

Building Stamina In Your Business

By Robert Selders, Jr.

Every small business owner and their team must have stamina to operate a successful, sustainable business. Without stamina, everything can seem insurmountable – dealing with tight project timelines, small budgets and irate customers can certainly take their toll. With stamina, you are able to confidently endure the highs and lows of life and business.

In a physical sense, stamina can be developed using any type of metabolic conditioning. Metabolic conditioning, more commonly known as “aerobic activity” is often recommended for its health benefits. Jogging, Pilates, step and kick boxing classes, and time spent on the treadmill, stationary bicycle, ski machine and air gliders are all examples of aerobic activities that do a good job of improving cardiovascular and circulatory health, while also assisting in weight loss.

For small business owners, aerobic activity is a great *first* step towards achieving important wellness and fitness goals. However, if you want to go beyond just being healthy, and are aiming for true fitness and stamina that lasts, you will need more. Specifically, you will need to integrate anaerobic activity into your fitness plan.

Anaerobic activity refers to exercises that are usually intense, and performed in short bursts. Examples of anaerobic activity include interval training, weightlifting, all types of sprints (running, biking, etc.), jumping rope, hill climbing and even isometrics.

Why do you need anaerobic **AND** aerobic activity? Every movement we make requires energy. Three metabolic pathways in our bodies provide that energy - they are the (1) phosphagen, (2) glycolytic, and (3) oxidative pathways. The phosphagen and glycolytic pathways are anaerobic. They depend upon the body’s ability to create energy from the naturally occurring chemicals found in our body, instead of from oxygen. This differs from the oxidative pathway, which is aerobic, and requires oxygen to create energy. Oxygen is needed because it breaks down glucose, which, in turn, creates energy.

All three pathways are essential to achieving total fitness and building stamina. If you were to focus on only one or two of these pathways, at the exclusion of the other, it would prove detrimental to your fitness goals. Similarly, if small business owners and their employees focus on only one aspect of the business, at the exclusion of others -- for example, focusing on marketing and ignoring sales and retention -- their business would eventually meet its demise.

Anaerobic and aerobic activities are essential components of proper conditioning, even though they share some of the same potential benefits. Both effectively improve cardiovascular function and decrease body fat. In fact, anaerobic activity can actually burn more energy (calories) than aerobic. Researchers have found that while aerobic activity burns, on average, 25 percent muscle and 75 percent fat, anaerobic exercises burns 100 percent fat. Stated more succinctly, anaerobic exercise can burn, on average, between five and seven times more calories than aerobic exercise.

Now, before you trade in your treadmill for a set of dumbbells or track shoes, remember, your body needs both. Anaerobic exercise helps you to preserve and build muscle and bone density, while dramatically improving your overall power, speed, and strength; and aerobic exercise improves your cardiovascular and circulatory health. Effectively combining the two creates the perfect synergy and provides the greatest fitness benefits.

An effective way to combine both of these components is through interval training. Through a properly structured interval training program, business owners and their employees will enjoy varied training that emphasize anaerobic activity, which coincidentally also develops a very high level of aerobic fitness without the usual downside of muscle loss. By incorporating the right level of endurance work in an interval training program, you will gain tremendous cardiovascular benefits without experiencing any of the loss of strength, speed, and power – all of which gives your business and your body the ability to build the stamina necessary for longevity and success.

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