



A FINE BALANCE

A Manager's Guide to Workplace Well-Being

CCMD
Roundtable
on Workplace
Well-Being

CHAired BY
YAZMINE LAROCHE

BY PETER STOYKO
AND ANDREW GAUDES



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The Roundtable members would sincerely like to thank the many individuals who contributed to the development of this document. This includes those who presented ideas to the Roundtable and carried out the production process. Their contributions helped ensure that this product will be useful to managers across Canada's Public Service and beyond.

What Is Action-Research?

CCMD's action-research process brings together practitioners and experts from both inside and outside of government. The group develops practical advice for dealing with pressing management challenges. The research process revolves around the deliberations of a diverse roundtable – a forum ideally suited for rapidly pooling and scrutinizing knowledge, insights and experiences. The research takes place over a year.

The management challenges are selected by managers and senior executives according to their urgency and importance to the Public Service as a whole. The end product contains leading-edge, focused, practical advice that public managers genuinely value and actively use within their work.

The roundtable is supported by a secretariat composed of scholars and public service researchers.

Taking Action on Workplace Well-Being

A Public Service that continually learns is better equipped to seize the fleeting opportunities found in our rapidly evolving economy and society. Research is a crucial vehicle of learning, but not just any kind of research will do. Research needs to be timely, relevant and offer practical advice. This is precisely what CCMD's Action-Research Roundtable process sets out to accomplish.

This is the second wave of research we have conducted in this highly successful format. Our consultations with managers identified five topics which require immediate research:

- Workplace Well-Being
- Internal Service Delivery
- Public Service Innovation
- Horizontal Mechanisms
- Science and Public Policy

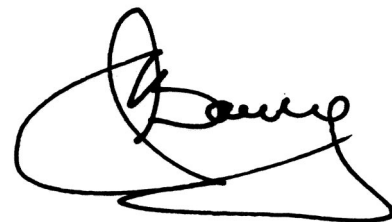
These topics are of strategic importance for Canada's Public Service as a whole, yet speak to the lived experience of our fellow managers and their staff.

This manager's guide was produced by the Action-Research Roundtable on Workplace Well-Being. The Roundtable's objectives were to take stock of this multifaceted topic, translate key insights into practical guidance and, in so doing, help public managers spread well-being throughout their workplace. In fulfilling these objectives, the Roundtable provides an ideal companion to the Report of the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Workplace Well-being, published in September 2000.

I am confident that you will find this report a path-breaking contribution to the our on-going journey to make the Canada's Public Service an employer of choice and a workplace where people thrive.

Many people deserve a sincere thank-you for their contribution. I would like to thank the Roundtable's Chair, Yazmine Laroche, Assistant Deputy Minister (Portfolio and Corporate Affairs) of Canadian Heritage, for her commitment and leadership. I also recognize the immense contribution of the Roundtable members who volunteered their time and expertise because they believed in the importance of workplace well-being. Finally, I would like to thank the Secretariat members for their diligent research and inspired composition.

Jocelyne Bourgon



President,
Canadian Centre for
Management Development

A Fine Balance

When I was asked to chair a Roundtable on Workplace Well-Being, my first reaction was: “Oh, they must want someone who doesn’t practise balance very well. Maybe they’re hoping to make a convert out of me.” As the Assistant Deputy Minister of a newly-created organization, I was living through 14-hour days, a horrendously steep learning curve and a feeling that my life was completely out of control. So, naturally, I accepted the assignment.

Workplace well-being – or balance, or harmony, or wellness – is a relatively recent entry into the public service lexicon. But recent survey results – of existing public servants and of potential recruits – point to a serious issue. While a majority of public servants feel committed to their work and, indeed, take pride in public service, a large number feel they have no control over the amount of work they do, and many feel they receive little recognition for their contributions. And, as we grapple with replacing a large segment of the workforce closing in on retirement age, those we seek to recruit are telling us that they do not see the Public Service as a desirable career choice.

The mission of this roundtable was to examine the issue and come up with some practical suggestions for use by public service managers. Our members were passionate about their task. We had representatives from within the public service, as well as academics who study these issues, and private-sector representatives who demonstrate best practices, along with other experts in the field. We were ably supported by a dedicated

secretariat of doctoral candidates and management trainees. Each member brought a unique perspective to the issue, and I am humbled by their commitment, insight and sagacity.

It was a rich and intense experience. Workplace well-being is a vast topic with a huge body of research. Our biggest challenge was trying to come up with a single product that would have practical application for Public Service managers.

In examining the issue, we recognize that achieving equilibrium in our complex lives is the responsibility of individuals as well as the organizations in which they work. As individuals, we have to be finely attuned to our own definition of balance, be clear about what our needs are and make a commitment to maintaining this equilibrium. As Public Service managers, responsible for our organizations, we have to create an environment that is both flexible and responsive to our staff’s needs – one that takes into account their requirements around balance, that recognizes their contributions, and enables them to flourish. Balance cannot be measured in 24-hour

increments, nor is it a static commodity. It’s about life and our changing needs and priorities as we live it. There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution, but there are a number of tips and strategies to try out, and we hope that this magazine will encourage you to develop your own approach.

To help you do that, we’ve produced a series of articles – one that outlines the case for addressing well-being in the workplace; another that highlights a remarkable example taken from the private sector; self-administered questionnaires to determine how you experience well-being – as an individual and as a manager; interviews with a variety of public service managers; and articles on workplace design and managing that most precious of resources – time.

We hope you will find the material relevant and informative. We encourage you to share it with others, and assess what you can do – for yourself and for your teams to ensure that we are all truly “well in our workplace.”

Yazmine Laroche



Chair
CCMD Action-Research Roundtable
on Workplace Well-Being

Well-Being by the Numbers

Executive Decisions

Missed Weekends: Canadian Government executives work, on average, almost 5 hours each weekend. More than a quarter of executives work 6 or more hours each weekend.

Brain Drain: 63% of retiring Government executives consider balancing work and personal life a very important factor in their decision to leave.

Upward Immobility: For 51% of Government executives, problems with work/life balance were a very important reason for not seeking a promotion. In the labour force as a whole, this number is 32%.

Cheer Up: Almost 2 out of every 5 Disability Insurance Plan claims in 1997/98 were due to depression or anxiety.

Drowning In Work

Heavy Load: In 1999, almost half of all Canadian Public Servants considered their workload not reasonable most of the time; 40% could not complete their assigned workload during regular working hours most of the time; 65% reported a need to improve their time management skills.

Shabby Job: Half of all Canadian Public Servants feel that their work often or always suffers because they are asked to do more with fewer resources, while 29% feel that their work often or always suffers because of unreasonable deadlines.

Time You'll Never Get Back

Commuter Blues: Workers spent an average of 62 minutes per day traveling to and from work during the regular work week in 1998. That is more than 5 hours per week, or 10 full days a year. For those who take the bus or subway, the average travel time per day is 100 minutes.



Life Isn't What It Used To Be

Balancing Act: The percentage of workers reporting moderate to high levels of stress from balancing work and life responsibilities rose by almost 75%, from 27% in 1989 to 46% in 1999.

Emotional Overload: Employees reporting high levels of depression more than doubled, from 15% in 1991 to 33% in 2001. In 1991, 1 in 5 workers reported high levels of job stress. By 2001, 1 in 3 workers were reporting high levels. High levels of role overload increased over the period, from 47% to 58%.

No Satisfaction: The share of workers with high levels of job satisfaction declined from 61% to 43% between 1991 and 2001. During the same period, the share with high organizational commitment declined from 76% to 43%. The share with high levels of life satisfaction declined from 54% to 41%.

Who's In Charge Here

Problem With Authority: Two thirds of Canadian organizations do not give their managers enough control to help employees balance work and personal responsibilities.

Gatekeepers: Most Canadian organizations (57%) leave teleworking to the discretion of managers.

Gender Trouble

This or That: Three quarters of female workers feel that commitment to family hindered career advancement. Two thirds feel that advancement depends on putting their career ahead of their personal life.

On Hold: 41% of women report postponing having a child, or not having one at all.

How Flexible is the Public Sector?

Not all government organizations allow flexible work arrangements. What percentage do?

71%

Family Responsibility Leave

68%

Compressed Work Week

59%

Job Sharing

46%

Tele-work



Maybe It's Time to Get a Life

More and more managers are waking up to the benefits of workplace well-being. Not just because it makes people feel better and be more productive, but because it's simply the right thing to do.

Its symptoms are subtle and easily misdiagnosed because they hide behind other primary disorders: chronic absenteeism; nagging colds and flus; more serious illness; and a lingering sense of dissatisfaction around the office. The signs of a loss of equilibrium between the working and personal lives of the people around you — or even yourself — can be hard to link to their root, but left unchecked can undermine the effectiveness of your team, your branch or even your entire department.

One sign that is difficult to overlook is a general dissatisfaction with work, although this, too, can be masked by confusion between the quality and the quantity of work. As a rule, public service employees like their jobs. In fact, of those surveyed in 1999, 96 percent said they felt their work was important and 88 percent said they liked their jobs. But 50 percent also said there was too much of a good thing.

The Report of the COSO Sub-Committee on Workplace Well-being made it clear: “In all parts of the public service and at all levels, workload is a problem. Many employees who responded to the Public Service Employee Survey felt that the quality of their work suffers because of the requirement to do the same or more work with fewer resources, and because of unreasonable deadlines.”

In an article entitled “Work/Life Balance,” Frank Claydon, Secretary of the Treasury Board and Comptroller General of Canada, amplified the results: “Public servants in Canada feel overworked. Government employees say they simply can’t balance the demands of the office with the responsibilities of home. They’re working harder and harder to simply keep their heads above water. This has to change, they said.”

To some managers, focused on the work at hand and responding to demands in the time-

“... it comes down to one simple fact: when employees are satisfied with their work environment and working conditions, they can make their best contribution and provide high-quality service and programs to Canadians.”

honoured tradition of providing exemplary service (after all, isn't that the definition of 'public service'?) those responses can seem simply like the price you have to pay at the dawn of the 21st century. Blame the information revolution, the 'new economy,' or just the prevailing attitude that the customer — in this case, the Canadian people — is king; whatever culprit is chosen, it's easy to adopt the approach that the job has to get done no matter what.

