

Home Business Magazine | Missing that Spark? Here's How to Power Your Business from the Inside Out

Independent entrepreneurs or business leaders may find it tough to stay motivated day after day. We all strive to keep that spark alive that can make all the difference between performing well or being exceptional. Employees who use their strengths, skills, and abilities every day are six times more likely to be engaged at work, 8% more productive, and 15% less likely to leave their jobs. ([Gallup](#)). The engine that drives engagement is powered by “personal energy”. Here’s how to boost your power from the inside out:

Be well. When I read an email closing with “Be well,” instead of “Regards,” or something similar, it cracks me up a bit. It sounds a wee bit like theoretical sunshine. Breaking down the concept, however, has a lot of merit. Whether it’s getting adequate sleep, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, or encouraging good posture, a healthy body produces more energy, so we are much more likely to engage at work.

For starters, [40% of Americans](#) are not getting enough sleep. According to the American Sleep Association, adults need an average of 7-9 hours each night to sustain healthy energy levels. While this can vary by individual, key factors that have a negative effect on our restfulness include: stress, alcohol, diet, and using electronics at bedtime. Nature has wired us to spend around 25%-30% of our lives asleep, so be sure to allow enough time to gear up for the following day.

Next, be cognizant of your diet and quantity of portions. Eating heavy carbohydrates or sugar-filled foods may produce a short-term spike of energy, but then drop our bodies into a lethargic state. Over eating can also

create lethargy, so keep it light. For morning meetings, try opting for fresh fruit with yogurt versus doughnuts, scones, or bagels.

Sometimes I get so engaged in my work that I glance at the clock and realize half the day has passed. It is important to get up and move, but how often? About every 5 minutes, or about [40 times](#) throughout a workday, we should at least be changing our position. Sitting in the same position for long periods of time has been linked to being overweight, type 2 diabetes, some forms of cancer, and premature death. What's more, according to the NHS, prolonged sitting is thought to slow the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure, and break down fat.

Beyond movement, your posture can increase energy levels in an instant! One of the [Ted-Talk videos](#) I've used over the years in coaching young people at work demonstrates the energizing psychological effect from changing your body's current pose. Power poses can boost confidence and placing a pencil between your teeth for simulation of a smile literally changes your brain chemistry and increases positive energy!

Feed your brain. Since 90% of what we do every day is a habit, one way to increase cognitive energy comes from challenging ourselves in areas that align with our natural strengths. Cognitive energy comes from the way we think and our knowledge base. Over time and with experience, our minds expand. People are more engaged and energized by working within their natural preferences. Entrepreneurs or small business leaders need to understand what motivates them naturally, then find a way to get paid for it.

Growth is an important part of human nature. Take a new class, try a different technique, or download a podcast series on a topic of interest. [Research by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham](#) found that when people set specific and challenging goals it led to higher performance 90 percent of the time. The more specific and challenging your goals, the higher your motivation toward hitting them. That explains why easy or vague goals rarely get met.

Renew your spirit. Beyond body and mind, our passion, ambition and inspiration are all critical to feeling energized. In some cultures, Tai Chi, meditation, and other spiritual energy practices are a regular part of the workday. Our Western cultures, however, tend to omit their valuable mental and physical benefits and miss out on the energizing and therapeutic aspects.

Research shows our positive beliefs alone can recreate the [effects of drugs](#), reduce pain, improve relationships, and boost overall well-being. Quantum physics reinforces the fact that our personal observations and behaviors shape the world around us. Chakra therapy, prayer, and other regular spiritual practices may significantly improve physical and mental energy.

These three steps can spark more engagement, productivity, and yes, even happiness at work.

About the author:

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Tabitha is CEO of [Cole Scott Group](#) and was formerly CEO of Military Assistance Company. She served as SVP Innovation & Sustainability at global companies Balfour Beatty Investments and Lend Lease Americas, and leverages years of successful experience with innovation program leadership, leader development, and engaging employees. She is a published and credentialed Certified Energy Manager®, Certified Demand Side Manager®, and is responsible for many major projects including the implementation of the world's largest rooftop solar community. While helping dozens of companies become more agile, Tabitha is an international advisor and speaker on energy, change management and innovation, with several [published works](#).

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