

Wellbeing Literacy Bite #2

Managing high work demands Strategies for Leaders



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In any organisation, there will be times when workloads intensify, due to project deadlines, seasonal peaks, or unexpected challenges. As a leader, your role is to ensure these high-demand periods are managed efficiently without compromising the wellbeing of your team. Prolonged periods of excessive workload can lead to burnout, decreased productivity, and negative health effects.

This guide offers practical strategies to help you, and your team navigate these demanding periods effectively while sustaining productivity and maintaining a healthy work environment.

While it's crucial to maintain productivity, it's equally important to prioritize the wellbeing of your team during periods of high demand.

5 Effective work practices for high-demand periods

1

Prioritise & Focus

Urgent vs important: guide your team to assess tasks.

Task breakdown: large projects, broken down into smaller steps = less overwhelm, more momentum.

Optimise scheduling: schedule tasks most challenging in peak productivity period.

2

Time Management

Set SMART goals: clear, daily goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound gives clarity, focus and progress.

Use Tools: calendars, planners or digital time tools keep everyone on track. Task management apps can help organise and track tasks.

3

Minimise Distractions

Focused work space: minimise noise and other distractions. Consider quiet zones or remote work during peak periods.

Manage technology wisely: turn off non-essential notifications & use productivity apps like Pomodoro timers to maintain concentration.

4

Collaboration & Support

Delegate & collaborate: promote a culture of comfort to delegate tasks and collaborate with colleagues.

Open communication: maintain an open-door policy for team members to discuss challenges - early intervention can prevent overwhelm & give timely support.

5

Encourage Breaks

Strategic breaks: emphasise the importance of taking regular breaks to recharge. Encourage shorter breaks through the day and longer ones when necessary. Returning to tasks with fresh energy can enhance productivity and creativity.

Preventing burnout your roles as a leader

1

Promote Self-Care

Balance work-life integration: encourage a health work-life balance by setting boundaries & ensuring personal time outside of work.

Physical health: promote regular exercise, healthy diet, & quality sleep as stress-busting, energy-giving fundamentals.

Mindfulness & relaxation: mindfulness practices like meditation or deep-breathing exercise help manage stress. Apps like headspace or Calm five guided sessions.

2

Grow Support Networks

Social connections: encourage your team to stay connected with supportive colleagues, friends & family. Social support can provide a buffer against stress.

Professional help: make sure your team knows about the availability of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and other mental health resources. Encourage help-seeking if they are feeling overwhelmed.

3

Recognise & Reward

Acknowledgement: regularly acknowledge your team's efforts & achievements, especially during high-demand periods. This can boost morale and maintain motivation.

4

Flex & Adapt

Adjust workloads: adjust workloads to match team capability during peak periods (where possible). Flexibility can help prevent burnout.

Tailor support: based on individual needs. Some may need more guidelines and flexibility than others during peak periods.