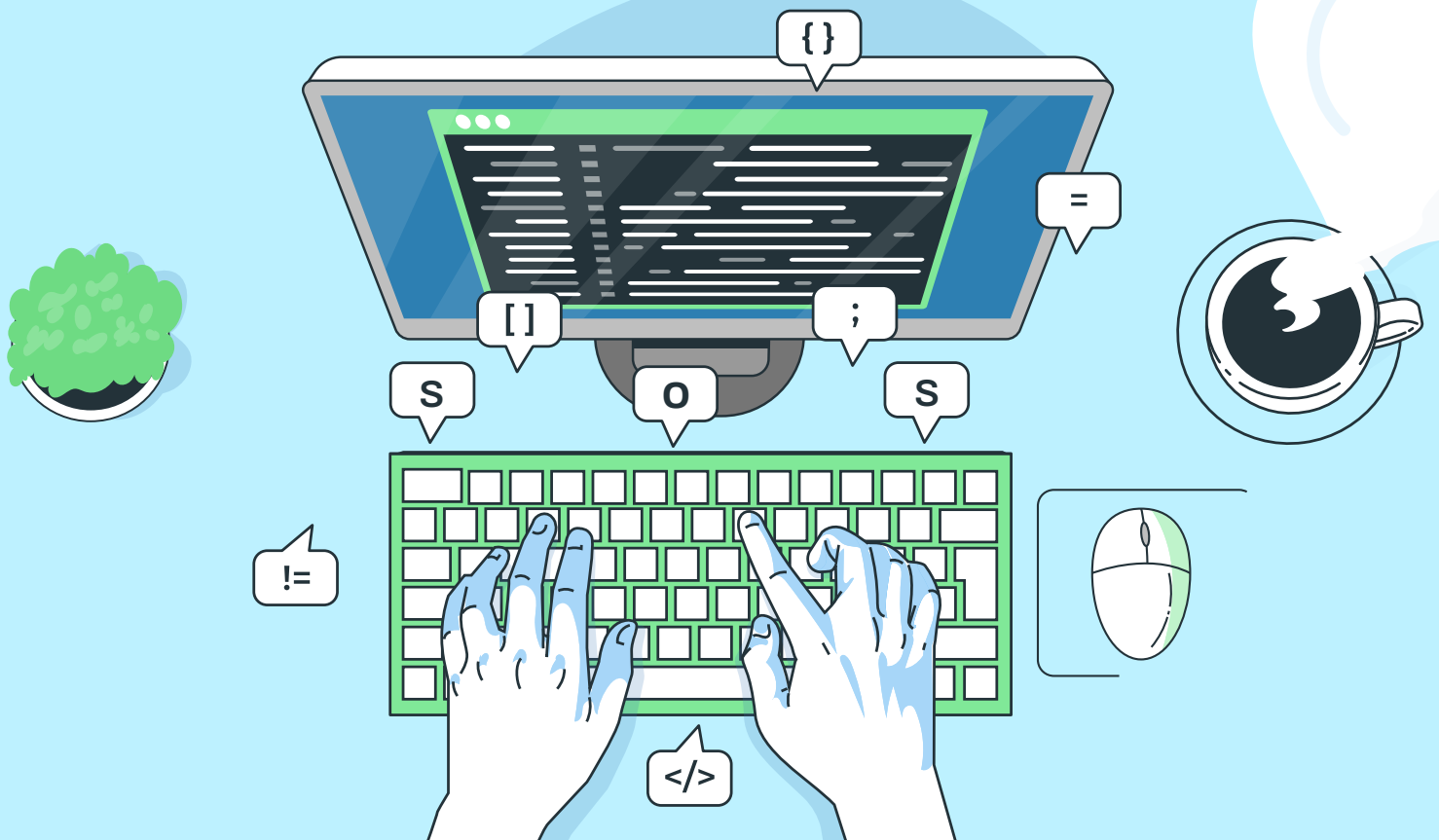




Burying the Burnout

Decoding the Health Challenges
of India's Tech Geniuses





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Burnout

buhn-awt • *noun*

A state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress



43% Indian Techies Experience Health Concerns Stemming From Work

India stands at the forefront of global tech innovation, with cities like Bengaluru earning the title of one of the world's top ten Silicon Valleys. Within these bustling tech hubs lies a vast population of professionals, driven by unparalleled motivation, diligence, and unwavering determination.

