SBA MINI GUIDES
BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Practical strategies to maintain productivity without burnout

INTRODUCTION

We often think of high performance as "pushing harder".

Unfortunately, you can push yourself and your team harder only for a certain amount of time before running into the risk of burnout.

High performance actually means sustaining energy, clarity, and trust over time.

When teams are stretched too thin for too long, performance dips, engagement crumbles, and people quietly check out.

What's worse, burnout doesn't always look like collapse. Sometimes, it shows up as low creativity, disengaged meetings, or a lack of risk-taking.

This guide is built for leaders who want results **without losing people along the way**.

We've outlined four practical strategies that help teams stay productive while protecting their well-being.
Each one includes:
- Key questions to assess your team
- Action items to implement right away
- Metrics to track what's working

You don't need to redesign your culture overnight: Just start with one or two ideas that make the pressure feel more purposeful and the pace more sustainable.

STRATEGY #1 NORMALIZE FOCUS TIME

Protect attention as a shared resource.

KEY QUESTIONS	• Do team members have enough uninterrupted time to do deep work? • How often do meetings crowd out strategic thinking? • Are people clear on what *not* to prioritise?
ACTION ITEMS	• Block recurring focus hours across the team calendar • Remove or combine nonessential recurring meetings • Use "one-line priorities" at the start of each week
SUGGESTED METRICS	• % of time spent in meetings per week • Completion rate of top 3 weekly goals • Feedback score on "time to think"

TIPS:

– Don't default to full-hour meetings – try 45 or 25 minutes

– Share a "focus-first" calendar example from a senior leader

– Make deep work visible: Celebrate wins that came from quiet time

STRATEGY #2
MAKE RECOVERY
NON-NEGOTIABLE

Rest is fuel, not a reward.

KEY QUESTIONS	• Do people feel safe taking time off without guilt? • Are recovery breaks encouraged or quietly frowned upon? • What's the tone around working outside of hours?
ACTION ITEMS	• Actively support full use of vacation and PTO • Set clear digital boundaries (e.g., reply expectations) • Build "no activity zones" post big deliverables
SUGGESTED METRICS	• % of vacation days used per employee • After-hours email or message activity • Burnout signals in engagement feedback

TIPS:

– Use "out of office" auto-replies to set tone from the top

– Encourage sharing how people recharge: model it, don't hide it

– Build a handoff plan template for pre-leave transitions

STRATEGY #3
CLARIFY WHAT HIGH PERFORMANCE LOOKS LIKE

Great output starts with shared expectations.

KEY QUESTIONS	• Is there alignment on what "great work" actually means? • Are team goals realistic based on capacity? • How often is success redefined or shifted?
ACTION ITEMS	• Co-create definitions of success for roles and projects • Revisit and adjust goals regularly • Run regular outcome-based retrospectives
SUGGESTED METRICS	• Goal completion rate • Alignment scores from pulse check-ins • Scope changes or project churn rate

TIPS:

– Keep goals in plain language: Avoid buzzwords!

– Ask, "What does success look like if we do this well?" at the start of every initiative

– Visualize team goals where everyone can see them weekly

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STRATEGY #4
BUILD EMOTIONAL
BUFFERING CAPACITY

Help teams absorb pressure without breaking.

KEY QUESTIONS	• Are concerns raised early and safely? • How does the team handle pressure moments or setbacks? • Is energy openly discussed, or avoided?
ACTION ITEMS	• Hold monthly "energy check-in" conversations • Train managers to spot stress signals and respond early • Normalize peer support and stress decompression rituals
SUGGESTED METRICS	• Psychological safety scores • Stress mentions in qualitative feedback • Manager well-being reports in team reviews

TIPS:

– Use a red/yellow/green check-in scale in team meetings

– Host "What's draining or fueling you this week?" team prompts

– Debrief tough sprints with no agenda other than naming what was hard

TIME FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE, WITHOUT BURNOUT?

Building a culture of sustainable high performance takes more than good intentions. It takes the right tools, behaviors, and conversations.

At SBA, we help leaders turn performance pressure into **purposeful focus** and **protective habits**.

Here's how SBA can support you:

- **Run a High-Performance Health Check** to identify pressure points and energy drains across your teams

- **Coach team leads and managers** on how to drive results without defaulting to intensity

- **Design simple operating rhythms** that balance ambition with recovery, clarity, and team connection

Let's talk about making your organization a great workplace

GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

Click the box to schedule a call, or send an email to
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