

Case Study 5: Change Champion Field Guide

Emotional Intelligence in Action: Sabre Holdings Corporation

OVERVIEW

HeartMath program outcomes show dramatic, sustained reductions in stress, sustained resilience improvement at Sabre.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Sabre Holdings is a global travel technology company, serving the world's largest industry – travel and tourism. We provide software to travel agencies, corporations, travelers, airlines, hotels, car, rail, cruise and tour operator companies through our four businesses: Sabre Airline Solutions, Sabre Hospitality Solutions, Sabre Travel Network and Travelocity (including lastminute.com and Zuji).

Sabre senior leadership team knows the importance of making a long term investment in a healthy workforce. Their highly successful Wellness Program, started in 2004, has more than 80 percent U.S. employee participation and has resulted in a solid return due to lower healthcare costs. In 2008, Sabre was named as one of America's fittest companies by *Men's Fitness Magazine*.

In 2007, Sabre Holdings wellness team targeted the reduction of Metabolic Syndrome as a key objective. Metabolic Syndrome is defined as having 3 or more of the following risk factors, which puts the person at significant risk of developing diabetes, heart disease or other serious illnesses:

- Fasting HDL: Men below 40 mg/dl; women below 50 mg/dl
- Fasting Triglycerides: 150 mg/dl or greater (or on medication for elevated triglycerides)
- Fasting Blood Glucose: 100 mg/dl or greater (or on medication for elevated blood glucose)
- Blood Pressure: 130/85 mm Hg or higher (or on medication for high blood pressure)
- Waist Circumference: Men over 40"; Women over 35"

Sabre's program focused first on weight management, partnering successfully with Trajectory Health (ACAP), and second on clinical stress reduction. These two factors are identified as the leading causes of metabolic syndrome.

As a pro-active champion and recognized leader in corporate wellness, Sabre is well aware that stress is a critical risk factor to employee health and performance, and contributes to rising health costs. In early 2009, Sabre commissioned an initial HeartMath pilot with 50 participants to assess the effectiveness of the program. The

outcomes showed significant Improvement ($p < 0.001$) in emotional vitality, organizational stress, emotional stress and physical stress with a 97% completion rate. Sabre selected HeartMath as their solution partner for clinical stress reduction and implemented a HeartMath pilot program for 50 employees. HeartMath's science-based training with feedback technology and decades of excellent, sustained outcomes and published research made HeartMath the best-in-class stress program. The pilot objective was to reduce stress and stress-related risk for Metabolic syndrome.

The HeartMath program selected was *Transforming Stress*, a multi-contact classroom and web blended format with each participant receiving the emWave Personal Stress Reliever®, an award-winning portable biofeedback device developed by HeartMath.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Participants were invited to apply for a ten week program to transform stress and build resilience. Participants were required to complete the program to be eligible to receive the class and technology at no cost; otherwise a small fee would be deducted from their payroll. Applicants who were at risk for metabolic syndrome were given preference for acceptance.

Metrics

- Pre and post biometric screening completed by Sabre. Participants received biometric screening before and ten weeks post-program.
- Pre and post psycho-social surveys. Prior to attending the course, all participants completed an extensive psychometric questionnaire, the HeartMath *Personal and Organizational Quality Assessment (POQA R4)*. The Assessment was taken at the beginning of the course and 10 weeks after.

Program Delivery

- HeartMath Transforming Stress Program was delivered
 - Forty-five-minute Introductory HeartMath webinar, The Science of Stress and Resilience.
 - Three- hour Transforming Stress classroom HeartMath training.
 - emWave Personal Stress Reliever for each participant to self-monitor and coach throughout the program period, as well as ongoing for sustained results.
 - Two one-hour live application group webinars over the next six weeks post-workshop.
 - Follow-up emails with practice suggestions.
 - Three newsletters with practice tips and links to HeartMath resources to sustain the learning.

OUTCOMES

The HeartMath pilot program produced excellent outcomes including a 59% reduction in Metabolic Syndrome, a 20% decrease in stress symptoms and a 63% reduction in the number of participants with high blood pressure.

