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Managing Change and Beyond...

tapasya

AGRICULTURE



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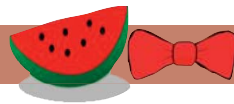
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Balancing is a fine art. It requires all elements or objects to be arranged in a way that facilitates overall harmony. It is true for life as well. And with work eating into most of our time, work life balance becomes essential to maintain harmony in our lives, relationships and finally society at large.

The last two decades India has witnessed unprecedented changes from a socio-economic and a cultural perspective. As our economy liberalized, growth became the driving force creating jobs and opportunities, fueling ambition and desires. Companies are expanding, the mood is mostly buoyant. People take up jobs, change jobs, plan their professional careers and work hard to please. Sometimes it is the individual who is driven and other times the corporate culture pushes employees to meet targets and deliver. Whichever way you look at it mostly it is a high pressure environment that demands results. There is no place for laxity.

In this new world striving towards 'corporate excellence', the employee needs to continuously explore impossible targets, and design tasks and activities around them quite unlike the predictable 'top down task orientation' of a corporate job in the past. This makes life more complicated with each passing day for every employee, decreasing the predictability and certainty of success and outcomes, thus forcing the new age employee to strive harder towards success. Further Blackberrys, mobile phones and email bring work and other corporate activities home, slowly pervading individual lives and blurring the professional and private space. Urban lifestyles, travel time and deteriorating social infrastructure compound the problem. All this slowly begins to take a toll.

We are all aware that the levels of stress and 'burn outs' are on a historic all time high in this new subculture that has emerged. Though each passing generation is more prepared and better equipped to deal with this new stress, the onslaught of expectations and newer demands keep adding up, outstripping the individual's

Work-Life Balance - A Programmed Approach To 'Employee Wellness'

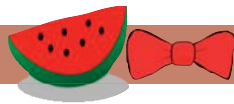
Amar Kumar



Amar Kumar is a well known Traditional Reiki Master Teacher (highest attainable level-equivalent to Grand Master) and is a registered Medical Practitioner with Indian Board of Alternative Medicine. Reiki Kendra, one of the oldest Government recognized Reiki Centers in the country, was set up by him in Kolkata in 1998. Although based out of Kolkata he has been practicing and teaching Reiki for the last several years both in different parts of the country and abroad. Apart from Reiki he is also exposed to other areas of alternate therapies, such as Yoga, Meditation, Pranik Healing, Art of Living, Fire Walking, Past Life Regression, Five Tibetan Rites, Nadi Pran Release amongst others.

Meditation techniques developed by him, although very simple to follow is very intense and has been very popular. A Mech. Engineer (B.I.T. Ranchi) and MBA (XLRI - Jamshedpur), he opted to pursue Reiki on full time basis after resigning from the post of Senior Vice President in BK Birla group. He has fond memories of his role as Training Manager in Dunlop when it was a multinational co. and subsequently as Co-ordinator of HRD movement in B.K. Birla group of companies and he feels life has again given him an opportunity to train people to live a happy and healthy life with Reiki. Because of his corporate background Amar Kumar understands the stress of the modern day workplace and has conducted numerous workshops for training executives in techniques of Reiki, yoga, meditation, pranayam, music therapy for relaxation, etc in companies like TCS, Tata Steel, NHPC, Gloster Jute Mills, etc. His services are frequently sought by Rotary Club, Dignity Foundation Sri Aurobindo Institute of Culture, Kolkata ATTN Educational Institution Pvt. Ltd., etc.

His students and client base come from diverse countries. Amar Kumar has been very active in creating awareness about Reiki through his lectures on various platforms and has a desire to leave behind an Institution of Reiki professionals to promote it in its original form.



capability to handle this constant change.

It is only natural for us to try and deal with the built up stress in our own way, and most people use a combination of both modern and ancient techniques. Some prefer to engage in retail therapy by splurging on shopping, others use the gym, or play sports or indoor games. The health route is gaining popularity with many taking to pursue Reiki, yoga and meditation. For others it would be music, vacations and weekend getaways, time spent with friends and family. In fact nowadays mindless hours in front of the television is also a popular choice.

