



Part of the Washington SBDC Podcast Series

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Small Business Employees Experience Corporate Stress:

Small business employees are increasingly shown to have signs of overwork, increased performance demands and stress related health conditions.

Stress: a mentally or emotionally disruptive condition occurring in response to adverse external influences.

Job Stress: triggered when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Stress contributors:

- The lack of a clear job description
 - Makes it difficult for individuals to determine the boundaries in which their work is confined. In this way they end up doing more work than is required and so the workload seems higher than the employee's capacity.
- Heavy responsibilities without any authority or decision making discretion
 - These individuals meet just the minimum job requirements leading to low productivity and low morale. This can lead to emotional and physical burnout.
- No recognition or reward for good performance
- Inadequate time is allocated to complete tasks
- When job security/promotion is in question

Internal Responses

- Perspiration
- Rapid breathing
- Fast heartbeat
- Dry mouth

- Tenseness in the muscles
- Cold hands and feet

External Symptoms

- Appetite disorder
- Frequent or continuous colds
- Digestive problems
- Back pain

Stress may increase risk for cardiovascular disease, psychological disorders, and even death. In Japan this is called *Karoshi* or death from work related stress. An average of 30,000 workers die from being overworked.

Early Warning Signs of Stress:

- Headaches
- Sleep Disturbance
- Job dissatisfaction
- Low morale

External responses result in:

- Increased Absenteeism
- Tardiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in work habits
- Less Personal Care

1/4 of the workforce view their jobs as the #1 stressor in their lives

How to relieve stress for your employees:

- Introduce a stress free zone where employees cannot talk about work
 - Example, Chicago business Belcamp software
- Other stress relieving activities
- Pinpoint stressful events that need special attention
- Prevent procrastination where possible, it causes a feeling of loss of control
- Honest communication will reduce stress by eliminating uncertainties and exhibits a level of respect

Summary: Stress need not be an office cancer but too much can seriously interfere with your ability to perform effectively.

Visit your local SBDC for no-cost, confidential advising services: www.wsbdc.org