

## Employers wake up to the power of a staff nap

### 1 Warmer

a. Discuss these questions.

1. Which of these describes you best?
  - a. avid napper
  - b. nap-neutral**
  - c. nap-resistant
2. How might napping lead to improved physical and **mental** well-being?
3. Why do you think some companies have tried to adopt a napping culture? Why might others be resistant?
4. How might one go about creating a pro-nap culture?

### 2 Key words

a. Read the definitions and find key words in the article that match them. The paragraph numbers are given in brackets to help you. Check your answers and your understanding of the words by using them to complete the example sentences.

1. when there is a relationship between two or more numbers \_\_\_\_\_

(paragraph 1)

*Studies suggest that academic performance* **correlate** *directly with*  
*sleep quality.*

2. a short sleep (usually not in your bed) \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 2)

*I don't mind the commute. I usually have a little* **snooze** *on the train.*

3. laziness; not working \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 2)

*Some psychologists think that hyper-productivity can be just as harmful as complete*  
**idleness** *; it is important to strike a balance.*

4. the quality of lacking determination and being weak in character \_\_\_\_\_

(paragraph 2)

*She is a high-achiever and could never be accused of* \_\_\_\_\_.

5. not wanting to accept changes or new ideas \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 2)

*While the team was initially quite* **resistant** *to the idea, they have now fully*  
*embraced the office nap.*

6. someone who says great things about something and tries to persuade others to have the

same opinion \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 4)

**evangelist**

*Heather is an \_\_\_\_\_ for life coaching. She has convinced at least three colleagues to give it a try.*

7. to provide more proof or support for an idea or opinion \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 6)

**reinforce**

*We hope that this online course will \_\_\_\_\_ the importance of adhering to our anti-corruption policy.*

8. something that makes you less hot or tired \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 7)

**refresher**

*After the presentation, we can invite our clients for a quick \_\_\_\_\_ in the lobby.*

9. to notice or discover something (usually that is not clear) (paragraph 8)

**detects**

*Ted was smiling, but I think I \_\_\_\_\_ a hint of sarcasm in his voice.*

10. reduce or be reduced in importance or size \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 8)

*Ever since the launch of the “no sugar” campaign, the shares of most sweets companies have diminished \_\_\_\_\_ in value.*

11. helping to achieve a plan in a business or organisation \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 9)

**strategic**

*Expanding into different regions requires a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ thinking and decision-making.*

12. to take something necessary or pleasant away from someone \_\_\_\_\_

(paragraph 9)

**deprive**

*Don’t expect your workers to show creativity if you \_\_\_\_\_ them of freedom.*

13. someone who frequently has trouble sleeping \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 17)

*Apparently, Nadia wrote her entire MBA thesis at night; she has always been an \_\_\_\_\_.*

14. continue to make an effort to achieve something even when it gets difficult or takes a long time

\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 18)

