A word from your Account Management Team...

Welcome to the Fall 2015 issue of Leadership!

Here we are again asking the same question that we do every year at this time: Summer’s over already!? Well don’t worry, just because the fun in the sun has ended let us help you soak up the rays in a different way with an article on lighting your office to make you feel better. Also this fall, we have some great resources on communication, coping with stress on the job, and responding to a changing workplace. And if you haven’t heard of the sandwich generation (who has?) see our article on how you can become a better supervisor by understanding their needs.

If the days seem to be getting just a little too short this time of year, let us lend you some light. When it starts getting dark please don’t forget to call your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-873-7138.

To your health!

– The MINES Team
Awareness is the name of the game in 2015! We here at MINES believe the first step to enhancing your wellbeing is becoming aware. By becoming aware you not only become cognizant of new ideas and open your mind to the world around you, but you also open your eyes to see yourself in a new light as well. **Total Wellbeing** will continue to bridge the gap between our potential and optimal wellbeing by bringing light to the 8 dimensions of wellness: Physical, Occupational, Intellectual, Environmental, Financial, Social, Spiritual, and Emotional Wellness and expanding your awareness of ways to support these dimensions in your life to help you promote your own Total Wellbeing.

**Total Wellbeing**
Focus on Awareness

Keep an eye out on MINES & Associates in 2015 as we explore the awareness landscape. From financial planning to social influence, physical wellness to emotional health, all aspects of your life are connected and can affect your wellbeing. Let us help you stay on top of this constantly shifting world and make your wellbeing easier to focus on than ever before.

**Share**
Your Own Perspective

In the spirit of awareness in 2015 we want to hear from you. We want to know about the things you do to support your own happiness and wellbeing. So please share your stories, whether they are success stories or struggles you have faced. We will be featuring some of your wellbeing stories in our publications to inspire and let others know that they are not alone.

Email your wellbeing story to:
communications@minesandassociates.com

**Wellness Webinars**
Support from the experts

Join our partner, Brown Richards, for any of their monthly webinars. 2015 will cover great new topics ranging from organizing your life, facts about Alzheimer’s, family cultivation, eating right, and much more! Visit our website to learn more, or register for upcoming events at www.minesandassociates.com/webinar.

Is there a topic you’d like to see us explore? We’d love to hear from you.
Shoot us an e-mail at communications@minesandassociates.com and let us know what you’d like to see.
Stress on the Job: How to Cope

You didn’t need more stress at work, but odds are you have it anyway. Take heart, though. The tools for coping with stress lie within each of us, experts say.

Just how much stress do American workers face? Integra Realty Resources, a national real estate appraisal firm, commissioned a study on the subject. Integra found ample anxiety and poor relationships on the job. And the survey found workers coping in unhealthy ways: skipping lunch to work, gulping coffee for energy, yelling at co-workers, and calling in sick.

“Stress is chemical. Stress is hormonal,” says psychiatrist Murali Krishna, M.D., of Oklahoma City. “If you don’t learn to cope, it will eat you alive.”

The costs are high

According to the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Harvard University, job stress costs employers about $2 billion a year in absenteeism, poor performance, tardiness, and worker compensation claims. Stress is linked to such medical conditions as high blood pressure, chronic pain, and allergies.

How can you fight stress? Self-empowerment and communication are keys, along with relaxation skills such as meditation or yoga.

At the University of Missouri in Columbia, researchers found most American workers mask their emotions (including positive feelings) and expect co-workers to do the same.

“There’s not enough communication in the workplace,” says Missouri communication professor Michael Kramer, Ph.D., one of the researchers. “Nobody is teaching employees how to deal with emotions in the right way.”

Don’t take stress to heart

Michael McIntyre, Ph.D., a University of Tennessee industrial psychology professor, says those who deal best with stress learn to shrug off turmoil. “A lot of people get stress thrown at them, but not everyone reacts to it in the same way,” he says. “A healthy employee may experience a provocation or mistreatment, but they think it through: ‘I don’t like that this happened to me, but it wasn’t directed at me personally. The world isn’t out to get me.’”

