A LOOK AT WORKPLACE STRESS:

PREVENTION AND CURES
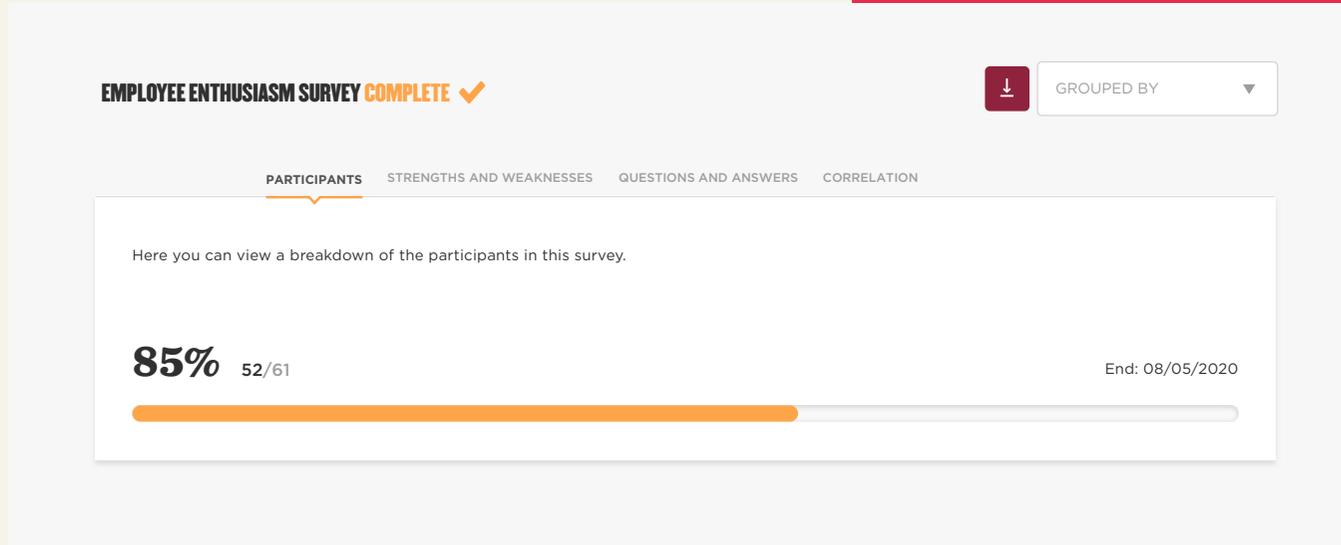
EMPLOYEE ENTHUSIASM SURVEY COMPLETE ✔

GROUPED BY ▼

PARTICIPANTS   STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES   QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS   CORRELATION

Here you can view a breakdown of the participants in this survey.

85% 52/61   End: 08/05/2020

Introduction

Preventing employee stress helps reduce absenteeism, improve retention, and create a happier, healthier work environment.

Stress Awareness Month has been held every April since 1992 to increase awareness about our modern stress epidemic.

Some facts about the workplace stress epidemic:
- 74% of adults have felt stressed to the point of being overwhelmed or unable to cope over the last year
- 217 million days of work are lost every year because of mental illness and substance abuse disorders
- 92% of people feel, at least sometimes, that they are under too much pressure at work

A 2020 study conducted by the UK Chartered Institute of Personal Development of HR professionals from over one thousand companies showed that:

- Nearly 37% saw an increase in stress-related absence over the last year, with 60% reporting an increase in common mental health conditions.
- The top two causes of stress are **heavy workloads** and **management style** (the same as 2019)
- 33% of people professionals who report that stress-related absence has increased over the past year say their organization isn't taking any steps to address it.

In fact, the World Health Organization found that companies that invest in treatment for anxiety and depression reap the rewards—and potentially see a fourfold ROI in people's increased ability to work.

This isn't always intentional. Companies rarely decide to hire as few people as possible and give them far too much work. The stress often snowballs: people leave without being replaced, customers grow, people take annual leave and sick days and workloads naturally increase. These gradual changes lead to employees becoming overwhelmed and unable to cope.

Cultural issues to keep an eye on

1. Toxic management

While we're certain very few managers aspire to be toxic, there are a great many who have no idea the impact their actions have on their team. Typical toxic managerial traits include:

- Raising voices/yelling at employees
- Getting visibly, easily frustrated
- Sending emails and other communications long outside of work hours, or while employees are on leave
- Encouraging gossip among employees
- Lacking compassion and empathy

These traits are often inherited from past managers—lingering signs of company cultures from the past, before the importance of empathy was understood. They are most troubling among senior leadership, whose behavior is often emulated by less experienced employees.

2. Blame management

Environments where people are afraid to make mistakes or ask questions, where people use the phrase "it's not my job," where co-workers negatively gossip about each other and engage in finger-pointing, is the norm, are incredibly restrictive to both personal and company growth.

