

Organizational Changes and Stress Management



India Inc Lays Stress on Fighting Mental Distress

Cos hold workshops, therapy sessions with focus on improving mental health of staff

Beating the Blues

Performance pressure, fear of job losses major causes of anxiety attacks and nervous breakdown at workplaces

Stress (55%) is among the top lifestyle risk factors identified by employers in India, according to a study by Willis Towers Watson

Steps taken for mental wellbeing of staff

- 1 Sensitisation programmes for senior management
- 2 Counselling initiatives
- 3 Online behavioural therapy
- 4 Yoga sessions
- 5 Art therapy



Source: The Economic Times, Saturday, April 6, 2019

- This is an age of discontinuity. The only thing that is constant in this world is change.
- The pace of change has never been as rapid as it has been during the last 25 years.





- Organizations which were once leaders in the market have either vanished from the scene or are struggling for survival. The classic examples in India are those of Mafatlal, Binny, BPL, Premier automobiles, etc.
- The most successful organizations are those that focus on doing whatever it takes to adapt to the changing conditions. For organizations the message is very clear: change or die.
- Only organizations that are able to adapt and master the challenges presented by the changes will survive in the long run.

GURU MANTRA

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CHANGE ENJOYMENT

"If you want to benefit from change you have to be someone who enjoys change. The word that usually comes to us after change is management. Risk management. Uncertainty management. We don't do change enjoyment. We don't use words like that after change."

As told by

Dhiraj Rajaram

Founder of Mu Sigma

To Suveen Sinha

In his book

The Tip Of The Iceberg: The Unknown Truth Behind India's Start-Ups

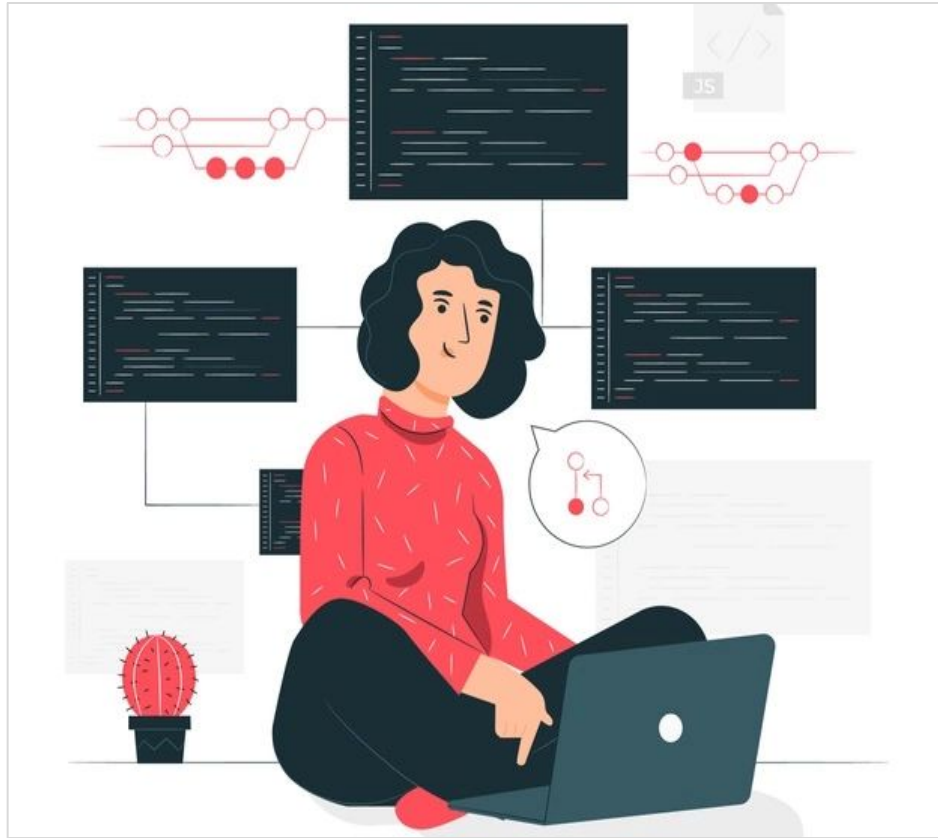
FORCES FOR CHANGE

Modern organizations are continuously facing a number of forces that are compelling it to change. Some of these forces are:

(1) Changing nature of the workforce:

- The employees of modern organizations are very different from those in the past.
- They differ from each other with regard to nationalities, gender, age, education, race, talent/ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, lifestyle and values.
- Organizations need to learn to adapt to such a multicultural environment.





(2) Changing technology:

- Technology is changing at a rapid rate.
- What is an in thing becomes an out thing sometimes in a matter of weeks.
- Thanks to the rapid advances in communication technology, the very idea an office has become outdated.

(3) Economic shocks:

- The economic meltdown and the financial crisis that followed led to the decline and bankruptcy of some well-known organizations.
- They were later acquired by other organizations.
- Thousands of employees lost their jobs.
- These economic shocks have hurt organizations badly and forced them to change.





(4) Competition:

- Organizations today face competition from within and across the borders.
- With the world becoming a global village, organizations have to face global competition.
- Only those organizations which can continuously innovate, have a flexible workforce which can develop new products and get to the market fast can survive this fierce competition.
- Besides, mergers and acquisitions can change market equations dramatically

(5) Changing social trends:



- The society has undergone a major change.
- Consumers who earlier could not connect are now able to connect and share ideas and product information because of blogs and chat rooms on the internet.
- Due to this, both employees and consumer have become more demanding.
- They have also become more concerned about the environment and expect organizations to adopt green practices.

(6)World politics:

- Political events in different parts of the world can have a profound impact on organizations.
- Changes in governments can pose new challenges.
- New economic powers have risen and the influence of hitherto powerful nations has declined.
- Organisations need to adapt to this emerging new world order.



- Employees are experiencing a lot of stress on account of these challenge and change that they face every day in the workplace.
- Hence, it is important that we develop a good understanding of stress and learn how to cope with it.



GURU MANTRA

➤ "To change the way an organization functions, the behaviors of people within it and their ways within it must be changed."

➤ "I have found that people within institutions continue to resist change until they have satisfactory answers to five questions:

(1) Why change?

(2) What will we change to? And, would I want to go that way?

