

# Building a Culture of Well-Being for Your Traveler Population

Talk by Graham Lowe, Ph.D.  
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International SOS  
Foundation  
**DUTY OF  
CARE**  
Summit & Awards **2018**

# My focus today

- How business travel affects employees' well-being
- Business costs
- Proactive risk reduction
- Importance of culture

# Global business travel (BT)

- ✓ Contributed 1.23 trillion USD to global economy in 2017 (Statista 2018)
- ✓ Spending forecasted to increase 6% to 7% annually to 2020 (Statista 2018)
- ✓ More diverse groups of employees travel to a wider range of countries

# An integrated approach...

**Health & Productivity Management**

**Human Resource Management**

**Organizational Behavior**

**Job Stress Research**

**Sleep Research**

*Work-Life Balance Research*

**Occupational & Travel Medicine**

**Travel Research**

# Impact of frequent BT on travelers

## PHYSIOLOGICAL

- Illness, accidents & injuries
- Sleep problems
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Diabetes

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Psychological distress
- Reduced work engagement
- Job dissatisfaction
- Work – family conflict
- Risk-taking

## SOCIAL

- Less involvement in family, personal, community roles
- Social isolation
- Cultural adaptation challenges

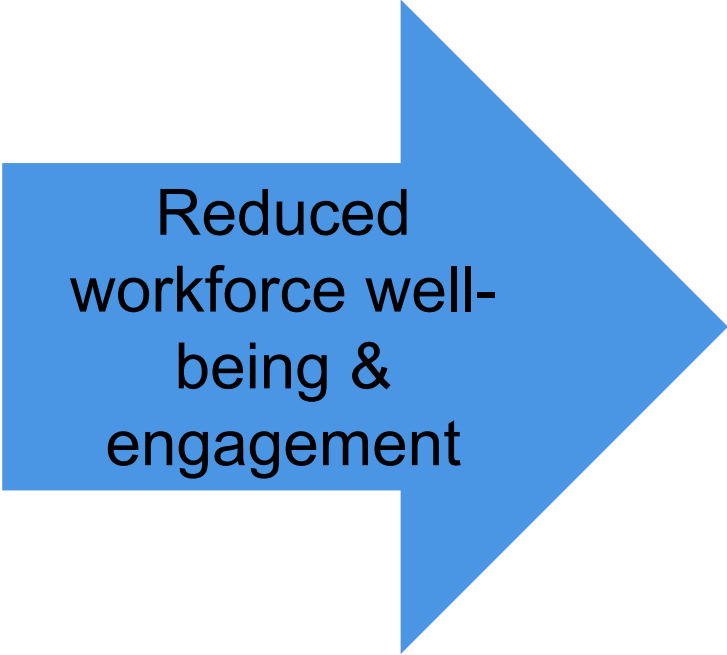
## EMOTIONAL

- Loneliness
- Burn out (emotional exhaustion)

# Expanding our focus...

- U-shaped health outcomes curve: Non-travelers and frequent business travelers are **less healthy** than employees who travel 1 – 6 nights monthly
  - J Travel Med 2010; JOEM 2011; JOEM 2018
- Commuters also experience high levels of work-family conflict and distress
  - Eur J Work & Org Psych 2014

