

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHING

Technology advances rapidly, and sometimes it is a daunting task to keep up. Now that the age of dial-up internet has passed, we decided to modernize and streamline our website. We have updated our products and services, and now you can meet our team.



Some of the new things we offer are:

Virtual Assessments: Our executive assessment process remains one of the best in the business. To facilitate reaching a broader audience, we now offer virtual assessments. We can assess leader candidates through virtual webcam interviews, proctored and unproctored assessments, and case study presentations. The great experiences and outcomes are the same, though the mode of communication is different.

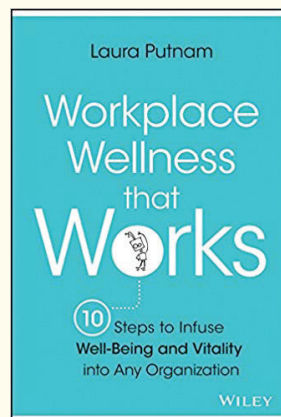
Expanded Training Offerings: Though never a training organization, our clients have been calling on us to leverage our real-life experiences working in a broad array of industries to create trainings. As a result, we have several new, customizable training courses available in our library, including those focused on High Performing Teams and Women Leaders.

Surveying and Strategic Planning: To expand our ability to help your organization improve, we now offer surveying (Org Health and Diversity/Inclusion) as well as strategic planning tools.

Check us out at the new www.oestrategies.com

BOOK REVIEW

Workplace Wellness that Works: 10 Steps to Infuse Well-Being and Vitality into Any Organization
by Laura Putnam



Workplace Wellness that Works illustrates why it is so important to have a plan in place to encourage health and wellness in the workplace. Research shows that simply putting a wellness program in place is not enough on its own to guarantee employee participation. Dictating participation is also an ineffective method for helping employees live a healthier and happier life.

Laura Putnam shows you how to take some out-of-the-box approaches to a more effective promotion of wellness. This book provides steps for incorporating wellness into your employee development strategy in a more productive and innovative way. It will give you a unique overview on how to develop and encourage well-being in the workplace. Not only is wellness a good idea, but it also inspires your employees to make lasting changes in their lives. At its core, wellness is about getting back to doing what we were designed to do naturally. In the workplace, it is about engaging people in their own well-being and tying health and wellness to the overall performance improvement of the business. This book will lead your organization down the path to workplace wellness by following each stepping stone outlined in the 10 steps.

Strategies:SHOP TALK

Newsletter of Organizational Effectiveness Strategies

Winter 2018



Organizational Effectiveness
STRATEGIES
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WORKPLACE WELLNESS

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK
A HEALTHY HUMAN IS A HEALTHY LEADER
Suzanne Miklos, Ph.D.



Leadership, by definition, is all about others. We celebrate serving, humble and hard-working leaders who focus their efforts and attention on the team. Yet, many leaders find it challenging to spend time on their own personal growth and evolution as a human being. Development is a life-long maturation process. Ignoring the work of self can come at a high personal and business cost.

Recently, we analyzed employee engagement data by correlating the team's engagement data to the leader's emotional intelligence score. In general, leaders who have higher emotional intelligence scores had teams who were more engaged. One interesting exception was that leaders who scored high in stress management, potentially to the point of over-using this strength, had teams that reported lower wellbeing at work. The pace-setting leader, who prides him or herself on being tough, may be inadvertently diminishing the resilience of the team.

Being a healthy human being – not just a good worker – is foundational to sustainable, effective leadership. The great news is that exercise, family, community involvement and worship are all contributors to a successful leadership career over the long haul.

As executive coaches, we learn that the mind, body and spirit are all equal domains of learning and effectiveness. For example, low serotonin is associated with anger. Sometimes people feel a chemical shift, identifying themselves as angry and then looking for something to be angry about. This is a pattern that occurs in those who are predisposed to impatience. Exercise, diet and practices that trigger happiness such as humor can all serve to support a higher serotonin level and reduction in the experience of impatience. This example illustrates that leadership behaviors start with self-care.

Leaders need to focus on their physicality. Taking care of the body with adequate sleep, nutrition and play is critical to a sense of well being, confidence and optimism. Emotions for the team get dragged down when the leader is run down. Considering that abusing one's body depletes the ability to be an effective, inspirational and creative leader, a clear plan and time commitment to wellness is part of the job.

Leaders also need to focus on relationships and spirituality. Working in an organization that can't move the needle on engagement is common when the leadership team is task and project focused and don't themselves have a strong sense of community and contributing to the greater good. Empathy and inspiration cannot grow in a test tube; they are grown in the context of give and take relationships.

Finally, leaders need to take care of their minds. The human brain craves stimulation from novel and diverse sources. It also needs time to power down through meditation or reflection. We have many clients who struggle to be strategic and create processes and training on strategic thinking. It may not be effective unless people learn to develop their own rhythm of fast and slow, push and recovery, and wide and deep thinking.

When a leader wants to lead others more effectively, the first stop needs to be the mirror. Physical, emotional and intellectual capacity are all derived from how leaders evaluate and take care of themselves. That is why training programs that lack a coaching component often fail to stick. The best development programs increase self-awareness and self-leadership to help leaders bring the best of themselves to their roles, their families and their communities.

MANAGER'S CORNER

WE AREN'T MEANT FOR OFFICES: NATURE AND WELLNESS

Chris Bamford, M.A.



