

Mindful Business Guide

How to use mindfulness and meditation for a more successful business (and a happier you!)

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Mindfulness:

What does it really mean?

Focus and the ability to bring the focus back

We never or very rarely have completely empty moments – our brains are almost always full of ideas, thoughts, criticisms, judgements and concerns.

All that noise in our heads makes it difficult to focus on one thing. We constantly find ourselves distracted and lead off down trails of thoughts – leaving us somewhere totally unexpected and unhelpful for where we wanted to be.

Mindfulness is a state of awareness, of focusing and being able to return to that focus. Meditation is a practice that helps train the brain to be more mindful.

How does that look in practice?

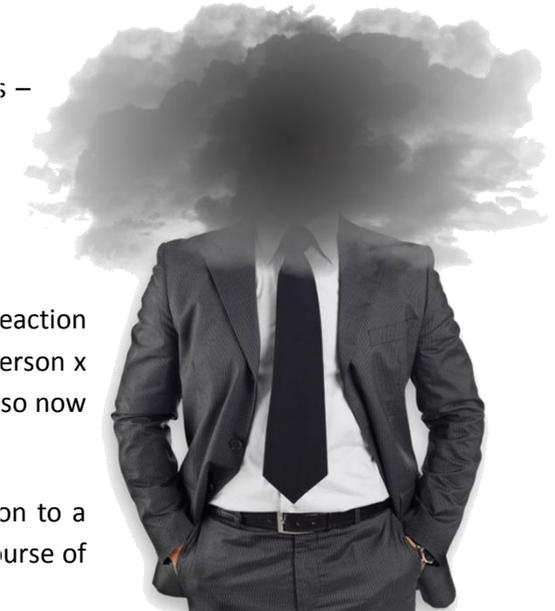
Does it mean we walk around looking tranquil and free from any distractions? Does it mean that people, distractions and noise that usually drives us crazy are no longer there? Of course not.

The same distractions and difficult situations will continue to be around us – it is how well we accept them and respond to them that can change.

Who upset you?

If I get angry when a person answers the phone in a rude tone– it is my reaction that has made me angry, not the person themselves. I cannot say that “person x really upset me” – I can say that “person x did something that I reacted to, so now I’m upset.”

Accepting this is key to recognising when we having an emotional reaction to a situation – and being able to step back from that and choose a different course of action.



What does this mean for business?

People who are more mindful, as demonstrated through regular meditation practice and reporting of a more focused mindset at work, show the following:

Higher cognitive performance

- ability to take in information and use it, problem solve and get things done

Higher focus

- less need to procrastinate and less easily distracted

Rational brain thinking

- moving from immediate autopilot responses to situations and more rationally thinking through the best reaction

Emotion management

- noticing personal emotions as they arise and choosing how to best manage these

All of these results mean great things for businesses – better results, fewer emotional outbursts, better relationships. And that is why companies like Google and CVS have invested in mindfulness training for their teams.



What can you do?

Start with you

It's easy to say the problem is other people. I'm calm and rational, it's everyone else who needs to be more focused and less emotional. The challenge is we can, every single one of us, be more focused and more rational. We can all benefit from daily mediation practice to cope with the everyday pressures of life and work.

Even Buddhists who have had these principles of meditation and mindfulness in their practice for centuries, continue to do it every day. So if you're thinking you'd like to see what impact more mindful people could have on your business: Start with you.

How can I meditate at work?

Let's face it, you probably can't – not easily anyway.

This is why it is more practical to build time into your routine outside of work. Examples we have heard from people who have found a way of making this work for them are:

- The first thing I do when I wake up is meditate for 10 minutes
- When I arrive at the work car park, I park up and put on a mediation CD to guide me in a 15-minute session before I go in and start my day
- On the train in the morning, I put my headphones in and use an app on my smartphone to guide me in a 10 minute meditation – and at the weekends I meditate in the bath!



But there is something you can start doing at work.... **NOTICE YOUR RESPONSES**. Notice when you are riled, notice when your emotions are driving your responses, notice when you are at your best. If you bring them into your conscious thinking you are more likely to be able to choose your responses.

How to get started

Just do it

The headspace app and website is a fantastic resource for people new to and experienced in meditation. We have all had a go at totem and find it really useful for our learning and continued practice.

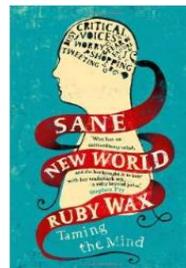
Sign up for the free ten-day trial at www.headspace.com



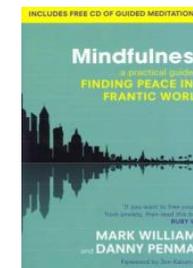
Read all about it

If you're interested more in the neuroscience and psychology behind this practice and why it works, two books may be useful for you:

Sane New World, by Ruby Wax



Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World, by Mark Williams & Danny Penman



about us

People at their Best

build:

We support you in uncovering your vision, mapping talent and developing end to end processes to manage talent within your organisation.

Focusing on profits through people



engage:

We help you to engage individuals and teams—supporting change, gaining commitment to your vision and retaining your highest performers.

Making sure you get the best from your people



assess:

We provide you with tools, techniques and assessors to help you map the talent and potential of individuals in your organisation and/or in selecting new talent.

Helping you recruit people who fit and deliver results



develop:

We design and deliver exceptional, focused and blended development, allowing each individual to grow in their role, capability and motivation.

Maximising potential and personal contribution



What our clients say about us:

We're nimble

"What sets Totem apart? It is their ability to be very thorough in their approach whilst at the same time willing to offer innovative suggestions that can be implemented in a time and cost effective way. Would I recommend them to others? Without question!"

HR Manager, Pulse

We get them

"I'd definitely recommend working in partnership with Totem – I say partnership, as this is exactly how they operate. They seize every opportunity to learn more about your business and by doing so are able to support projects with this insight, often going above and beyond the original scope."

Resourcing Manager Carphone Warehouse

We inspire confidence

"...combining her extensive organizational psychology knowledge with a wealth of insight gained during her years as a professional actor Liz offered our business something that was truly unique."

The result of this is a powerful and thought provoking blend of theory and practice which demystifies the art of communicating and influencing effectively in formal and informal situations."

Talent Manager HML