

CASE STUDY / FEATURE

Taking the Stress Out of Work

Profit margins, expansion and new ideas are not the only items high on the business agenda in today's workplace; the wellbeing and health of employees is now recognised as an important and worthwhile investment.

It's hardly surprising given that government research estimate that some five million workers in the UK are thought to suffer from high levels of work-related stress.

In fact, work-related stress is the second biggest cause of employee sickness absence days in the UK, and is recognised as a major cost for business. Anxiety and stress are responsible for an estimated 10.5 million lost working days per year in Britain and lost days costs the economy billions every year.*

A rapidly growing trend to help employees deal effectively with work-place stress and achieve work-life balance is the use of health and wellbeing coaching programmes.

Rumana Zahn, acclaimed and award-winning naturopath, has done just this with the launch of a new and innovative programme designed to help improve the health and wellbeing of people in the workplace.

The programme, which includes a series of workshops, coaching and support, engages employees and helps them to become pro-active in their healthcare so that they can maintain and prevent future illnesses.

Rumana explained: "Stress is the modern-day plague of the workplace. As we lead increasingly busier and more hectic lives we are more susceptible to the debilitating effects of stress. This can lead to a host of problems for business including increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, and low staff morale and motivation.

“There are a number of factors that can affect an employee’s health, including work-life balance, recurring health problems and stress. The programme aims to help employees identify and manage these issues.”

The programme is divided into six sections and the topics include: nutrition, detoxification, structure, emotional health, mind and thinking and life. Other topics are available and can be selected according to the needs of the organisation.

Case studies

E-business development agency, The North East Regional Portal, recently invested in the programme for its team of 10. Chief Executive Norma Foster explained: “We were very keen to participate in the Wellbeing at Work programme. As a very busy and professional organisation striving to lead the way in e-business, we set ourselves high standards and therefore commitment is paramount.

“However, there is a huge difference between the buzz people enjoy from doing a busy job and a workforce simply daunted and unable to cope with strains forced upon them. I wanted to ensure that the team could access information and support to maintain their wellbeing and so remain happy and productive – after all a burnt out workforce is an unproductive workforce and it is in no-one’s interests to find themselves in that situation.

“Since Rumana delivered the programme, productivity has soared and, although absenteeism wasn’t an issue, sickness has fallen and everyone’s feeling great!”

Some of the team share their experiences:

Maria Humphreys, Project Manager

The programme couldn’t have come at a better time for me. During the course of the programme my dad had a stroke and normally stress of this nature is very difficult to cope with.

Instead, I managed very well through eating healthily and avoiding quick fixes like alcohol and coffee. I'm grateful to Rumana for reminding me that I am in control of what I consume, and there is no doubt in my mind that the last few months would have been a lot harder to deal with if I had been the 'old me'.

I enjoyed the benefits of changing diet straight away. I felt less irritable, more alert and focused and had lots more energy and motivation. At the start of the programme I rated my energy levels at 40%. Now I'm at 70% and still climbing!

Still, the biggest difference for me is dramatically reducing the amount of alcohol I drink! I didn't drink that much anyway – maybe a couple of glasses of wine a week and the odd big night out – but now I can enjoy a night out with friends (who *are* drinking) and not feel obliged to be drunk too. I have gained back so much more time through not feeling sluggish or hung-over the day after a night out. I'll never say never but it's nice to feel 100% in control!

Pascal Fintoni, Head of Business

I was feeling tired and run down at the beginning of the year and felt unwell for long periods of time. Although I coped with work well, I always felt that I could do with an energy boost. After consulting with Rumana I discovered that certain foods may be contributing and I took steps to reducing a number of foods, including wheat and dairy, from my diet. Almost immediately I felt the effects; I couldn't believe that something so simple could have such profound results! Now, some months later, my energy levels are at 100% and I'm able to tackle my workload and responsibilities head-on.

The Wellbeing at Work programme was revealing in many ways; I often used to skip meals and snack on junk food, but Rumana taught us how important diet and nutrition is, particularly with wellbeing. She showed us how some really simple decisions can result in lifelong changes.

Sidsel McKeith, Operations Manager

The programme has been inspirational and has changed my whole approach, not just towards healthy eating, but towards adopting more holistic approach to healthy living.

It has given me much greater awareness of the choices I can make to maintain good health through appreciating the importance of not just a nutritious and wholesome diet, but also paying attention to posture, exercise, detoxification and emotional resilience as part of the whole mix. Realising that it's not a chore to burden myself with, but more a positive decision to take constructive action has been life-changing and I have been hugely motivated by Rumana's teachings.

Liz Johnson, Project Support

I have been plagued with migraines since I was a teenager and have often had to resort to lying in darkened rooms for days in agony. Not even prescription painkillers could reach it at times, and I was at my wits end trying to predict the headaches and reduce the pain. The wellbeing at work programme took a completely holistic approach to health and Rumana explained how the food we eat and the chemicals that we unwittingly consume can be closely linked to migraines and other debilitating conditions. After consulting with Rumana, I kept a food diary and managed to identify the food and drink that trigger the attacks. Although I still do experience some migraines the frequency and intensity have reduced significantly – it's such a relief!

The programme has also has a great effect on other parts of my life – some things I didn't even realise. Problems like tiredness, which I'd put down to lack of sleep, really lay more with not eating the right things, and at the right times.

Now I'm so much more aware of what I eat and do, and how it will affect me. I now feel totally in control of what I put into my body and understand how to maintain my health and wellbeing.

To request a free Wellbeing at Work brochure call 0845 680 1418 or email info@rumanahealth.com

If you want to interview any of the case studies or Rumana Zahn, require photographs or want more information, please call Jennifer Robson at the North East Regional Portal on 0191 487 2002 or email Jennifer.robson@n-e-life.co.uk

*According to the Health and Safety Executive -
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.htm>

Notes to editors

Rumana Health is run by highly talented and respected naturopath Rumana Zahn. Her vision is to encourage individuals to take a pro-active and multi-disciplined approach to achieving the very best of health. ,

She aims to set high quality standards in the field of 'preventative' healthcare and for it to be highly regarded and respected, having equal standing alongside modern medicine.

Rumana runs her own health clinic and workshops for individuals and businesses, and has developed a new and innovative programme designed to help improve the health and wellbeing of your staff. The associated benefits could reap massive rewards for your business.

Employee benefits

- Better health and ways to manage health naturally.
- Clearer thinking.
- Less recurring illnesses.

Business benefits

- Improved staff performance and productivity.
- Less employee sickness and absence rates.
- Happier, healthier and motivated workforce.

The seminars and workshops can be delivered on a regular full day, half-day or bite-sized basis.

Visit www.rumanahealth.com