



EXECUTIVE VITALITY: FEEL BETTER, LEAD BETTER

You may be fit to be a leader. But are you a leader who is fit?

More and more executives are telling us of the toll that their leadership lifestyles are taking on their vitality. It may start with low energy. Or an inability to focus. Pile on emotional or physical exhaustion, and before long, job performance suffers. Personal satisfaction and welfare can plummet as well.

If you want to lead better, doesn't it make sense for you to try to feel better, too?

That's why EXCN is so committed to Executive Vitality. We consider your vitality as one of your most precious commodities. The more you have, the more you can achieve and enjoy. With ample Executive Vitality, you have physical stamina; you display mental and emotional vigor. Your ability to lead, support, and thrive are fueled.

What exactly is Executive Vitality? We define it as the vital force which sustains leaders' success across many demanding roles. It is impacted by all aspects of an executive's life: including play, spirituality, relationships, finances, health, work, and personal wellbeing. Executives are human. Like all humans, leaders need to recreate (re-create) in smart, strategic ways.

What threatens Executive Vitality? Many common, everyday choices. Inadequate sleep is one example. Fewer than seven-to-nine hours a night can negatively impact job performance, whether you feel tired or not, according to research at Harvard Medical School's affiliate, Brigham and Williams Hospital. Poor diet. Constant stress wreaks havoc as well. Studies conducted by Dr. Redford Williams of Duke University Medical Center and reported in the New York Times in 2003 found that in conditions of "relentless stress, blood is shunted away from organs into muscles. When you are in this mode a good deal of the time, the brain is scrambled, your thinking process doesn't work well, your judgment is clouded. It's very difficult to think clearly."

Where do you start in addressing Executive Vitality? EXCN can help. We start wherever you are on the vitality "spectrum." The important thing is to get going.

What's the process? EXCN begins with an inventory and assessment of your current state. From there we help you build an Executive Vitality Action Plan.

In our next issue, we will discuss details of the Executive Vitality process, including many of the great results our clients have accomplished.

Here are a few simple, yet key, suggestions:

1. Keep track of your energy level on a 1-to-5 scale. Make certain you rate this in the morning and evening at about the same times each day (by your watch, no matter what time zone). Reflect on moments throughout the day where you had the most energy and where you had the least. What do you learn? What are the patterns? What can you do about it?
2. Go to sleep and wake up at about the same time each day (no matter where you are) ensuring about 7-to-8 hours of rest per night—every night!

3. Eat healthy, exercise, avoid too much alcohol or stimulants, and visit your physician on a regular basis to ensure you are in shape.
4. Identify your energy infusers and "live" them on a regular basis. An energy infuser is anything you do that positively increases your energy level. For example, swimming, helping a friend, making a charitable contribution, or taking the dog for a walk.
5. Set targets for improving your vitality and keep chipping away so that you reach your targets, increase your energy, and improve your effectiveness as a leader.

Alas, "energy and persistence conquer all things." —Benjamin Franklin