

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Stress in the workplace – can it be avoided?

Stress in the workplace is on the increase, and there are many people who are able to identify with the anxiety of having too much to do, no time to do it; impossible demands on time or unsupportive colleagues to name just a few pressure points. In a bid to reduce it, there has been a wave of stress busters, ranging from in-office massages to away-days, but are these the answer? Helen Bailey, from workplace coaching specialists, PINNA, argues that the underlying causes of stress which need to be tackled, and not just the symptoms.

“When it comes to stress in the work place, we need to look at where stress comes from and use this as a starting point for change.”

“It is,” she says “more about clarity of expectation. For employees, feedback is crucial, either on how well they are doing or on opportunities to improve. We need to have these conversations, but sometimes managers avoid them, and it is this which leads to stress.”

Of course, stress is not always a bad thing – some people positively thrive in a hectic environment, but this is usually because they are confident of their own roles and how well they are doing. For most people though, a stressful environment requires a different way of management, not just sticking

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plasters.

For example, change programmes can have a massive impact on staff, which can result in reduced productivity, a poor working atmosphere, and often absenteeism. But how many managers really find out how their staff are feeling? And how do they do this?

A good manager will be close to the temperature of the organisation, whether this is by employee surveys, team meetings, or simply by asking colleagues. Strangely enough, it is rare for managers to admit there is stress in the workplace, but this isn't the case for their employees.

It appears that there is a disconnect between bosses and the impact of changes on staff, but there are a number of things which can be done to improve the situation. Here are PINNA's top seven stress-busting tips for managers to improve their workplace:

- As a leader/manager, find ways to elicit feedback to find out how your really staff feel. You will need to create a culture where staff feel able to tell you honestly, and where there is an open two way communication.
- Create an environment where it is safe to give this feedback
- In times of change, increase communication. It is best to over-communicate rather than pull back. If there is a delay, acknowledge it, keep staff informed at all time. Often its the uncertainty which can cause stress and rumour.
- Whilst acknowledging change is difficult for everyone, do what you can to keep business as usual going and keep communicating.
- Keep reminding your staff of the vision and explain why you are going through change. Sometimes people lose sight of why there is change.
- If there are IT or infrastructure changes, there is a tendency to focus on the technical side and implementation. Remember to communicate the new behaviour required and how the bigger picture.
- Involve staff in the change where possible – get their involvement and ideas rather than impose change.

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