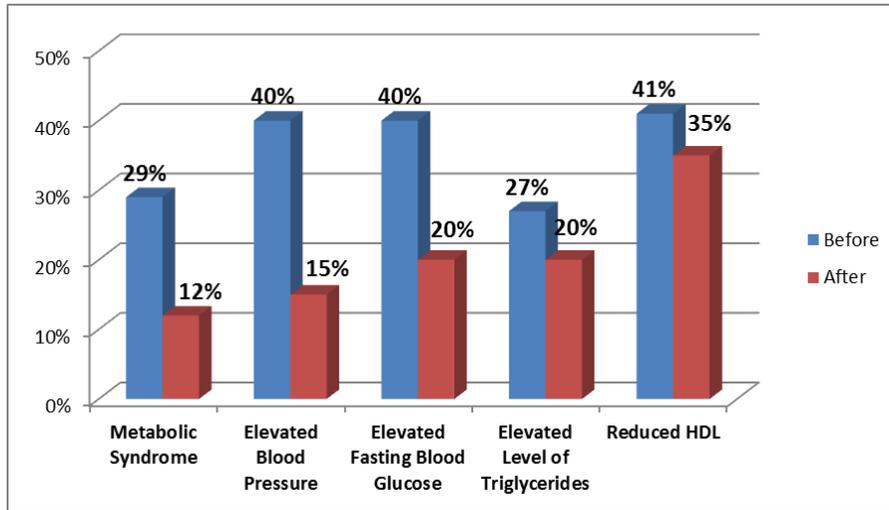


Figure 1: Biometric Results of the Program

Biometric Outcomes

- Sixty-three percent reduction in the number of people with elevated blood pressure
- Twenty-six percent reduction in number of people with elevated triglycerides
- Fifty percent reduction in the number of people with elevated glucose

Psychometric Outcomes

The POQA addresses individual and business performance issues through fifty-two items in four major scales: Emotional Vitality, Emotional Stress, Organizational Stress, and Physical Stress. Significant improvements were seen in all four major scales. Figure 2 shows the psychometric results as a result of the program.

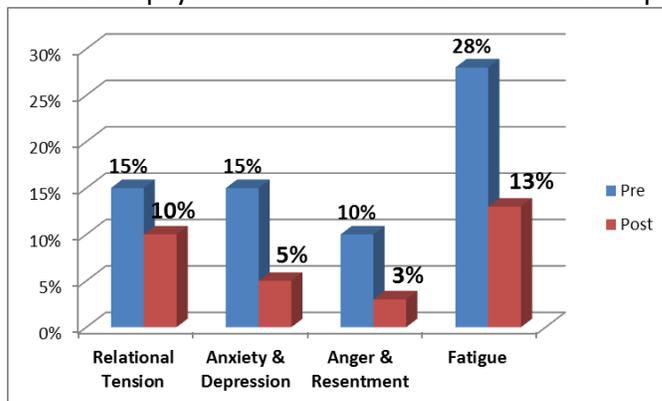
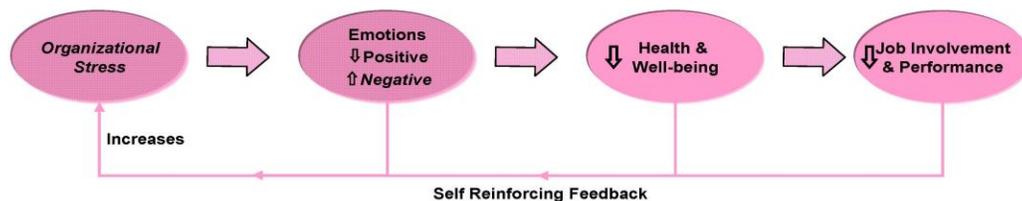


Figure 2: Psychometric results post program

Effects of Organizational Stress



Effects of HeartMath Intervention

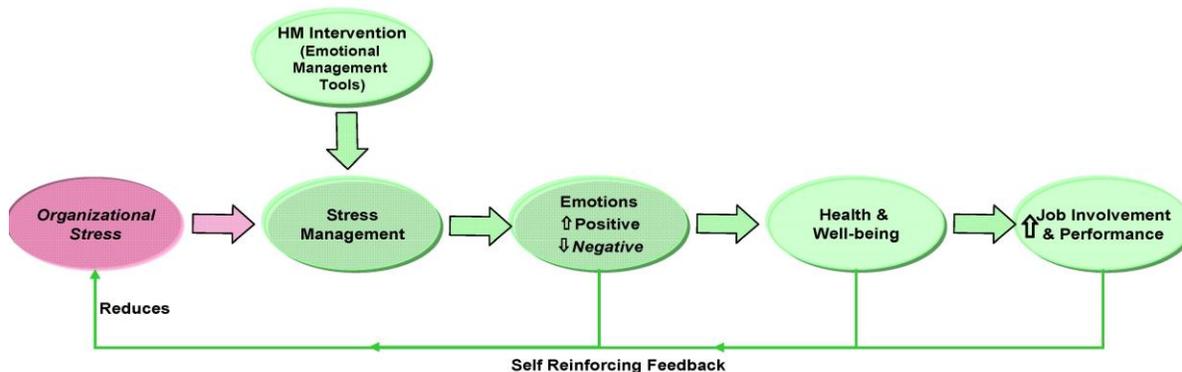


Figure 3: Program impact flow chart

NEXT STEPS

The pilot provided a double bottom line: (1) the potential for more positive health through reduction in lifestyle risk factors related to metabolic syndrome and (2) greater well being through ability to deal with stress in a positive and productive manner. This double bottom line provided Sabre the opportunity for health cost and trend reductions in the future.