Working harder, longer can be easily justified in short bursts. A weekend with the laptop here, an evening at the office there; it can seem like a small price to pay when a project deadline is staring your team in the face.

The problem, however, is that the exception can quickly become the rule. Once the balance between work and home shifts toward the office, it takes a concerted effort to tilt it back the other way.

Overwork becomes the new normal.

Identifying the Problem

From the manager's perspective, the problem can be difficult to identify, particularly with mounting deadlines and your own work/life issues to face. Those who adopt the 24/7 workplace warrior stance may even have a hard time defining the issue.

The COSO Sub-Committee states it eloquently: “Workplace well-being is about many things: it is about people having meaningful and challenging work to do with an opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge; it is about working effectively with colleagues and managers; it is about a work environment that is safe and healthy, that is respectful of individuals and their different circumstances,

including the need for work/life balance, and where people have the tools they need to get the job done; it is about being fairly compensated, in terms of both salary and benefits; it is about having learning opportunities and possibilities to achieve personal career aspirations. Workplace well-being is about all of this and more. But it comes down to one simple fact: when employees are satisfied with their work environment and working conditions, they can make their best contributions and provide high-quality services and programs to Canadians.”

In its report, “Beyond The Talk: Achieving a Healthy and Productive Work Environment,” the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX) cited six essential factors for a healthy work environment:

- A values-based work environment and management regime;
- Open communications and dialogue;
- Collegiality and sharing within a team;
- Clarity and unity of purpose;
- Significant flexibility and discretion, and support for reasonable risk taking;
- and
- Balance between work and personal life.

The report also stated that “the pivotal factor in determining health outcomes and satisfaction with the work environment is control over the job or decision latitude. In its simplest terms, ‘decision latitude’ can be described as the degree of control one has over the work environment and one's daily activities, the decisions which are made and the results of those decisions. It also relates to the ability to say ‘no’ or to negotiate workload without fear of reprisal or punishment.”

The Stakes Are High

APEX made it clear that work/life balance issues are not about shirking work or dodging around a pressing deadline; it's a health issue. "Individuals' lack of job control is more strongly related to distress levels, short-term health complaints and longer term health disorders than other factors, including personal lifestyle habits.... It is clear that if one takes a healthy person and places them in an unhealthy environment — no matter what degree of hardiness or resiliency they may have to begin with — the unhealthy work situation will create an unhealthy individual."

The costs associated with a loss of workplace well-being are myriad.

APEX reported that the fastest growing category for claims under the Disability Insurance Plan for federal employees is that of mental and health disorders. In 1995, the overall rate for mental health claims as a proportion of all new claims for all public servants was 33.4 percent. In 1996, it was 37.5 percent, up from less than 20 percent a decade earlier.

Nora Spinks, president of Work-Life Harmony Enterprises and a member of the Canadian Centre for Management Development Action-Research Roundtable on Workplace Well-Being, has more chilling statistics. She points out that employees who experience high demand, low control, high effort and low reward experience have three times more heart problems and back pain than the average Canadian, and up to five times more likelihood of developing certain types of cancer. Their risk of mental health problems, infections and injury ranges between two and three times the norm, and they are twice as likely to abuse substances as the average Canadian.

"We're creating environments that are making people ill and susceptible to injury," says Spinks.

All of which can lead to chronic absenteeism that, unlike the occasional day off to address family responsibilities or so-called



The many sides of ... Individual Well-Being

Physical well-being: Maintaining healthy and energetic bodies by making healthy choices about exercise, diet and stress management.

Emotional well-being: The piece of mind, confidence and self-respect that we achieve by coming to terms with our full range of feelings.

Spiritual well-being: The purpose, fulfillment, and meaning that comes with having a sense of connection to those things that are larger than ourselves.

Intellectual well-being: The mental acuity that results from keeping our minds active, alert, open, curious and creative.

Social well-being: The camaraderie that comes from maintaining a rich web of relationships with family, friends and colleagues.

'mental health days,' can be a sign of mounting depression. Excessive amounts of stress can take a huge toll. The Business & Economic Roundtable on Mental Health reported that almost a \$100 billion is lost each year in Canada and the United States due to reduced productivity from depression. In Canada, 1.4 million workers (10 percent of the workforce) are affected by depression.

Ultimately, faced with these mounting pressures, some employees simply leave. The cost of replacing employees who opt out before they burn out can be staggering — up to 150 percent of their annual salary — but for an ageing public service looking to renew itself with young talent, there is an even more daunting spectre. Younger generations now entering the workforce are less willing to settle for situations their elders grew to tolerate. Personal time is more important to them than identification with a job, and monetary compensation alone will not bind them to an organization. Recent research indicates that once employees attain the level of earnings they can reasonably expect given their training and skills, they are motivated most by the content of their work, the quality of the people they work with, and the opportunities to

stretch and grow within a job and an organization.

Exacerbating the situation for the public service is that surveys show that it ranks low on the totem pole in the minds of graduating students for career paths. If present trends continue, public employers can forget about recruiting "the best and the brightest" — the "best of the desperate" seems more like it.

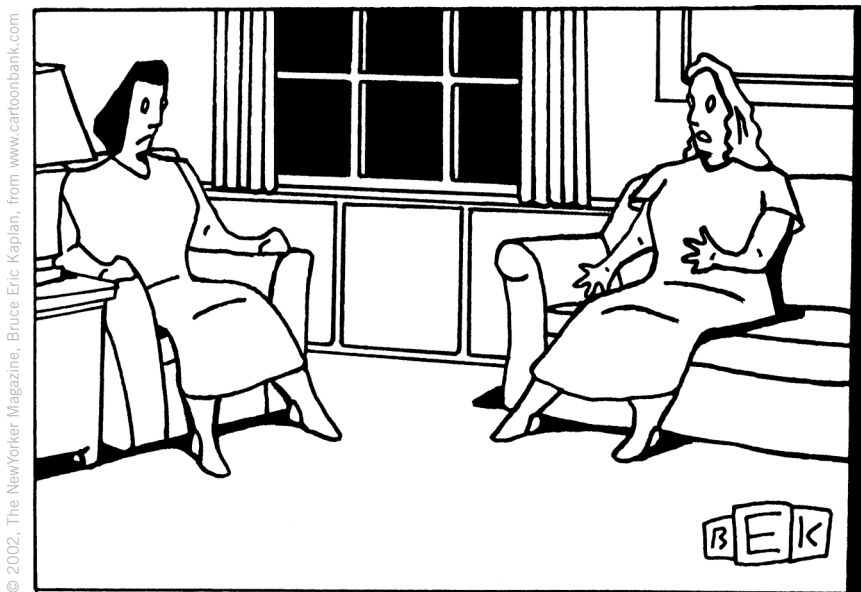
An Antidote for Antipathy

There are several ways to reverse this trend. The first is by building more meaningful relationships between managers and staff through well-being and quality-of-worklife efforts. Research shows that people quit managers, not necessarily employers. Turnover rates in organizations with strong ties are half those of organizations that do not.

Middle managers have the biggest stake on a personal level. Ultimately, their own workplace well-being is determined, to a large extent, by the level of satisfaction within the teams they supervise and those with which they interact on a regular basis. They are also in the best position to institute change. Although clear messages and

support regarding the importance of work/life balance must come from the top levels of management, the middle manager is the person actually on the line. He or she can best understand the volume and complexity of work per employee, to know when it becomes too much, and to push back when expectations from more senior levels of management are unrealistic.

"Middle managers have a particularly important role to play," states Frank Claydon. "More often than not, they make the day-to-day decisions that affect employees. They are



"It's easy. The first step is to entirely change who you are."

in the ideal position to pull people together and develop work/life balance strategies for their own teams.

“Many of our managers have given a high priority to work/life balance. These managers provide employees with a clear picture of the business priorities and encourage them, in turn, to be just as clear about personal interests and concerns. They are open-minded and recognize and support their employees as ‘whole people’.”

An example can be found at Statistics Canada.

Each year, a group of middle managers within the agency hold an Innovative Practices Conference to discuss the challenges they face in their work lives. The group focuses on an urgent priority and collaborates to develop innovative improvements to the agency.

During the 2000 conference, managers noticed a set of recurring themes in the challenges they face: workload, limitations with the physical environment, and the importance of recognition — all the signs of workplace well-being problems. As a result, they studied some trailblazing private-sector cases such as MDS Nordion and Nortel and set out to transform the way work takes place in the agency.

Fortunately, Statistics Canada had a head start compared to many public organizations. It had implemented the fiscal austerity measures of the ‘90s without laying off staff, employees had access to higher levels of training funding than the norm and there was already some infrastructure in place to address well-being challenges, including an on-staff nurse, a fitness centre, and an employee assistance program. The agency had a strong foundation of values on which to build.

Still, the managers recognized the need to integrate workplace well-being more fully into the daily work lives of Statistics Canada employees. The prevailing view was that this



was the right thing to do, in addition to the many benefits to productivity and effectiveness.

That was the genesis of the Workplace Wellness Committee. With the buy-in of senior management the agency named a wellness champion, Sange deSilva, to provide vision and leadership and a mandate was formed to implement practical actions that would result in measurable improvements.

One of the first things deSilva did was develop an action plan. Next, he established a number of working groups responsible for implementation and getting results. The main goal was to make staff aware of the importance of well-being and encourage participation in fitness and healthy living activities. The plan also aspired to create new programs to help employees balance work and personal responsibilities, as well as improve the physical environment in which people work. In short, the goal involved creating a supportive work environment for well-being.

Fulfilling these plans required a great deal of cooperation from a variety of parties across the organization. Statistics Canada already had a director general responsible for accommodations

and a variety of committees responsible for health, safety, networking and well-being, but coordination was required to ensure they shared a similar goal. This resulted a number of improvements, such as larger allocations of work space, an expansion of the fitness centre and regular flu shots for employees.

The committee compiled a list of best practices, supportive management practices, and advice on a variety of well-being related topics — such as stress management and prevention — and made these available to all employees on an Intranet site. Focus groups were brought together to identify ‘fixable problems’ with respect to workload. Lunchtime sessions were set up on topics such as mental health, breast health, and bio-feedback. An annual Workplace Wellness Award and Employee Appreciation Day became vehicles to recognize the contributions made by employees.

Younger generations are less willing to settle for situations their elders grew to tolerate.

If present trends continue, public employers can forget about recruiting “the best and the brightest” — the “best of the desperate” seems more like it.

