the true impact of fantasy football, one would have to talk to department managers and those running corporate IT departments, who probably have the best sense of how much internet traffic is directed toward sports and fantasy football sites,” said Challenger.

“So, what’s the point of this non-scientific study? It is simply to acknowledge that fantasy football is a massively popular phenomenon that cannot be ignored. No one can deny that it is a common source of workplace chatter around the water cooler and lunch table throughout the season. While it is arguable as to whether fantasy sports participation impacts the bottom line, IT departments are very likely to see a dip in the company internet quality as bandwidth is devoted to researching players, making trades and scanning the waiver wire,” he added.

Even with the potential loss of internet speed, Challenger suggests that the impact of fantasy football is not at all negative. In fact, he argues that more companies should embrace the phenomenon and recruit employees into company-wide leagues, as a way to build morale and camaraderie among workers.

“An across-the-board ban on all fantasy football or sports websites is likely to backfire and cause a drop in morale, loyalty and, ironically, productivity. The end result could be far worse than any loss of productivity caused by 10 to 20 minutes of team management each day.

“Companies that not only allow workers to enjoy fantasy football, but actually encourage it by organizing a company leagues are likely to see significant benefits in morale, which, in turn leads to an overall boost in productivity as well as employee retention,” said Challenger.

Forty percent of respondents in a 2006 Ipsos survey said fantasy sports participation was a positive influence in the workplace. Another 40 percent said it increases camaraderie among employees. One in five said their involvement in fantasy sports enabled them to make a valuable business contact.

Furthermore, a more recent study by researchers at the National University of Singapore found that occasional non-work-related web browsing at the office can refresh tired workers and enhance overall productivity.

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