How to Reduce Occupational Stress

John Kyriazoglou

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A guide to manage and reduce occupational stress in your business

Contents

DEDICATIONS

This book is dedicated to the glory of Ancient Greece, and to my blue-eyed, lovely grand-daughter, and princess of my life, Melina.

John Kyriazoglou

Prologue

'Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim'.

Aristotle

Introduction to Stress

Stress, anxiety and depression are found in all people and in all cultures, industries, economies and societies, regardless of the education, social status or economic background of the individuals concerned. This is due to a variety of reasons, but mostly because of the high and extremely demanding aspects of their workplace.

The fact is that most adults, all over the world, spend the largest if not a substantial part of their lives working in private companies or public organizations. Whether they are employed in Canada, the U.S., or Australia, in a high-technology startup in East Asia, a financial institution in England or Germany, or a garment factory in the Dominican Republic or India, they experience extreme occupational stress.

Also they are not engaged at all in their work!

The quality of their workplace experience is inevitably reflected in the quality of their lives. Gallup's finding that the vast majority of employees worldwide report an overall negative experience at work – and just one in eight are fully involved in and enthusiastic about their jobs – is important when considering why the global recovery remains sluggish, while social unrest abounds in many countries[1].

Also my own consulting experience and various other international studies have shown that business managers (top, middle, bottom, etc.) and professionals, in all types (private, public, etc.) and size (small, medium, large, etc.) of companies in all business functions (Note: Sales, Finance, Production, Logistics, Customer Support, IT, Internal Audit, Compliance, External Auditing, Medical Services, Educational and Academic Services, etc.), have very difficult and stressful jobs[2].

Why is that?

My own guess and possible answer based on my experience and other sources is that this is due to the 21st Century's volatile and perplexed business environment all over the world.

This environment, among other things, is usually composed of:

1. Increased workloads and demands.
2. Constant shareholder demands for performance, cost-cutting, downsizing, etc.
3. Not well defined and overextended, many times, ranges of accountability.
4. Too wide span of controls assigned to individuals.
5. Turbulent socio-economic conditions (social, religious, etc.) of doing business across the globe.

This makes it absolutely imperative for organizations, public and private, to have strong and motivated managers and professionals to lead their corporate staff toward accomplishing their strategic and operational business goals and objectives, in the best way.

To accomplish these general goals and specific objectives, in an organizational products and services framework, managers and professionals not only use their human resources, but they also use inputs, methods, and systems, to create outputs which can be translated into products and services for customers, and a control system to achieve all these in the most optimal way.

When you take into full consideration the full array of duties, roles and responsibilities in leading and managing their units, departments, organizations, etc., one thing becomes clear: business managers and professionals have difficult and **stressful** jobs. But how can business managers and professionals, such as military officers, medical experts and nursing staff, reporters, IT managers, internal auditors, firefighters, airline pilots, police officers, etc. handle this stressful environment?

As a board member, enterprise owner, Chief Executive, business manager or professional, you must resolve the situation (**occupational stress**) troubling you and your business entity and its people, with specific actions and activities.

Proposed Solution

How can you effectively resolve the issue of occupational stress management?

My answer is the use of ancient Greek wisdom and specific and practical methods and techniques that you can review, consider, customize and apply to yourself and your own business.

What does ancient Greek wisdom have to do with occupational stress?

The current model of living is based more and more on competition, technology, open markets and profit at all costs, and less on harmony, peace (in a true sense) and moral values. This way has been proven wrong. The way we look at harmony, peace, honor and justice does not, I think definitely, seem to resolve our current world problems, at both the personal as well as the business level.

Technology and all other developments have forgotten, in most cases, our psyche (mind).

That's where philosophy steps in. As philosophy nourishes our psyche (soul) it becomes most important. And as the world problems are not being tackled and resolved to any level of satisfaction, we have to go back.

Back to the basic principles of philosophy so that we attain the proper principles and virtues so that we bring values, order and balance in our personal life, our business organizations, and our society. This is the only way so that we can all travel the difficult road to a better world.

I selected the ancient Greek wisdom for several reasons.

Firstly because of its breadth, non-religious and global appeal, as Ancient Greek philosophy saw life in a holistic sense. Secondly because of my ability to read and understand better the original philosophical texts. And thirdly because I had to work with people of many religions, cultures, socio-economic backgrounds and corporate settings, I had to find another approach.

This approach (The Occupational Stress Management and Reduction Approach, termed *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'*) is the basis of this book on occupational stress reduction.

The stress coping methods and techniques set forth in this book and the policy examples and action plans are based on three sources:

Source 1: Ancient Greek Wisdom

This is the first source of my proposed 'The OCCUP Stress Approach' to reducing occupational stress. Ancient Greek culture, philosophy and wisdom saw life in a holistic sense. The main principles proposed were: to free oneself from greediness, to achieve a gentle character, chastity, modesty in clothing and behavior, harmonic balance of mind, prompt and rational decisions, honesty, goodness, truth, logical and concise thinking and speech. These were their general rules on how people should approach and live a better life[3].

Source 2: Practical business experience

This is the second source of my proposed 'The OCCUP Stress Approach' to reducing occupational stress. This relates to my varied experience in multinational and multicultural business management, consulting, auditing and volunteering activities, etc. and how these were applied to occupational stress management and reduction in various personal and corporate settings.

Source 3: Books and Other Resources

This is the third source of my proposed 'The OCCUP Stress Approach' to reducing occupational stress. This source includes various studies, reports, surveys, books, experiences, data and other resources noted in the Bibliography.

In conclusion, these three sources (philosophical world views, experience and bibliography) are my basis in crafting *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* to reducing occupational stress**,** summarized next and described fully in the following chapters of this book.

Why I wrote this book

This is a sequel to my other books on business management controls and ancient Greek wisdom.

The business books deal with organizing and running better corporate entities and their functions (sales, production, finance, IT, etc.). The wisdom books present the richness of the maxims, sayings and quotations of ancient Greeks (Epicurus, Socrates, Aristotle, etc.) and propose a holistic way (The Pandora Way) to improving your personal life and business activities[4].

Summary contents of book

This book contains, in summary:

Part A: This relates to the main stress reduction approach and the strategies and actions to reduce it. It includes: Preface, Chapters 1 to 7 inclusive, Notes and a Bibliography.

Part B: This includes an Appendix. It contains numerous Plans, Policies and Questionnaires that complement Part A of the book.

Audience

The audience of this book includes, as an example:

1. Executives: Board directors, executive officers, business managers, corporate professional staff, internal auditors, etc.
2. Business professionals: Professional business consultants, accountants, external auditors, quality management engineers, project managers, etc.
3. Healthcare staff: Medical doctors, nurses, social workers, holistic medicine professionals, psychologists, etc.
4. Anyone interested in managing his or her occupational stress.

Conclusion

This book is a **self-help guide** and deals with ways to manage, cope with and reduce the occupational stress for you and your business. It may transform and enhance your personal life and working practices. I hope that this book may assist you in reducing occupational stress for you and your business organization, and in the process improve your personal life and business activities.
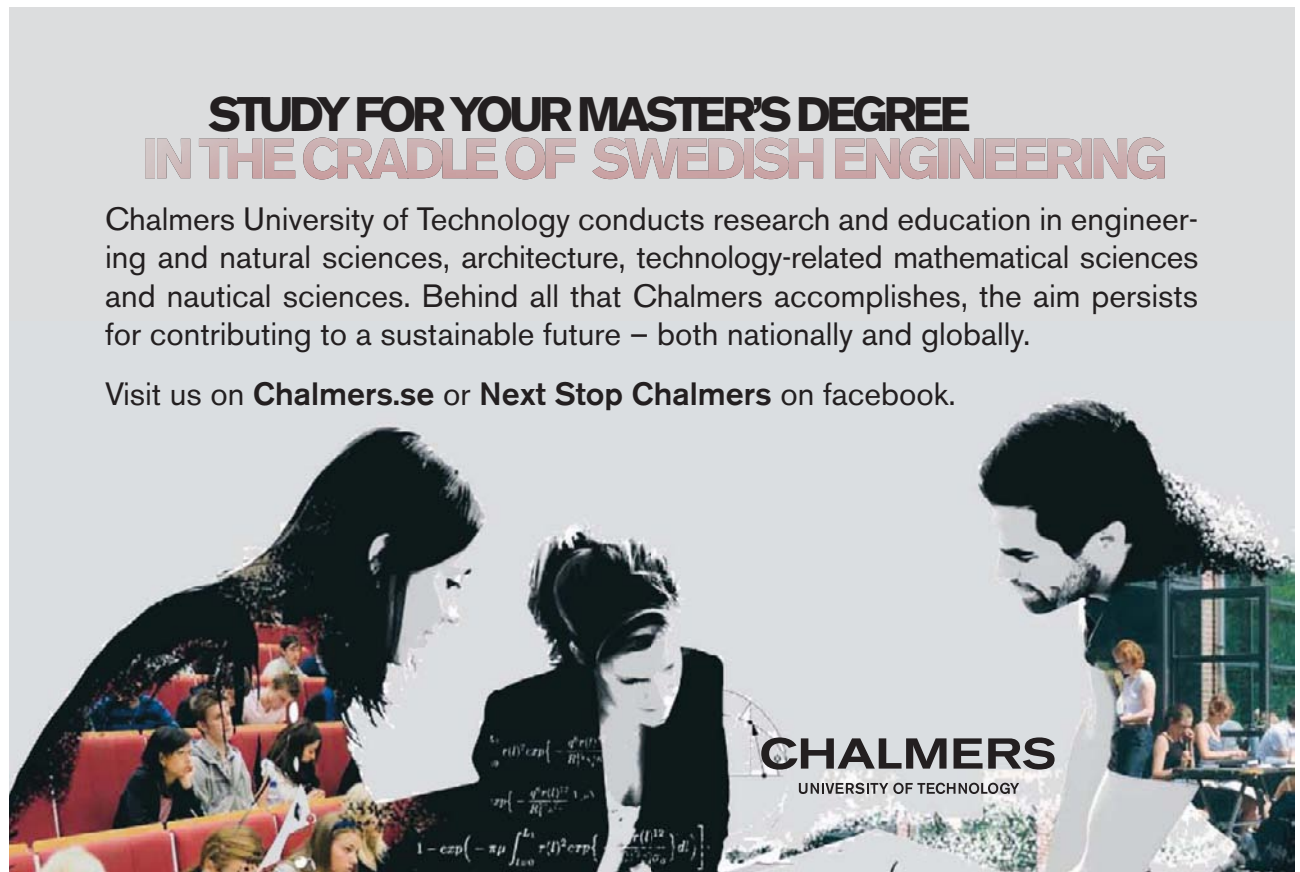
In addition it may help you get along better and have a happier, less troublesome and more balanced life. I am responsible for any mistakes, omissions or errors. Any material or ideas proposed are only for educational and self-help and awareness purposes. If they are used they should be considered only after thorough study and customization to your personal and business requirements and purposes. The author and the publisher bear no responsibility for the probable use of the proposed actions, policies and plans. All comments are welcome and will be acknowledged.

John Kyriazoglou, CICA, B.A. (Hon.)

1 The Stress Management Approach

'We have said that temperance is a mean with regard to pleasures (for it is less, and not in the same way, concerned with pains); self-indulgence also is manifested in the same sphere'.

Aristotle

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents an overview of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and details the parts making it up, such as: definition of the stress terms and stress factors, how to deal with stress; the four universal forces and principles that affect your life and help you deal with stress issues; and the stress management action plan, for your consideration and potential use for your business organization.

1. Stress Environment

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. The term 'stress' is derived from Latin '*stringere*' which means 'draw tight, bind tight, compress, press together, which comes from Greek '*strangein*', *which means* 'twist'.

Stress is a critical element of our survival as humans. In small doses, stress helps you to stay focused, creative, energetic, sociable, fit and alert. But when stress becomes overwhelming, it can damage your health, your mood, your body, your mind, your family, your productivity, your relationships, and your quality of life.[5]

Moreover it may cause you anxiety and depression.

Stress and anxiety, according to noted psychology and psychiatrist research, can produce both physical and psychological symptoms. Common physical symptoms include: stomach ache; muscle tension; headache; rapid breathing; fast heartbeat; sweating; shaking, etc.

In addition to physical symptoms, stress and anxiety can cause mental or emotional ones, including: feelings of impending doom; panic or nervousness, especially in social settings; difficulty concentrating; irrational anger; restlessness, etc[6].

Stress factors

There are, usually, two main categories of stress factors in our life, such as: Stress factors related to personal and family life events; and Occupational or Work-related stress factors.

The stress factors related to personal and family life events normally include: 1. Death; 2. Health; 3. Crime; 4. Self-abuse; 5. Family change; 6. Sexual problems; 7. Argument; 8. Sleep changes; 9. New work hours; 10. Vacation; 11. Moving; 12. Money; and 13. New job.

The stress factors related to occupational or work-related stress factors normally include: 1. The demands of the job; 2. The control staff have over how they do their work; 3. The support they receive from colleagues and superiors; 4. Their relationships with colleagues; 5. Whether they understand their roles and responsibilities; 6. How far the company consults staff over workplace changes; 7. Technology; 8. Rules and Regulations; 9. Information Overload; 10. Work-Family Balance; 11. Poor Leadership; 12. Inequity; and 13. Company Longevity.

2. How to deal with Occupational Stress

Experience has shown that occupational stress management and reduction needs specific actions that must be executed very well. But above all, stress reduction needs a strong will, faith, commitment and continuous perseverance for the intended actions of stress management to come to full fruition.

This is because the human brain is divided into two distinct cerebral hemispheres: left and right. The left brain is the seat of order, logic, analysis, sequence, structure, discipline, will power, and problem solving. It is analytical, objective, looks at parts and is rational. The right brain is the seat of creativity, spirituality, aesthetics, intuition, synthesis and holistic thought. It is subjective and looks at the whole.

You need both parts of the brain for best stress-reduction results: Techniques and actions (the left part) and motivation and creativity and other spiritual dimensions (the right part). You will have better results in occupational stress reduction if you enable your right brain to better implement the techniques and actions of the left brain.

You do this if you think in more spiritual terms and incorporate the practical left-brain actions with the right brain spiritual world in 'mind-body' interconnected mode.

'Mind' expresses the spiritual external and internal forces of the *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* that inspire and activate you and your business into executing well your stress-reduction actions, *such as:* **The Three Forces** (S1: Supreme Being; S2: Society; and S3: Soul), described later.
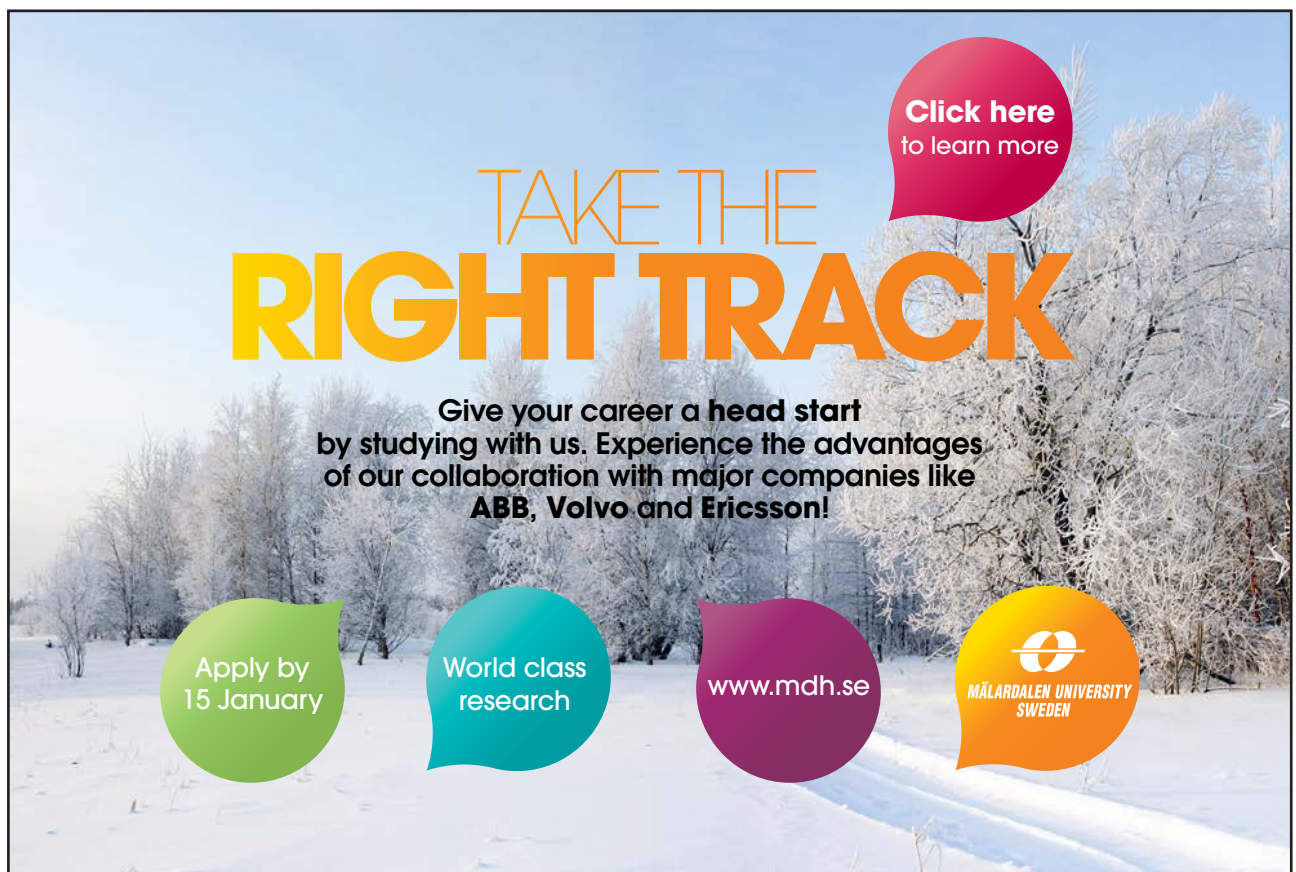
'Body' represents the planned actions of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* for your business in pure physical terms, such as strategies and action plans (*see next chapters 2 to 7*).

