



Provided by the author(s) and University College Dublin Library in accordance with publisher policies., Please cite the published version when available.

Title	Managing Burnout
Authors(s)	Clancy, Annette
Publication date	2018-12-03
Publication information	Accountancy Ireland, 50 (6): 67-67
Publisher	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/9834
Publisher's statement	Copyright © 2018 Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland. Articles may not be reproduced without prior permission.

Downloaded 2019-06-18T09:18:08Z

The UCD community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters! (@ucd_oa)



Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



Managing burnout

Burnout is a very real problem, but organisations can ease the burden with some simple adjustments.

BY DR ANNETTE CLANCY

Stress, pressure and deadlines are part of the everyday workload of managers. But when the common feeling of stress tips over into burnout it can be a serious problem, affecting not just your own health and performance but that of your team and organisation.

Some researchers say that as many as 50% of medical professionals and 85% of financial professionals have been affected by burnout. Others say that as few as 7% professionals have been seriously impacted. While researchers may disagree on the numbers, they do agree that burnout is associated with many negative physical and psychological health outcomes such as depression, sleep disturbances, anxiety, and increased alcohol and drug use.

Burnout is a psychological syndrome that is characterised by a negative emotional reaction to one's job as a consequence of extended exposure to a stressful work environment. It produces feelings of inadequacy and alienation, which affects personal and professional relationships.

Stressed people think that they will feel better if they can get on top of the situation, whereas burnout is associated with the belief that one's situation will never be rectified.

How to spot the signs of burnout?

Burnt-out colleagues are not difficult to see. Once productive and engaged, the quality of their work will decrease; they will come in late to work; interactions with colleagues will become curt; and they will become prone to illness, thus absenting themselves from the office more frequently.

How to address burnout

If companies look at their role in creating workplace stress which inevitably leads to burnout, there is every chance they can eliminate the factors that lead to burnout. Recent research suggests that there are three steps leaders can take to address burnout in organisations:

Reduce excessive collaboration

The endless rounds of meetings and conference calls, which aim to include every stakeholder in every decision. Very often, this type of collaboration is required by corporate cultures yet is far beyond what is required to get the job done. Burnout is also driven by the always-on digital workplace. Switching off a personal device lays the emotional impact at the individual executive's door rather than with the company's policy.

Call off unnecessary meetings

There is huge demand for collaboration in contemporary organisations with little in the way of technology and norms to manage it. Left to their own devices, employees will manage their time in ways that reduce stress and burnout. Companies could also challenge the assumption that collaboration (two heads are better than one) and meetings are the best way to get things done. Recent research on introverts subverts this assumption and provides alternative methods (such as breaking work tasks into individual, pair and small group) to capture the creativity and talent of all organisational members.

Stop overloading the most capable

The best people in organisations, at every level, are overwhelmed by meetings, emails and interruptions. They then cannot do the job for which they have been hired because they are busy collaborating with other people.

Giving people the space and time to do their job may be the most important intervention companies make to address burnout and drive success. It is a win-win for everybody.



DR ANNETTE CLANCY

Annette is an organisational consultant and also researches organisational behaviour, in particular emotion in organisations.