

Last updated: 16:00 (GMT+04) Wednesday, July 23, 2008. Rajab 20, 1429.

gulfnews.com

Search

Mobile edition

ePaper

Live weather

Shortcuts

Go

GNAds4U

JOBS4U
WHEELS4U
PROPERTIES4U
CLASSIFIEDS4U
THE NATION
THE GULF
THE REGION
THE WORLD
BUSINESS
SPORT
TECHNOLOGY
IN DEPTH
GALLERIES
YOUR PICTURES
VIDEO
FEATURES
TABLOID
FRIDAY
E+
EXPLORE
UNWIND
NOTES
SPORT EXTRA
ASK THE LAW
RESIDENTS GUIDE
ABOUT THE UAE
SPECIAL COVERAGE

Pictures from the past
YOUR SAY
LETTERS
POLLS
EMAIL US
OPINION
EDITORIALS
COLUMNS
WEEKEND REVIEW
GN FOCUS
ABOUT GULF NEWS
SEARCH
PAST EDITIONS
FRONT PAGE PDF
EPAPER
MOBILE EDITION
SUBSCRIPTIONS
GN REWARDS
RSS FEEDS
JOBS AT GN

BUSINESS

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

Eternal cycle of goals and rewardsBy Carole Spiers, Special to Gulf News
Published: October 22, 2007, 22:50

Today's workplace is clearly asking for burnout.

Office technology alone manages to set up an atmosphere of non-stop emergency, even when there is no actual crisis on. International trading heightens this effect, with its 24/7 operation nagging that makes you feel guilty about going home. And then there is the sheer intensity of commercial competition, suggesting that the slightest relaxation will play straight into the hands of the other side.

That is how so many of our most gifted, energetic and responsible executives find themselves victims of burnout with their career, sometimes finished by 30. They feel that each extra effort will give them more control over their situation. But in fact, the situation increasingly controls them.

The cycle works this way. A goal is set, you reach it, and earn the promised reward. The next goal is then set higher in exchange for a higher reward. You start to make a Pavlovian connection between effort and reward, and then you can't escape the spiralling workload.

Commitment

Even if you wanted to, you probably couldn't get off the treadmill, as there is usually no option of settling for a 'lite' version of your working day. And offering to work a three-day week is just not feasible when there is an unspoken need to keep behind the situation seven days a week.

Today's executive responsibilities demand total commitment or nothing.

Total absorption is of course the ideal work-mode, a kind of trance, where you attain prodigious levels of concentration and deep insights that impact favourably on your record. But this is basically living on adrenalin - and adrenalin is finite.

That is the moment when the rocket turns into a falling stick. As you start working unnaturally long hours as routine, your efficiency starts to drop. Meanwhile you have neglected your health, your leisure and your family life too.

This is one half of the picture, and it is the better-known half-burnout as the dangerous other side of achievement culture, sometimes seen as the punishment for greed.

RSS RSS FEED

>> Get Business as a news feed

YOUR MONEY

>> Latest Forex rates

LATEST STORIES FROM BUSINESS**BUSINESS**
Mercedes-Benz launches new generation cars**BUSINESS**
Oman plans makeover of ancient forts and caves**AUTOMOBILES**

>> GM unveils 2010 Camaro

AVIATION

>> Etihad flights to Almaty in Kazakhstan start in December

BANKING AND FINANCE

>> Emirates NBD profit soars 45%

>> AUB net profit touches \$211.7 million in midway 2008

>> UNB earnings soar 41% to Dh764.6m

>> Emirates NBD plans Saudi operations

>> Noor in venture to open Islamic bank in Maldives

>> Darling hints at 'profound' effects of global credit crisis

>> Sukuk issuance in Gulf rises 17% to \$17b

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

>> IT industry holds much potential for future growth

>> Winners of oil prices aren't only international majors

>> Going through a transformation

>> Chinese banks could see shrinking profits in coming days

COMMODITIES

>> Apple posts \$7.46 billion third-quarter revenues

>> Costly food and fuel drive Italy's consumer morale to 15-year low

>> Vietnam to tax rice and fertiliser exports

CONSTRUCTION

>> Housing quality in Dubai has a 'long way to go'

