

# Companies need to support their employees in avoiding burnout over the next year

Now is the time to gauge where people are, unpack the problem areas, and find ways of making life easier for your employees, says Nicol Myburgh, head of CRS Technologies HCM Business Unit, as the world has not yet left the Covid-19 pandemic behind. Remote working, disconnected workplaces, masks and distancing remain a constant for the foreseeable future and this means that employees run the risk of suffering from work-from-home (WFH) fatigue and experiencing challenges around productivity, engagement and disconnection.



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“It’s important to pinpoint issues and find out why your employees are struggling, what areas are impacting on their productivity, and why they feel out of touch,” he adds. “At the moment, most people are fed up and want their routines, lives and workplaces back to normal. But this isn’t going to happen any time soon so organisations need to find ways to support people throughout the next year.”

One of the biggest challenges to employee satisfaction right now is the lack of routine. WFH fatigue is caused by most people leaping from the standard 8am-5pm with lunch breaks and desk breaks to working 6am-11pm, seven days a week. The sudden removal of boundaries and work hours has meant that many employees are working harder and longer than they should, and this is now starting to affect their performance.



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Anja van Beek 26 Nov 2020



## Enforce regular working hours

“People are burned out and tired, but many don’t recognise the symptoms or understand how they’ve reached this point,” explains Myburgh. “The business needs to enforce regular working hours, provide people with working structure from within their homes, and give people a chance to disengage and relax. This is really important right now, or you run the risk of

losing people to long periods of mental and physical recuperation.”

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this problem, it’s a good idea to offer employees access to a staff psychologist who can help them unpack their issues and find their way forward. Also consider introducing social sessions on Teams or other networking platforms, as these will allow people to unwind in an informal setting while remaining connected with their colleagues. Connection is important, and can be cultivated with the judicious use of online sessions, meetings and even colleague ‘speed dating’.



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## Reducing the sense of disconnect

“We use an app that connects people in the business to one another,” says Myburgh. “It makes appointments for different people to connect and allows people to get to know one another outside of the office and the onslaught of digital information. It’s a very easy way of helping people get to know all other employees in a company without putting pressure on them or making it too invasive. This is a great way of breaking the ice and reducing that sense of disconnect.”

From staff socials to a staff psychologist to ongoing recognition and respect, businesses need to look at inventive ways of connecting with their people and helping them through the new normal. This will help people to recognise symptoms of burnout, adjust their workstyles intelligently, and form connections in spite of the enforced distances.

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