In just a year, the agency was reporting a variety of improvements.

These are still early days in Statistics Canada’s efforts, but a palpable change is evident in the organization’s culture. Their story says a great deal about why workplace well-being is important for the vitality of an organization. Just as importantly, it speaks volumes about how a large public organization can go about effecting tangible changes. The change doesn’t happen overnight – it’s a long journey requiring patience and follow-through – but small wins are possible in a relatively short span of time.

Sharing the Solution

The key thing is to involve staff in decision-making, to whatever degree possible.

“I strongly believe that supporting staff must become more deeply ingrained in our management culture,” says Claydon. “That is why I think we need to build the implementation of work/life balance strategies into management accountability. Managers should be rewarded for their ability to produce something or to achieve a desired effect, of course, but they should also get credit for the way they get the job done.”

According to Linda Duxbury, a professor at Carleton University’s Eric Sprott School of Business and a member of the Canadian Centre for Management Development Action-Research Roundtable on Workplace Well-being, supportive managers have some common traits.

They help ensure their staff members’ work/life balance by: having realistic expectations of how much work can be done in a given amount of time; spending time coaching and mentoring their employees; doing a good job of planning the work to be done; giving recognition for a job well done; and asking employees for input

before decisions are made.

Judith LaRocque, Associate Deputy Minister for Canadian Heritage, adds that it’s important to face the reality of the workplace and be creative.

“Some workload factors are simply beyond our control. Rather than focus on the things we can’t change, managers can focus on areas where they can have a positive impact. “For example, last summer we made an informal effort to ensure that everyone took some vacation. It may seem like a small thing, but it makes a huge difference.

“The important thing is to have a dialogue

“Some workload factors are simply beyond our control.

Rather than focus on the things we can't change, managers can **focus on areas** where they can have a **positive impact.**”

between manager and staff member to tailor something that works for both the individual and the department.”

One area that has gained rapid acceptance is alternative work arrangements, such as teleworking, condensed work weeks and flexible scheduling. Although these alternative work arrangements provide a wealth of opportunities, they are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is possible. A number of recent pilot projects are demonstrating the art of the possible. In the process, these initiatives are helping the public service overcome a stereotype of being an inflexible place to work.

A good example is a pilot being run by Public Works and Government Services Canada Customs and Revenue Agency in downtown Vancouver. The two departments are experimenting with “hoteling,” a flexible workspace arrangement where office space is reserved for short periods of time. Teleworkers and those who work off-site at least 40 percent of the time can reserve a workstation and commute to the office only when they need to. This new office concept not only provides employees with flexibility but also saves office space costs.

Taking the Next Step

For the front-line manager, the real challenge of promoting well-being is to figure out who is responsible for what and where to get started. Does improving well-being begin and end with you, the individual, as a matter of personal choice? Or, on the other hand, is the organization you work for responsible for giving you the support you need to live a healthier and more fulfilled life?

The short answer to these questions is that well-being is a shared responsibility. The long answer raises more than a few contentious issues.

Many managers resent being told what a healthy and fulfilling professional life should be. We live in a society that cherishes personal freedom and the right to pursue career aspirations. Plus, one person's idea of well-being is not going to suit everyone. So, one may rightly ask, why should my life choices be any of your business?

Such questions over-simplify the issue somewhat. None of us lives in a vacuum, and so many of the choices we make affect others. Managers who work punishing hours with excessive workloads usually wind up imposing these burdens on others. Someone has to draw the line somewhere. This is not always an easy thing to hear, particularly in parts of the public service where the “death march” to fulfilling deadlines is the rule rather than the exception. The truth is that personal lifestyles that embrace well-being do not involve the compromises that many assume.

However, a supportive work environment is required — one that provides employees with the flexibility and training to organize their work more effectively. This includes an organizational culture that is willing to give up traditional work arrangements.

All this means that managers stand at an important crossroads in the achievement of well-being. They need to think more intelligently about their own well-being. At the same time, they have an opportunity to create the workplace supports that make well-being possible for others, as well.

So what are you waiting for?

Getting Well the MDS Nordion Way

While many companies were talking about workplace health over the last decade, MDS Nordion was actually doing something about it. This former Crown corporation emphasizes that workplace health is an ongoing journey.

It was 1991, the beginning of a decade-long high-tech boom. This was the year that MDS Nordion went from being a Crown corporation (part of Atomic Energy of Canada) to becoming a subsidiary of a global medical and life science company, MDS Inc. If you ever wondered what would happen to a government organization if it was suddenly exposed to the fierce competition of a global technology industry, look no further. Today, that transition is well underway and the company is thriving. So, what was the secret to this success? The answer may surprise you.

MDS Nordion made a wide array of changes to the way it operates but it is best known as a company that revolutionized the way it promotes the well-being of its workforce. In fact, it was the first company to be awarded the *Canada Awards for Excellence Healthy Workplace Award* in 1999. This investment in workplace health was made partly because senior managers thought it was the right thing to do. Promoting and ensuring workplace health was also consistent with the company's corporate culture. A healthy workplace is integral to what this company does every day around the world. MDS Nordion's products and technology are used to prevent, diagnose and treat disease in over 80 countries. Employee well-being and corporate success were seen to be, and continue to go, hand in hand.

Workplace health is often considered a perk or a sideline, something that does not directly pay dividends. On the contrary, workplace health initiatives helped MDS Nordion minimize a number of chronic ills that face many companies. Some industries are plagued by growing levels of employee burnout and absenteeism, skyrocketing health insurance premiums, and excessive turnover and employee poaching – all of which are an enormous cost burden. In order to compete, employers require a highly motivated workforce that is committed to the company's mission.

Subsequently, to explore the causes of stress, the company conducted a "Stress Stakeout" survey. Along the way it discovered time-wasting activities, sources of conflict and inefficiencies. Seminars are conducted regularly to help people better manage things such as time demands and workload. Staff surveys and focus groups are routine way of gathering employee feedback. A technique called "brown paper process mapping" is used to review work processes and gives employees input into the way their job is performed. Employees also enjoy

Absenteeism was reduced by a third, employee grievances dropped by 90 percent, and time lost to injuries dropped by 80 percent. The company's turnover rate is 6 percent compared to an industry average of 10 percent.

While many companies addressed the challenge with throwaway gestures, such as adding a foosball table to the employee lounge or giving away hockey tickets, MDS Nordion chose to act more comprehensively.

MDS Nordion began by conducting a health needs assessment and a comprehensive workplace health plan followed. The company also implemented compulsory training for all managers and employees that included communication, conflict resolution and team building skills.

access to an onsite modern fitness facility.

And these are just to name a few of the company's efforts.

The results of the company's comprehensive approach are remarkable. Absenteeism was reduced by a third (from an average of 6 days in 1993 to 4 days in 1999), and employee grievances went from 50 to 5 per year, over a four-year period. Time lost to injuries dropped by 80 percent. The company's turnover rate is 6 percent compared to an industry average of

10 percent. The share of employees who are coping well with work-related stress is 73 percent, while the proportion who enjoy their work has grown to 88 percent. In addition, the company continues to look for ways to address life balance issues within the organization.

While there was considerable effort required on the part of management and employees to make the healthy workplace a reality, the financial commitment did not involve huge sums of money. The company spends only about half a million dollars per year on its workplace health initiatives for a workforce of approximately a thousand people. That is a fraction of the human resource management budget of a government organization of equivalent size.

Public sector managers are now recognizing the importance and benefits of workplace health. This bodes well for nurturing an invigorated, dynamic and creative public service.

Not all of MDS Nordion's experiences will be directly applicable to your organization, but their efforts remains a rich source of inspiration and ideas. Now it's your turn to innovate. Who knows, perhaps you and your colleagues will be receiving well-being awards in the not-too-distant future.



Reading Up

some reading suggestions

[Simplify Your Work Life: Ways to Change the Way You Work So You Have More Time to Live](#)

By Elaine St. James

Looking for suggestions about how to streamline your work life and balance your responsibilities? This book has 85 of them. Learn how to reduce your work time, be more productive in the time that you have, and make your work life more fulfilling.

[DotCalm: The Search for Sanity in a Wired World](#)

By Debra A. Dinnocenzo and Richard B. Swegan

We live in an age of overload: large quantities of fast moving information ("information overload"); technologies that keep us constantly connected ("access overload"); and a blurring of the lines between home and work ("work overload"). This book offers several tips to contain the overload, including coping tips for people in organizations that only pay lip service to the notion of balance.

[Harvard Business Review on Work & Life Balance](#)

By Various Authors

This compendium of articles covers several topics. It shows that balancing work and personal life isn't a zero-sum game. Managers who let their work frustrations spill-over into their personal lives are studied. We're shown how to create a supportive work environment for both men and women. A spectrum of alternative work arrangements are explored in terms of their tangible and intangible benefits.

Experience

Balancing Work & Personal Life

We asked four Public Service veterans to offer their insights on balancing work and personal responsibilities. As you'd expect, several **colourful and intriguing perspectives** emerged.

How would you define balance between your work and personal responsibilities? Chances are, your definition is very different from that of your next-door neighbour or the colleague down the hall. We all live very different lives, with our own personal and professional aspirations.

This diversity of opinion raises a host of questions. Who's responsible for achieving balance? Is it you, the one who knows what's in your best interest? Since your organization also has a stake in your well-being, does it have a say too? To what extent is the organization responsible for providing a supportive environment?

For us managers, the issue of balance is doubly complicated. Managers experience a unique set of challenges with respect to balance. Many of us are at a stage in our lives where we are caring for children, parents, or both. We are also at a stage in our careers where we hold jobs that often lead us to work extra hours and take on great responsibilities. Also, as managers, we can play an important leadership role in helping others achieve balance. So what can we do about balance as managers?

In order to help clarify these questions, we asked some experienced managers about how they have coped. Experience is the great teacher. Perhaps the experiences of others can help you to better understand what balance means to you – as an individual and as a leader.

We all live unique lives and hold different responsibilities. I would imagine that we each have our own personal understanding of balance. In your opinion, what defines “balance” in the context of workplace well-being?

Leah: In my opinion, the word “balance” deals with the ability of an organization to meet its goals while addressing employees’ needs for such things as learning and development, the need to be involved, as well as the need to create a life outside of their professional environment. A balance of these elements creates a very healthy work environment.

