



Accept the changing nature of work

Liz McKeon offers some stress busting advice

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One of the major sources of stress for managers today is the fact that jobs are no longer for life - job security is a thing of the past.

Salons and spas expect employees to be more flexible, more accountable, to be more hardworking and committed. At the same time, employers offer increasingly limited (or no) assurances or expectations of employment security and career development opportunities.

"In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed:

They must be fit for it, they must not do too much for it and they must have a sense of success in it"

- John Ruskin, 1851

Stress levels have increased due to various reasons, such as lost jobs, pay cuts, being at risk of losing jobs and businesses diving into deeper debt. All these issues have one thing in common....increased stress!

It's important to be able to distinguish between pressure and stress. Pressure is motivating, stimulating and energising. But when pressure exceeds our ability to cope, stress is produced. Continued high levels of stress can, at worst, result in illness, depression or even nervous

breakdown. However, there are a number of signals that help you detect when your levels of stress are bordering on dangerous.

Take a good luck at your well-being. If you experience any number of stress symptoms such as, on-going irritability, suppressed anger, feeling unable to cope, insomnia, nausea on a frequent or constant basis, it is time to start looking for causes and to reassess your priorities. These symptoms are your body's way of telling you that you have crossed the dividing line between healthy pressure and harmful stress.

Once you've admitted that you're not coping with the current everyday pressures of work, the next step in the process is to identify the sources of stress in your workplace / business. Once this is done, you can draw up a plan of action to minimise or eliminate the excess pressure.

Plan to deal with your own stress:

1. Understand what causes you stress, when you are likely to become stressed and how you can avoid these situations.

2. Take responsibility, it is you that is being affected and you that needs to resolve it, don't be afraid, ashamed or uncertain to admit that stress is a problem, because the longer you deny it, the worse the effects of the downward cycle.

3. Identify the source of the stress, the solution is then to rationally consider how to take down the stress wall that is encircling you, brick by brick.

4. Anticipate and plan for stressful periods.

5. Develop strategies for handling stress, consider reducing the cause of stress, or learning to accept it, if it can't be removed.

6. Understand and use management techniques to prevent and reduce stress.

7. Relax! Easier said, than done....

8. Acknowledge stress in others.

9. Build a positive team environment. It is possible to reduce stress for others by developing good communication systems, a supportive team approach, a blame-free environment and a clear sense of involvement and responsibility.

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