

## **Professional Goals for the Year 2006 to 2007**

I am planning to have my professional life settled by the end of next year. By settling my professional life I mean be in academia either in Canada, Europe, or in Pakistan. After academic success and track publication record I would move to establish my own academic institute and consulting business. Students would be able to complete the higher education degrees with us and we would provide consulting services to the industry. We would also look into the areas of how to make Peace in the world. We would have to establish a Strategic Institute within our Academic Institute where efforts would be made to bring all the conflicting parties around the globe on one table and have them settle their difference in the civilized manners. We would also work with organizations like United Nations to achieve these goals.

I hope to establish the institute either in Europe, in the Canadian city of Vancouver or it could be in my own country. I am expecting to have this process completed no later than fall 2008, this would simply mean that I have around two years to plan and establish such an institute.

I am fortunate enough to have some of the brilliant academic gurus in my life. So, to fulfill the process of talent and be on the right track would not be an issue at any given time. I hope I would be able to accomplish these goals as mentioned in this paper to make this world a better place for those who are here.

Most respectfully,

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# **Stress Management and Information Technology**

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Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they can't cope. Stress may not always be created by others in our life; we may be a contributing factor in the stress full moments in our life. It is a good idea to communicate with others during the difficult moments, or in my case I personally visit the place like foster homes, hospitals, nursing homes, and care facilities during the stress full moments.

This seminar has opened some new avenues that I never had the opportunity to expose to myself in the past like visiting spiritual place. For example visit to Zen centre in San Francisco, meeting at the ocean beach for discussion of readings and lectures, visiting the quiet places like point Richmond bay point are truly practical way to minimize the stressful moments in someone's professional life.

In the information technology sector workers spend normally more time at work than any industry due to the project dead lines and the desire to launch the project successfully. So even though there is a stress on the employees due to workload but it is hardly consider as stress at least in the early years of the careers. It is not a negative stress that would affect the employees negatively. Most of the people involve in the IT sector are young graduates who want to make their names famous by making things work for all of us in the departments by utilizing all the skills they gathered during their graduate school seminars, lectures and call for papers.

However, this scene changes in the long run when people stay in the same firm for quite sometime. The following survey is completed by the RHI Consulting firm based in Menlo Park, California. The firm asked the Chief Information Officers about different causes of the stress at the work place. A very big majority of the CIO's mentioned that

the rising workload is the major cause of the stress. The second major cause was the Politics at the work place.

### **Information technology Professional Survey<sup>1</sup>:**

**"Which of the following do you think is the greatest source of workplace stress for IT professional?"**

<i>Rising workloads</i>	<i>55%</i>
<i>Don't know/no answer</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Pace of new technology</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Commuting</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>Work/life balance issues</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Office politics</i>	<i>24%</i>

Source: RHI Consulting

(The following research on stress management is completed by Cornell and Indiana Universities in the USA:)<sup>2</sup>  
Stress is simply the body's non-specific response to any demand made on it. Stress is not by definition synonymous with nervous tension or anxiety. Stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness; it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological; heart attacks and accidents. The important thing to remember about stress is that certain forms are normal and essential.

As the body responds to various forms of physical or psychological stress, certain predictable changes occur. These include increased heart rate, blood pressure (systolic and diastolic), and secretions of stimulatory hormones. These responses to stress will

occur whether the stress is positive or negative in nature. In lay terms, it is known as the "fight or flight" mechanism. Continual exposure lowers the body's ability to cope with additional forms of psychological or physiological stress.

The results of continuing stress may cause disruption in one or more of the following areas of health: physical, emotional, spiritual and/or social.

### **Recognizing Stress:**

**The following are indicators that you may be experiencing**

General irritability

Elevated heart rate

Increased blood pressure

Increased accident proneness

Floating anxiety-anxious feeling for no specific reason

Trembling

Insomnia

Headaches

Indigestion

Pain in neck and/or lower back

Changes in appetite or sleep pattern

Stress is a process that builds. It's more effective to intervene early in the process rather than later. Try to become aware of the signs that suggest the process has begun.

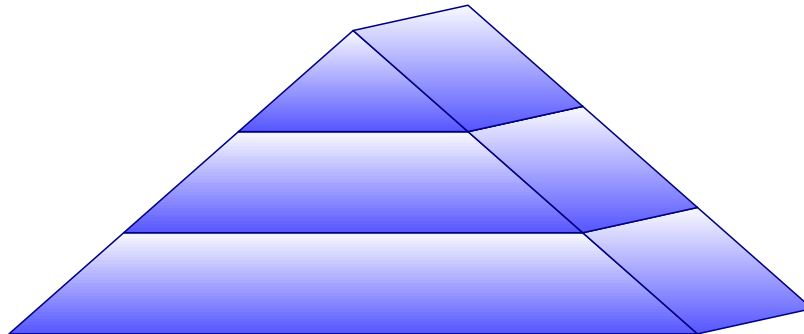
## **Stress Management and Effective Strategies:**

The following are tips on how to maintain a healthier lifestyle and to prepare you to cope with the stress of everyday living.