John: I do not use the term, nor seek, “balance.” I look for “harmony” between self, family and work.

Lynn: Harmony and happiness, both professionally and personally.

Pablo: Achieving balance requires an individual to understand two things. The first is to be aware of one’s self; our core emotions, aspirations, stamina, and interests that provide you with satisfaction. The second is to recognize

Let Me Introduce You to ...

Although our interviewees share a long history with the Public Service of Canada, they bring very different experiences to the table.

John Adams is the Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. John has worked to achieve balance in an organization that demands a great deal of its staff, both mentally and physically.

Lynn MacFarlane is an executive who has extensive experience in the hustle-and-bustle world of central agencies. Lynn has experienced the issue of burnout firsthand. She has vowed to never let it happen again. Today, despite maintaining enormous responsibilities at FINTRAC – the government’s new anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing agency – she serves as a role model for others seeking to achieve balance.

Pablo Sobrino works for the Canadian Public Service in British Columbia, as the Area Director for the Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada. Pablo has long sought personal balance through self reflection (“first, know thyself”) and has worked to help others do the same (“morale is key”).

Leah Soucoup Benoit has worked for the Public Service for 31 years in Human Resources Development Canada, Moncton. Although currently on assignment, she is the Manager of Insurance Payment Operations. Leah has had to achieve balance amid a number of major changes in her department and work unit.

the priorities in one's life that best provide you with the satisfaction – family, relationships, writing, reflection, hobbies, etc. Balance in the context of workplace well being is when the workplace meets personal priorities and contributes to your overall satisfaction with yourself.

Whether we speak of harmony or balance, do you feel you achieve this between your professional and personal lives?

Leah: No. I have not yet accomplished a good balance but I am working toward that goal. Breaking old work habits is difficult, but since my own awareness of workplace well-being as an issue has risen, I am trying to take that theory and put it into daily practice.

Pablo: Yes. I have achieved good balance in my life. I think it is important to recognize that balance in my context is not necessarily balance for someone else.

“Fifteen years ago, coping with young or ageing family were seen as concerns to check at the front door when entering the workplace.”

How do you achieve this balance?

Pablo: I achieve balance by constantly examining my personal and work priorities and making the daily choices that ensure that I am satisfied with my life. It means deciding whether that evening meeting is really more important than my son's soccer game. It means deciding whether traveling on the red-eye is less important than celebrating my daughter's birthday. It means deciding whether I stop doing e-mail half an hour earlier so I can get that workout done before I go home to cook dinner (a relaxing activity of mine).

Speaking of workouts, I wonder about the role of physical health. How important a role does maintaining your physical health play in your search for balance?

Leah: In the past, maintaining physical health has not played as important a role as it should have, and as a result, two years ago I was diagnosed as being in the beginning stages (“Level 3”) of burn-out. This was a real eye-opener for me. In my mind, this sort of thing happened to people who were dissatisfied with their jobs or who were experiencing friction between their personal and professional lives. That wasn't me! I loved my job, was not a mother, which is a full time job in itself, and my husband supported my need for having a career. Regardless of those factors, it still happened to me. Hence, I now consider my physical (and mental) well-being more often, though there is always room for improvement.

Much of the time we speak of balancing work and personal activities as an individual responsibility. Surely the organization you work for plays an important role here too. Is the culture of the Public Service one that promotes balance?

Lynn: Many good intentions, many best practices, always room for improvements.

Pablo: The stated values of the Public Service clearly promote balance. There are many policies in place to create a flexible workplace and many programs available to support and teach public servants and provide them with the tools to achieve balance in their lives. However, the most important “culture” affecting balance consists of the values promoted and championed by a public servant's immediate supervisor. The

Public Service “culture” does not visibly reward managers and supervisors who achieve the stated values.

Have perceptions within the Public Service changed over the last ten to fifteen years regarding workplace well being?

John: Yes, they’ve changed. We have 30 percent fewer personnel and the same workload. There is less time and less focus on well being which has created the perception that it isn’t as important as it once was.

Pablo: Perceptions have changed. Workplace well-being is now seen as a way to help meet the need for increased productivity in the face of increasing demands and decreasing resources. Perceptions have changed because the workforce is ageing and the health concerns attributed to stress are better understood. They are changing because younger people have seen that workplace loyalty is not rewarded and satisfaction must be pursued in more ways than just work.

Leah: Fifteen years ago, coping with young or ageing family were seen as concerns to check at the front door when entering the workplace, but this is slowly changing. Now, leave options are available to aid in coping with senior family members and children, as well as other arrangements such as part-time and telework (working from home).

Lynn: Our workplace has changed – just think about gym bags versus briefcases. At one time, gym bags were viewed to be held by “slackers” with time on their hands. Now, they symbolize an important part of a person’s well-being and it is greatly admired.

Have you utilized any of the various tools that the Public Service provides to promote your own sense of balance and well-being?

Lynn: Yes, twice in my career I have had mini-sabbaticals. In 2000, I took advantage of the Leave With Income Averaging program and had three months to recharge, reconnect, relax and learn. I am an active promoter of alternative work arrangements, part-time, job-share, compressed work week; I even have a “satellite employee” physically located in Edmonton, but part of my HQ team. These arrangements

“The more I pursued balance, the more promotions and opportunities were offered to me and the happier and healthier individual I have become.”

enrich the workplace and allow individuals to balance and contribute

Pablo: Yes, in particular the training and flexible work arrangements that are available.

Leah: I have utilized the EAP [Employee Assistance Program]. Most managers are quick to offer it as an option for employees, however, many are hesitant to use it themselves. There is still a stigma attached to having a personal need for such services.

Name one thing that you would change about the way the Public Service operates that you think would improve the promotion of workplace well being for its members.

Lynn: A partnership between leaders and individuals would most likely lead to more workplace well-being. Some people look to leaders only, not to themselves and what they can do.

Leah: In my opinion, one issue of particular relevance deals with travel status. Employees who are required to travel on a regular basis should somehow be compensated for the loss of their personal time. Money is *not* the answer. They need time off to make up for the time spent alone in hotel rooms, away from their personal lives. We are doing better in that regard. Currently, an employee who is away for three weeks can now fly his or her spouse to meet them for a weekend. However, there are still many restrictions that I disagree with.

Pablo: Actively reward public service managers who promote the stated values of achieving a balanced workplace and promote well-being. The reward must be based on staff recognition of the manager's efforts and modeling.

As managers, we are in a unique position. We exert influence that can help or hinder others in their quest to achieve balance and well-being. How do you, as a manager, promote a sense of workplace well-being?

John: By walking the talk.

Leah: As a manager, I tried to stay in tune with employees' personal lives as it helped me to realize what was really important to them, making me more conscious of their individual priorities, values and needs for balance. Most employees are eager to share stories about their families and their lives outside work, and I enjoyed hearing about their successes and their concerns. Recently I have been away from the unit on assignment, and I miss not only my colleagues, but updates on their lives as well.

Pablo: The key to workplace well-being from my perspective is to ensure that morale in the workplace is such that staff and managers are satisfied with the work they produce in the context of their family life. This involves simple management techniques such as delegation of authority and transfer of "real" responsibility

down into the organization. It involves defining goals and expectations, communicating about concerns and success, providing for flexibility and empathy around personal situations, allowing for growth, learning, and promotion. It involves promoting the notion of balance and the expectation I have for my management team to consider all aspects of their staff's needs around balance. As these particular aspects take hold in the "culture" of the place, work productivity improves, morale improves, and balance in terms of satisfaction improves.

What have some of your greatest challenges been in this regard?

Lynn: Workload.

John: Time.

Leah: The greatest challenge for me is promoting balance to others, when I have not yet been able to completely put it into practice for myself.

Pablo: The greatest challenge in several workplaces I have experienced has been to provide staff with the notion of responsibility for their work, outcomes, and balance. Delegation of responsibility requires "trust", and trust is something that has been broken many times in the relationship between staff and their supervisors.

How have you overcome that challenge?

Pablo: Trust takes a moment to break and possibly years to rebuild. It is only through consistent, demonstrated, and communicated commitment to staff that you can build the trust that allows staff to assume "real" responsibility for their work and the balance.

Is it possible for a manager to be a "workaholic" and still foster a sense of balance amongst their staff?

“Actions speak louder than words. If a leader does not demonstrate that he or she values and practises balance, it is hard for the staff to embrace.”

John: Of course.

Leah: Yes, it is possible, but in my opinion, a “workaholic” can not be as effective in fostering balance as someone who actually has balance in their life.

Pablo: This is interesting, using the term “workaholic.” The key here is if the manager understands and achieves the nature of satisfaction, then the amount of work they do is irrelevant. The sense of balance can be fostered with staff by action and by not imposing the manager’s sense of “balance” as the expectation from staff. This involves active management by the manager to ensure that staff understand that the important thing is personal balance and not hours of work.

Lynn: Actions speak louder than words. If a leader does not demonstrate that he or she values and practises balance, it is hard for the staff to embrace.

I expect that our experiences have changed our view of balance and well-being. Moreover, at different stages of our lives I would think we have a very different take on the subject. As your career with the Public Service has progressed, has your definition of balance changed?

John: Yes. Harmony was achieved early in my career with more emphasis on family and less on work and self. With time emphasis switches

from family to work and self. This is possible as family demands decrease as children mature and eventually move off on their own.

Lynn: Yes, maturing, experience and a better sense of myself have allowed me to vigorously pursue balance. The more I pursued balance, the more promotions and opportunities were offered to me and the happier and healthier individual I have become.

Leah: When I began my career, things like “workplace well-being” and “balance” were non-issues, so I never gave it much thought. However, since awareness of this topic has begun to broaden, my definition has changed dramatically. It has changed because I have matured. I do not believe that my values have changed, but I do think that I am more conscious of them on a daily basis. I now refer back to my personal values when I am required to make a decision regarding balance.

Pablo: Yes it has changed. As I have matured and better understood the notion of personal satisfaction I have made choices to meet my changing priorities. I have tempered my career ambitions to ensure that I spend more time with friends and family. I have reset expectations of myself to ensure that I am physically capable of meeting the demands of work, home, and play. I take care of Pablo!

Thank you for being so open. We wish you luck in your pursuit of wellbeing.



IN

OUT

Time is on My Side

We live in a hectic world filled with demands and distractions. It's time to get focused, marshal our energies, and concentrate on those things that really matter to us.

