

Job + Holidays = Stress

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The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reported that 25% of employees see their jobs as the primary stressor in their lives and 75% feel that workers today have more job stress than a generation ago. In a recent Dateline NBC/Prevention Magazine survey, 41% of those polled admitted finding the holidays extremely stressful, almost as bad as asking the boss for a raise. Combine these statistics and it becomes clear why the holidays may be particularly stressful for some employees.

At this time of year employers and employees may have conflicting priorities caused by pressures of too many projects and too little time. At a time when companies are trying to meet deadlines and wrap up year-end paperwork, workers are preoccupied with holiday planning. As businesses focus on increased potential holiday revenues, workers are preparing to welcome friends and families.

Some employees may experience guilt and anxiety from having to choose between holiday programs at their kids' schools, or working overtime. Current economic climate will cause some to worry about holiday budgets while some employers will stress over workers' reaction to smaller or nonexistent bonuses. Some will resent assignments that delay plans to decorate our houses like those on magazine covers that tantalize us as we wait in endless lines. Some will feel inadequate when, because of work, their house is the only house on the block still without lights a few days before the big day and still some of us will resort to burning "Fresh Baked Cookie" candles, since we have no time to bake. Some will be especially frustrated when we are too tired to participate in spiritual events as we planned.

For those already dissatisfied with their jobs and careers, routine tasks become unbearable, productivity further declines and going to work feels like walking a tightrope. The following few suggestions may help us get some perspective this holiday.

Identify what is important and plan your time to accomplish only those things; *your productivity will improve because of it.*

- Ask for help and support from friends, family, co-workers and neighbors; *your relationships will grow from it.*
- Stay flexible and open to all possibilities, *your sanity depends on it.*
- Take walks with your family to admire the colors and decorations around you, *your body will thank you for it.*
- Encourage communication in the workplace to resolve conflicts; *your coworkers will appreciate you for it.*
- Support employees' plans to celebrate, *organizations will be better for it.*
- Develop an appreciation for company bottom lines this time of year, *our economy will grow from it.*
- Focus on the pure simple truths of the holidays, *our communities will be better for it.*
- Take time to be thankful we live in America, *our futures depend on it.*