How to tame stress with success

• Eat right. Instead of coffee, drink water or juice. Instead of junk food, snack on fruits and vegetables.
• Exercise at least three times a week. Pressed for time? Focus on a workout that gets your heart rate up (racquetball, aerobics, or a long walk).
• Connect with others. A social network revives you and keeps you on an even keel. Seek out supportive co-workers and avoid “stress carriers.”
  • Assert yourself. Speak up about petty annoyances while respecting others’ feelings.
  • Relax and rest. Get a good night’s sleep. Learn relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga. Take “mini-relaxation breaks” during the day.
  • Reduce clutter. Simplify your work area to offer physical and mental space. Schedule time for managing paperwork. Try to reduce the noise level.
  • Take a media break. The artificial stimulants of the Web, TV, and radio often obscure your true emotions, thoughts, and hopes.
  • Go for a walk. A measured stroll can do wonders for stress levels as you focus on your movements.
Responding to a Changing Workplace

In a changing workplace, where downsizing and re-engineering are facts of life, you need to hold yourself accountable for your own job performance, morale, attitude, and behavior.

“You need to take initiative to ensure that you will prosper when changes come to your department and the expectations aren’t as clear as they once were,” says Rosemary T. Salmon, coauthor of The Mid-Career Tune-Up. “And instead of waiting for your boss or the company to issue new guidelines, take the opportunity to initiate some personal action plans, so you can actively respond to recent developments.”

“You may need to interact more with others who can help you with the resources you need and you may need to keep others informed about new and unexpected obstacles or bottlenecks”

Strategies for success

Keep these strategies in mind when your company changes directions, objectives, or structure. They are proactive responses to managing your own performance and morale.

• Do your best to meet cost, time, quality, and quantity requirements. “Even as things around you change, keep your work moving along at a steady, predictable pace,” says Ms. Salmon. “You may need to interact more with others who can help you with the resources you need and you may need to keep others informed about new and unexpected obstacles or bottlenecks.”

• Adjust to changing priorities. You should be able to shift from tasks that are comfortable, habitual, and easy to new activities that will help you meet new priorities. “It may be difficult for you to let go of routine actions that you’ve been doing for a long time,” says Ms. Salmon. “But the need to change your approach to accommodate new priorities is essential.”

• Take the initiative in developing creative solutions to problems, and do what’s necessary to get the job done. Decide which is the better option -- a thoughtful, analytical, data-based approach that leads to informed and tested conclusions; or an intuitive, creative, gut-feeling approach based on brainstorming and other imaginative techniques.

• Accept responsibility for your work and for the consequences of your efforts. Accountability is an important concept for employers. Companies and their managers are looking for people willing to accept responsibility for whatever happens, even if the results aren't as positive as they may have been in the past. “In times of rapid, unpredictable change, doing the best you can is a fair expectation,” says Ms. Salmon. “Plus, accepting responsibility when things fall short of your manager’s expectations or your own personal standards is the first step in learning how to make things better”

• Set high performance standards for yourself. You know what you’re capable of doing, and you know how much time and energy you’re willing to invest in your changing job duties. Once you have defined your own performance expectations and made certain they meet at least the minimum required by your company at this time, you should be able to proceed with confidence.

• Maintain a high level of enthusiasm and an optimistic perspective about changes in responsibilities and directions. “Even if you feel that what your company has done or is doing isn’t in your best interest, you need to keep your end of the bargain by working as conscientiously and efficiently as possible,” says Ms. Salmon.

• Do your best to foster cooperation and teamwork with others. “Everyone is probably in the same situation, trying to figure out how things are going to develop and stabilize,” she says. “Some of your colleagues may have figured out approaches that can help you, and some of them may benefit from your ideas.”
Communicate for Success

However you try to climb the ladder of success, communication will help boost you to the top.

“People do business with people they know, like, and trust, and communication provides the data that creates rapport,” says Susan RoAne, author of “What Do I Say Next? Talking Your Way to Business and Social Success.” “Nobody achieves success alone. You need to reach out to others and develop a network of people and resources.”

Ms. RoAne suggests these pathways to increasing your communication skills.

Learn to network

Befriend people in different departments within your company by introducing yourself to them and by inviting a different co-worker to lunch each week. Meet new people in your community by joining associations, getting involved in community projects, and attending social gatherings.

Make the most of small talk

“The best mode of communication is plain old conversation. The goal isn’t to wow people with brilliant commentary; it’s to make them comfortable with us. Finding commonality via conversation is how to do that,” says Ms. RoAne.

Ask about people's hobbies, vacations, pets, and family. Find out where they’re from; you may know people in their hometowns. The object is to find something in common.

Initiate

“Good things don’t come to those who wait; they come to those who initiate,” says Ms. RoAne.

If you’re shy at social gatherings, introduce yourself to people and make them feel comfortable. There are two parts to mingling -- being interesting and being interested.
Be interesting

It helps to be interesting, whether you’re talking to one person or giving a speech to a group. Boredom never attracts anyone.