As with many people, my never-ending quest to better manage my time began with the purchase of a spiffy, leather-bound scheduler. I was determined to meticulously record upcoming events and become organized. And it worked ... for exactly three weeks. After another false start with a digital scheduler, I had to face the sobering truth: keeping track of my time commitments never left me with a sense of control. In fact, every entry in my organizer confirmed my worst fear that I was drowning in work.

As with financial management, time management is about making the most of a scarce and valuable resource. You can't "make time" any more than you can print money. Since accounting for all my pennies wouldn't make me a canny financial manager, I don't know what made me think that scheduling would lead to a more effective use of my time. It's what you do with a scarce resource that counts.

I have to admit, I was very passive when it came to responding to work demands and time pressures. I'd agree to all sorts of commitments – meetings, deadlines, deliverables – without first asking the right questions. Planning ahead wasn't in my repertoire. I let myself get sidetracked by details best left to the better qualified. It was once said, "Managers are not paid to make the inevitable happen." I wasn't applying myself in a way that made the best use of my abilities.

Before I start sounding too confessional, I should point out that I'm not alone. Some 65 percent of all Canadian public servants report a need for better time management skills. Almost half feel their workloads are unreasonable most of the time. This has been described as the "time famine": too much to do, not enough time in the day to finish everything. Too often, this causes us to work evenings and weekends until we burn out.

Keeping Demands in Check

So how can we take greater control of our time and workloads? It might help to start by taking a closer look at our work relations.

We work within a web of relationships. Work demands and time pressures can come from all directions: from our ourselves, our bosses, our peers, even those elsewhere within the system. Each source can be managed, but not always in the same way.

I often feel besieged by work coming down the chain of command. A reported 95 percent of Canadian government executives work in excess of 40 hours a week; 15 percent actually work more than 60 hours per week. Besides creating an expectation that success means working long hours, busy executives may create enormous work burdens on others. Some diplomatic skills are required to “push back,” or ask senior managers to fully consider the longer-term impact of their decisions on others’ work load.

In their classic treatise, Oncken and Wass showed how our peers can pull us into their work, often quite unintentionally. Every time someone says “we have a problem,” “can I get your input on something,” or “can you take a look at this,” you’re drawn in. You’re now on the hook for extra work that, unless it is cleared up quickly, can pile up. If it does, you will likely feel guilty for those things left undone. Your colleagues will also get impatient as they wait in a holding pattern. Sometimes you have to resist getting too involved and put some trust in others’ abilities.

More and more, we work in teams and partnerships. This interdependence requires us to pay more attention to the flow of work. If our interactions with others remain spontaneous and ad hoc, then individual productivity suffers because of needless interruptions and impromptu demands. Collective capacity suffers if we don’t

synchronize our workflow with others, especially if one person’s work depends on the completion of another’s. It’s worth taking some time to set down some rules of engagement and bring work routines into sync.

Keeping Yourself in Check

Even when my work relations are very functional, I still find myself imposing unnecessary demands and pressures on myself.

So how do we manage these demands? There is no formula, of course. However, research conducted by Bruch and Ghoshal found that these demands can be best

managed by concentrating on two key factors: focus and energy. Managers who stay focused on a clear set of goals are less likely to be distracted and are better able to prioritize their time. Those who are able to pace themselves, limit their work to prime hours, and do work that has personal meaning are able to maintain high levels of energy. Unfortunately, only 10 percent of the managers studied maintained this strong focus and husbanded their energy.

The rest of us fall into three other camps.

Some of us are “procrastinators,” taking a passive approach to work and putting things off until the last minute. Contrary to popular belief, this is not entirely a personality trait, but can be influenced by our work environment. Procrastinators should minimize the busywork that depletes their energy and develop routines that clear work off their desk. A useful step is to learn how to delegate work more effectively.

Those of us most likely to suffer from burnout are the “disengaged” managers. We may be focused, but we may not have the inner resources to follow through. If you’ve met someone you’d describe as a “professional cynic,” chances are they are in this group. Such people need to find ways of reinvigorating themselves and overcoming the barriers in the

Many of us experience a **time famine**: too much to do, not enough time in the day to finish everything.

Don't let procrastinators, professional cynics, or serial delegators cause you to lose control over your schedule. **They need to respect your time** as much as you respect theirs.

organization that zap their energy.

The final group are the “distracted” managers. These are managers who are highly energetic but don't have enough focus. Some are “serial delegators,” sending people off in all directions without regard to available resources. Many are willing to take on more than they, or their staff, can handle. Managers like this jump from commitment to commitment, often letting work fall through the cracks or finishing it haphazardly. Those of us in this group need to keep our eye on the ball, staying committed to a concise set of clear objectives.

What To Do

If you see yourself in any of these descriptions, I encourage you to take a sober second look at your work habits. If you work with people like this, you need to make sure that they don't undermine your attempts to control your schedule. So what specifically can be done? You can read all the self-help books on the subject you want. Most boil down to a rather tidy set of tips.

1. Don't Do Everything Yourself, Learn to Delegate More Effectively

We may take on too much of the workload ourselves simply because we feel capable of doing it. It is often said that managers spend their time doing what they did in their old job instead of handing it off to someone else. If you're spreading your resources too thin to properly delegate, then you have a responsibility to let your superiors know.

2. Manage Meetings, Don't Let Meetings Manage You

Meetings take up a large portion of our day but not all of them are necessary. If someone doesn't have to be at a particular meeting, resist the urge to invite them just in case their input could prove useful. If a meeting is likely to provide little value, don't hold it. If decisions need to be made at a meeting and all the key decision-makers aren't there, you're better off postponing the meeting so that you don't have to waste time tracking down





can increase the likelihood of mistakes, result in poor results, and become a barrier to creative thinking. If more than 75 percent of your work time is filled up on your schedule, you are highly unlikely to be able to create new opportunities. Jointly setting more realistic deadlines can help. If work activities are highly interdependent in your office, you and your colleagues can get together to arrange a sequence of work tasks that accommodate everyone. This includes providing enough buffer time for when unforeseen circumstances get in the way; otherwise you'll likely be

working overtime.

approvals and briefing absentees. By not holding all-staff meetings too early or too late in the day, you help others balance their work and personal lives. It also helps to designate particular days of the week “meeting free” days so that you and your colleagues can concentrate on work without interruption.

3. Cut Down the Number of Iterations a Job Takes

I often find myself redrafting papers or redoing something that should have been done right the first time. Iterations can be high value-added refinements. However, they can also be the result of a lack of clarity at the outset or excessive time pressures. If others encourage you to participate in poorly defined activities, perhaps you should ask them to be more precise. As a general rule, I don't take “I'll know what I want when I see it” for an answer. Others need to respect your time just as much as you respect theirs.

4. Develop More Realistic Deadlines and Synchronize Your Workflow with Others

Evidence suggests that a frantic work pace

5. Organize Your Workspace

Much of our time is wasted tracking down information that should be at our fingertips. The information is the needle and the pile of papers on your desk is the haystack. Many of us have the authority to invest in a proper document management system in our offices so that our colleagues aren't constantly searching for the documents they need.

6. Cut Down on Time-Wasting, Low Value-Added Activities

Much of our day is consumed by low value activities that, if pressed, we'd have to admit are not terribly important. It is useful to sit down with your colleagues and assess the value of meetings, tasks, deliverables, and events. You may be able to cut many activities that do not bear directly on your key objectives and responsibilities. In the public sector, this can be a challenge because those things we often think of as “red tape” exist for very important reasons. If nothing else, taking stock of such procedural requirements may help you find better ways of fulfilling important obligations.

Or it will remind you why they're there in the first place.

One method of cutting down on time-wasters is to place a value on each activity you normally do. Perhaps the activity can be rated on a scale of 1 to 10. If high value activities are not taking up the lion's share of your schedule, then you might seriously consider cutting back on the lower value activities.

7. Batch Process Your Work Tasks

Just because something needs to get done doesn't mean it needs to get done immediately. If you need to complete a number of phone calls or other small tasks, set time aside to get them all done at once.

This also applies to the location where activities are held. Instead of running all over town for meetings, schedule meetings together when they are in proximate locations.

8. Avoid Interruptions and Multi-tasking

Interruptions cost managers a great deal in terms of lost concentration from switching between tasks. The more complicated the tasks, the greater the cost to productivity when switching. Modern work-life is full of sources of interruption: e-mail messages, mobile-phone calls, faxes, drop-in visitors, and instant messages. You can often choose to accept these communications at particular times of the day and let others know when you're available. None of this means you will be unable to reply promptly.

Another way of avoiding interruptions is to set aside time when you will not be disturbed. The times I work at home for the day are some of my most productive.

A common mistake is to think that you can be productive by "multi-tasking." This is a buzzword that means doing more than one thing at

once. This usually doesn't save much time, but it is likely to reduce the quality of your work.

9. Automate Routine Tasks

Many of the most routine tasks can be accomplished without having to devote much attention at all, provided you make the right arrangements beforehand.

Many of us don't realize that some of the computer programs we use come with a handy set of automation tools built into them. Most e-mail programs can automatically file and process messages that come from people we frequently communicate with. This is particularly handy for getting rid of junk mail. Many common office programs, such as word processors, have "macros" that allow you to record and repeat frequent tasks.

10. Anticipate and Prepare Yourself for Contingencies

Keeping a schedule is more effective if it's done in a strategic, goal-directed way. This includes developing time lines and planning for contingencies. If you spend a great deal of time responding to crises, chances are you're not doing enough to anticipate. Remember that



proper planning is about setting out procedures and processes that make the most effective use of time. It is not about generating unnecessary paper work and approval stages.

11. Account for Personal Demands on Your Time Too

It doesn't do any good to manage time and energy during the workday, only to feel run-down at the end of each day. I have household chores and other personal responsibilities to take care of. These responsibilities are now incorporated into the way I manage my time so that I don't inadvertently foist them on my family members. Personal responsibilities can be managed just as effectively as work responsibilities, and thus increase the amount of true leisure time I enjoy (that is, not time spent crumpled in exhaustion on the couch watching a favourite TV show, but time spent pursuing personal passions).

12. Make Use Of Dead Time

You may find yourself with extra time occasionally. If a meeting ends early or begins late, or you get a task done ahead of schedule, think of it as a gift. Use this time to catch up on some work-related reading, or use it as "smell-the-roses" time that's just for you.