3. The Universal Forces

Within the framework of this book it is worthwhile to conceptualize the existence of three **spiritual universal forces** (3 Ss) that impact, drive, energize, influence the golden principles (just noted) and concern your life and business, and naturally your stress and feelings: *(S1) Supreme Being, (S2) Society and (S3) Soul*[7].

Force S1: Supreme Being. To attain a less-stressed and more balanced life both as persons and as business organizations we have to connect with The Supreme Being (God, Nature). This force provides the energy to enable us to reduce stress effectively by igniting the principle **Faith** and the completion of their proposed actions.

It is the Ultimate Logos of Heraclitus. **Heraclitus** proposed the view that all entities come to be in accordance with the Logos (principle of order, reason and knowledge, or God). One of his eloquent sayings is: 'Human laws are the creation of Divine Law, as it (the Divine Law) is superior to all other laws and it is applicable to all people the same way'.

Force S2: Society. As social beings we have to relate well to others to exist well. This is true for both individual persons and business organizations. Thus to continue to the road of a less-stressed life both as persons and as business organizations we have to connect with Force 2 (Society). This force provides the energy to us to keep reducing stress by igniting the **principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness)** and the completion of their proposed actions. The standards, values and morals of the society we live in are taught to us since our earliest childhood. They are incorporated into our own psyche, soul and mindset.

Force S3: Soul. Finally, in order to survive better, we have to sustain well both our own persons as well as our business organizations we have to connect to Force 3 (Soul). This force provides the energy to us to keep reducing stress even more by igniting the principles of **Temperance and Courage** and the completion of their proposed actions. It is the largest and most critical internal energy source for humans. It is also true for business organizations as they are made up of human beings, who manage its affairs and operations.

These universal spiritual forces and principles work in miraculous ways. As various neurological studies have shown spiritual forces energize your RAS (Reticular Activating System) which controls your body and mind so that you take action as a human being.

Thus these three forces **along with the seven principles, your stress-reduction** goals, tips, milestones, rules, recommendations, **strategies**, **plans,** ancient Greek wisdom and action points are bound to drive your **RAS** into effective action.

They do this by supporting your RAS to stay focused, do things and achieve what you want. Furthermore they reinforce your learning and your capability to be more adaptable, less stressed and resilient and change your habits to the better.

4. The Four Stress Reduction Strategies

The objective of the first strategy (**Strategy #1: Incorporate Basic Stress Reduction Actions into your Business Operations)** is to is to is to use the **Principle of Temperance** to maintain yourself and your business and make both stronger so that you manage, cope with, reduce and alleviate your occupational or workplace stress, and improve your personal and business life.

For more details see Chapter 3.

The objective of the second strategy (**Strategy #2: Add Spirituality to your Basic Stress Reduction Actions)** is to use the **Principle of Faith** to connect with nature and The Supreme Being so that you and your business *keep* reducing occupational stress more and more.

The objective of the third strategy (**Strategy #3: Improve your Stress Reduction Management Process with Better Relationships)** is to use the beneficial aspects of utilizing the **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness)** to sustain and improve their personal emotional health and the health of their business organizations. And this way to keep reducing the occupational stress at both levels: personal and business.

For more details see Chapter 5.

The objective of the fourth strategy (**Strategy #4: Strengthen your Stress Reduction Management Process with More Robustness)** is to is to use the **Principle of Courage** to make you and your business more robust so that you and your business *keep* reducing occupational stress more and more, and probably reach the end of your stress-reduction efforts.
For more details see Chapter 6.

5. Occupational Stress Management Plan

This action plan contains the following seven steps:
Step 1: Scope the occupational stress problem
Step 2: Organize and operate the stress-management team
Step 3: Establish the occupational stress-management framework
Step 4: Design, Develop and Implement stress-management strategies and action plans
Step 5: Establish stress-management communications
Step 6: Monitor stress-management activities
Step 7: Manage stress-management performance.

These are detailed in the next chapter.

10. Summary of the Chapter and Conclusion

In summary, the bricks and mortar joining and supporting all pillars and holding this edifice (‘*The OCCUP Stress Approach*’) together are represented by the pearls of wisdom of ancient Greece (*contained in this book and in other books of mine listed in the bibliography*), the three universal forces and my principles, techniques and action plans, detailed in this book.

In conclusion, since everyone has a unique response to occupational stress, there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies. Focus on what makes you and your business organization feel calm and in control.

You may consider reviewing and customizing this approach (‘*The OCCUP Stress Approach*’) to your requirements. It is entirely up to you and your style of business demands and professional requirements.

The following chapters outline in detail all the processes of ‘*The OCCUP Stress Approach*’, their proposed strategies and actions for better occupational stress management and reduction.

2   Occupational Stress Management Plan

'The magnificent man is like an artist; for he can see what is fitting and spend large sums tastefully'

Aristotle

Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the organization activities of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* in terms of: An Occupational Stress Management Action Plan; and the four stress reduction strategies.

1. Occupational Stress Management Plan

The objective of this plan is to present a set of steps you may use to design and implement stress reduction actions both for you as well as your business organization.

Occupational Stress Management Plan
Step 1. Scope the stress problems
Step 2. Organize and operate the stress-management team
Step 3. Establish the occupational stress-management framework
Step 4. Design, Develop and Implement stress-management strategies and action plans
Step 5. Establish stress-management communications
Step 6. Monitor stress-management activities
Step 7. Manage stress-management performance

Figure 1: Occupational Stress Management Plan

Step 1: Scope the stress problems: Identify the occupational stress at the workplace of your organization. This entails conducting a stress audit for your organization. More details are provided in the Appendix (Appendix 1: Occupational Stress Audit Questionnaire[8]).

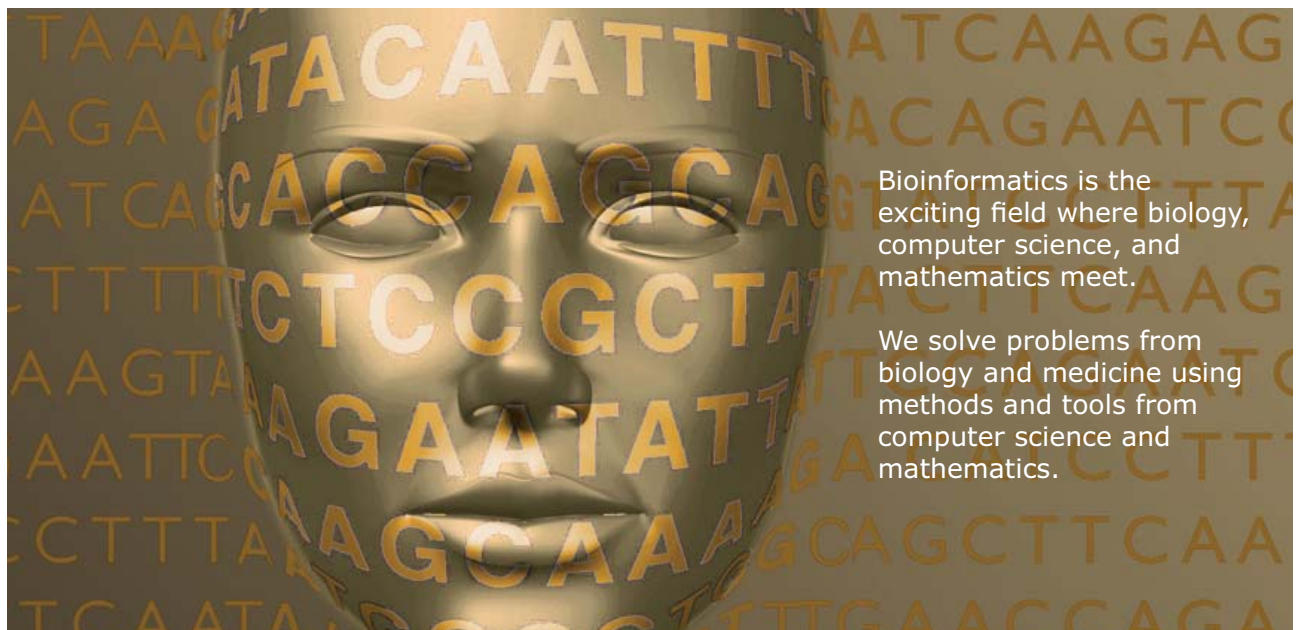For the latter case, use existing data to judge your current wellness and stress position, such as personnel exit interviews and sickness, absence and staff turnover records, etc. You may also survey your staff as to their attitude and experience of occupational stress at your workplace. You may also call in a wellness consultant to coordinate a company-wide stress audit for your business organization.

Step 2: Organize and operate the stress-management team.

1. Assign project manager or team leader.
2. Develop terms of reference.
3. Define the team and the roles within the team.
4. Assign specific responsibilities and performance objectives.
5. Develop and issue project schedule and reporting mechanisms.
6. Educate team on all factors, issues, standards and regulations related to occupational stress and ways to improve the mental wellbeing of your employees and managers at your organization's workplace.
7. Build commitment and trust by valuing the contribution of each member of the team.
8. Build empathy for each person's challenges.
9. Ensure the competence of the whole team, as well as each member.
10. Empower the team by allowing the members to work within the guidelines with each other to accomplish the goals.
11. Ensure that they provide support to all business managers implementing the stress reduction strategies.
12. Collect the wellness and stress reduction performance data and issue reports to all concerned.
13. Review and make recommendations on stress issues.
14. Ensure that a mechanism is established to resolve conflicts.

Step 3: Establish the occupational stress-management framework

1. Set clear vision, mission, values and targets for the project and its expectations.
2. Ensure that Board and Management responsibilities are well defined including the establishment of a Wellbeing Steering Committee.
3. Establish an Occupational Stress Policy (*see Appendix 2*).
4. Educate your team on the philosophical concepts of ancient Greek wisdom and other approaches (e.g. The Mindfulness Approach) for occupational stress management.
5. Review and finalize the corporate philosophical principles for managing occupational stress for your company. These philosophical principles will include: Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage (**The Seven Principles**).
6. Inform team members of the desired outcomes and measures of success (*see Appendix 3: Occupational Stress Performance Measures*). Invite each member to be a part of the team and communicate the goals and why they are selected.

Step 4: Design, Develop and Implement stress-management strategies and action plans: To reduce occupational stress at the personal and business levels you require specific action plans. These will be developed and executed, for best results, in four strategies, as described below (*see The Seven Principles Stress Reduction Strategies*).

Step 5: Establish stress-management communications: Craft and implement a **stress-management** communication policy (*see example in Appendix 4: Communications Policy*) and associated procedures. Ensure clarity and accountability for all types of communications. Ensure that the team shares information and develops an open mind. The design and development aspects are part of this process (Organization). The implementation aspects are part of the fourth process (Monitoring). *More details in Chapter 7.*

Step 6: Monitor stress-management activities: Establish regular monitoring. Review progress. Identify issues, and resolve problems. The design and development aspects are part of this process (Organization). The implementation aspects are part of the fourth process (Monitoring). *More details in Chapter 7.*

Step 7: Manage stress-management performance: Develop performance policy for team members. Link this policy with corresponding corporate performance system. Award team members when performance targets related to **stress-management** are met. Manage and improve performance issues related to **stress-management**. The design and development aspects are part of this process (Organization). The implementation aspects are part of the fourth process (Monitoring). *More details in Chapter 7.*

4. Description: The Seven Principles Stress Reduction Strategies

Each strategy of '*The OCCUP Stress Approach*' contains a business action plan with several actions, policies and ancient Greek wisdom sayings. This action plan for the business you associate with, lead, manage, consult, monitor, etc. will support you in reducing occupational stress for your business more effectively.

The four stress-reduction strategies are described in summary, next.

Strategy #1: Incorporate Basic Stress Reduction Actions into your Business Operations

This **strategy** (detailed fully in Chapter 3) describes the role of the first principle (**the Principle of Temperance)** of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'*.

Strategy # 1 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following occupational stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 2. The control staff have over how they do their work; 3. The support they receive from colleagues and superiors; 6. How far the company consults staff over workplace changes; 7. Technology; 9. Information Overload; and 11. Poor Leadership;

Strategy #2: Add Spirituality to your Basic Stress Reduction Actions

This **strategy** (detailed fully in Chapter 4) describes the role of the second principle (**Faith**) of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'*.

Strategy # 2 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following occupational stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 3. The support they receive from colleagues and superiors; 4. Their relationships with colleagues; 6. How far the company consults staff over workplace changes; 7. Technology; and 12. Inequity.

Strategy #3: Improve your Stress Reduction Management Process with Better Relationships

This **strategy** (detailed fully in Chapter 5) describes the role of the **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness)** the third, fourth, fifth and sixth principles of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'*.

Strategy # 3 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following occupational stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 4. The relationships of staff with colleagues; 5. Whether they understand their roles and responsibilities; 7. Technology; 8. Rules and Regulations; and 10. Work-Family Balance.

Strategy #4: Strengthen your Stress Reduction Management Process with More Robustness

This **strategy** (detailed fully in Chapter 6) describes the role of the **Principle of Courage** the seventh principle of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'***.**
Strategy # 4 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following occupational stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 5. Whether staff understand their roles and responsibilities; 7. Technology; 10. Work-Family Balance; 12. Inequity; and 13. Company Longevity.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter described the Process 1 activities of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'***.** These related to the Occupational Stress Management Action Plan and the four stress reduction strategies:

Strategy # 1 (Chapter 3): Incorporate Basic Stress Reduction Actions into your Business Operations (Force 3, Principle: Temperance);

Strategy # 2 (Chapter 4): Add Spirituality to your Basic Stress Reduction Actions (Force 1, Principle: Faith);

Strategy # 3 (Chapter 5): Improve your Stress Reduction Management Process with better Relationships (Force 2, Principles: Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness); and

Strategy # 4 (Chapter 6): Strengthen your Stress Reduction Management Process with more Robustness (Force 3, Principle: Courage).

In conclusion, since everyone has a unique response to stress, there is no 'one size fits all' solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies. Focus on what makes you and your business organization feel calm and in control.

I am recommending that you use this and framework and its constituent strategies in sequence for best results. However, you may also consider using one or more of these strategies independently of each other, as your business situation and operating style require and demand.

You may also consider reviewing, customizing and using one or more or all the recommended strategies of this approach. It is entirely up to you and your style of business demands and professional requirements.

The seven principles and their proposed strategies of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and actions for stress reduction supported by ancient Greek wisdom are detailed in the next chapters of this book.

Additional actions on improving other aspects in your personal and family life as well as your business and professional activities after achieving the strategic objectives of reducing your occupational stress are contained in *Appendix 5: Holistic Life Improvement Road Plan.*

3   Strategy #1: Incorporate Basic Stress Reduction Actions
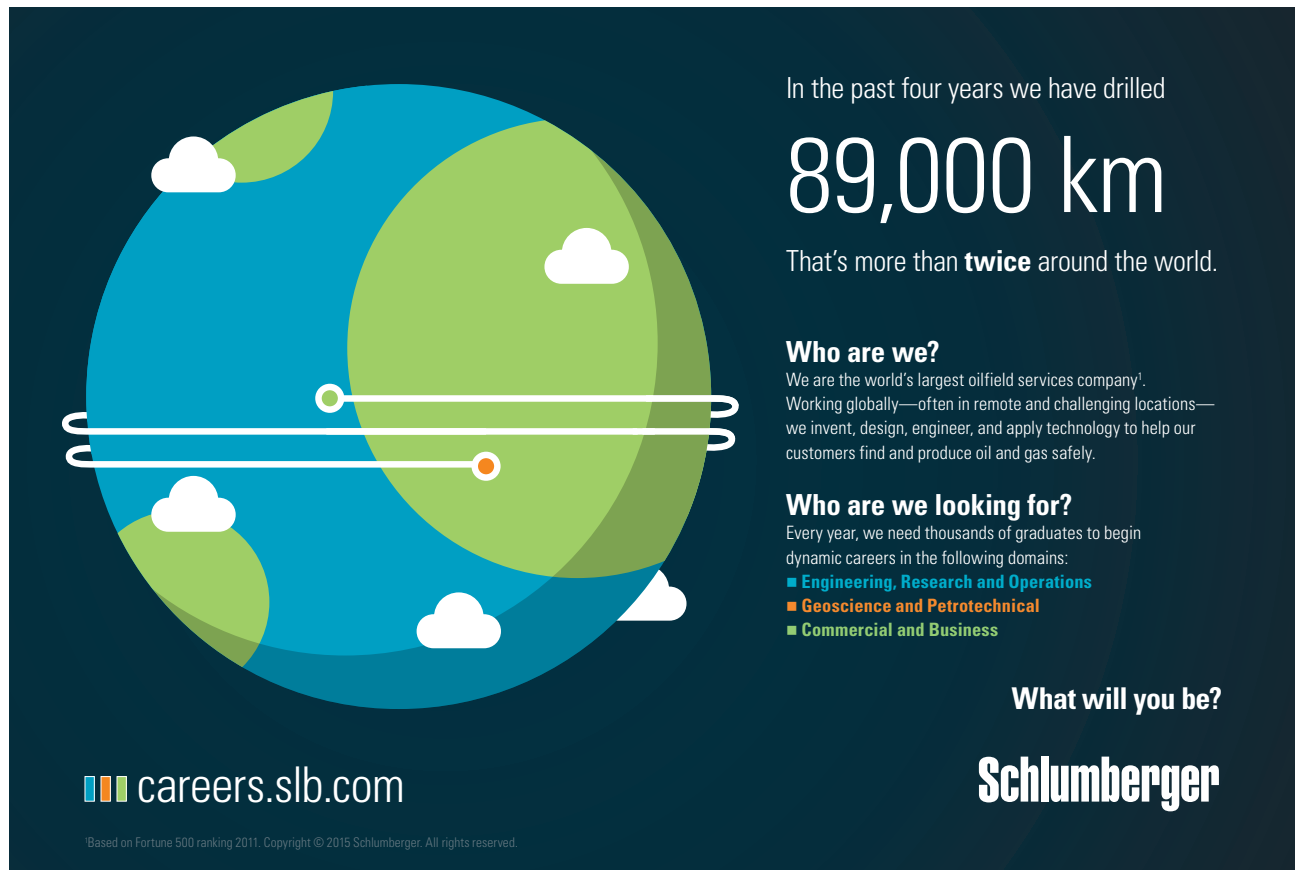
'You could not discover the limits of soul, even if you traveled by every path in order to do so; such is the depth of its meaning'.