Ms. RoAne suggests you “read your hometown newspaper daily, as well as a national paper. And know what’s going on in your industry and your clients’ companies.”

Give your opinions about something by starting with, “I think,” “It seems to me that...” or “My opinion is” so you don’t sound dogmatic.

Also, in your conversations, include short personal stories about your own interesting experiences so people can get to know you better.

Be interested

Listen, listen, listen. Most people want someone to listen to them and make them feel important. Listening demonstrates your respect and admiration.

Show your interest by responding to what’s being said with questions such as “How did you accomplish...?” or “What was most exciting about...?”


Smile

A smile is the universal body language of acceptance. People don’t like to feel rejected, and a genuine smile makes them feel at ease. Add some enthusiasm, and you’ll create a spark of positive energy that will be hard to resist.

Keep in touch

Greeting cards, personal notes, and short e-mail messages can keep your name in the minds of those you’ve met. If you keep in touch at least four times a year, you’ll be doing better than most. Then, when the need arises, you’ll have a network of resources to give you information, guidance, and encouragement.

“Listen, listen, listen. Most people want someone to listen to them and make them feel important. Listening demonstrates your respect and admiration.”
Light Right -- You’ll Feel Better

To most of us, lighting means flipping a switch up or down. There’s not much to think about.

But for decades, scientists have been studying light’s effects on our health. They’ve found light involves much more than a switch. Light can improve our health and mood. But the wrong kind in the wrong place can harm us.

At home

One proven effect of light is its influence on what doctors call the “sleep/wake cycle.”

“Light resets how the brain produces hormones that control our sleep/wake cycle,” says Alan Hedge, Ph.D., director of Cornell University’s Human Factors and Ergonomics program.

You can correct some sleep disorders with exposure to light. For instance, if you’re waking up in the middle of the night, avoid bright light in the morning and place yourself in darkness an hour before bedtime. Over time, this should correct your sleep problem.

Too much exposure to sunlight can cause sunburn and skin cancer. But moderate exposure allows the body to convert a substance in your skin to vitamin D, which is essential for calcium absorption.

“Ultraviolet rays from the sun also kill dust mites and bacteria,” Dr. Hedge says. “Letting sunlight flow into a room will help keep that room germ-free. In some countries, people take their bedding outside during the day so sunlight will kill dust mites.”

At work

Most workplaces have ceiling fixtures with bright fluorescent bulbs. But designers rarely consider the nature of our jobs. If they did, workspaces might use desk lamps, dimmers, or light aimed at specific points.

Many companies assume brightly lit workspaces are best, but that isn’t true. “Research shows that bright lights in buildings make workers lethargic at the end of the day,” Dr. Hedge says. “This lethargy is the brain’s way of saying, ‘You’ve had so much stimulation today. Close your eyes and relax.’”
Light striking a computer screen will create glare that can cause headaches. So can overhead fluorescent lights.

In fluorescent fixtures, the light turns on and off every time voltage passes through the bulbs. Normally, this flicker is so quick it's invisible. As the bulbs age, the flicker slows and becomes visible.

"If you are sensitive to the flicker, you will experience headaches," says Dr. Hedge, maybe even migraines. "And if the flicker from your computer screen and overhead light are out of sync, you will also experience headache and eye strain."

**In later years**

Age brings new needs. "After age 40, the eye becomes more opaque, so it is harder for light to get through," Dr. Hedge says. "We need more light to have the same visibility we had in our teens." He has these suggestions for older adults:

- Areas such as stairways and walkways should be well lit to avoid slips and falls.
- Older adults are more sensitive to glare, so bright lighting on glassy bathroom and kitchen surfaces may cloud their vision.
- Be wary of blue. Wavelengths of light appear as different colors. Long wavelengths look red; short ones look blue (though this is hard for our eyes to see). Blue light scatters in aging eyes. "If you are in a room filled with blue light, your vision will become hazy," says Dr. Hedge.

**Is sunlight best?**

Full-spectrum light bulbs claim to mimic daylight. Can this be true?

"No," says indoor-environment researcher Jennifer Veitch, Ph.D., at the Institute for Research in Construction of Ontario, Canada. "Full-spectrum lamps don't look like daylight. They provide light but not daylight."

"Daylight changes in intensity, color, and location throughout the day and month," she adds. "These lights are static. They are not a good imitation."

Dr. Veitch says there is no evidence that daylight is better than artificial light. "There are some benefits and some unhealthy aspects to exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun. We need a balance. For most of us, most of the time, a balance between sunlight and indoor lighting works best."
Helping Employees of the Sandwich Generation

The “Sandwich Generation” is comprised of working adults; typically in their 30s, 40s, and 50s; who are sandwiched between raising children and caring for aging parents. These individuals often feel overwhelmed by these two demands, and find it difficult to balance being a caregiver, a parent, and an employee.