Not all of these tips apply to everyone or every circumstance. After all, we all face different challenges, prefer certain work styles, and have different work requirements. If you are struggling to manage your time like I am, the key lesson is to periodically take some time out to reflect on how best to apply one of your most precious resources – your time.

Site Seeing

a collection of
useful Web sites



Active Living at Work

www.activelivingatwork.com

Desk jockeys take note. This Health Canada sponsored site will help you rejuvenate your workplace by promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles. It includes business cases, step-by-step strategies, trend-spotting, research and physical activity guides (one is geared towards older adults).

Building A Healthy Workplace

leadership.gc.ca

Part of The Leadership Network's site is devoted to well-being, including a library of noteworthy government document and a set of assessment and implementation tools. It is particularly good at clarifying the role played by diversity, ethics and values.

Canadian Health Network

www.canadian-health-network.ca

This clearinghouse of health information, also sponsored by Health Canada, will help you become a more sophisticated consumer of health-related information. You will also find plenty of resources, answers to common questions, articles, news and tips.

Job Quality

www.jobquality.ca

This site features a path-breaking set of employment quality indicators, covering such topics as job design, work environment and social relations. An employers' toolkit also provides practical advice on how to improve.

Work-Life Balance in Canadian Workplaces

labour-travail.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/worklife

This Human Resources Development Canada site specializes in helping you balance work and personal responsibilities. Here is where you'll find management guidance, tools, case studies, research and a list of readings. One highlight is the site's compendium of workplace programs, policies and practices.

Alternative Officing

You Have Options

We hear much about the changing nature of work – team based, fast paced, results oriented – but hear relatively little about officing strategies to match. Organizations are also giving people greater freedom and control over when, where, and how they conduct their work. The one-size-fits-all, 9-to-5 cubical commute seems less relevant by the day.

Alternatives exist. These officing strategies not only save organizations money by making optimal use of space, they improve effectiveness by accommodating a wider array of work styles. Most importantly, these strategies provide each of us with the flexibility needed to better balance our work and personal lives.

On-site Strategies

On-site officing strategies reconfigure the spaces within the organization's workplace. Alterations involve rearranging office spacing to incorporate occasional users, group activities and team environments.

Shared Space

This office setting assigns more than one individual to a single workspace to make the most of low-use spaces. This is often applied with flexible work strategies such as time-sharing, compressed workweek, and telecommuting.

Project Team Environments

These spaces are tailored to a group collaborating on the same project. The size of the space is adjustable to accommodate changes in the number of people working together as the project evolves.

Group Address

This is an area specifically assigned to a group that is working together for a particular period of time.

Activity Settings

These are settings that cater to the needs of group interaction. This can include meeting spaces and interconnected workstations. It can also include lounge space where people can exchange ideas or a person can work in a more relaxed setting.

Free Address

The free address is a cluster of workstations available to individuals as needed. People may circulate in and out of the space, but no scheduling is required for a workstation.

Hoteling

Hoteling is similar to the free address strategy, except that the space must be 'booked' and is available for a set maximum period of time.

Off-site Strategies

In off-site strategies, employees may spend all or part of their work outside the workplace and the existing workplace is configured with this in mind.

Virtual Officing

In essence, virtual officing is the ability to work out of a briefcase. Work activities are supported by the use of information technologies such as cellular phones, portable computers, and handheld computing devices. Have a seat at your local coffee house, plugin your laptop and get to work.

Telework or Satellite Centres

Satellite centres are off-site locations for several telecommuters in one place. These centres can support individuals from the same or different organizations. In large cities, these centres save suburbanites commuting time while providing office facilities.

Telecommuting

You can also work from a place that is physically removed from your organization, such as a home office. Enabling technologies such as desktop computers, fax machines and Internet services support telecommuting.



Getting Physical

The physical work environment influences the way we work, whether we realize it or not. If you want to be at the top of your game, there are a few things you should know about your surroundings.

I'd like you to take a moment and think about the last time you attributed a particularly productive day to your physical work environment. Now, think about the last time you attributed a particularly *unproductive* day to your physical work environment.

Are you finding it easier to attribute bad days to your physical surroundings than good days? If so, you're not alone. A 1989 study on the influence of the physical environment on managers found that whenever a noise distraction was introduced it was rated as a serious impediment to their productivity. Yet, managers did not report the *absence* of noise as an important benefit of their workspace.

This shouldn't come as a surprise to most, since it is unusual to credit the absence of something as a reason for productivity in the workplace. This would be similar to acknowledging the lack of a power outage for

the amount of work you were able to undertake on a given day.

Aronoff and Kaplan summarize this in the following way: "People tend to forget the physical workplace when it is not a problem, but complain vociferously when it is an irritant. Consequently, the physical work setting, when it is reported at all, tends to be rated negatively."

This helps explain why organizational studies in general have under-emphasized the physical environment. In this context, researchers may be experiencing what has been described as an attribution error — underestimating the role of the situation, or physical working environment, and overestimating the role of people's personalities in influencing behaviour.

The parallel tendency for workers to rate the physical environment as "relatively unimportant" to their job satisfaction may also reflect an employee's attribution error on their

part, rather than the real contribution the physical environment makes.

Let's face it. If the physical environment was irrelevant in how we felt about the activities we undertook we would have no interest in how our surroundings were arranged. Yet, most of us find it important to introduce elements of ourselves to the workspace where we spend the better part of the day.

We set up picture frames with photographs of family, friends and pets (some even have photographs of boats, cars and motorcycles ... research is still trying to figure that out). We arrange a spray of dried flowers, or hang a memento of a vacation from the past for others to see

It is no accident that when presidents and prime ministers address the public from their office you see photos of family on the credenza behind them. This is a statement about who they are, what their values are and what defines them. It is a silent, yet public declaration of the individual.

This is only amplified in our own private spaces. Our homes become a mural illustrating who we are and what we believe in. Okay, maybe not on Saturday morning when the pile of dirty laundry is rivaling the elevation of the CN Tower. However, when we get our place "presentable" for company, we have our homes arranged in a manner that we think "defines us."

So what does this mean for our work? When we are unable to define ourselves by enhancing the surroundings we work in, we surrender an element of personal control. Knowingly or unconsciously, we have lost a bit of our ability to define ourselves among others around us.

Considering that we all live in different homes, drive a dizzying array of vehicles to work, dress in a manner that speaks to our individuality ... what makes anyone think that we all want to reside in an 8 foot by 8 foot cubicle that looks just like the other 25 on the same floor?

Loss of control is a stressor in the

Case in Point

Government Officing: The Art of the Possible

Never before has there been so much choice in office designs. Open officing facilitates both team and solitary work, striking a balance between privacy and accessibility. Activity spaces offer a more comfortable and a less sterile work venue that can boost creativity, or the odd spell of relaxation. Some new workstations make better use of vertical space, keeping things within arms reach. And this is just to name a few approaches; the possibilities are almost endless.

When talking to public managers

about these modern alternatives, some important questions are frequently raised. These new designs are interesting but can they be implemented in the government workplace? Renovating offices can be disruptive, so what's the pay-off and is it worth it? I've worked in a walled office or a cubicle for my entire career, why should I switch now?

Moreover, many managers are under the impression that regulations – the space allocation regime known as the "universal footprint" – prevent officing innovation. This is simply not true. Public managers have plenty of

workplace. While we would not call the inability to decorate a “smoking gun” for workplace stress, we can suggest that lack of autonomy in an individual’s work can be partially compensated for by allowing for personal expression in their workspace.

Encouraging individual expression of one’s workplace can positively impact behavioural outcomes. Of course, there are limits to that expression. Nobody wants to see the introduction of life-size illustrations of models in bathing suits in anyone’s office ... really.

Another way of increasing personal control of an individual’s workspace is by introducing telework initiatives, allowing employees to work from home several days a week. Clearly, one of the positive features of telework is that it allows individuals to work in an environment where they have a high degree of discretion in how it is arranged.

While we understand that there is a negative impact from the presence of workplace stress, it may be worthwhile to remember the

extent of that negative impact on an individual, the organization and even on the community:

- Stress has been associated with a multitude of negative health effects, from musculoskeletal illness to cardiovascular disease;
- A coping mechanism often associated with stress is the development of poor health habits. Smoking, substance abuse, poor diet and over-eating are ways that individuals will try to cope;
- Social conflict, absenteeism, lower performance, and higher levels of burnout are organizational attributes associated with the presence of high levels of workplace stress; and
- Employees faced with high levels of stress may exhibit signs of helplessness and are less likely to be involved with community and political activities, electing to partake in more passive leisure activities (i.e., television watching) when given the choice.

room to innovate and experiment.

If you want a glimpse at the future of officing, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) will show you in their bureau of Accommodation Planning and Interior Design (APID). This group offers design and design management services in the area of office accommodation management services that can help your organization make the change. Interestingly, the group’s own office space serves as a laboratory of sorts where some leading-edge designs are piloted.

When visiting, you’ll find open office constellations tailored to the needs and preferences of the group. Private rooms provide some solitude when high levels of privacy are in order. Several activity (or “support”) spaces were added for meetings,

breaks or reading. A kitchen area doubles as a library and has become a key forum where group members exchange ideas. Wasted space is minimized and the aesthetic appeal is maximized.

The real key to transforming your office space in this way is to redesign work processes in tandem. As Veronica Sylvester of PWGSC notes, a “change in officing is not just cosmetic, but is a change in the way you work.” Thus, although there may be some disruption to existing work routines, it is usually a disruption for the better.

Contrary to what you might think, the Treasury Board Secretariat’s space allocation framework – the amount of space each type of public servant should ideally have – dovetails nicely with this type of design. In the past, the guidelines stipulated that the more senior you are the more space you get.

Today, the guidelines allocate space based on a person or group’s functional requirements. This is also the essential goal of modern officing.

The people at APID can also speak from experience about the benefits of these alternatives. There is, of course, improved productivity, greater aesthetic appeal, and more efficient use of space.

Just as importantly, modern officing is a particularly important part of the government’s recruitment and retention campaign. Young talented workers feel more comfortable working within the new offices. Many will forego short-term gains in salary for the long-term well-being that comes from a pleasant and functional work environment. According to Sylvester, “It does make a difference and we’re a living example.” Even the few employees who have left for the

While we have only dealt with the aesthetic physical elements in the workplace, there is comparatively more research on the environmental controls in the workplace. Variables such as room temperature, lighting, noise and occupant density can also affect an individual's level of personal control and sense of well-being.