persevere

*To be a successful entrepreneur, you need to be determined to \_\_\_\_\_*

*through challenging times.*

## Employers wake up to the power of a staff nap

GROUPS FROM LAW FIRMS TO THE NHS ARE SEEKING HELP FOR THE OVERWORKED

EMMA JACOBS

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- 1 A friend once mused that the number of babies you have directly correlates with your ability to nap. I had one.
- 2 During maternity leave more than a decade ago, I became demented by my failure to sleep when the baby slept. I tried everything. I changed into my pyjamas mid-morning, Winston Churchill style. I put on eye masks, made the room pitch black, walked in the fresh air, sprayed lavender cologne on my pillow and ate turkey slices. Nothing worked.
- 3 I am not anti-nap. I don't see a short snooze as a sign of **idleness** or moral decay – if anything, framing it as **fecklessness** makes it more appealing. I am just nap **resistant**; it's part of my make-up. Or so I believed.
- 4 Cara Moore, an executive coach and founder of ProNappers, a business consultancy, thought differently. An **evangelist** for the power of the nap, she has become so good at it she can fall asleep sitting in a co-working space with earbuds and an eye mask.
- 5 It increases productivity, she says. "If you go for a nap with an unsolved problem – an email you haven't been able to phrase quite right or a conversation that's weighing on your mind, you often wake up [and] know what to do or say."
- 6 The benefits were **reinforced** by research in the journal Sleep Health last month. It found regular napping slowed the pace the brain shrinks as we age, lowering the risk of dementia and other diseases.
- 7 Naps fall into three categories. The **refresher**: a post-lunch rest to revive energy; a recovery nap to remedy broken sleep, perhaps mid-morning; and the preparatory nap to ready for a night shift or evening of socialising.
- 8 Employers are waking up to the advantages. Dr Guy Meadows, clinical director at The Sleep School, which runs programmes for businesses and individuals, **detects** a shift in attitudes. He says some employers in law, consulting, banking and the NHS are asking for help for staff working long or antisocial hours, as they are worried about diminished concentration and increased risk-taking.
- 9 With organisations that require employees to work late on a deal, for example, Meadows might suggest "a strategic nap". "In the past [employers] were coy. They didn't want to be talking about sleep-depriving their employees. [Today] they're more open about wellbeing."
- 10 How to nap is one of the most common questions in his sleep sessions for companies. Employees typically don't nap, he says, because they don't know what to do and they can't fall asleep.
- 11 Of course, scornful managers or a lack of facilities (nap pods or quiet rooms) at the office are also big obstacles.
- 12 How many organisations have a napping culture, with managers truly enlightened about snoozing on the job? My editor is flexible but I can't imagine promising to deliver an article just as soon as my nap is over.
- 13 Working from home may have eased the way for some white-collar professionals. Research by LifeSearch, the life insurance provider, found one in six admitted to a nap during work time.
- 14 In overcoming nap resistance, Moore asks me to examine thoughts holding me back. A common one, she says, is pride in being busy. I'm past the stage of hustle-humblebragging – but am guilty of believing that if I press on, I'll grind through the work quicker. This desire to crack on, says Moore, and "tick a few more things off their list" is fool's logic.

Continued on next page

15 As with a good exercise regime, Meadows encourages scheduling naps in a diary, setting an alarm or asking someone else to hold you to account. Meadows suggests experimenting with the napping time, usually between 10 and 20 minutes.

16 The first day at home after lunch, I start with 10 minutes, setting the alarm in case I enter deep sleep. I lie in a hammock with a cushion over my eyes to reduce the light. Worrying that my neighbours will wonder why I've got a cushion on my eyes prevents me from sleeping. Moore suggests listening to something to slow my whirring internal thoughts. I try a guided meditation, interrupted by a request to fund their podcast. The next day, I listen to a boring book. It works for a bit and then my mind wanders: how did the narrator discover his knack for sending people to sleep? Does it interfere with his dating life? Better was Moore's ProNappers' meditation, which declares "napping is a great use of your time", accompanied by the sound of waves.

17 On the fourth day, I enter a kind of twilight consciousness. Success, according to Meadows, whose most important advice is, don't fixate on sleep. The ambition, he says, creates its own stress – evident among **insomniacs**.

18 Two weeks later, on a sporadic nap schedule, I find that rest has become its own reward. I'm going to **persevere**. A nap habit takes practice, after all – Moore suggests at least a month, and Meadows, three. No one can accuse me of lacking ambition.



Emma Jacobs, 9 July, 2003

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## 3 Understanding the article

a. **Read each statement. Then decide if they were implied by the Author (Au), Cara Moore (CM), Dr Guy Meadows (GM), LifeSearch (LS), Sleep Health (SH) or if it is Not Implied (NI).**

1. I tried everything, but I could not sleep, and it drove me crazy.
2. With the right accessories, I can easily fall asleep in a work environment.
3. I come from a long line of keen nappers.
4. Frequent naps reduce the risk of certain neural diseases.
5. Magical things happen during sleep: it's great for problem-solving.
6. I know employers in different sectors are introducing naps, especially for workers with antisocial schedules.
7. Let's say someone was working late on a deal – I might recommend a strategic nap the next day.
8. Napping is still not that common – I can't imagine telling my boss, "I'm just going to have a quick snooze".
9. One of the biggest reasons people resist the idea of napping is because they want to be seen as 'very busy'.
10. Try experimenting with nap duration and schedule it into your day.
11. You shouldn't worry about sleeping; just try to relax.
12. I've been trying it for a few weeks and don't think I will persevere.