Heraclitus

Chapter Overview

Up to now you have established your approach (Chapter 1) and the stress management framework (Chapter 2).

This chapter describes: the role of the first principle (**Temperance**) and the first Stress Management Strategy (first part of the Implementation Process); an action plan with several actions, techniques, questionnaires, policies and ancient Greek wisdom sayings, for your review, consideration and potential use.

1. Introduction: The role of the Principle of Temperance

Within the framework of this book and on the basis of ancient Greek wisdom I have used the golden principles of Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage (**The Seven Principles**) to practically manage and reduce occupational stress in the terms of each stress reduction strategy. The specific role of the first principle (Temperance) is detailed further in this chapter.

The wise Pythagoras guides us: 'Golden Verse 14. And accustom not thyself to behave thyself in anything without rule, and without reason'; 'Golden Verse 25. Let no man either by his words, or by his deeds, ever seduce thee'; and 'Seek the true value of all things, and enjoy all gifts of God according to Measure'. Life is a true reflection and mirrors of what we were in the past, what we are now, and what we can be in the future. The way we live, that is, our lifestyle (modus vivendi on the sociological vernacular) depends on our thoughts, our concepts, our ideas, and our world-views which we materialize at all times.

In our 21st century society, in both West and East, we are not allowed to know ourselves. As we grow, we have so many responsibilities, duties and roles that we must perform or expected to carry out by greater society. There is no time, or energy, or disposition to analyze or to look at ourselves. To know who we really are, where we come from, what our purpose is on this planet, where we are going, where the path for happiness is, and so on.

They are probably not fully aware of the absolute need to utilize the **Principle of Temperance** to maintain and sustain themselves and their business organizations better.

Their stress, both personal and occupational or work-related is at the highest limit. It is time for them to take control, get to know their own self and manage it better, so that they alleviate their occupational stress and be happier.

How do you change all that?

My recommendation is to use the strategy and actions presented in this chapter. You may also employ the additional strategies outlined in the following chapters.

2. Description of the first stress-reduction strategy

This strategy (**Strategy #1: Incorporate Basic Stress Reduction Actions into your Business Operations**) contains two action plans: Business and Corporate.

The main aim of this strategy is to support you to maintain yourself and your business and make both stronger so that you manage, cope with, reduce and alleviate your occupational or workplace stress, and improve your personal and business life.

Strategy # 1 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 2. The control staff have over how they do their work; 3. The support they receive from colleagues and superiors; 6. How far the company consults staff over workplace changes; 7. Technology; 9. Information Overload; and 11. Poor Leadership;

This strategy is based mainly on the Seven Principles of Living by Socrates and secondarily by Aristotle's theory of motivation and other ancient Greek wisdom concepts and sayings presented below.

For example **Socrates** guided his students: 'To keep interested in the truth; to make sure that their soul is as good as possible; and to get a good soul, they must maintain the four virtues of prudence, temperance, courage and justice'.

This strategy (**Stress Management Strategy #1)** is driven by the golden **Principle of Temperance,** the first principle of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach',* energized by universal force S3 (Soul) and supported by specific implementation actions and policies noted in the following paragraphs.

3. Business Stress Reduction Action Plan (Strategy #1)

This plan contains 6 actions you can execute to manage, cope with and reduce occupational or workplace stress with the use of this strategy. You may need these as a business owner, leader, manager, board director, business consultant, or other professional, etc., if you want to improve your business workplace environment and improve your company's effectiveness.

Action MB1: Organize your business for stress reduction

1. Ensure that an occupational stress audit has taken place, as noted in step 1 of 'Occupational Stress Management Plan' (*Chapter 1*). If a stress audit has not been done, ensure that it is done effectively.
2. Review the results of the occupational stress audit. Revisit or use existing data to judge your current business stress position, such as personnel exit interviews and sickness, staff absence and staff turnover records. Also start surveying staff as to their attitude and experience of stress at work, e.g. through a survey or questionnaire, etc.
3. Write and issue a stress policy.
4. Train your staff on occupational stress (see also Action MB4: Improve the education and learning of your people).
5. Get support. Use occupational stress experts if you think you can learn to manage occupational stress issues better.

Action MB2: Manage your business time and work with friendship.

1. Examine your business activities in accordance with the values of love and friendship, and your obligations.

2. Manage work assignments by delegating tasks; by assigning ownership of the work you give to your employees; by listening to them with respect, sensitivity and full attention; and by providing all necessary training, coaching and support so that they can do their job well.

3. Spend 60% of your business time in critical non-emergency activities, 30% of your business time in critical and emergency activities, and the remaining 10% of your business time in uninteresting activities.

4. Learn to say a friendly 'no' when others attempt to load you with activities that are not aligned with your professional and business needs, corporate vision, mission and values.

5. Use positive and friendly thinking to manage all the events, issues, problems and facts related to your business life and take preventive action when it is required on your part.

6. Perform your business and professional activities based on the priorities set by you and the time requirements of your business life and company, but also reinforcing the values of justice, goodness, fairness, love and friendship in all business activities.

7. Participate in social groups, professional societies and corporate volunteering (unpaid) activities on the basis of love and friendship.

8. Understand and know your personal limits and the limits of your business organization.

Action MB3: Organize and manage your corporate ethics

'It is not possible for anyone, when he (or she) does nothing, to do much'.

Aristotle

1. Have a corporate ethics policy (*see also Appendix 6: Example of a Corporate Ethics Policy*). Ensure that stress reduction related activities are included.
2. Craft vision, mission and values statements for your business. Include stress-reduction objectives into these.
3. Plan well all your business operations.
4. Know your organization extremely well.
5. Act in a fair, practical, responsible, efficient and results-oriented way.
6. Monitor and improve your business operations and actions.
7. Promote personnel to higher levels of organizational hierarchy, who are capable of forming positive, trusting and caring interpersonal relationships with people who report to them.
8. Train Your People. See action 4 next.
9. Involve your business personnel by being passionate and enthusiastic, keeping your company personnel informed and involved in the decision making process, as much as possible.
10. Motivate your people and keep clear channels of communication
11. Act with integrity and keep commitments to all participants in the affairs of the business (employees, authorities, customers, board members, stakeholders, etc.).
12. Protect the interest of all employees in a work group, even those who are absent
13. Handle emotional issues like occupational stress with calmness and fairness
14. Provide a positive and moral example to others[9]

Action MB4: Improve the stress education and learning of your people

1. Provide appropriate leadership and planning the stress reduction activities required for educating, training and coaching both to yourself (as a manager or senior executive, etc.) and to your business staff.
2. Obtain proper funds and other required resources for educating, training and coaching both yourself and your business staff on occupational stress reduction issues.

Action MB5: Assess the stress management skills your people

1. Assess the stress management skills of yourself and all your managers and employees via self-evaluation methods, coaching, questionnaires, benchmarking or other current education tools and techniques.

Action MB6: Develop the stress management skills your people

1. Develop the occupational stress management interpersonal relationship skills of all personnel and especially those of current managers and employees desiring promotion, by sending them to relevant courses or by coaching and mentoring programs.
2. Consider using specialized training programs, like NLP and Mindfulness training.
3. Upgrade job-related knowledge by attending university and professional seminars, and taking specific industry courses by both yourself and your business staff.
4. Get involved in coaching programs with concentration on occupational stress reduction for both yourself and your staff, as required.
5. Get involved in occupational stress reduction mentoring programs for both yourself and your staff, as required.
6. Get certified by a professional associations (both yourself and your staff) and get various critical organizational functions (e.g. production, IT, etc.) and components (e.g. IT security) certified.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter described the role of the first principle (**Principle of Temperance**) of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* in our current life and the first Stress Reduction Strategy (**Strategy #1: Incorporate Basic Stress Reduction Actions into your Business Operations**). It also used the ideas of Socrates, Aristotle and other ancient Greek wise men (and over 10 of their sayings) and developed and presented an action plan with several actions, techniques, and policies.

The Business Stress Reduction Actions pertained to reducing your occupational stress as a business by: Organizing your business for stress reduction; Managing your business time and work with friendship; Organizing and managing your business better; Improving the stress education and learning of your people; Assessing the stress management skills your people; and Developing the stress management skills your people.

In conclusion, the end result of this strategy is to organize you better so that the implementation of its recommended policies, plans, techniques and actions will make you robust spiritually and enable you and your business to *start* coping, managing and reducing your occupational stress.

Additional actions on improving other aspects in your personal and family life as well as your business and professional activities after achieving the self-management objective and reducing your occupational are contained in the Appendix (*see Appendix 5: Holistic Life Improvement Road Plan*).

4   Strategy #2: Add Spirituality to your Basic Stress Reduction Actions

'Human nature has no real understanding; only the divine nature has it'.

Heraclitus

Chapter Overview

Up to now you have established your approach, the stress management framework and implemented the first stress reduction strategy.

This chapter describes: the role of the second principle (**Faith**) of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and the second Stress Management Strategy; an action plan with several actions ; and various ancient Greek wisdom sayings, for your review, consideration and potential use.

1. Introduction: The role of the Principle of Faith

Within the framework of this book and on the basis of ancient Greek wisdom I have used the golden principles of Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage (**The Seven Principles**) to practically manage and reduce occupational stress in the terms of each stress reduction strategy. The specific role of the second principle (Faith) is detailed further in this chapter.

FAITH, as the main manifestation of believing in **The Supreme Being**, is as old as humanity itself. Humans in every society across the globe and over thousands of years practice some type of religion. Even though ancient Greek religion was polytheistic, it also incorporated concepts that could be said to resemble an Ultimate Reality or a Supreme Being or a Supreme Law. Divinities manifested by gods, goddesses, semi-gods and semi-goddesses and spirits (daemons, etc.) were the most important element of ancient Greek religion. The ancient Greeks were faithful and prayed to their gods and goddesses. They showed this faith by participating in a number of rituals, rites, ceremonies and sacrifices in order to impress and placate the Gods. Temples, shrines and statues were erected as a designated place to offer sacrifices to the Gods.

NATURE is another manifestation of believing in the existence of **The Supreme Being.**
Nature, in the broadest standard and well-accepted sense, is equivalent to the natural, physical, or material world or universe. 'Nature' also refers to the phenomena of the physical world, and also to life in general. It ranges in scale from the subatomic to the cosmic.

About one half of the forests that covered the Earth are gone. Each year, another 16 million hectares disappear. The World Resources Institute[10] estimates that only about 22% of the world's (old growth) original forest cover remains 'intact' – most of this is in three large areas: the Canadian and Alaskan boreal forest, the boreal forest of Russia, and the tropical forest of the northwestern Amazon Basin and the Guyana Shield (Guyana, Surinam, Venezuela, Columbia, etc.).

In addition to above concerns and issues, experts advise us that faith and nature activities relieve our personal and occupational stress.

Many people across the world, even though religious in many cases, are probably not fully aware of the beneficial aspects of utilizing the **Principle of Faith** to sustain and improve their personal emotional health and the health of their business organizations. And this way to reduce the occupational stress at both levels: personal and business.

How do you change all that?

My recommendation is to use the strategy and actions presented in this chapter**.** You may also employ the additional strategies outlined in the other chapters of this book.

2. Description of the second stress-reduction strategy

This strategy (**Strategy #2: Add Spirituality to your Basic Stress Reduction Actions)** contains an action plan to support you to connect with nature and The Supreme Being so that you and your business *keep* reducing occupational stress more and more.

Strategy # 2 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 3. The support they receive from colleagues and superiors; 4. Their relationships with colleagues; 6. How far the company consults staff over workplace changes; 7. Technology; and 12. Inequity.

This strategy is based mainly on the five principles of The Cynics as outlined next and secondarily by other ancient Greek wisdom concepts and sayings (Heraclitus, Socrates, etc.) presented below.

The Cynics, ancient Greek philosophers, like Antisthenes (c. 445–c. 365 BC), Diogenes the Cynic (c. 412 404 BC–323 BC), etc. offer the following guiding principles to us:

Principle 1: The goal of life is happiness, i.e. living in agreement with Nature.

Principle 2: Happiness depends on being self-sufficient, and a master of mental attitude.

Principle 3: Self-sufficiency is achieved by living a life of Virtue.

Principle 4: The road to Virtue is to free oneself from any influence such as wealth, fame, or power, which have no value in Nature.

Principle 5: Suffering is caused by false judgments of value, which cause negative emotions and a vicious character.

This strategy (**Stress Reduction Strategy #2**) is driven by the golden **Principle of Faith** the second principle of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and energized by universal force S1 (Supreme Being) and supported by specific implementation actions and policies noted in the following paragraphs.

3. Business Stress Reduction Action Plan (Strategy #2)

This plan contains over 18 actions you can execute to manage, cope with and reduce occupational or workplace stress with this strategy. You may need these as a business owner, leader, manager, board director, business consultant, or other professional, etc., if you want to improve your business workplace environment and improve your company's effectiveness.

3.1. Faith related actions

Action FB1: Establish your main business philosophy framework

1. Establish your main business philosophy framework. This should contain controls, such as:

   a) Vision Statement.
   b) Mission Statement.
   c) Values Statement.
   d) Corporate Ethics Policy.

    e) Corporate Social Responsibility Policy.

    f) Corporate Ethics Committee, Office and Program.

    g) Diversity Practices Management Approach.

    h) Religion-related complementary actions.

The purpose of all these is to guide the organization for the future (where it wants to go), to define more specific ways to accomplish that and to set ethical standards for all parties (board, executives, management, staff, etc.), in order to carry out their daily activities and interactions.

Defining all these (vision, mission, and values, etc.) is usually done once. These however, may be updated, depending on various circumstances and conditions, during the strategic planning or other reviews and evaluation processes of your specific Organization.

Experience has shown that, in the long run, the establishment and activation of all these main business philosophy framework elements has several impacts for your company.

First of all they bond people together and commit them to a common cause and a higher purpose. By bonding your business people to your common company purpose you are bound to reduce occupational or workplace stress and make your organization mentally healthier.

Secondly, besides stress reduction, the following long-term benefits are also likely to accrue to your business:

a) Greater and more improved organizational image and focus.

b) Better operation of your business functions as everyone operates on the basis of the same organizational image and focus.

c) Enhanced professional perception of your organization to society.

d) Improved team oriented environment for your staff.

e) Improved communication among all your business stakeholders.

f) Enhanced management and employee morale.

g) Better attraction and retention of the best people in your business organization.

Action FB2: Corporate Ethics Policy. *See example in Appendix 6.*

Action FB3: Corporate Social Responsibility Policy. *See example in Appendix 7.*

Action FB4: Corporate Ethics Committee, Office and Program.

Establishing a corporate ethics committee and office should be done by the board. The corporate ethics program should be developed by the corporate ethics committee (made up of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources Director, etc.).

A corporate ethics committee is a group of senior-level managers within a private company or public organization, established by the Board or other top organizational authority, that convene to implement an effective corporate ethics program within their organization.

A corporate ethics office is a formal part of an organization whose sole and main responsibility and duty is to implement the organization's ethics program. Typically, corporate ethics offices handle issues of misconduct, employee communications on the company's standards and aligning management control systems with corporate responsibility goals and specific objectives.

A corporate ethics program is a formal organizational initiative to implement standards of responsible business conduct, initiate awareness and training on ethics throughout the organization and detect and prevent misconduct.

Action FB8: Diversity Practices Management Approach. *See example in Appendix 8.*

Action FB9: Religion-related complementary actions.

1. Implement the business vision, mission and values statements, the business ethics policy and the corporate social responsibility policy and other diversity policies of your company using well-accepted religious principles and values in the business environment you operate.

2. Solidify your people's trust in each other in your profession and company by practicing and promoting your professional and company's moral principles and values in all activities.

3. Formulate and execute activities in your professional and business operations and procedures on the basis of well-accepted religious and ethical values.

4. Avoid lying and deceptive advertising and discrimination of any kind in your professional and business affairs.

5. Uphold the rights of your profession and industry.

6. Uphold the rights of employees, business and community stakeholders.

7. Report on all of these to your company board, internal staff and external stakeholders as well as your community by including all relevant data in your corporate reports and your business website.

4.2. Nature related actions

Likewise, at the business and professional level, it is up to each of us (owner, manager, CEO, board director, etc.), to use the nature principle to protect the environment in operating and managing our organizations, managing our people, interacting with our customers and partners, etc. so that we reduce occupational or work-related stress.

The corporate response to environmentalism has taken many forms. These range from simple exploitation of the phenomenon to a deeply committed entrepreneurship by those who share the values of the environmentalists and attempt to incorporate those values into the production process itself in every possible way.