(3) How will I be affected by this change?

(4) Will I have the skills required to be effective in the new organization?

(5) Does our leader have the will, and the skill, to manage this complex process?"

Arun Maira

in his book

'An Upstart in Government
Journeys of Change and Learning'

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

- Stress has become an inevitable part of modern life.
- Whether it's a student or an employee, almost everybody experiences stress.
- In fact if anybody wants to have a stress life then they should go to the Himalayas and do tapasya.
- Even there, one cannot guarantee a zero stress life!





- Organizational stress has also become an issue of great concern and worry because stress can have damaging physiological and psychological effects on people working in organizations.
- Besides stress experienced by one employee can affect the safety of other employees as well as the public.
- For example, stress experienced by an airline pilot can lead to a major accident and the loss of several lives.

DEFINITION

- Stress is defined as "an unpleasant psychological process occurs in response to environment pressures(Robbins and Judge, 2013).
- Stress may also be described as a condition which an individual experiences when he is faced with some opportunity or demand or resources whose outcome is uncertain but is important to the individual.





A few interesting things about stress are:

(1) Stress is not always negative:

- Stress is often seen as something bad and that which should be avoided.
- But this is not always true.
- Many people see stress as an opportunity to improve on their performance.
- For example, many executives see the stress caused by workloads and deadlines as a challenge and they experience immense satisfaction when they are able to meet this challenge.

(2) Challenge versus hindrance stressors:

- Stressors may be in the form of challenge stressors or hindrance stressors.
- Pressure to complete work on time or extra workload are examples of challenge stressors.
- Hindrance stressors are stressors that prevent a person from reaching his goal.
- Research has found that hindrance stressors cause more strain than challenge stressors.
- The performance of employees increase when they receive high levels of organizational support in the face of challenge stressors.



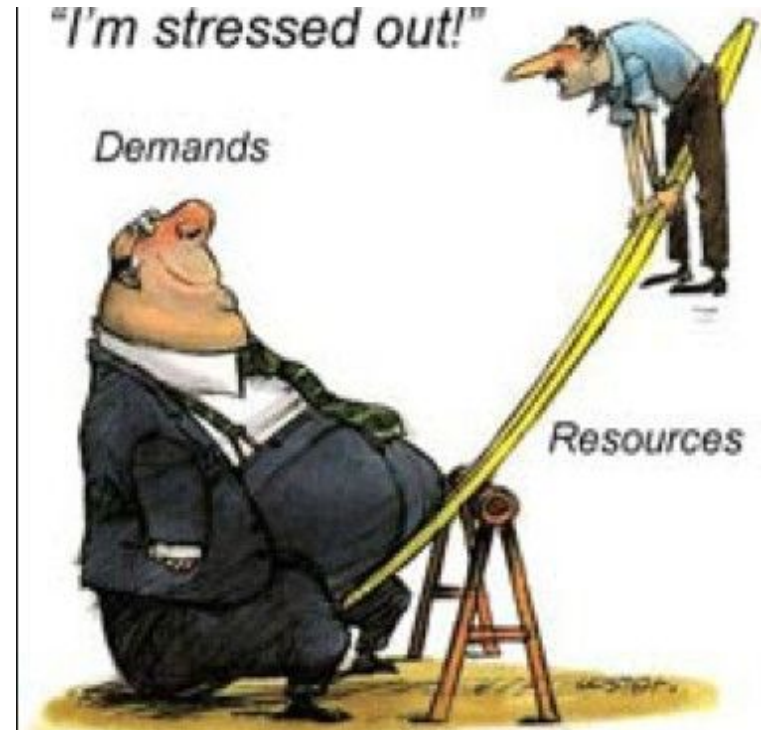


(3) Commitment and stress:

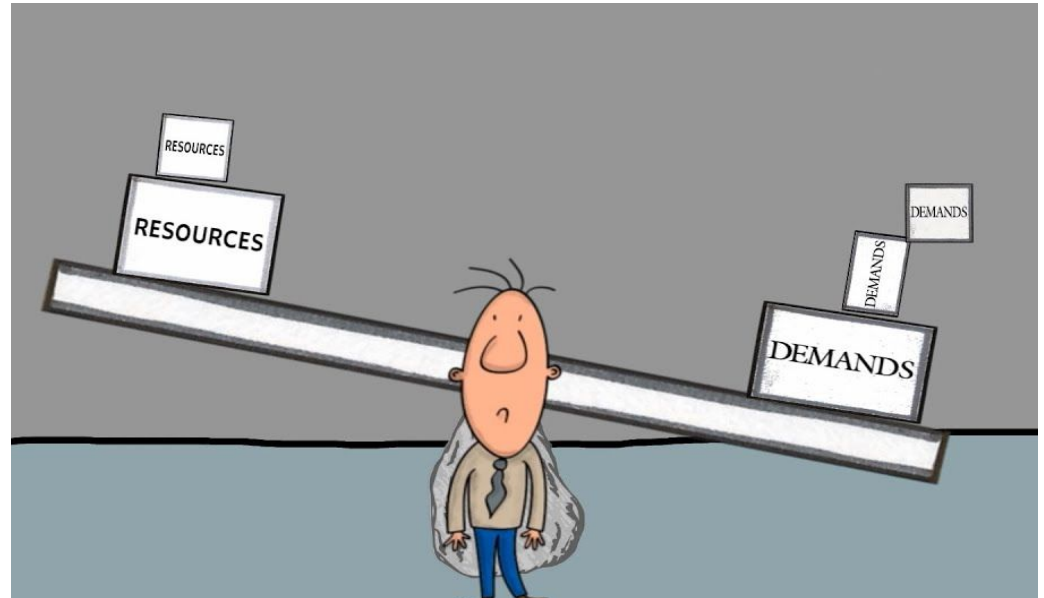
- The performance of employees with high levels of affective commitment (positive feelings) for their organizations improves in the face of stress.
- They convert their psychological stress into greater focus and commitment to achieve organizational goals.

(4) Demands and resources:

- Demands on the job may take the form of responsibilities, duties, obligations, pressures, expectations or uncertainties.
- The demands may be emotional or cognitive in nature.
- Resources refer to those things that are under an individual's control and which he can use them to meet the demands.



