

Can training reduce employee stress?

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by Brett Henebery | 08 Jun 2017



A new report has provided some insights into how learning new skills can combat employee stress in the workplace.

The report – called “Workplace Confidential: The Real Story Behind Stress, Skills, and Success in America” – was released this week by online training company, Udemy.

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The survey found that more than half (52%) of full-time employees in the US feel more stressed today than they did one year ago.

However, 58% are turning to company-sponsored skills training as a solution.

Darren Shimkus, vice president and general manager for Udemy for Business, said workplace stress has reached “unprecedented levels” in the US.

“There is a unique confluence of internal and external triggers, from a volatile political climate to the rise of artificial intelligence in the workplace,” Shimkus said in a statement.

“At the same time, the skills required to do our jobs change about every three months, and pressure to adapt is relentless.”

Shimkus said the study shows that workers are responding to stress with a “new self-driven approach” based on learning and growth.

According to the report, 60% of US workers are stressed “all or most of the time” because of two main pressures both inside and outside of the workplace.

Respondents said the biggest stress trigger outside of work was the current political climate (50%). Inside of work, the biggest stress figure was the fear of losing jobs to artificial intelligence or new technology (43%).

Recognising the impact that stress can have both in and outside the workplace, some organisations have developed specific programs aimed at improving resilience training.

One such company is PD Training, which developed a program called ORANGES, which gives workers more than 40 tools to change the way they approach their work and lives.

Paul Findlay, managing director of PD Training, told *L&D professional* that resilience is “the capacity to withstand and adapt to the challenges that life throws at us”.

“When it’s low, workers struggle to bounce back and thrive. Without the right attitude, workers are not always looking for an opportunity, solution or possibility,” he said.

Regardless of the industry, Findlay said that most organisations – including those undergoing restructuring and industries where customer-facing activity is normally stressful – can benefit from training to boost resilience.

“People get worn down by relentless change and they commonly end up becoming short-fused, negative and mildly depressed. They take stress leave days, call in sick or become cynical and counter-productive in the face of organisational redesign,” Findlay said.

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