

The role of the board and administration

# HEALTHY WORKPLACES, HEALTHY JOBS

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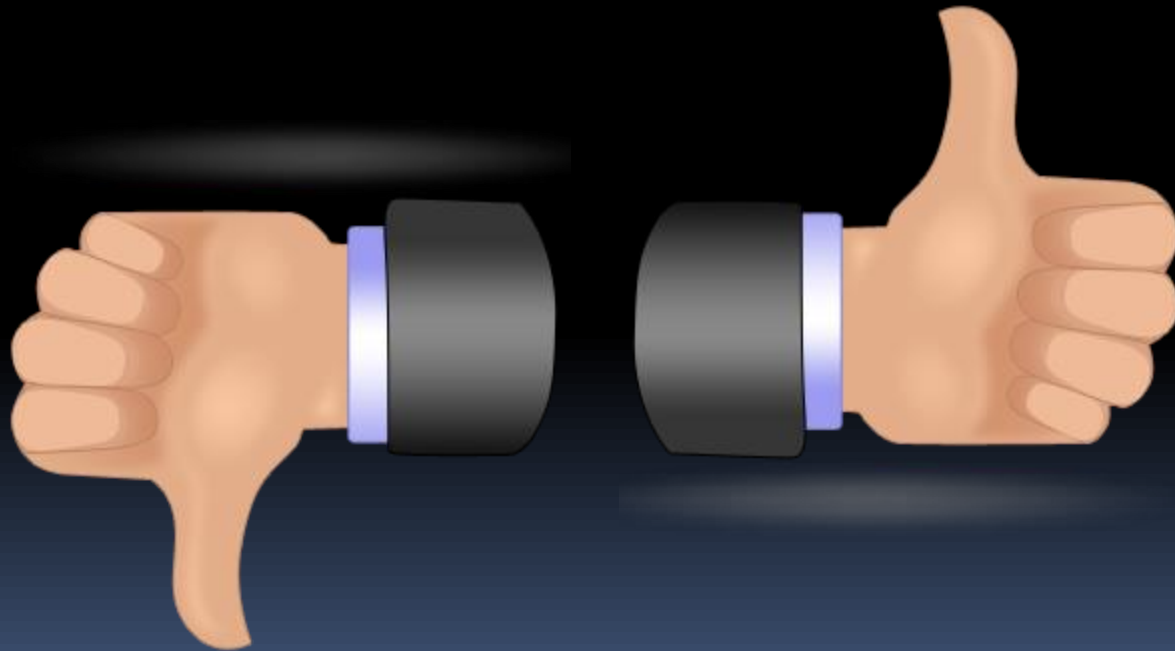
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About 25% of adult life spent at work



Life cannot be broken into separate and unrelated segments. Work life and home life may have different elements and activities but both are woven together because our mind and emotions function in a continuity rather than in an episodic manner.

Work and the workplace can have a positive or adverse effect on health



The mind is not always in the same place  
as the body.

# What Makes A Workplace "Unhealthy"?

1. Unresolved interpersonal conflict
2. Pressure of recurring deadlines in poorly organized work system
3. Heavy responsibility for human or economic concerns
4. Monotonous work or that which requires constant concentration.

# What Makes A Workplace "Unhealthy"?

5. Stress though not usually classified as a mental disorder, can precipitate both physical and emotional problems



# Depression in the workplace

- Left untreated, depression is as costly as heart disease or AIDS to the US economy. (Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, Dec 2003: 1465-75)
- Over \$51 billion in absenteeism and lost productivity and \$26 billion in direct treatment costs.
- Ranks among top three workplace problems for employee assistance professionals (follows family crisis and stress). (Employee Assistance Professionals Association 1996 Survey)

# What Makes A Workplace "Unhealthy"?

5. Stress though not usually classified as a mental disorder, can precipitate both physical and emotional problems
6. Frequency of critical incidents: assault, sexual or psychological harassment, accidents, emergencies
7. Too much/not enough work

# Healthy workplace:

Context

Culture

Stability

Alignment/connectivity to  
'calling'