In 2010, HeartMath launched Revitalize You!, a video-based e-learning version of the program. Sabre decided to pilot this to compare to the workshop outcomes and determine which format was most effective. The e-learning pilot had 93 participants, a 97% close rate and almost identical outcomes to the classroom program.

This resulted in Sabre selecting the HeartMath e-learning program as their solution partner for clinical stress reduction. Since then, Sabre has been offering HeartMath’s Revitalize You! e-learning program quarterly to all employees and spouses in the health plan. Programs in 2011 and 2012 showed participation and completion rates remaining high, with 115 signing up for the most recent program, and completion rates averaging 87% with 95% satisfaction measured in exit surveys.

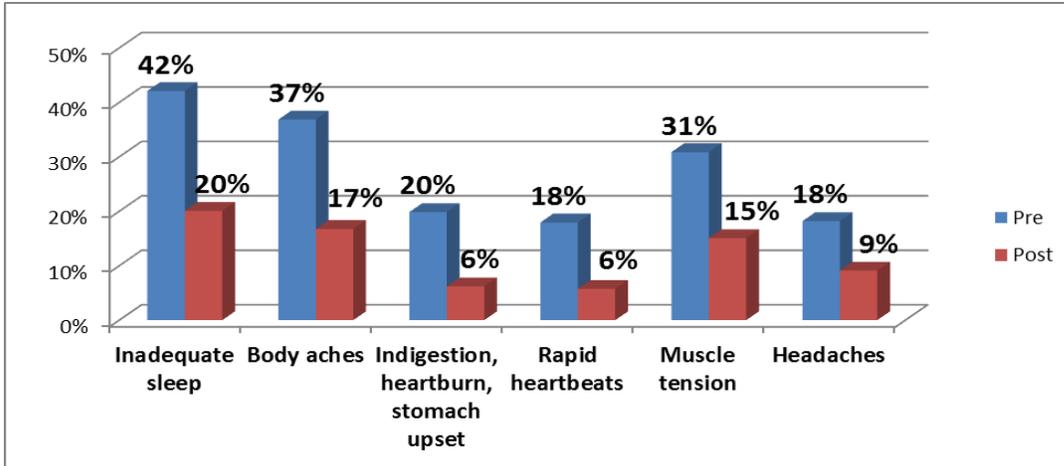


Figure 4: Physical Health Symptoms Outcomes 2010 – 2012 n=538

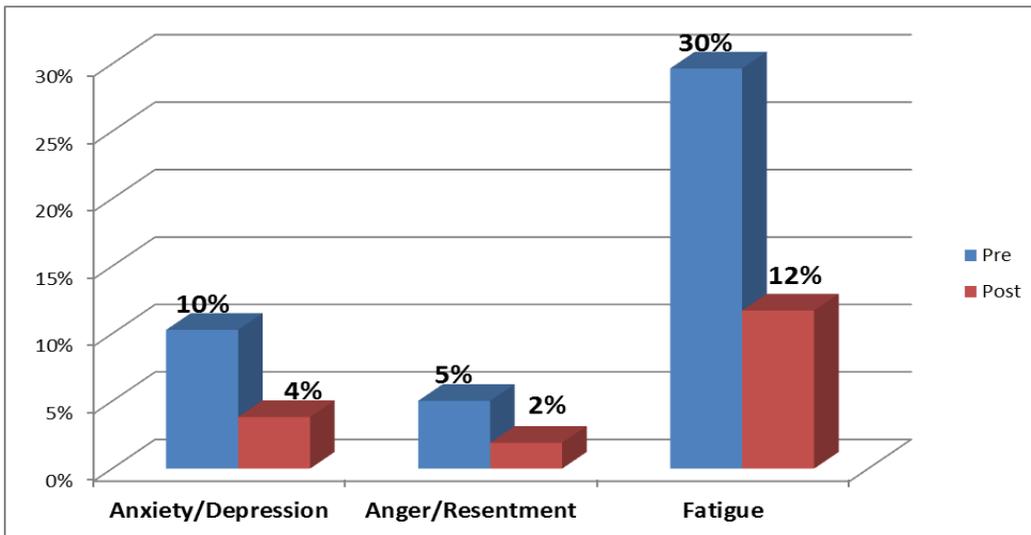


Figure 5: Psychometric Outcomes 2010 – 2012 n=538

POQA outcomes over the three years showed significant improvements across all stress scales. (See Figures 4 and 5) For instance, among those whose pre-data indicated they belonged to the “high risk” group (often-to-always feeling one or more of: depressed, angry, resentful, can’t sleep, relational tension, anxious, tired, body aches, indigestion, rapid heartbeats, muscle tension, headaches) there was a 54% improvement (reduction) in the number of participants in this high risk category. A one year follow on POQA showed sustained outcomes.