

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Hrsg.)

Ressourcenförderung in Zeiten ständigen Wandels

Resilienz für Mitarbeiter, Führungskräfte und Unternehmen

Summary

Noteworthy characteristics of resilience include a positive outlook and a focus on resources and possibilities rather than on deficits. The topic of resilience involves the idea of not avoiding, but rather overcoming adversity and challenges and learning from them. Optimism, acceptance, a focus on finding solutions, casting off the mantle of victim hood, accepting responsibility, a focus on networking, and planning for the future: All of these are qualities typically found in resilient people.

In the labor market, the term “resilience” encompasses more than the capabilities of each individual; it also refers to an organization’s ability to adapt quickly and successfully to needs that are constantly changing. It is evident that there is a direct correlation between the strength and effectiveness of individual employees and the resilience of the organization as a whole.

Since the dawn of the industrial age, business success has depended primarily on technical resources; the focus has been on optimizing machines and technology. In today’s knowledge-based society, however, the crucial factors for success are human beings and their cognitive capacity and creativity, as well as the relationships among people within the organization. Whether in business, education, healthcare, the IT industry, the service industry or the administrative sphere, people are having to deal with more and more responsibilities and information, rapid change and ever increasing complexity. Work today means mental work – solving problems, planning, organizing and deliberating – and this will be even more true in the future.

In Germany, the incidence of mental illness has steadily grown over the past few decades. Since 1994, cases in which workers are unable to perform their jobs have increased by more than 100 percent, and the number of days lost to work disability has risen by nearly 90 percent. Today mental disorders are the fourth most important category of illnesses, making up 12 percent of the total. Along with the alarming number of sick days and early retirements, presenteeism is becoming an increasingly significant problem. This term refers to a phenomenon in which employees are physically present at work, but their productivity and willingness to perform are far below the optimal level.

An organization’s corporate and leadership culture and its health management system are of critical importance in seeking to solve the problem of increasing levels of psychosocial stress. The health of employees and their ability to work together are a crucial factor in a company’s productivity and ability to compete.

This brochure is intended for employees at all levels of the hierarchy who are interested in the topic of resilience. It contains an overview of the origin and development of the concept of resilience, as well as suggestions and helpful hints for promoting resilience, with a special focus on personal, social and work-related resources. Questionnaires are provided to help individuals and organizations assess the current state of their resilience. In addition, a report and several references describe the subjective experiences of a number of individuals with respect to organizational processes and devote special attention to aspects of in-company health management. Finally, interviews with a scholar who focuses on issues of the future, an extreme athlete and a brain scientist provide the author's chosen framework for examining the topic of resilience in the context of resource activation.