# What Makes A Workplace "Healthy"?

## 1. Context—the physical environment

Noise level

Ergonomics

Work pace

Safe lifting

Physical demands

Air quality

Toxic substances

Workplace design

Security provisions

Safety guidelines

# What Makes A Workplace "Healthy"?

## 2. Culture—the social environment

- Balance between work and family
- Staff involvement in decision making
- Perception of equality
- Peer communication/social atmosphere
- Employee training/development/satisfaction
- Positive supervisor communication/feedback
- Staff morale and employee recognition

# What Makes A Workplace "Healthy"?

## 3. Stability—the change environment

- Impact of technology changes

- Restructuring—mergers/acquisitions

- Downsizing

- Frantic pace of work and life

- Erosion of leisure time

- Blending of work and home time

- Change of supervisors

The Tokyo Declaration (1998) —a consensus statement by 29 occupational health experts from Europe, Japan and the USA.

“Most of these developments are driven by economic and technological changes aiming at short-term productivity and profit gain... Production practices are increasingly ‘leaner’. New employment practices such as use of contingent workers are increasingly adopted.



Concurrently, job stability and tenure is decreasing... New management models are introduced... This rapid change, combined with both over- and under-employment, is likely to be highly stress provoking.”

—from The Tokyo Declaration

# Workplace threats to mental health:

- Changes in work
- Changes in administration/supervisors
- Changes in workplace
- Critical incidents (hostility, harassment, emergencies)
- Financial/relational pressures brought to the workplace

# What Makes A Workplace "Healthy"?

4. Workplace alignment with life 'calling'  
Workplace provides connectivity to personal goals/values/objectives in life  
Proactive support/advocacy for healthy lifestyle behaviors such as weight control, exercise/physical activity, diet and nutrition choices, stress management, hygiene

# Healthy workplace:

Context

Culture

Stability

Alignment/connectivity to  
'calling'

# What is organizational culture?

Underlying and often unexpressed assumptions, values, beliefs, and attitudes that have been jointly learned and taken for granted.

# Organizational cultural assumptions:

1. Assumptions about people.
2. Assumptions about power and relationships.
3. Assumptions about time and space.
4. Assumptions about ethics.
5. Assumptions about identity and purpose.

"It can be argued that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture; that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work within culture; and that it is an ultimate act of leadership to destroy culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional."

—Edgar H Shein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*

"Leadership creates and changes cultures,  
while management and administration act  
within a culture."

—Edgar H Shein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*



"The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead."

—Edgar H Shein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*

# Assumptions about people:

## Lazy/need incentives

“The average worker wants a job in which he does not have to put much physical effort. Above all, he wants a job in which he does not have to think.”

—Henry Ford, 1922

## Motivated/need opportunity

“I think most of us are looking for a calling, not a job. Most of us have jobs that are too small for our spirit. Jobs are not big enough for people. There’s nothing I would enjoy more than a job so meaningful to me that I brought it home.”

—Norah Watson, 1974

Employees look for:

- Daily meaning as well as daily bread.
- Recognition as well as remuneration.
- Worthwhile work.

“I consider it a dangerous misconception of mental hygiene to assume that what man needs in the first place is equilibrium or, as it is called in biology, “homeostasis,” i.e., a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him.”

—Victor Frankl, *Search for Meaning*, p. 105



## Entity A

Assumption: People are unmotivated, lazy, dishonest, untrustworthy.

Decision-making: tends to be more centralized, rules and policies to control behavior, one-way communication, management is more paternalistic.

## Entity B

Assumption: People are motivated, responsible, capable, interested, honest.

Decision-making: tends to be more distributed, rules and policies less constrictive, two-way communication, management more collaborative.

# Assumptions about relationships:

## Age = experience/wisdom

Employees told what to do.  
Work structured individually.  
Hierarchical communication.  
Decisions from top down.  
Tends for formality.

## Experience/wisdom distributed

Employees invited to discuss challenges.  
Flatter organizational structure.  
Multi-directional communication.  
Participatory decision-making.  
Tends to informality.



# Assumptions about time and space:

Time is money—use it carefully. Symbolic meaning to arriving early/late (high commitment or low efficiency/low commitment or high efficiency).

