

# Health leadership and mental health: A challenge to corporate culture and corporate health

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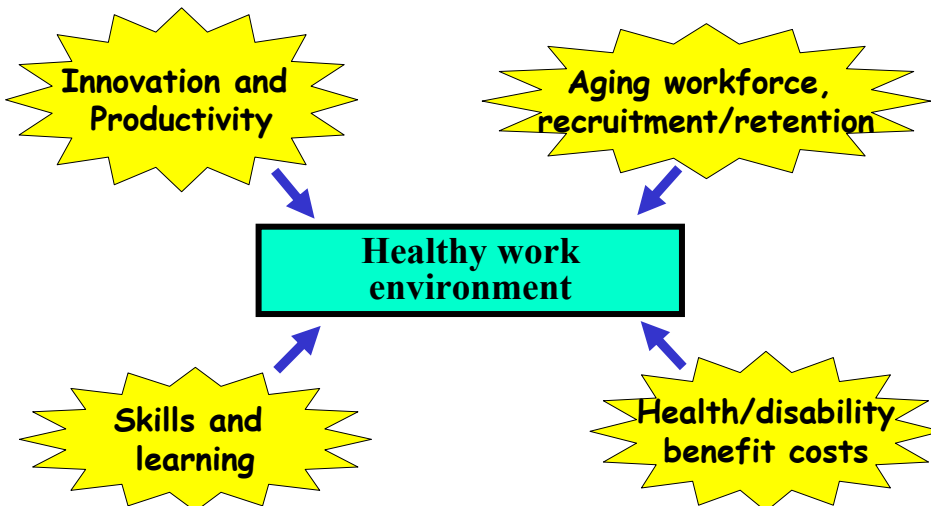
Keynote presentation at *The European Network of 'Enterprise for Health'*,  
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## Four compelling reasons to create healthier work environments



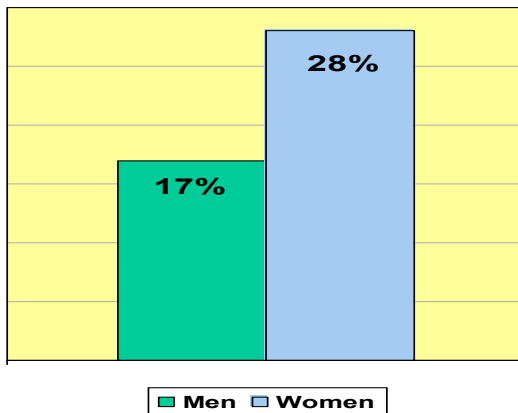
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# Causes and consequences of job stress

## Job demands and employee control

Percentage of workers reporting high  
job strain by gender, Canada, 1994/95



**Job strain is a  
major stressor  
caused by:**

- hectic jobs,
- conflicting demands,
- little control over pace of work or how to carry out duties

Source: National Population Health Survey data. *Health Reports* (April 2001).

## Stress and health

*High job strain increases the probability of ....*

- migraines
- psychological distress
- work injury
- depression and reduced health

*Other work stressors:*

- high physical demands
- low co-worker support
- high job insecurity
- low supervisory support

- *This research is only a starting point*
- *We need to dig deeper into changes in jobs, workplaces and the economy*

## Rising work pressures

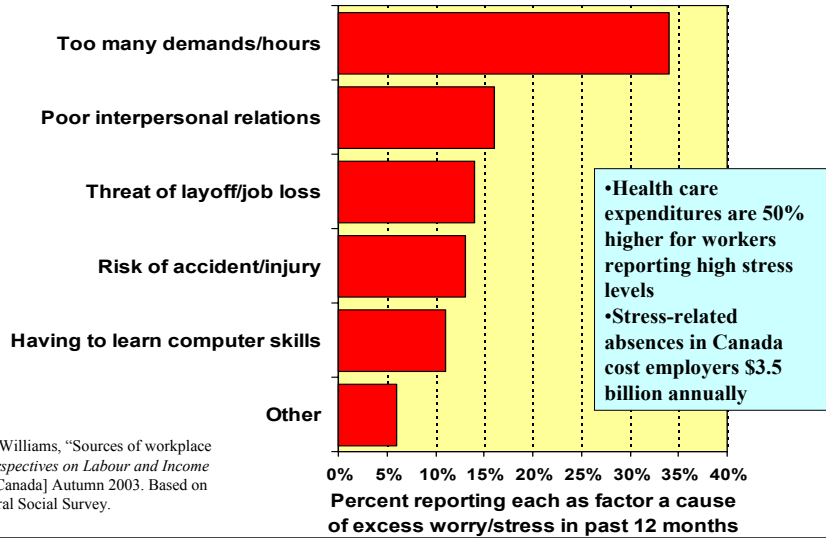
**Work intensification:**

- *Long or 'non-standard' work hours, inflexible schedules, rising workloads and performance expectations*
- *The employment contract has been redefined: 110% effort*