Yet, behind the veil of success and innovation, a darker reality looms. The very traits that define these individuals —talented, hardworking, and resilient— often lead them down a path of excessive workload, triggering a string of stress, anxiety, and even depression.

Onsurity is India's first monthly subscription-based employee healthcare benefits platform tailored for SMEs and startups in India. Recognising the critical challenges confronting the IT/ITES sector, Onsurity has joined forces with the Knowledge Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on a vital mission: to highlight these challenges through a comprehensive study.

The objective of this study extends far beyond merely shedding light on the struggles faced by tech professionals. Instead, the endeavour is to ignite collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing the holistic well-being of this indispensable workforce.

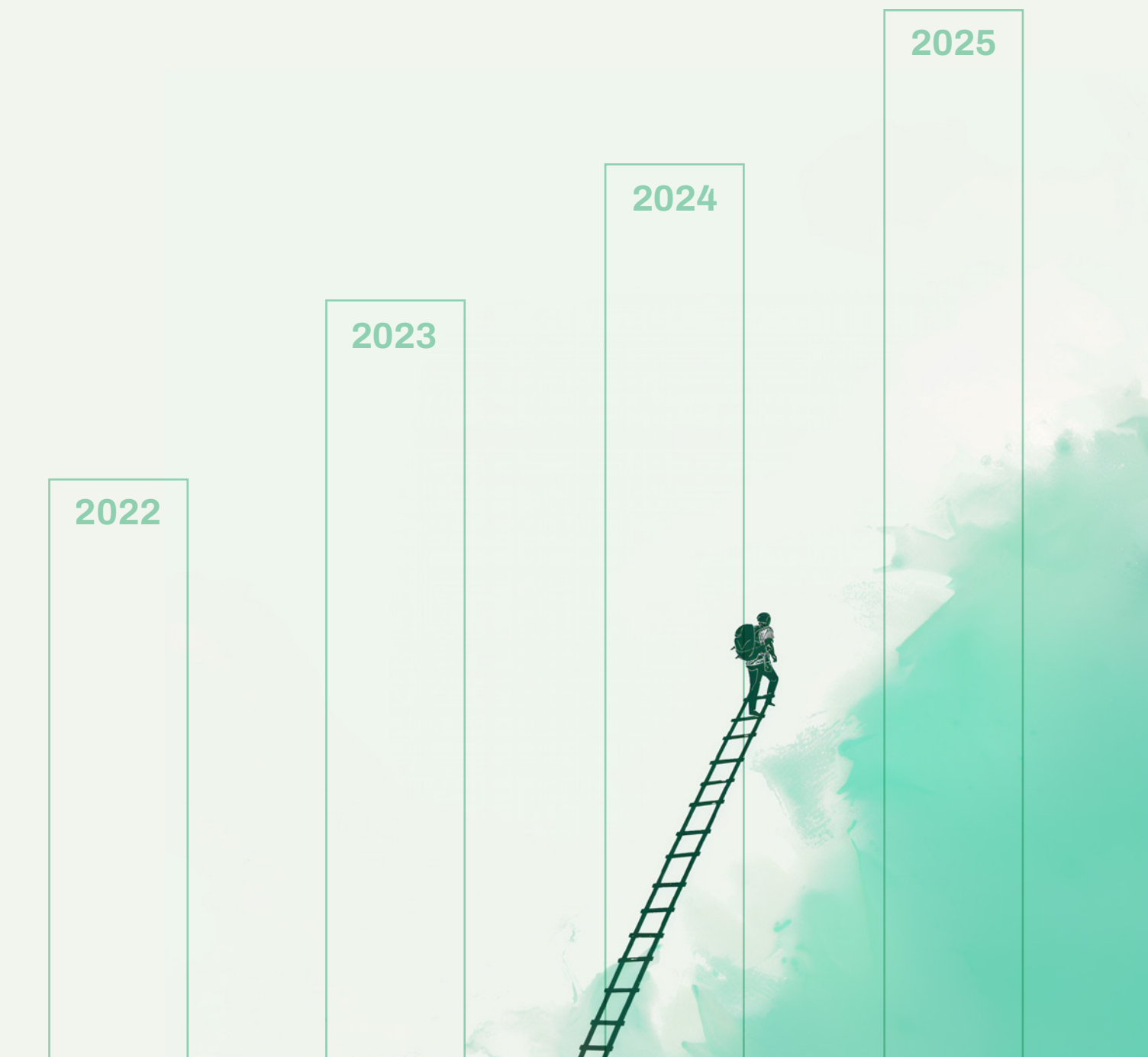




Did you know?

The Indian Government has set a goal of making technology 20–25% of the country's GDP by 2025.

This makes it imperative for tech-led companies to make employee well-being their key focus to ensure the workforce is ready for the big leap.





India's Innovation Engine and the Price of Neglect

The world's dependence on Indian tech talent is indisputable, with India serving as a powerhouse of innovation and technological advancement. From pioneering startups to established multinational corporations, Indian tech professionals play a pivotal role in shaping the global landscape of innovation.

According to a report by NASSCOM, India's IT industry alone contributed around 8% to the country's GDP in 2020, with exports reaching over \$150 billion. This staggering contribution underscores the significant role Indian tech talent plays on the world stage. However, this dependence is not unilateral; it's symbiotic.

