Fueling Your Business Performance
By Robert Selders, Jr.

As entrepreneurs, feeding our business often takes priority over feeding ourselves. Today's small business owners and their employees are working longer hours than ever before. Today's small business workforce is also increasingly mobile, with business owners and employees spending more time on the road and on the go. So it's no wonder proper nutrition takes a backseat to a busy schedule.

What we put into our bodies, however, has a direct effect on our business output. The typical eating routine of the busy entrepreneur and employee is less than ideal. Skipped meals, fast-food lunches, grab-and-go vending machine snacks, and cocktail-laden business dinners may seem unavoidable in our fast-paced business world. But rather than saving you time, this business diet is filled with empty calories, processed ingredients, and harmful toxins that have a serious impact on energy levels, mood, productivity, and overall health.

Adopting healthy nutrition habits, on the other hand, can mean a tremendous boost for business. Your body needs the proper fuel to perform your daily business tasks and compete effectively. A diet comprised of whole foods, quality sources of protein, good fats, nutrient-dense vegetables and fruits translates into higher energy levels, more even-keel moods, sharper mental acuity and focus, clearer skin and more attractive appearance, reduced gut problems, controlled blood sugar levels, weight loss, fewer illnesses, less susceptibility to disease, and better long-term health. All of which help you feel and perform better on the job.

Eating healthy is not about crash diets, quick fixes, or fads. It's about making a sustainable lifestyle change. What's more, it's not as difficult to do as you might think. There are many approaches to achieving the right balance. The key is to take smaller steps and grow them as you're able to be more consistent. Listed below are a few habits, that when followed, will help you improve portion control, food choices, and meal timing.

1. Eat slower and stop when you're 80% full – take your time and actually enjoy your food. It takes about 20 minutes for the "fullness" mechanisms to kick in between our brain and belly. When you rush through your meals, it's likely that you'll eat way too much before you brain sends the signal that you're full.
2. Eat protein and nutrient dense vegetables with every meal – consuming protein with every meal helps improve body composition and satiety as well as overall health and performance. Consuming adequate amounts of nutrient dense vegetables not only increases metabolism, but also helps to balance your pH level – which helps reduce your risk of cancer, maintain bone strength, and prevent muscle wasting.
3. Eat starchy carbohydrates AFTER exercise – want to get rid of that stubborn, hard-to-remove body fat? Wait until after you exercise to eat that bowl of pasta, Kaiser Roll, or cup of brown rice. Earn it! No exercise, no carbohydrates (of course tons of vegetables and a few servings of fruit are okay). If you want to gain weight, now that's a different conversation.
4. Eat healthy fats everyday – many people avoid fats altogether; it's far better to balance your intake between saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fats. Doing so improves brain function and mood, enhances reproductive health, and helps you have better skin and eyesight.

Just making a few minor changes to your nutritional habits initially will produce immediate positive results. Build on those minor changes and before long, you'll start noticing a significant change in the way your body and your business performs.

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