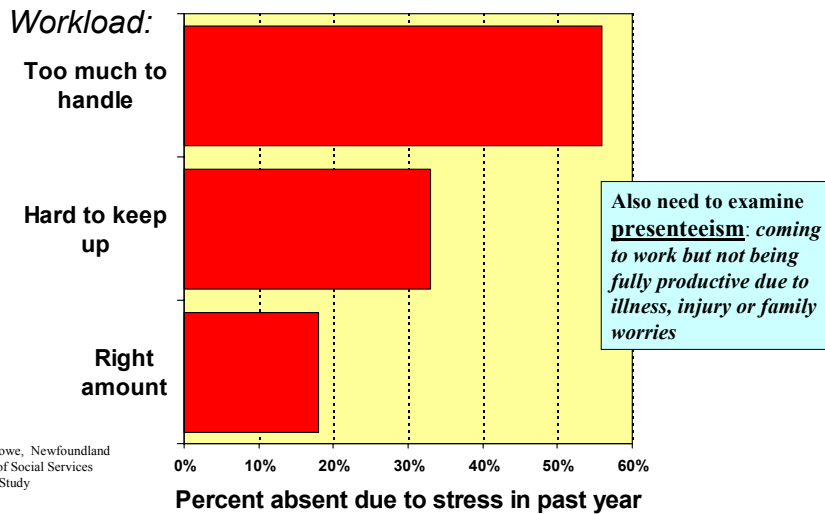
**Consequences for:**

- employee health
- health care costs
- work-life balance
- absenteeism, turnover
- morale
- learning and skills
- change

### Triggers of workplace stress

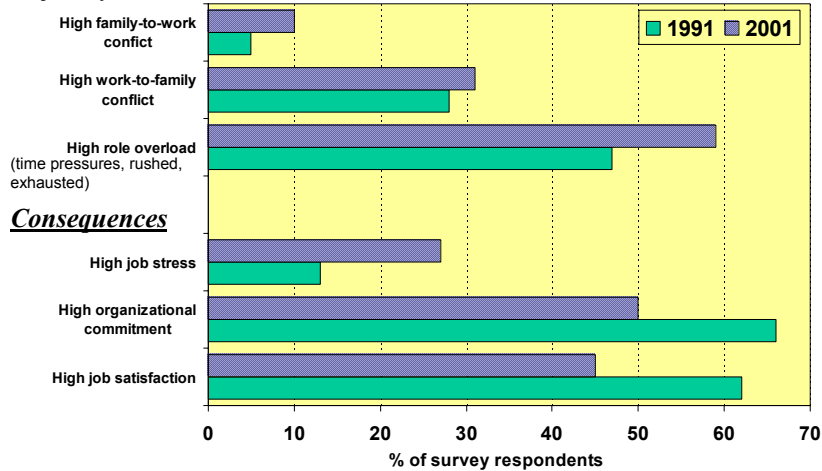


### Workload and stress-related absences



## Rising work - family conflict

### Work-family balance



Source: L. Duxbury and C. Higgins, *Work - Life Balance in the New Millennium* (CPRN Discussion Paper, October 2001. [www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org))

## Job stress requires organizational solutions

- The rise of knowledge-based jobs and industries has increased the importance of the psychosocial environment for workers' health
- Two prominent models of the psychosocial work environment:
  - The **Demand-Control Model** links psychological strain to the joint effects of the job demands (workload) and the decision-making freedom, influence and skill development opportunities workers have to meet these demands. Social support available in the workplace from coworkers and supervisors can "buffer" the impact of job demands.
  - The **Effort-Reward Imbalance Model** model argues that the greatest risk to health occurs where people experience a mismatch between high efforts spent (demands, pressures, responsibilities) and low occupational rewards (salary, support, treatment).
- 3 approaches to stress management intervention: primary or preventative, secondary or reactive, tertiary or treatment
- Stress models above focus on the need for primary interventions
- These solutions are organizational, not individual

