

# What GlaxoSmithKline Discovered About Using

# ENERGY

## as a Wellness Tool

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### Energy. noun en·er·gy \ e-n r-j \

Energy is the physical or mental ability that allows an individual to do something. GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), headquartered in Brentford, London and one of the largest health care companies in the world with 100,000 employees in 115 countries across the globe, drew from the human energy management concept derived from the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute to take its wellness program to a new and better level. GSK was looking to do more than increase productivity and reduce health care costs and found energy management in action to be the answer.

#### Energy Management in Action

Although GSK is a pharmaceutical company, the organization felt the sting of rising health care costs in spite of its role within the health care industry. "Like many

companies, we were struggling with rising healthcare costs and health risk profiles of employees," said Dr. Robert Carr, former Corporate Medical Director for GSK. "We were also aware of the increasing pressures to balance personal and professional lives and the growing awareness that areas such as engagement, and mental and physical well-being were linked. Our health risk assessments and surveys were showing that employees weren't able to manage the daily demands of their lives; they weren't getting enough sleep to refuel and re-energize their bodies. These signs lead to a health risk profile that was not suitable for continued business performance. We needed to handle this in a systems way to optimize the effectiveness and health of people to augment the business performance."



This was the genesis of GSK adopting the Human Performance Institute's Corporate Athlete® program; they needed a design that did more than focus on eating well and living an active lifestyle. The Human Performance Institute came to the attention of the company when a sales and training group for GSK participated in one of their events and thought it stood out with its sustainable approach to core insights. Dr. Carr, along with a team of health care and human resource professionals, enrolled in the program with the task to evaluate the two-and-a-half-day Corporate Athlete® program based on health, engagement and leadership.

"There was something different about this program," said Dr. Carr. "It emphasized elements that were overlooked in the past. Not just the science and evidence generated by the program from working with professional athletes, but the ability to transfer those findings and best practices from the athletic space to the corporate environment. We took their core content and began presenting it to our senior leaders."

#### What Makes the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute Different?

The Human Performance Institute focuses on energy management to create results, because energy is an essential component to both health and engagement. Your energy as an individual is broken into four categories: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. The power of this model comes from understanding both how and where your energy is created in these four dimensions, how to optimize those levels, and finally how to build greater capacity for energy in these areas.

"The process to identify this 'energy management competency' is to be aware of your energy, and how to get the most out of it through proper nutrition, movement throughout the day and learning how emotions amplify or diminish energy," said Dr. Carr. "If you manage your fuel well, you won't have ups and downs. For example, if you eat one big meal a day you will crash eventually. But, if you eat several small meals throughout the day, you will have a consistent level of energy."

The idea that emotions, nutrition and activity combine to affect our energy may not seem to have a direct effect on a business, but we have all been in a meeting where we're hungry, haven't stood up from our chair in a few hours and are starting to get cranky. How did that meeting go? Was it productive? Or were you checking the clock waiting for it to be over?

The opposite of this is also true. We have all been lost in an activity we enjoy, operating at our best with the time just flying by without you noticing. This is what the Human Performance Institute means when discussing its definition of spiritual energy: discovering what you are passionate about and aligning your actions to meet these passions. Self-awareness is essential; you cannot manage what you aren't aware of.

#### The Science of the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute

Many programs like this that focus on "energy" seem to belong in a store with bead curtains, the scent of patchouli in the air and crystals covering the shelves, but the Human Performance

Institute has the data to back their claims. The emotional side of the program focuses on the heavily researched concept of cognitive rewiring to change your emotional state. You can see this in action with many athletes, notably tennis players. After the point is over, the tennis player goes back to the line where they fidget with the racket, bounce the ball a few times, fiddle with their shirt and so on. This is not superstition as many believe it is, rather it is the player recalibrating their emotional state, settling down and giving their body the time it needs to reset and prepare to play the next point.

The physical side of the program addresses both nutrition and movement. Many people don't think about how they eat and how often they move affects their energy levels. Being mindful of what you need your body to do in the next few hours and giving it appropriate fuel to complete the task is critical.

#### Implementing Energy Management at GlaxoSmithKline

Organizing and creating a program like this is no small feat, and rolling the program out to 100,000 employees in all corners of the Earth only added to the difficulty. Dr. Carr could not introduce this initiative like a traditional program.

"We looked at it in a systems way, attacking in three areas," said Dr. Carr. "First, focusing on the individual by helping him or her understand the basics of energy management. Then we ensured the leaders operated in a manner that would allow for energy management. Finally, we focused on the culture as a whole, ensuring the strategy would be sustainable to support both the individuals and the leadership. If the leaders weren't able to support it, and the culture cannot support it, the program was doomed to fail as soon as the courses were over."

To begin the actual roll out, Dr. Carr and his team identified roughly 200 key opinion leaders in the organization from all levels, genders and locations of the company; similarly to how a popular retail chain would release a new product. Those opinion leaders attended the program, and proceeded to push it through the entire organization.

The program rolled out at GSK was not the exact program of the two-and-a-half-day Corporate Athlete® course, but was customized to meet the needs of GSK's workforce like classes on how to manage and energize a workforce, as well as leadership expectations.

Human energy management ultimately became part of the company culture. Interviewees at GSK are asked how they handle human energy during the interview; not as an immediate disqualifier, but to target the potential employee to receive further education on the topic. Elevators at GSK offices have signs that read "reserved for the less-abled, please use the stairs." Cafeterias follow the energy management brand, and are now "energy cafes." And when it comes time to design a new office space, the facilities team works with the idea of human energy in mind, adding centralized mail pick up, printers and trash cans; ensuring

that employees need to move throughout the day.

#### The Effects of the Program

Tracking the outcomes of a wellness program can be difficult, with many programs using return on investment (ROI) as a measurement of success. Due to the nature of the energy management program, a financial ROI is very difficult to track.

"How do you determine ROI when there are 15 things that go into it?" asked Dr. Carr. "We can't produce a financial-like document that states we saved \$X and spent \$Y for a program like this, it is too diffused through the organization to prove scientifically. What we can show are the other values that are equally important for gauging impact. We cannot show that we saved money, but can show that leadership engagement is up 40 percent for example."

This means tracking value on investment (VOI), or tracking the things that increase engagement and improve financial performance, health costs and business performance. This might seem like a stretch, but GSK has published data to prove their claims.

Published in the *Online Journal of International Case Analysis* in 2013, the article "Developing fully engaged leaders that bring out the best in their teams at GlaxoSmithKline" by Julia Brandon, PhD, found many indications that the program is having a positive effect. One finding showed that 80 percent of the participants see energy courses as having enhanced their overall job performance, up to three years after completing the program.

Further research showed that GSK leaders improved on various aspects of leadership including coaching and communications. Program graduates were more likely to report "excellent" health after they had completed the course and were more likely to make healthy changes to lifestyle risk factors like diet compared to control groups. Finally, graduates had significantly higher engagement than peers who did not attend the program.

"What this program is really doing for employees is allowing them to manage their pressures in a healthy, positive way that encourages growth," said Dr. Carr. "It does not eliminate the pressures of life, but it helps you to bounce back and manage your day without the volatility of ups and downs. This reflects in your behavior, being more balance and engaged."

Although Dr. Carr is no longer with GSK, the program he helped create and foster lives on, improving the lives, energy and business there. By focusing on energy as the outcome rather than health, GSK was able to transform their culture. A side effect of this was increased health, but also improved engagement at work and improved leadership. GSK became more than a healthy health care company—it became an efficient company that is better to work for. 