THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF ‘SLEEPING ON THE JOB’
WHY YOU SHOULD IMPLEMENT MID-DAY NAPS IN YOUR WELLNESS OFFERING

“Don’t think you will be doing less work because you sleep during the day. That is a foolish notion held by people with no imagination. You will be able to accomplish more.”
– Winston Churchill

Q&A WITH CHRISTOPHER LINDHOLST, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF METRONAPS

The annual National Sleep Awareness Week is coming up this week beginning on March 2nd and ending on National Napping day, March 10th. The week is dedicated to raising awareness for the importance of healthy sleep habits as well as the risks of sleep deprivation. A growing number of employers acknowledge the vital need for sufficient sleep and they are supporting this by providing their employees with dedicated rest facilities. To learn more about the importance of sleep and the phenomenon of ‘sleeping on the job’, we turn to industry expert Christopher Lindholst. He is the CEO and Co-founder of MetroNaps, a pioneer in fatigue management solutions for the workplace since 2003.
CHRISTOPHER LINDHOLST: MetroNaps was founded in 2003, with a simple goal: to fight workplace fatigue. Our purpose is to help workers to get the most out of their day, and organizations to improve their performance.

“Allowing employees to take a short 15-20 minute nap is an easy way to boost alertness, leading to a 30% decline in attention failures.”

We do this by managing energy, instead of time. A drop in alertness in the afternoon is a normal part of the human sleep-wake cycle, affecting productivity, creativity and even mood. Allowing employees to take a short 15-20 minute nap is an easy way to maintain their level of energy, and to boost alertness. In fact, research shows that mid-day rest can result in a 30% decline in attention failures.

MetroNaps works for a broad range of clients around the world, and has implemented installations in offices, hospitals, universities and fitness centers in dozens of countries across four continents.

VBM: HOW CAN OFFERING NAPPING FACILITIES BE BENEFICIAL FOR COMPANIES?

CL: Research has conclusively shown that napping provides benefits that lead to happier, healthier employees. Some of these benefits are for example reduction of stress, improvement of mood and increase in creativity. Study also shows that there are many productivity benefits associated with napping. In other words: providing napping facilities will save companies a lot of money.

“Frequent nappers have a 37% lower chance of dying from heart problems than those who do not nap.”

Study shows that not managing the energy levels of employees is costing employers a full 520 hours per employee per year in lost productivity. Harvard researchers estimated the total bill for this lost productivity, due to sleep deprivation, for US companies alone to be more than 63 billion dollar per year. Implementing short-rest solutions is an easy and effective way to boost company productivity and performance.


SOME FACTS ABOUT NAPPING

• Even as little as 6 minutes of sleep is sufficient to promote declarative memory performance.
• Naps improve performance level and self-confidence of task performance.
• Lack of sleep causes US workers to perform at subpar levels. Harvard researchers estimate that sleep deprivation costs US companies $63.2 billion in lost productivity – per year.
• The loss of only one hour of sleep due to daylight saving can already affect your circadian rhythm. Research has shown that workplace injuries increase by 6% and car accidents by 8% during the day after the loss of an hour of sleep.
VBM: AMONG YOUR FATIGUE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS, WE FIND THE ENERGYPOD. WHAT MAKES THIS CHAIR DIFFERENT FROM OTHER NAPPING SOLUTIONS?

CL: The EnergyPod is designed based on years of research, to provide the optimal short rest experience. It combines elegant style with ergonomic functionality. The contour of the chair takes pressure of the cardiac system by placing the user in a zero-gravity position. The EnergyPod is powered by the i20 Technology, which allows users to start a preprogrammed 20 minute nap with just one touch. Specially devised rhythms play through the built-in speakers for optimal relaxation and gentle waking is guaranteed with a programmed combination of light and vibration. Lastly, the EnergyPod is space efficient: the privacy visor provides privacy and allows shutting out any external stimulus, without the need for a separate room.

VBM: WOULD YOU CONSIDER NAPPING JUST AS IMPORTANT AS NUTRITION AND EXERCISE?

CL: Most definitely! I call napping the third pillar of health. It is generally accepted for employers to invest in nutrition and exercise programs for their employees, but when it comes to investing in fatigue management, some people are a little more restrained. This is remarkable: the health benefits of napping are substantial: frequent napping can lower the chance of dying from heart related problems with 37%. Besides, napping is actually the only one out of the three pillars that will pay off almost immediately. Nutrition and exercise will have effect on the long run, where sleep on the other hand will affect work performance directly.

“Within the next 5 years, all leading companies will implement fatigue management solutions – With incentives of healthcare providers.”

VBM: ARE THERE ANY BASIC RULES FOR THE IDEAL POWERNAP?

CL: It is scientifically proven that the ideal powernap is between 15 and 20 minutes long. In this time, your mind and body can recharge, but you will not experience grogginess when waking up. Listening to soothing music can help with falling asleep during the day, just as establishing a routine. Last, make sure to take your nap in a quiet and secure place, just so that you don’t have to be concerned about disturbances.

VBM: HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF FATIGUE MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE?

CL: I expect the awareness of the importance of sleep to continue to grow. As a result, I believe that all leading companies will implement some kind of fatigue management solution, within the next five years. We will also see insurance companies support sleep and napping with incentives for good behavior.