# Costs to businesses



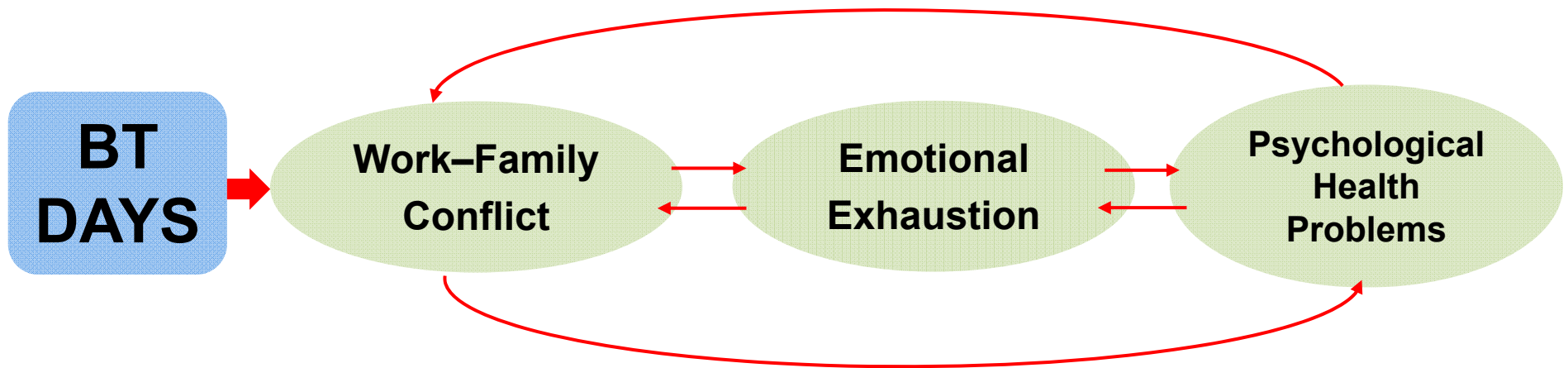
Reduced  
workforce well-  
being &  
engagement

- Lower work productivity
- Increased health claims
- Increased short-term disability
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Turnover
- Tarnished employer brand
- Strained customer relations

“Business travel has become a core competency in today’s corporate environment.” *Journal of Travel Medicine, 2010*

# BT and work-family conflict

## JOB DEMANDS – RESOURCES MODEL



## HEALTH IMPAIRMENT PROCESS: “LOSS SPIRAL”

Source: Jensen & Knudsen, A two-wave cross-lagged study of business travel, work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, and psychological health. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2017.



# “Something’s Got to Give”

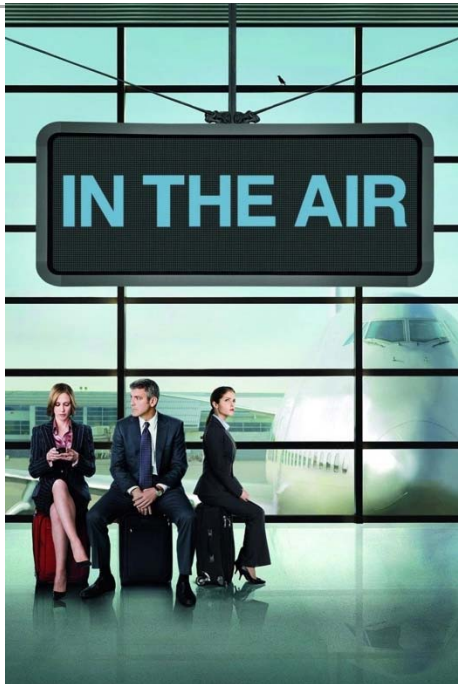
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- **Largest work-life balance study**
  - ✓ 25,000 full-time employees in large Canadian organizations, all sectors
- Work performance and well-being are compromised when male and female employees have significant caregiving demands
- Life-cycle framework: no dependents, childcare, eldercare, sandwich
- High levels of role overload are pervasive (40%) and systemic
- Few employers provide any form of support
- Recommend employer recognize caregiving as a legitimate work issue

SOURCE: L. Duxbury & C. Higgins, *Something’s Got to Give: Balancing Work, Childcare, and Eldercare*. University of Toronto Press, 2017.

# Healthy & sustainable business travel



“The field of occupational medicine needs to expand beyond its current focus on infectious disease, deep vein thrombosis, violence, and injury to bring more focus to the behavioral and mental health consequences of business travel.” Rundle, Revenson & Friedman, JOEM (2018)

- They call for more education, training and “**a corporate culture that emphasizes healthy business travel.**”

# “Fitter, Happier, More Productive”



- Survey of corporate business travel managers found more dissatisfied than satisfied with how their company addresses the impact of business travel on travelers
- Biggest concerns were impact on traveler’s health, turnover, safety, productivity
- Need to document hidden costs of business travel
- However, spending control (not health) is top priority for corporate travel programs

“Travel management is not just about cost, but also **duty of care**. We need to involve procurement, but also HR and corporate social responsibility departments.” *Executive at Carlson Wagonlit Travel*