## 4 Business language – collocations

a. **Complete each sentence with the correct preposition(s).**

1. When will senior management wake \_\_\_\_\_ the importance of fostering employee wellbeing?
2. I can really sense a shift \_\_\_\_\_ Jamie ever since he started the self-awareness training.
3. Do not let fear hold you \_\_\_\_\_ from exploring new career paths.
4. It's very late, but I think we should press \_\_\_\_\_ and finish our assessment.
5. If we split these customer survey results, we can grind \_\_\_\_\_ them more quickly.
6. I know we've been working on this for weeks, but we need to crack \_\_\_\_\_ if we want to deliver our proposal on time.

7. I'm a completist – I get great satisfaction from ticking things \_\_\_\_\_ my list.
8. Sharing your goals with colleagues is a great way to hold yourself \_\_\_\_\_ account.
9. Let's focus on our strengths and try not to fixate so much \_\_\_\_\_ our past mistakes.
10. This week is hectic. We just landed a huge client, so now we are \_\_\_\_\_ a tight schedule.

**b. Choose the most formal word or phrase in each sentence below.**

1. I believe that more companies are **starting to appreciate** / **waking up to** the benefits of reduced working hours.
2. The economic climate has caused a **change of gears** / **shift** in the housing market.
3. His poor performance review **held him back** / **hindered him** last year.
4. Our CEO's motto is: just **endure** / **press on**.
5. If we stay focused, we can **continue with** / **grind through** these texts and finish them in an hour or two.
6. I know we've been working on this for weeks, but we need to **continue** / **crack on** if we want to deliver it on time.
7. I thought it was terrible how they **blamed her** / **held her to account** for their misdoings.
8. We suggest mindfulness as a tool to learn not to **fixate on** / **obsess about** the negative.
9. We are **in rather a rush** / **on a tight schedule**.

## 5 Discussion

**a. Discuss these questions.**

1. Did anything in the article surprise you? What was it?
2. How do you feel about “the power of the nap”?
3. Should all companies allow employees to nap? Why (not)? How?
4. What are other ways companies can foster employee wellbeing?

## 6 Wider business theme – employee wellbeing

a. Read the list of factors that are most detrimental to employee well-being below. Choose the correct heading a–c for each column 1–3.

- a. Design of work
- b. Leadership behaviours
- c. Ways of working

1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Micro- or undermanagement</li><li>• Lack of recognition</li><li>• Lack of psychological safety and empathy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being chronically overburdened</li><li>• Lack of career growth</li><li>• Boring, meaningless, or monotonous work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Switching tasks constantly</li><li>• Not being able to make their own decisions about how they work</li><li>• Always being available and 'on'</li></ul>

*Reported by a survey conducted by Deloitte in the United States of America (2022)*

b. Which of the factors are most prevalent in your work culture? Discuss and prioritise one issue in each area.

c. Now read and discuss Deloitte's description of each area. Is there anything you would add or modify?

1. Design of work (how you are organised): This is designed to limit clutter, streamline information flow and optimise scope so workers can focus on outcomes instead of tasks and allow for more purpose-driven work.
2. Leadership (how leaders behave): Leaders are self-aware, show positive personal well-being behaviours, foster psychological safety with excellent EQ, and make strategic choices for their organisation and team, supporting collective well-being.
3. Ways of working (how you get work done): Tech is used strategically to facilitate automation, allow for more meaningful work and limit task-switching. Tech comes with clear expectations and supports intentionally designed hybrid work.

# BUSINESS NEWS LESSONS

d. Have a meeting in which you brainstorm how to address the three main issues agreed upon in task B. Use your understanding of the three different areas and your discussion in task C. Do more research if you need to. Complete the table below.

Issue	Possible solution	Pros	Cons
Leadership			
Design of work			
Ways of working	e.g., including napping facilities	increased productivity / reduced risks in decision-making	cost of facilities/cost in time of training