

Mindfulness and Business¹

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Most of the time, a person's brain is prone to focus on the future (worries, expectations, etc.) or the past (regret, guilt, etc.). The human mind is also naturally inclined to judge everything (for example, good, bad, big, small, etc.).

People who practice mindfulness concentrate on themselves (their thoughts, emotions and physical sensations) or focus on different aspects of the environment around them (people, things, places, etc.) with undivided attention and in a non-judgemental manner. Consequently, mindful people tend to be less reactive. Individuals who intently practice mindfulness are centred on the present moment and use their five senses (touch, sight, smell, hearing, taste) fully.

People tend to see reality through the lenses of their mental biases (e.g., exaggerating, mind-reading, drawing quick conclusions, etc.). Salzberg (2014) observed that mindfulness helps people cut through their mental biases to get in direct contact with themselves and their surroundings.

Tart (mentioned in Fontana, 1999) observed that mindfulness helps people see things as they are, instead of how they want them to be. Research notes several benefits of mindful practice, such as less tiredness, better communication skills, higher self-esteem, improved memory skills, fewer distractions, heightened awareness, improved decision-making, more creativity, lower stress levels, enhanced performance, and less emotional reactivity, among others.

Collard (2014) observed that mindful individuals tend to be more vital, enthusiastic, grateful, and compassionate. The continuous use of mindful techniques also has a positive impact on relationships and the overall well-being of a person. Below there are some potential uses of mindfulness in the business environment.

Mindfulness can be used as part of active listening to a company's stakeholders. When a person is actively listening to another, the former can become a silent observer of the latter's movements, gestures, tone of voice, emotions, and words. Mindful listening contributes to a better comprehension of the speaker's message. Mindful listeners temporarily silence their inner dialogue to pay full attention to what is being said. This type of listener adopts a more empathetic attitude with a speaker.

With mindfulness, a business person can fully concentrate on projects of great importance (contracts, strategies, product innovation processes, launching of new items, etc.). Mindful practice can help people focus on the priority tasks at hand, without being distracted by trivial ones. Mindful observation can also be used to avoid multitasking,

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which lowers productivity, according to research. In other words, mindfulness also allows people to manage relevant tasks in a more productive manner.

A very important question for self-reflection is: “How can I be more mindful at work?”

References

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This is an excerpt from the book “The Art of Compassionate Business: Main Principles for the Human-Oriented Enterprise” (2019, Routledge).

About the Author



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