

## Duress and Prevention

### how directing staff into making good lifestyle decisions can affect your profitability



In clinical studies in the USA they tested how pressure of time and dedication of memory can actually make people choose the easiest option - as the mind is fundamentally lazy. When two test groups were given a memory related task to which was added a distraction by way of choosing either a healthy or unhealthy meal, those with the greatest memory-load (stress) chose the most unhealthy food. Those with the **least memory-load chose the healthy fruit choice.** (*Reference 'Thinking Fast and Slow' by David Kahneman*)

Basically if we have **less stress** in our lives we are more likely to **make good lifestyle choices.** We become rational thinking individuals.

The solution is to manage the stress load, enabling us to use our 'thinking' brain rather than just the lazy part of the brain which gives us those quick easy instantaneous answers and responses. The lazy mind is the one which is used all the time when driving a vehicle, it is intuitive and you literally don't have to consciously think about the task in hand.

When you do have to think about questions, systems, orders (and even the problems that you have at home), and they are not in your daily repertoire of tasks (on auto pilot) you have to use the thinking part of your brain and this invariably creates a headache for you. You might even become stressed.

So if you are **low on energy** you will have trouble in quickly coming up with the answer and this is when you get **tired.** As a frequent occurrence it can lead to fatigue, stress and then anxiety. Statistics show that continual stress with very little control on the environment and high demands has a **very high correlation with degenerative heart disease and other degenerative health issues** as well. We recognise that unwell staff cost dearly in terms of poor productivity, absenteeism, presenteeism and recruitment/induction costs.

People generally succumb to stress in the manner of either disease or chronic disorders. Our minds are lazy and whilst under pressure – duress - we want to do things by instinct. If prevented from doing tasks by instinct we become frustrated and irritable. In the normal course of a day we don't think before we act, translating to **mistakes and accidents which in many scenarios equates to loss of hard earned money.** This is both the business owners money and the employee's ability to earn an income. Which is why you buy insurance, right?

So when you have an accident the financial pain is reduced somewhat with insurance. What if you and your staff are really healthy? The probabilities of having an accident are reduced and therefore no financial pain, which reduces dependency on insurance.

## What's the solution?

Part 1 We all need energy to be productive and reduce those accidents. Importantly, the energy must be sustainable and produced over a long period of time of a day and not just in 2 hour bursts with high intake of sugars and carbohydrates which are actually quite harmful to our system (ie diabetes and dangerous slumps in alertness). This is putting stress on your metabolism.

Part 2 Make lifestyle decisions for yourself and your staff which prevents fatigue and stress from starting the vicious cycle.

- Sleep the required 8 hours of a day - really important
- Keep hydrated by drinking water as the first choice
- Eat real nutritional food.
- Eat low GI foods that keep you feeling full for longer. Those high GI foods that give a quick shot of energy (the fatal sticky bun!) result in an energy slump approx. 2 hours later). **This is when drivers feel sleepy at the wheel.**

For the business owner, the consequential hidden cost of accidents and mistakes are often not calculated or even discussed. It's that 20/80 rule where you only claim for what you know. Think about the results that could be achieved by providing an environment that **directs staff into making good lifestyle decisions**. Nutritional food is actually a no-brainer if it has been made more convenient for them than stopping at the local takeaway.

Alert staff are less likely to injure themselves (and your truck and load) so how much could you save in insurance excesses and sick leave? I know of a small admin office with just 5 staff where the savings on a simple health pilot were \$7,000 in just a 12 month period.

Remember it's called the **Health & Safety Act**.

If you would like to know more on how simple measures can put more money on the bottom line of your business feel free to contact me for a chat ([solutions@ritetrack.co.nz](mailto:solutions@ritetrack.co.nz))

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