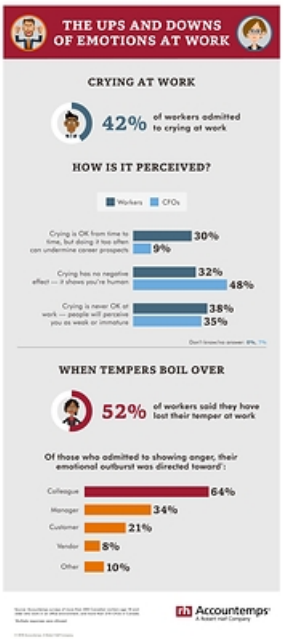
Robert Half Canada

# Cry Me A River: How Emotions Are Perceived in the Workplace




*Survey: More Than Four in 10 Canadian Workers Have Shed Tears on the Job; Nearly Half of Executives Say It's OK*

TORONTO, April 3, 2018 /CNW/ - Everyone knows keeping emotions in check isn't always easy. But is it ever OK to express feelings of sadness or frustration on the job? According to a new survey from staffing firm Accountemps, more than four in 10 Canadian workers (42 per cent) have admitted to crying at work. Luckily, nearly half of Canadian CFOs (48 per cent) said shedding tears has no negative effect on how a worker is perceived.

Employees are harder on themselves than executives: 38 per cent of employees compared to 35 per cent of CFOs said crying is never acceptable at the office.

Both workers and CFOs were asked, "**How does crying at work impact on your reputation?**" Their responses:

| | **Workers** | **CFOs** |
|---|---|---|
| Crying is OK from time to time, but doing it too often can undermine career prospects | 30% | 9% |
| Crying has no negative effect – it shows you're human | 32% | 48% |
| Crying is never OK at work – people will perceive you as weak or immature | 38% | 35% |
| Don't know/no answer | 0% | 7% |
| | 100% | 100% |

Workers were also asked, "**Have you ever cried at work?**" Their responses:

| **Yes** | **42%** |
|---|---|
| No | 58% |
| | 100% |

**Additional findings:**

- Workers age 55 and older are more likely to think crying has a negative effect on your reputation (47 per cent) than those ages 35 to 54 (42 per cent) and 18 to 34 (31 per cent).
- More than half of employees (52 per cent) have lost their temper on the job.
- Of those who admitted showing anger, 64 per cent said their emotional outburst was directed toward a colleague; another 34 per cent said it was aimed at their manager.

"Occasionally getting emotional at work is understandable, but frequent upsets can damage your reputation, and negatively impact coworker relationships and productivity," said David King, Canadian president of Accountemps. "In frustrating situations, it helps to take a step back before you react. Approaching challenges with patience and composure demonstrates your professionalism, and can set you apart for career advancement or growth opportunities."

Here are five scenarios that can test even the coolest head and advice for handling each with professionalism and emotional intelligence:

- **The overbearing boss —** Your manager keeps a close eye on you and gives you little control over projects. This can cause more stress and decreased morale and productivity. Instead of becoming frustrated, set up a private meeting with your boss to discuss ways you can build trust and gain more independence.
- **The combative coworker —** You and your colleague keep butting heads on a business problem. Try to consider your coworker's perspective. Hearing another point of view may help you both resolve the dispute more quickly.
- **The innocent error —** As soon as you hit "send" on an email to your boss, you realize you've made a mistake. Instead of yelling out in frustration and distracting others, keep a level head as you address the situation. Send a follow-up note or speak with your manager to apologize and correct the issue.
- **The personal emergency —** Private struggles, such as a family crisis or health concerns, are bound to affect your work life at some point in your career. Consider talking to your boss — without oversharing — and request scheduling flexibility or a personal leave. Being transparent can ultimately benefit you and your employer.
- **The unbearable workload —** Juggling too many tasks can lead to burnout. Instead of lashing out when your manager assigns you more work, meet to prioritize and possibly delegate projects to your teammates or temporary hires.

**About the Research**

The surveys were developed by Accountemps and conducted by independent research firms. They include responses from more than 300 Canadian workers age 18 and older who work in an office environment, and more than 270 CFOs from a stratified random sample of companies in Canada.

**About Accountemps**

Accountemps, a Robert Half company, is the world's first and largest specialized staffing service for temporary accounting, finance and bookkeeping professionals. The staffing firm has 300 locations worldwide. More resources, including job search services, can be found at roberthalf.ca/en/work-with-us/our-services/accountemps. Follow us at @RobertHalf_CAN for additional workplace news and hiring trends.

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