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Subject: **We're Under Stress!! Help for Managers – MG Assessments**
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Maximize People, Generate Performance, Achieve Results

Depending what statistics you read, as many as 80 percent of workers feel stress on the job. Add talk of falling housing prices, failing banks, threatened job security and an unsteady Wall Street and it's no wonder more and more of us feel anxious.

**We're under stress.
Here's help for managers who need to coach through the chaos of stress.**

Dear Christine,

Inside this issue:

- Is Your Workplace Stressed?
- Nine Tips: Ways to Change Your Organization to Prevent Job Stress
- Your Solution Toolbox: Stressing From Poor Job Fit? Try Profiles Performance Indicator™

Is Your Workplace Stressed?

I just had one of those whacky days. You know what I mean — the kind of day when everything that can possibly go wrong does.

Your co-worker bites off your head. You spend most of your work day fighting fires. Every one of your opinions seems to conflict with your superior's ideas. And on the way home you forget to stop for milk.

We all have these stress-filled days. The fact is even dream jobs have stress: responsibilities, deadlines and performance expectations.

Sometimes stress is good. *Eustress*, or good stress, motivates us and ensures that we get things done.

A stressful working environment on the other hand — one filled with distress including unreasonable expectations, poor job fit, employee conflict, layoffs or restructuring — can cause even the smallest problem to seem like a life-or-death event.

Add stress away from the job, such as disharmony at home or financial worries, and **coping becomes almost impossible.**

I learned from WebMD that stress can drastically affect health in many ways. Under stress, our bodies become more vulnerable to illnesses.

... Experts have linked stress to high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, heart attack and heart failure.

... Stress can make symptoms of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) worse.

... It may play a role in gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), peptic ulcer disease, and irritable bowel syndrome.

... And stress can make skin disorders such as acne or psoriasis worse.

According to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress.

According to AIS, stress on the job costs industry and business more than \$300 billion a year because of accidents, absenteeism, employee turnover, diminished productivity, medical/legal/insurance costs and workers' compensation awards.

In a University of North Carolina study, 50 percent of employees reported that they achieved less while fuming about a negative atmosphere or situation they faced.

... 20 percent said they do not do their best work while under nonstop stress

... 46 percent thought about quitting their jobs because of stress, and

... 12 percent resigned.

This is why sociologists often call stress America's number one health problem.

Nine Tips: Ways to Change Your Organization to Prevent Job Stress

So what does this mean for managers? Undoubtedly, stress makes our jobs more difficult. Here's the dilemma:

How can we coach through the chaos of stress and get the work done without driving away our best workers?

To coach others through stress, you need specific information that tells you what's going on with each of your employees. In other words, you must know where workers need help and how best to offer that help before stress gets so bad that half your workers throw their hands in the air and think about quitting. You will have a much more difficult time coaching stressed workers or teams when tardiness, absenteeism, conflict and poor productivity symptoms are already apparent.

Now here are some specific ideas to move you along:

1. **Know yourself.** Make sure your leadership or lack thereof is not creating the problem. Are you communicating clearly? Are you making job requirements understandable? Have you kept your employees abreast of changes they need to know about?
2. **Enhance job fit through assessments.** Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation and opportunities for workers to use their skills. Assessments will show you whether an employee has the skills, motivation, interest and other competencies to do the job he is in. If they are lacking, a development plan is in order, or you might consider giving him a new position he fits better.
3. **Provide focused training.** There are many techniques that can reduce the short-term affects of stress and prepare employees to become more stress resilient in the future. Train employees to cope with both acute and chronic stress.
4. **Clearly define expectations and responsibilities.** Just as a high jumper must clearly understand and see the height of the bar in order to select the right effort and approach to jump over the bar, employees must have clear expectations to best achieve those expectations.
5. **If it involves them, involve them.** Give employees opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs. This will reduce stress while enhancing job commitment and engagement.
6. **Provide adequate feedback.** Telling employees how well they are performing is one of the easiest workplace stress reducers. At least once per day, provide positive feedback. When feedback is constructive, keep the 5 to 1 ratio in mind; over time, give 5 positive message for every constructive message.
7. **Foster work life balance.** Encourage employees to strive for balance in their lives – especially those who seem overly focused on work. Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.
8. **Direct workers to take short breaks throughout the day.** Remind them in a humorous way if your culture permits it. – i.e. over a public address system.
9. **Suggest therapy or counseling if stress is not work related.** You should not attempt counseling unless the stress you see is work-related and within your area of expertise.