# Stress, learning and innovation

## Healthy workplaces support innovation

- Corporate and policy agendas converge on two goals: **competitiveness** and **healthy workplaces**
- The Canadian government's innovation strategy claims that "(k)nowledge is the main source of competitive advantage, and it is people who embody, create, develop and apply it". *Achieving Excellence: Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity. Canada's Innovation Strategy*. Industry Canada 2002 [[www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca](http://www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca)]
- Healthy work environments contribute to economic goals by support knowledge development and use

## 'Learning organizations' are healthy workplaces

- Lots of pressure to make better use of existing talent
- Need to create enabling conditions for the use and development of skills
  - *a healthy and supportive work environment*
- The human resource management practices and organizational contexts that support learning also define a healthy workplace
- All workers can be 'knowledge workers' if given continuous learning opportunities

Statistics Canada reports that being too busy at work is the most common reason cited by those facing barriers to job-related training in 1997 (by 42%).  
*Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Summer 2002).

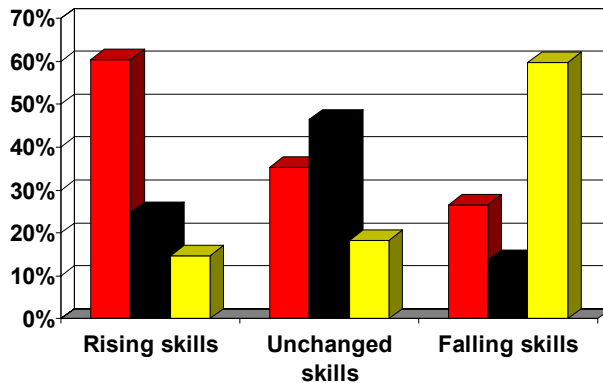
## Stress and the 'Creative Class'

- Focus on the key economic role of knowledge workers (managers, professionals, technicians)
- Richard Florida calls these workers 'the creative class' (*The Creative Class*, 2002)
- Feel more rushed, time-impoverished and stressed than other groups
  - perceive their time as increasingly valuable
  - have flexible schedules
  - ICT enables them to take their work everywhere

## Stresses of a knowledge economy

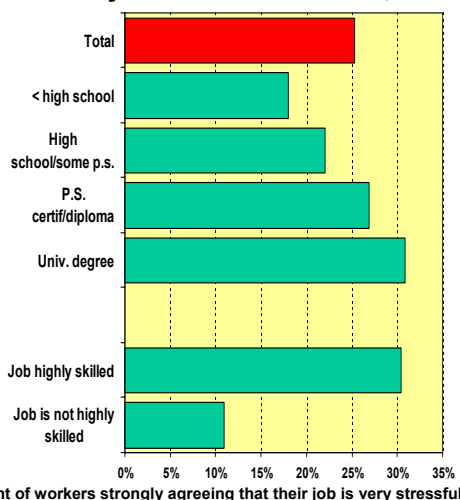
Change in stress at work over previous 5 years, Britain, 2001

■ Increase in stress ■ No change ■ Decline in stress



Data from 2001 Skills Survey, representative sample of 4470 paid workers between ages of 20 and 60.  
Source: F. Green and D. Gallie, "High skills And high anxiety: skills, hard work and mental well-being."  
SKOPE research paper No. 27, University of Warwick, Spring 2002.

## Job stress by education and skills, Canada

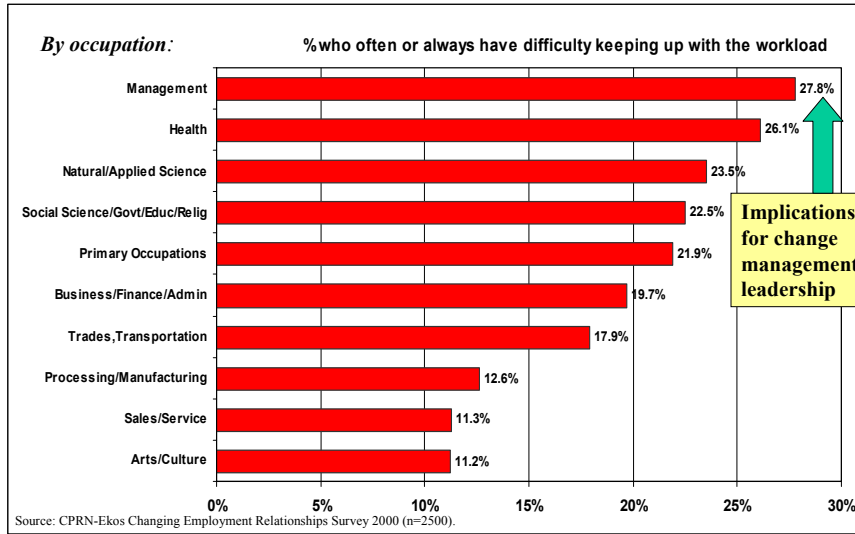


Percent of workers strongly agreeing that their job is very stressful

Source: CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey 2000 (n=2500).