# Promoting BTs' well-being and productivity

## Experts recommend the following policies and practices:

- ✓ Understand full impact of BT on employees and business
- ✓ Monitor health of frequent travelers
- ✓ Track intensity of BT
- ✓ Learn from BTs who are healthy and satisfied
- ✓ Educate employees on how to reduce personal impact of BT
- ✓ Acknowledge and help alleviate work-family conflict
- ✓ Expand EFAP programs
- ✓ Train and reward managers for being supportive of BT needs
- ✓ Help BTs manage workload and expectations before, during and after travel
- ✓ Provide flexible work options
- ✓ Provide BTs more control over when, how and where they travel
- ✓ Coordinate travel policies with HR, OHS, wellness, and CSR goals and plans

# Foster a “culture of health” ...

“...a working environment where employee health and safety is valued, supported and promoted through workplace health programs, policies, benefits, and environmental supports.”

*Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

**Organizational Culture**



YES	NO	<b>Due diligence check list</b>
		Do you know your traveler population?
		Do you analyze and report travel and traveler data?
		Have you assessed risks faced by different traveler groups?
		Are there control measures for identified hazards?
		Are resources to meet travelers' well-being needs adequate?
		Are travelers educated about risks and resources?
		Are managers/supervisors equipped to support travelers?
		Is traveler health and safety integrated into travel, OHS, wellness, HR and CSR policies and goals?
		Are travelers consulted and their concerns addressed?
		Do you track compliance with travel-related policies?

## People at Work (AU)

- I am pressured to work long hours
- I have unrealistic time pressures
- I can voice concerns about changes that affect my job
- I feel physically drained
- I feel burned out
- I have difficulty concentrating
- Do you believe that in the near future you will...
  - Take sick leave for a stress-related problem
  - Seek medical advice for a stress-related problem?
- Also see 4 items on sleep patterns

<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/mental-health-at-work/tools-and-resources/people-at-work/overview>

## Guarding Minds at Work (CDA)

- My employer is committed to minimizing unnecessary work stress
- I have some control over how I organize my work
- I am able to reasonably balance the demands of my work and personal life
- I feel supported in my workplace when I am dealing with personal or family issues.
- My employer promotes work-life balance
- I have energy left at the end of most work days for my personal life

<https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/>



# Promoting health *and* safety

- Leading corporations promote both health and safety
- More successful than their peers who do not take this integrated approach
- *Annual Corporate Health Achievement Award* by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
- Companies with high scores on both health and safety dimensions increasingly outperformed the S&P 500 index
- **Johnson & Johnson, IBM, Boeing, Dow Chemical, American Express.**

**“...companies that integrate their health and safety efforts, building a culture of health and wellness along with a culture of safety, are likely to have a competitive advantage in the marketplace.”**

Fabius, R. M., et al. (2016). Tracking the Market Performance of Companies That Integrate a Culture of Health and Safety: An Assessment of Corporate Health Achievement Award Applicants. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, 58, 3-8.

