



Conversations with the Experts

Personal and Workplace Resilience



Kay N. Campbell

Bio: Recently, Dr. Campbell assumed responsibility for development of the global health and productivity initiatives for employee health at GlaxoSmithKline, a leading Pharmaceutical company. She is responsible for the international health and productivity strategy, design and implementation of key health initiatives, evaluating impact, and delivering on the departmental health scorecard. She is brand manager for Personal Resilience worldwide, as well as has responsibility for the Americas and assists with Asia Pacific businesses for Team Resilience. For the past six years, she was the US Manager, Employee Health Support and Resilience in GSK. She has held various positions in the company for the past 23 years including management of disability, clinical operations, health promotions and worklife initiatives. Dr. Campbell also serves as Adjunct professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a national and internationally recognized lecturer on management, health promotions and disability management. She has authored numerous articles and a chapter in the AAOHN Core Curriculum for Health Nurses published by Slack, Inc.

An Interview with Kay N. Campbell

By Judi Casey and Karen Corday

Casey: How does GlaxoSmithKline [GSK] define resiliency?

Campbell: The official definition is the ability to be successful, personally and professionally, in a highly pressured, fast-paced and continuously changing environment. When we talk about resilience, we have a two-pronged program that focuses on both personal and team resilience.

Casey: Was it a conscious decision focus on both resilience of the workplace as well as personal resilience?

Campbell: That's correct. Historically, our interest in resilience comes from our background in stress management. We've managed workplace health for thirty years, and within that arena there's the issue of targeting people's risks and giving them the skills to manage their concerns. We wanted to build skills so that employees didn't become stressed in the first place. In fact, we don't use the term "stressed" because it has a dual meaning: it can be the causative agent, but it's also a result. One can have stress but also feel stressed. To get out of this quagmire, we use the term "pressure" or "pressured." Everyone has pressures in their lives; one must respond to them, and can do so positively or negatively. If one responds negatively, the result is stress. A positive response emanates from using resiliency skills, which results in growth.

In dealing with stress management, we'd give people resiliency skills and then they'd go back to their job. If people returned to work in an unsupportive environment, it was difficult for them to maintain their resilience. This was how the notion of team resilience evolved; people need supportive environments to stay resilient and work better. This makes it a win-win situation for the company as well. We're now moving into our next phase of resilience training where we focus on leadership development. We want to incorporate the notion of resiliency into self-management and modeling behaviors.

Casey: So resilience at GSK evolved from thinking about a resilient worker to a resilient team to having a senior leader

that models resilient behavior?

Campbell: Yes. We are working towards having a resilient organization that understands the concept, supports it, and reinforces it.

Casey: What are the business drivers for the focus on resilience?

Campbell: The business reality is that we work in a highly competitive marketplace in which we continuously experience change. In the 1980's, when mergers started happening and business models changed, the mentality was to "get through this change, and then we'll be okay." We now know that change is constant—there are always new technologies and new ways of selling. This requires employees to absorb new information and adapt quickly. There will be more demand for knowledge and information management. People need to self-manage from a personal effectiveness perspective, but they also need to be in a supportive work environment. Leaders are responsible for creating a culture that encourages adaptation and creativity. GSK has always been a global company, but in reality we were a U.K. company and a U.S. business. The bulk of our work and money came from those two places. In recent years, our other global markets have become more important to the success of the company. This requires more global thinking on our part. All the people that work for us need to be highly engaged, adaptive, and able to expect and embrace change.

Casey: What are your workforce demographics?

Campbell: We have about 104,000 employees globally. About 40,000 of those are in the U.S. and U.K.; the remainder is all around the rest of the world in about 45 different sites. What we have found through our surveys is that the issue of overwork is the premier workplace pressure of our employees regardless of where they live. If you think about overwork, it has everything to do with the way we do work. It's about technology, change, pace, and demand. The issues are similar everywhere. Part of it, in my mind, is the notion that how we've done business in the past may not be the way we're going to do business in the future. Change is slow, and we tend to hold onto outdated ways of working, which causes pressure. I suppose it's helpful for employees to know that GSK employees in Kuala Lumpur are struggling with the same pressures as workers in Argentina. It affects everyone around the world.

