

## BUSINESS EYE

# Humans are suffering

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**T**his week's over-indulgent sashay into the realms of fantasy-thinking comes to you from Barbados, where I'm away from the office working on a strategy for world domination post the Brexit

debacle; always assuming we are not going to be forever locked into 'GroveReesMog-gDay'.

After Brexit, the most depressing observation I've made at work in the past five years has been the rapid descent into poor mental health we have experienced, as exhibited by colleagues and, indeed, myself at work.

We are really struggling to cope as human beings these days.

Just in my own small company alone, we've witnessed one senior guy become unhinged and in the space of a few months completely change character and leave under a dark cloud

after losing apprentices, stripping to the waist to do pull ups in the middle of the workplace and picking fights with colleagues.

Another member of the team developed a split-personality disorder.

In a team of 50 people we've had around 20 cases of people suffering depression, alcoholism and being on one form of anti-depression resolution or another. It is a quiet epidemic.

The statistics back up our anecdotal evidence. It's a good job or I might develop a complex about being a 'Dickensian Boss' and need more medication myself.

The number of sick days

lost to stress, anxiety and depression has been rising aggressively year on year. In fact, the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK is now mental ill health, accounting for more than 70 million of the 130 million lost days a year. This costs us around £100 billion a year in lost output.

The thing is, work is changing fast, and the AI revolution hasn't even taken hold yet.

Work is intensifying. We now have multiple demands on our attention, we have to multi-task, and the pace has accelerated past 'break-neck' to 'break-mind' speeds, unless, of course, you work for

a nameless Local Authority Waste team, who have failed to even get me a replacement rubbish bag in four months; but that's another story.

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present and aware of what we are doing, and not worrying about the future or ruminating on the past.

It's the sort of new-fangled mumbo-jumbo sandal-wearing territory that I'd usually avoid like the plague, but it strikes me that we need to do something different to survive this always on, frenetic life we have engineered for ourselves.

A mindful workforce will suffer less stress, will burnout less readily, and will be less

soaked in the acid of perpetual anxiety.

This offers the potential for improved focus, longer concentration, less emotional exhaustion and higher productivity.

Mindfulness is a bit like swimming, no amount of reading books will trump diving in and getting wet.

If your aim is to have a team which is positively flourishing rather than hanging on getting by, by the skin of their teeth, then perhaps you should consider doing something about it?

For help go to [www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org) and look for 'begin for business'.