

MANAGER STRESS: HOW IT AFFECTS BOTTOM LINE AND TIPS TO HANDLE IT

A WHITE PAPER BY ECSELL INSTITUTE



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AN ESSENTIAL SKILL FOR MANAGERS

Being a manager is stressful. At one end, they have company executives who are always putting pressure on them for their team's performance. And at the other, they have team members who are coming to them with their needs or complaints. Not to mention the countless customers who want them involved whenever there is an issue with their account.

With stress being unavoidable for managers, it is essential that they learn to how to cope with it to be effective in their role. According to Ecsell research, while the majority of managers are actually good at handling their stress, there is a sizable portion who still struggle. We surveyed 825 employees across numerous industries and found that nearly one-third don't think their manager is at their best during stressful times.



The consequences for those managers that don't learn to handle stress reverberate across their teams. When team members feel their manager can't handle the tough times, it starts to color their overall opinion of their manager. In this way, how well a manager handles stressful situations is seen by their team members as indicative of how well they handle their management role overall.

Our surveys also underscore the relationship between a manager's ability to deal with stress and numerous key metrics that measure the employee experience. Specifically, managers who handle stress well receive better ratings than managers who don't on the following metrics:

- Their team members' **LIKELIHOOD OF BEING RETAINED**
- Their team members' **OVERALL HAPPINESS IN THEIR ROLE**
- Their team members' rating of the **MANAGER'S OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

TEAM MEMBER RATINGS ON KEY METRICS



All of these differences are highly statistically significant, showing a strong relationship between how well a manager handles stress and the quality of their team's overall experience. So the data is clear - stress is inevitable for managers, and if they don't learn to manage it, the negative repercussions can affect an organization's bottom line. Their team members will be less happy in their jobs, be more likely to turnover and have a lower opinion of their manager overall.

3 TIPS TO HELP YOUR MANAGERS

1

Get them to talk about it.

Like all people, managers can benefit from talking about their challenges when they are feeling stressed. Whether they are open with their leader or have a management peer who is willing to listen, simply talking about their stresses can help your managers alleviate them. Company leaders should encourage their managers to be open and find at least one trusted leader in which they can confide.

2

Help them set priorities.

When managers know where to spend their time, they are more focused and feel like they can tackle large work loads more effectively. In your next one-to-one, offer to take a look at their to-do list together, and wrap up the meeting by asking them which tasks, if any, they would like your help accomplishing.

3

Encourage breaks during the workday.

Taking small mental breaks throughout the day not only helps managers lower stress levels, but it can actually make them more productive. If they've been sitting in their office for hours, taking a walk outside, laughing with their colleagues for a few minutes or simply finding a quiet moment to breath can help your managers feel more calm and ready to tackle the rest of their day.

CONCLUSION

We often think of stress as something that only impacts the person experiencing it, but our research is clear. When managers don't take steps to get their stress levels under control, it negatively impacts their team members' happiness, retention and overall work experience. Which means that unchecked management stress isn't just a problem for them, it's a problem for your entire organization.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Sarah Wirth is president of Ecsell Institute, as well as one of the world's foremost authorities in metric-based performance coaching and growth.

She has 20+ years of experience in employee assessment, leadership development, executive coaching, and customer service. Sarah joined Ecsell Institute in 2011 to help executive leaders, managers, athletic coaches, teachers, and more master how coaching done correctly is the #1 enhancer of performance. Her best-selling book, *The Coaching Effect*, was written to bring Ecsell Institute's mission to more people.