

The Business Case for a Healthy Workplace



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About the Speaker:

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- Founder and CEO of WorkSaver Systems
- Army Veteran -Attended West Point Military Academy
- Medical PhD in Neuroanatomy, LSU School of Medicine
- Licensed Physical Therapist
- Certified Ergonomic Specialist
- Professional Speaker
- Federal and State court accepted expert in FCEs, fitness-for-duty testing, clinical biomechanics, and ergonomics
- Author of book chapters: *Fitness-for-Duty*, in American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) Guide to Occupational Health (2018) and *AMA Guide to Functional Capacities Evaluation*, in The Lower Extremity and Clinical Neurology (2001)

Healthcare Cost in the U.S.

- Topped 3.3 Trillion in 2016
- Cost per person : \$10,348
- Up 4.3% from 2015



Presenteeism

The problem of workers' being on the job but, because of illness or other medical conditions, not fully functioning. Can cut individual productivity by one-third or more.

It's not just about lost time accidents.
Cuts productivity by one-third.
A \$60- 130 billion per year problem!



Harvard Business Review

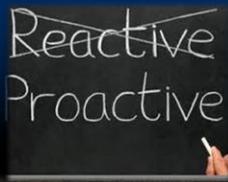
Investing in a Healthy Workplace

- 70% of health care expenses are associated with preventable conditions
- Improving physical and psychosocial environment results in a cost benefit ratio ranging from \$1.50 - \$6.15 for every \$1 invested



Fries (1998)

Why Being Proactive is Essential for Businesses to Survive Current Global Health Trends Affecting Employee Health



The Silver Tsunami



Adults aged 65 or older will make up 21% of US Workforce by 2020

The Obesity Epidemic



Higher Risk for...
Diabetes
Cancer
Cardio Problems
Sleep Apnea & Fatigue
Arthritis
More High Risk Surgery

Longer Rehabilitation after Injury



More Sedentary Childhoods



More Sedentary Jobs

For people who sit most of the day, their risk of heart attack is about the same as smoking,” *Martha Grogan, MD, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist*

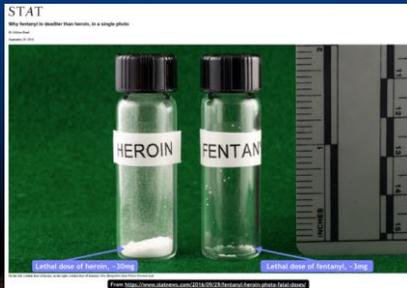
In Wall Street Journal article on beating heart attacks.



Adverse Drug Interactions – Polypharmacy & Opioid Epidemic



Deaths from Heroin and Fentanyl Skyrocketing

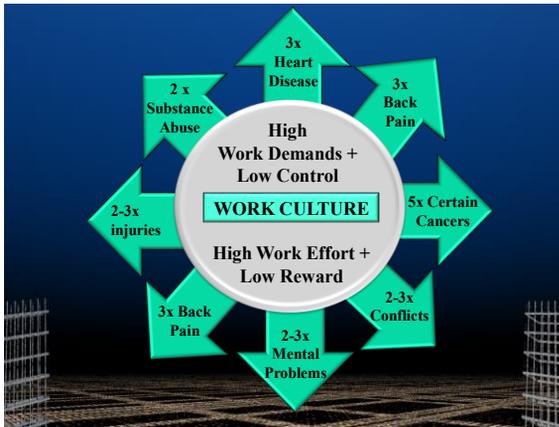


Impact of Lifestyle Risk Factors (LRFs)

(Sedentary, Overweight, Smoker, Alcohol Abuse)

- LRFs increase job absenteeism 50% and health costs 2-3 x more than those without LRFs
- There is a direct Linear relationship between obesity & WC claims, lost workdays, medical claims costs and indemnity costs
- Smokers – \$2500/year per employee
- Excessive alcohol consumption – \$597/year per employee
- Being Sedentary /Unfit - \$488/year per employee





Factors Impacting Worker's Health?