A green business is an organization that demonstrates continuous compliance with applicable environmental regulations, conserve energy, water, and other materials, implement sound environmental practices that prevent pollution and waste generation, and share environmentally responsible practices with other businesses in the community.

A green business is **based on a sustainability framework which balances environmental, economic and social impacts in context of an organization's business needs.**

The following actions will help you establish a green business and reach the objective of nature in order to alleviate your occupational stress at the professional and business level:

Action NB1: Craft a green business management plan. This contains the management system approach for identifying your business's green objectives. This plan should include how you will achieve your objectives and what are the key performance indicators to track the success of your plan. Identify specific activities, (such as a certain percentage of waste diversion, percentage of local or organic meals, etc.) metrics for tracking, and outcomes you want to achieve for each objective identified and who is responsible for the end results.

Action NB2: Set up an environment management policy. This contains what your business objectives will be in terms of the environmental legislation, regulations, and other applicable requirements. *See appendix 9 for such an example.*

Action NB3: Develop your green business practices. This includes:

Action NB3.A: Develop your green business offices practices and guidelines.

Action NB4: Make your building as green as possible.

Action NB5: Develop your green production operation.

Action NB6: Develop your green computing operation.

More details are included in the Appendix (*see Appendix 10: Green Business Practices*).

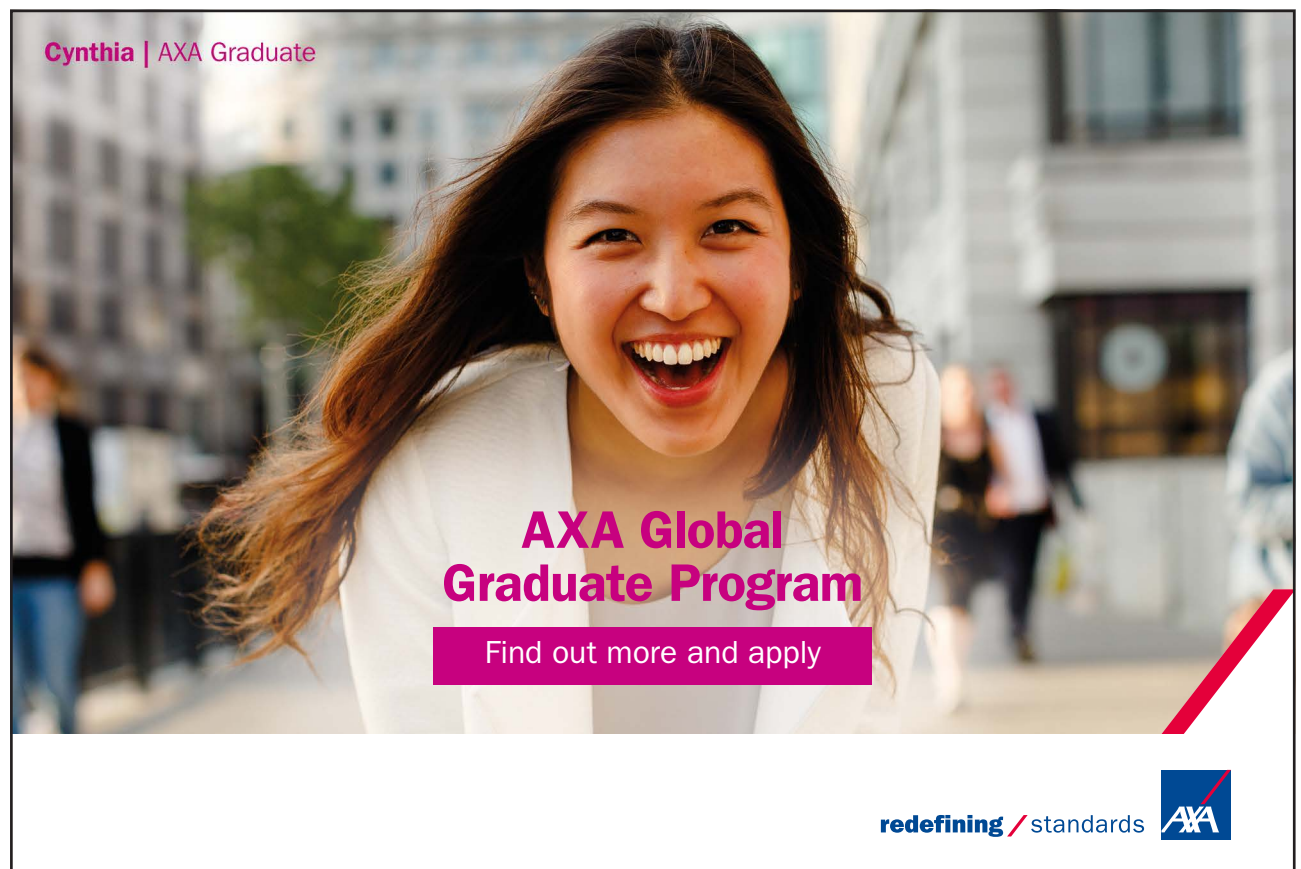**Action NB7: Get internal support.**

1. Engage internal stakeholders in supporting your plan. These stakeholders involve board members, top management and all levels of management and employees, including, as needed, their union representatives.

2. Establish or create a green business committee to focus on all aspects of green business.

Action NB8: Get external support.

1. Engage vendors and supply chain partners in supporting your green business plan.

2. Include your green business specifications in your RFP process and awarding of contracts.

3. Network with them and use their services when you need them. Part of being a green business is making sure that you do your best to ensure that your supply chain is green, too.

Action NB9: Green business performance management.

1. Establish your green performance objectives by quantifying your results in human scale terms (e.g., amount of $$ or Euros saved, amount of trees saved, amount of CO2 kept out of the atmosphere, etc.).

2. Track your Performance. Just as you monitor your budgets, you need to monitor and track the performance of your green business action plans.

3. Ensure accurate reports so you can build on them for future years.

4. Communicate your results to your internal and external stakeholders, including media and the industry, as required.

Action NB10: Create a nature visits and events program for your company.

1. Establish and operate a nature program to suit your company's needs and aspirations.

2. Your goal should be to create rewarding experiences for your attendees (management, staff).

3. Align this program with your organization.

4. Be creative and include a yoga break, human powered energy stations, networking events that have purpose in a local community, etc.

5. Allow for some outdoor or nonscheduled activity time. Your attendees will appreciate your efforts to take care of their green needs.

Action NB11: Educate yourself and your staff.

1. Attend yourself and your staff, courses, seminars and industrial conferences on all aspects of green business that apply to your company.

2. Keep up with environmental news and green business trends to identify areas you can improve on.

3. Make your own checklist of green business practices to implement and set deadlines for crossing them off your list.

4. Share green news and tips with your co-workers, employees, and clients.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter described the role of the second principle (**Principle of Faith**) of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* in our current life and the second Stress Reduction Strategy (**Strategy #2: Add Spirituality to your Basic Stress Reduction Actions**). It also used the ideas of the Cynics and other ancient Greek wise men (and several of their sayings) and developed and presented an action plan with several actions and policies.

The Business Stress Reduction Actions pertained to reducing your occupational stress as a business by: Faith related actions, such as: Establish your main business philosophy framework (Vision, Mission and Values statements, etc.); Diversity Practices Management Approach; and Religion-related complementary actions), and Nature related actions, such as: Craft a green business management plan; Develop your green business practices; Create a nature visits and events program for your company; and Educate yourself and your staff.

In conclusion, the end result of this strategy is to organize you better so that the implementation of its recommended policies, plans, techniques and actions will make you robust spiritually and enable you and your business to *keep* coping, managing and reducing your occupational stress.

Additional actions on improving other aspects in your personal and family life as well as your business and professional activities after achieving the faith objective and reducing your occupational stress are contained in the Appendix (*see Appendix 5: Holistic Life Improvement Road Plan*).

5 Strategy #3: Improve your Stress Reduction Management Process with Better Relationships

'To extinguish hybris (or hubris, meaning exaggerated self-pride) is more needed than to extinguish a fire'.

Heraclitus

Chapter Overview

Up to now you have established your approach, the stress management framework and implemented the first and second stress reduction strategies.

This chapter describes: the role of the **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness),** the third, fourth, fifth and sixth principles of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and the third Stress Management Strategy; an action plan with several actions ancient Greek wisdom sayings, for your review, consideration and potential use.

1. Introduction: The role of the Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness)

Within the framework of this book and on the basic of ancient Greek wisdom I have used the golden principles of Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage (**The Seven Principles**) to practically manage and reduce occupational stress in the terms of each stress reduction strategy. The specific role of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth principles are detailed further in this chapter.

Epicurus advises us**:** 'The largest of the goods that wisdom creates for a happy life is friendship';

We are social animals. Our daily encounters with parents, spouses, bosses, and even strangers shape our brains and affect both our nervous system and cells throughout our bodies, all the way down to the level of our genes. According to various studies if we relate well we tend be less stressed. In the opposite case we get sick easier, both physically and mentally. Sociability is responsible for all of these.

Sociability is a trait, the ability, the act or the quality of a person to seek the pleasant company of others. People who show high levels of sociability are friendly, outgoing, courteous, tactful, diplomatic, sensitive to the needs of others, show concern for their well-being and create cooperative relationships with their colleagues and people they work with. They also show, according to studies, less occupational or workplace stress, in most cases, as they adjust better to the environment they are. In addition, loneliness and sociability were investigated in other studies. Those who are lowest in loneliness produced the highest number of antibodies, while those who ranked as being highly lonely had the lowest number of antibodies[11].

Sociability is built on the concepts and skills of social intelligence. In other words social intelligence in people and corporations is manifested through aspects of sociability.

Social intelligence provides the framework, methods and repertoire of model behaviors for you to attain the required skills to become more sociable in both your personal life and business activities.

Sociability and social intelligence are part of the greater concept of 'association with others', which is defined by how we interact with one another in all our every-day personal and business activities, in terms of:

1. 'Friendliness' (Friendly Activities), manifested by Friendship, Love, Mercy, Forgiveness, and Happiness;
2. 'Harmony' (Harmonic Symbiosis), expressed by Peace, Justice, Honor and Wisdom; and
3. 'Goodness' (Aspects of Goodness and Badness), depicted by Goodness, Hate, Anger, Murder and Vice.

It is worth noting that the ancient Greeks lived a highly social life, as evidenced by how they participated in open democracy, athletic games, religious festivities, theaters, symposia, etc.

Coming to our century the question is: how do we then improve our sociability and become more intelligent socially, both as individuals as well as business organizations, and decrease our stress, both personal and occupational?

In addition to above concerns and issues, experts advise us that faith and nature activities relieve our personal and occupational stress.

Many senior executives across the world, even though very successful in their own domain, are probably not fully aware of the beneficial aspects of utilizing the **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness)** to sustain and improve their personal emotional health and the health of their business organizations. And this way to reduce the occupational stress at both levels: personal and business.

How do you change all that?

My recommendation is to use the strategy and actions presented in this chapter (**Strategy #3: Improve your Stress Reduction Management Process with Better Relationships).** You may also employ the additional strategies outlined in the other chapters of this book.

2. Description of the third stress-reduction strategy

This strategy contains a Business Plan you can execute as a leader or manager person for the business you associate with (lead, manage, consult, monitor, etc.).

Strategy # 3 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following occupational stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 4. The relationships of staff with colleagues; 5. Whether they understand their roles and responsibilities; 7. Technology; 8. Rules and Regulations; and 10. Work-Family Balance.

This strategy is based mainly on the Seven Principles of Living by Socrates and the ideas of Aristotle, the Stoics and Epicurus and secondarily by other ancient Greek wisdom concepts and sayings presented below.

For example: The principles of living taught by the **Stoics** (Zeno of Citium, Pyrrho, Epictetus, etc.):
  a) Prudence (Ability to judge between actions at a given time);
  b) Temperance (Practicing self-control, abstention and moderation);
  c) Courage (Endurance and ability to confront fear and uncertainty); and
  d) Justice (Proper moderation between self-interest and the needs of others).

Epicurus considered friendship a matter of the most crucial importance. Everybody, including women and slaves attended his teachings at his school, called 'The Garden'. He claimed that friendship, more than anything else, contributed to the good and pleasant life as it is the cohesive force that makes society and human cohabitation and coexistence possible at all.

This strategy (**Stress Reduction Strategy #3**) is driven by the golden **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness)** the third, fourth, fifth and sixth principles of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and energized by universal force S2 (Society) and supported by specific implementation actions and policies noted in the following paragraphs.

3. Business Stress Reduction Action Plan (Strategy #3)

This plan contains 12 actions you can execute to manage, cope with and reduce occupational or workplace stress with this strategy. You may need these as a business owner, leader, manager, board director, business consultant, or other professional, etc., if you want to improve your business workplace environment and improve your company's effectiveness.

3.1. Sociability related actions

Action SB1: Use friendship to craft your business relationships

Plato: 'Friendship, freedom, justice, wisdom, courage and moderation are the key values that define a good society'.

1. **Friendship requires sensitivity**. Show sensitivity to other professions and companies by avoiding derogatory comments and do not criticize, condemn or complain to anyone about them.
2. **Friendship requires collaboration**. Make your professional and business goal the habit to work together and collaborate with other professions and companies harmoniously.
3. **Friendship requires patience**. Show patience and maintain good relationships with everyone in business and economy (colleagues, supervisors, senior management, customers, authorities, etc.).
4. **Friendship requires honesty**. In a business environment, be interested in others (colleagues, supervisors, senior management, customers, etc.) with sincerity, always showing friendship, goodness and honesty to all.
5. **Friendship requires politeness**. Address the other professional or business person always in plural terms, unless the other person allows you to speak in the singular.
6. **Importance complements friendship.** Use importance in associating with others. Make the other professional or business person feel important to you, and you do that with sincerity.
7. **Friendship requires friendly communication**. Start a professional or business communication in a friendly and pleasant manner. When you are in error, accept it quickly and emphatically and apologize with honesty. Express your sympathy to the other person. Keep your humor within acceptable social boundaries while rejecting slander and vulgarities.
8. **Business time management requires friendship.** Examine your business activities in accordance with the values of love and friendship, and your obligations. Spend 60% of your business time in critical non-emergency activities, 30% of your time in critical and emergency activities, and the remaining 10% of your time in uninteresting activities. Learn to say a friendly 'no' when others attempt to load you with activities that are not aligned with your professional and business needs, vision, mission and values.

9. **Positive thinking complements friendship**. Use positive and friendly thinking and priority. Use positive and friendly thinking to manage all the events, issues, problems and facts related to your business life and take preventive action when it is required on your part. Perform your activities based on the priorities set by you and the time requirements of your life and company, but also reinforcing the values of justice, goodness, fairness, love and friendship in all business activities.

10. **Friendship requires participation**. Participate with friendship. Participate in social groups, professional societies and corporate volunteering (unpaid) activities on the basis of love and friendship. Understand and know your personal limits and the limits of your business organization.

11. **Friendship impacts compliance**. Devise and implement your company's compliance actions considering all rules and regulations (your company's rules, policies, and guidelines, as well as laws of your government, industry, professional association, etc.) on the basis of friendship for better implementation.

Action SB2: Use goodness to strengthen your business relationships

1. **Goodness requires dedication**. Understand that goodness, kindness, friendship and collaboration (with your customers, staff, stakeholders, etc.) needs time and dedication to develop and grow.

2. **Express goodness to society**. Establish and operate a corporate philanthropic program by[12]: crafting a social responsibility policy (*see Appendix 11 for a typical example*); deciding on the funds to be set aside for such purposes; ensuring all executives have clear roles and responsibilities regarding this program; and linking your corporate philanthropy to your business mission and activities.

3. **Goodness requires right communication**. Use polite, positive and constructive discussions and good communications to support your business relationships so that goodness and friendship can add benefits for yourself and your professional associates.

4. **Goodness requires collaboration**. Learn and practice ways to be good, trustworthy, collaborating and co-operating with your professional associates, both in your work and in your other professional encounters.

5. **Social grooming complements goodness**. Practice good and kind social grooming to solidify your business relationships better. By this you will work in a more productive way, improve your trust in the other person, cooperate with better result for both parties and learn from each other in the process.

6. **Goodness requires limits**. Define your boundaries and limits to the breaches of goodness, kindness, trust and friendship by the other parties.

7. **Goodness strengthens change management**. Manage changes in your business environment in a fair, good, kind, friendly and effective way.

3.2. Harmony related actions

Action SB8: Complement silence with other behavioral characteristics.

1. Be sensitive. Show sensitivity to other professions and companies by avoiding derogatory comments and do not criticize, condemn or complain to anyone about them.

2. Be collaborative. Make your professional and business goal the habit to work together with other professions and companies harmoniously.

3. Be patient. Show patience and maintain good relationships with everyone in business and economy (colleagues, supervisors, senior management, customers, authorities, etc.).

4. Be honest. In a business environment, be interested in others (colleagues, supervisors, senior management, customers, etc.) with sincerity, always showing friendship, goodness and love to all.

5. Be polite. Address the other professional or business person always in plural terms, unless the other person allows you to speak in the singular.

6. Be sincere. Make the other person feel important to you, and you do that with sincerity.

7. Be friendly. Employ friendly rules of communication. Learn to say a friendly 'no' when others attempt to load you with activities that are not aligned with your professional and business needs, vision, mission and values.

8. Apologize. When you are in error, accept it quickly and emphatically and apologize with honesty.

9. Be sympathetic. Express your sympathy to the other person.

10. Use humor. Keep your humor within acceptable social boundaries while rejecting slander and vulgarities.

It is imperative that you to act, given the stated additional problems and industrial diseases caused by noise at work[13], besides the already-mentioned occupational or work-related stress. Thus, as a business person, owner, manager, board member, professional, etc., it is your duty to handle these issues effectively by the use and support of the silence principle.

