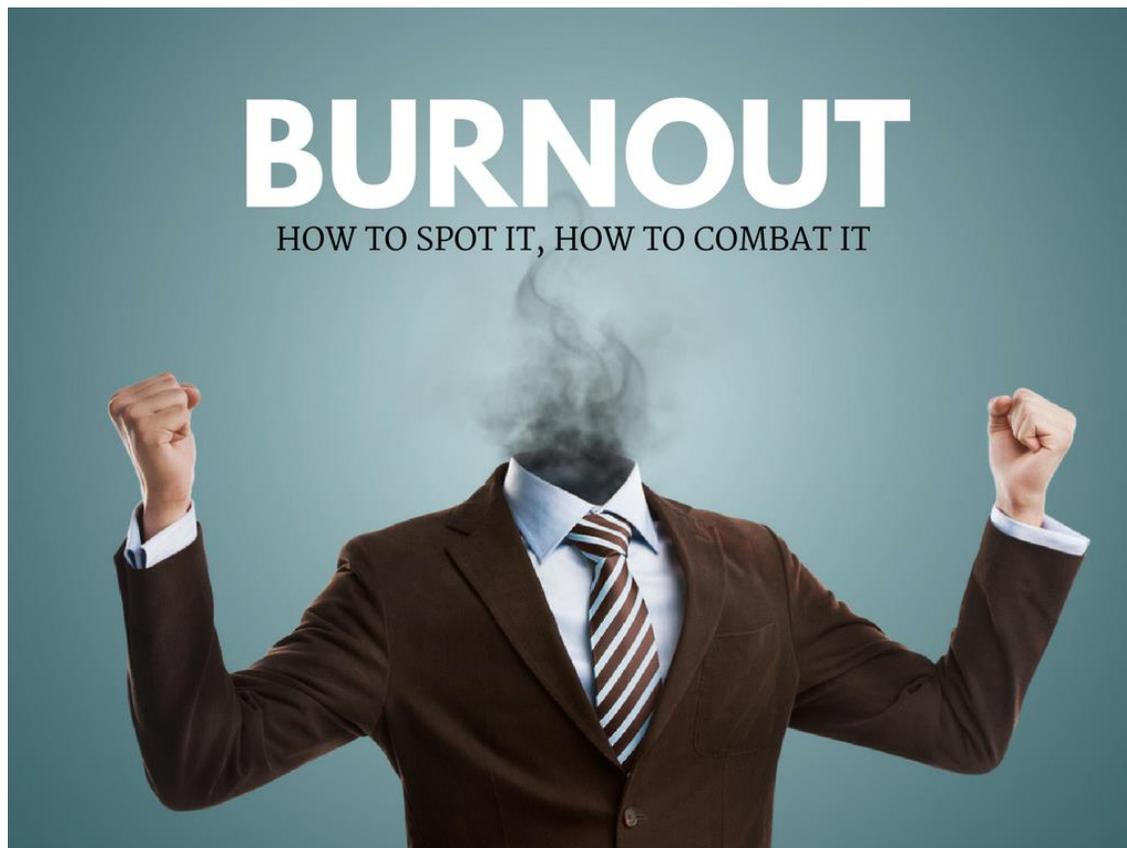# The Causes Of Employee Burnout And What You Can Do About It!

"There is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency.

- Natalie Goldberg

Employee burnout is a common phenomenon, but it is one that businesses tend to treat as a talent management or personal issue rather than a broader organisational challenge. That's a mistake!

The psychological and physical problems of burned-out employees, which cost an estimated $125 billion to $190 billion a year in healthcare spending in the U.S., are just the most obvious impacts.

The true cost to business is far greater, thanks to low productivity across organisations, high turnover, the loss of the most capable talent and scaringly, and potentially insider security incidents.

Employee burnout might seem like a problem that only affects individuals, but it's one of the biggest threats to employee engagement and broader aspect of insider risks.

Executives need to own up to their role in creating the workplace stress that leads to burnout: heavy workloads; job insecurity; frustrating work routines; and lack of executive support;

According to one survey conducted by of over 600 senior HR leaders, nearly half (46%) say work burnout is responsible for between 20% to 50% of their annual workforce turnover.

