



## Can you 'switch-off' over the festive period?

The surge of new technology has made many of our work lives easier and communication quicker and simpler. But, with the advent of smart phones comes the 'always-on' culture that many of us live by.

Now that we receive texts, emails and phone calls through one device we are expected to respond quickly and this can become a constant string of interruptions. Sometimes this can also impact on us 'out-of-hours', affecting our personal lives.

If you are striving to further your career or have your own business it becomes hard to fight off the urge to be connected and constantly available - therefore making it very difficult to switch-off and enjoy some downtime.

SME businesses in the UK employ over 16.6 million people and account for 99.9% of the business population so this issue needs to be addressed if you are an SME business owner. It is predicted that this problem will result in employee burnout and a large rise in stress related absenteeism - if ignored this may well have an economic impact on your business.

CABA's wellbeing consultant Lucy Whitehall believes these devices and software have created a 24/7 culture which now blurs the distinction between home and work lives. This can cause a wellbeing imbalance. "Employee wellbeing influences every aspect of a business. Profitability, sustainability, customer engagement, talent attraction and retention are all impacted by how well, or not, employees feel," she says.

CABA's practical advice to combat these negative effects include listening to employees to give them the support they need; introduce chill-out areas where employees can get away from their workspace and if possible offer flexible working hours. Also try to model a healthy work-life balance throughout the organisation – for example employees need to see others leave on time or stay at home when they feel ill. This is especially important if you are the business owner or a manager – you need to lead by example.

So, try to use this festive period as a chance to relax and spend quality time with family and friends - and hide your smart phone! It may feel difficult to do, but will hopefully leave you feeling energised and ready for the New Year.

From all the team at Fairhurst – we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

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