

Leveraging Sleep for Peak Performance

Well-rested workers make better decisions, are less stressed and more creative and innovative.

For the first time in history, people aren't deciding when to work, they're deciding when **not** to work. It's a shift with choices and implications that can either significantly impede or significantly improve human performance - and that's why employers are not only taking note, but taking action.

In a recent McKinsey survey of 196 business executives, 83 percent said organizations should do more to educate leaders about the importance of sleep.

When workers lose sleep, organizations lose productivity, and perhaps even a potential industry-leading competitive edge. After all, who knows what innovative idea might get blocked by brain fog? In fact, many a historic innovation has come to mind during dreamtime.

But it's not quite as simple as reminding or even incentivizing people to go to sleep. Because also for the first time in human history sleep must compete for its place in a world where we can work, shop, game, learn, socialize and consume entertainment 24/7 from bed. Employees and employers still expect they'll have to pull occasional all-nighters, but research says it backfires. A study last year showed that **employees who monitored their smart phones for business reasons after 9 p.m. were more tired and less engaged the next day at work.**

And while it's clear to everyone else which are the well-rested vs. unrested co-workers, the sleep-deprived themselves are in denial. They believe they are functioning 'just fine' with five or less hours a night, in a manner similar to the way the inebriated believe they're not impaired.

The ROI of Sleep Training

Insomnia averages \$3,500 a year per employee in added health care costs and lost productivity. Sleep training costs an average of \$300 per year per employee.

Companies with Pro-Sleep Policies & Programs

- Aetna • Apple • Bain & Co.
- Barclays • Ben & Jerry's
- Google • Huffington Post
- McKinsey • NASA • Nestle
- NY Times • Nike • P&G

Types of Sleep-Assistance

- Pay-for-Sleep
- Energy Napping Pods
- Sleep Screenings
- Sleep Education
- Meditation Classes
- Onsite Massage

Percent of Pro-Sleep Offerings

- 12% after-hours work policies
- 9% after-hours email policies
- 9% napping rooms
- 5% jet lag policies
- 3% sleep disorder screenings



Sleep Education Programs: 2 Case Studies

Sales Force of a Leading National Bed Retailer

Challenge

To help hundreds of employees across 270 stores nationwide to achieve good quality sleep on a regular basis, especially during the busy peak holiday sales; to provide employees with essential sleep education to pass on to customers to improve the nation's sleep.

Approach

Initial surveys of both employee and customer sleeping habits enabled the creation of a Sleep School Accreditation program for employees. Employees completed monthly modules via an instore e-learning platform to increase their knowledge and understanding of sleep regulation, optimum lifestyle, bedroom habits and sleep disorders. This knowledge was then used to improve their own sleeping habits, as well as their customers'.

Results

After 1 year of employee training:

- 51% Use training 'A lot' or 'Very Much' to improve their own personal sleeping habits
- 43% significant improvements in their sleep quality
- 28% 'Very good to Excellent' sleep (a 4-fold increase)
- 37% report better daytime energy
- 60% regularly share sleep knowledge with customers

Client Services Team at a 'Big 4' Consultancy

Challenge

Help the employees achieve the best possible sleep and recovery in limited amount of time available, enabling best daily performance despite:

- Not enough time for sleep
- No regular sleep hours with late nights and early starts
- Inability to switch off the mind
- Inability to sleep when travelling
- Waking up feeling unrefreshed and underperforming

Approach

The Sleep School's Professional app was used to survey all employees to understand sleep needs. Away day held to educate employees on how best to achieve good quality sleep in the face of high work demands and pressures. All employees provided with The Sleep School Professional app to allow continued practice and learning following the away day.

Results

Employee feedback on training content:

- 100% 'Extremely' or 'Very' useful
- 76% 'Extremely' or 'Very' relevant to their working life
- 76% 'Extremely' or 'Very' likely to use training at work.
- 82% 'Extremely' or 'Very' likely to recommend

Sources

Forbes: "The Companies that Teach their Employees How to Sleep;" Ceridian infographic: "Why Good Sleep Health Matters in the Workplace;" McKinsey: "The Organizational Cost of Insufficient Sleep: Sleep-Awareness Programs can Produce Better Leaders;" Fast Company: "Did you skip work because of poor quality sleep? You're not alone;" WorldSleepSurvey.com, AetnaSleep.com; TheSleepSchool.org: case studies.