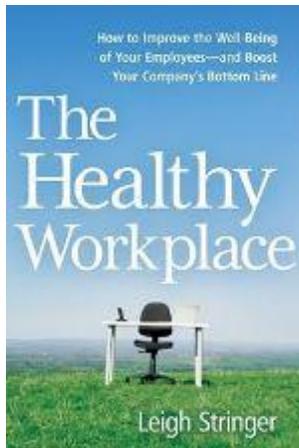


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Healthy Workplace: How to Improve the Well-Being of Your Employees – and Boost Your Company's Bottom Line***

Author: **Leigh Stringer, LEED AP**

Publisher: AMACOM

List Price: US\$27.95 Format: Hardback, 256 pages

Publication Date: July 2016 ISBN: 978-0814437438

Reviewer: **Larry Barnett, PMP**

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Introduction

Leigh Stringer, LEED AP, introduces ***The Healthy Workplace*** with a bit of personal humor to describe how the typical workplace of the 21st century may not contribute to the overall health of its workers.

The alarming increase in the cost of care, however, is not humorous. In fact, a major portion of the cost of health care services goes to treat non-communicable, chronic illness. Employers are paying a large part of that cost, and are seeing an increasing correlation between employee health and their bottom line.

Overview of Book's Structure

The first few chapters of ***The Healthy Workplace*** discuss the historical development of humans, of industry, and the evolution of work and the human workplace. They also raise concern about current and recent conditions in the workplace. The modern workplace, in general, has been slow to respond to any such alarms. However, some leading companies have been purposefully investing in the overall health of their employees, and are seeing real and lasting benefits. Stringer discusses how flow, group flow, creativity, and a certain degree of control all work together to reduce stress and increase performance.

The next chapters consider the human physiology and how best to fine-tune it for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The author describes how physical movement can counteract the effects of sedentary behavior. Moreover, she shows how movement can both expend and create energy, while motivating people toward better performance. An entire chapter is devoted to practical ways of reducing stress and increasing focus. Another chapter even targets ways to improve sleep habits.

The last two chapters describe how some well-known companies have successfully implemented strategies laid out in **The Healthy Workplace**. Examples show how company culture can substantiate a *health culture* and positively affect the bottom line. Finally, Ms. Stringer lays out strategies for building a business case for expanding or implementing a Health Initiative.

Highlights

The author closes with a year 2025 projection. It is a hypothetical tale of two paths — *business-as-usual* or *the evolved workplace*. *Business-as-usual* requires little initiative; it leads to a bleak, unhealthy outcome. The path of *the evolved workplace* leads to healthy people, healthy companies, and healthy economies. It is the result of a continuing and deliberate mindset shift to **The Healthy Workplace**.

Highlights: What I liked!

Highlights include:

- Absenteeism and “presenteeism” (which is going to work while being sick, or not being fully engaged) are both impacts of chronic illness due to an unhealthy workplace. Both are costly for employees and employers alike.
- Walking Meetings foster communication that is more fluent and more focused.
- Multitasking leads to a “...drop in productivity, more stress, and a 10 percent IQ drop.” Focus on one task at a time.
- A table in the *Afterword* summarizes Healthy Workplace Strategies. This could be good material for developing a business case for a Health Initiative.

The *Acknowledgements* describes a striking collection of people and companies whose expertise, example, and enthusiasm all contributed to **The Healthy Workplace**. It shows both the positive undercurrent of leading companies and thought leaders in this important subject, *and* extensive effort by the author to effectively bring it all together.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Business leaders on the verge of implementing or expanding health initiatives could benefit from the book. The evidence is compelling. Project Managers, working alongside Human Resources, would find beneficial the information on Vision, Charter, and ongoing evaluation.

Conclusion

The Healthy Workplace has good, practical information for individuals on improving health and reducing stress in any environment, especially the workplace. It is a good resource for any company implementing or expanding a Health Initiative.

For more about this book, go to:

<http://www.amacombooks.org/book.cfm?isbn=9780814437438>

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About the Reviewer



Larry Barnett

Texas, USA



Larry Barnett has broad experience in information technology, IT Project Management, Business Analysis, and Solution Development and Delivery. His work experience covers a variety of industries, most recently the Energy industry, and previously, Paper & Forest Products. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting, from Texas Tech University. Larry is a member of the Project Management Institute, Dallas Chapter, having acquired PMP certification in 2015. He serves as sergeant-at-arms for Dallas PMI Toastmasters.

Larry can be contacted at LarryBarnettPMP@gmail.com