Signs of workplace stress

In order to support employees going through stressful times, it's important to start working with them on mitigating their stress levels as soon as possible. Some signs of employees suffering from stress include:

- Sudden decrease in quality of work
- Change in appearance, including looking "unkempt" or tired and sudden weight loss/gain
- Appearing withdrawn or isolated from other employees
- Increased tardiness and absenteeism
- Working long hours with decreased productivity
- Increased cynicism or negativity

9:24 am Time in *Average*

20:31 pm Time out *Average*

TOTAL DAILY AVERAGE

11:7 work hrs.

● CLOCKED IN   ● CLOCKED OUT
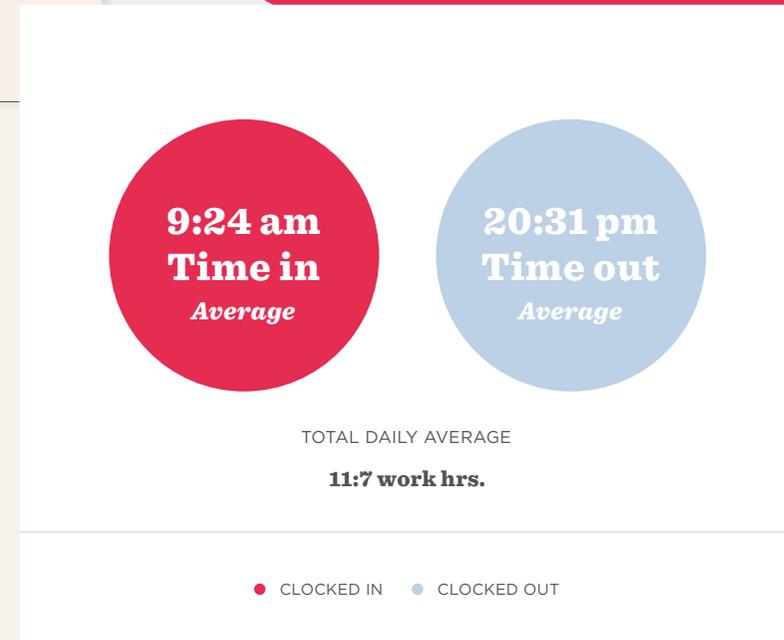
The most common causes of employee stress

1. Excessive workload

When employees are overworked, not only do they not have time to do their best or capacity to be creative. Feeling constantly overwhelmed and exhausted is a recipe for burnout and stress in the workplace.

2. Toxic management

Managers who employ toxic management styles within their teams create unsafe environments, where employees are afraid to ask questions and make mistakes and have trouble collaborating and trusting each other. The fear and discomfort caused by toxic managers leads to exhausting emotional turmoil and overwhelming stress.

3. Blame culture

When employees push responsibility and accountability on teammates, rather than taking ownership upon themselves, this can be a source of stress and distrust for the entire team. This behavior is often a direct result of toxic management, where employees are scared to take fault for fear of retribution.

4. Relationships

Poor relationships with colleagues, managers, or influencers within the business make it almost impossible for employees to perform well. This causes two types of stress: performance-related, where an employee feels they're not reaching their potential, and social, where employees feel isolated.

5. Personal factors

Stress in an employee's personal life can't be checked at the door. Whatever they're struggling with at home will seep into their work performance.

Developing a preventative strategy

In order to increase retention and employee happiness, it's important to focus on preventing stress—not just curing it. Creating a stress-free workplace is difficult but will lead to exponential gains that will be felt throughout your culture.

In order to tackle stress prevention, we suggest taking these three approaches:

1. Remove the stigma from mental health. Engage leadership in facilitating discussions about mental health and make mental health-related openness a focal part of your culture. For example, you can:

- Hang mental health awareness posters around the office
- Share articles within your communications platforms
- Discuss signs of stress at company meetings
- Build mental health awareness into your onboarding program and performance reviews

- Create an environment that allows people to speak up about their personal mental health and check in on their colleagues.

2. Implement a zero-tolerance policy for toxic management. To prevent toxic management from creeping into your organization, include avoiding toxicity in your recruitment and managerial training. Within this framework, include:

- Tips and advice on how to give (and take) constructive criticism
- Approaching mistakes as lessons, rather than failures
- Acceptable social and professional discussions and trait

Make training an ongoing process so managers won't slip into old habits or norms.

3. Initiate a policy that encourages (or insists upon) a daily welfare walk. Walking is a proven way to improve mental health, but leaving the workplace during the day is a tough ask for some. Remove the guilt and anxiety around people leaving the office for 30 minutes by sharing local walking routes and asking your senior team to champion walking meetings. Make these breaks as normal and essential as a morning coffee.

How can HR help with the stress reduction revolution?

- **Spot the signs:** know what signs of stress look like

- **Identify the causes:** put interventions in place

- **Provide resources:** clearly communicate what help is available

- **Remove the taboo around mental health:** starting with the C-Suite

In 2020, it's time to make smarter decisions
when it comes to your people and organization.

To learn more about hibob and our data-driven tools,
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