- What the worker bring to the job : health, beliefs, attitude, and values
- What the workplace does to the worker once they are there

Note: The employer is able to exert a strong influence on the first factor and has total control over the 2nd factor

– Safe Workplace Promotion Services Ontario, 2011

So What Do We Know?

Wellness programs are unlikely to have much effect on employees who work in a toxic psychosocial work environment.

Greatest gains occur in workplaces that is an open, trusting and supportive work environment.

Younger workers are much more interested in work-life balance than earlier generations of workers.

Older workers who can afford to retire will not be retained through financial incentives. They are looking for more **respect and flexibility** in the workplace.

The 3 Avenues to a Healthy Workplace



Components of the Three Avenues to a Healthy Workplace

1. Organizational Culture

- *Respect & Appreciation*
- *Balancing Workloads*
- *Job enrichment*
- *Decision latitude*



2. Physical Work Environment

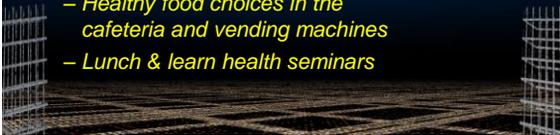
- *Ergonomics*
- *Industrial Hygiene*



3. Personal Health (Wellness) Resources

Examples:

- *Exercise breaks*
- *Fitness club or equipment subsidies*
- *Smoking cessation programs*
- *Stress management*
- *Healthy food choices in the cafeteria and vending machines*
- *Lunch & learn health seminars*



Improving Organizational Culture



Stress in a business contributes to at least 60% of workplace accidents.

(Chrysalis Performance Inc. Research, Ravi Tangri, 2003)



Stress Affects Health Much More than Most People Know

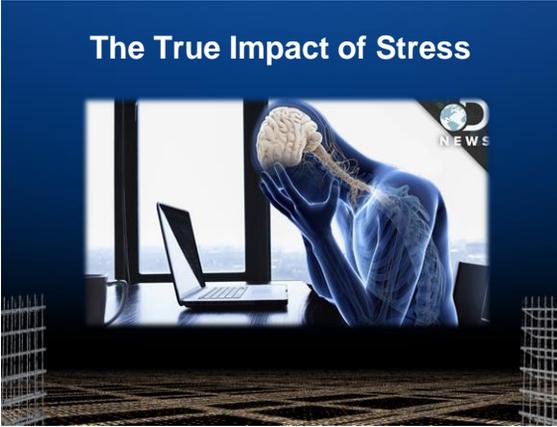


Sources of Workplace Stress

- Excessive Job Demands (Work Overload)
- Lack of employee control over how they work
- Poor management and colleague support
- Lack of role clarity
- Organizational changes
- Poor working relationships
- Harassment

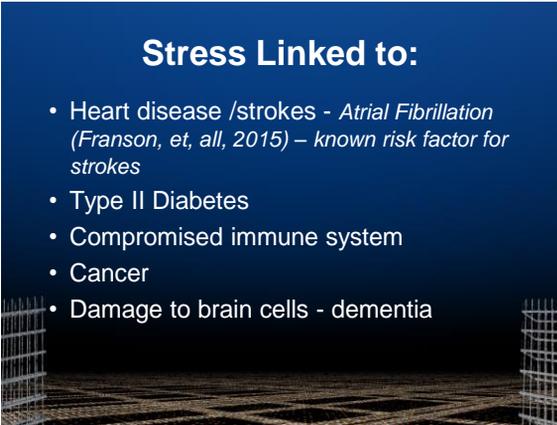


The True Impact of Stress



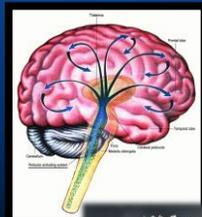
Stress Linked to:

- Heart disease /strokes - *Atrial Fibrillation (Franson, et, all, 2015) – known risk factor for strokes*
- Type II Diabetes
- Compromised immune system
- Cancer
- Damage to brain cells - dementia

