

# Stress Management Our Way



*Fulfill your duty and  
avoid costs  
Our Way*

reduce employee stress    be proactive    avoid litigation

## Stress

Stress is literally a killer. We expect a lot from our senior people and the resulting stress can have serious health consequences – for the person and the bottom line.

So what is it? Britain's government agency handling stress management, the Health and Safety Executive, has defined stress as:

“The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them’.

We all know that pressure builds up from a number of areas. We import home-related stress into the workplace and vice-versa. Stress management therefore means managing the whole problem, and not just looking at the office.

## What does stress cost?

In the United Kingdom 12.8 million days were lost in 2003/4 from stress, depression and anxiety. That is almost half a day for every working person. Half a million people suffer illness from stress – one in sixty working people, while five million (or one in six working people) feel at least very stressed in their job. These stressed people can hardly be working at optimal efficiency.

Further, it is widely agreed that the pressure of modern business is increasingly falling on relatively small numbers of senior, capable people. These are the people most vulnerable to stress, and the ones that their organisations can least afford to lose.

In addition, research has recently shown that stress in working women is on the rise, to levels similar to men. Hence, we can expect the problem to continue growing as women increase their penetration of senior levels of management

So, stress is costing real money in lost working hours and productivity. It is a business cost that deserves attention.

## Regulatory growth

Stress is also an area where governments have sought to intervene in many countries. There has been a trend in many countries to mandate OSH (Occupational Safety and Health) measures to push the responsibility for stress onto companies. Other countries have seen litigation cases and multi-million dollar settlements to compensate employees for an unreasonable level of stress.

In the United Kingdom in 2001 over £300 million was paid for stress related damages, and damages at that time were growing at a twelve-fold rate per year. Since 2003 the government started levying unlimited fines on companies that do not comply with stress management regulations.

Get used to it. This is a serious issue facing all modern companies. Many other countries are following the United Kingdom's example, while others with more laissez-faire attitudes, such as the United States, can expect a dramatic increase in civil lawsuits.

So, organisations must cope with this product of modern society. And business must cope with the costs of lost productivity and extra costs whenever stress calls.

Fortunately, we can help to lower the stress of your key people.

## Avoid Costs of Stress

In the United Kingdom all companies with at least five staff have a duty to carry out risk assessments and manage the risks as far as is reasonably practical (Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992). In many other countries, similar laws are in the process of proposal and implementation.

Second, you need to show that you have given sufficient support to employees or risk litigation. Otherwise, you are liable for being sued by the employee.

Third, the current legal position does not exclude sources of stress in personal life. You have a duty to a working person with a highly stressful personal life to identify and manage their overall stress.

So, the answer is to be proactive, manage sources of stress and thereby do the right thing for your employee while avoiding litigation and other costs.

## Source of Stress

There is a major source of stress that has been poorly managed in the past: The family.

Today's teenage children are different from past generations. A dominating theme of the latest generation of young adults is that they have short attention spans, expect gratification and do not possess much of a work ethic. They place an ever demanding strain on their parents in terms of emotion, money and commitment, while giving little in return compared to earlier generations.

The result – stress on your most valuable people from outside the workplace.

The traditional answer is to ignore it. But you have a duty to manage stress and this is a major cause. You have two choices: face up to the fact that family stress is part of today's management scope or risk being sued for not taking reasonable measures.

## The Reasonable Measure

We have developed a scheme where young adults can be managed by their parents, the incessant demands for money can be deflected and they can be trained in self-sufficiency using methods to which they can relate.

All an organisation has to do is invest in a stress management package. The organisation receives interest on the funds covering the estimated cost of money and the principal is returned after five years. Your employee receives regular feedback of the progress of their young adult, knowledge that they are developing and avoids being hassled.

A win-win-win scenario.

This package is now available. There is no long-term costs to the organisation, it reduces the stress of the employee with older families and provides a positive return on investment through reduced risk from stress litigation and from avoiding a source of productivity loss.

You have a duty. Are you going to fulfil it, or will we see you in the next round of court cases? The choice is yours.

*So take charge  
Manage stress and perform your duty to your employees  
Avoid the expense of litigation  
Do the right thing*

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to invest in a stress management plan