

Taking control and avoid burnout

My view has always been that on the whole the industry does not develop its people as well as it should. Now one of the leaders in the provision of training services to the recruitment industry in Australia, The Recruitment Training Company was set up to assist recruitment organisations in developing their talent in the hope of avoiding the high consultant burnout which we experience.

In 2004 I wrote *The Art of Recruitment* I wanted a resource to assist recruiters on a day-to-day basis because I knew that on the whole business owners and managers won't spend the time or money developing their people in the same way other industries do. They just accept the high turnover rates that we have and continue to bring new blood in. I have often wondered about the opportunity cost of high consultant turnover when a little thought into skill development may have been the answer. Maybe it's up to us as individuals to avoid burnout if we want a long term recruitment career.

Avoiding Burn out

Ultimately we are all individually responsible for our health and well being and therefore it is up to you as an individual to avoid burnout.

I have had periods of burn out during my recruitment career that's for sure. They normally occurred when I lost balance in my life and it became all work and no play or when I hadn't had a holiday for a long period of time. I have always advocated taking a break every three months – even if it's only a long weekend to re-charge and relax.

Let's face it, from time to time you will feel down, not happy or even depressed. Even the most positive and optimistic people sometimes feel less than 100%. I have often said that in our business you can't afford to have a bad day. Too much stress for too long and you suffer burnout.

Stress is used as a blanket term to describe the pressures and tensions you suffer as a result of a hectic lifestyle. We all suffer from it

from time to time. If, like me you are a Virgo, it will always be the monkey on your back unless you learn and continually practice the skills involved in dealing with it.

Stress can take many forms, but the important thing is not to let it build up. Stress is caused by how you deal with external factors. For some people, it only takes one thing to go wrong to make them stressed, for others it takes a whole month of things going wrong to bring them to the boil!

When you start to feel stressed, take a break from whatever you are doing and focus on something or some place that brings you great enjoyment. Try this exercise to distress.

1. **Gentle breathing** (1 minute). Sit or stand as straight as you can, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Try to let thoughts pass by, rather than dwelling on them.
2. **Visualise** (3 minutes). Try and recall a place or situation where you felt absolutely contented and relaxed. Let yourself become immersed in the moment.
3. **Let go** (1 minute). Once your mind and body are completely relaxed, let go of your stress. Visualise a tunnel of blue light immersing you from the head and pouring through your body. Picture it washing your stress away.
4. **Stretch** (1 minute). Keep your eyes closed and breathe in deeply. Enjoy the feeling of relaxation and rest. Now open your eyes.

Build your immunity

Improving your health will help increase your ability to deal with stress and avoid burnout. When you are under too much pressure, you can start to feel tired and overwhelmed. You can avoid the ill effects by keeping your mind and body in balance.

1. **Make time to relax** and take regular breaks.
2. **Get regular exercise** – we all know the benefits of exercise but if you find it difficult to fit it in, walk everywhere you can. You'll be amazed at how much better you feel.

3. **Take up a hobby** – pick something that you really enjoy and only do it when you feel like it.
4. **Plan a day off** – make time for a day of indulgence. Sleep late; go to the beach or movies; eat out – whatever takes your fancy.
5. **Diet** – make sure that you eat a balanced diet most of the time. We all know the benefits of eating well, it's just that sometimes we need to be reminded of them!

Our jobs are some of the most stressful around and add to that our lifestyle in this fast paced and constantly changing time. We don't deal with a product that we know will do what it is supposed to do; we deal with people who change their minds and sometimes don't do the right thing. Stress is caused by how we deal with the situations that arise everyday. You choose your reaction to situations so you can choose to get stressed about stuff or not. By maintaining balance and learning the skills required to deal with stress on a day to day basis, you may be able to avoid 'burnout' over the longer term. ■



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