

Leaders under control

A global assessment has revealed some surprising findings about the potential causes and cures of work-related stress

A recent assessment by leadership development experts Zenger Folkman sought to determine levels of stress in the workplace, as well as causes of stress and possible ways to alleviate it. The global assessment revealed that a quarter of all respondents felt 'overwhelmed' at work, with younger people experiencing the most stress, primarily due to their workload.

Work-related stress has a detrimental effect on mental and physical health, but also impacts business, with lowered productivity.

The assessment indicated that performing tasks more slowly was associated with feeling more overwhelmed by work, while employees who worked at a faster pace and took leadership decisions experienced less stress. These findings indicate that the best way to reduce stress is to increase pace of work.

"The ability to plough through work rapidly, set priorities and make important work-related decisions were the qualities that most separated those who felt overwhelmed from those who felt things were under control," Jack Zenger told Forbes.

Fines hit Fiat Chrysler in order to drive safety home

Regulators have imposed a huge fine, as well as some more unusual penalties, on Fiat Chrysler Automobiles after vehicle safety laws were violated

Fiat Chrysler are to pay US \$70 million in fines for their failure to recall around 11 million of their vehicles. In order to discourage other companies similarly scrimping on vehicle safety, the government has additionally required that Fiat Chrysler buy back hundreds of thousands of faulty automobiles.

Regulators did not stop there, however, and also made the company agree to allowing an independent monitor to have oversight of their safety procedures for three years, and funding educational programmes on recalling vehicles for other carmakers, as well as suppliers and customers.

"I think we are going to see the industry taking this issue more seriously," said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "We believe that the very strong fines that we are issuing today, coupled with remedial measures, will allow us to move forward." It is predicted that the financial cost to Fiat Chrysler Automobiles will reach US \$105 million overall.



Restoring transparency and trust

Although people rarely stop to think about the story behind the products they consume, one innovative start-up is seeking to change this

Provenance, established by Cambridge graduate Jessi Baker, is a service with a mission to equip consumers with knowledge about the items they buy. Using the Blockchain service, which allows all users to browse archives of data on bitcoin transactions, Provenance makes it possible to trace the 'lifetime' of a product all the way back to its origins.

This service could reveal the materials used in manufacture and the human labour involved, empowering consumers to make ethical choices when spending their money. Already, Provenance is working with hundreds of SMEs, which hope to establish greater customer trust through the transparency that the service offers.

"There are a lot of cynics who think people don't care, some don't and some do," Baker told *Marketing Magazine*. "I am one of those consumers who, if they had information, would make better choices."



New laws to target non-compete agreements in employee contracts

In June, new legislation was introduced that aims to prevent non-compete agreements being put in place for employees earning under US \$15 an hour

The two Democratic Senators introducing the bill, Chris Murphy and Al Franken, hope that the Mobility and Opportunity for Vulnerable Employees (MOVE) Act would help protect low earning employees by allowing them to apply for jobs with other employees that pay competitive salaries. Non-compete agreements can make it impossible for low-wage employees to progress by disallowing their movement to companies with similar business to their current employer.

Murphy and Franken's legislation comes after high profile cases, such as that of sandwich chain Jimmy John's. Jimmy John's non-compete agreement states that for two years after leaving the company the employee will not be permitted to work in any business that receives 10 per cent or more of its sales from sandwiches, and exists within three miles of one of their stores. Such a clause could prevent workers from finding better employment.

Despite potentially giving low-paid workers the break they need, some believe the laws could also harm small businesses. Some smaller companies rely on non-competes to retain their employees, and the investment made in them, for longer and ensure that company knowledge, such as client information, is not transferred elsewhere.

Round-up: Driving corporate responsibility

With a growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility in the global business community, brands the world over are taking business ethics more seriously

According to the Reputation Institute's 2015 Global RepTrak 100 survey, BMW, Google and Daimler are the world's most reputable companies. This annual survey measures the public perceptions of corporate reputations based on seven dimensions: innovation, leadership, governance, citizenship, workplace, performance and products and services. The most highly ranked companies were perceived to communicate more

with their customers, and seen as more consistent and distinctive than their competitors.

Businesses seeking to expand will have to pay increasing attention to their green credentials, according to new research by professional services provider, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). PwC's poll of 60 companies across the globe shows that 70 per cent would not participate in a private equity fundraising round and would turn down co-investments due to environmental, social or governance risk factors.

Costa, the Whitbread-owned coffee shop chain, recently became the first cafe brand to win a two star sustainability rating by the Sustainable Restaurant Association. The chain received acclaim for sourcing a broad range of ingredients from British producers, as well as recognition for its seasonal sourcing policies and robust waste management practices – both of which are key focus areas in the hospitality industry.