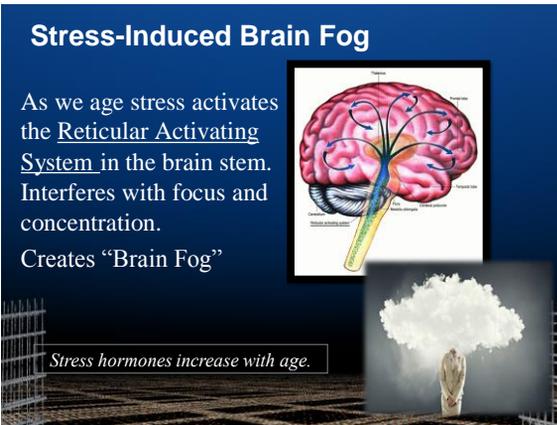


Stress-Induced Brain Fog

As we age stress activates the Reticular Activating System in the brain stem. Interferes with focus and concentration. Creates “Brain Fog”



Stress hormones increase with age.



Stress & Sleep Deprivation



Skills Affected by Lack of Sleep

- Comprehension and communication
- Producing innovative solutions to problems
- Emotional intelligence (empathy, self-confidence)
- Assessing risk and anticipating consequences
- Multi-tasking and decision making

This causes lost productivity costing organizations an average of \$2,280 a year per sleep-deprived employee

Industrial & Transportation Accidents

Around 20% of fatal road accidents involve driver fatigue.



Usually the driver is already tired when they get behind the wheel from long hours, stress, high carb meals, shift work, lack of sleep, sleep apnea or physically demanding jobs.

Famous Accidents Attributed to Sleep Deprivation

- Three Mile Island Nuclear Meltdown (1979)
- Challenger Space Shuttle Accident (1986)
- Chernobyl Nuclear Accident (1986)
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (1989)



Reducing Stress on Employees

- Match skills of employee to the job
- Focus training in the morning
- Take advantage of crystallized intelligence
- Provide extra time for learning
- Provide more time for practice
- Promote reverse mentoring
- Reduce need for multitasking



Reducing Errors

Standardize Processes and Use Check Lists



Creating a Healthy Workplace for Healthy Sleep

- Avoid work overload – delegate wisely.
- Discourage bringing work home.
- Allow time for employee exercise during work day.
- Consider flexible hours where people can work the hours when they are most productive.
- Discourage reading e-mails after normal work hours



Promote Mindfulness

- Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present.
- Means living in the moment rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future.



Promote Daily Exercise



Exercise Reduces Anxiety, Improves Mood,
Sharpens Memory and
Reduces Risk of
Dementia & Alzheimer's



Best Sleeping Pill - Reduce Stress



Tips on Making the Work Climate Healthier



Promote Employee Engagement in the Job

An “engaged employee” is one who is fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work and so takes positive action to further the organization’s reputation and interests.

Employee engagement is the *magic ingredient* and the special sauce that makes all the difference in business.



Are Your Employees Engaged in Their Work?

- **ENGAGED:** Employee works with passion and feels connected to their job. They drive innovation and progress.
- **NOT ENGAGED:** Employee is “checked out”, unhappy, putting in time but not energy or passion.
- **ACTIVELY NOT ENGAGED:** Employee is acting out their unhappiness and undermining accomplishments of engaged, productive employees.

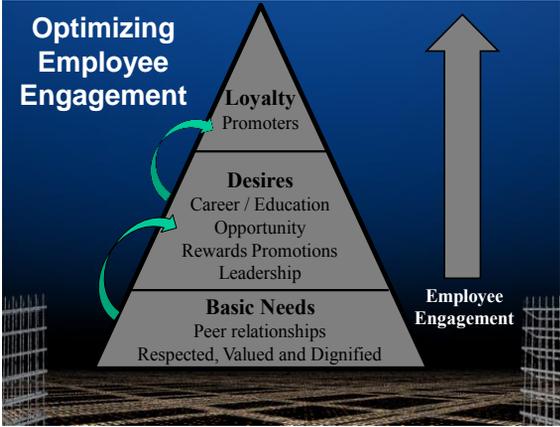
Six Traits of An Engaged Employee

- **Mutual Trust** with Employer & Co-workers
- **Leadership** - takes charge without being told
- **Job Satisfaction** - happier, more dedicated
- **Motivated** - welcomes new challenges
- **Problem Solver** - helps business overcome obstacles
- **Productive** – better job performance



Impact of Engaged Employees

- On average **50% more likely to exceed expectations** than least engaged employees (Harvard Business Review, 2013)
- **87% less likely to leave** the organization (Forbes, 2012)
- Employers experience on average **19% boost in income** compared to a decline of 33% for employers with the lowest % of engaged employees (Blomberg Business Week, 2009)
- **22% higher productivity** and **27% higher profits** (Gallup – 2013)



Encourage Employees to Exercise

It's a natural antidepressant.