**Action SB9: Use harmony in your business activities**

1. Allow time for your company personnel to make harmony, praying, meditation and silence their useful tools.

2. As a business manager get rid of all your negative thoughts by allowing only pleasant, happy and harmonious thoughts to fill your mind.

3. Preserve yourself by maintaining a healthy, harmonious attitude towards sleeping, eating and relaxing, and by relating to nature.

4. Learn how to handle business and professional failure in a calm way and recover from it in an effective way.

5. Use harmony to handle difficult people within your business or profession in a fair and positive manner.

6. Use harmony to work out mutually-agreed solutions on problems and issues involving your associates, customers, professional and business partners.

Action SB10: Build and manage a harmonic team

1. **Scope the problem**: Identify and document specifications, needs, expectations, demands and resources.

2. **Organize the team**: Assign project manager or team manager. Develop terms of reference. Define the team and the roles within the team. Assign specific responsibilities. Develop and issue project schedule and reporting mechanisms.

3. **Link team to strategy**: Set clear vision, mission, values and targets for the project and its expectations. Inform team members of the desired outcomes and measures of success. Invite each member to be a part of the team and communicate the goals and why they are selected.

4. **Enable team culture**: Build commitment and trust by valuing the contribution of each member of the team. Build empathy for each person's challenges. Ensure the competence of the whole team, as well as each member. Empower the team by allowing the members to work within the guidelines with each other to accomplish the goals. Resolve conflicts.

5. **Establish communications**: Craft and implement communication policy and associated procedures. Ensure clarity and accountability for all types of communications. Ensure that the team shares information and develops an open mind.

6. **Monitor activities**: Establish regular monitoring. Review progress. Identify issues, and resolve problems. Close the project when all project activities have been concluded successfully.

7. **Manage performance**: Develop performance policy for team members. Link this policy with your corresponding corporate performance system. Award team members when they reach they pre-defined performance targets. Manage performance issues.
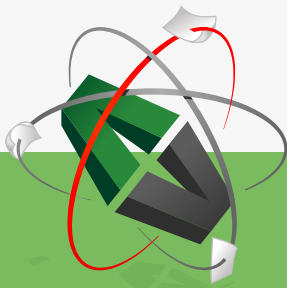
Action SB11: How to handle angry people at work

Aristotle: 'Anybody can become angry, that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way, that is not within everybody's power, that is not easy.'

1. **Shift perspective**. Take a short walk outside of the location where the conflict has taken place.
2. **Use silence**. Make silence your useful tool. Use it to envision happiness and success.
3. **Meditate**. Breathe slowly and get rid of all your negative thoughts. Allow only pleasant, happy and harmonious thoughts to fill your mind.
4. **Design alternate solutions.** Think out various solutions as regards the difficult person and the situation facing both of you. Work out a mutually-agreed solution with the person(s) involved.
5. **Implement agreed solution**.

Action SB12: Adopt Family-friendly workplace practices

If you are a board director or senior manager it is worthwhile for you to consider adopting family-friendly workplace practices. These are bound to lessen the occupational stress of both employees and your management team. One of the best ways of doing this is to employ the ancient Greek principles of harmony, justice, friendship and kalokagathia (goodness and kindness) as the basis for executing the following steps:

1. Craft your family-friendly workplace practices.

1.1. Allow certain professionals to work at home via internet, one to two days a week, depending on the job's specifics. For example this can be done for computer programmers, sales men, accountants, etc.

1.2. Enable leaving off work early every Friday, assuming the work has been completed during the previous day.

1.3. Provide child care facilities.

1.4. Allow taking time off during Christmas for overtime or extra work done previously.

1.5. Provide a policy for working part-time or creating part-time work opportunities.

1.6. Allow taking time off for an educational or skill upgrade and agreement to come back.

1.7. Allow children to access the workplace of their parents working for you under certain conditions, during holidays, etc.

2. Review, agree and communicate these to all staff.

3. Monitor the manner of their implementation.

4. Ensure that these policies and practices apply equally to all people in your business organization.

5. Make all necessary changes and improvements, at least on an annual basis.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter described the role of the **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness),** the third, fourth, fifth and sixth principles of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* in our life and the third (**Stress Reduction Strategy #3: Improve Your Sociability**). It also used the ideas of Socrates and other ancient Greek wise men (and several of their sayings) and developed and presented two action plans (Personal and Business) with over 19 actions.

The Business Stress Reduction Actions pertained to reducing your occupational stress as a business by: Using friendship and goodness to craft your business relationships; Using harmony and silence techniques and concepts to operate your business, managing teams and handling angry people at work; and adopting family-friendly workplace practices.

The end result of this strategy is to enable you to improve your personal and business relationships better and this way *keep* coping, managing and reducing occupational stress more effectively.

Additional actions on improving other aspects in your personal and family life as well as your business and professional activities after achieving the **Principles of Justice, Harmony, Friendship and Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness),** and reducing your occupational stress are contained in the Appendix (*see Appendix 5: Life Improvement Road Plan).*

6   Strategy #4: Strengthen your Stress Reduction Management Process with More Robustness

'It is by disease that health is pleasant, by evil that good is pleasant, by hunger satiety, by weariness rest'.

Heraclitus

Chapter Overview

Up to now you have established your approach), the stress management framework and implemented the first, second and third stress reduction strategies.
This chapter describes: the role of the **Principle of Courage** the seventh principle of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and the fourth Stress Management Strategy; an action plan with several actions and ancient Greek wisdom sayings, for your review, consideration and potential use.

1. Introduction: The role of the Principle of Courage

Within the framework of this book and on the basic of ancient Greek wisdom I have used the golden principles of Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage (**The Seven Principles**) to practically manage and reduce occupational stress in the terms of each stress reduction strategy. The specific role of the last principle (Courage) is detailed further in this chapter.

Epictetus provides the guiding principle: 'Never tell yourself that you lost but that you gave it back. Did your child die? It was given back. Did your wife die? She was given back. Was your property stolen? It was given back. Care for whatever you have like it is foreign to you, as passers-by look upon a hotel when they visit it'.

Society values, unfortunately, success to mean excessive luxury and unwarranted indulgences, fast cars, beach-owning mansions, private planes, super yachts, trophy wives, etc. This makes you not to care about the career you have chosen, whether you have a balanced and harmonious life, and does not make you concentrate on making yourself and society better, in the long run.
But failure is a given in life, no matter what you do. Even the most successful people in business and other sectors of the economy have faced a professional setback at some point. The difference lies in how such failures are handled. Some people, managers and professionals are able to come out of them as better. Others are not, as they cannot or do not know how to manage failure and become more resilient. This adds to their occupational stress, and creates problems for them and the people they associate with.

Many people across the world, even though successful in many cases, are probably not fully aware of the beneficial aspects of utilizing the **Principle of Courage** to sustain and improve their personal emotional health and the health of their business organizations. And this way to reduce the occupational stress at both levels: personal and business.

So, how do you we strengthen personal and corporate resilience?

My recommendation is to use the strategy and actions presented in this chapter (**Strategy #4: Strengthen your Stress Reduction Management Process with More Robustness).** You may also employ the additional strategies outlined in the other chapters of this book.

2. Description of the fourth stress-reduction strategy

This strategy (**Strategy #4**) contains an action plan to make you and your business more robust so that you and your business *keep* reducing occupational stress more and more.

Strategy # 4 and its actions mainly focus on attacking the following stress factors: 1. The demands of the job; 5. Whether staff understand their roles and responsibilities; 7. Technology; 10. Work-Family Balance; 12. Inequity; and 13. Company Longevity.

This strategy is based mainly on the five principles of The Stoics and secondarily by other ancient Greek wisdom concepts and sayings presented below.

This strategy (**Stress Reduction Strategy #4:** Strengthen your Stress Reduction Management Process with more Robustness) is driven by the golden **Principle of Courage** the seventh principle of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'* and energized by universal force S3 (Soul) and supported by specific implementation actions and policies noted in the following paragraphs.

3. Business Stress Reduction Action Plan (Strategy #4)

This plan contains 9 actions you can execute and several policies you can implement to manage, cope with and reduce occupational or workplace stress with this strategy. You may need these as a business owner, leader, manager, board director, business consultant, or other professional, etc., if you want to improve your business workplace environment and improve your company's effectiveness.

Action RB1: Define Business Resilience for your company.

You need to define business reliance so that all your people have a common understanding of what it, Business Resilience, relates to.

Business Resilience can be defined, in practical terms, as 'the positive ability of a company to adapt itself to the consequences of a catastrophic failure and recover back to its previous normal business operations in a prescribed time period with the less damage as possible. These catastrophic failures may be caused by one or more of the following, either acting alone or in conjunction with other events. These, as an example include: loss of a very large portion of customers, great losses of markets, product or services obsolescence, major customer electrical or other energy power outage, weather conditions, a fire, a bomb, a major labor dispute and strike, a pandemic, an earthquake, a physical security invasion of facilities, a critical breach or takeover of IT systems and facilities, a major cyber-attack and destruction of company IT resources, or similar such event'.

This can only be put into actual terms for your business by a Business Resilience Management Plan, described next.

Action RB2: Implement a Business Resilience Management Plan

All the potential disasters if not planned and recovery actions not managed effectively can shut down a healthy and profitable business in no time. It is therefore natural and expected that these cause occupational stress to the business owners, executives, managers and professionals, all over the world.

Several questions come to the effective manager's mind.

How can I make my company more resilient? Should I create a resilient corporate culture? How can my organization deal with change? How can business staff cope with ambiguity and uncertainty? How do they allocate resources? How do my managers foster self-effectiveness as opposed to fatalism in their operating staff? Is there trust and goodwill, a shared sense of purpose and a feeling that there exists the capacity and skills to meet all demands? Is there a sense of inter-connectedness, of co-ordination, of real honest communication?

In my experience there are four things you need to do to prepare yourself and your business organization:
1. Craft and implement resiliency plans, policies, procedures and methods
2. Obtain systems and resources for resilience
3. Improve the resiliency coping skills of your staff
4. Enhance your company's social intelligence.

And let's not forget that you also need a cultural framework and strong leadership to motivate all parties into action, before the disaster strikes and immediately the moment it does.

Business Resilience Process

A usual Business Resilience Process, in my experience also complemented by various other sources (see bibliography) includes the following seven major sub-processes:

Sub-Process 1: Business resilience planning. This entails studying, analyzing and planning for managing business resilience issues, such as: supply chain logistics, customer issues, brand name, reputation and other competitive advantage issues, privacy, building redundancy with partners, inventory and offshoring facilities, aligning procurement strategy with suppliers, building honest relationships with your employees, customers, and suppliers, etc.

Sub-Process 2: Identifying the business functions, business data, IT systems and resources: This involves identifying funds, personnel, facilities, business functions, IT systems, offices, data, filing systems, equipment, partners, etc.

Sub-Process 3: Addressing any special security requirements: Companies, regardless of type and size, need to support security-rich communication, business transaction processing and other critical systems and facilities via a well-defined security strategy for protecting the corporate assets including the brand image and other intangible assets.

Sub-Process 4: Developing the plan, changing the corporate culture and assigning roles and responsibilities.

Sub-Process 5: Testing the plan.

Sub-Process 6: Reviewing the plan.

Sub-Process 7: Maintaining the plan.

Furthermore I have used these seven sub-processes to craft a detail plan with 24-steps to execute an effective business resilience process in various client assignments[14].

Action RB3: Align your IT systems with your business operations

Step 1: Conduct Enterprise Architecture (EA) Preliminary Study
Step 2: Set up EA Organization
Step 3: Commit EA Users
Step 4: Develop EA Communication
Step 5: Document EA Demands Documentation
Step 6: Select EA Framework
Step 7: Define Current Business Model
Step 8: Develop Changes to the Current Business Model
Step 9: Document Future Business Model
Step 10: Craft EA Implementation Plan
Step 11: Execute EA Plan
Step 12: Monitor, Review and Improve EA Process[15]

Action RB4: Manage your company's finances very well

The Seven Sages provides us with the guiding principle: 'Acquire wealth in a just way'.

1. Establish efficient financial and other business recording systems and procedures and manage and monitor your business wealth, such as: investments, accounts payable, receivable and budget very well, and your cash flow and cash very effectively.
2. Establish and execute optimal anti-fraud procedures.
3. Perform due diligence on all your staff and partners.
4. Backup all your critical business data in an offsite safe location.
5. Register all your patents and copyrights.
6. Innovate and keep abreast of market and technology developments.
7. Establish and execute a business policy to contribute to social causes, ecology, philanthropy and community work[16].

Action RB5: Develop and Sell New Products and Services

Developing a new product or service entails a complex set of activities, such as:

1. Concept development: conceptual design and definition of the characteristics of the new product or service.
2. Product or service planning: market building, small scale testing and feasibility study.
3. Product and process engineering: detail design of the product, identification of the tools, processes and equipment required and building first prototypes.
4. Pilot manufacturing: fabricating the first products, reviewing and improving the manufacturing process, marketing the first products, and planning the full production process.
5. Market testing: evaluate field experience with product or service and devise your promotional plan.
6. Market penetration: implement your promotional plans, evaluate first experiences with product or service, fill distribution channels, promote products, and interact with key customers.
7. Review and improve the process as needed[17].

Action RB6: Implement an Industrial Espionage and Sabotage Management Plan

1. Describe your company's major management controls, and compare them with your industry standards and with the similar-type controls established by other similar companies, and identify any obvious gaps and required improvements.

2. Quantify, in terms of money, the total investments (data, systems, patents, buildings, plants, other assets, etc.) owned and managed made by your company at this point in time.

3. Describe your company's major physical (buildings, offices, plants, etc.), IT and web-enabled applications security controls, and identify any obvious gaps and required improvements.

4. Improve your protection mechanisms of the business data, patents, trademarks and information systems and other assets of your company, according to the gaps identified above.

5. Improve your internal audit system and ensure execution of both periodic and ad hoc audits of all your business operations and internal controls.

6. Submit all the documentation required to register your patents, copyrights, intellectual property, inventions, and trademarks with the proper authorities[18].

7. Classify your business data according to sensitivity criteria, etc.

8. Design, develop and implement adequate security controls on the basis of a company-wide risk assessment of the threats and risks facing your specific company.

9. Train all your users, managers and IT staff in protecting and safeguarding your business data and information against social engineering techniques.

10. Implement production processes that ensure your products are not defective, support these products after they are sold, fix them if they are found defective, and inform your customers if your products are found problematic.

11. Set up a unit or team to gather (legally) business intelligence data for your use.

12. Associate with other firms and partners to make your operations more resilient by exchanging data and techniques[19].

Action RB7: Implement a Cyber Resilience Management Plan

Cyber-resilience is the organization's capability to withstand negative impacts due to known, predictable, unknown, unpredictable, uncertain and unexpected threats from activities in cyberspace[20].

The primary objective of the Cyber Resilience Management Plan is to provide guidelines for the implementing an IT security data program for all the information collection, storing and processing activities of the organization.

An example of such a plan is described next.

1. Conduct a risk analysis with focus on what risks might hit you and what costs they will imply for your operations and business reputation.

2. Establish the I.T. Security Management Steering Committee.

3. Formulate your I.T. Security Strategy.

4. Examine the various security options and decide on the Security Model to use for your business organization.

5. Establish and implement security policies and procedures.

6. Establish the I.T. Security Organization (manager responsible, type of organization: unit, department, team, etc., appointment of security staff, security budget formulation and approval, procurement of other resources, etc.).

7. Describe the responsibilities, roles and work tasks of the I.T. Security Organization (unit, department, team, etc.) and its dedicated staff.

8. Execute the required activities to instill awareness and sensitivity on security issues to all personnel of your business.

9. Document all the activities and transactions of your company where I.T Systems are deployed and used.

10. Educate and Train your I.T. Security Team.

11. Implement your I.T. Security Plan.

12. Ensure full operation of your I.T. Security Organization.

13. Ensure monthly review by the board and improvement of the functions of the I.T. Security Team on the basis of reported results, incidents (detected, reported and resolved), resource utilization.

14. Ensure reporting and reviewing of security issues, both every month and on an ad hoc basis (on urgent matters) at the Board and Top Management level.

15. Employ an expert to conduct Cyber Security Penetration Testing, at least annually[21].

Action RB8: Manage Employees on Standard Rules

1. Manage your employee issues on the same basis for all and on the basis of standard rules known to all and accepted at the time of hiring. These rules may include:

2. Recruit and select employees on the basis of merit (such as skills, education, training, professional qualifications, experience or ability to perform the job), and regardless of age, race, gender, religion, marital status and family responsibilities, or disability.

3. Dismiss or lay off employees on pre-set criteria and after a review process.

4. Treat all employees fairly and in a just and moral manner.

5. Provide employees with equal opportunity for training and promotions.

6. Enable all employees to achieve their full potential, as conditions allow.

7. Reward employees on the basis of a performance system and pre-set and agreed objectives[22].

8. Ensure the good operation of your Corporate Wellbeing Improvement Plan (an example is provided in Appendix 3 (Corporate Wellbeing Improvement Plan)).

9. Ensure the good operation of a grievance process.

10. Ensure that all these are contained in your Employee Handbook and that this is reviewed and upgraded annually[23].

Action RB9: Implement a Critical Resources Plan

1. Create and implement a written critical resources plan.
2. First Part. The first part of this document should detail how the company manages the succession of its critical resources: How the company's officers are elected and replaced; How successors are to be chosen and the respective roles of the CEO, the board and the various board committees in the succession process; How other critical resources, like IT, Finance, Sales, Production, etc., are hired and replaced; and Emergency succession procedures (sudden death, vacancy, pregnancy, etc.).
3. Second Part. The second part of this document should detail how the company manages the purchasing and availability of its critical resources for the operation of the business functions: Agreement with supply partners to hold strategic materials, parts and personnel available within a pre-defined time frame; Costs involved for emergency resourcing;

4. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter described the role of the seventh principle (**Principle of Courage**) of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'*. It also used the ideas of the Cynics and other ancient Greek wise men (and several of their sayings) and developed and presented an action plan with several actions and policies.

