

# Beat Business Burn-Out

January 12 2010

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Recent reports show that job satisfaction rates in the U.S. are at the lowest level in more than two decades. The recession has caused employees and employers to tighten their financial belts. In many places work that was done by three or four colleagues is now being managed by one. As a consequence, stress, anxiety and job burn-out - made worse by unhealthy habits and poor communication - can devastate business results.

“People are worried about losing their jobs, making bank payments and keeping their families safe. Their fears are real. For companies, the economic uncertainties are impacting market predictions. Fatigue is climbing as managers and their teams cope across difficult months.

They’re becoming exhausted,” said Dr. Mary Capelli-Schellpfeffer, medical director of Loyola University Health System Occupational Health Services.

Job [stress](#) and fatigue can lead to behaviors that negatively affect health. For example, a busy working mother may cut out exercise to spend precious time with her children. Another employee may stop eating lunch to open a slot for an extra meeting. Or a worker with [high blood pressure](#) may cancel doctors’ appointments and stop medications to bridge an insurance gap.

“During hardship, a healthy routine can actually be a huge help to employees,” Capelli-Schellpfeffer said. “Staying well can ease [stressful experiences](#). The healthier a person is, both physically and mentally, the

better they can deal with the challenges life throws at them.”

She encourages individuals to do an inventory of good habits by considering these questions:

Are you taking your prescriptions and keeping up with medical visits?

Do you get more than 7 hours of sleep a night?

Is there fatty fast food in your diet?

Has your regular exercise fallen by the wayside?

“If you think you’re too busy to work out, start with 10 minutes a day for a short walk. In a year you will complete 50+ hours of this simple fitness activity! You will feel more in control of your wellness and better prepared to deal with troubles around you,” Capelli-Schellpfeffer said.

When it comes to habits during social occasions, don’t forget to check alcohol consumption. “Those extra beers, cocktails, or glasses of wine will actually diminish coping ability, add extra pounds, and put you at risk of making important decisions or driving while impaired.”

While advertisers may promote talking, texting, and timing activities in an overlapping fashion, Capelli-Schellpfeffer suggests it’s best to avoid multitasking.

“Research shows that a person’s efficiency degrades when too many activities require attention at once. Regardless of your age or experience, the multiple distractions lead to mental errors. Keep focused on one project at a time: it will be less difficult to finish. When you are done, marking a completed job off your ‘to do’ list will give you boost to take on the next assignment.”

Companies also need a wellness check during stressful periods.

One of the most important healthy habits an employer can use in the fight against burn-out is frequent communication.

“Communication is critical to success. That’s always true. But it’s harder to do during challenging events because of all the “noise” from bad news. Make sure your messages are being repeated and sent to employees in a variety of ways. Don’t assume one e-mail is going to reach everyone,” said Capelli-Schellpfeffer. “Shared messages can become an important vehicle for solidifying trust and a team perspective.”

“When a supervisor stops by an employee’s desk asking, ‘How are you doing?’ the action makes an impact. The added bonus is that the supervisor is more likely to gain valuable first-hand information about what is or isn’t working in the enterprise,” said Capelli-Schellpfeffer.

“Employers and employees are living in the same work-world. Healthy habits and communication are basic tools everyone can use to beat business burn-out and protect productivity until the recession’s effects clear.”

Provided by Loyola University Health System

Citation: Beat Business Burn-Out (2010, January 12) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-01-business-burn-out.html>

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