Creating a well-balanced work environment

Increasingly more and more organisations are now facing the challenges of stress related sick leave and lower productivity levels.

With the strong belief that leadership is mostly about setting direction, creating the right conditions for other people to perform and to help them develop, we have, during the last 20 years, helped leaders become more aware and supported them in their growth and development journey.

Nowadays part of this journey very often includes the ability to reduce stress and build more efficient working environments. As leaders we can't influence all the factors that impact our employees perceived stress level, however, there are a lot of things we can do that will have a significant impact on how our employees experience their working situations and contribute to the company performance.

The first step is that we need to acknowledge some of the factors that cause stress and what can be done to prevent them from happening. Then we need to understand how our behaviours and actions are contributing to these factors.

As an individual leader it is very often difficult to recognise and relate to your own behaviour and how it is perceived by others. Getting feedback from the people around you is key to calibrating your style and its impact.

Additionally, we have another challenge, and that is to recognise what the optimal conditions are for the people that are currently being led, since this is both different for people and their circumstances. An essential part of developing your leadership capability is therefore to get feedback in order to further understand and recognise your own behaviours and understand how they impact the people you are currently leading.

It is important to underline again that we cannot improve it all, but just a small improvement can, in our experience, very often lead to significant improvements.
As an aid to getting feedback, we have developed a questionnaire that covers some of the most important behaviours, that if used in a balance way, will prevent stress and increase productivity.

Please contact us if you would like to run a demo: www.feedbackonline.com/contact

If you are interested in learning more, please continue to read:

What causes stress?

The interesting thing about stress is that some stress is good and it's how we perceive it; healthy levels of stress are very personal. We also know that it is very important to have periods of recovery after times of significant stress. Additionally, we know that sometimes we get stressed in certain situations that the same situation occurring the day after would not cause stress at all.

Stress is created by thoughts and the emotions connected to those thoughts. The thoughts might not be conscious and can therefore grip people in stressful situations. Since most people are not fully aware and in control of this process, we very often blame the situation or someone else for the stress.

Think about standing and waiting in a queue. If you try to find the fastest queue, you probably will experience stress. If you instead consciously choose the slowest queue, it will have an impact on your thinking and your stress level. It is not the queue itself that impacts the stress level, it's all about how you think when you are standing in the queue.

So how can this knowledge help us to create a more productive and stimulating workplace?

After investigation into what themes of conscious and subconscious thoughts are that trigger stress emotions in people, we can group them into some areas.

1   **These themes are:**

- Feeling Incompetent
- Risk of failure
- Not being valued
- Treated inconveniently
- Forced to work against your values
- Lack of respect
- Lack of freedom
- Losing control of workload
- Feeling unsafe
- Loss of belonging – No identity with group or team

Since the strength of our individual needs is different, these themes have different impacts on different people. Look them through and think about a situation where you have experienced stress, can you find any theme that might have triggered it?

Again, some stress is good, so what we need as leaders is to find the right balance for the people we are leading. If you have people that have a very stable home environment, eat healthy, exercise daily and sleep well every night you are in quite a unique situation. Most groups of people that we meet consist of a variety of people in a variety of life stages with a variety of different needs.

Finding the right balance for your team and the individuals in your team is the key.

2   **Looking at the external things that you can do as a leader when working on the "right conditions for other people to perform" we find 6 areas:**

- Possibility to achieve results
- Possibility to learn and develop
- Possibility to influence and do work independently
- Feeling safe
- Being part of a bigger purpose (team or other identity)
- Recognition

As you can see there is a correlation between these motivational factors and our stress themes.

Our questionnaire is based on these insights, and we have chosen questions that will help leaders to identify what needs they are fulfilling well today with their current behaviours and what behaviours they need to change if they want to find a more productive balance of stress in the organisation.

We hope you will find this questionnaire extremely useful and a great support when developing yourself and your team!

Good luck,
Peter

Read more about our questionnaire and order a demo at www.feedbackonline.com
Find out more about our consultancy and what we can do for you at www.sharinginsight.com