

STRESS SOLUTION TOOL

Corporate Case Study 3

Data indicate that 22% of group health insurance costs are stress related and in the neighborhood of \$308 billion dollars annually.¹

Stress is the most costly lifestyle factor in corporate America and was found to generate more than \$35 million in medical costs at Union Pacific Railroad based in Omaha, Nebraska.²

The U.S Bureau of Labor says that stress costs US businesses \$300 billion annually in lost productivity, absenteeism, accidents, employee turnover, and medical, legal and insurance fees, and workers' compensation awards.³

IBM

IBM, a Fortune 50 company installs the Stress Solutions Tool (SST) on the corporate intranet as an in-house stress control program. Prior to the program rollout, the site attracts 7,000 employees ready to reduce stress.

Situation

This Fortune 50 global company, like many others, realized that stress was a significant problem, a major burden in both economic and human terms for the company and employees alike. They had tried various stress management programs before, but with little success. Employees weren't utilizing the programs or they took too much time from work with minimal results. When they first saw the Stress Assessment Tool, the company realized that this program was different. The company has conducted three critical reviews for best-in-class online stress tools and repeatedly maintained their use of the SAT for four years. Additionally, when used as a portal to Human Resources, they realized that it could directly link employees to appropriate corporate benefits and programs.

STRESS SOLUTIONS TOOL

The company put the Stress Solutions Tool on their U.S. corporate intranet as part of a pilot program for executives. The executives had such a positive experience with it that they mentioned it to others in the organization. Word of mouth spread, and before they knew it, over 10% percent of their 70,000 employees with access to the corporate intranet had taken the assessment online. The SST answered a need the company knew they had, but didn't know how to resolve.

¹ Manning, M., et.al., "Occupational stress, social support, and the costs of health care." Academy of Management Journal, 1996, Vol. 39, No. 3, 738-750.

² Leutzinger, Goetzel, Richling, & Wades, 1993.

³ The U.S. Bureau of Labor, Government Report, 1996.

Employees recognized the opportunity to make positive changes in their lives. Through their SST Employee Interpretive Report, they were able to see the key items where they needed the most help. This drove them to get the help needed on their own by utilizing the appropriate EAP services to help them implement positive changes from their personal Stress Action Plan.

Resolution

When presented with an assessment tool that made sense, the organization and individuals chose to take action towards health. The company has settled on the Stress Solutions Tool as the tool for their stress control strategy and plans to keep it available for their employees indefinitely. The product was reviewed in Business Health magazine in 2001 for its innovation in linking IBM's HR services to the SST report so that the employee could access the proper resources immediately to begin making positive behavioral changes. The company has noticed that when employees experience challenging times at work such as the change IBM made in its retirement plans, that employee use of the SST product spikes, thus providing employees needed resources to cope with and transition through the ongoing changes in business cycles.

ROI

In the 1980s and 1990s large insurance companies studied the benefit of a variety of different stress management programs and found that they generally returned between a 5 and 10 to 1 ROI. With the rise in focus on consumerism and the need to have employees take increasing responsibility for managing and paying for more of their health care, the incremental return to the company for employee use of the SST should be ten times or more. Stress has been linked to 22-60% of health care costs. ⁴

The SST is based on a scientific model that accounts for 76% of stress symptoms based on the measurement of susceptibility, sources and symptoms of stress, all measured by the SST. The remaining 24% is attributable to physiological and genetic predisposition, and life history. This comprehensive integrated approach combined with the private, targeted employee report containing employee specific information and a robust action planning process, led the employee to make positive behavioral changes that improved their mental and physical health and the quality of their work/life situations.

⁴ Manning, M., et al., "Occupational stress, social support, and the costs of health care." *Academy of Management Journal*, 1996, Vol. 39, No. 3, 738-750.