Your Solution Toolbox: Stressing from Poor Job Fit? Try Profiles Performance Indicator™

If you are interested in learning more about this complete tool that can help you build successful teams for your organization, give me a call or send me an e-mail. I'll happily show you what Profiles' Performance Indicator™ can do for you and your organization.

One of the major causes of workplace stress is **poor job fit** between an employee's normal style preference and his/her job requirements. For instance, if an employee is normally very quiet, prefers solitary personal activities, and likes to ponder important decisions, putting that person in a high touch, highly communicative or interactive role will cause extensive stress simply due to the job role. Overtime, this will lead to burnout and possibly health problems.

The solution, make sure the job fits the person using the Profiles Performance Indicator™

With a PPI assessment, a 15-minute test, you can measure behavioral factors that affect an employee's success.

Often used during the hiring process, the Profiles Performance Indicator™ assessment helps determine whether a candidate will fit a company's core values. (You can't determine cultural fit from an interview, nor can you develop it, and yet poor fit tops reasons for employee failure.)

When you use a PPI assessment, you will receive two reports: one for a manager and one for a worker.

The PPI coaching report for managers:

- 1) Gives suggestions for motivating an employee.
- 2) Will tell you whether an employee is internally motivated or externally driven.
- 3) Notes behavioral tendencies in critical, job-related competencies.
- 4) Gives an employee's response to job stress, frustration and conflict.

The PPI report that goes to the worker:

- 1) Gives feedback about performance and ideas for professional growth.
- 2) Aids the employee in understanding his on-the-job attitudes and behaviors.
- 3) Offers a guide for better communication and cooperation with co-workers.

PPI works best before performance and communication fails. So don't delay. To learn more about the Profiles Performance Indicator™, give me a call or send me an e-mail. I'd love to discuss more effective ways you can stay in touch with your employees.

Also, Provide Targeted Training

With heavy workloads, rising expectations, and increasing life complexity, your employee's ability to manage their attitude and stress, and maintain emotional control under difficult conditions is becoming one of the most, if not THE most important skill for life and business.

We offer an intensive experiential workshop where participants will learn 2 innovative learning models, 31 applicable skills, and over 25 techniques. With 4 assessments, 13 practical job aids, 6 exercises, 2 case studies, and 4 mastery application activities, participants will learn how to overcome stress in the moment and plan for chronic stress reduction. Call us today to learn more!

Do You Want These Benefits?

Creating a healthy workplace where employees work together productively takes commitment and skill. It takes creating a peaceful environment of healthy interaction. And it takes tapping into what people really care about – their lives. Do this effectively and you will reduce stress and reap the following positive benefits:

- Healthier employees
- Decreased absenteeism and tardiness
- Fewer on-the-job injuries
- Fewer interpersonal conflicts
- Reduced turnover
- More productivity
- Better workplace relationships
- Free-flowing communication
- Fewer errors
- Infectious good attitudes

MG Assessments has several new features that will make our site more informative and interactive.

[See my blog](#): Updated regularly will focus on the hottest Human Resource Issues.

[Ask an Expert](#): Submit any question and one of our human resource experts will answer it.

[Submit a Story](#): Do you have an outrageous story to share about your boss? Were you asked to do something outrageous at work? Has there been any time where you did something for work, but did not understand why you were doing it? We are looking for outrageous or humorous (and true) stories.

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