- $\text{STRESS} = \text{DEMANDS} > \text{RESOURCES}$
- Whether an individual experiences stress or not depends on the resources he has available to cope with the demands.
- If the individual has adequate resources then stress caused by the demands will be reduced.



SOURCES/CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress at work is on account of many different factors. The various potential causes of stress can broadly be divided in three categories:

- (1) Environmental Stressors
- (2) Organizational Stressors
- (3) Personal Stressors



ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS

Environmental uncertainty is a major cause of stress. Uncertainty due to environment may be of three types.

(1) Economic uncertainty:

- Economic downturns affect businesses.
- Employees experience high levels of anxiety and stress when the economy is in bad shape.
- This is mainly on account of job insecurity.
- Employees are not certain whether they will keep or lose their jobs.



BURNOUT ON THE JOB

Corporate warriors of the new economy cope better with pressure-packed workplaces than with their own health.



HEALTH DOWNTURN

The economic meltdown came with a health warning. But some suffered more than others. Here's a four-sector in India with the most unhealthy workforce:



20%
INDIANS WORRY OVER WORK-LIFE BALANCE THE MOST GLOBALLY. THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY TOPS THE WORRY CHART.

Blue Collar Blues



India's loss in terms of potentially productive years due to lifestyle diseases is one of the highest in the world. By 2030, the loss is expected to rise to 18 million years, which is 940 per cent more than that estimated in the U.S. Stress is the prime killer at work, say experts.

61% believe stress is "healthy" and just a normal part of work life.

75% do not find carrying work home causes any kind of stress.

60% of corporate workforce try to help stressed out colleagues through counselling, support, financial help and so on.

52% don't believe in taking a few days off to cope with stress.

Source: Corporate Workforce Lifestyle and Lifestyle Diseases: New India Global Consumer Opinion Survey, M. Nielsen, Perceptics (Madras) & Corporate Female Workplace, New Delhi, World of Work, Gurgaon, 2017-18.

Compiled by Damayanti Chatterjee

(2) Political uncertainty:

- Employees experience less stress when they have a stable political climate and changes are implemented in the nation in a systematic and orderly manner.
- However, employees experience great stress when there is great a degree of political uncertainty.



- For example, Pakistan has high political uncertainty as it keeps moving from a democratic to military system of governance every few years.
- These frequent changes create chaos and confusion and adversely affect the working of organizations.
- The danger of terrorism has become a cause of stress even in nations that have stable political systems.





(3) Technological uncertainty:

- Rapid advances and changes in technology pose a threat to employees.
- This is because such frequent changes make employee skills and experience outdated.
- They are under constant pressure to learn and update themselves quickly.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

A wide variety of organizational factors can cause stress among the employees. The various organizational factors can broadly be divided into three categories:

- Task demands
- Role demands:
- Interpersonal demands

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS



(1) Task demands:

- A number of factors relating to the task or work to be performed can cause stress among employees.
- The level of autonomy, degree of task variety, working conditions, physical layout are some of factors relating to the task that can cause stress.
- Assembly line pressures, overcrowd working conditions, excessive heat or cold, poor lighting unpleasant smells, excessive humidity, distracting noise. demanding customer service, inadequate safety measures are some task related factors that cause stress.





(2) Role demands:

- Every employee has a particular role to play or a particular function to carry out in the organization.
- The pressures of these roles can cause stress in the employees.

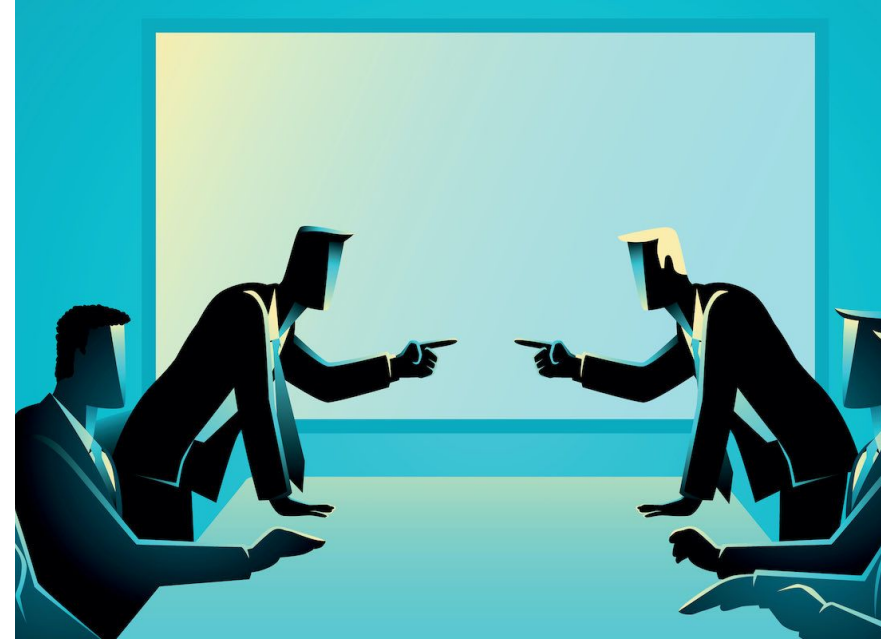
Some specific role demands that cause stress are:

(a) Role conflict:

- Employees often experience role conflict when different people have different expectations from them.
- For example, the supervisor who is the link between the management and the worker is often the victim of role conflict.



- If he supports the management on certain issues, then the workers will label him as a management stooge or a 'chamcha'.
- At the same time if he is seen supporting the workers then the management will not like it.
- Hence supervisors very often experience stress as they are caught between the management and the workers.



(b) Role overload:

Role overload occurs when the individuals are asked to do more work than they can complete in a specific period of time.



(c) Role ambiguity:

- Employees experience stress when they are not provided with a clear picture about their work, duties and responsibilities.
- The employee is not sure what he is expected to do.
- This creates confusion in the minds of the worker and results in stress.



(3) Interpersonal demands:

- Pressures and demands of other employees in the workplace can cause stress.
- This especially true when the employee does not have a good relationship with co-workers, superiors and subordinates or when they do not receive any social support.
- Bullying, sexual harassment, physical fights, racial discriminations can cause a lot of stress employees.

