

UP THE CREEK

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Replenish or Wasted Energy

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It is safe to say that over time organizations have evolved and changed. As leaders, we feel this change happening with our employees and also in our own work pace. Technology advancements have afforded us more efficient ways to communicate from just about any place as well as the ability to gather, store and access valuable data.

However, we also experience the demands for ever-higher performance from ourselves and our workforce. Since humans are not machines, employees are finding themselves exhausted, disengaged and sick often with a weary human spirit. People try to keep up the pace with the usual method of putting in longer hours but find themselves on the proverbial “hamster wheel” never feeling refreshed. What if we focused on a renewable resource?

Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy (2007) explored the science of stamina and studied the idea of expanding and renewing energy vs. time management to see how organizations could help build and sustain employee energy. From their research they developed recommended practices for renewing in four dimensions of personal energy; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

The recommended rituals are deceptively simple. As a leader in your organization you have the opportunity to model these for others and help staff set self-care goals that use these practices.

A brief summary of their recommendations:

PHYSICAL ENERGY

- Prioritize good sleep habits.
- Cardiovascular activity at least 3 times per week.
- Small meals and light snacks every 3 hours.
- Learn to notice signs of imminent energy flagging: restlessness, yawning, hunger, difficulty concentrating.
- Take brief and regular breaks away from your desk every 90–120 minute intervals throughout the day.

EMOTIONAL ENERGY

- Notice when we start to slip into negative emotions (irritable, anxious, insecure) and take a pause to use deep breathing techniques and defuse those negative emotions.
- Fuel positive emotions by regularly expressing appreciation to others.
- Adopt the “reverse lens” (what might the other person in this conflict say) or use a “long lens” to ask “how might I see this situation in 6 months.”

In This Newsletter

Supervising employees and leading in an organization is a tough job. This quarterly newsletter provides helpful research based articles with practical ideas to help you grow and flourish in your leadership role.

Business Quote

“Self-care is never a selfish act, it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others.”

Parker Palmer

Fun Fact

The Twitter bird actually has a name, it's Larry.



MENTAL ENERGY

- Notice how “multitasking” undermines productivity – focus for 90 minutes then move on to the next activity
- Perform high concentration tasks away from phones and emails.
- Respond to voice mails and emails at designated times during the day.
- Each night, identify the most important challenge for the next day – make that your first priority when you arrive at work in the morning.

SPIRITUAL ENERGY

- Identify activities that use your strengths and do more of these, work to delegate the activities that are not your strength.
- Allocate time and energy to what you consider most important.
- Take some time to determine what are your core values (i.e. health, family life, security, choice, adventure, altruism). Then work at living out these values.

In addition, to recharge, we also need to recognize the cost of energy depleting behaviors (conflict, mistrust, worry) and take responsibility to change them regardless of the circumstances we’re facing. In an effort toward positive change, there is a benefit in shifting the emphasis from getting more out of employees to investing more in them. Then, employees are able to bring more of themselves to work.

Take a step and identify one of these suggestions to start for yourself as an example to your staff. Establishing even a few of these simple rituals can lead to striking results across organizations. Also, thinking of developing energy expansion vs. time management skills can help to free us from working those ever longer days trying to get ahead only to find ourselves energy depleted and unhealthy.

Some helpful questions to ask yourself:

- What are my current rituals and which of those give me energy?
- Which of the above mentioned rituals could help me increase my energy?
- What self-care goals have I encouraged my staff to develop in an effort to increase employee health and engagement?

Remember to use your resources. Sand Creek can help you develop your own self care plan and advise on how to build self-care plans for employees. Let us help you, give us a call at 888.243.5744.

Reference:

Schwartz, Tony & McCarthy, Catherine. (2007, October) Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time. Harvard Business Review.

About Sand Creek Workplace Wellness

Sand Creek is a women-owned small business specializing in providing exceptional workplace wellness services to support the human spirit at work. We embrace our core values of service, hope, trust, compassion, and wisdom in each interaction, thereby upholding our mission of providing helpful solutions to improve productivity and shining a light in the darkest of moments.

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to offer face-to-face counseling and consulting to those that voluntarily reach out to us. We are not simply a phone counseling service or online tool type EAP. Thousands of professional counselors form a worldwide Sand Creek network available to deliver personal care and support to you in your community. Our services are administered nationally, but delivered locally.

Sand Creek supports the relationship between individual health and overall organizational health. Our Organization Assistance Program (OAP) service extends the reach into the organization and provides work teams with a systemic approach to improve the health and well-being of an organization.