

# Managing workplace stress as year draws to close



By [Lyndy van den Barselaar](#)

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As businesses look to reach year-end targets, white-collar employee stress levels rise, which must be managed for both employee wellness and business performance.



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White-collar is defined as relating to the work done or the people who work in an office or other professional environment. This includes professional, administrative and managerial work.

While a small degree of workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with employee productivity, as well as on physical, mental and emotional health. In today's trying economic times, workplace stress has increased and can often include worries such as losing one's job and paying one's debt. While one cannot control everything in the business environment, managing stress is about focusing on the aspects of your job that are within your control.

For those in managerial or leadership positions, effective stress management is crucial. Emotions are contagious and stress can have an impact on the quality of your interactions with team members and others in the workplace. A stressed leader can lead to the whole team becoming stressed, having a negative impact on the tasks or projects at hand.

The Prosumer report released by global advertising agency Havas Worldwide, titled, 'My Body, Myself, Our Problem - Health and Wellness in Modern Times', states that a stressful job and anxiety are among the six factors most detrimental to brain health, along with a low-nutrition diet, tobacco and alcohol.

This is proof that stress not only negatively affects one's work, but also one's personal life and health; further highlighting the necessity of effective stress management, especially in today's fast-paced business environment.

## **Prioritising, organising key to managing stress**

Prioritising and organising one's work load is possibly the most important factor in managing stress, as it ensures a sense of self-control and a feeling of knowing and being able to handle one's responsibilities. Aim to set realistic and attainable goals for each day, and stick to them.

Take regular breaks, even for just a few minutes between tasks, to allow one to regroup and focus fully on the next task. Breathing deeply and rhythmically for a few minutes is also proven to lower stress levels.

Further, eating a balanced diet and sleeping well can significantly reduce the body's stress levels and help one to feel more focused and in control. When the body is well rested and sufficiently fuelled, it immediately reacts better to any situation.

Importantly, employers have an important role to play in assisting employees who are struggling with stress. One's personality, experience and other unique characteristics influence the way one responds to, and copes with, stress. This means that employees will respond differently to stress and find different situations stressful. Employers will benefit from having support structures in place to assist employees in managing their stress levels.

Liaise with employees to find out what makes them feel stressed, what they feel would be most helpful in managing their stress levels, and making concerted efforts to assist them in their efforts. A stressed team is most often an unproductive team, while employees who feel supported by their employers are often more dedicated to their job.

## **ABOUT LYNDY VAN DEN BARSELAAR**

Lyndy van den Barselaar is the MD of Manpower Group South Africa.  
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