PERSONAL STRESSORS

- The whole person goes to work and the whole person back home. What happens in an employee's personal life affects his work life and vice-versa.
- Some of the different personal factors that can cause stress to an employee are:



(1) Family problems:



- Family stressors may be in the form of a quarrel between the husband and wife or the temporary illness of a member of the family.
- It can also be something more serious such as strained relationship between the spouses or between the parents and the children.
- Another serious family stressor could be Indisciplined children, a handicapped child, mentally retarded children etc.

(2) Financial problems:

- Financial hardships are common in hy like Mumbai where accommodation is expensive and the cost of living is high.
- A person has to do additional work or the wife has to take a job.
- This reduces time for domestic family life and reduces the feelings of well-being and increases the potential for stress.
- Besides, some people are poor at money management and their expenses always exceed their earning, thus causing stress.



(3) Personality:

- The personality of some individuals makes them more prone to stress than other individuals. For example, some individuals tend to focus more on the negative aspects of the world.
- The different sources of stress (environmental, organizational and personal) may all add up together and cause considerable stress.
- A particular stressor by itself may not be very powerful but when added to other already existing stressors may prove to be too much and may lead to a complete breakdown of the individual.
- The level of stress experienced by an individual is the sum of the different stressors.



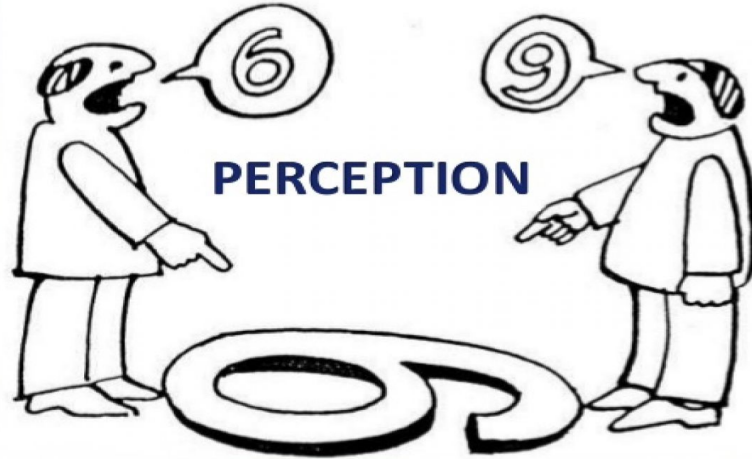
INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

- There are large difference between people with regard to the cause of stress as well as their ability to cope with stress.
- What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another person.
- For example, a desk job may be stressful to one employee but another employee may enjoy it.
- Some people can handle high levels of stress while others break down. For example, India's cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni can handle stress well and in fact thrives in a crisis situation.



Individual differences in the experience of stress are due to four factors:

(1) Perception:



- How a person perceives (looks at) the situation and what he thinks about it will determine whether an individual will experience stress or not.
- An employee's experience of stress is determined by his perception of reality rather than reality itself.

- That is, rather than the situation itself; how an employee interprets the situation will decide whether he experiences stress.
- For example, layoffs or downsizing may be seen by one employee as a job insecurity whereas another employee may see it as an opportunity get a fat severance package with which he can start his own business.

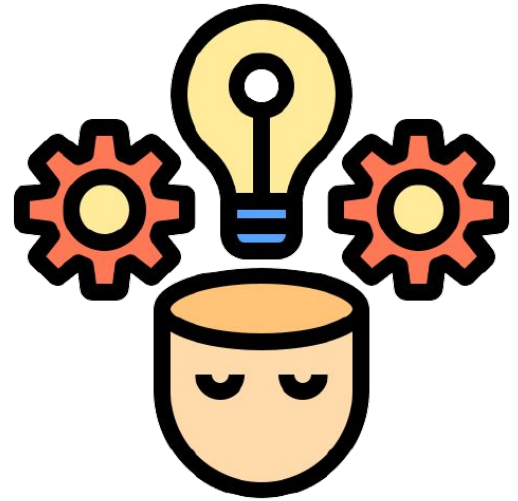


(2) Job experience: There is a negative relation between job and job stress. That is, an employee with more experience on the job will experience less stress.

There are two reasons for this

(a) Selective withdrawal:

- Those employees who are unable to cope with stress on their jobs are more likely to voluntarily quit their jobs.
- Thus, those who continue to work for the organization are employees who have more stress-resistant traits and are able to cope with stress in their organization



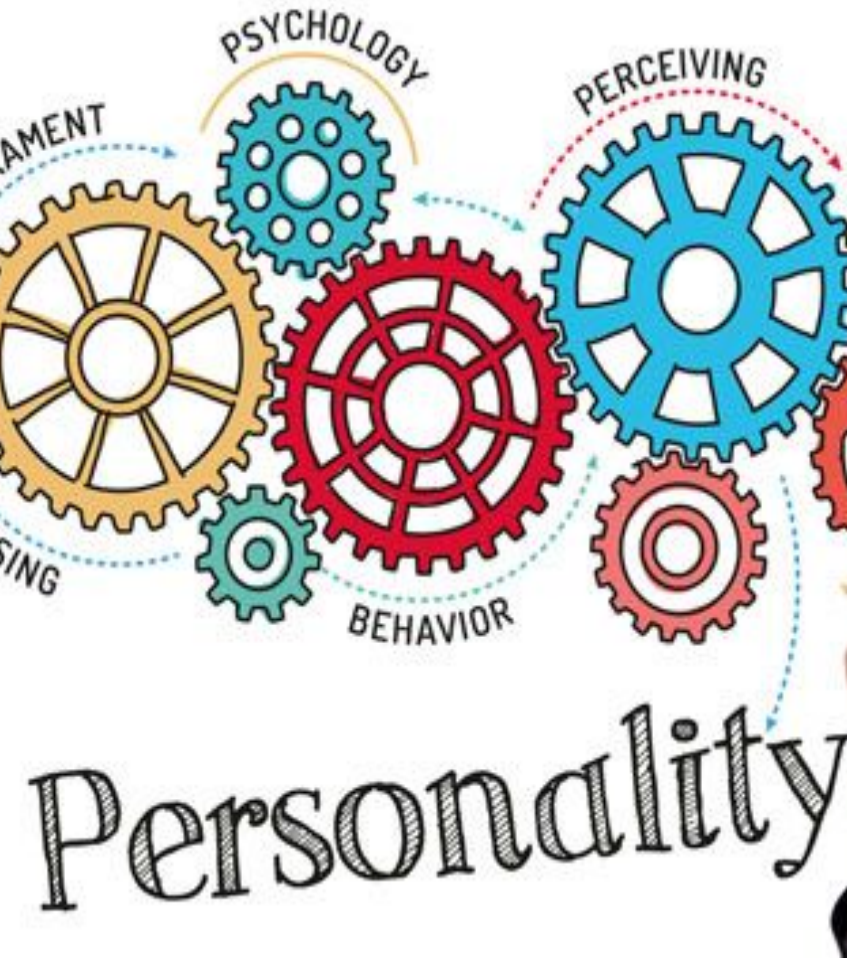
(b) Coping mechanisms:

- People develop stress coping mechanisms when they are exposed to stress for a long period.
- They learn to adapt to the situation.
- Hence, employees who have been there on the job for long experience less stress.

