

The “Daily Plan-It™”

SHUMATE BROKERAGE CORP.

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De-stress for Success

You probably won't be shocked to learn that a majority of American workers feel overwhelmed by stress. In a 2006 survey by CareerBuilder.com, more than 50 percent of respondents claimed that their workdays were filled with stress. An even more frightening response: 77 percent of those polled said they experienced job burnout.

Financial planners are even more susceptible to stress and burnout than the average office worker, especially when you consider the critical role they play in their clients' lives. Many carry an ongoing burden, weighed down by the responsibility they feel. Are they getting the best rates of returns for their clients? Have they effectively protected them from inflation or a severe market downturn? It appears that, financial planners worry about three things: their relationships with their clients, the volatility of the markets, and the future of the financial planning industry.

The pressure cooker

In addition to client responsibility concerns, many financial planners are small business owners, and deal with additional pressures that accompany managing any growing practice. They're forced to make instant decisions with far-reaching consequences, oversee their practice's growth, handle potentially volatile client personalities, and coordinate vendors, business partners, bankers, and insurance organizations. No wonder the pressure is rising!

Stress manifests in both emotional and physical ways. Emotionally, one may experience depression, anxiety, mood changes, crabbiness, and a feeling of being alone in the world. Physically, one may experience fatigue, muscle aches, weight changes, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, and stomach problems. All these troubles together might lead to a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, which is associated with burnout.

Tips on dealing with stress

1. Manage expectations: Begin by setting attainable goals, both long- and short-term.

2. Organize your workspace: A clear environment paves the way for clear thinking.

3. Deal with underlying causes. Identify the causes of stress and handle them. Are you a perfectionist? Try to lighten up. If you have too much work on your plate, ask for help or join forces with another planner.

4. Attend to your health. Make sure that you get enough sleep, eat a nutritious diet, and get plenty of exercise. Also, drink lots of water to stay hydrated.

5. Be empathetic. Don't take your clients' problems personally. Rather, learn to empathize with them, and offer them counseling. Stay focused on your boundaries, and keep them in check.

The financial world is a challenging place to navigate. That's why your clients need you. You'll serve them best, while simultaneously growing your business, if you stay cool, calm, collected, and stress free.

Shumate Brokerage Corp.

1918 West Cass Street
Tampa, FL 33606-1232
800.330.8582
813.254.7681
Fax ~ 813.251.8049

www.ShumateBrokerage.com

Email ~ Brent@ShumateBrokerage.com

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