Over the past month or so, I have discovered podcasts. I guess I could be considered a slow adopter of new technology! One of my current favorites is the Hidden Brain hosted by Shankar Vedantam on NPR. On September 10th, he interviewed Ming Kuo, a University of Illinois professor who studies the impact of nature on physical and psychological health. They said that for most of human existence, we lived in the natural world. Only recently in our history have we moved to “office dwellings.” They mentioned that animals in zoos tend to do much better physically, psychologically and socially when they are housed in a natural habitat rather than in cages. Could the same be true for humans? While the typical office environment is hardly a cage, it is often bereft of nature, as is most of our daily lives.

Neuroscience has recently had a major influence on management sciences and understanding the role that nature can play in our lives. For example, most of us are familiar with *Fight or Flight* (parasympathetic activity) and *Tend and Befriend* (sympathetic activity) responses. Studies have shown that when we look out the window at green landscapes, our sympathetic nervous system is activated and our heart rate decreases – it relaxes our brains. Even when people are shown pictures of nature in a laboratory setting (as artificial as sticking humans in an office), their blood pressure decreases, and they become calmer.

According to the Attention Restoration theory, when people don't have access to nature, they are more mentally fatigued. And when we are mentally fatigued, we are less effective at handling interpersonal situations. Said differently, nature can help us in how we relate to others; we are better able to respond empathetically when we have access to green spaces.

Our immune system also reacts in positive ways to us spending time in nature. During the podcast, Kuo

mentioned a study that found special white blood cells that fight cancer, known as “killer cells,” increase on average of 50% after spending three days in a forest preserve and stayed elevated for thirty days afterwards. No increases were found after three days in a nice urban area.

This podcast had a special interest to me. During my coaching training, my capstone project was combining two of my passions: coaching and fly fishing. The physical and psychological benefits received from spending time on the water fly fishing has caused this activity to be included in several groups focused on healing physical and emotional issues, such as with veterans (Project Healing Waters) and for women with all stages of breast cancer (Casting for a Cure). Personally, I find fly fishing creates a mindful state, and while wading in a river can be quite physically exhausting, I am immersed in the rejuvenating surroundings of nature. I feel mentally refreshed.

As a leader, your active participation in your company's wellness program demonstrates your willingness to set an example and lead the way for your team. Think about how you can incorporate nature into your personal wellness routine, and how you can creatively add a bit of nature to your next team building session. Maybe you can even take them fly fishing!



OES INSIGHTS

“Fly fishing is my passion. When on the water, I am centered and focused on what is present. When remembering past trips or thinking about the next one planned, I smell the salt air, see eagles above, and feel the water moving around me. I am there.”

– CHRIS BAMFORD

“There are few better ways to disconnect than playing a game of racquetball. The high speed of the game, coupled with the strategic nature of defense and offense, keeps your mind in the moment. You'll have no idea what projects are due tomorrow!”

– MIKE SLITER

“Stress comes from feeling unable to meet current demands. I tend to reframe stress as an exciting challenge and leverage faith that the right resources and ideas exist if I only open my eyes. Staying committed to fun and appreciation keeps stress hormones in check.”

– SUZANNE MIKLOS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

MINDFULNESS MATTERS

Michael Sliter, Ph.D.



The wellness revolution continues to take the United States by storm, with organizations offering more and more flexible and healthy options. The most popular workplace wellness interventions involve physical fitness, such as inspiring employees to take steps, exercise classes, and encouraging healthy eating choices. Fewer interventions focus on the benefits of building mental resilience to help workplace stress that can potentially result in burnout.

Recently, more attention has been paid to mindfulness in the workplace, a practice long used to increase personal awareness, present-mindedness, and compassion (Hyland, Lee, & Mills, 2018). Major organizations, such as Google, Nike, Apple, and the U.S. Army, have adopted mindfulness practices and have seen a significant return on investment. What is mindfulness, and how can it help both you and your organization?

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a practice that has its roots in Buddhist mind training methods. The goal of mindfulness is to be completely in the present, seeing things as they are in the current moment (Gunaratana, 2011). Our lives tend to be fairly distracted; as I write this research article, I am walking on a treadmill (1.5 mph), flickering my attention between two computer screens, and thinking about who is picking my daughter up from school. My perception of the world around me is influenced by my biases, assumptions and past experiences, and emotion colors much of what I see. Mindfulness is the practice of experiencing the world bereft of those distractions and biases, focusing one's attention on what is here and now. Beyond that, mindfulness is an opening of the mind to new possibilities and interpretations of the environment, with an emphasis on compassion (Gunaratana, 2011).

Does mindfulness work?

Though mindfulness in organizations is rather new, clinical psychologists have long been promoting mindfulness as a coping mechanism for both mental and physical illness (Baer, 2003). Consistently, the practice of mindfulness has been linked with reduced anxiety, reduced stress levels, and increases in memory, empathy and self-compassion

(Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). In a business context, the practice of mindfulness relates to better consumption of feedback, reduced emotional reactivity, and increased creativity, innovation, engagement, and productivity (Chaskalson, 2011). Thinking of the bottom line, it has also been related to lower absenteeism.

How can it be used at work?

On an individual basis, there are a vast array of resources to help guide people on practicing mindfulness throughout the day. I would recommend finding videos of guided mindfulness training to begin. When you become more comfortable, you can use self-guided techniques. I use an app called Mindful Minute and set a timer based on my schedule. You need not put aside a lot of time for mindfulness to be effective.

At an organization level, many training programs exist for mindfulness. Most common is a program called Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, which involves 1) hosting in-office mindful meetings, and 2) daily individual practice. Some organizations offer one-time offsite events, and there are also online, virtual classroom options available. HR representatives can easily find avenues to become certified to create and conduct in-house mindfulness training to supplement existing stress management programs. We recommend that you examine the efficacy of these trainings over time, including whether these techniques are adopted long term and what kind of impact they have on employees – their performance, relationships and individual levels of stress.

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