- *Peter Drucker:* Knowledge workers must be treated as assets, not costs. Their work must enable continuous innovation, learning and teaching.
- *Problem:* knowledge work occurs in organizational contexts that can undermine these goals

## Work Overload



## Healthy organizations

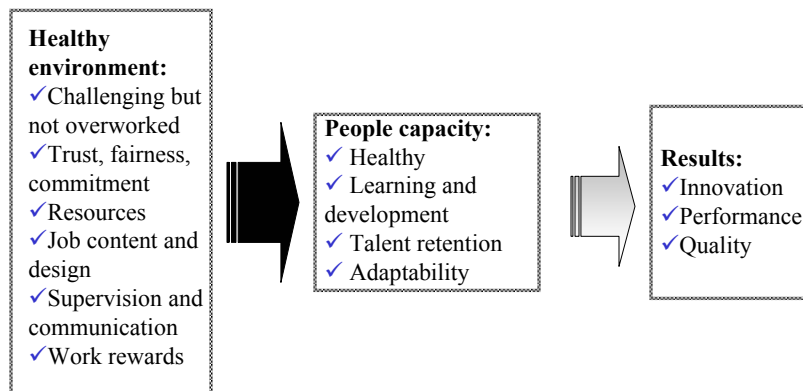
## The Healthy Organization

- Goes beyond workplace health promotion, linking health and performance
- Population health thinking
- Addresses individual health risk factors *and* work environments
- Balances customer expectations, organizational goals, employee skills and health needs
- Getting there requires systemic change and the collaboration of OHS, HR, OD, line managers

**See: U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. *The Changing Organization of Work and the Safety and Health of Working People*. 2002. [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)**

## The logic of a healthy organization

*Here's how a healthy work environment, people capacity, and organizational effectiveness are linked:*



## Employees' perceptions of a healthy work environment

### INFLUENCES:

- *Most positive*: Good communication and supportive relationships (communication, co-workers, supervisor, recognition)
- *Most negative*: job demands (stressful, hectic, heavy workload, conflicting demands)

Source: G. Lowe, G. Schellenberg, H. Shannon, "Correlates of employees' perceptions of a healthy work environment." *American Journal of Health Promotion*, July/August 2003.

### OUTCOMES:

- Employees who perceived their work environments as "healthy" had higher job satisfaction, commitment and morale, and lower absenteeism, intent to quit

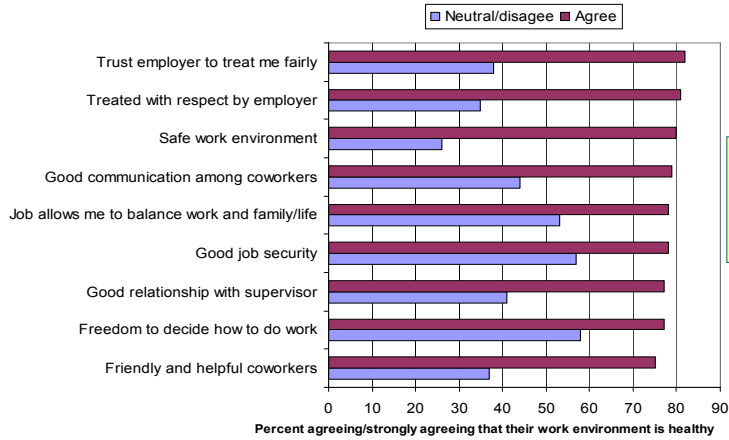
### IMPLICATIONS:

- Supports a comprehensive model of workplace health that targets working conditions, work relationships and workplace organization for health promotion interventions.

## Fairness

- Values are the cornerstone of a healthy organization
- Trust, fairness and respect are upper-most in employees minds as requisite workplace values
- Fairness is a principle guiding workplaces actions and therefore a key determinant of employee health and well-being (Martin Shain)
- Perceptions of organizational fairness are influenced by the same workplace factors as perceptions of control (voice in decision making) and stress (workload demands)
- Fairness contributes to a 'psychologically healthy workplace', which some experts argue is socially responsible
- Fairness is linked to trust

Upstream indicators: Correlates of a healthy work environment



•Approximately 1 in 4 Canadian workers are in work environment they perceive to be unhealthy.