DEVELOPMENT

>> Mubadala forms \$8b GE venture

>> IFA launches \$200m project in Thailand

>> Lifestyle City raises budget to Dh4b

>> Depa venture wins Singapore contract

>> Work begins on tallest building in Jordan

ECONOMY

>> Inflation in Kuwait accelerates to 11.4%

GENERAL

>> e-governance gains ground in Abu Dhabi

>> Russian firm wins \$418m Dolphin deal

HOTEL & TOURISM**RADIO 1**

Listen now

RADIO 2

Listen now

>> Streaming FAQs

>> Radio schedules

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Olympics 2008

But there is also the less-known cause of burnout - the stress of being a loser in business. It is not only because losers are dumped with all the tedious chores that may demand even more midnight oil than the work of the high-flyers. It is the sheer mental grind of being powerless, unable to influence a situation, someone who basically gets things wrong and whose opinions are not wanted.

The frustration and hopelessness intensify, as though you are walking along for ever with the left foot in the right shoe. This is the true opposite of adrenalin, making a bad performance even worse.





And then, without having enjoyed the rewards that go with over-achievement, you too turn into that pitiable figure, the burnt-out case.

The writer is a BBC broadcaster and motivational speaker, with 20 years' experience as CEO of Carole Spiers Group, an international stress consultancy based in London.

Key points: What causes a burnout

- Today's culture automatically ratchets-up stress, leading to burnout.
- With high achievers, concentration and efficiency intensifies, then fails.
- With low achievers, frustration and humiliation equally lead to burnout.

More from **Business**

Email this article 	Printer- Friendly version 	Email the Editor 	Bookmark this article 
---	--	---	--

Post this story to:

[Del.icio.us](#) | [Digg](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Reddit](#)

>> Travelodge plans to boost UK seaside holiday market

INDUSTRY

>> Swatch, Rivoli tie up to boost market share in Saudi and India
>> Caterpillar's earnings climb 34% on Asia sales

MARKETS

>> Dubai market advances for third straight day as Arabtec gains 7.61%
>> Wachovia reports record quarterly loss of \$8.9b
>> DuPont earnings up 11% as sales gain

OIL & GAS

>> Fuel price rise boosts Chinese demand
>> Iran not to press for output cuts at Opec's next meeting
>> Demand for oil products hits two-year low in Korea

TELECOM

>> etisalat leads global mobile operators posting fastest first-quarter growth

TOURISM & TRAVEL

>> Oman takes a 'different approach'

TRADE

>> Strong currency forces Dubai to import less from euro zone

MORE STORIES FROM BUSINESS

AUTOMOBILES

>> Mercedes-Benz launches new generation cars

AVIATION

>> BA to transfer to Dubai Terminal 5

BANKING AND FINANCE

>> Doha Bank Q2 net profit increases 25%
>> Noor Islamic Bank expands in Maldives
>> Emirates NBD expands in Saudi Arabia
>> Emirates NBD profit up in Q2 2008
>> UNB records Dh764.6 million profit

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

>> Do you really fly economy class?

COMMODITIES

>> GCC-based jeweller posts 55% growth

ECONOMY

>> Map of the global food crisis

INDUSTRY

>> GE, Mubadala tie up for global venture

INTERNET

>> Web threatens MidEast business growth

OIL & GAS

>> Dolphin Energy taps Russian contractor

REAL ESTATE PROPERTY

>> Limitless to build Jordan's twin towers

TECHNOLOGY

>> BlackBerry or Apple?
>> Joining the competition
>> Wearable gadgets are in
>> The degeneration of online debates