When we looked inside organisations with high burnout rates, we see three common culprits: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a reduced personal accomplishment.

Burnout appears to follow a process that begins with emotional exhaustion, where the person feels fatigued and drained by work and frustrated by the day's events. The person will then try to detach, and distance themselves from the "cause" of the exhaustion. In extreme form, because of the exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of accomplishment, there might be a small possibility that the individual might "bite back", seek revenge, or even cause some form of injury to the client, project or even the organisation as a result of being highly aggrieved and distressed.

| Emotional Exhaustion | → | Depersonalisation | → | Lack of Accomplishment | → | Security Incident |
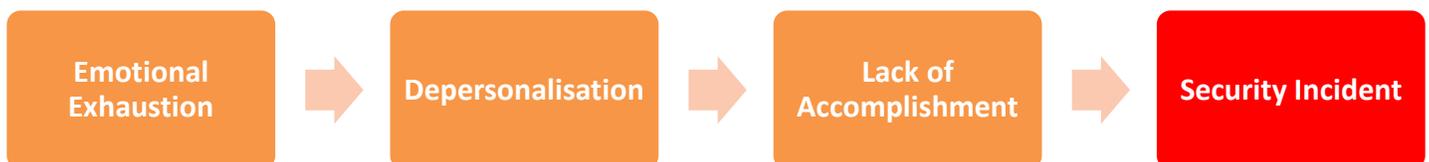
What are consequences of burnout?

- Some individuals stay in their jobs resign to their existence and join the legion of "deadwood", happily collecting their paycheques but doing little to contribute to the mission of the organisation;

- Some individuals will stay in the same occupation, but seek alternatives new role. For example, the burned-out nurse might go into nursing education to avoid contact with sick patients;

- Some individuals bravely pursue a new occupation or a new opportunity with another organisation often experiencing guilt about not being able to cope in the old environment; And

- Some individuals as mentioned, might lash out at the organisation, the project, at other individuals, and possibly the client for being aggrieved, dissatisfied and unfairly dealt with.

What You Can Do About It

The Maslach Burnout Inventory identifies six domains that contribute to work burnout:

1. Workload
2. Control
3. Reward
4. Community
5. Fairness
6. Values

As discussed, the costs of employee burnout can take a significant toll on physical health, psychological well-being, and work performance.

Maslach highlighted the need to pay more attention to the social and organisational environment in which individuals works. In particular, organisations need to be more creative about solutions at an organisational level, rather than just an individual one.

When it comes to preventing employee burnout, Maslach has some very clear advice:

"Building engagement is the best approach to preventing burnout. People who are engaged with their work are better able to cope with the challenges they encounter, and thus are more likely to recover from stress. So building an engaged workforce, before there are major problems, is a great prevention strategy."

What Is your Employee Engagement Level?

If you are concerned about the possibility level of employee disengagement within your organisation or experiencing negative behaviour within your workforce, then we can help you overcome the potential risks that the "human element" that may place your organisation.

CommsNet Group **Employee Engagement Assessment** is designed to reveal strengths and opportunities for positive change in your organisation as well as identifying organisation culture risk.

The Employee Engagement Assessment evaluates common attributes that influence the level of emotional motivation, commitment, perceived support, and connectedness your employees feel about your workplace. The objective of this process is to turn intangible motivators into markers for progress and success and importantly reduce the potential risk in negative unintended and intended consequences.

For more information, reach out to us at info@commsnet.com.au or contact us on +61 2 6282 5554.

Your Next Best Step

If you are keen in addressing the risk from within, but not sure where to start, why not attend our free Insider Threat Worksop. This half day workshop is conducted in most capital cities and are designed to help you understand the best practices that can be implemented to identify and mitigate insider threat within your organisation.

To find out more about our Insider Threat Workshop

Contact Us

if you need some more resource material, download the Insider Threat eBook by CommsNet Group, completely free of charge. For more information, you can also send them an email at: info@commsnet.com.au OR give us a call at: +61 26282-5554.