(3) Social support:

- Support and backing of co-workers, superiors, and subordinates can greatly reduce the impact of stress.
- On jobs that are high on stress levels, social support can greatly reduce the negative effects of stress.





(4) Personality:

- Employees who are high on the personality trait of neuroticism experience greater psychological stress.
- Individual who are high on neuroticism believe that there are stressors on their job and view their environment as threatening.
- Besides, neurotic individuals adopt faulty ways of coping with work problems.
- Rather than face the problem, they tend to avoid or run away from it.

THE JAPANESE HAVE A WORD FOR DEATH FROM OVERWORK

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China said it lost 246 policemen last year in overwork, two-thirds of all who died in the line of duty. Long recognised as a problem in the developing world, overwork is a reality in offices everywhere. While no direct link has been found between overwork and death, experts feel it's best to avoid long hours at office and workplace stress.

Workaholics need to get out of office

People who work long hours (20 hours/week) are three times more at risk of stroke than those working standard hours (35-40 hours/week), says a 2015 study in the journal, *Lancet*.

The study of 16 lakh individuals, however, found that the link with coronary heart disease was weaker.



As the Japanese found out long ago, the phenomenon of fatal overwork was first recognised in 1967, after the sudden deaths of a string of top Japanese executives.

The Japanese call this phenomenon **karoshi**.

To count its victims, victims must have worked more than 100 hours of overtime in 12 months. India's death toll is 40-50 deaths of executives in line of service, according to reports.

In a similar, but less known, victims are those who die from the overwork of around 100,000 per year in the country.

Indians among the most vacation-deprived

Travel website Expedia's 2017 Vacation Deprivation Study said 10% of Indians feel they are vacation deprived, just below South Africans, French, Malaysians and Hong Kong dwellers.



It's an issue in China too

China has a long history of overwork, as it is a country where, according to the Chinese New Year, that's a daily struggle to find time to rest. The figure may be misleading, but Chinese officials are working 100-hour days, due to overwork does point to the presence of a problem.



Many have punishing hours

A 2014 study of 100,000 workers in the United States found that 10% of workers work more than 40 hours a week, 10% work more than 40 hours a week, 10% work more than 40 hours a week, 10% work more than 40 hours a week.



Source: The Times of India, Thursday, April 12, 2018.



Workaholic employees experience more stress. Some traits of workaholic employees are:

- (a) They are obsessed with their work - they eat, drink and breathe their work.
- (b) They put in extremely long hours at work.
- (c) They are continuously thinking about their work even when they are not working.
- (d) They keep on taking more responsibility in order to satisfy their internal desire to keep working.

- Although workaholics might appear like ideal employees who want to very hard for their organization, this is not always the case.
- Even though they work very hard, they may not be more productive than employees who are not workaholics.
- Besides, the work-life balance of workaholics gets disturbed and they also suffer from psychological burnout.



CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The job conditions causing stress vary across cultures. Research has found that:

- (1) Employees in the US experience stress when they do not have adequate control over their jobs.
- (2) Job evaluation and lack of training is the major cause of stress among Chinese employees.



(3) Managers of individualistic cultures (US, UK, Canada etc) experience more stress when work interferes with their family life. It is less so in the case of employees from collectivistic cultures (Asian countries).

- This is in collectivistic cultures working extra hours is seen as a sacrifice for the family. In contrast in individualistic cultures, working extra hours is seen as personal achievements being given more importance than family.

(4) There are no differences in the experience of stress across cultures due to personality traits. For example, a Type A personality experiences stress across all cultures.



Stress-Related Disorders Take Toll On Telecom Sector Workers



Turmoil in the industry has seen jobs slashed by an estimated 25% and there is a perceived lack of fresh opportunities. Psychiatrists say the number of patients from this sector has gone up. **Devina Sengupta** reports

Nowhere Men (and Women)

There has been **50% increase** in patients coming from the sector in the last year and counsellors expect a similar jump in coming months

Employees are suffering from **DEPRESSION & ANXIETY DISORDERS**, say doctors

Those employed are **AFRAID OF BEING LAID OFF** & are working in a frenzy to retain posts

MERGERS, TAKEOVERS ARE BUILDING INSECURITIES on what will happen once process is completed

Retrenched employees feel **DEJECTED WITH NO VACANCIES** in other sectors.



Source: *The Economic Times*, Saturday, November 25, 2017.

EFFECTS/CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

The effects of stress are physiological, psychological and behavioral.
Stress affects one's body, mind, and behavior.



PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS

Job stress has several harmful effects on the employee's health.

Research has found the following physiological symptoms of stress:

- (1) Upper respiratory illnesses
- (2) Poor functioning of the immune system
- (3) Heart diseases
- (4) Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- (5) High cholesterol in the blood
- (6) Ulcers
- (7) Arthritis
- (8) Frequent colds, fever etc.



All these physiological effect are terrible not only for the individual but also for the organization. People having such problems are frequently absent which disrupts work in the organization

DID YOU KNOW?

- 30% of corporate employees across sectors are struggling with obesity, diabetes, heart ailments and back problems.
- 20% of urban Indians worry over work-life balance the most. Globally, the state of the economy tops the worry chart.
- 83% of executives showed depressive symptoms.
- 17% of executives took drugs to control high blood pressure.

Source: India Today, June 21, 2010.

What's On Your Mind?

