**Business Case for Emotional Resilience**

This document summarises the business reasons for developing emotional resilience.
An extensive reference list is provided at the end.

There are 5 key reasons why we need to develop emotional resilience.

Work-related stress, lower-than-ideal work productivity and changing social landscape in society are creating new challenges at work. Against this backdrop, emotion is normal at work and emotional resilience has proven benefits in the workplace.

- **Work-related stress**
  There are many signs of work-related stress in our workplaces. The evidence is somewhat sobering. Against this background, it is no surprise that we consider our levels of work stress to be increasing leading to poorer productivity and health.

  o Work-related stress cost the economy £6.5bn in 2012 due to absenteeism and sickness.
  o Only 20% of the UK workforce is healthy.
  o Stress is the second biggest cause of workplace conflict and employees spend on average a day per month dealing with this (CIPD – 2010).
  o Stress is now the number one cause of long term absence from work, where the duration is 4 weeks and over.
  o Stress and mental health conditions are now the second biggest cause of absence from work.
  o The average annual absence for all mental health conditions is 21 days, rising to 30 days for depression. (MIND - 2011). Given that the average number of holidays is 25 days per year plus 8 bank holidays, this is surprisingly high.
  o Stress from our perception of daily hassles including work stress and family arguments can kill us as easily as the stress from serious life events. The people who do worst are the ones who have the strongest emotional reaction to both big and small events (Aldwin, 2014).

  The bottom line is that we are either stressed at work and working below our productivity, or we are absent from the workplace on sick leave with stress.

- **Lower-than-ideal work productivity**
  In addition to the serious problems of productivity left by people who are absent from work through illness, there is a growing problem of 'Presenteeism'. This is a lack of productivity of people at work leading to employers restricting access to the internet and personal phone calls at work as ways to try to solve the problems. In a recent Gallup Employee Engagement survey, 73% of people surveyed stated that they were not motivated to do their work and would typically put in minimal time but not the required effort. As many as 81% of people at work are feeling either disengaged or only engaged when necessary, with only 19% of people reporting that they are both competent and motivated.

  These statistics have potentially serious implications for the success of employers today. They indicate that many people are working below their potential and not bringing their full engagement to work. Perhaps we have toxic work environments where we treat people as 'human doings' rather than human beings. The issues are complex. The reality is that we seem to be underperforming at work, and we face dissatisfaction and disengagement from the fortunate people who are employed.

- **Changing social landscape**
  No one would dispute that relationships with colleagues, bosses, customers and other 'stakeholders' are key to work success. Yet, loneliness in society is increasing and the amount of time we spend socially interacting has fallen dramatically in the last 25 years (Office for National Statistics, 2013). 29% of our population now live in single person households. As many as 57% of adults aged 18-34 and 46% of adults aged 35-54 reported that they felt lonely sometimes or often (Mental Health Foundation, 2010). 42% of adults reported that they did not count any of their colleagues at work as friends and 10% said they did not have a single close friend (Relate, 2014). The prediction is that as many as 42% of people getting married will end in divorce. Interestingly the pattern of divorce rates seems to follow the financial market, the worse the recession, the higher the divorce rate (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Yet, we were built for living in communities and work relies more and more on working collaboratively with others. We seem to have lost our 'social mojo'. We need to find new ways to rekindle our connections at work, to help us to survive.

- **Proven benefits of Emotional Resilience**
  Research evidence supports the proven benefits of resilience to organisations. Resilient people:

  – Are less likely to become mentally or physically ill during adversity (Siebert, 2005).
  – Experience overall more hope, optimism and positivity, making them better able to cope with job demands (Fredrickson, 2001)
  – Are better able to learn new skills and knowledge when their existing skillset becomes outdated (Gorelick et al., 2004).
  – Have a better chance of succeeding when competing for a job or promotion (Siebert 2005).
  – Are best able to turn adversity into a growth experience, and to leverage it into new experiences and ways of working (Maddi and Khoshaba, 2005)
  – Highly-resilient people appraise stressful tasks as less threatening, compared to low-resilient people (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004).
  – Are able to handle anxiety and tolerate frustration even when faced with episodes of distressing emotional experiences (Carver, 1998; Saarni, 1999).
  – Restore self-esteem after failure (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).
  – Show more creative problem solving when handlings stressful situations (Ddemos, 1989; Cohler, 1987; Murphy & Moriarty. 1976).
  – Elicit more positive responses from social support networks to help buffer the impact of negative emotional experiences (Demos, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992).
  – Demonstrate greater personal insight by having the ability to judge their own strengths and limitations in difficult times (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).
  – Recognise own feelings and those of others and utilize their emotion knowledge to effectively manage their own emotional experiences (Kumpfer, 1999; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990).
  – Regarding individual personality differences in resilience (measured using psychometric tests) shows that resilient people are optimistic, zestful, energetic, curious, open to new experiences.
  – Are typically energetic people who frequently use humour as a coping strategy (Werner & Smith, 1992; (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).
  – People with low resilience have a difficult time coping with negative experiences and are unable to recover from them (Klohnen, 1996; Rutter, 1987).

