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CEOs Under the Knife

Massage, Anyone?

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Smart Strategies For Fast Growing Companies

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Ernst & Young names this year's winners

Massages in the Workplace

health

Employers find a way to help workers fight stress

Fact: An estimated 150 million work days are lost each year in the United States due to back pain and headaches, at an annual cost of \$55 billion in business productivity.

Fact: Sick leave and employee absence payments are due primarily to musculoskeletal disorders, mental and nervous complaints, carpal tunnel syndrome, chronic fatigue, and back and disc pain.

What does all this mean to your business? If you are a small business, you are likely to feel a greater impact from stress at the work site than if you are a large corporation. A client might not get his shipment; a sales meeting might be missed; and your phone calls might not be answered when your assistant is out due to a chronic headache or back pain.

In today's fast-paced world, our greatest challenge is to achieve balance between our business life and its related stresses and our personal life. Stress can accumulate over time and lead to chronic tension and anxiety. The feeling of being "stressed out" can cause illness and contributes to absenteeism in small businesses.

Moreover, people are working longer hours; the median is 50.8 hours per week. Women have full-time jobs at the office and the home. The more work one does, the more stress is encountered, making that employee prone to absenteeism.

The warning signs of too much stress are chronic pain, back and neck pain, nervousness, anxiety, insomnia and fatigue. These symptoms cause the body to go into distress. Furthermore, chronic stress impairs the immune system, allowing a common cold or more serious illness to attack the body. It leaves the body vulnerable as well, and inhibits recovery. Recovery time is costly to your business, and affects the morale of co-workers.

An Effective Solution

Today's small businesses have a simple and effective solution to battle the ailments listed above - regular massage therapy for employees at the workplace.

The focus of on-site massage therapy is to decrease absenteeism and to eliminate irritating ailments that drain a business and economy. Your company's future relies on your employees' productive and creative input. We all want to feel good. Massage in the workplace can decrease the time and expense of doctor visits. It also can assist with the common complaints and ailments that decrease production and contribute to employee absenteeism. Having your employees finish the day in a good state of mind will have them returning in a good state of mind. Like visiting a restaurant, your experience there will dictate how often you will frequent the establishment.

"It's about taking care of each other when you work. The results are positive because employees become more relaxed and the costs are low," said Lynn Gwin, human resource manager for Akron Child Guidance Center.

Here are some ideas for your company:

Offer 10-minute breaks throughout the day as a "stress buster." By incorporating on-site massages on a regular basis (weekly, monthly or quarterly), your organization can probably reduce sick day absences and save money in the long term. Moreover, enthusiasm energizes people and makes them learn and become more creative and better able to concentrate on their work, thereby decreasing absenteeism. An employee who is experiencing back pain will go to work rather than stay home, knowing a massage program is available.

Unlike a full body massage, chair massage does not require people to undress or be rubbed down with oil.



Chair massage focuses on the muscles affected by stress: the back, neck, shoulders, hips and hands.

Regular therapeutic massage can help restore one's balance by triggering a relaxation response. Where tension is present, the touch of massage will cause a release of muscle tension. Massage will cause a temporary relief of stress, eliminating those physical problems that interfere with work.

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