1. Structure each day to include a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic exercise.
2. Eat well balanced meals, more whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables. Substitute fruits for desserts.
3. Avoid caffeine. The substance may aggravate anxiety, insomnia, nervousness and trembling.
4. Reduce refined sugars. Excess sugars cause frequent fluctuation in blood glucose levels, adding stress to the body's physiological functioning.
5. Reduce alcohol and drugs. These substances may add to headaches and swelling, decrease coping mechanisms and add to depression.
6. Get a least 7 hours of sleep nightly.
7. Spend time each day with at least one relaxation technique - imagery, daydreaming, prayer, yoga or meditation.
8. Take a warm bath or shower.
9. Go for a walk.
10. Get in touch! Hug someone, hold hands, or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to relieve stress.

The following research diagram was brought into our attention by one visiting researcher at Argosy University at Stress Management seminar. The speaker mentioned that these

three factors; exercise, breath deeply and relax muscles would help to minimize the stress in our daily life.



Exce

The stress environment is defined by many health organizations as following equation.

$$\text{Stress} = \text{Pressure} > \text{Resources} (S=P>R) \quad ^3$$

Then what is the best way to resolve this equation? We have to keep the resources at equilibrium point so the P is not exceeding the R.

The maximum resources of Information Technology that an individual uses on average basis in his / her life are a PC, printer, fax machine, sometime scanner and digital camera.

How these resources could be used to ensure it is the cause of comfort rather than stress?

In the Information Technology sector it is possible we are sitting alone for many days and

weeks while working on a special project. Those who are professional and have worked long time in this field, they know what to expect. However, for new comers it could cause incredible amount of isolation due to loneliness, particularly is someone has not been trained in the schools of information systems.

The research at the Swedish University<sup>4</sup> is about having greenery in the neighbourhoods.

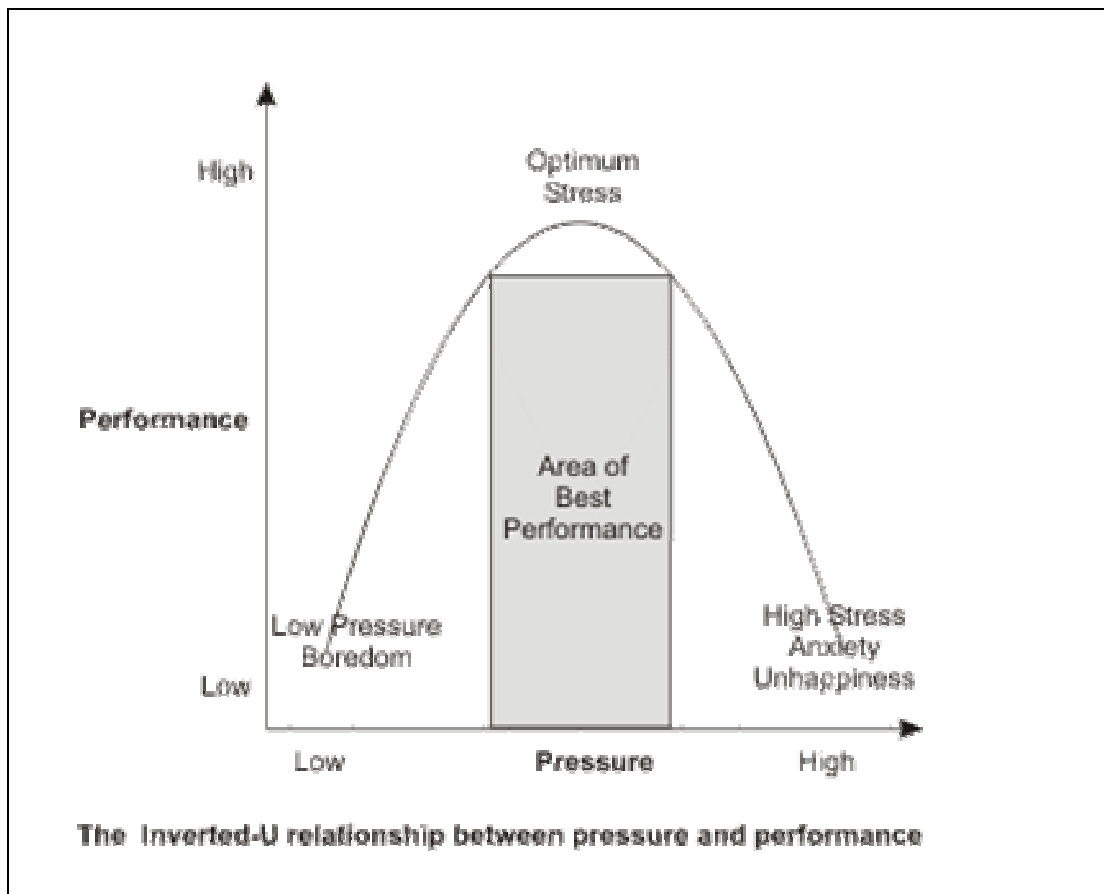
The researcher mentioned that those areas where there is more greenery have less stress

Breathe  
Deeply

Stress Release Pyramid by Ria Tanz K

and the areas with little or no greenery have more stress. In the Information Technology departments there are state of the art building that would provide all the freshness that someone needs to remain clam and determine at the work, however, it would be great idea to develop a culture where employees spend sometime on regular basis outside the computer research areas or computer labs.

