



Business Wellness: STEPS Ministries

Some of Your Most Valuable Employees Are High-Functioning Alcoholics. They may perform well, but they need help—what will your company do?

Companies take pride in their high-functioning employees. As they should. But do you want to know a secret? Sometimes, those people are high-functioning alcoholics as well.

“My strong, strong suspicion is that what makes some people more likely to rise to the top is the same thing that makes them more likely to be addicts.”

(David Linden, Neurobiologist at Johns Hopkins Medical School)

Any company with more than a dozen employees likely has people on their team who are struggling with addiction. Addiction affects 10-15% of the work force, and twice as many people have at-risk behaviors. In fact, more than 75% of those with addiction issues are employed full-time. But what most people don't know is that the attributes of high-functioning workers and leaders align strongly with those of alcoholics, including traits such as:

- Compulsion for control and self-sufficiency
- Obsession on achievement or perfection
- Fixation on ego, entitlement, and pride

“The traits that make a good CEO – risk-taking, strong drive for success, obsession, dedication, novelty-seeking – are precisely what make a ‘good addict.’ (Alice G. Walton, from the article “Why the Brains of High-Powered People May Be More Prone to Addiction”)

Understanding High-Functioning Alcoholics. High-functioning alcoholics are people who appear to function normally despite being addicted to alcohol.

They are often not viewed as alcoholics because they don't fit the stereotype since they have succeeded or over-achieved during their life. There are many millions of high-functioning alcoholics who do a good job at work. But even though they may remain high performing, they are not operating at their best, with research suggesting they are 30% less productive than they could be.



They are still very valuable employees, and they are good people with lives and families. They just have an issue they need to deal with. Their company can help them—or hurt them—in their journey to get better. And the business will benefit—or suffer—from how company executives make that choice.

Addiction is a compulsive behavior, but it is also a disease, and this is widely accepted by the medical community. At most companies, employees with other illnesses are given benefits and assistance in getting well. Doesn't it make sense to do the same with the disease of addiction?

What your company can do:
STEPS Business Wellness provides consulting, speaking, training, and coaching for companies, business groups, and individuals in the areas of addiction prevention, resilience, wellness, and workplace effectiveness. Visit www.StepsBusinessWellness.com or contact Steve Ward at stevecward@lifeimprovementsteps.com.

— Steve C. Ward
 Executive Director, STEPS Business Wellness
 Author of STEPS: A Daily Journey to a Better Life
stevecward@lifeimprovementsteps.com



White Plume Technologies is delighted to support the spread of Good News in our community.
 SERVING BIRMINGHAM SINCE 1999

Digital Healthcare & Revenue Cycle Management



Drive & Measure Performance. White Plume makes it quick & easy. We save our clients time and an average of over \$10K per provider per year with automated revenue cycle software & advanced analytics that work with your existing EHR.

WHITE PLUME

Learn More or Schedule A Demo:
WWW.WHITEPLUME.COM

205-871-3833