The Business Stress Reduction Actions pertained to reducing your occupational stress as a business by: Implementing a Business Resilience Management Plan; Aligning your IT systems with your business operations; Managing your company's finances very well; Developing and Selling New Products and Services; Implementing an Industrial Espionage and Sabotage Management Plan; Implementing a Cyber Resilience Management Plan; Managing Employees on Standard Rules; and Implementing a Critical Resources Plan.

The end result of this strategy is to organize you better so that the implementation of its recommended policies, plans, techniques and actions will make you robust spiritually and enable you and your business to *keep* coping, managing and reducing your occupational stress.

Additional actions on improving other aspects in your personal and family life as well as your business and professional activities after achieving the faith objective and reducing your occupational stress are contained in the Appendix (*see Appendix 5: Life Improvement Road Plan*).

7   Improve Stress Efforts

'Know you not how small a part you are compared with the whole. I mean with respect to the body, for as to intelligence you are not inferior to the gods nor less; for the magnitude of intelligence is not measured by length nor yet by height, but by thoughts'.
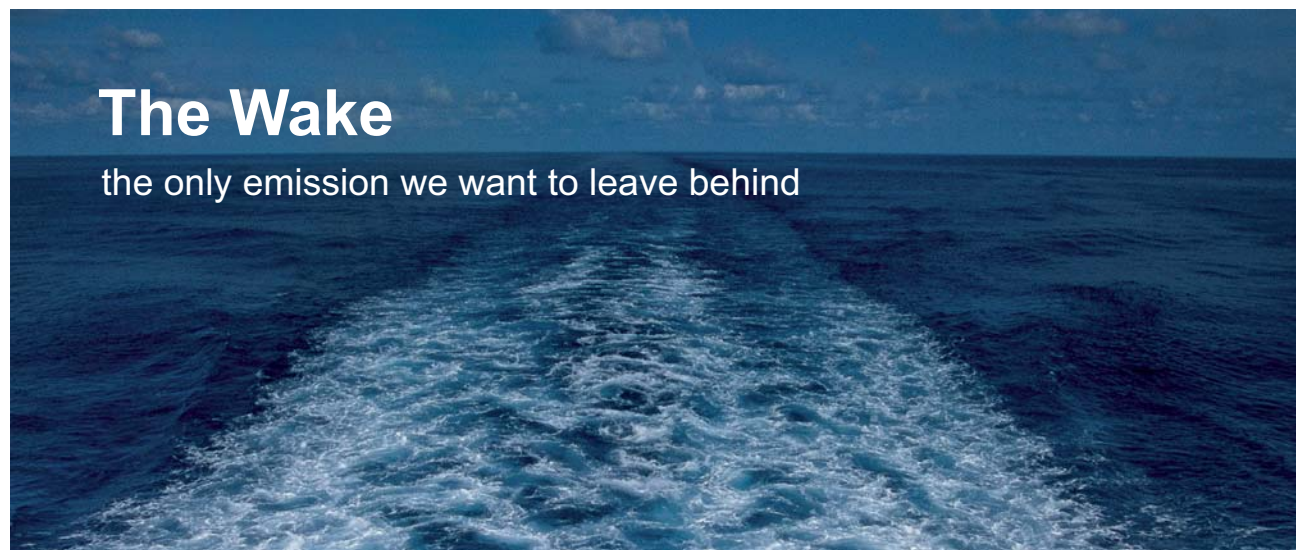
<div align="right">Epictetus</div>

'The OCCUP Stress Approach'

Chapter Overview

Up to now you have established your approach, the stress management framework and implemented all four stress reduction strategies.

This chapter describes the monitoring process and several actions to monitor, review and improve your occupational management and reduction efforts.

1. The Monitoring Process

The main aim of this process is to monitor the execution of all previous processes and action plans so that occupational efforts are improved. This is carried out by the plans (Corporate Performance Management Plan and Corporate Stress Support Action Plan) and actions detailed next.

This process and its actions focus entirely on ensuring that all other processes attack all occupational stress factors. It is based mainly on what Aristotle has advised:

'Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit'.

Also it is driven by all seven golden **Principles** (Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage), inspired and energized by all universal **forces** (S1, S2 and S3) and supported by specific implementation actions and policies noted in the following paragraphs.
So, how do you we improve stress efforts with this process?

My recommendation is to use the concepts of corporate performance management and support actions to monitor and improve the occupational management and reduction efforts of your business.

2. Corporate Performance Management

Corporate performance measurement is not an end in itself. The usual reason for corporate managers to measure performance is to find measures to evaluate, control, motivate, promote, and improve their business operations and staff. In addition to the regular performance measures (financial, sales, production, IT, etc.) they must also measure the company's efforts in **managing and reducing occupational stress**. They do this effectively by establishing and running a **Corporate Performance Management System** and monitoring all their business management controls and a set of key performance indicators. This is carried by a management plan outlined next.

Corporate Performance Management Plan

This plan contains several actions you can execute and several policies you can implement to manage, cope with and reduce occupational or workplace stress with this strategy. You may need these as a business owner, leader, manager, board director, business consultant, or other professional, etc., if you want to improve your business workplace environment and improve your company's effectiveness.
It may be complemented, depending on your business specifics with the Corporate Stress Support Action Plan detailed in section 3 of this chapter.

Action 1: Establish your Corporate Performance Management System

1. Formulate and set up your performance measurement system (e.g., BSC at the corporate level), and other complementary quality systems.
2. Ensure that occupational stress indicators are included in the process (*see Appendix 3: Occupational Stress Performance Measures*).
3. Enter the performance data into your BSC and other performance systems.
4. Carry out the required performance analyses.
5. Link these to the Governance Information System which measures your performance in terms of governance, risk and compliance (in total corporate terms).

Action 2: Establish your Business Dashboard

1. Purchase a ready-made computerized **Business Dashboard system** or develop your own.
2. Deploy your **Business Dashboard system** so that you have instant visual and reporting information of all your performance data (including stress).
3. Link this computerized to your other governance, quality and compliance systems.

Action 3: Set up your Corporate Rewards System

1. Define your company goals and performance targets that the rewards system and program will support, communicate process to all concerned, and identify the specific desired employee performance details that will reinforce the company's goals.
2. Determine the key performance measurements.
3. Link this rewards system to the corporate performance management system.
4. Develop the appropriate rewards (such as: pay, overtime, bonus, profit sharing, stock options, recognition, career planning, coaching, promotion, group-based rewards, etc.).
5. Set performance targets and communicate the program to all employees.
6. Evaluate, measure and monitor corporate performance (including stress performance).
7. Collect data, execute rewards process to each employee, review the results and improve process.

Action 4: Monitor Business Management Controls

There is no point in only tracking **occupational stress**. You must also monitor your while business. This is done by monitoring your business management controls. These must be monitored and reviewed so that the performance and **stress** problems and issues that surface during the every-day operations of the specific business are resolved the best way possible. As a minimum, the following should be monitored, reviewed, evaluated and improved on a time-period (quarterly, annually, etc.), appropriate to the conditions of the organization for which these controls operate.

These issues, systems and activities are:

1. Business strategy;
2. Management responsibilities;
3. Compliance issues and breaches;
4. Risks, budgets, corporate investments;
5. Mission support systems;
6. Business continuity plan and testing;
7. Functional and IT operational transactions and errors;
8. Corporate performance (financial, production, project, IT, etc.);
9. Asset management issues;
10. Security issues and incidents;
11. Customer satisfaction;
12. Internal and external communication;
13. Data and service quality;
14. Segregation of duties in all critical functions (e.g., finance, asset management, IT, etc.);
15. Innovation activities;
16. R&D efforts and projects;
17. Human resource management issues and problems;
18. New project implementations; and
19. Business intelligence activities (information collection and processing as regards industry and competition issues concerning the organization).

Step 5: Monitor stress-management activities

In addition to the above overall monitoring you may have your stress team monitor stress performance separately so that you better results in the end. This may be done by:

1. Establishing regular stress monitoring.
2. Reviewing stress management and reduction progress.
3. Identifying unresolved stress issues, and resolve problems.

Step 6: Establish your stress-management communications

1. Craft and implement a stress-management communication policy and associated procedures.
2. Ensure clarity and accountability for all types of communications.
3. Ensure that the team shares information and develops an open mind.
4. Issue Business Management Report. This report is needed to report the corporate performance and stress data gathered during the data collection, analysis, and processing phase.

Step 7: Manage stress-management performance

1. Develop performance policy for stress team members.
2. Link this policy with corresponding corporate performance system.
3. Award team members when performance targets related to **stress-management** are met. Manage and improve performance issues related to **stress-management**.

3. Corporate Stress Support Action Plan

This plan contains you corporate-level actions that support your **Corporate Performance Management Plan** presented just before. Other management functions like the Board, Senior Management, HR Management and Stress Team have a pivotal and crucial role to play in supporting the implementation of this strategy.

Their role, responsibilities and actions are presented in chapter 1 and appendices 2 and 3 (second part of this book). Especially the chairperson of the Wellbeing Steering Committee should sponsor, facilitate and ensure a smooth implementation and monitoring of the results of this process in reducing occupational stress in your workplace, even more.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this chapter described the activities of the final process (**Monitoring**) of *'The OCCUP Stress Approach'*.

This process supports the monitoring, reviewing and improvement tasks of managing and reducing occupational stress your business organization.

The end result of this process is to organize you better so that the implementation of its recommended policies, plans, techniques and actions will make you robust spiritually and enable you and your business to *keep* coping, managing and reducing your occupational stress.

In conclusion, let's remember a wise quotation of Plato: 'Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge'.

Hopefully by having the desire motivated by the seven principles; the emotion inspired by the three universal forces; and the knowledge given to you by the actions of this process you may find it easier to monitor and review all your company's efforts. This way you can improve the management and reduction of your business occupational stress in a better way.

8   Concluding Remarks

'Happiness resides not in possessions and not in gold, happiness dwells in the soul'.

Democritus

Modern 21ˢᵗ century corporations and organizations must always seek ways to change and improve their operations and business functions so that they satisfy their customers (citizens in the public sector domain) and their stakeholders and maintain their optimal survival and capability to compete in their own market and socio-economic environment.

In many countries, employers have a legal responsibility to recognize and deal with stress in the workplace so that employees do not become physically or mentally ill.

It is important to tackle the causes of stress in the workplace as stress at work can lead to problems for the individual, working relationships and the overall working environment. These issues may include lowered self-esteem and poor concentration skills for the employee. The employer may suffer from increasing customer complaints, staff turnover and days lost to sickness.

A recent survey conducted in the United States found that 8 out of 10 employees are **stressed at work.** Consider the consequences[24]!

'It has been estimated that work-related stress negatively affects at least 40 million workers in 15 countries of the European Union, costing 20 billion euros annually (European Commission, Employment & Social Affairs, 1999). This survey revealed that 45% of workers had monotonous tasks; 44% did not rotate tasks; 50% had short, repetitive tasks; 35% had no influence on task order; 28% had no influence on work rhythm; 54% reported working at very high speed, and 56% worked to tight deadlines[25].

Managing stress in the workplace is therefore an essential part of both individual and corporate responsibility. It is your job as an owner, board member, CEO, manager and professional.

Appendix 1: Occupational Stress Audit Questionnaire

This appendix contains 4 audit questionnaires with over 87 questions to evaluate the stress level of people at all levels of your company, in terms of: Personal Happiness; Personal Stress; Occupational Stress of Business People (employees, managers, professionals); and Occupational Stress of Senior Executives.

1. Personal Happiness Audit Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to help you assess the level of your personal happiness.

Question 1: Are you satisfied with your visions and desires?

Question 2: Are you meeting your life's dreams?

Question 3: Does your every-day basic vocabulary contain stories or myths?

Question 4: Do you follow well-accepted moral values and beliefs in your life?

Question 5: Do you find many things you enjoy doing?

Question 6: Would like to be someone else if you had another life?

Question 7: Do you enjoy reading most of the time?

Question 8: Do people describe you in positive and friendly terms?

Question 9: Is music a part of your life?

Question 10: Do you think that you have talents?

Question 11: Are you satisfied with how you have developed yourself up to now?

Question 12: Do you admire and follow the positive aspects of people you admire?

Question 13: Are you satisfied about the way you spend your time?

Question 14: Do you feel excited about your daily activities?

Question 15: Do you feel happy most of the time?

Question 16: Do you feel sad when bad things happen in life or in the life of others?

Question 17: Do you feel angry without any observable reason?

Question 18: Do you feel stressed a lot of times during the day?

Question 19: Do you find praying or meditation activities soothing for your soul?

Question 20: Are you satisfied with your career so far?

Question 21: Do you meet with friends regularly?

Question 22: Do you have adequate social activities?

Question 23: Do you support others in need to the best of your ability?

Question 24: Do you exercise regularly?

Question 25: Do you visit nature whenever you can?

2. Personal Stress Audit Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to help you assess the level of your personal stress.

Please record how much stress you feel in relation to the following personal or family life events.

Question 1: Death of a family member or friend?

Question 2: Health of a family member or friend?

Question 3: A vicious crime or other harmful incident of a family member or friend?

Question 4: Abuse you inflicted on your own person?

Question 5: Family change (marriage of yourself, a family member, friend, pregnancy, divorce, etc.)?

Question 6: Sexual problems of yourself, a family member or friend?

Question 7: Argument with a loved family member or friend?

Question 8: Sleep changes or not getting enough sleep?

Question 9: New work hours at your place of employment?

Question 10: Vacation or time-off issues, like not knowing where to go, what to do, etc.?

Question 11: Moving to a new location?

Question 12: Money issues like not having enough or having too much, etc.?

Question 13: Demands and issues related to a new job?

Question 14: Other unspecified issues?

3. Occupational Stress Audit Questionnaire for Business People (employees, managers, professionals)

The objective of this questionnaire is to help you assess the level of your occupational or workplace stress.

1. The demands of the job

Question 1.1: Do you work extremely long hours?

Question 1.2: Do you have to attend too many meetings after business hours?

Question 1.3: Do you have unreasonable tasks and deadlines imposed upon you?

Question 1.4: Do you have conflicting demands, tasks and deadlines?

Question 1.5: Do you have unachievable targets and deadlines?

2. The control you have over how you do the work

Question 2.1: Do you have opportunities to express your ideas and points of view?

Question 2.2: Do you have encouragement to use your skills, talents and knowledge to do your work?

Question 2.3: Do you control the corporate resources necessary to do your job?

3. The support you receive from colleagues and superiors

Question 3.1: Do you have appropriate training and coaching?

Question 3.2: Do you have management support in carrying out your duties?

Question 3.3: Do you have feedback on you have achieved?

Question 3.4: Do your colleagues and co-workers support you in your job?

4. Your relationships with colleagues

Question 4.1: Do you have excellent relationships with your manager?

Question 4.2: Do you get along well with staff, co-workers and colleagues?

Question 4.3: Do you get along well with customers?

Question 4.4: Do you have high regard for the company?

5. Whether you understand the roles and responsibilities assigned to you

Question 5.1: Do you know what is expected of you?

Question 5.2: Do you have the required skills to do the job?

Question 5.3: Do you feel that you contribute to your department's goals?

6. How far the company consults you over workplace changes

Question 6.1: Are you consulted before changes are implemented?

Question 6.2: Are changes supported by top management when they are implemented?

Question 6.3: Are you fully trained to accommodate the changes in your work?

7. Technology

Question 7.1: Are you well trained in technological issues affecting your work?

Question 7.2: Does your company provide support to you on technological issues?

Question 7.3: Do you understand how technology is adding value to your work?

8. Rules and Regulations

Question 8.1: Are you well trained in complying with rules and regulations?

Question 8.2: Does your company provide support to you on compliance issues?

Question 8.3: Do you understand how compliance affects your work?

9. Information Overload

Question 9.1: Do you neglect some tasks because you have too much to do?

Question 9.2: Do you know how to handle work and information overload?

10. Other Issues

Question 10.1: Are you spending too much at work and neglecting your family?

Question 10.2: Do you feel that your managers exhibit leadership?

Question 10.3: Do you feel that there is equity in terms of your performance level and awards?

Question 10.4: Do you feel that the issues concerning the long-term survival of the company are handled well?

Question 10.5: Do you have good business management controls?

4. Occupational Stress Audit Questionnaire for Senior Executives

The objective of this questionnaire is to help you assess the level of the occupational stress of senior executives.

Question 1: Have the control needs and requirements of the various stakeholders of the organization been defined?

Question 2: Are high levels of corporate ethics maintained at all levels (Board, Executive Management, Middle Managers, operating staff, etc.)?

Question 3: Does the Board of Directors (BOD) monitor Executive Management (EM) to ensure short-term financial stability of the business?

Question 4: Does the BOD monitor EM to ensure long-term financial stability of the business?

Question 5: Does the BOD monitor EM to ensure long-term success of corporate and business-related changes?

Question 6: Does the BOD ensure high level of corporate governance and accountability at all levels (Board, Executive Management, Middle Managers, operating staff, etc.)?

Question 7: Does the BOD supervise the setting up and monitoring of the operation of an effective risk assessment and management system by EM?

Question 8: Does the BOD supervise the setting up and operation of an effective crisis assessment and business continuity management system by EM?

