



Work Smart Live Smart

Reducing Your Stress Due To Technology

By
Dave Paradi, MBA

*Constant emailing and text messaging reduces
mentality capability temporarily by
an average of 10 points on an I.Q. test*

University of London, 2005

With the pace of technological change these days, many people feel stress due to technology. Here are some tips on reducing the stress you might feel when buying, learning or using technology.

Buying Technology

When thinking about any technology purchase, first make a list of what features you need and what are optional features. Don't restrict your list to what you currently do, try to predict what you will need in three to five years.

Then, before you head to the store, do your research at a relaxed pace where you have time to consider your options outside of the frantic pace of a store. Put on some relaxing music and head for the Internet to do some research (stores play up beat music loudly to heighten the tension you feel and help push you to a quicker decision). Some of the destinations you should check out on the web include independent sites that review technology such as CNet, PC World magazine, PC Magazine and Mac World. Use the features of these sites to compare the different products that are available. When you find a product that you think meets your needs, go to the manufacturer's web site and view the user guide for the product (most are available online now). Make sure you can understand it and the features work the way you expected them to.

If you are unfamiliar with the technology you are looking to buy, ask for help. Don't let your pride get in the way. Ask friends and family who have already purchased what you are looking for who they know that has knowledge about that area. Don't be surprised if it turns out to be someone's teenager! Kids today pick up on new technology at lightning speed because it is all they have ever known. Remember to look for someone who focuses on your list of needs, not someone who is just interested in the latest and greatest available. Trusting this advisor is the most important aspect of your search. It is unlikely that a salesperson can fill this advisor role.

With this research and advice in hand, you can then head to the store as an informed consumer, with a much better chance of making a good decision.

Learning Technology

Once you have purchased some new technology, you need to learn how to use it. If you don't count the learning in your overall decision, you are bound to end up more stressed over wasting money on technology you never use. The investment in training pays off in less stress and more productivity. There are many resources available for learning technology, one will fit your learning style better than another.

You can take a course at a local school or training center. This experiential way of learning can help you also identify local resources, such as the instructor or a fellow student, who you can ask for help in the future. You can follow the tutorial that came with the technology, whether it is computer based or video based. These step by step resources usually give you reference material to look at later when you can't remember how to do something with the technology. You can also buy a book on using the technology. This reference resource can be a handy way to look up things on a regular basis. When you go to the bookstore, don't just grab the first book you see or the best selling title. Leaf through the different choices to find one that you can understand and is organized so that you can find things quickly without additional stress. Also consider quick reference guides that can sit beside your desk or table and provide a "cheat sheet" for the technology.

Using Technology

Once you have learned the technology, you have to use it or else you will forget it and create stress from not remembering how to use it. Dedicate time to practice with the technology. Find uses for it so that you build a habit of using the technology (experts suggest that if you do something for 21 consecutive days, you have a great chance of it becoming an enduring habit). Even though you have invested time in learning the technology and practicing, don't think everything will be smooth sailing. Expect that there will be frustrating times when using the new technology. But don't stress when something goes wrong, just go back to the reference material you have and find out how to do what you need to do. If the technology has settings, learn how to cancel a change in settings or undo what you have done. Then you can start again and learn how to do it properly. You will be successful and you should celebrate each step along the journey. Give yourself small rewards for accomplishing something new with your technology or remembering how to do a specific task.

Technology, like most other things in our lives, can be extremely beneficial, but can lead to stress and we buy, learn and use it. Use the ideas above to reduce the stress you feel due to technology.

About The Author:

Dave Paradi is known as The PowerPoint Lifeguard because he rescues speakers and their audiences from "Death by PowerPoint". Dave is the author of "Guide to PowerPoint" in the Prentice Hall Series in Advanced Business Communication. His consulting, workshops and learning tools help organizations improve the

profitability of their PowerPoint presentations. Learn more at <http://www.communicateusingtechnology.com> .
©2005 Dave Paradi

Stress and wellness specialist, **Beverly Beuermann-King** translates current research and best practices information into a realistic, accessible and practical approach through her dynamic stress and wellness workshops, on-line articles, e-newsletters and media interviews and through a collaboration called *Awakening The Workplace*. Visit www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com for more on Beverly and her wellness work.

**Bring one of these related workshops to your team -
From Job Stress To Job Smart or
Harnessing Your Energy – Bust Your Stress**

Call Beverly at 705-786-0437 or
Visit **Presentations & Keynotes** at www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com
for presentation descriptions and outlines.