Requiem for a Dream

Depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 TRILLION each year in lost productivity. A negative working environment may lead to physical health problems, harmful use of substances or alcohol, absenteeism and lost productivity.

Statistics for depression are alarming—at 5.6 crore people, India rates the highest in the world. At best, depression can paralyse normal life. At its worst, it can lead to suicide, which, the Indian Council of Medical Research stated this year, is the leading cause of death by a non-communicable disease among Indians aged 15-39 years.

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

Approximately 150 million people in India need care for their mental health condition.

Almost 70-92% of these cases failed to receive treatment.

Source: National Mental Health Survey 2016

India has the highest number of teenage suicide rates globally.

4.5% of India's population has a depressive disorder.

One in 10 persons in India has a mental illness.

3.0% of India's population has an anxiety disorder.

Depressive and anxiety disorders are among the most common in India. Source: WHO, NIMHANS.

One of every 10 people in India has a mental illness, according to a survey by Bengaluru's National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), which has seen around 3 lakh visitors seeking psychiatric help this year, says its director BN Gangadhar.

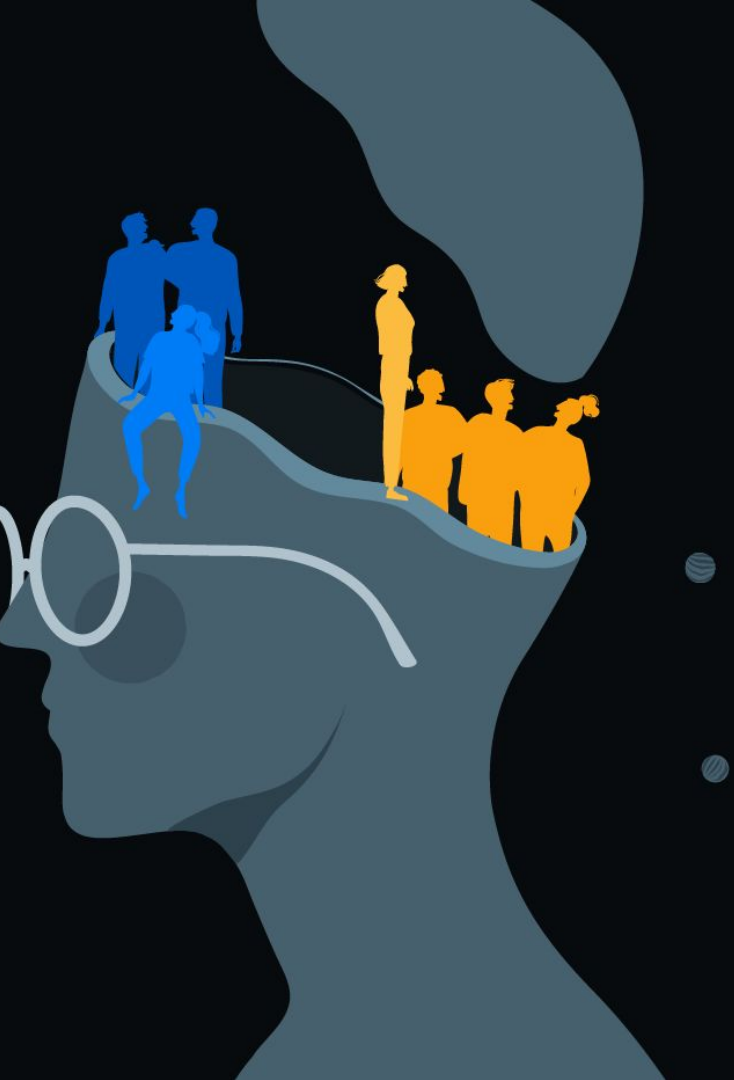
Source: The Economic Times, Tuesday, December 18, 2018.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

The mind and body are closely connected. The following are some of the psychological effects of stress

- (1) Job dissatisfaction
- (2) Anxiety
- (3) Tension
- (4) Boredom
- (5) Depression
- (6) Irritability
- (7) Laziness
- (8) Lowered emotional well-being
- (9) Frequent mood changes (moodiness)
- (10) Loss of self-esteem
- (11) Inability to concentrate on work
- (12) Inability to make decisions etc.





The psychological problems due to stress are as serious as the physical problems.

The psychological effects are more likely to happen on jobs where

- (1) The employee's work lacks clarity - his duties, authority and responsibilities are not clearly defined.
- (2) The employee has very little autonomy (little control) over his job.
- (3) There is little job variety - the employee has to do the same routine and monotonous work

(4) There is lack of feedback about job performance.

(5) The employee does not develop a sense of identity with his work and feels his work is not significant.

Such jobs reduce employee satisfaction and involvement and cause stress.



BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS

Stress has several behavioral effects. The behavioral symptoms of stress are:

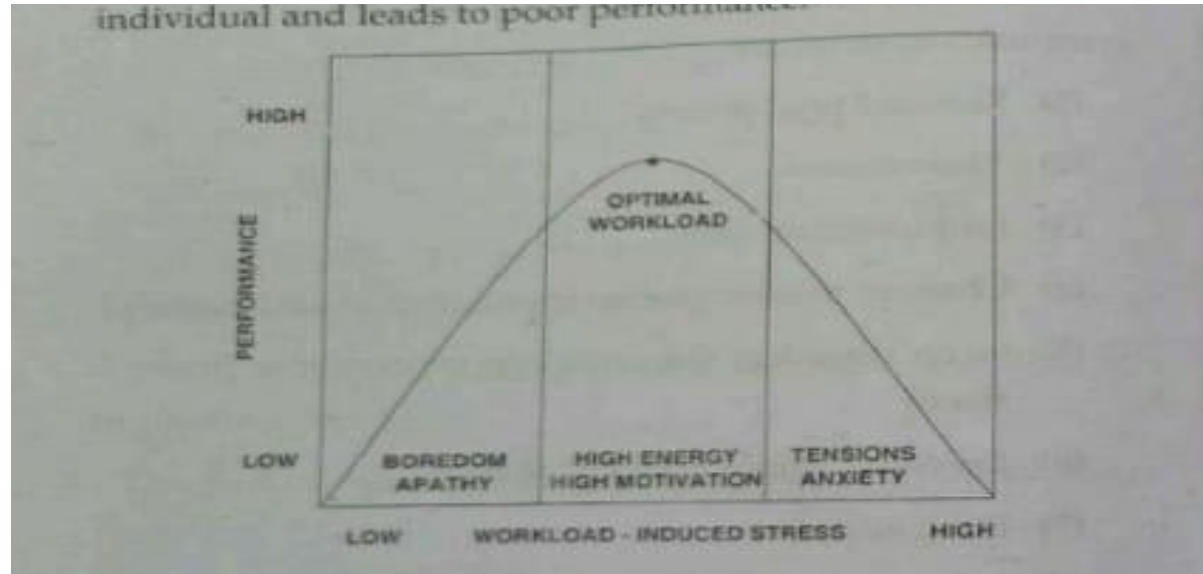
- (1) Reduced productivity
- (2) Absenteeism
- (3) Employee turnover
- (4) Changes in eating habits (overeating or undereating)
- (5) Sleep disorders (loss of sleep or excessive desire to sleep)
- (6) Excessive drinking (Alcoholism)
- (7) Drug addiction
- (8) Excessive smoking
- (9) Poor interpersonal relations
- (10) Stammering