Tip: If your organization can afford gym memberships for employees, that's great. But even a brisk, 15-minute walk every other day will do the trick. Help staff form lunchtime walking teams.



Focus on the Positive.

Most of us listen to too much bad news.

Tip: Tell employees about what's going right. Send out a daily e-mail with a positive quotation or tidbit of good business news. Reading something positive first thing in the morning sets a positive tone for the day.



Train Managers to Listen for "Negative Self-talk"

Employees who beat themselves up over every mistake tend to focus on what they're doing wrong, not their successes.

Tip: Encourage bosses who hear negativity to remind employees that the good they do always outweighs the little goofs. Preach the value of making it OK for employees to make honest mistakes.



Play up Employees' Strengths

Everyone is good at something, but few of us excel at everything.

Tip: Help managers identify each employees' strengths, and then assign them work that they're good at. Build teams whose members' skills complement one another.



Manage **STRESS** at Work

No workplace is entirely stress-free, but some employees handle stress better than others.

Tip: Bring in lunchtime speakers to educate employees about stress-management.

Post stress-busting exercises on your internal website.



Help Employees Focus on Work

- The less they worry about squeezing in personal business, the better they can focus on work.
- Tip: *Re-advertise your work/life benefits, such as flextime, telework, child and elder care and on-site conveniences like an ATM or cafeteria.*



Also Focus on the Greater Good

- Tip: *Regularly remind employees of the value to others of the work they do, whether it's to fill a need, make customers happier or help the company meet its goals.*



Stop the Negativity!

- Employees might not be able to completely avoid toxic co-workers, but they can limit their exposure.
- Tip: *Enforce a "zero-tolerance" policy against harmful gossip and incivility.*



Encourage High-Quality Relationships

They are critical to employee happiness.

Tip: Create opportunities for co-workers and their families to socialize with "work friends."

Remind employees that your employee assistance plan can help them strengthen personal relationships when they must cope with divorce, drug addiction and family issues.



Reward Cheerfulness

- Walking into a workplace of cheerful colleagues is a great way to shake off the blues.
- *Tip: Encourage managers to "catch" people smiling and thank them for it.*



Create an EVP

An Employee Volunteer Program (EVP) is planned, managed effort that seeks to motivate and enable employees to effectively serve community needs through the leadership of the employer. Improves engagement with employer.

Tip: Studies show that people who donate time and money are happier and healthier than others. Organize employees to volunteer at community events.



Show Gratitude

- Remind supervisors to thank employees often. Celebrate employees accomplishments.
- *Tip: Encourage bosses to praise employees in front of their peers.*



Improving the Physical Environment



Ergonomics

The applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely — called also biotechnology, human engineering, human factors.



Ergonomic Goals

- Reduce Awkward (Stressful) Postures
- Reduce Excessive Force (Physical Exertion)
- Reduce Excessive Repetition
- Reduce Exposure to Vibration (HAV and WBV)
- Reduce Contact Stress
- Reduce Environmental Stress

What about ROI?

There is overwhelming evidence that ergonomics interventions result in a return on investment ranging from 3:1 to 15:1.

Office Ergonomics – Key Concepts:



Seated Office Work Effects on General Health

- Doubles the risk of cardiovascular disease as compared to standing/walking jobs (Body goes into storage mode)
- EMG activity of leg muscles become silent
- Calorie burning reduces to 1 Cal per min
- Good cholesterol drops 20% after 2 hours
- Insulin effectiveness drops 24% after 24 hours

Patel et al., 2010, Leisure Time Spent Sitting in Relation to Total Mortality in a Prospective Cohort of US Adults, American J Epidemiology.

