

# IT'S TIME TO CHANGE HOW WE VIEW SLEEP

*It's Day 2 of Drive Safely Work Week™* and today we're backing things up a bit to talk about the importance of sleep. One of the most vital influences on human performance—including operating a motor vehicle safely—is the time spent sleeping. Sleep deprivation in employees is associated with increased healthcare costs, as well as decreases in productivity and increased safety risks. **Sleep drives safety and performance in all parts of life.**



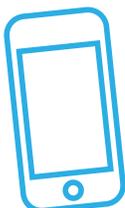
One company thinks sleep is so important, it's **paying employees to get more sleep.**

**"If they can prove that they get 20 nights of sleep for seven hours or more in a row, we will give them \$25 a night, up to \$500 a year."**

Mark Bertolini, Aetna CEO

## WAYS TO SHOW YOUR ORGANIZATION VALUES SLEEP

- Sleep management can be taught in organizations, just as time management and communication skills are.<sup>7</sup>
- Evaluate and rework company policies to ensure that they encourage—or at least don't discourage—a good night's sleep. Look at policies covering:
  - ✂ travel
  - ✂ email (e.g., blackout time after which no emails can be sent)
  - ✂ team working (creating tag teams that enable employees to hand work to each other across time zones)
  - ✂ work-time limits (setting limits on hours or creating blackout periods)
  - ✂ mandatory work-free vacations
  - ✂ predictable time off
  - ✂ napping rooms
  - ✂ smart technology that improves sleep management.<sup>8</sup>
- Employers can also develop sound policies to foster improved sleep, such as facilitating flexible scheduling to allow for rest following a long trip or international travel.



A number of companies have imposed blackout times on work emails. A large European car business, for example, programs the smartphones of its non-management employees to switch off work emails automatically between 6pm and 7am. This may not work for everyone—but provided there are overrides, such a policy can send a clear signal of management's value of quality down time and sleep.<sup>9</sup>

## WHY RETHINK SLEEP?

- Nearly 30% of employees say they are unhappy or very unhappy with the quality or quantity of their sleep<sup>6</sup>
- More than 75% of employees say they feel tired many days of the week<sup>6</sup>
- 15% say they doze off during the day at least once per week<sup>6</sup>

For too long, the need for sleep has been viewed as an afterthought or even a sign of weakness. But as outlined in Day 2's employee campaign materials, science is telling us that thinking needs to change.

## A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Research shows that in addition to diet and exercise, getting 7 to 8 hours of good-quality sleep is essential to well-being. As part of a larger wellness program, employers can offer sleep information, tips for better sleep and online programs focused on improving sleep habits.

## EXCESSIVE DAYTIME SLEEPINESS

"Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS) is increasingly being recognized as a critical contributor to lower productivity and poorer mental health in the workplace. This is why identifying it, understanding it, measuring it, and formulating measures to combat it (are so important to) the design of workplace health programs for them to optimize your most valuable asset—your human resources." (GCC Insights)

- Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a sleep disorder in which breathing is briefly and repeatedly interrupted during sleep.
- A common symptom of OSA is Excessive Daytime Sleepiness. OSA may adversely affect work performance through decreased productivity and increased injury rate.
- A new study finds that OSA is the single most important preventable medical cause of EDS and motor vehicle crashes. The odds of a work accident [of various types] was found to be nearly double in workers with OSA.<sup>1</sup>
- 9%+ of women and 24% of men are estimated to have OSA; 80% go undiagnosed.<sup>2</sup>
- According to a Harvard Medical School study, workplace motor vehicle accidents related to OSA cost up to \$40 billion each year.<sup>3</sup>
- Other common sleep disorders that can result in EDS are Insomnia and Restless Legs Syndrome. In total, there are said to be more than 80 different sleep disorders, the majority of which go undiagnosed.

As of 2016, 73% of companies offered a wellness program, up from 58% in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

According to a RAND Corporation study, every \$1 invested in overall wellness efforts yields a return on investment of \$1.50.<sup>5</sup>

## DROWSY, DISTRACTED, OR FOCUSED... YOUR DECISIONS DRIVE YOUR SAFETY

References for all pages can be found at <http://trafficsafety.org/dsww/dsww-2016-materials/references>

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