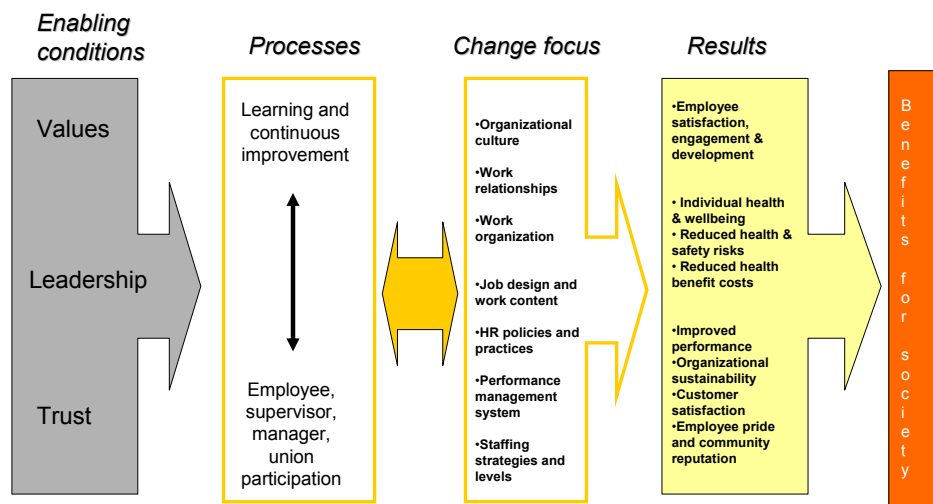
Source: CPRN-Ekos Changing Employment Relationships Survey, 2000. Microdata file. Employees only (n=2109)

# Leadership for health

## Success factors in workplace health promotion

- Supportive corporate environment and leadership commitment
- Non-health issues are important health promoting factors
- Participative change process, involving all levels of employees
- Comprehensive workplace and employee interventions
- Rigorous project management (needs analysis, priority setting, a plan, monitoring and evaluation)
- An integrated, multidisciplinary approach
- WHP embedded in management practices and strategic plans

## Action model for creating healthy organizations



## Two strategies for healthier organizations

### *Program strategy*

- **thought** → **plan** → **action**
- Tends to get bogged down in the planning stage
- Imitation driven
- Narrow project focus
- Top-down change with some formal group participation
- Expert-led
- Limited diffusion

### *Learning strategy*

- **thought** ↔ **action**
- Results in greater health improvements
- Vision driven
- Strategic business focus
- Top-down / bottom-up change process
- Empowerment
- Wide diffusion

Adapted from E. Menckel and L. Österblom, *Managing Workplace Health* (Swedish National Institute for Working Life, 2002) p. 57.

## Health as a corporate social responsibility

- The European Union wants “health at work” to be part of a corporate social responsibility framework
  - Encourage firms to adopt voluntary “good practices” that exceed legislated requirements
  - Healthy work is integrated into the European employment strategy
  - Linked to quality of employment and full use of human productive potential

*See: Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community Strategy on health and safety at work 2002-6. Commission of European Communities, March 2002.*

## Actions for employers

- Shift focus from symptoms to causes
  - Health and productivity improvements require changes to job design, organizational systems, human resource management practices, and workplace culture, and leadership
  - The healthy organization model can guide these changes
- Take a comprehensive approach
  - Need team efforts by professionals in occupational health and safety, workplace wellness, organizational development, human resources, and executives and line managers
- Directly involve employees
- Link healthy organization strategy to workforce and workplace renewal
- Document how investing in a healthy organization contributes to firm performance

## Your role as leaders

1. What is your **vision** of “a healthy organization”?
2. What are the supporting values?
3. How can you act the values?
4. How can you be a ‘catalyst’ and an ‘enabler’ for change?

## Canadian resources

- Institute for Work and Health [www.iwh.on.ca](http://www.iwh.on.ca)
- Health Canada, Workplace Health Strategies Bureau [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/whsb-ssmt](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/whsb-ssmt)
- Canadian Labour and Business Centre [www.clbc.ca](http://www.clbc.ca)
- National Quality Institute [www.nqi.ca](http://www.nqi.ca)
- Canadian Policy Research Networks, Job Quality website [www.jobquality.ca](http://www.jobquality.ca)
- Conference Board of Canada [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)