

Burnout is everywhere in our precarious global economy, but it is especially pronounced in the travel and hospitality industry. Knowing the reasons why can help prevent it from taking over.

“The current COVID-19 worldwide drama is causing and will cause well into the future the loss of mental stability as well as the destruction of their physical business, and we must all be ready to accept this new norm and deal with each person in a caring and understanding manner” stated Max Najar, Axis Travel Centre from Australia.

In May of this year, the **World Health Organization** clarified its definition of burnout as an “occupational phenomenon,” rather than a medical condition, noting it results from “chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” It is characterized by physical and mental exhaustion, mental distance from one’s job, feelings of negativity, cynicism, and “reduced professional efficacy.”

ALWAYS OPEN- There are plenty of reasons why burnout happens, from personality or individual circumstances, to a company or society’s structure — and of course a mixture of all of the above. However, the travel industry, has several fundamental characteristics which mean it can lend itself to burnout unfortunately well.

Sorensen, GM of the Beaumont Hotel in London, says unlike almost all other industries, there’s no “lights off” at a hotel “A hotel is always open. This business is not like an office where you switch the lights off, close the door and everyone goes home,” Sorensen stated “So it is easy for managers to hang around beyond their contracted hours and keep working. It’s what makes a hotel a kind of danger zone for the type of people who have tendency to overwork and burn out, because it never stops.”

Within the Travel Agency sector, Max Najar, a Keynote speaker and travel agent for over 42 years

“Dedicated and qualified Travel Agents, who maintain a strong passion to know their product knowledge, respect their built-up Industry contacts and are focussed on delivering exceptional services to their business and leisure clients really know that they must work 24 x 7 and not gauge work with a time clock.

My mindset is pre-set, no matter what the time is. This particularly applies to International travel where time zones differ and from Australia, we must attend to issues efficiently and effectively, with the mutual understanding that a value is also placed on one’s time, which is both the time of the client and my own time “

In addition, hospitality has traditionally engendered a kind of calling in many people. Separated from the phrase “hospitality business,” do not forget, and the word means generosity and kindness towards guests. There is a high degree of company loyalty with many hospitality and travel industry clients, as well as a desire to not let customers down. That can often lead to people putting work before their own well-being.

“A lot of the time in travel you’re dealing with people who literally are investing their hard-earned money into the dream of these amazing holidays and experiences, so you’re dealing with a really high risk product,” Sheasby said. “So the fact that a [travel rep] is contactable 24/7 when anything goes wrong can cause extreme pressure for people.”

Travel Agent, Najar stated “... the monetary spend is not important to me, but the pleasure and positivity created from delivering exceptional services, using my toolkit of experience and expertise is the most important factor with a focus that I have adopted to now attend to clients who appreciate what is involved and respect that, and not attending to referred clients who wish to extract or misuse my expertise. You must remember that our human lives are short and get shorter as time passes us by, hence I place the highest value on the component of “time”, and attending to my valued agency clients who benefit from what I know and what I do, allowing me to establish and maintain a fabulous database of appreciative clientele who understand these factual qualities”

THE NATURE OF THE COMPETITION IT would be impossible to talk about burnout in the travel industry without talking about the technological, financial, and macroeconomic factors that have shaped and transformed the industry over the past twenty years. **“Hospitality has always been a 24/7 business, but it’s more of a 24/7 business than it’s ever been,”** Conley said. **“People have an expectation that if they have a problem, then it’s going to be solved in this moment.”**

CURIOSITY MEETS WISDOM – AS A PSYCHOLOGIST SAID AT A RECENT INDUSTRY EVENT “To realize that you can actually become **fresh and new** at whatever age,” is the goal, “When you’re in a learning mindset and a beginner’s mind there’s a certain freshness that you feel.” **Remember that it is the adoption of this “freshness” that is the holy grail!**