For example, one study looked at the effect that the introduction of thermostats accessible to employees in their offices had on personal comfort. Although the thermostats were not connected to anything, participants believed they had more control of their room temperature and as a result believed that their environment was more comfortable.

Variables that have been found to be associated with negative outcomes are:

- High occupation density in the workplace;
- The absence of privacy;
- Poor air quality;

- Excessively loud noise or unexpected bursts of sound; and
- Uncomfortably high or low temperatures (although it is interesting to note that we will withstand lower temperatures better than high temperatures).

The opposite conditions have been found to lead to positive outcomes:

- Low levels of crowding;
- Visual and acoustic privacy;
- The presence of pleasing fragrances. This does not mean pumping in a cocktail of odor-masking chemicals. Some organizations have their on-site dining facilities bake bread in the morning, which not only creates a stampede at the first coffee break, but distributes one of the most pleasing and harmless aromas throughout the facility;
- relaxing sounds, such as a stream or

private sector have later admitted that they regret their decision.

If you're worried about the cost of the new approaches, you needn't be. The change process doesn't necessarily have to cost very much. Most innovative office components do not cost much more. In some cases, APID has simply refurbished, repurposed, or rearranged existing furniture and fixtures. A bit of experimentation with inexpensive materials, such as lighting and wall surfaces, has also served the group well.

When the group helps other government organizations with their officing, the key challenge is usually integrating new office designs with the connectivity infrastructure; that is, the telecommunications and computing "plumbing" within your office. Some buildings have less than ideal infrastructures, while others rely on difficult to change legacy systems.

This challenge shouldn't stop you from changing your office environment since this infrastructure will ultimately have to be modernized anyways. Nonetheless, it is a complicating factor.

Another challenge is reluctance on the part of those who worry that new office designs will lead to more distractions. Also, creating unstructured activity space, such as lounge space, implies that staff are given greater responsibility to manage their own time. Some people find this threatening.

There is no question that open and interconnected workspaces call for a new office etiquette. This does not mean modern officing is more conducive to distraction. To the contrary, studies show that in office environments that are more open, people are more conscious of their neighbours and are more courteous as a result. Contrast this with cubicle

spaces where people are presented with the illusion of separate space and feel less obligated to keep noise levels down.

There is also a misconception about the nature of privacy in modern office environments. As Sylvester notes, "privacy means different things to different people" and these differences can be accommodated. Special quiet rooms can be set aside for private business. The configuration of work stations can create high levels of privacy even where no walls exist. Moreover, modern officing doesn't necessarily mean you can't have a private office.

The big office may no longer be the status symbol it once was. Today's managers are focusing on how to create an office environment that encourages teamwork, creativity and productivity. Just ask Veronica Sylvester!

- a fountain;
- moderate temperatures adjusted for different seasons; and
- warm white fluorescent lighting rather than cool white.

Environmental psychologist Robert Baron found in a review of research on the physical environment that individuals who experienced more positive physical conditions were more likely to:

- set higher personal goals and have greater motivation;
- be more collaborative and demonstrate leadership qualities;
- evaluate colleagues at a higher level;
- generate greater creativity in problem solving;
- accept greater levels of risk; and
- resolve interpersonal conflict through more positive methods such as cooperation and collaboration rather than avoidance and competition.

So, while it is important to consider how team members interact with each other, and how managers structure their organization, the wise manager will also consider the physical environment in order to create a workplace that supports positive results.



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Please Be Seated ...

The shape of your workstation and office furniture **can shape you**. Some minor tweaking of your workspace can help you **ward off the aches and pains**.

How high are your armrests? Is your seat pan enabling your knees to bend for the optimum angle? Are you getting enough ventilation through your chair? Who would have thought so much consideration needs to be given to the chair that we sit in?

Well, in light of the fact that most individuals will spend about one third of their day sitting, leaning over a keyboard, straining to view a flickering CRT monitor, it's no wonder so many office workers have sore wrists and backs, neck pain and headaches.

How we physically position ourselves during our workday has a dramatic influence upon how we feel. Posture is an important component of workplace health and central to the study of

ergonomics.

Ergonomics is the “applied science concerned with the human physical characteristics that need to be considered in designing the objects (tools and environments) used by people. The goal of ergonomic design is to achieve a fit between people and objects, such that these objects can be used efficiently and safely. In office seating, the ergonomic goal is to minimize the fatigue and discomfort associated with long periods of sitting.”

The tricky part about posture and ergonomics is that the effect of poor design is cumulative. We may not sense discomfort from the way we are positioning ourselves until it is too late. Then we require more aggressive remedies than just changing the way we sit.

Physiotherapy and chiropractics, as well as braces and tensors, then become the means to reducing our discomfort.

The health care cost and lost productivity due to posture-related illness (a.k.a. musculoskeletal injury, for the ergonomically savvy) has steadily increased for the past twenty years. And it's no coincidence that the increase parallels the advent of computers in our workplace.

Interestingly enough, many individuals already have the right chair for their work. Organizations have realized the cost-effectiveness of buying the proper chairs for their employees.

However, because chairs are more complex to adjust than the settings on a VCR, many users do not take the time to ensure their

seat is properly positioned.

Business furnishing manufacturers are also supplying new users with interactive software and videos in the hopes of better acquainting customers with all the adjustment features of their chair. But it still remains up to the user to make the proper adjustments.

Of equal importance is the need for users to realize that they should vary the position of their chair throughout the day. No single setting is optimum for extended periods. Fine tuning, or making regular adjustments to your chair

for different tasks to maintain variety in your posture, is a key component to reducing strain.

As a result of improper use of chairs and failure to adjust the settings, many users are no better off than if they were to use a dance hall stacking chair for their task chair. In an attempt to change this, we provide the following ergonomics guide.

This guide has been created to assist you in understanding what an appropriate setting should be for your chair. You will discover how the intricacies of your office

chair impact on your body. You will also learn something about your chair's optimal settings.

Since manufacturers have varying ways of setting their product, the following cannot instruct you on exactly *how* to make the adjustments to your chair. So please refer to your manual for proper adjustment controls; there are likely controls on your chair that you're not aware of.

Whatever you do, *do not* remain seated for the entire performance.

Seating Settings

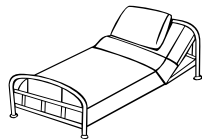
ERGONOMIC COMPONENT	STRESSOR MINIMIZED	FRIENDLY ADVICE
Seat Pan Height Range	Sore legs, lower back strain, and premature fatigue	The seat height should support a knee angle of 90 degrees.
Seat Pan Tilt	Leg strain, lower back strain, and premature fatigue	Optimal posture is maintained when your legs extend so that the inside of your knee creates an angle of about 135 degrees (about 45 degrees beyond a right angle). Allow your seat to tilt forward about five degrees to comfortably engage in work that requires you to lean forward.
Back Rest Angle Adjustment	Back muscle strain and lower back fatigue	Adjust your seat pan and back rest so that your feet touch the floor. A forward angle will help stabilize work that requires you to lean forward. The seat back should be set to minimize interference with elbows.
Lumbar Curve for Lower Back Support	Lower and middle back strain, plus back muscle strain	Your chair should have a hump (no more than 5 cm) at the bottom of the back rest. This supports the natural curvature of the back and lessens pressure on the spine.
Seat Cushion Thickness	Soreness of buttocks and premature fatigue	The seat cushion should be about 2 1/2 cm thick with an appropriate density.
Seat Covering	Soreness of buttocks and premature fatigue	The fabric should be permeable and not slippery to allow for ventilation and the absorption of perspiration.
Seat Pan Shape	Premature fatigue and limited fit	The seat pan should have a waterfall edge that is slightly concave.
Armrest	Shoulder, arm, elbow and wrist strain	The armrests should be low enough to fit under your desk. Detachable armrests are preferable. You should be able to rest your elbows on armrests while working.

Ten Simple Things

Health Improvement Tips



1 Sleep Tight



Many of us experience a “sleep deficit;” we don’t get enough deep sleep at night. Among other things, this reduces our resistance to disease, increases the likelihood of making mistakes, and can make us irritable. If you find yourself nodding off or drinking too much coffee, perhaps you could get to bed earlier. And if you have a couch in your office, catch a brief nap to reinvigorate yourself.

2 Eat Right



Besides increasing the risk of heart disease and other ailments, eating too many processed and junk foods throws our hormones out of balance. This leads to mood swings, depression, fatigue, poor memory and diminished concentration. “Bio-energetic whole foods” are the answer. These natural, unrefined foods are particularly effective at rejuvenating and revitalizing our bodies. Examples include colourful vegetables, legumes, whole grains, fruit, herbs, berries, and nuts. Ask the people in your workplace cafeteria to keep these foods on hand and if they can’t, bring your own.

3 Work in Comfort



In your workspace, is it too hot, too cold, or too noisy? If so, look into making changes in your work environment. A fan, portable heater, or music player with head phones can help if you can’t control these things directly. Make sure that your office furniture is adjusted to reduce repetitive strain injuries.

4 Illness Prevention



As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. Flu shots are a worthwhile investment. To avoid colds, regularly wash your hands in warm, soapy water. Since cold viruses can live on surfaces for several hours, don’t touch items that cold sufferers come in contact with.

5 Building Bonds



People who build intimate bonds with friends and family are more likely to achieve health and longevity. If you feel that you’re neglecting your loved ones, remember that an investment in your personal relationships pays dividends in health and happiness.

6 Work Out



Most Canadians (63 percent) are not active enough to maintain an optimal level of health. In fact, the desire to exercise more is the number one thing employees cite as a health priority. This is for good reason. A commitment to exercise can reduce the risk of stroke, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and depression. If you're sure you can't spare a large chunk of time for exercise, look for other ways of increasing your physical activity. Perhaps you could park your car further away from your office and enjoy the walk. A few minutes of stretching exercises could be added to your routine, perhaps while you're waiting for your computer to boot up in the morning.

7 Chill Out



Your state of mind affects the health of your body. Too much stress can lead to all sorts of unwanted physical side-effects. Take some time out to relax and meditate. This will give you better "body awareness" and help you tidy your mind.

