

Owners of companies stressed from too much work

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BEING the boss isn't all it's cracked up to be.

A new survey paints a picture of stressed out owner/managers of Irish small and medium size companies missing out on family occasions because of work and bringing work home with them at night.

A new lifestyle survey conducted by network operator O2 has found that nearly a quarter of owner/managers in Irish SMEs are working almost 51 hours a week while 6pc are working more than 61 hours a week while.

The average hours worked per week by senior managers in small and medium businesses is 44.

This compares to 37.2 hours a week for the rest of the population, according to Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures.

This effectively means that being in charge will add at least an extra 7.2 hours to your working week.

A quarter of respondents to the survey say they did not take their full entitlement to annual leave with just over half saying they always took their full holidays.

The survey also shows that a nine-to-five job is a rarity amongst owner managers in Irish SMEs with 62pc working some weekends and two-thirds working weekends more than once a month.

A total of 47pc of respondents say they bring work home in the evenings and a quarter of these say they have to do this every week day.

The survey points to the fact that such is the pressure on owner managers that over a quarter - some 28pc - say they have missed important family events such as anniversaries or children's birthdays due to work ties.

The survey, which looked at almost 300 firms employing between one and 50 people, found that while the bosses work hard

their lifestyle leaves room for much improvement.

A total of 31pc of owner/managers in Dublin are members of a gym while just 21pc outside the capital have gym membership.

Of those who are members of a gym, 38pc visit twice a week. A healthy 19pc said work out three times a week while 15pc go more than three times a week.

Mark Fielding, chief executive of ISME, the representative body for small and medium size companies, said the results were hardly surprising and had been borne out by previous surveys they had carried out.

"We came up with fairly similar figures in relation to the number of hours worked - we found the average was 52/53 hours a week for owner/managers and we found the average manager was taking 18 days holiday a year," Mr Fielding said.

He said it would not be uncommon for people to be bringing home work at night mainly due to red tape and the amount of form filling that owner/managers had to do.

"It's not uncommon for someone to work a full day, do a few hours extra and then bring home the PAYE returns - they don't view it as core work so they put it off until they get home," Mr Fielding said.

While he said the latest survey results showed the commitment, dedication and dynamism of owner/managers of Irish SMEs, who he described as the wealth creators of the Irish economy, he said there was no official recognition of their effort from Government.

"There is little reward from the Government.

"As an owner/manager you don't even get the PAYE allowance an ordinary worker will get.

A lot of people are suffering from stress and this feeling of being alone in business is something we get a lot of people ringing us about" the ISME chief said.