Casey: What are the components of team resilience, and why is the team approach beneficial?

Campbell: Your world at GSK is the group with which you work. The company is your manager. When it comes down to assessing your work environment, it's all about the interaction with your co-workers. If your work relationships are good, then you are quite satisfied with work, even if you're overworked. If you have bad relationships at work, then work is not the place you want to be at all, and the workload seems overwhelming. So, if you have a supportive team, your perception of overwork is completely different; even if you have a large amount of work to do, it doesn't seem as overwhelming. The team has the solutions to solve issues around work. Now, there are uncontrollable issues; most people can't control headcount, budget, and so forth. Why exert effort on these issues? Spend time on aspects that you can control; try different ways of working, new solutions, and creative ways to help other team members. This is why we work on teams. Of course, most people are on many different teams. A manager may head up a team, but then be a subordinate or colleague within other teams.

Casey: Do you have an example of a team being particularly creative in changing something about work that they could control?

Campbell: A lot of work is done around meetings—people always have too many meetings. We have work groups of people from all over the world, so time becomes an issue for them consistently having meetings at 6:00 in the morning for some people so others may have them in the middle of the day is disrespectful. Teams can consider everyone's schedule and agree to meet at a reasonable time for everyone. Rotate the meeting times so that everyone gets a reasonable meeting time most of the time, regardless of where they are physically. Flexibility is another issue that comes up in these discussions. There are always employees that are interested in flexible scheduling, but they may have gotten negative reactions in the past, so they are afraid to ask again. Career development is another popular topic. For example, in our R & D community, the workers are research scientists, and they want to stay informed, and there's only so much money for conferences. Maybe not everyone gets to go to a conference, but the person who does go is responsible for a presentation to the rest of their team, so everyone benefits. It needs to be acceptable to specifically address issues of concern; everything must be able to be discussed without fear. We've seen a lot of good work around changing the culture about what is acceptable to discuss with one's co-workers.

Casey: What is the process for team resilience?

Campbell: After taking an assessment, the team will go through the resilience process, come up with an action plan, and work on it for a year. At the end of that time, they redo the assessment and get a pre- and post- report. We can document changes and track if employees feel less work demands and less pressure from being overworked. We can monitor whether people are better able to meet work-life demands and are more satisfied with their work.

The assessment looks at several aspects of people's work lives. Workers identify where they are on a pressure curve—are they bored, comfortable, stretched or overwhelmed? They also answer questions about their health and their ability to manage home and work. There are groupings of questions around relationships within work teams, work demands, the culture of their team and the company, career development, the ability to control one's work, management practices, and individual characteristics. Those are the large areas of pressure that we assess. The assessment gives an aggregate report about individuals on teams. There are also open-ended questions about how team members can do work differently to make a difference within their work team. I always think the open-ended questions are valuable. The report begins a discussion; this leads to brainstorming and prioritizing suggestions. At the end of the session, teams have tangible action steps. The team then has 9-12 months to put the action steps in place, and at the end of this time, they come back and report on the changes.

Casey: What steps could employers take who are interested in developing a more resilient workforce?

Campbell: I do think it's important to keep in mind the two-pronged approach. People need to learn how to manage their pressures and self-manage. They also need to work for a supportive manager and within a supportive team. It's important to understand that people are important to your business, and their ability to perform well has everything to do with their health. A supportive culture is paramount. I don't know that an assessment tool is absolutely necessary, but employees must be able to have an open dialogue with their co-workers and supervisors without fear of retribution.

Casey: Is this an easier sell to businesses lately due to escalating health care costs?

