

Law Matters Newsletter

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Stress

What to Do

Stress



I used to work with a litigator who took early retirement because he could no longer stand the pressure to be right all the time. My personal record for a working day is 38 hours (I think the others in the room may have had chemical support). One of my contemporaries suffered a major breakdown due to his excessive workload.

The law is one of the most stressed professions - see here

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/law/lawyers-among-most-stressed-official-/5063595.article>

This also leads to high alcohol consumption and other issues. Alcohol is, of course, a depressant.

Not all stress is damaging. On the contrary, a degree of stress can help people to raise their game and perform at a higher level. Tolerance to stress varies between individuals, but most people can cope with considerable stress for a short period. The damage comes when stress is unremitting, with no recovery time. This is often the case with lawyers, where there is so often several other matters waiting to be dealt with, and possibly already late.

Bad stress damages health, both psychologically and physiologically. This leads to absence, possibly prolonged, and potentially to early retirement. The individual's performance also suffers (which can increase stress) leading to client complaints and claims. So the firm suffers as well as the lawyer. That makes it even more of a management issue.

Help is Available

On an individual level, confidential help is available through Law Care <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/information-and-support/stress> or the Law Society Pastoral Care Helpline 020 7320 5795. Of course, the cause of the stress may largely lie in an individual's personal life.

Additionally, an individual can work to improve their mental toughness, though building confidence, managing time and managing pressure. All that is important, but cannot solve a work overload.

The major stressor may be work related - a difficult colleague or manager, insufficient support or training, too big a workload and so on. The manager may themselves be suffering in a similar way, so there is no magic wand. It is, however, a management issue.

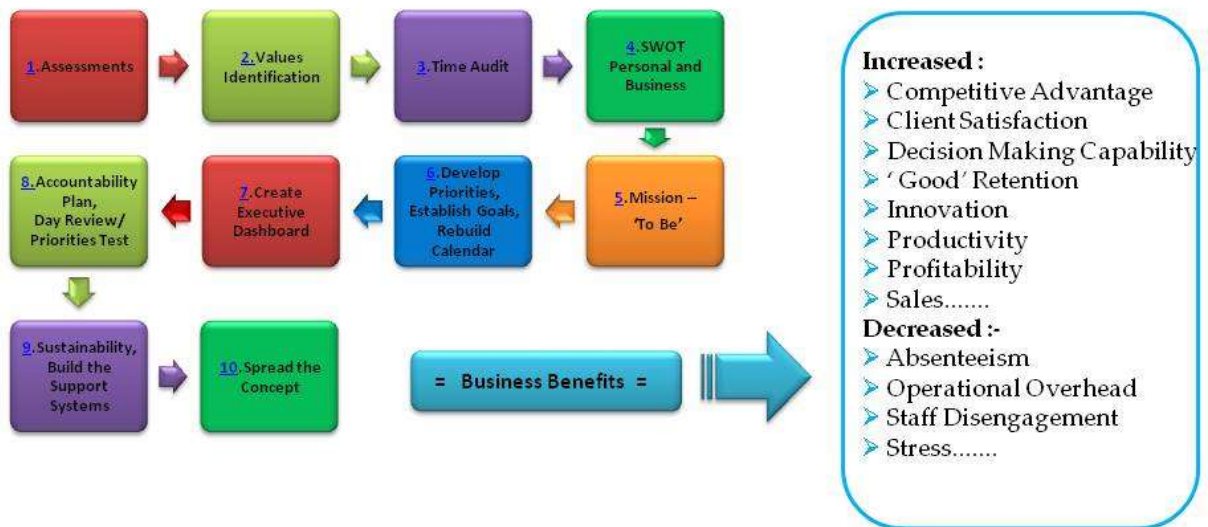
Managing lawyers is difficult - they tend not to do what they are told. Being a successful manager while also being a successful lawyer is more difficult still.

We are on a mission to improve management skills in the legal profession - in part to reduce stress and improve service and profitability. See Iwan's LinkedIn profile here <https://www.linkedin.com/in/iwanthomas/>

We can assist in measuring and building Mental Toughness, in coaching executive skills and in succession planning among other things.

One particularly useful process for departmental heads is the following

OVERVIEW OF MASTERMIND EXECUTIVE COACHING PROCESS™



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One of the features of this process is that it develops a mission for the head and their team, based on their values and strengths. This is only half of the process, with the remainder of the process translating that mission into action.



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