

Stress in the workplace essay sample



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This essay will present the argument that stress is a real factor in the working environment. This fact will be supported with peer reviewed journals and will be given due consideration under the theme of in what capacity stress is caused in a work environment and in what way can the environment be altered in order to generate less stress among the workers. The theme of stress is relevant not only because of productive working but also in consideration for the employees health: many stress related health risks include high blood pressure, heart attack and other serious illnesses.

In order to maintain a salubrious lifestyle, not only is stress a factor to be maintained but stress under certain high-pressure situations that occur increasingly in the work environment: the key to healthy living is to reduce stress through breathing techniques, stretching, relaxing and most importantly, lowering the level of stress in the immediate environment. The nature of stress in the work place focuses on a person's reaction to a specific event; in the restaurant business this event could be a myriad of factors: wrong food order, unpleasant customer experience, or lack of respect from fellow workers or employer.

When an employee is faced with these variables during they course of a work day, tension mounts, and stress becomes higher, as Kello states, “When we perceive an event as a challenge or potential threat, a physical and psychological response is triggered by the autonomic nervous system. Whether the stressor is external (an oncoming car swerves into our lane) or internal (an anxiety-arousing thought), its onset abrupt (a sudden emergency) or gradual (a long-term unresolved problem), this automatic reaction is essentially the same” (Kello 2006; 21).

A person's heart rate and blood pressure increase in such situations and their breathing becomes increasingly short and shallow; the muscles tense and a person begins to sweat; this is a stress attack which is initiated with the fight or flight instinct in humans. Kello also mentions the general adaptation syndrome or GAS. If this system stays active for too long of a time or becomes active more each day then an employee may begin to suffer from " chronic hypertension, cardiovascular disease, gastro-intestinal disorder (such as ulcers) and migraine headaches" (Kello 2006; 21).

Without relief from these stressors medical problems will begin or increase and thus stress is accumulative. One maxim that holds true today is that a person should leave their home life at home and their work problems at their job (Kello 2006; 21). However, stressors all act in the same way despite whether or not an employee does not choose to share their problems. Kello suggests in his article that stress, however unfortunate its side effects may be also contributes to the overall performance of a worker.

Kello gives the analogy of a team playing sports and how the team does not do well if a player is too hyped up or even if the player is too laid back. A person will perform better if they are achieving an adrenaline flow that contributes to them being ' aroused' in their work environment, " The goal of stress management is to have an optimal level of arousal, often labeled " eustress. " The right amount of positive stress is essential if we're to focus, work safe, and do our best.

This is in contrast to " distress" – the negative, harmful, excessive level of stress. We need enough arousal and activation to be engaged, mindful, fully

in the game, performing at our safest and best. Balance, as usual, is the key” (Kello 2006; 21). Mental duress is in exact correlation with the physiology of the worker (Davolt 2006; 1). It begs the question then what must be done in the working environment especially those filled with more stress than other such as restaurants what can be accomplished in order to propagate a salubrious work structure.

One such existing example of less stress in the work place may be found in Salt Lake City, Utah where ARUP laboratories received the first award for clinical research done with regards to workers’ psyches with the American Psychological Association. This working environment provides its employees with, “...a free on-site primary care clinic, a wellness and fitness center and a meditation room. A healthy curriculum of free classes for employees includes such stress- busters as yoga, tai chi and strength training” (Davolt 2006; 1).

Another clear avenue by which a more salubrious and less stress filled work place may be considered is through communication. Through proper communication respect will also be included in the working environment and it is with these two variables that stress heightens; when someone gives instructions to another employee and someone the object of the conversation is lost in translation a plethora of stress comes from such a misunderstanding. This is especially true in the restaurant business.

When a waiter/waitress orders a meal for the customer this transaction relies solely upon proper communication between the customer and the waiter/waitress and the waiter/waitress and the cook. If there is any type of misinterpretation within this diagram of tertiary communication then the

order is wrong and the whole line of communication falls prey to angst, frustration and stress. Having healthy relationships with fellow employees and with the boss is one way in which stress can be relieved in the work place, “ Often, respect is manifested in egalitarian ways.

Some companies abolish job titles to alleviate on-the-job class struggles. Another might rotate its premium “ rock-star” parking spaces among employees high and low. At Carl Freeman Associates, a Washington, D. C. , real estate developer, the bosses and the bossed break bread together four times a week in a 30-year-old company tradition known as ‘ lunch together’” (Davolt 2006; 1). Thus, the connection between mental health and the well being of employees is established.

As an example of the correlation between a salubrious working environment and work production ARUP’s annual turnover rose 14% which subsequently placed it in the lower rung of quartile for stressful lab industry (Davolt 2006; 1). Communication skills are further emphasized in regards to relieving stress in order to better the company through Devaolt’s statement, “ Milwaukee-based communications firm Versant, an APA winner in the small-business category, has seen fees charged per employee rise 31% since 2001, when the company consciously set out to build a sterling workplace culture” (Davolt 2006; 1).

It is within the capacity of the work place or the employer to set up a structured system by which the employee may do their job more easily. Chief among distractions for employees that add to stress is concern over childcare, eldercare, health care costs and other money related worries

(Davolt 2006; 1), so, it rests with the employer to set up a program to help alleviate such stresses, “ ‘ You need to provide employees with resources they need to manage their daily living problems and save them a lot of grief and keep them functional,’ says Joe Roche, executive director of INOVA EAP in Virginia” (Davolt 2006; 1).

Different people may have different reactions to stress but the physiological change that occurs in the body due to stress in the work place is proven through studies. Headaches, back pains, and other irritants are all products of stress. It is through the continual support of the employer that employees may become less stressed. In the area of communication and even in something as small as respect stress factors may be lessened in the work place. The more a person is educated about their job the less stress there will be (Kello 2006; 21).

Another way in which stress may be lessened is through a healthy and helpful relationship with co-workers, “ Build rapport with supervisors and co-workers by organizing a once a week lunchtime volunteer program. Lead a food or clothing collection for needy employees or families outside your company” (Kello 2006; 21). In this way and in the above stated ways stress in the working environment does not have to lead to headaches, irritation in the bowel, or other unpleasant effects.

If a person has just the right balance of stress, that is enough to be motivated but not enough to cause health problems, then the work place will be one filled with salubrious natured peopled. This essay has shown how stress is caused in a work place and how stress can be subsequently lowered

in a working environment. Each avenue of stress reduction is important to follow just as staying productive at work is important. Lowering stress is vital to a more productive working employee.