- The relationship between stress and performance is commonly described with the inverted U curve. Absence of stress leads to poor or low job performance, no stress results boredom and absence of job challenges.
- However, low to moderate levels of stress stimulates the body and improves performance.
- This is because the individual gathers resources to meet job demands and hence performs the job faster and with greater intensity.



- Stress becomes destructive in nature when the level of stress becomes excessive.
- This is because too much stress leads to tension, anxiety, places unrealistic demands on the individual and leads to poor performance.



- In brief, stress within limits is beneficial. It is only when stress is excessive that it becomes counterproductive and has negative effects. If there is no stress at all then a person might not be motivated to give his best.



COPING WITH STRESS

- Stress can have both positive and negative effects.
- However, managements and employees often differ in their perception of stress.
- Stress that is seen by the management as positive and conducive (favorable) to better performance may be seen as excessive or too much stress by employees.
- Stress may be managed both at the individual and at the Organizational level.



INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

An employee may take personal responsibility for reducing stress in his life. Some strategies that an employee may adopt to reduce stress in his life are:

- **Better time management**
- **Physical exercises**
- **Relaxation training**
- **Expanding social support networks**



(1) Better time management:

Many employees experience stress because they manage their time poorly. Better time management will not only help the employee reduce stress but also help him to accomplish much more.

The following are some well-known time management principles that can help employees reduce stress:

- (a) Prepare a daily list of activities to be completed.
- (b) Prioritizing activities in terms of their importance and urgency.
- (c) Scheduling activities based on their prioritizing.
- (d) Awareness of one's daily schedule and doing the demanding activities at a time when one is most productive and alert.
- (e) Avoid distraction such as those caused by frequent checking of e-mails and SMSes.

These time management principles help an employee focus his attention and efforts on immediate goals and reduce distraction





(2) Physical exercises:

- Aerobics, swimming, jogging, cycling are examples of physical exercises that can help to reduce stress.
- Exercises lower the heart rate, increase lung capacity, improve overall health, build greater energy and stamina and lead to improved work performance.
- It also provides a welcome diversion from work.
- It increases the confidence of a person, it takes the person's mind off stressors for sometime and it mentally relaxes a person.

(3)Relaxation training:

- Meditation, hypnosis and deep breathing are relaxation techniques that help to reduce tension by helping the individual reach a state of deep physical relaxation.
- These techniques helps to release muscle tension and experience peace.
- Research has found that fifteen minutes of quiet meditation reduces individual's oxygen consumption, lowers respiration, increases the electrical resistance of the skin and shifts the brain waves towards a calm relaxation.
- They produce significant positive changes in the heart rate and blood pressure. Meditation helps in psychological recovery.
- It thus reduces stress and improves job performance.



GURU MANTRA

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

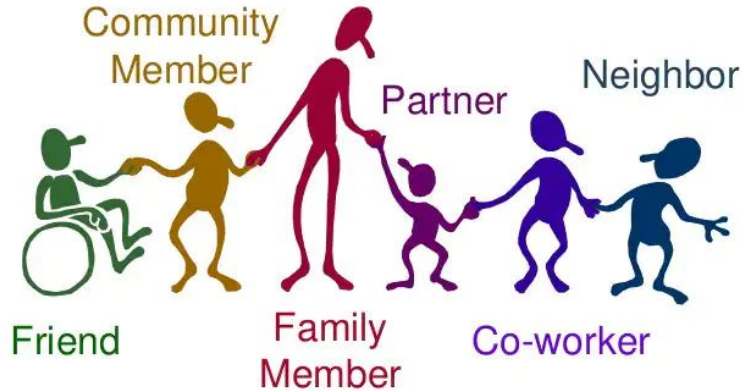
"There is no such thing as work-life balance... there are work-life choices, and you make them, and they have consequences."

Jack Welch
Former CEO, General Electric

(4) Expanding social support networks:

- The social support system of an individual usually comprises of friends, family and close co-workers.
- They help a person in coping with stress by serving as an outlet for his tension and frustration.
- When there is social support the stressed individual knows that he is not alone and that he can get help in dealing with his problems.

Social Support Network





- Friends and family members are major sources of support because we can confide in them without the fear of being criticized and misunderstood.
- Close friends between whom there are 'no walls' of any kinds are extremely helpful.
- Expanding the social support system not only gives an individual more people to talk to but also offers a different and more objective perspective to a stressful situation or problem that an individual is facing.
- However, these relationships must be completely free and open to be helpful.

Some other measures that an employee can take at an individual level to reduce stress are:

- (1) Taking a break from work when a person feels he is completely exhausted and drained out. This helps to reduce the mental strain.
- (2) By telling the superior that one is stressed. Others can help only when they know that you need help.
- (3) Detaching oneself mentally from work when physically away from work. This helps in the recovery process.