Question 9: Does the BOD ensure that an effective internal audit and corporate compliance management system is in place and operates effectively by EM?

Question 10: Does the BOD ensure that an effective corporate performance management system is in place and operates effectively by EM?

Question 11: Does the BOD review and approve all business plans, organizational and restructuring plans and major investments crafted and executed by EM?

Question 12: Does the BOD ensure that an effective corporate management system is in place and operates effectively by EM?

Question 13: Does the BOD ensure that an effective corporate management succession system is in place (particularly for the senior positions of CEO, CFO, CTO, CIO, General Management of divisions and functions, etc.)?

Question 14: Does the BOD ensure that an effective skills-training system is in place at all levels (Board, Executive Management, Middle Managers, operating staff, etc.)?

Question 15: Does the BOD ensure that an effective stress reduction system is in place at all levels (Board, Executive Management, Middle Managers, operating staff, etc.)?

Question 16: Does the BOD ensure that all IT systems, data centers, etc., are operated effectively by all management levels and serve all critical business functions in a top results way?

Question 17: Does the BOD ensure that all company functions (personnel, risk, compliance, IT, sales, marketing, production, finance, etc.), are operated effectively by all management levels and serve all critical customer demands in the best results way?

Question 18: Does the BOD ensure that an effective corporate management research and development system is in place?

The above questionnaires may be complemented with a Corporate Wellness Audit and an Improvement Plan. This material is available at:

https://flevy.com/browse/business-document/corporate-wellness-management-and-evaluation-toolkit-958

This toolkit contains 18 audit questionnaires with over 90 questions to evaluate the Corporate Wellness of your company, in terms of: 'Tone at the Top'; Understanding of the organization by the board; Integrity; Operational philosophy; Ethical climate; Empowerment; Leadership; Employee motivation; Open mind and shared values; Information flow throughout the organization; Corporate culture; Morale; Trust; Corporate attitude; Competence; Expectations; Structure of reporting relationships; and Wellness Practices.

Appendix 2: Occupational Stress Policy

Developing the occupational stress policy should be done by the board via the given corporate committee. This should be reviewed, improved and ratified by the board. A typical example of such a policy is:

Occupational Stress Policy – Example

'The Company' will make proper provision for the minimization of stress and anxiety at work of our employees and others who may be affected by the company's activities.
This policy will apply to everyone in the company. Managers are responsible for implementation and the company is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

This policy and the policies included in the Employee Handbook, describe the arrangements we have made for managing our **health, safety and occupational stress affairs.**

Definition of stress

'The Company' defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Policy

'The Company' will, as regards stress and anxiety management:

1. Comply with relevant legal requirements and industry standards,

2. Assess, on a continuous basis, all projects, operations and work activities to eliminate and minimize risks related to occupational stress,

3. Set well-defined and clear performance objectives and targets,

4. Prepare action plans to train all staff on occupational stress management,

5. Review training to ensure that occupational stress management is effective,

6. Arrange for periodic audit of the occupational stress management system,

7. Provide access to competent professional advice, as required,

8. Work with regulators and industry bodies to implement relevant legal requirements and trade standards related to **occupational stress management.**

Board and General Management Roles

A complete description of the general roles of managers and board members is included in Appendix 1. As regards **occupational stress management,** board directors and managers will specifically ensure that:

1. Occupational stress issues are assessed by all business functional management, both as required and on an ad hoc basis, as issues arise. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

2. An excellent two-way communication process is operating effectively at all levels of the organization. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

3. All working places and locations are regularly inspected and monitored to ensure that health, safety and occupational stress arrangements are undertaken. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

4. Guidance on dealing with occupational stress at work is published and communicated to all levels of the organization. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

5. All current jobs and tasks, as required, are assessed in order to identify tasks and responsibilities which may place prolonged and harmful levels of stress upon jobholders. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

6. In consultation with the jobholders, so far as is reasonably practicable, job design is changed in order to reduce the risk and make the task easily executed. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

7. Credit to job holder for his or her accomplishment is given. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

8. Job holders are not placed within a job for which they do not have the ability, knowledge or skills. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

9. Adequate training and instruction with regard to the job assigned, the working environment and any specific pressures and issues is provided. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

10. Ensure the effective operation of a grievance procedure. This means that if any employee feels that satisfactory progress is not being made to resolve any occupational stress issue to take the matter to the Human Resources Department or the Health and Safety Officer. Board directors and senior management take remedial action as needed.

11. Discuss the results of the grievance procedure and make all necessary changes, as feasible. Board directors and senior management take remedial action if issues are properly escalated, as needed.

12. Support and help their employees to find ways to alleviate the negative side of stress on a personal basis. Board directors and senior management review and ensure these actions, as appropriate.

Human Resources Management Roles

The authorized Human Resources Manager or assigned staff will:

1. Give guidance to all managers on the occupational stress policy.

2. Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address occupational stress by collecting sickness absence statistics and keeping proper records on all occupational issues raised.

3. Advise managers and staff on occupational stress training requirements.

4. Provide continuing support to managers and staff in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace specialists and counsellors, as appropriate.

Occupational Health and Safety Management Roles

The authorized Manager or assigned staff will:

1. Provide specialist advice and awareness training on occupational stress.

2. Train and support managers in implementing occupational stress risk assessments.

3. Support individuals who have been off sick with occupational stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.

4. Review any job design changes to ensure that occupational stress in reduced.

5. Collect anonymous data on all occupational stress issues.

Professional Staff and Employees Roles

All professional staff and employees at all levels, will:

1. Raise issues of concern with your Manager, Board Member or Safety Representative, as deemed appropriate.
2. Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
3. Support and help yourself to find ways to alleviate the negative side of stress you're your own personal basis.

Appendix 3: Occupational Stress Performance Measures

1. Amount of training budget for occupational stress for Board members per year
2. Amount of training budget for occupational stress for senior management per year
3. Number of occupational stress procedures reviews per year
4. Department morale index
5. Percent of management interviews with employees
6. Hours of employee engagement in new developments
7. % hours of unjustified staff absence
8. % staff resigned voluntarily
9. Number of hours and staff trained on occupational stress reduction
10. Percent of unsatisfied customers to satisfied customers
11. Percent of unsatisfied employees to satisfied employees
12. Percent of unsatisfied partners to satisfied partners
13. Number of health accidents not resolved
14. Number of safety issues not resolved
15. Number of ethics code violations,
16. Number of complaints (employees, customers, community),
17. Percent of professional employees active in professional societies,
18. Number of ethics decisions made by higher-level management,
19. Percent of managers active in community activities,
20. Monetary value of fines imposed due to non-compliance
21. Number of quality errors
22. Security violations by department
23. Safety Incident Index
24. Number of self-assessments on stress reduction
25. Number of improvements after stress reduction reviews
26. Number of hours on mentoring programs
27. Number of coaching hours
28. Hours of employee sicknesses

Appendix 4: Communications Policy

An example of a communications policy may be:

'We communicate with those most directly affected first. Our organization's first obligation is to the health, welfare, and safety of the people most directly affected, our employees, and the protection, restoration, and recovery of company operations.

On issues of health, welfare and safety of our people, we will:

1. Craft and implement strategies to improve the health, welfare and safety of our people 2. Take actions to reduce the occupational stress in our workplace
2. Educate all management and line staff on best health, welfare, safety and stress reduction practices
3. Monitor all health, welfare, safety and stress reduction actions
4. Review and improve all our health, welfare, safety and stress reduction actions, at least annually

When unanticipated emergencies and critical events, we will:

1. Respond quickly
2. Act conclusively
3. Take appropriate responsibility
4. Ask for help and understanding
5. Inform company employees immediately
6. Show concern
7. Strive for transparent decision-making, behavior, and results
8. Be open to suggestions
9. Explain to the community as soon as possible
10. Invite local officials to help with explanations (where appropriate)
11. Seek out and talk to affected groups and affected agencies
12. Use simple, direct, and positive messages.'

Appendix 5: Holistic Life Improvement Road Plan

The stress management methods and their actions presented in this book are part of a larger and more comprehensive Life Improvement Road Plan of 21 actions based on ancient Greek wisdom and my consulting and coaching experience.

This road plan has two major components:

Component 1: Personal and Family Improvement Road Plan

Component 2: Business and Professional Improvement Road Plan

These are outlined, in summary, next.

Component 1: Personal and Family Improvement Road Plan

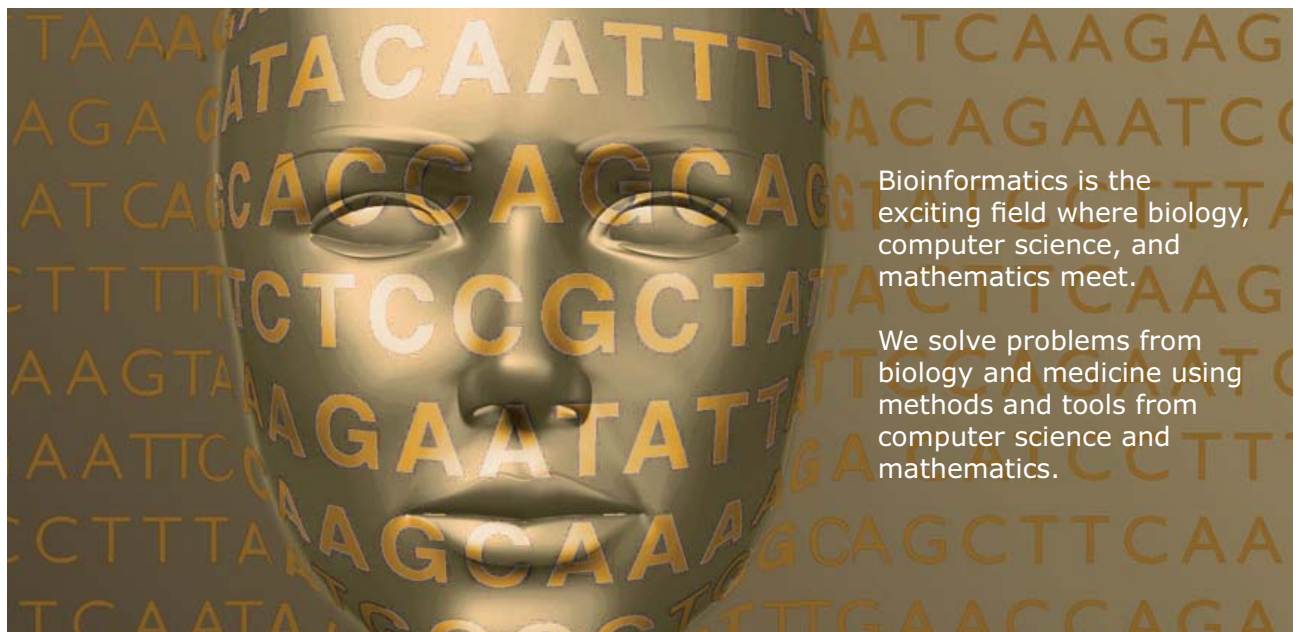Action 1: Connect to the Supreme Being daily

Action 2: Govern your personal and family affairs with effectiveness

Action 3: Manage your personal and family wealth effectively

Action 4: Manage and improve your personal relationships with friendship

Action 5: Complete your personal affairs with harmony

Action 6: Benefit your life with goodness and kindness

Action 7: Improve your self-control

Action 8: Manage your stress

Action 9: Improve your personal knowledge and skills

Action 10: Improve your family relationships

Component 2: Business and Professional Improvement Road Plan

Action 1: Use moral values to establish your company's objectives

Action 2: Govern your business organization effectively. Ensure excellent design, implementation and monitoring of your Corporate Wellbeing Improvement Plan.

Action 3: Govern your business customers fairly

Action 4: Manage your business wealth with diligence

Action 5: Sustain your professional relationships with care and values

Action 6: Use harmony in your business activities

Action 7: Permeate your business activities with goodness

Action 8: Manage your business people more fairly and effectively. Ensure excellent design, implementation and monitoring of your Corporate Wellbeing Improvement Plan Action 9: Improve the knowledge and skills of your business staff

Action 10: Build and manage an effective top management corporate team. Ensure that the top team monitors, reviews and improves your Corporate Wellbeing Improvement Plan.

Action 11: Implement your hard business controls (such as plans, procedures, targets, job assignments, etc.) with specific improvement actions related to soft controls. These relate to behavioral attributes such as tone at the top, understanding of the organization by the board, culture, structure of reporting relationships, morale, integrity and ethical values, operational philosophy, trust, etc.).

All of these plans are fully detailed in my recent books noted in the bibliography section of this book.

Appendix 6: Corporate Ethics Policy Example

1. The Ethics Policy of Business 'AAAXXX' establishes the values and ethics of service to guide and support all employees regardless of their hierarchy or responsibilities.

2. All staff are required to sign at the time of employment a proprietary information agreement that restricts disclosure of proprietary, trade secrets and certain other data and information about the Company, its joint venture partners, suppliers and customers. This Policy applies to all Board Members, Directors, Managers, Employees and External Contractors without regard to whether such agreements have been formally signed.

3. All Board Members, Executive Management, Middle and Lower Level Managers, and Employees should not have private interests, other than those permitted by these measures, that would be affected particularly or significantly by actions in which they participate.

4. All Board Members, Executive Management, Middle and Lower Level Managers, and Employees may engage in employment and business activities outside the Company only when they are specifically authorized to do so.

5. All Board Members, Executive Management, Middle and Lower Level Managers, and Employees must use their best judgment to avoid situations of real or perceived conflict. In doing so, they must not accept or solicit any gifts, hospitality or other benefits that may have a real or apparent influence on their objectivity in carrying out their official duties or that may place them or the Company under obligation to the donor.

6. This Policy applies to all Board Members, Executive Management, Middle and Lower Level Managers, Directors, Employees and External Contractors working for the Company.

(For a more detail example, see my books:

(1) Business Management Controls: A Guide, www.itgovernance.co.uk**, and**

(2) Business Management Controls: Toolkit, www.itgovernance.co.uk)

Appendix 7 Corporate Social Responsibility Example

Developing a corporate social responsibility policy can done by the Chief Executive or by a group of people (e.g. a committee of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources Director, etc.).

An example of a corporate responsibility policy follows next:

Our Company 'XXX' (a fictitious name) focuses on delivering essential products and services to millions of people every day. By understanding our impact on society, the economy and the wider environment, we can develop positive relationships with stakeholders to benefit both business and the community. Outlining our approach to corporate responsibility with details of the policies and initiatives that illustrate our commitments, includes:

1. How our core products and services impact on society including how we buy and sell goods and services;
2. Information about the major environmental impacts of our business and how we are working to reduce them;
3. How we support our employees within the working environment to help them balance the competing demands of work and life;
4. How we seek to achieve positive impact in local communities through our community investment program; and
5. How we are managing key diversity issues through developing a greater understanding of customer and employee needs'.

Appendix 8: Diversity Practices Management Approach

Emerging global trends are driving the growing economic power of a diverse workforce. Most economies and nations across the globe (U.S., China, India, other Asian countries, most European countries, Australia, Africa, South America, etc.) have a workforce made up of mixture of different races, cultures and religions and other preferences. All companies, regardless of their size, in the age of Internet, operate world-wide. The world is diverse, if nothing else. *For more statistics and other information, see: Global Trends in Bibliography.*

Diversity as a concept focuses on a broader set of qualities than race and gender. In the context of the workplace, valuing diversity means creating a workplace that respects and includes differences, recognizing the unique contributions that individuals with many types of differences can make, and creating a work environment that maximizes the potential of all employees.

There is a legal mandate, in most countries, to accommodate diversity issues and religious practices in the workplace. However, accommodation should not only be a requirement. It is good human resource practice to create an open environment that recognizes religious practices of all employees.

All effective managers must therefore deal with this landscape in a positive, effective way. The following approach is my recommendation to you in this regard.

Step 1: Board and Executive Positions

As a business owner or chairman of the board of directors of your company consider adding diversity to your board and senior management positions. These people will add more input to your dealing with diversity in your business for employees, customers and regulators, both at home and abroad.

Step 2: Diversity Policy

Study all diversity issues and the way you do business and craft the required policies to instill the required actions in your business, your management and your employees.

You Corporate Diversity Policy might be, as an example:

'We appreciate the importance of creating an environment in which all of our employees can feel valued, included and empowered to bring great ideas to our workplace and to the way we do business. It is the policy of our company not to discriminate against or harass any person employed or seeking employment with our company on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or military status.

This policy applies to all employment practices, including personnel recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, merit increase, salary, training and development, demotion, and separation.

Our diversity and inclusion efforts will therefore focus on:

1. Leading, managing and embracing different cultures, ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations.
2. Creating a work environment that fosters growth and advancement.
3. Engaging with our customers in a way that reflects and respects their unique perspectives and experiences.
4. Monitoring our company performance as regards our diversity objectives on a continuous basis and report our progress towards achieving them on an annual basis.'

Step 3: Diversity Guidelines

Consider the following issues and decide on what should be done for your business.

1. **Network groups.** A large numbers of corporations are successfully instituting faith-based and interfaith networks. Will you allow your people to participate in these?
2. **Prayers.** Public prayers in the workplace occur and are more common in certain countries. Will you also do this?

3. **Vacation Scheduling.** Most companies have a clear policy around time-off and vacation. Consider the requirements of different religions in this effort, especially during the religious festivities of your staff and their faith.

4. **Consider and adopt a no-tolerance policy for severe issues**. Employees need to know what kinds of behavior will not be tolerated and that action will be taken immediately if problems between employees occur. If they have been properly trained and educated on company policies, there is no excuse for severe religious issues between employees.

Step 4: Training.

