

RESILIENCE FOR LEADERS





Do you ever feel that you're working more but achieving less? You're not alone. There are numerous research studies that document the physical and psychological challenges facing managers. And most organizations do not develop the crucial Resiliency skills needed to generate high performance. This paper provides an example of an overwhelmed manager and specific strategies for becoming a more Resilient and effective leader.

As a marketing manager at a mid-size consulting firm, Lauren has a lot on her plate.

She enjoys managing a team of talented people, and she loves watching them collaborate to solve problems, meet deadlines, and work towards their goals.

Aside from the rewards of management, however, Lauren constantly feels pressed for time. She tries her best to hold regular, one-on-one meetings with each of her employees, because she wants to provide the meaningful feedback and guidance they need to succeed. But it always feels like there's not enough time each week, and a recent internal change has increased her stress exponentially. Last month, Lauren's CEO announced that the company was set to undergo a merger with a smaller company in a related field.

This is a positive sign that Lauren's employer is succeeding financially. It also means that Lauren is faced with a great deal of ambiguity about her future. She doesn't know what's going to happen, so she begins to assume the worst. Dozens of questions are running through her mind. "What if her team members threaten to quit?" "What if her new coworkers are smarter and more successful than her?" "Or not as good as her current team?" "What if she can't handle her new role?"





Since Lauren has begun to speculate negative outcomes for her future, she worries there might be something she needs to do to prove her worth. Lauren decided that she would work even longer hours. Maybe this will prove to her boss that she's capable of her job, and she won't end up getting fired. Working extra makes Lauren feel stressed, and she often feels like she doesn't get enough credit or recognition for putting in extra time and energy.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AFFECT US ALL

Lauren isn't alone in experiencing these feelings. Numerous research studies show that most managers work significant overtime hours. One study found that 77% of people in managerial roles feel so pressed for time that they work 29 extra days of overtime per year. Working overtime isn't anything new to Lauren, either — she often works 10+ hour days and usually works on weekends. "If I can just squeeze in a few more hours today, I can cross a few more things off of my to-do list before going home" Lauren says to herself. She feels under-appreciated and undervalued, and she has become more and more disengaged in her work. She often wonders, "what's the point?" and sometimes thinks about leaving her job and pursuing a nonmanagerial role with a better work-life balance. Maybe if she worked somewhere else, her hard work would actually be appreciated, she thinks to herself.

Lauren is reacting to a change in a normal way. Responding negatively to stressful or unexpected situations is part of what's called an *inherent negativity bias* — a natural human auto-response to challenging situations. However, Lauren's response to the merger would be much less detrimental if she was trained in Resiliency. Resiliency Training programs are designed to help managers and other business professionals identify and adapt their innate responses to challenging situations. Resiliency Training can also have a positive impact on a person's physical and emotional wellbeing. Managers equipped with Resiliency skills are not just less stressed at work, they are actively happier in their personal lives.

Despite the fact that Lauren's negative reactions are common, her lack of Resiliency has a negative impact on everyone around her. Lauren thinks she's carrying the extra psychological weight in order to alleviate the stress on her employees and therefore benefit the business, but the result is actually the opposite. Lauren's negativity bias has a hugely negative impact on her individual ability to perform, which thereby affects her employees' ability to be productive and efficient.

Most managers fail to realize the full extent to which their behavior impacts employee performance. But the link between unengaged managers and engaged employees is clear.



**30% OF U.S. WORKERS ARE ENGAGED,
AND JUST **14%** ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED**



**ACTIVELY DISENGAGED MANAGERS COST THE U.S. **\$319
BILLION TO \$398 BILLION** ANNUALLY.**

**WORK UNITS SCORING IN THE TOP HALF OF EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT ARE:**

- 21% more productive
- 22% more profitable
- Experience 37% less absenteeism
- Experience 48% fewer safety incidents

According to a study by Gallup which surveyed engagement data from 190 diverse industries, employees who are supervised by highly engaged managers are 59% more likely to be engaged than those supervised by disengaged managers. This is known by Gallup as “The Cascade Effect,” meaning that employees’ behavior is directly impacted by their managers behavior, and a manager’s behavior is directly impacted by the upper level management they follow.

