

Navigating Change: The WAVE model for organizational resilience



Change happens. Have you ever gone through a team restructuring with so much confusion that you thought, “Whatever, I don’t care.” Or so caught up preparing for a conversation with your boss that you step off your morning commute, wondering ‘how did I get here?’ If you said, yes; welcome to the club.

From geopolitics to acquisitions, change is all around us. With 24-hour connectivity, it is impossible to respond effectively to that demand our attention. Unsurprisingly, work-related stress and employee disengagement has become a global phenomenon. In the U.S. alone, 80% report job-related stress¹ and 70% disengagement.² Many of us feel our work and ‘real’ selves are misaligned, disconnected from ourselves and others, or distracted and unable to focus. When our minds wander, productivity suffers.

Mental training matters. The most forward-thinking companies are proactive in mental health management. For example, Aetna saw a \$3K productivity increase and a \$2K medical expenditure decrease *per employee* with its mindfulness programs.³ Transport for London saw a 71% drop in absenteeism due to stress, anxiety, and depression. Mental training impacts the bottom line.

WAVE a model for organizational resilience. Just like ocean waves, we cannot stop thoughts from rising or teams from restructuring. We can, however, build the capacity for optimal performance during any stage of transition, from momentary stillness to sudden disruptions. When introduced properly, mindfulness, emotional intelligence (EI), and resilience move beyond feel-good concepts to powerful tools that can help people navigate work and personal transitions with greater effectiveness, productivity, and collaboration.



The *WAVE* model outlines four dimensions of organizational resilience, the ability to “bounce back” and anticipate and adapt to change. It offers practical tools and techniques based on emerging neuroscientific research on mindfulness, the ability to pay attention to the present, and EI, the ability to monitor, understand, and manage our own and others’ emotions.

Wisdom explores the inner work of focus and mindset necessary for innovation and clear action. *Alignment* extends out to opportunities for greater personal, team, and organizational engagement and commitment. *Vitality* brings attention to the personal and environmental contributors for stress management. *Engagement* draws out the trust and awareness required to influence others and build strong collaborative relationships.

WAVE prepares organizations to navigate transitions with greater clarity and foresight. A deeper dive into the capacity for resilience can help them ride out the daily ebbs and flows and survive tsunamis of change.

¹ American Psychological Association, 2017

² Gallup, 2017.

³ Harvard Business Review, 2015.