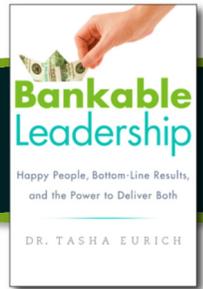


Bankable Leadership Tip Sheet #12



For God's Sake...Loosen Up!

In recent years, 55% of people report that their workload has increased, and 27% say it's doubled. Most leaders are in a downward spiral of stress. Are you burning yourself out, either through a self-imposed, unrealistic work ethic, or because of pressure from the top?

Anyone can work fifty, sixty, seventy hours a week—for a while. But this will catch up with you. There is strong evidence that taking time off actually helps us be healthier and more productive.

- An Ernst & Young study found that for every ten hours of vacation an employee took, their performance reviews were 8 percent higher the following year.
- A University College of London study reported that workers who put in more than 55 hours of work per week showed poorer vocabulary and reasoning—i.e., they got stupider!
- The Framingham Heart Study found that taking annual vacations reduces the risk of heart attack by 30 percent in men and 50 percent in women.

Tips to Take More Breaks

Frequent, shorter vacations may be best: It's hard enough to take a day or two—let alone a week. But never fear: Research shows that even a day or two off work can improve health and well-being. And, because benefits from days off fade after about 5 days, it's important to take frequent breaks.

Make time off, time off: Make a rule to unplug a few evenings or weekend days per week, and respect your employees' need to do the same. Be careful about the response culture you're creating (e.g., don't e-mail your employees on a Saturday—they'll think you want a response). Instead, hold onto your e-mails and send them when you get back to the office.

Tips to Have a Little More Fun

Find the joy in what you do: Are you the same person at work and outside work? If not, dig into why this might be. It takes a lot of energy to be something we're not and almost always saps the fun right out of life.

Let your team goof off a little: Your team will need to goof off from time to time. If you walk by and see this happening, don't jump to the conclusion that the employee is lazy or unproductive. Ask questions to learn the pattern.

Make boring things less boring at work: In team meetings, make a commitment to do something fun and carve out this time. In the course of your day to day interactions with your team, if you don't laugh at least once per hour, ask yourself, "Do we need to lighten up?"

Gamify: Try turning otherwise-average tasks into games. For example, if your sales team makes its quota, take everyone on a field trip outside the office—say, to a baseball game.

More resources available at www.BankableLeadership.com

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