Gallup’s research points to a number of other findings that illuminate the impact of disengagement on mission-critical business factors, such as productivity (*see above*).

This research also highlights the negative impact disengaged managers have on a company’s bottom line. To maintain employee retention, happiness and success, executives must find a solution to such managerial stress. It’s not possible to change the demands of modern business environments; however, it is possible to change how employees respond. Specifically, managers can learn to adapt more productive and proactive responses that do not negatively impact their employees and peers.

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BENEFITS OF RESILIENCE TRAINING

Resiliency Training is one of the most effective ways to manage natural stress responses. To better understand exactly how Resiliency skills are developed, let's take another look at Lauren.

The first step Lauren can take to develop a more productive stress response is to reform her automatic stress response using the CAB vs. CAR technique taught in TRACOM's Developing a Resilient Mindset® program. This method helps managers identify and reinterpret their automatic thoughts in more proactive ways. CAB stands for Challenge, Automatic thinking, and Behavior. This is the traditional stress response of people untrained in Resiliency. Alternatively, CAR is the sequence of Challenge, Active thinking, and Realistic response. The latter strategy helps managers like Lauren understand and identify different types of automatic thinking based on memorable characters. CAR exercises show managers how to reflect upon their past responses to certain situations to become more aware of future responses. This helps a person realize that their fears and doubts about change are merely perceived outcomes, and that they are not realistic or imminent. This technique will help Lauren by teaching her how to challenge negative responses with more realistic and positive ideas.

A second strategy that can help Lauren manage her stress and become more engaged is to adopt mindfulness. Technology keeps Lauren mentally tethered to her work at all times, even in the evenings and on the weekends. Therefore, a mindfulness strategy of disconnecting from technology could be extremely beneficial for helping Lauren de-stress. If Lauren can take time

to put her phone away and turn off email and chat notifications, she will have a better time mentally disconnecting from the work that is constantly stressing her out. Lauren can also use mindfulness to implement technology-free places or periods of time in the office, where everyone is forced to communicate in person.

In addition to removing the distraction of technology, this will make Lauren and her team more comfortable having one-on-one conversations, which will keep everyone more engaged and therefore improve team communication.

A third Resilience strategy that would help Lauren is that of goal-setting. Setting ambitious goals is productive in a number of ways that will help both Lauren and her team. Resiliency Training teaches managers how to set SMART goals, an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Setting SMART goals makes it easier to define and execute a realistic goal, which helps managers overcome certain challenges that previously felt unattainable and stressful.

TRACOM's Developing a Resilient Mindset program teaches strategies that are effective because they help managers identify the negative feelings and thoughts that cause stress and disengagement.





Become a more effective and Resilient leader. Improve your team's engagement and productivity with Resiliency Training for leaders.

TRACOM's Adaptive Mindset for Resiliency™ programs teach people about their sources of and response patterns to stress while providing practical strategies for altering counterproductive responses. The program is based on decades of research on Resiliency and groundbreaking research in neuroscience. Your team will gain insights about themselves and learn concrete ways to buffer themselves from workplace stressors. They will be able to use these skills immediately to enhance their resilience and improve their job performance, ultimately resulting in greater results for your entire organization.



TRACOM[®] GROUP

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY[®]

We provide the “AH HAS” to people as to how and why they act and interact with the world around them the way they do. We do this by teaching people about the core elements of an individual: their behavior, their emotions and their mindset and the impact these elements have on them each and every day. We call these core elements Social Intelligence. Most people are completely unaware of the impact that these elements have on them each and every day in how they interact with others and how they frame what is happening in the world around them.

[WHY we do] We believe that improving peoples’ understanding of themselves and others makes the world a better place.

[WHAT we do] We synthesize our discoveries into actionable learning and resources that improve an individual’s performance in all parts of their lives. We call this Social Intelligence

[HOW we do it] Through research and experience we uncover the hidden barriers to individuals achieving their maximum potential and identify how to help overcome them.

WWW.TRACOMCORP.COM | INFO@TRACOM.COM | 303-470-4900