

## Burnout is an Escalating Organizational Threat

Burnout among entrepreneurs, management teams, or frontline supervisors is a risk that is escalating, but can be recognized and prevented.

Warning signs can take on many characteristics such as tension, exhaustion, or passive engagement.

The frame of mind that an employee has toward their work environment evolves over time, so let's consider a few stages that may occur within an engagement cycle:

**Optimism:** When undertaking a new challenge, employees experience energy, commitment and creativity.

**Collaboration:** An effective teamwork experience between colleagues and subordinates.

**Routine:** Responsibilities are predictable and on automatic pilot, leading to complacency and static expectations.

**Cynical:** A frustrated and pessimistic perspective that dwells on the past, justifying the unwillingness to influence change.

**Indifference:** A feeling of defeat and emotional exhaustion that leads to withdrawal and ultimately burnout.

Are these stages a natural cycle of burnout that occurs every three to five years? As a consultant you need to implement a strategy with clients that enables their employees to re-engage by providing new challenges, a refreshed environment, and a renewed purpose.

At the same time, fully engaged employees will naturally absorb new responsibilities without establishing boundaries on their physical and emotional wellbeing. It is in leadership's best interest to engage good counsel and protect emerging superstars from themselves.



When there is evidence of burnout within your corporate culture it requires intervention, as it can infect the cultural engagement of existing and new employees. Watch for symptoms of burnout or a combination of indicators such as tension, withdrawal, or dramatic changes in commitment.

Leadership needs to anticipate these dangers, and build in the checks and balances to assess and anticipate the causes of burnout.

Assessments or surveys that capture the insights of employees, supervisors, and leadership, are a fundamental resource to measure the employee experience and their impact on organizational performance.