Offer diversity training to all employees. This will exercise their mental skills and attitudes while working in your business multi-cultural and diverse workplace. This will get them to manage better any potential clashes in your business operations. Religion and other diversity issues may be hot on their own and when two religions collide the results can be devastating for your business. It is vital to offer training to all employees and to discuss what is acceptable in terms of discussing faith or other issues related to diversity in the workplace. Employees may try to impose their belief systems on others without even realizing it.

Step 5: Study Cultural Traditions

It makes good sense to know the cultural and religious holidays and traditions that your coworkers observe. Consider learning more about them by researching or taking a course on their traditions and holidays. Find out the origins of the holiday or tradition, when they are celebrated each year and what they signify. Your colleagues will likely be touched that you took time out to learn about the traditions that mean most to them.

Step 6: Dress Code

Consider changing your dress code to accommodate the religious aspects of your workforce.
These may include, as an example: attire (short or full dresses), facial coverings, headwear, symbols, badges, icons, etc. Define what is allowed and what is not allowed during business hours, providing that the health, safety and security of customers or staff are not compromised.

Step 7: Include All Employees in Critical Decisions

If your business has employees from diverse backgrounds it is best to listen to their opinions on critical business issues. Listening to opinions from a diverse group of people can, many times, change the way you do business, and probably for the better. People from a different background may offer a perspective on an issue that no one else has given. This can increase the amount of innovation and creativity in your business operations.

Step 8: Provide time off to employees for religious reasons

Some major world religions guide (or often dictate) that worship must be offered at specific times during each day. These are bound to interfere with a work day. Offer time off for these employees and a special room to exercise their faith. As a business manager you must be prepared to face some criticism from your employees who do not share the same faith and feel slighted because they do receive the same treatment. Learn how to deal with these instances.

Step 8: Avoid overreacting

A newly diverse workplace is bound to have growing pains and it is important to embrace these struggles and avoid overreacting to them. Remember that you cannot please all of the people all of the time. Avoid overreacting to simple issues that may arise. Compromise is a vital part of true diversity.

Step 10: Monitor the behavior of employees.

Monitor the behavior of your employees. If it is apparent that there is discontent over religious issues, encourage the two parties to discuss their faith and problems in a safe environment, away from other workers. This way they may come to a better understanding of one another. Encourage the finding of common ground between employees.

Appendix 9: Environment Management Policy

Developing the environment management policy should be done by the board via the given corporate committee. This should be reviewed, improved and ratified by the board. A typical example of such a policy is:

'The Company shall:

1. Meet or surpass all environmental legislation, regulations, and other applicable requirements and continuously improve the company's environmental performance consistent with defined goals;
2. Fully integrate environmental and economic considerations into the company's processes of planning, constructing, operating and decommissioning;
3. Ensure that the environmental impacts and risks of company activities are identified, assessed and managed;
4. Proactively advocate socially responsible laws and regulations and, where appropriate, market-based and voluntary approaches for achieving environmental objectives;
5. Inform and encourage meaningful consultation and collaboration with employees, customers, contractors and the public related to the company's operations and its impact on the environment;
6. Be an environmentally responsible neighbor in the communities in which the company operates;
7. Act promptly and responsibly to correct incidents or conditions that endanger the environment and inform those who may be affected; achieve ongoing improvements in eco-efficiency through reductions in wastes and emissions per unit of electrical and thermal energy produced and delivered;
8. Identify and develop new business practices and business opportunities which represent solutions to environmental problems and create value for shareholders;
   use a performance assurance process to assess compliance with this policy and the company's environmental management system;
9. Report performance assurance results periodically to the board of directors; and
10. use an environmental management system to set environmental objectives and targets that support this policy and regularly review performance against these objectives with senior management'.

Appendix 10: Green Business Practices

Action NB3: Develop your green business offices practices and guidelines. An example of what you can do, as a business manager, and have your corporate staff do is listed next:

1. Make your documents digital and use electronic signatures and the security software to sign them and exchange them with your partners and clients.

2. Print less.

2.1. Print less and try to use less paper as possible.

2.2. Do not print every e-mail message.

2.3. Encourage others to do the same.

2.4. Make back-up copies of important files and e-mail message and keep them on a digital medium, instead of storing boxes of paper files.

3. Unplug ICT hardware.

3.1. Learn and use energy saving techniques for your ICT equipment.

3.2. Turn off everything you possibly can before you leave the office each day.

3.3. Program all computers of your business to turn off automatically at a certain time each night, just in case your people forget to turn them off when they leave.

3.4. Set all monitors of your company to turn off after a few minutes of inactivity.

3.5. Do not leave things like cell phone chargers plugged in when you're not using them.

4. Corporate Recycling.

4.1. Establish a corporate recycling program. Recycle paper, cans, bottles, cell phones, digital media, and everything you can think of.

4.2. Place paper recycling bins in convenient locations all over your business offices.

4.3. Use specialized bins for cans, bottles, cell phones, digital media, and everything you can think of.

Action NB4: Make your building as green as possible. Your aim should be to provide a healthy, comfortable and productive indoor environment for building occupants and visitors.

An example of what you can do for your business includes:

1. Construction of Building.

1.1. Prevent contamination of the building during construction.

1.2. Take steps to minimize the creation and spreading of construction dust and dirt.

1.3. Prevent contamination of the building and the building's systems (heating, cooling and ventilation, etc.) during the construction process.

1.4. Protect construction materials from the weather elements so that they do not become damp, moldy or mildewed.

1.5. Use building materials, adhesives, sealants, finishes and furnishings which are friendly to the environment. In other words they do not contain, generate or release any particulate or gaseous contaminants including volatile organic compounds, etc.

2. Building Envelope.

2.1. Set up environmental systems that not only treat air temperature and provide adequate ventilation, but which respect all of the environmental conditions which affect human heating comfort and health.

2.2. Maximize the use of natural daylighting. Optimize solar orientation and design the building to maximize penetration of natural daylight into interior spaces. Provide shades or daylight controls where needed.

2.3. Maximize the use of operable windows and natural ventilation.

3. Clean and Healthy Building.

3.1. Provide dedicated engineered ventilation systems that operate independently of the buildings heating and cooling system.

3.2. Monitor indoor air conditions including temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide levels, so that building ventilation systems can respond when space conditions fall outside the optimum range.

3.3. Use biodegradable and environmentally friendly cleaning agents that do not release VOCs or other harmful agents and residue.

3.4. Install new air filters and clean any contaminated ductwork and ventilation equipment.

Note. For more information, see Green Building Resources in the Bibliography

Action NB5: Develop your green production operation. An example of what you can do, as a business manager, and have all corporate staff do is listed next:

1. Make environmental issues central to your corporate values.

2. Craft and implement your environment-healthy production processes, in terms of:

2.1. Methods of growing, harvesting, or extracting new raw materials in such a manner that energy is conserved and few or no artificial chemicals are introduced into the process.

2.2. Methods of reusing materials to minimize waste and, indirectly, to save energy.

2.3. Techniques for avoiding where possible high-energy or chemicals-intensive processes.

2.4. Schemes for processing production wastes back into the process or into secondary uses.

3. Ensure that all your business operations are deliberately and consciously managed with those principles guiding all choices.

4. Ensure that all your manufacturing processes fully comply with your country's laws (federal, provincial, state, etc.) regarding:

4.1. Air and water and other chemical pollution.

4.2. The transportation and final management of toxic, hazardous, radioactive, and infectious wastes.

4.3. Land management and restoration in the mining of resources, etc.

4.4. The raising of animals and the management of their wastes, etc.

Note. For more details on the various environment issues, see Environment Protection Laws and Regulations in the Bibliography.

Action NB6: Develop your green computing operation. An example of what you can do, as a corporate or IT business manager, and have all your corporate staff do is listed next:

1. Power-down the CPU and all peripherals during extended periods of inactivity.
2. Try to do computer-related tasks during contiguous, intensive blocks of time, leaving hardware off at other times.
3. Power-up and power-down energy-intensive peripherals such as laser printers, etc.
4. Use eco-friendly computer screens, like liquid-crystal-display monitors.
5. Use notebook computers rather than desktop computers, whenever possible.
6. Use the power-management features to turn off hard drives and displays after several minutes of inactivity.
7. Minimize the use of paper and properly recycle waste paper.
8. Dispose of e-waste according to regulations (federal, provincial, state and local).
9. Employ alternative energy sources for computing facilities and hardware.
10. Use specialized software to see how much electricity your computer uses and adjust the settings of your power options to help minimize it.

Note. For details, see Green Computing Resources in the Bibliography.

Appendix 11: Business Resilience Detail Process

A. Analysis Phase

Step 1: Business Analysis. This involves analyzing your business, data, customers, products, services and strategies to determine your company's most critical operations that must be covered by the resilience planning process.

Step 2: Business Resilience Planning. This entails studying, analyzing and planning for managing your detail and specific business resilience issues for your business functions, such as: supply chain logistics; customer issues; brand name; reputation and other competitive advantage issues; privacy; building redundancy with partners; inventory and offshoring facilities; aligning procurement strategy with suppliers; building honest relationships with your employees, customers, and suppliers, etc.

Step 3: Critical Issues Identification. This pertains to identifying the critical issues related to recovery from a disaster, such as business functions, business data, IT systems and resources, such as: funds, personnel, facilities, business functions, IT systems, offices, data, filing systems, equipment, partners, etc.

Step 4: Security Requirements Documentation. This addresses any special security requirements of the specific business. This is because companies, regardless of type and size, need to support security-rich communication; business transaction processing and other critical systems and facilities via a well-defined security strategy.

Step 5: Risk Assessment. Study and decide what risks you should be planning for recovering purposes.

Step 6: Business Management Controls Alignment. Ensure that your company has a well-functioning Business Management Controls (BMC) Framework. See Appendix 13 – Business Management Controls Framework, for an example.

Step 7: Resilience Organization. Set up the resilience organization with a committee, staff and other facilities and equipment.

Step 8: Systems and resources. Obtain the required systems and resources.

B. Design Phase

Step 9: Design resilience strategies, plans and objectives
This step involves the design of company-specific Business and IT Continuity Plans and other related policies, procedures and practices for resiliency purposes. An example of these and more details are included in Appendix 12 – Business and IT Continuity Plans
Step 10: Design Communication Plan.

C. Development Phase

Step 11: Develop resilience Strategies, Plans, Procedures

Step 12: Develop Communication Plan.

Step 13: Develop resilience skills training for staff.

Step 14: Develop social intelligence plan.

D. Implementation Phase

Step 15: Implement resilience Strategies, Plans, Procedures

Step 16: Implement social intelligence plan.

Step 17: Conduct resilience skills training for staff.

Step 20: Test your business resilience Plan periodically.

E. Evaluation Phase

Step 21: Monitor resilience Strategies, Plans, Procedures

Step 22: Evaluate resilience Strategies, Plans, Procedures

Step 23: Review and make changes as required.

Step 24: Maintain Plan.

Note. For more details see my Business and IT books in the bibliography section of this book.

Appendix 12: HR Management Controls

Description

The purpose of HR Management controls is to standardize the way of managing human resources. Standards and rules standardize the behavior of employees and make outcomes predictable. These are instituted by managers after the organization structure is established.

Examples of human resource management controls are: Human Rights Policy, Benefits and Personnel Committee, Personnel Administration Procedures (described later), Job Descriptions, Employee Management Policies and Procedures Handbook, HR Hiring and Dismissal System, HR Planning System, HR Performance Management System, Benefits and Incentives System, HR Computerized Information System, and personnel management controls. As a minimum level of control in this area, each organization should craft and implement Personnel Administration Procedures, as noted next:

Personnel Administration Procedures

In addition to whatever general administration controls are exercised, at the level of the Organization, the additional management controls for all personnel should include:

1. Screening of personnel during the hiring process,
2. valid employment contracts and job descriptions,
3. appropriate supervision by management,
4. skills planning,
5. authorization controls (a set of defined levels of authorization for purchases, expenses, invoices, payments, contracts, investments, hiring and firing of personnel, transaction processing, file and records management activities, archiving of critical records, reports, and data, etc.),
6. segregation of personnel duties (described in this chapter),
7. rotation of duties,
8. vacation taking,
9. adoption of ethical and compliance standards, polices and procedures
10. employee documentation (job application, job description, resume, records of participation in training events, salary history, records of disciplinary action and documents related to employee performance reviews, coaching, and mentoring),
11. health and safety procedures,
12. employee performance review

These are usually included in an Employee Handbook.

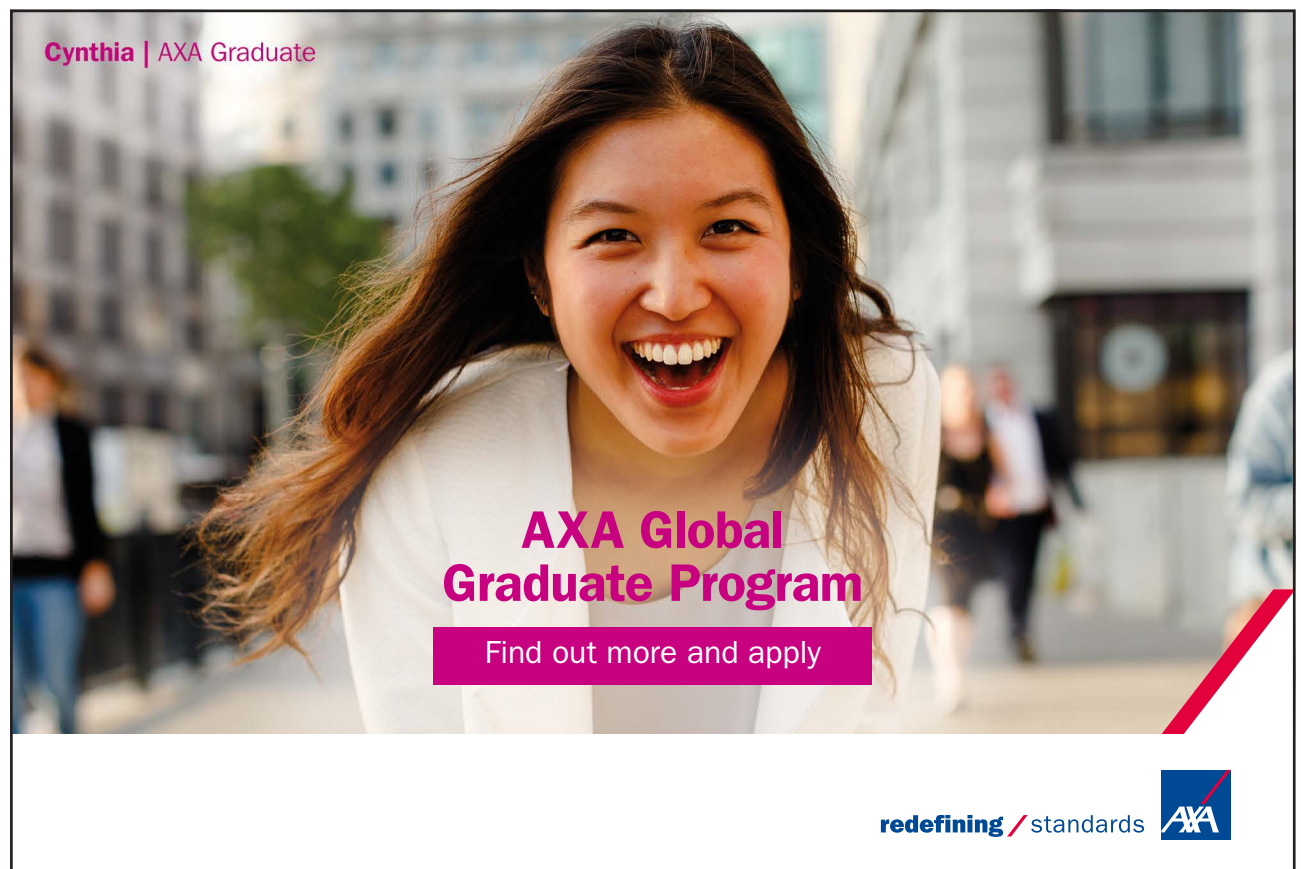# Appendix 13: Business Management Controls Framework

The purpose of this framework is to satisfy the basic control objectives of most business organizations. A description of this is listed, in summary, next.

First Level (Organize). Set up:

1. Board, management and committee roles, structure and responsibilities
2. Business functions and resources
3. Standards, policies and procedures
4. Internal Controls Framework and Manual.

Second Level (Envision). Institute:

1. Corporate culture, vision, mission and values
2. Strategy, goals, objectives and targets
3. Performance Framework and Management.

Third Level (Govern). Implement Policies and Procedures:

1. Strategy
2. GRC (Governance, Risk and Compliance) controls
3. Operational controls (purchasing, finance, IT, data, security, fraud, etc.)
4. Personnel administration, including segregation of duties, compensating controls, etc.
5. Management & compliance reporting.

An example of corporate procedures include:

1. Financial Management Responsibility Controls
2. Financial Standards, Systems, Policies and Procedures Controls
3. Computerized Financial Systems Controls
4. Responsibilities and Segregation of Duties Controls
5. Post Transactions and Update Books Controls
6. Manage Petty Cash Controls
7. Manage Checks Controls
8. Manage Accounts Receivable Controls
9. Manage Accounts Payable Controls
10. Manage Payroll Controls
11. Manage Financial Performance Controls
12. Corporate governance, compliance and risk Controls.

Fourth Level (Audit). Carry out:

1. Monitoring controls
2. Internal audits
3. Self-assessments
4. External audits
5. Regulatory audits.

Fifth Level (Augment). Compare organization to external entities:

1. Studies by external experts
2. Certify personnel
3. Certify organizational components (structure, service quality, policies and procedures)
4. Corporate social responsibility, including community involvement, etc.
5. Soft Controls.

For more details on using this framework in your business, see my Business and IT books in the bibliography section of this book.

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