HUM HAI NA! (ICICI Bank Combats Stress)

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ICICI Bank has taken a number of steps to reduce the levels of stress among its employees. Some of the unique and noteworthy measures initiated at ICICI are:

- (1) A camera-linked crèche that allows parents to keep an eye on their children through their computers.
- (2) Given the long hours at work, ICICI Bank has started a Saturday Kids club for children between the age of 5 and 12 years on the first floor at ICICI towers. Here kids are taught crafts, computer education and other things, while the parents are at the desk.
- (3) The ICICI towers boasts of a host of convenient services such as swimming pool, sleeping rooms, gymnasium, steam and sauna rooms, personal travel services to subsidized cafeterias.
- (4) An onsite dietician advises employees on their diet and monitors cafeteria food to ensure healthy eating habits. Other health related benefits include dental coverage, mandatory annual health check ups, hospital tie-ups and stress reduction programs.
- (5) ICICI is also in the process of short-listing an organization to run crèches near its residential quarters in Mumbai.

Source: Adapted from Business Today, Anniversary Issue, January 21, 2001.

ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACHES TO STRESS MANAGEMENT



- Managements of organizations can also take a number measures to reduce stress experienced by their employees.
- They can especially work on those factors that are within control such as role and task demands.
- Though suitable strategies the task and role demands can be modified or changed.

The following are some strategies that an organization may adopt to reduce employee stress:

(1) Proper Selection and Placement:

- Careful selection and placement of employees can greatly reduce stress, Organizations should strive to place the right man on the right job by matching the abilities and skills of the employee with the requirements of the job.
- This will lead to greater job satisfaction.
- The stress levels of different jobs are different.
- Selecting individuals who have experience and an internal locus of control for high stress jobs will not only reduce stress but also help them to perform the job better.



(2) Training:

- Training of new employees whose performance is unsatisfactory can also help to reduce stress.
- Training increases self-efficacy and leads to better performance.

(3)Goal setting:

- Goals which are specific, challenging and provide feedback not only reduce stress but also motivate employees to work harder.
- Well defined goals give employees greater clarity and purpose of their.
- They will also see stressors at work as challenges rather than hindrances. Well defined goals with regular feedback reduce uncertainty and frustration leading to lower levels of stress.



Corporates offer flexi hours to ease staff's commute woes

NO MORE RISKING LIVES TO PUNCH IN ON TIME

International Advertising Association's India Chapter has undertaken a social initiative called 'WorkToLiveToWork'.

Spurred by personal bereavements due to accidents on suburban rail network, Nandini Dias, managing committee member of IAA and CEO, Lode-star UM India, a media buying agency, has conceptualized the project which urges CEOs/HR heads to help implement flexible timings so that employees don't risk lives to reach offices.

Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) employees have the flexibility to come early and leave early or vice versa while maintaining the core work hours (11am to 4pm).

Corporate houses where flexi-timings are a reality

Employees like expecting parents, women with young children and those who are temporarily incapacitated for physical movement but otherwise fit can work from home on any two days in a month. —Nigam Suley, senior manager for Mahindra & Mahindra, who

Today's technology advancements— including intranets, extranets, document sharing techniques and broadband speeds— allow colleagues to work effectively and productively from home or during commute.

Wondering India has a policy that allows working from remote locations.

By Mahesh Chakrabarti | IN MUMBAI, MUMBAI INDIA

At Amway India, flexi-timings were introduced 3 yrs back to give employees the option to choose their work shifts.

This initiative has proven beneficial for our direct sellers and customers who usually prefer to visit our offices/stores during non-peak hours. —Shantanu Das | CEO-AMWAY INDIA



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(4) Job redesign:

- Jobs may be redesigned to provide employees with greater control over their work.
- Giving employees more responsibility, autonomy and feedback will make work more meaningful and reduce stress.
- Job enlargement and enrichment can play an important role in reducing stress.
- However, it is very important to keep individual differences in mind while redesigning the job.
- Thus, while the right job design for an employee who has low growth need may be low responsibility and increased specialization, this may not be the right design for an employee with high growth need.



(5) Reduction of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity:

Organizations can greatly reduce stress due to role ambiguity and role conflict by providing employees with a clear description of the duties they have to perform so that there is no uncertainty or confusion regarding what one is expected to do.

(6) Greater employee participation:

Increasing employee participation in the decision making process can also greatly reduce employee stress as it makes them feel empowered. It also increases employee involvement and commitment to the decision.



(7) Effective communication:

- Open communication can reduce stress as stress is very often an outcome of employee perceptions.
- Proper communication will ensure that employees view situations as opportunities rather than as threats.
- Besides, it removes role ambiguity and leaves little room for role conflict.



(8)Sabbaticals:

- Everyone needs a break from work or wishes for time to personal interests.
- Such employees may be sent on a long vacation or sabbaticals. Such 'breaks' enhance the individual's ability to cope with stress.
- Employees come back to work refreshed, keen, more creative and energetic.
- Employees when sent on paid sabbaticals feel rewarded and valued by their employers.



CORPORATE FOLKLORE

WORK-LIFE BALANCE - NOT JUST LIP TALK BUT A WAY OF LIFE

Most organizations today use very clear metrics to track the progress and growth of **WHAT** they do—usually it's money. Unfortunately, we have very poor measurements to ensure that a **WHY** stays clear.

Dwayne Honore who runs his own commercial construction company in Baton Rouge, Louisiana figured out how to measure something most people can only pay lip service to: work-life balance. Honore believes that people should not spend all their time at work, but rather they should work to spend more of their time with their families.

Every employee at Honors Construction is required to clock in the morning and clock out in the evening. But there's a catch. They must clock in between 8:00-8:30 a.m. and out by 5:00-5:30 P.M. Stay any later and they are taken out of a bonus pool. Because employees know they have to leave by 5:30 p.m., wasted time has dropped to a minimum. Productivity is high and turnover is low.

Consider how much you get done the day before you go on vacation. Now imagine every day is like that. That's what Dwayne Honore figured out how to do. Because he figured out how to measure a value he holds dear, that value is embraced.

Extracted from

Start With Why:

How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Action

by
Simon Sinek

(9) Wellness programs:

- Workshops that help employees quit smoking, reduce alcohol consumption, develop a fitness (exercise) schedule, eat better, develop a healthier lifestyle - all contribute to the overall improvement of the employee's physical and mental health.
- Such programs serve as active strategies for reducing employee stress.



A group of four diverse people (three women and one man) are smiling and huddled together, suggesting a team celebrating a success. The image is overlaid with a teal color and several large, semi-transparent white circles. The text "THANK YOU" is centered in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font.

THANK YOU