



# Combating stress at the workplace

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**A major cause for work stress comes from outside the office – from the commute itself. Allowing people flexible office hours can help them avoid traffic and spend more time with their families. Here are a few simple steps that can help reduce stress at the workplace**

## **1. Empathize with your fellow employees as fellow human beings**

From the security guard to the CEO, each employee is still a human being. To make the company a pleasant place to work, it helps to remember and share each co-worker's personal joys, sorrows and worries, and lend a hand where possible. In my book, a great manager is one who does not sacrifice discipline or performance while still playing the role of guide, coach and friend to his team. The worst manager is the one who treats his team as slaves with no feelings.

## **2. Be flexible regarding the special needs of women employees**

The different social and personal necessities of female employees require different HR practices. Sometimes, a manager may need to reassure worrying parents. Pregnant women may need to be given less stressful work. New mothers may need an individualized ramp up period. The Indian context must always be respected and a gentler approach helps create highly loyal employees.

## **3. Allow flexible office hours so the employees can avoid traffic congestion on their commutes**

Ironically, a major cause for work stress comes from outside the office – from the commute itself. Allowing people flexible office hours can help them avoid traffic and spend more time with their families. A happy employee is a productive employee!

## **4. Allow recreational activities during office hours**

Get the employees to do something fun they would never think of doing otherwise. Without compromising on time with their families, the employees gain a sense of accomplishment and a spring in their step (particularly with the salsa class!)

## **5. State the company's goals in words that can become each employee's personal goals**

This is a subtle point, but powerful! For example, instead of saying, "The company wants to become the leader in this industry", try saying, "We will develop ourselves to become the best experts in this industry". The latter statement will inspire more people from day to day.

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