

eBook

4 SIMPLE WAYS TO HELP EMPLOYEES BEAT BURNOUT





There's no denying it: most of us are struggling to keep up with the hectic pace of modern life.

Our can-do attitudes mean our plates are piled high with competing priorities. Our technology is buzzing and beeping. We're carting the kids to practice while prepping for the next meeting. And we're scarfing down dinner as we answer messages on multiple devices.

Meantime, healthy habits like managing stress, focusing on one task at a time, or getting to bed at a decent hour seem like near-impossible asks.

Sound like your typical day? It's typical for employees, too.

But while this kind of lifestyle is synonymous with "success" in the modern world, employee burnout plagues organizations everywhere,

costing them a pretty penny in lost productivity, low engagement, increased safety incidents, and so much more.

It's time to take action

You can help your people break the stress-fueled lifestyle that's crushing their energy, crippling their productivity, and sapping their wellbeing before it's too late. Read on to learn about the toll employee burnout takes on your company, and why the power to prevent it is in your hands.

You'll discover:

- The serious implications burnout has on your people and your company
- Tell-tale signs your employees are struggling with burnout
- How to use wellbeing to reignite your people



BURNT TO A CRISP

Burnout's effect on people and business

67%

employees report feeling burned out on the job¹

75-90%

doctor visits are related to stress²

9 in 10

HR professionals name poor health, high stress, and lack of sleep as factors impacting employee well-being³

\$180B

healthcare costs due to workplace stress⁴

46%

increase in healthcare costs for stressed workers⁵

1 in 5

U.S. workers spend at least 5 hours each week worrying about work, health, or finances while on the job⁶

Sources:

¹ "Employee Burnout, Part 1: The 5 Main Causes", Gallup, 2018.

² "America's #1 Health Problem", The American Institute of Stress, 2018.

³ "State of the Industry: Engagement & Wellness in 2015." Virgin Pulse. 2015.

⁴ "How Stress Is The Business World's Silent Killer", Forbes, 2018.

⁵ "The Impact of Stress: StressPulse 2014 Survey." ComPsych. 2014.

⁶ "Colonial Life study: Stressed workers costing employers billions - weekly", Business Wire, 2019.

Key to helping people avoid or overcome burnout is recognizing the signals in the first place.

But signs run the gamut — from exhaustion, to low or no motivation, to poor performance, to other factors more difficult (or even impossible) for employers to notice, like declining health or relationship problems at home.

Wondering what you can do?

First, encourage managers to create a caring team environment to help employees feel comfortable speaking up when they're facing challenges. Then, educate managers on these telltale signs of employee burnout, especially when it's the typically high-performing people who are exhibiting them.

1. A serious slump in productivity or work quality

What it is: When top-notch employees turn into unreliable ones.

Warning signs: Consistently missed deadlines, frequent client complaints, an A-plus employee whose performance dips in comparison to months or years passed.

2. An uncharacteristically detached or disengaged worker

What it is: When employees disconnect or lose their "spark."

Warning signs: Poor communication with colleagues, disinterest or low enthusiasm, a former team-player who no longer collaborates with the group.

3. The unusually pessimistic, cranky employee

What it is: When the team cheerleader turns into Debbie (or Donald) Downer.

Warning signs: On-going negativity, constant complaints, a go-getter employee who can no longer be encouraged.

Why wellbeing is the solution

It's all too common for people to mask the symptoms of burnout, so much so that even they don't realize they're headed down a slippery slope. In its early stages, the chronic stress that fuels burnout can feel exhilarating in the same way that working against a deadline motivates some people.

But on-going, low-grade stress and anxiety is detrimental in the long run. If your employees lack the resources to deal with the pressure and demands, it'll lead to eventual burnout.

Here's where employee wellbeing programs come into play

Offering tools and resources that support all areas of employee wellbeing help people manage everything on their plate and can help you guard your workforce against burnout.

93%

executives who agree a healthy lifestyle prevents burnout¹

82%

employees think stress management is an important part of a workplace wellbeing program²

78%

employees who participate in workplace wellbeing programs feel more energetic and productive at work and beyond³

Sources:

¹ "93 Percent of Executives Say a Healthy Lifestyle Can Prevent Burnout," Business Wire, 2015.