Today, more than two-thirds of women with children under the age of 18 are in the workforce, and up to one-third of workers in the U.S. are caregivers for older relatives. The Sandwich Generation is growing, so it is important for employers to pay attention and find ways they can help.

Employees of the Sandwich Generation are typically concerned about the following things:

- Finding good child care providers, home health care services, retirement homes, and other child and elder care services.
- Having alternative work schedules that allow them to telecommute or leave work when needed to deal with family issues.
- Finding ways to ease health problems and stress caused by burnout.
- Trying to incorporate relaxation techniques and exercise into their lives.
- Discovering how to heal strained relationships with family members, and how to be better parents and caregivers.

Employers can step forward and give assistance to the Sandwich Generation; in turn, the company will have workers that can operate more effectively and productively because their outside-of-work needs are being met.

Employers can consider:

- Offering employees telecommuting, job-sharing, or other alternative work week options.
- Offering referrals to child care and elder care service providers.
- Giving crisis management services or how-to-handle-stress workshops.
- Teaching workers about EAP and related benefits that the organization offers.
- Training managers to be sensitive to workers’ needs, so that they may be creative in helping employees balance their family and their work.
Preventing Shoulder Pain and Injury

Your shoulder has the widest range of motion of any joint in your body. This flexibility allows you to do everything from throwing a baseball and swinging a tennis racket, to lifting and moving equipment or materials at work or at home.

But, the joint's structure makes your shoulder vulnerable to injury. “The shoulder is inherently unstable due to its bony structure,” says Christopher DiPasquale, M.S., P.T., a physical therapist with Performance Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine in Colchester, CT. “It’s like a golf ball on a tee, with the rounded end of the upper-arm bone moving within the end of the collarbone. This allows a great deal of motion at the expense of structural robustness, since a number of muscles that go across the shoulder joint -- including the rotator cuff -- are subject to pinching or tearing over time.”

Age, strain, or overuse (in the case of rotator-cuff tears) can combine with the shoulder’s unstable structure to cause injuries, necessitating physical therapy or surgery.

Taking care

The following tips will help you prevent shoulder pain or injury and maintain a full range of arm motion:

- Adjust your posture. According to Mr. DiPasquale, irregular posture is the root of most shoulder problems. “We live and work in a society in which we spend a large amount of time sitting at a desk or driving a car,” he says. “These activities make our muscles tight and shoulders rounded, restricting arm motion.” With the shoulder’s vulnerable muscles misaligned, lifting something or throwing a ball can cause injury. To avoid this, Mr. DiPasquale suggests practicing “postural awareness,” which involves strengthening your shoulder-blade muscles with exercise and standing and sitting up straight.

- Stretch and strengthen your shoulder. Stretching and strengthening exercises are the keys to preventing shoulder pain and injury. “You can do a few repetitions of each a few times a day to loosen tight muscles, always staying aware of your posture.” If you plan to begin a sport that involves intense shoulder motion, such as tennis or baseball, Mr. DiPasquale recommends doing an exercise program that begins with shoulder stretches and shoulder-blade pinches, which involve repetition of shoulder-blade squeezes. Later, add weight lifting to increase intensity.

- See a physician if you are experiencing any shoulder pain. Mr. DiPasquale recommends seeking help sooner rather than later. “A physician will consider your medical history and perform a thorough evaluation to identify the shoulder problem and design a treatment plan for you,” he says. The physician may refer you to a physical therapist for continued treatment.
A note to Supervisors...

From time to time, situations arise when a supervisor is not sure how to respond to a particular behavior. The Employee Assistance Program is available on a 24/7 basis for consultation on issues such as: referring an employee to the EAP, how best to respond to and manage difficult behavior in the workplace, and whether training or some other form of group intervention (such as an organizational intervention or a conflict resolution) may be helpful for a particular situation. The EAP can serve as an ally to anyone who is working with a troubled employee.

- 24/7 supervisor consultation regarding problems in the workplace
- Assessment of behavioral risk on the job
- Return-to-Duty conferences
- Advisory services in writing, revising, and implementing policies
- Supervisor and Manager training
- Unlimited formal Work Performance Referrals
- Coaching for management and leadership skills
- Conflict resolution for supervisor-employee problems

MINES believes that employees are an organization’s most valuable resource. Your EAP is always available to provide you and your employees with support.

The MINES Team