## Why now?

- **New demands**
  Technology advances give us vast productivity tools at our finger tips and an almost instant ability to access knowledge and connect with people anywhere in the world – email, smart phones, you are never far from an internet connection. Discoveries in science and ground-breaking research are helping to identify cures to diseases considered to be incurable 20 years ago. Globalisation is creating a marketplace for skills and talent world-wide and creating more intense competition for jobs. With all of this, comes more pressure at work, to work faster smarter and harder. We also can breed a false sense of feeling in control over events until a crisis hits. A key skill in the 'new normal' of our chaotic, turbulent work lives is how to notice and value emotion and to be able to stay in control of our emotions, thoughts and behaviour at work which, research shows, drives our performance and success. Alongside this move the National Health Service is diverting more investment towards mental health issues; recent increases in the ratio of money spent on mental health issues versus physical health.

- **Job insecurity**
  With the ever changing demands at work, no longer can anyone claim to have security in their jobs. There is a constant need to question how you do your work so that you can stay in a job and be considered to be 'employable'. Recent research shows that there are health impacts from job uncertainty; for example, people who reported concern about losing their jobs were more likely to develop first time asthma at work (Loerbroks A, Bosch JA, Douwes, J et al 2014). Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is considered to be an essential need now for a much larger proportion of the working population as a result of the job pressures and financial uncertainty.

- **Public disgraces**
  Every day in the news we hear stories of conflict, public disgrace and bad behaviour in organisations under the media spotlight, often with an immediate negative impact on the company involved including a dive in share price. Underneath these publicly leaked frictions, there is a combination of different factors. Emotional aspects include a perceived lack of recognition, misunderstandings and disagreements through poor listening, without any say of those people closely involved. Even when companies are expanding and there are opportunities for growth, uncertainty and fear can quickly seep across a workforce. Rumours about upcoming redundancies can spiral; anxiety, suspicion and mistrust escalate. There is a high level of mistrust of organisations and their motives compared to the days when you were hired into a job for life.

  There may be little you can do to stop the stressful events at work and in your life, but you can change how you react to the daily hassles. This has an important effect on your health and your effectiveness at work.

## Lack of available 'human' upgrade

We live in an age where we can upgrade practically anything about our looks through cosmetic surgery. Unfortunately our human 'hardware', by this I mean our brains and our bodies, remain unchanged since the days of hunting and gathering food to feed the family. Our internal programmes and patterns, which we 'run' on a daily basis, our human 'software', includes how we handle emotion on a daily basis.

Though we receive frequent email notifications to click on a link and update our phones, apps and software to get the latest upgrade, unfortunately, no-one has emailed us yet about upgrading our emotional resilience. Our human software is long out-of-date, our upgrade is long overdue and the knowledge and research about how emotions affect us at work is growing daily.

We have to make the effort now to update ourselves. If we don't take this step to plunge in now and learn about emotional resilience, we run the risk of falling behind and continuing to operate below our potential at work. We need to learn from the tried-and-tested solutions for familiar emotional problems at work so that we have the best chances of success.

Our emotions have a major impact on our effectiveness. Positive feeling states are associated with healthier bodies, improved thinking, and enhanced decision-making capabilities. Intentionally invoking a positive feeling can enhance our ability to function in our work. On the other hand, when we are negative, frustrated, or angry, we tend to lose focus and become less effective.

1. Our thinking and our health are connected. What connects them are our emotions. Emotion modulates thinking processes by driving selective attention (e.g. Öhman, Flykt, & Esteves, 2001).
2. Emotion guides goals management (e.g. Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987), allowing selection between alternatives (e.g. Bechara, Damasio, Damasio, & Anderson, 1994; Damasio, 1994) and preparing the organism for action (Frijda, 1987).
3. Conversely, cognitive appraisal (interpretation) of the situation may trigger emotion (e.g. Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001).
4. Despite cognitive declines that occur with aging, older adults solve problems involving emotional content much better (Freda Blanchard-Fields).

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