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Better Workplace



Creating a Better Work Environment

American society often finds workers at their place of work for long hours and working on weekends. Building a better place to work varies because there are so many factors to consider. The size of the business and the scope of what it does (selling, manufacturing, creating, etc.) all impact the workplace:

- how large is the space, office or building?
- are there several locations?
- how many employees work at a given location?
- do customers visit the location?
- what types of industry regulations apply to the facility and to the work it does?

There are several areas listed below addressing making a better workplace. After all, sometimes we spend more time at work than anywhere else, so whether you are an owner, a manager, or an employee, you should make it a safe, productive place.

Improve Productivity by Reducing Stress

Under normal conditions, the human body is in an energetically balanced state that is capable of maintaining the physiological functions of the body and can adjust to any change in the environment. Western medical research has shown that when the human body is under stress for extended periods of time, the nervous system becomes highly active and the person becomes unable to focus on a single item, breathing becomes restricted, the muscles become tense and movement begins to slow down. Stress is the combination of psychological, physiological and behavioral reactions. Stress affects individuals in different ways. Some develop stress related illnesses, some suffer anxiety, have panic attacks, muscular tension, and hyperventilation, and others respond with obsessive or compulsive thoughts and behavior.

Surveys and Research Reports over the past two decades reveal that:

- 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects due to stress
- 75 - 90% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related complaints or disorders
- An estimated 1 million workers are absent on an average workday because of stress related complaints

So how can stress be removed or reduced in the workplace? Start with the environment:

Presentations

inspect your building and evaluate the temperature, lighting and music to make sure they provide comfort and a good environment to which to work. Next, inspect the work area. Is it clean and maintained? How is it furnished and decorated? The equipment and furnishings should be ergonomic in design to provide support and comfort for the worker. It may seem next to impossible to find time to relieve stress at work, but a few well-spent minutes at regularly scheduled breaks can dramatically increase your productivity, work enjoyment and overall health. Some companies offer a 'quiet room' where employees are allowed to remove themselves from their work area and take time to relax and refocus. Many quiet rooms are furnished with mood lighting, quiet music or sounds of nature playing to help the employee to relax. Comfortable floor pads or massage recliners are nice amenities that encourage a brief period of meditation or quiet time. Some companies provide a walking path for their staff and workers to get outside and benefit from a calm work out in nature. Picnic and break areas, and walking areas with flowers and shrubs are wonderful benefits for enjoyment. Maintenance can be minimal to the employer. More elaborate areas include running water flowing into a pond. Benches placed along the paths allow those interested to sit and enjoy. Not every business has the resources or space to provide these distinctive break enhancement options. But every business can offer two simple methods that will remove stress and improve the productivity of every person when they take their breaks.

Cost-Effective Methods Proven To Increase Productivity and Profits While Reducing Stress and Improving Workers Well-Being

Method 1:

Offer employees clean, bottled, distilled water at several strategic locations (at time clock area, close to the break room, near restrooms). Water is the most essential nutrient to work at peak efficiency. Water regulates the body's temperature and maintains muscle tone. It carries nutrients and oxygen to every cell in the body. Dehydration causes the body to slow down and the ability to focus becomes more difficult. Coffee, teas and sodas are not substitutes for water. Encourage your workers to start their day by grabbing a bottle of water; allow it in the work area for daylong enjoyment. This will provide health benefits and reduce stress which will improve their performance. To learn more about water in the workplace go to:

<http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressReleases/030611a.asp>

Method 2:

Western medical research has proven that in order to reduce the harmful effects that stress produces in individuals, they must set aside time for self-regeneration. This can be accomplished by practicing 10-15 minutes of tai chi. The *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, (Volume 9, Page 747-754, October 2003) is only one of many reports showing the beneficial effects of tai chi for reducing stress, lowering blood pressure and relieving anxiety. Tai chi provides all the benefits of a rigorous aerobic workout but, because it is not strenuous, it carries no potentially harmful side effects. Tai chi requires no special skills, clothing or equipment, and can be done anywhere by all fitness levels. Tai chi involves a series of choreographed moves that flow together like a slow motion dance. They are done in a precise order to help facilitate relaxation and mental concentration. When tai chi is carried out at break times, the employee has more energy and a healthier outlook on life. Companies find that tai chi improves productivity and creates happier employees.

Life Improvement Options

A three year study conducted by a large corporation showed that 60% of employees and managers were absent from work due to psychological problems such as stress. Most of this time off could be prevented with better health options. The study offered a number of solutions. They included things like getting a yearly examination from your primary care physician to prevent minor ailments from becoming major illnesses. Several complementary and alternative health care programs were given as other options to consider.

Complementary and alternative medicine is defined as 'any medical or health care system, practices, or products that are not presently a part of conventional medicine.' Here are some suggestions of complementary and alternative programs:

Guest Speaker

Resources

- [Products & Services](#)
- [Wellness Matters](#)
- [Destinations](#)
- [Industries Served](#)
- [Satisfied Customers](#)
- [Library](#)

- [Tai Chi Practice](#)
- [Breath Therapy](#)
- [Music Therapy](#)
- [Herbal Therapy](#)
- [Nutrition Therapy](#)



Wellness programs improve quality of life.

Wellness Alternatives

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