Space: size, location, and furnishings of office  
open office—facilitates communication  
closed office—need to be alone...  
failure to obtain appropriate space  
reward is interpreted negatively

Managers/supervisors are the bearers and transmitters of cultural assumptions. Employee assumptions about the workplace culture are largely influenced by managerial attitudes.



# Assumptions about ethics:

## Entity A

Honesty  
Integrity  
Trust  
Hard work  
Loyalty  
Commitment  
Respect  
Fairness

## Entity B

Competition (win at any cost)  
Individualism  
Ladder climbing  
End justifies the means  
Power over others

Employees stunned most academics by saying that the code of ethics for their company had very little influence on whether they made ethically correct choices. It was the culture of their companies and the examples set by their leaders that influenced their conduct.

—from a 2004 study by the Journal of Business Ethics

Mistreatment of employees can be viewed by employees as justifying retaliatory responses (theft, less productivity, absenteeism, noncompliance).

# Elements of workplace culture:

## Environmental

Policies, rules, regulations  
Compensation and  
benefits  
Organizational structure  
Job design  
Physical workplace

## Behavioral

Patterns of communication  
Management style  
Decision-making processes  
Degree of feedback and  
appraisal  
Degree of control or  
autonomy

# Creating and embedding culture

- The effect of leadership charisma—not always predictable or sustainable
- Testing/experimenting with solutions
- Establishing systems to monitor, measure, control, reward
- The power of stories and leadership example
- Formalized statements
- “Little by little” rather than “all of a sudden”

# Other cultural assumptions

Private vs public

For profit vs Not-for-profit

Service vs acquisition

Goals

Spiritual values (Christlikeness,  
conversion/baptisms)

# Healthy workplace:

## Policy framework

- Values
- Employment practices
- Vacations/sick leave
- Breaks in worktime schedule
- Safe reporting system for improper conduct
- Harassment/hostility
- Bereavement
- Healthcare
- Crisis events

# Healthy job:

## Job content:

- Excessive/insufficient workload
- Participation/control
- Meaningful/monotonous
- Fits skills and personality

## Job context:

- Part of larger purpose
- Recognition/social support
- Fairness
- Positive interpersonal relationships
- Balanced home/work interface



# Healthy job provides:

1. Sense of purpose: more than producing goods or services, one that makes a difference.
2. Sense of ownership: having some say in how the work is done.
3. Sense of fit: what I do fits into the larger mission.
4. Sense of community: we are doing this together.
5. Sense of contact: we can build worthwhile relationships

"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

—Theodore Roosevelt

# What can be done:

1. Create/sustain healthy workplace culture
2. Highlight mission/vision/values

Mission

Defines fundamental purpose

Vision

Defines future state

Values

Defines culture and priorities

# What can be done:

1. Create/sustain healthy workplace culture
2. Highlight mission/vision/values
3. Ensure meaningful work
4. Review policies from an employee's perspective
5. Be sensitive to the impact of workplace changes

# What can be done:

6. Review corporate medical policies and employee health benefits.
7. Review pattern of health costs in the organization.
8. Staff training to recognize signs of stress/depression and respond.
9. Educate employees about stress and depression and policies to help mitigate their effects.

# Some key principles:

1. Employees are the most important asset of the organization.
2. Efficiency of the business or effectiveness in mission will be enhanced if employees have good emotional health.
3. Support services for employee mental health are win-win measures for the business and the employees.

# Benefits of a healthy workplace

| To the organization                        | To the employee                        |
|--|--|
| a well-managed health and safety programme | a safe and healthy work environment    |
| a positive and caring image                | enhanced self-esteem                   |
| improved staff morale                      | reduced stress                         |
| reduced staff turnover                     | improved morale                        |
| reduced absenteeism                        | increased job satisfaction             |
| increased productivity                     | increased skills for health protection |
| reduced health care/insurance costs        | improved health                        |
| reduced risk of fines and litigation       | improved sense of well-being           |

[http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/topics/workplace/en/index1.html](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/workplace/en/index1.html)



# Resources:

<http://www.mental-health-today.com>

<http://www.allaboutdepression.com>

<http://www.nmha.org>

[http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/topics/workplace/en/index1.html](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/workplace/en/index1.html)