

Leader Tips

Leaders' role in managing team energy

Every organization goes through stressful periods. Difficult times can give teams an opportunity to challenge themselves and grow. But prolonged, unpredictable stress can have a negative effect on team performance, engagement and individual health.

Often, organizations respond to demanding times by working more hours or hiring more people. While this may be necessary at times, ensuring individuals are effectively managing their **energy** can also help overall team effectiveness.

Energy refers to our capacity to work. It is normal to go through periods- even daily- where we encounter stress and deplete our energy. When this happens, we are less effective and engaged with our work. The good news is that there are things we can do to renew energy and recover. Leaders also can manage teams in a way that helps rebuild energy and restore the team to full engagement.

According to psychologist Jim Loehr, there are 4 sources of energy: Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual. Here are some things leaders can do that tap into these sources and help renew team energy.

1. Clarify the individuals' and the teams' purpose. Instill a clear line of sight from your work to Caterpillar's strategy and goals. Help people understand why their work is important.
2. Reinforce our Values as the foundation of our strategy and the basis for how we relate to each other.
3. Encourage breaks after 90 minutes of continuous work that include healthy snacks, hydration and social interaction. Be a good role model.
4. Implement clear expectations for working hours, meeting times and remote work. Consider "no meeting days" and avoiding early morning/late afternoon meetings.
5. Be considerate of diversity of language and time zones. Don't schedule meetings at unreasonable times. Leverage technology to buffer against language barriers.
6. Avoid unnecessary meetings. Consider if the goals of a meeting are suited to an email or shared reading materials.
7. Reach out to your team, even if just to "check in" and say hello.
8. Use time during your 1:1 meetings to discuss engagement. Ask directly about workload. A simple question like, "how is everything going for you?" can open a conversation about an employee's energy levels.
9. Model authentic, honest and candid communication to build a culture of trust.
10. Build confidence through recognition of both accomplishments and effort.
11. Demonstrate empathy by urging employees to make work-life choices that help create balance. Strongly encourage use of vacation and other paid time off.
12. Engage all team members in meetings. Delegate agenda items. Encourage use of cameras and the chat function.
13. Set challenging goals, even during times of stress. Reinforce a growth mindset by recognizing effort, learning and growth, not just outcome.
14. Know your resources. Caterpillar's global Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is not just a benefit for employees. It is a tool for leaders to help employees be at their best. Make referrals early and often. You can find more information and global access numbers at [CaterpillarEAP.com](https://www.caterpillar.com/eap).