

Business Owner Stress Test – How do you score?

**STRESS IMPACTS YOUR BUSINESS, PROFITS, AND PERSONAL LIFE.
DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT NOW, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!**



Ask Yourself The Following:

- ☞ Do you have a clear understanding of the advanced business skills you need to succeed in your business?
- ☞ Do you have a clear plan to move your business forward?
- ☞ Is stress affecting your bottom line?

Backgrounder

Community Futures West Interlake surveyed fifty of their business clients. They were asked what stressed them, and how it impacted their business. The results pointed to:

- 1) Employee issues;
- 2) Trying to achieve the balance between home life and the business;
- 3) Dealing with changes that happen, often externally; and
- 4) Dealing with customers

Further, they felt that the solution to many of their stressors could be resolved if there was an improvement of skills in the following areas:

- 1) Communications
- 2) Time Management
- 3) Conflict resolution
- 4) Financial Management
- 5) Problem Solving

Now, the next step is to do something about it - take the stress test.

THE STRESS TEST

The remainder of this booklet will take you through a process to begin to identify what factors are negatively impacting you and your business as follows:



1. Work through Pages 2 & 3 and determine your personal and business stressors.
2. Then decide which stressors are the most important to deal with right now.
 - a. Decide what you need to do to get a balance in your life.
 - b. Ask yourself: What do you need to do to get your business to grow and be more profitable? Then proceed to:
3. Your Stress Plan - Page 4
 - a. Write it out.
 - b. Keep it simple and manageable.
 - c. What is it you want to do?
 - d. What are the specific activities you will need to do carry out to achieve your goals and resolve what is stressing you.
 - e. Act on it!

CAN COMMUNITY FUTURES WEST INTERLAKE HELP?

CALL 1-888-496-8932

You Have 2 Options:

- 1. You can work through this package yourself, or**
- 2. Community Futures staff will meet with you and we can go through this package together.**

If there are enough businesses who are interested in specific training, Community Futures can see that this training is delivered in the region.

Personal/Life Event Stressors

Life Events – Past 12 Months

(check all those that you are feeling stressed about)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Became disabled or incapacitated.	Began menopause or other major life change.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of sense of self. Loss of independence.	Long-term or life-threatening illness or injury.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of identity and stature.	Major change in health or behaviour of family or friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dependent on others for basic subsistence and care.	Loss of regular transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of self-determination and self-sufficiency.	Major decision regarding your immediate future.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of previous capacities and capabilities. Loss of personal mobility.	Major personal achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual problems. Infidelity. Divorce or Separation.	Change in your personal habits, lifestyle, dress, hobbies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in closeness with spouse, lover, partner.	Change in your religious or political beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reconciled or conflict with partner, lover, former spouse, etc	Loss or damage to personal property. Victim of natural disaster.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict with parents, siblings and family members. Family turmoil.	Vacation, trip, taken or not taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social isolation. Change in social activities.	Christmas / Thanksgiving, or other major holiday. Change in family get-togethers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Became engaged. Married or began a live-in relationship.	Made a new friend. Broke up with a friend due to conflict. Lost friend any other reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problems with co-workers. Conflict with officials, classmates, co-workers, etc.	Major change in finances. Credit rating difficulties.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work interfered with family life.	New large purchases (i.e. car) or new mortgage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Major change in conditions of work. You or partner fired.	Violent crime victim.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Death of a spouse, lover, or other family/household member	Physical/emotional abuse by partner, parent, caregiver.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy. Became a parent, or grandparent.	Injured in car or other accident.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child or family member left home. Child returned home with a child, etc.	Involved in claim or law suit. Jailed due to legal trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in marital status of your children or parents.	Change in sleep habits. Change in diet and appetite.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Changed residence. Landlord problems.	Developed thinking and learning disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mortgage or loan foreclosure. Became homeless	Developed problems with emotional control.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moved to new town.	Parenting conflicts. Conflicts with children. Single parenting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other family/household stressors.	Modified from Life Events Inventory: www.headinjury.com/lifevents.htm	

Business / Entrepreneur Stressors

Entrepreneur Stressors

Do you sometimes feel stressed, depressed or trapped? Do you feel like you are not getting ahead in your business?

Go through the following list of possible stressors and check the ones that apply to your situation:

- Money/Cash Flow
- Staffing: Availability / Quality / Reliability
- Lack of time to do everything / Heavy workload
- Low sales / Not getting the results I want
- External Issues:
 - (PST, GST, etc., Government demands)
 - Requirements of the bank, lawyers, etc.
 - Weather, weak economy
- Personal stress (health, family issues, personal debt, etc.)
- Isolation/lack of support system
- Changing technology
- Lack of adequate information and skills needed to manage a business
- Pressure to succeed
- Community demands (volunteer time, donations, etc.)
- Always wearing my business hat
- Not having a confidant or mentor to share my ideas and problems with

Essential Business Skills

Specifically, in which areas do you feel you need to improve your business skills? As you read through the following list of Essential Business Skills, check those that apply right now:

- Financial management: budgeting, bookkeeping, record keeping, bill paying, collections, quality control
- Time management/setting priorities/organizing/planning
- Human resource management: Hiring / Training / Management / Delegating / Staff Reviews / Firing / Leading / Team building
- Inventory controls
- Goal setting
- Problem Solving
- Contingency planning: Sick family members/or key staff/or self
- Communication skills: with customers, suppliers, etc.
- Relationship building with resources: legal, accounting, banker, etc
- Networking
- Customer service skills
- Technical skills
- Selling Fundamentals
- Marketing/promotion
- Decision Making: researching information to make sound business decisions



YOUR STRESS PLAN OF ACTION



If you are feeling the affects of stress and do nothing about it, the odds are that it will not go away by itself. You need to make a plan of action. A stressor that has been addressed is a great relief regardless of the outcome.

Take a moment to reflect and ask yourself, am I doing the same activities every day anticipating a different result?

Below is a list of Action Areas that the majority of stressors can be categorized into. Your task is simple: based on your results from the surveys on Page 2 & 3, it is time for you to put in writing your goals. Goals should be specific and measurable, action oriented, realistic and timed. For example, if your business stress is due to lack of customers, your goal may be to increase customers in your business by 20% through a direct flyer marketing campaign to be done by the first of the month.

BUSINESS Stress Plan Goals

✍ Sales and Marketing Goals:

-
-
-

✍ Staff Goals:

-
-
-

✍ Customers and Community Involvement:

-
-
-

✍ External: Government, PST, GST, Regulations, etc. (externally dictated):

-
-
-

✍ Finances, Money, Accounting/Bookkeeping:

-
-
-

✍ Other

-
-
-

PERSONAL Stress Plan Goals

✍ Money/Finances:

-
-
-

✍ Time: Hobbies, Leisure, Family, Volunteering:

-
-
-

✍ Health/Injury (you and your family members):

-
-
-

✍ Relationships: Spouse/Family/Friends/Children

-
-
-

✍ Career, Work Satisfaction/Change:

-
-
-

✍ Other

-
-
-

For additional information, visit the Community Futures West Interlake website at www.westinterlake.com.

We have a library of stress related resource materials for you to borrow.