



Wellness in the Workplace

On any given week, most Americans spend nearly half of their waking hours working, toiling away more hours than almost any other population in the industrialized world. Technology has also made our work inescapable, ubiquitously shadowing us at any almost any time of day. Our time is often so jam-packed and relentlessly plugged in, that it can be challenging to find a moment's peace.

As a leader, it's vital to understand that self-care is healthy for your bottom-line. A supportive and caring boss contributes to associate health and buffers against the typical stressors of the workday. Likewise, a company culture that is supportive of physical, emotional and social well-being builds an integrated model of overall health that affects the bottom line. An organization filled with healthy and fulfilled staff that deals with stress in a helpful manner is a productive workplace that retains its employees.

Communicate often

Perhaps the single most useful approach for dealing with stress is promoting a work environment where high stress is not taken for granted, but is discussed with an open and problem-solving attitude. Failure to communicate with employees about stress just makes the problem worse.

Decrease demand and encourage independence

A job with a heavy workload, a fast pace, or strict timelines is considered to be a major contributor to job stress. This combined with very little decision-making ability, autonomy or control can be cause for increased health problems such as cardiovascular disease, exhaustion, and depression. Wherever possible, allow your employees some decision-making latitude on the job. Encourage team-based decision-making and modify workflow to be more efficient.

Offer support and recognition

When workers feel an imbalance between the level of effort required for doing the job and job rewards (i.e. promotion, money, self-esteem), they are at greater risk of the consequences of ill health. Be sure employees are aware of their professional development path. Keep them up-to-date on their performance and achievements and implement a clear and consistent reward system. The best approach is balancing rewards with effort.



Boost social support

Social support can be defined as proactive communication, care and understanding. Workers with low levels of support from family, friends, colleagues and mentors are particularly at risk for productivity loss and health problems. Start a mentorship program that will allow employees to work with leadership on their managerial skills and initiate team-based activities that encourage camaraderie.

Bear in mind that when employees are at peak health levels, they are also at peak levels of productivity. By combining supportive leadership and wellness together, it is possible to nudge employees to be well, not just in terms of their physical health but also their interpersonal and social well-being.

SAFETY REMINDER

Fatigue is more than just being tired. If you're missing out on the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep each day, you could become sleep deprived and be at higher risk for the negative effects of fatigue.