² "Business of Healthy Employees Survey," Virgin Pulse, 2016.

³ "Business of Healthy Employees Survey," Virgin Pulse, 2016.

Along with offering an employee wellbeing program, it's important to create a company culture that discourages employees from burning the candle at both ends. Read on for three ways to get started.



1. FIND WAYS TO STAY WELL.

The best habits to help prevent or recover from burnout are likely the ones your people are having trouble making time for: eating right, sleeping well, and exercising.

Ever notice how a great night's sleep, a killer workout, or a couple days of seriously healthy eating make you feel like you can accomplish anything? That's no fluke. All three elements have a major impact on people's energy, brainpower, moods, and more. They also have a cyclical affect on health — meaning if your people improve one area, they're more likely to make strides in the other two and improve their health across the board.

- Create a workplace that makes healthy choices easy for employees.
- Radical changes like installing nap pods or building a state of the art gym are nice, but small improvements like swapping sweets and baked goods in the vending machines for more nutritious options work, too.

2. TELL EMPLOYEES TO TAKE A BREAK.

One of the biggest factors in preventing burnout? Taking time to relax and recharge.

With 52 percent of U.S. employees leaving vacation days unused every year and one in four people saying they feel stressed or guilty when requesting time off, be sure to create policies that encourage people to take a little time away.

- Downtime is critical. Encourage employees to recharge their batteries with a few days away from work or a longer vacation when possible.
- Sometimes a true getaway is in order, and other times a long weekend is all that's needed to catch up at home and feel refreshed.
- Scheduling daily breaks like grabbing lunch with a colleague, getting in a workout, or simply stretching their legs and taking a quick breather are all options to fit in some daily downtime.

3. FOCUS, (UN)INTERRUPTED.

With everything they've got going on, your employees are feeling overwhelmed and distracted — and it's only driving them closer to that burnout status.

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Many people aim to tackle everything on their to-do list by multitasking, but this strategy's actually causing a productivity nightmare. In fact, people switch tasks every three minutes, and it takes them about 23 minutes to get back on task, meaning multitasking is barring employees' ability to make meaningful progress or deeply engage in what matters most.

- Employees should be encouraged to focus on one task through to completion — rather than juggling multiple priorities simultaneously.
- Training for soft skills like time management can help, but so can monitoring employees' workloads, limiting the amount of mandatory meetings, and setting good examples when sending out anything that can spur a notification, a beep, or a buzz on employees' devices.

4. STRIKE A BALANCE

The tools available today make working easier than ever before, but they also mean employees are tethered to their devices and never truly away from work.

In fact, 37 percent of employees spend more than 10 non-work hours each week completing work-related tasks⁴. This 24/7 accessibility has a serious impact on employees' personal lives, making it feel impossible to ever truly unplug from the office. (Case in point: [75 percent of people admit to using their phones while on the toilet](#)). No one's suggesting to give up devices, but it's important for people to step away from them to decompress and spend valuable face-time with family and friends.

- Organize policies that set some boundaries, and make it clear that unless there's an emergency, you don't expect your employees to answer emails or messages once they've finished the workday (or when they're using the bathroom).
- Once you've got parameters in place, be sure managers and employees alike mind them.

Conclusion

Simply put, burnout's bad for business and even worse for your people. But you can help your employees and company alike avoid its detrimental impact.

Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of burnout in your people, and save them from its debilitating effects by supporting their wellbeing.

Give them the resources they need to manage all of life's stressors and actively create a culture that makes getting and staying healthy easy — not just another to-do.

1. Understand and lookout for the warning signs in your workforce.
2. Offer robust resources to help your employees regain control over their stress, wellbeing, and lives.
3. Create a culture that supports wellbeing and banishes the kind of behaviors that lead to burnout.

Creating a mentally healthy workplace is not just the right thing to do, it helps build stronger, more productive organizations. Learn what's impacting mental health around the world and stay ahead with strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of your employees.

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