Importantly while some of the above mentioned stress busters address the mind directly, others such as sports, reiki or yoga have a holistic positive influence on the individual. What I want to attempt in this article going forward is to explore the feasibility of a 'Program Managed Approach' for any organization towards a healthier, more productive and driven employee base by focusing on their Overall Wellness.

Human Resources today is an established and empowered line function in most corporate setups today. It has evolved from a labour management or payroll management system to an organizational steward to the employee or the custodian of the most valuable and important asset to the top management.

Work-Life Balance as a philosophy is being attempted across organizations to help the social infrastructure which the HR can create around the employee that ultimately helps him cope with the stress, heal himself and further create a sense of belonging to the organization. There are two observations that I would make here. The first is recognizing the correlation between Work-Life Balance and Employee Wellness. The second is that could there be a singular answer to Corporate HR's dilemma to program managing employee wellness to ultimately deliver the Motivated Employee as



Creating Reiki awareness at World Confluence

an Asset back to the organization?

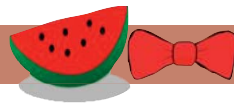
However, for the HR to achieve program success it would need leadership support, high performance wellness teams/services and effective communication strategies internal to the organization, wellness incentives tied to benefits, outcome monitoring and most importantly - A Structured Wellness Program.

I have had the opportunity to work in the corporate world as Senior Management across companies for many years and I have also been actively practicing Reiki, Yoga, Meditation, etc. for more than 15 years. Having observed both sides closely I realise that it is absolutely imperative for companies to nurture their employees to create a positive work environment that will ultimately benefit both sides. The good news is that this has now become the success mantra across many organizations already.

In fact I would argue to go one step ahead and translate this into an organizational culture. Wellness programmes should be a regular feature embedded in the overall HR policy of the company. One-off training sessions have limited benefit. It should be consistent, held at fixed intervals for maximum mileage. For those who are sceptic I suggest try it out with a handful of senior executives chosen to go through a wellness programme through a pilot training program across four quarters, and see the benefits for themselves. Once the top management is convinced through self experience, they could be instrumental in driving the change across the organization.

The training should not just be a skill being imparted over a two to three day program, but must engage the employee. Refresher courses, graduation parties with employees and their family, quarterly training on Reiki, Yoga, Meditation among other therapies, experience sharing should all be factored into the "Organization Wellness Strategy" before being rolled out to the employee.

The key success parameter of such



a program is the low entry barriers. It is difficult for individuals to pick up newer sports, have access to open spaces or quality gymnasiums. Sometimes the time demanded by the stress buster formula could be a strain on the over-stretched employee. But in case of a holistic wellness programme there are no preconditions. Irrespective of - one being overweight, introvert, thin, with no exposure to sports-Reiki, Yoga and Meditation can enable them to become Healthier and Happier.

These ancient 'Wellness' techniques have helped multitudes tide over chronic and non-chronic health and wellness issues. Among Reiki Kendra's thousands of trainees and a multitude of CXO level personnel who have participated in the corporate workshops, an overwhelming majority have seen a marked improvement in the quality of their lives. There are many encouraging examples, from getting rid of a nagging migraine that plagued them for years, or curing oneself of diabetes, blood pressure and other lifestyle diseases. There are countless experiences. These include overcoming chronic fatigue, orthopedic issues, conceiving a child, addressing memory loss and lack of concentration and dealing with insomnia or depression.

Though the examples above may not necessarily be life threatening immediately, our urban lifestyles continue to deplete our strength and happiness. The possibility of overcoming these obstacles through a Programmed Approach initiated by the HR team and driven by the top management of conscious companies is very real.

It is most common for exhausted employees to return home after a long day, tired and irritable, nursing aching backs and feelings of guilt about not being able to give one hundred percent to their families. All this can change. Companies with right policies can enable the same employee to come home after a hard day of work and still find the energy to play with his or her children, or read a book or go out with spouse or friends, to chat, to laugh, to listen.



Demonstrating Yoga

A healthier, happier employee is an invaluable asset for companies. It is a win-win situation for all. Companies can make the change, and the good news is more and more of them are willing to try it.

NOTE : Reiki Kendra has researched and identified such programs suited for Corporates which include Reiki, Yoga, meditation, etc. among other therapies. It has held several such successful workshops for top tier companies across India.

www.reikikendra.com

Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit. When one is free from physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the soul open.

– B.K.S. Iyengar