



A Generational Approach To Anxiety

by [Steve Brown](#)

Pet owners with anxious dogs and cats are always on the prowl for solutions to stop compulsive behavior. Some have had luck with a product called the ThunderShirt (essentially a jacket that swaddles your pet). Applying gentle, constant pressure on the pet's torso has a calming effect on many animals and may be a solution if your cat is excessively grooming itself or your dog spends much of his time cowering under your coffee table when thunder storms rumble in the distance.

Humans too suffer from anxiety and the impact in the workforce is often overlooked (even though anxiety reportedly affects some 40mm adults). Consider that there is a large cost associated with treating health-related issues that arise as a result of anxiety, as people with anxiety are more likely to use health care services. Studies also find that anxious employees tend to miss more work, underperform, have tense inter-office relationships and are more likely to be issued either verbal or written warnings as a result of their behaviors.

Employers including banks have been under more pressure in recent times to confront stress and anxiety among their employees. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 72% of people with daily anxiety report it interferes with their lives, but only 9% of people receive formal diagnosis and treatment.

Given the prevalence of anxiety issues in the workplace, the topic is not nearly as taboo as it once was for banks. As such, a considerable number of financial institutions have introduced programs designed to detect and prevent problems from spilling over into work.

As you're developing or tweaking these important programs, you might want to take note of how generational differences may also come into play. For instance, anxiety levels tend to be higher for younger employees than for older ones, according to a recent white paper "The Impact of Anxiety on Different Generations of Employees" from workplace-services firm Bensinger, DuPont & Associates. Roughly 30% of Millennials using the firm's employee assistance program (EAP) services reported experiencing anxiety, compared with 26% of Gen Xers and 25% of Baby Boomers.

Anxiety can present itself in the workforce in any number of ways and the job impact appears to vary with age. Millennials, for instance, tend to miss more work than older employees, while Boomers tend to have more issues with relationships and disciplinary action, according to the white paper.

Banks can focus on training personnel to recognize the hidden signs and symptoms of anxiety including apathy, negativism, low morale, boredom, irritability, fatigue and repeated absenteeism. Banks also need to continue letting their staffers know that employee assistance programs are available, confidential and that there is no stigma attached to participating.

Additionally, if you haven't already done so, consider strategies for dealing with different generations of employees that experience anxiety at work. For instance, you might run separate age-based workshops on coping with stress in the workplace. Banks could also develop a set of best practices that can be fine-tuned for different generations of employees.

Anxiety in the workplace is a real problem that requires tailored solutions. After all, not every dog or cat responds positively to the ThunderShirt and similarly, no one-size fits all solution will take care of anxiety among all employees in your bank. Keep taking steps though to make progress.

BANK NEWS

M&A Activity

1) Parkway Bank and Trust Co (\$2.2B, IL) will acquire Park Federal Savings Bank (\$156mm, IL) for an undisclosed sum. 2) Baylake Bank (\$1.0B, WI) will acquire Union State Bank (\$91mm, WI) for \$9.7mm in cash and stock.

Branch Activity

1) Hanmi Bank (\$4.2B, CA) said it will close 4 branches (3 IL, 1 VA) as it seeks to reduce expenses and enhances efficiencies going forward. 2) Union Bank & Trust (\$7.3B, VA) will close 7 branches in VA that are inside grocery stores, in an effort to improve efficiencies. 3) KeyBank (\$92B, OH) will close 1 branch in AK.

M&A Flow

SNL Financial reports that as of April 30, there had been 88 M&A deal announcements in the banking sector (vs. 81 at the same time last year) for a median price-to-tangible book ratio of 142.82% (vs. 137.96% at the same time last year).

Loan Reserves

Fed research finds the allowance for loan and lease losses to loans for banks nationwide (\$1B to \$50B) was the following at the end of 2014: construction & land development (1.9%); consumer (2.4%); C&I (1.4%); and single family residential real estate (1.0%).

SBA Expansion

The SBA said it will expand its online lending platform known as LINC to all of its lenders nationwide. LINC launched as a pilot program in Feb and allows small businesses to fill out an online form to get a loan. Lenders then have 48 hours to respond to borrowers.

Risk Focus

Fed research flags the following areas as having the highest areas of concern: BSA/AML (indicates policies, procedures and processes have not always kept pace with vulnerability to money laundering, bulk cash smuggling, virtual currencies and marijuana related businesses). Areas tagged as "elevated" include: credit quality of loan growth; lengthening of asset maturities; capital plans and stress testing; and information/cyber security.

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