Campbell: In the U.K., it has been an easy sell because of government regulations. There's a guideline from the government that requires supervisors in companies to assess the mental well-being of their employees. In the U.S., where we're so concerned about health care costs, health promotion has seen a real resurgence. There's an emphasis of keeping individuals healthy, but I don't see companies taking up the mantle of "Let's have an environment that fosters, encourages and drives people to be healthy." So, in my mind, there's a long way to go. Around the world, where you don't have the health care cost issue, companies are interested in the notion of productivity. They want people to be productive, and if people are healthy in the broadest sense, they are able to come to work and do their best work. That was the main driver for GSK to engage in this program, and it's a real selling point.

Casey: What research could help you move forward with your resilience efforts?

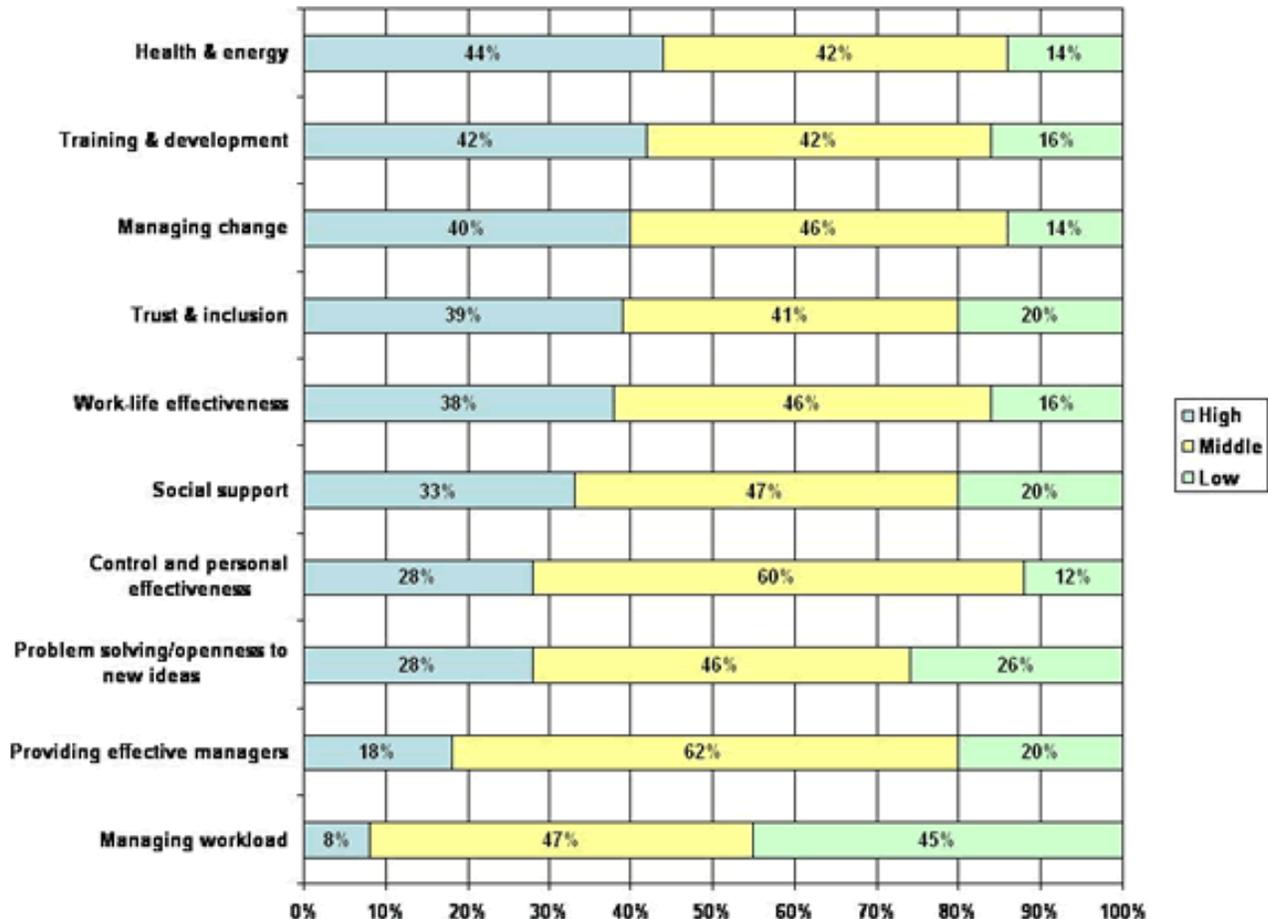
Campbell: We're always interested in engagement and the difference between commitment and engagement. We've looked at our own data, trying to understand our teams to see if we can use the data as a predictor for future team behaviors. If the team rates themselves as resilient, how do they compare to people who are highly committed and engaged but are endangering their health? Who leaves the company? Who burns out and has to go on sick leave? How do pressures impact health and in turn commitment and engagement? We've done a little work on flexibility and health and would like to understand that notion a little better. The Conference Board started a group that looks at engagement globally; otherwise, there's not a lot of work being done on that topic, and it's something in which we're very interested.