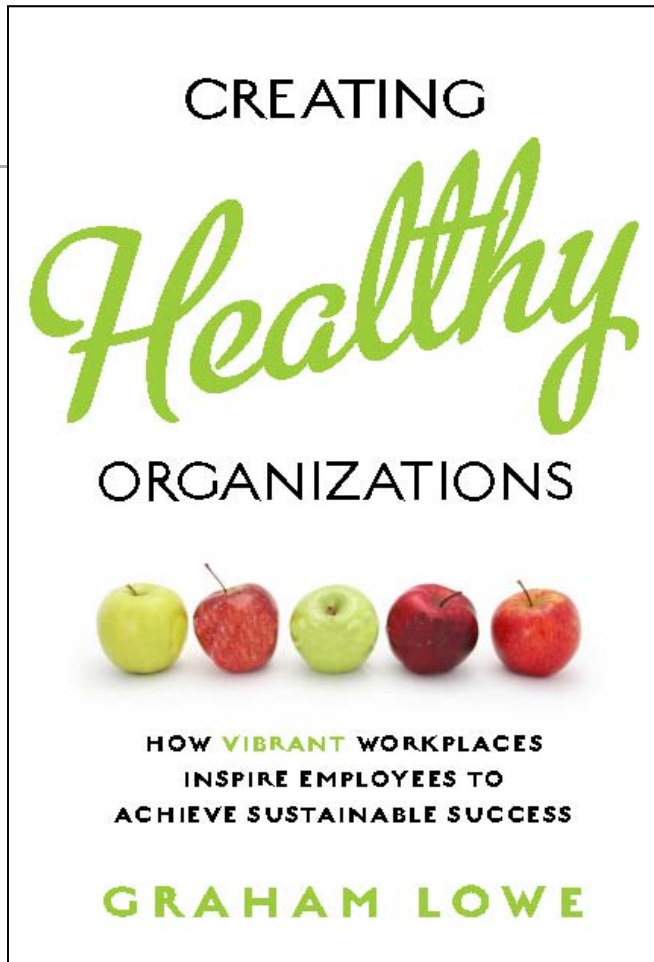
# Enablers of healthy workplaces

- 1. Leadership and culture:** Demonstrated commitment from leaders, backed by resources, to improve employee well-being and the embedding of health and safety goals into the organization's culture.
- 2. Integrated and comprehensive approach:** A commitment to achieving healthy workplace goals is integrated into the organization's strategy and linked to safety, human resources and corporate social responsibility.
- 3. Participation:** Active participation of employees and managers at all stages of the workplace health improvement process, and as users of healthy workplace programs and resources.
- 4. Communication:** The organization and its leaders regularly communicate with workers about healthy workplace resources, initiatives and progress through multiple channels.
- 5. Continuous improvement:** Achieving healthy workplace goals requires time, persistence, a continuous review of progress measures, and appropriate adjustments to initiatives.

## To conclude...

- ✓ Supporting the health and safety of BTs is a growing challenge
- ✓ Extensive BT can impose significant personal and business costs
- ✓ These costs can be reduced or avoided by taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to employee health, safety and well-being
- ✓ Success in these areas will improve employee well-being *and* business performance

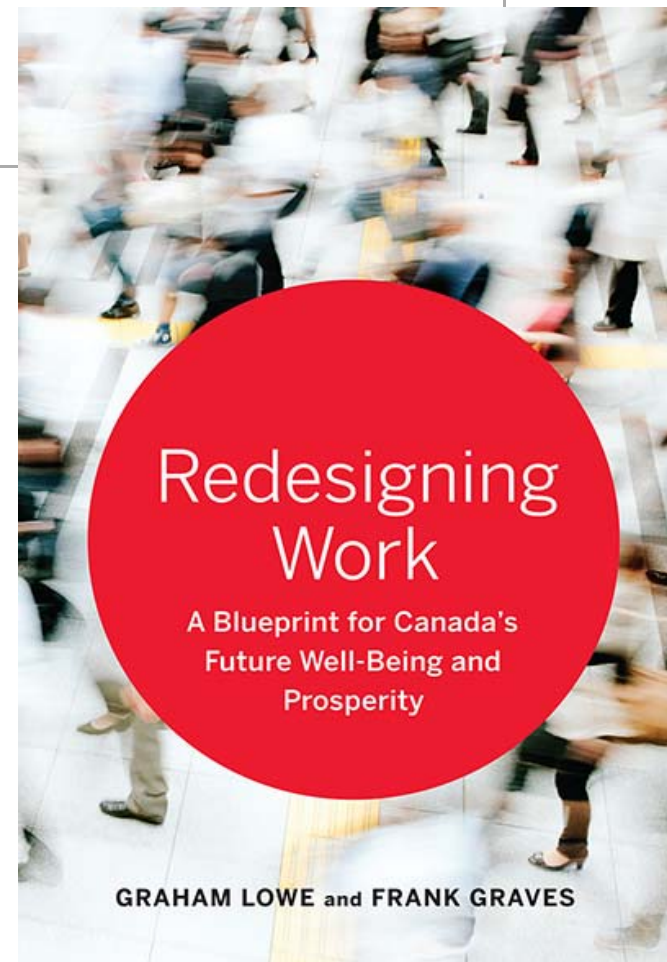
# Questions & Comments



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