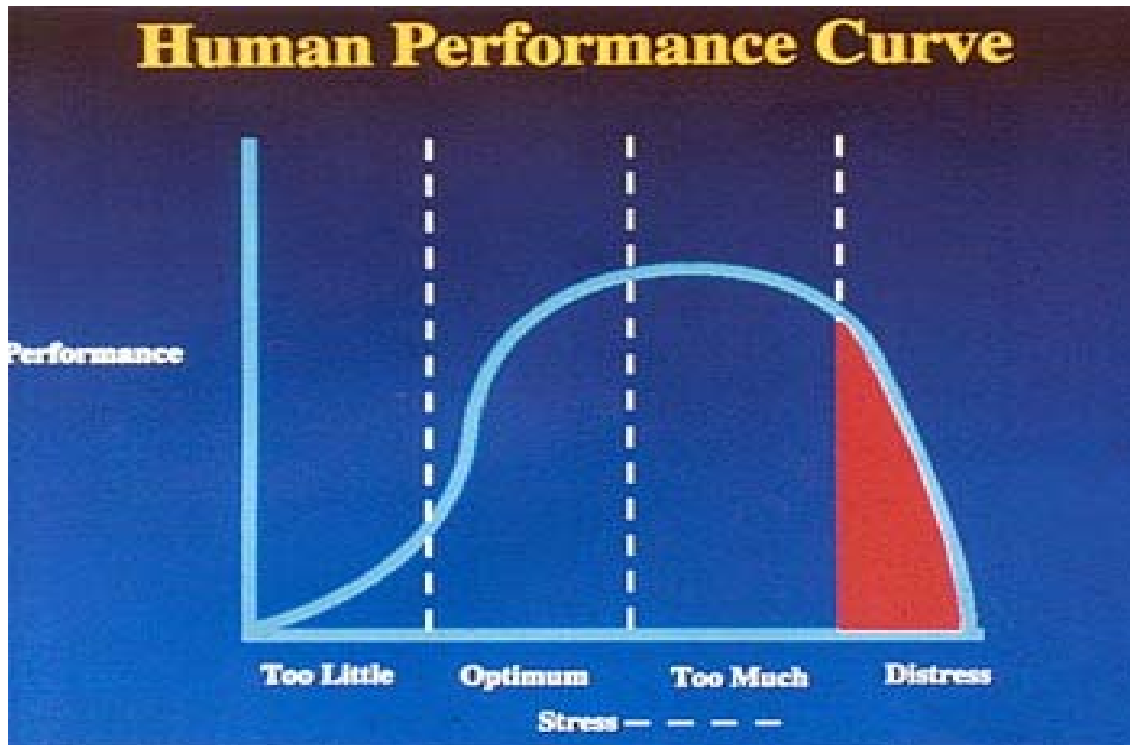
### **Relationship between Performance and Stress<sup>5</sup>**



Source: [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

The above mentioned diagram is adapted from the mindtools.com web site to enhance my learning of the topic. The diagram explains the real world scenario, the link between performance and the stressful pressure. The best moment for someone's life at work is the grey area and the worse is the area on the right of grey area.

The Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland has done extensive research on the stress and human performance. The following diagram adapted from the trinity web site again explains the correlation between the stress and performance of human beings.



Source: Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

This diagram has four areas that need our attention. From left to right stress is too little and as the curve goes up the stress level goes up too. However in the last part of the diagram (painted in red colour) is the high stress area.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> *IT OFFICE OVERLOAD* , Computer Dealer News, 11842369, 01/05/2001, Vol. 17,

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<sup>2</sup> [www.cornell.edu](http://www.cornell.edu); [www.indiana.edu](http://www.indiana.edu)

<sup>3</sup> University of Vermont, [siri.uvm.edu/ppt/stressmanage/stressmanage](http://siri.uvm.edu/ppt/stressmanage/stressmanage)

<sup>4</sup> A Garden at Your Doorstep May Reduce Stress – Private Gardens as Restorative Environments in the City, Ulrike A. Stigsdotter and Patrik Grahn, Department of Landscape Planning Alnarp, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences SLU

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mindtools.com/stress/UnderstandStress/StressPerformance.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.tcd.ie/collegehealthweek/stressmanagement/>