Casey: Any thoughts on how your experiences with workplace resilience could benefit families and communities?

Campbell: Some of the questions on our assessment focus on the ability to manage both home and work. We ask some of those types of questions on our health risk appraisal. In our personal resilience program, we try to incorporate the principles of Corporate Athlete. This focuses on understanding motivation—why do you work? What drives you to do what you do? The notions of being spiritually aligned, emotionally connected, mentally focused and physically energized are ones we are adding to our management and leadership models. This requires people to understand themselves better and align the way they work and live their lives with their value systems. This should impact workers' families and communities, ultimately.

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How Well Does Your Company Rate in Managing Resilience?



Note: “WFD Consulting identified the ten factors critical to building resilience in organizations and invited work-life professionals, HR professionals, media/press, and other leaders to rate their own organizations on these ten essential factors. The findings summarized here are based on respondents’ ratings from fifty mid-size and large for-profit corporations and organizations.”

Source: WFD Consulting. (2004). *How well does your company rate in managing resilience?: WFD’s organizational resilience scorecard*. Retrieved March 27, 2007, from <http://www.wfd.com/PDFS/scorecard%20summary.pdf>.

Additional Resources Related to Personal and Workplace Resilience

Creating a Resilient Workplace: This eleven-page paper by Bryan Hiebert of the University of Calgary was presented at the 2006 conference of the National Consultation on Career Development. It consists of “practical suggestions for creating a workplace that is conducive to being resilient and promotes a sense of well-being.”

“The Five Principles of Organizational Resilience”: This 2002 article by Michael A. Bell is from the Gartner archive; Gartner is an IT research and consulting firm. It describes how the five principals serve as the “underlying architecture” to resilient virtual organizations (RVOs), “yet another evolutionary stage as enterprises move from being highly responsive and agile to being agile, responsive, and resilience.”

- To access the article, click here: http://www.gartner.com/DisplayDocument?doc_cd=103658.

Resilience Education: Dr. Mary Steinhardt of the University of Texas at Austin directs research on resiliency at the university’s College of Education, Department of Kinesiology and Health Education. The site explains the studies on resiliency in progress as well as courses offered on this topic and includes recommended books as well as a resiliency bibliography.

- To access the website, click here: <http://www.edb.utexas.edu/steinhardt/index.htm>.

The Resiliency Center: The Resiliency Center is run by Dr. Al Siebert, author of *The Resiliency Advantage*. This web site includes several full-text articles by Dr. Siebert, a quiz to test personal resilience, and personal stories from people who have successfully used resiliency in their own lives.

To access the website, click here: <http://www.resiliencycenter.com/index.shtml>.

WFD Consulting: Resilience: WFD offers resilience services for a fee, but this page features their Organizational Resilience Scorecard for free, where you can “measure how your organization stacks up on the ten essentials for managing resilience” along with the scorecard results from mid-size and large employers.

- To access the website, click here: <http://www.wfd.com/products/resilienceinfo.html>.

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