



How to increase energy and productivity within your team: a manager's guide.

Practical advice, useful tips and expert insight to help everyone.

For your team's wellbeing.

Updated July 2020.

Introduction.

Here, we'll look at what managers can do to help employees stay on top of their game.



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Keeping your team energised and engaged

Six ways you can support your team



Keeping your team energised and engaged

It's a phrase that most of us can relate to: 'There are never enough hours in the day'. With longer to-do lists that include work, family and personal goals, it can sometimes feel like we never have the energy to get things done.

Despite the challenges of the last year, 55% of workers have said their colleagues are just as, or even more, productive than before the pandemic. However, there are a huge range of ways in which lockdown has affected energy levels at work. Some workers may feel more energised than before, while others will be more likely to be tired and stressed, which is likely to be impacting on how much they are able to achieve during the working week.

It's clear that energy and productivity at work can be closely related. So how can managers and leaders make a difference and give their teams a boost?

55%

of workers feel their colleagues are just as, or even more, productive than before the pandemic.

Deloitte. Working during lockdown. deloitte.com, accessed July 2020.

Six ways you can help your team.

1 Reduce email time

Where work allows, try encouraging people to check their inbox less often. Some workplaces even have an 'email-free day' every so often to promote this. On those days, people can still pick up the phone for anything urgent, and anything else can be dealt with during your allotted email slot. Set a reminder and try to stick to opening your inbox during those set times.



Reading an email that's just come in can disrupt your concentration for over 20 minutes.

Mark G., Gonzalez VM, Harris J. No Task Left Behind? Examining the Nature of Fragmented Work. 2005. www.lcs.uci.edu

2 Start small for a quick motivation boost

Try putting the small, easier tasks at the top of your team's list. Research has suggested that when we complete a task, no matter how big or small, we get a rush of the 'motivation molecule' dopamine. And that rush can help motivate you for the rest of the day. On the other hand, unfinished tasks can occupy your mind and make it more difficult to concentrate on anything else until they're finished.

3 Promote regular breaks

Trying to concentrate for hours at a time is a recipe for disaster, so make sure to promote regular breaks. Desk time, a productivity app that tracks computer use, analysed their data and found that the most productive employees worked for 52 minutes then took a 17 minute break. This type of work-break pattern can keep concentration at higher levels for longer, making people more productive throughout the day.

4 Let people focus on one task at a time

Don't expect people to multitask – it's not possible. When you attempt more than one task at once, your brain constantly flicks between them, resulting in neither of them being done well. Your brain just can't handle more than one task at a time. Allow your employees to prioritise one task and complete it to the best of their ability before doing something else.



5 Allow people to choose their environment

People are broadly defined as either extroverts, who get their energy from being around other people, or introverts, who prefer quiet and solitude to recharge. Introverts may much prefer the increased home working that has come with lockdown. Meanwhile, extroverts may miss the social interaction that comes with being in the office.

When possible, people should be allowed to monitor how they're feeling and take a cue from there. Working from home may give someone the peace and quiet they need, for example. Alternatively, working from a local coffee shop could provide a background hum of noise that someone thrives on.



6 Encourage healthy eating and exercise

These may seem like personal areas that managers and employers shouldn't meddle in. Yet there are appropriate ways that workplaces can promote healthy eating and regular exercise. Encouraging people to take their lunch breaks and promoting healthy snacking (for example by sharing healthy recipe links around the team) can help. You could also hold virtual exercise classes or encourage people to attend meetings on their phone while out for a walk.

Diet and exercise are vital to performing at your best. Certain foods aid brain power and concentration, while exercise has been shown to have immediate positive effects on mood and mental sharpness.



Resources.

For more advice and support on managing your team's wellbeing, visit Bupa's workplace mental health and wellbeing hubs.

Workplace mental health hub

bupa.co.uk/workplace-mental-health

Workplace Wellbeing hub

bupa.co.uk/workplace-wellbeing

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