

Transformative leadership: How to help prevent employee burnout

By [Sandra Orta](#)

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Since the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in South Africa in March 2020, and subsequent variations of lockdowns implemented across Africa, life as we know it has drastically changed. The lines between home and work have been blurred and it has proven increasingly difficult to maintain work-life balance.



Sandra Orta

As a single mother to a five year old daughter, the difficulty in finding a balance between work and my personal life is something I understand all too well. As a leader in one of the largest diagnostics companies, I am confronted with the responsibility of prioritising the company's growth but most importantly, prioritising the well-being of the company's best asset - its employees.

Lay the foundation for business continuity without employee burnout:

As a leader, encourage your staff to think of these factors in their daily engagements with fellow colleagues.

1. Set time boundaries

Just because the company has provided employees with work-from-home (WFH) equipment including mobile phones, it does not mean they should be on call well into the wee hours of the morning. Delivery and accountability should govern the way of work.

2. Could this have been an email? Limit unnecessary conference calls

The culture of persistent conference calls may have skyrocketed due to WFH. We were so used to walking to people's desks to ask 'a quick question', in the absence of this liberty, we might find ourselves falling into the habit of setting up a conference call for every single thing. Have you considered a quick chat message, formulating your

thoughts into a concise email or even a Whatsapp message for quick turnaround?

3. Meeting-free Friday afternoons

As people wind down into the weekend, they are probably finalising their priorities for that week. A meeting-free Friday afternoon allows them enough breathing room to conclude the week's deliverables so work does not bleed into their weekend plans; taking away from family time and other parts of their lives.

4. Increased WFH tolerance

You will most likely hear Peppa Pig, Spongebob, a barking dog or even a smart-mouthed parrot in the background and that is okay. This is how everyone is keeping sane because everyone, their families and their pets are now all at home.

5. Understanding the consequences of neglecting work life balance

A 2020 study by the International Labour Organisation on managing work-related psychosocial risks during the Covid-19 pandemic states that during the Covid-19 pandemic, many workers are not only confronted with high work demands, but also have to organise their home life and look after their dependents, particularly if they have children, elderly, ill or family members with disabilities, or if they have disabilities themselves. All these elements contribute to the deterioration of one's work-life balance, with negative effects on the mental health of workers.

Your organisation possibly has services such as ICAS to assist in instances where employees require help but I am of the school of thought that prevention is better than cure. Take daily small steps that lead to a space where you are able to segment parts of your life in a manner that is conducive to both your physical and mental health.

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