



Teamworks Talk

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*“Building a better
workplace”*

Long hours and low productivity at work

By Joanne Grey©

It's official. An International Labour Organisation study shows that 20% of Australians work more than 50 hours per week, whereas only 10% of their European counterparts work similar hours. An AC Nielson poll shows that those earning over \$60,000 seldom take a lunch break.

According to Census 2006 data, one in four New Zealanders work longer than 50 hours a week. Yet despite these figures, Australia and New Zealand still have one of the lowest productivity levels. Workers compensation for stress comprises 9% of working insurance claims. Longer hours do not automatically result in greater productivity. For example, the French used to work one of the shortest weeks (35 hours), but were ahead of the British in productivity. Employees in the UK typically work a 45-hour week. Technologies such as mobile phones and email invade employee's homes, leading to sustained tension and stress-related illnesses. Continued page 2...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

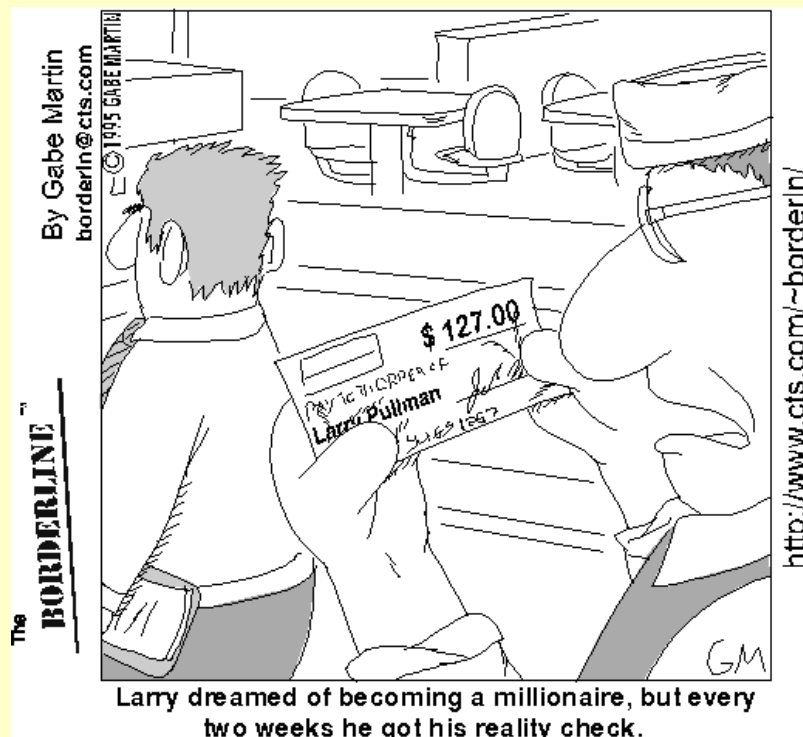
Long hours and low
productivity at work

12 Easy steps to stress
management

Team Snippets: John Stuart

Our contacts

*“The time is always
right to do what is
right.”*
- Martin Luther King



Long hours and low productivity at work continued....

EU countries are subject to a 48-hour maximum work week, under the EU's Working Time Directive. British employees can opt out, which no doubt adds to the fact that they work longer hours than other Europeans.

“Employers are driving the market...negotiating lower salaries and longer working hours.”

France has recently changed their 35-hour work week, due to a stubborn 10% unemployment rate and economic slowdown. The 35-hour week will not be eradicated, but employers will offer extra hours at a higher rate of pay, giving employees a choice of working longer. French employees can now work a maximum of 48-hours a week, should they choose.

Working longer hours is a culture that will not change by itself, particularly during these uncertain times, when work is scarce and employees want to maintain their jobs. Employers are driving the market and are in a stronger position to negotiate lower salaries for longer working hours. Work/life balance often reduces in importance when one is desperate for work, frequently leading to exploitation. So what do we do about it? Is education and exposure enough? Perhaps it's time for a legal restraint on working hours.

When employees and employers, even coworkers, have a commitment to one another, everyone benefits. I have people who have been in business with me for decades. I reward their loyalty to the organization and to me. I know that they'll always be dedicated to what we're trying to accomplish.

– Donald Trump

12 Easy Steps to Stress Management

By Joanne Grey©

Lighten up! Stress can raise your risk of heart disease, obesity and depression. It can also make your working life a misery. Get back to basics and remember what really counts in your life. Balancing work and home CAN be achieved, if you are prepared to make a few adjustments.

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.”

- Stephen Covey

If you modify your behaviour one step at a time, without making radical changes, both your work and personal lives will improve. If you are productive at work, your loved ones won't bear the brunt of your bad day when you get home. The key is to adapt gradually and make one small change at a time.

Changes can be implemented slowly, by focusing on one area at a time. Once you have mastered one change, gradually introduce another. Most people need to consistently work on changing a behaviour trait for about three weeks before it becomes a habit.

For more information on the 12 Easy Steps to Stress Management, check out our website:

http://www.teamworkspacific.com.au/article/12_steps_to_stress_management

Team Snippets



John Stuart is in Germany running a 'summit meeting' for the International Paralympic Committee (Athletics).

He is using Open Space facilitation for the 80 delegates of the participating countries and will let us know how it went on his return.

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