Sitting's Impact on Life Span

“It’s not just how much physical activity you get, but how much time you spend sitting that can affect your risk of death. Sitting may actually shorten a person’s average life span.”

- American Cancer Society



For people who sit most of the day, their risk of heart attack is about the same as smoking,” Martha Grogan, MD, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist

In Wall Street Journal article on beating heart attacks.



Latest Trends in Office Ergonomics



Latest Trends in Field Ergonomics



Exoskeletons



Zero G Ergonomic Tool Arm



Exoskeletons Provide Chairless Seating



Noonee—a startup based in Switzerland—has created the Chairless Chair. The device is worn behind the legs, though it still allows for normal walking. When the user needs to take a break, he/she leans back and rests on the device, creating a chair anytime, anywhere.

Video



The Goal:
Improve safety,
productivity, and
abilities to work
longer as one
ages



Reduces muscle
stress and
increases
productivity.

So How Do You Know if The Person You Are Hiring is Fit for the Job?



Or Perhaps You Prefer not to Know?



Consider this: 33% - 45.4% of Injuries Occur during the first Year on the Job (BLS, 2013)

Also Consider the Fact that Musculoskeletal Disorders are Skyrocketing

Direct costs of MSDs are over \$20 billion a year.
Workers Compensation Claims Per Injury \$29,000 – 32,000



MSDs are leading cause of pain, suffering, and disability

Employee Screening – Assessing Fitness for Duty



Types of Fitness-for-Duty (FFD) Tests

- New Hire (Post-Offer / Pre-Placement)
- Return to Work
- For Cause
- Job Transfers / Promotions
- Periodic for High Risk Jobs



ROI of Fitness for Duty Testing?

Fitness for Duty Testing has been shown to result in a return on investment ranging from 8:1 to 13:1

Savings have been hundreds of thousands per year for industries annually.



Objective Testing without Bias is Essential
*Preconceived Perceptions of Work Capacity
can Lead to Unfair Disparate Discrimination
in Hiring*



Purposes of a FFD Exam?

- Helps prevent buying a pre-existing medical condition(s).
- Objectively measures pre-existing impairments
- Matches person's physical capacities to perform the essential physical demands of a job safely.
- Provides objective basis for reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disability
- Provides training on body mechanics and wellness feedback



FFD Program Must Be Legally Compliant



On-Site Physical Demands Validations are Key



Pre-Existing Impairments Should be Measured and Recorded- Savings to Average Client: \$268,000 annually



Once Cleared by a Properly Performed Physical Exam, Functional Testing can be Administered



FFD Testing should be Monitored for Legal Compliance



Establish Precise P&Ps that Address Pre-Test, Test, and Post-Test Phases of Hiring



Failures Due to a Covered Disability - The Interactive Accommodation Review



Return to Work Process

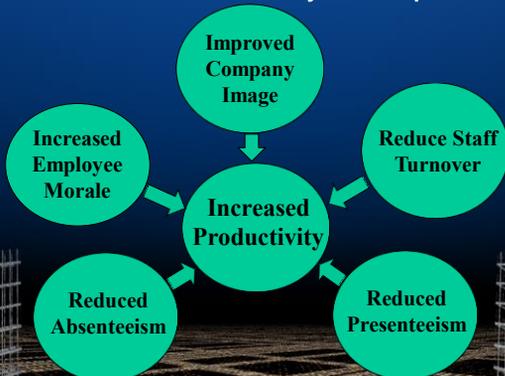
- Should have a definitive return to work program (policies and procedures) in place.
- Should have validated functional job descriptions that describe essential physical demands for each job.
- Fitness for Duty test can be conducted “for cause”.
- Know what reasonable accommodations can be offered for each job.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Improve Personal Health Resources

- Promote exercise on the job
- Subsidize fitness clubs
- Stress management
- Healthy nutrition
- Health seminars/ fairs
- Smoking cessation programs



Benefits of a Healthy Workplace



Questions?



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