8 Kick the Habit



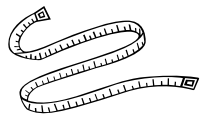
So you thought you could be healthy while maintaining bad habits like smoking? Dream on. Now is the time to quit.

9 H₂O



Water helps regulate many of our bodily processes and we usually don't drink enough. Ideally, we should be drinking water throughout the day. Among other things, water helps our body synthesize hormones and neurotransmitters that help us think. So whenever you hold a meeting, make a point of bringing a pitcher of water and some glasses.

10 Cutting Calories



Over-eating has become a major problem in our society. Most of us consume about 50 percent more than our bodies need. There is always room for comfort food on those days when you feel a little stressed. However, there is plenty of room to cut down in general. And don't forget, the more physical exercise you get, the more calories you can consume. Food lovers should hit the gym.

Many busy people starve themselves during the day and then pig out in the evening. You should pace yourself, with breakfast, lunch and dinner. Throw in a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. And try not to eat late in the evening. By doing this, your body is able to produce enough growth hormones, which boosts your immune system, decrease body fat, and provide a greater sense of well-being.

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Stress Test

Would you describe yourself as stressed or satisfied while at work? Do you feel that you are treated fairly? What about your staff? How confident are you that your leadership style promotes the productivity and well-being of your staff?

If you're struggling to answer these questions, we have some simple tools that can help you assess the way you manage stress and stress risks. These tools draw from the renowned work of Martin Shain of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and his Business Health Culture Index.

Feel free to share these tools with your colleagues and staff. Perhaps you can meet as a group and use these instruments as the starting point for a dialogue on workplace stress. Don't forget to ask yourself what you're going to do about your findings. Perhaps its time to think about creating an action plan for stress risk management.

1

Stress & Satisfaction

This is a simple, four-question self-assessment that helps reflect on your own work life. (Pages 44-45)

2

Health & Productivity

This is a slightly longer assessment of your leadership style. It will help you reflect on the health and productivity in your work environment, at least insofar as it is influenced by your management. (Pages 46-47)

Measuring Up

Stress & Satisfaction

A Self Assessment



step 1

Circle the number that best describes how you feel about the following statements.

step 2

Score yourself. If 1, 2 or 3, then enter 0 in the box. If 4, 5 or 6, then enter 1 in the box.

		Not At All	Once In A While	Sometimes	Often	Most Of The Time	Always	Score
Control	I am satisfied with the amount of involvement I have in decisions that affect my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Reward	I feel I am rewarded (in terms of praise and recognition) for the level of effort I put out for my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Demand	In the last 6 months, too much time pressure at work has caused me worry, "nerves" or stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Effort	In the last 6 months, I have experienced worry, "nerves" or stress from mental fatigue at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Total								

Add the first and second scores ...
 subtract the third score ...
 subtract the fourth score.
 Enter total in the bottom box.

If your score is positive, then you experience more satisfaction than stress at work and, on the whole, you feel you are being treated fairly. If your score is above +1, chances are that you experience superior health and a sense of well-being.

If your score is negative, you experience more stress than satisfaction at work and may feel that you are treated unfairly. If your score is below -1, you are at risk for a wide variety of health and capacity ailments.

Employees who consistently experience high stress and low satisfaction at work suffer the following consequences.

step 4

If total score is positive ...
 If total score is negative ...

step 3

Tally the scores. (Your total should be between -2 and +2.)

Health Consequences	Capacity Consequences
3x Heart problems	Reduced adaptability
3x Back pain	Reduced ability to cope with change
5x Certain types of cancer	Impaired learning
2-3x Injuries	Impaired memory
2-3x Infections	Increased helplessness
2-3x Conflicts	Increased passivity or aggression and conflict
2-3x Mental health problems	
2-3x Substance abuse	

Measuring Up

step 5

Fill out this checklist for improvement. Research has established that demand, effort, control and reward determine, in large part, the experience of stress and satisfaction at work

Control

Amount of say over how the work is done.

- Generally speaking, I have an adequate amount of control and influence over my work.
- I take advantage of opportunities to give my opinion on issues that affect my work.
- I create opportunities to give my opinion on issues that affect my work
- If I have not been consulted and think I should have been, I let the person to whom I report know.
- I actively look for and create choices and options for myself at work rather than seeing myself as a victim.

Demand

Amount of time to do the work.

- Generally speaking, I have enough time to get my work done.
- Each day, I prioritize my work and do the most important tasks first.
- If I have too much work, I check with the person to whom I report to clarify priorities.
- I manage my time effectively.
- I ensure my work is organized as efficiently as possible.

Reward

Amount of recognition and appreciation for work.

- Generally speaking, I feel adequately rewarded for the work that I do.
- I know what makes me feel rewarded and appreciated for my work.
- I share this information with person to whom I report and with my coworkers.
- I show my appreciation for the work of others.
- I reward and appreciate myself for a job well done.

Effort

Emotional and psychological requirements of work.

- Generally speaking, I think that the amount of mental energy required to do my work is reasonable.
- I think of ways to reduce the mental fatigue from my work.
- I have effective ways of managing my stress at work.
- I have effective ways of managing my stress outside of work.
- I let go of things that are beyond my control.

Learn More

These self-assessments are based on the research of Martin Shain from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, as well as the work done by Human Resources Development Canada's (HRDC) Organizational Development Services and Wellness Program. Learn more from the following:

- Martin Shain, 1999. "Stress & Satisfaction: The Role of Occupational Health & Safety," in *Occupational Health & Safety Canada*, 15, 3: 38-47.
- Martin Shain, Helen Suurvali, Eddy Ross, 2000. "Stress, Satisfaction & Fairness at Work: Implications for Health." Hull: HRDC, Organization Development Services.

Measuring Up

Health & Productivity

Assessing Your Management Style



step 1

Circle the number that best describes how often the following apply in your role as a manager.

step 2

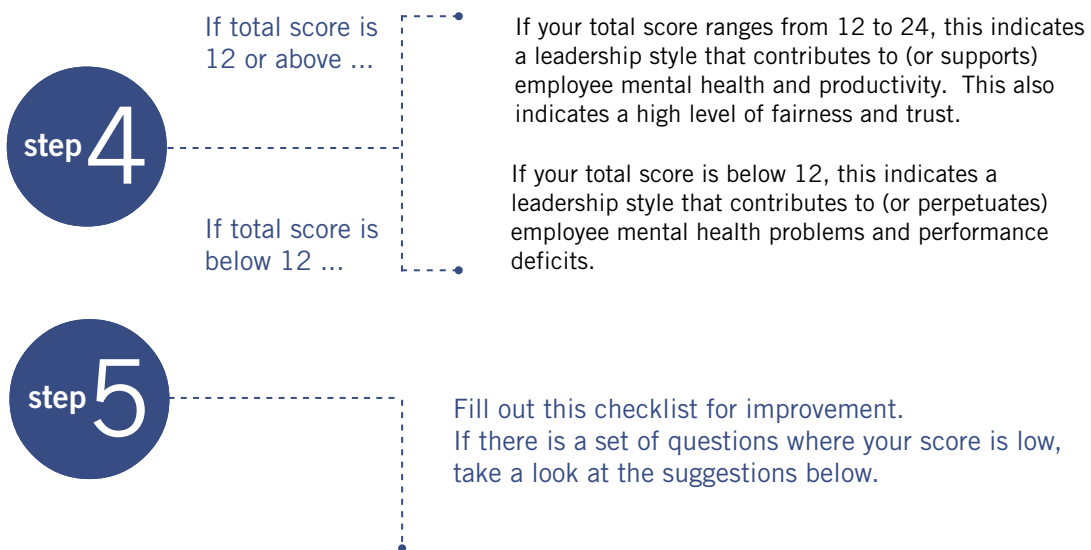
Write your score for each question in the corresponding box to the right.

		Usually	Some-times	Never	Score Boxes
Control	I am concerned about whether my employees have enough time to get their work done within regular hours.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	I act as a workload coach to my employees by assisting them to prioritize their work.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	My employees would agree that I try to ensure they are able to accomplish their work within regular working hours.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
Reward	I consider it important to involve my employees in decisions and changes which affect their work.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	I consult with my employees on decisions and changes which affect their work.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	My employees would agree that I consult with them on decisions and changes which affect their work.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
Demand	I consider it important that the amount of mental and emotional effort required by my employees is reasonable.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	I take steps to reduce the amount of mental and emotional effort required by my employees when work is extensive.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	My employees would agree that I help to manage the amount of mental and emotional effort required to do their work.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
Effort	I know what makes each of my employees feel rewarded and appreciated for their efforts.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	I appreciate and reward my employees for their efforts	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
	My employees would agree that I appreciate and reward them for their efforts.	2	1	0	<input type="text"/>
Concern	The degree to which you consider the impact of your decisions on key aspects of employee job satisfaction and stress.				<input type="text"/>
Action	How much importance you attached to this impact in terms of what you are prepared to do about it.				<input type="text"/>
Validation	The extent to which you get feedback from you employees about your actions.				<input type="text"/>
Total Score	An indicator of the probable impact that your leadership style has on the mental health and productivity of your staff.				<input type="text"/>

step 3

Tally the scores for each column and the grand total.

Measuring Up



Control

Amount of say over how the work is done.

- Delegate decision-making to individuals.
- Allow people to decide how they will accomplish their work.
- Be a good workload management coach to establish boundaries between essential work and things which can wait.
- Allow people to use and manage external contractors to assist with high demand activities.

Demand

Amount of time to do the work.

- Clarify priority work for employees.
- Set realistic service delivery standards with clients.
- Encourage client investment in results which must exceed standards.
- Get out of some businesses and roles.
- Help people to say “no” without guilt.

Reward

Amount of recognition and appreciation for work.

- Provide new learning opportunities.
- Offer interesting assignments.
- Give promotions.
- Establish external representation roles.
- Give positive feedback on work well done.
- Be clear on what each employee in your work unit finds rewarding.

Effort

Emotional and psychological requirements of work.

- Monitor perfectionist tendencies.
- Ensure staff are taking holidays and are working towards a healthy work/home balance.
- Engage staff and clients in the redesign of work processes to reduce effort and strain.
- Invest in technology and high quality training and development to augment staff competencies.
- Equip people with skills and processes for conflict resolution.