The innovative products and solutions crafted by Indian tech professionals have transcended borders, enriching lives and simplifying human experiences worldwide. Neglecting the well-being of these professionals risks stunting this progress. As stress, burnout, and mental health issues become increasingly prevalent in the tech industry, there's a real danger of squandering our full potential. Without prioritising the well-being of tech professionals, we risk not only their health and happiness but also hindering the very innovation that drives human advancement.

Onsurity and KCCI undertook a survey involving over 300 techies across India, aiming to comprehend their interplay between work and well-being.

The survey was conducted pan-India in cities including Delhi, Bangalore, Kochi, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata. Among our respondents were Software Developers, Web and App Developers, Data Analysts, Data Scientists, UI/UX designers etc.

Age Group

25-30 70%	31-35 19%	>35 11%
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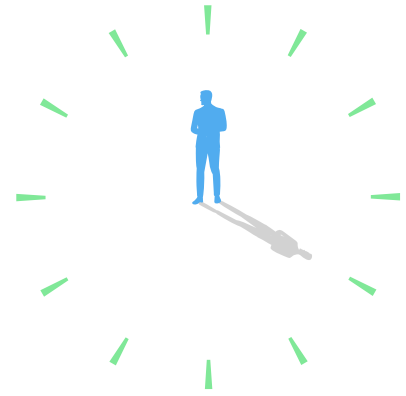
Gender

Male 79%	Female 21%
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The findings provide an insightful window into the concerns of India's tech professionals. Additionally, we engaged with both seasoned tech veterans and early-career professionals to gain a comprehensive understanding of the measures that companies and individuals can adopt to safeguard their well-being amidst the demands of work.



Over 50% Techies Devote More Than 9 Hours to Work Daily



According to data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Indians rank among the world's most industrious workers, dedicating an average of 47.7 hours per week, per employed individual as of 2023. What's even more striking is that when compared against the top ten largest economies globally, India emerges as the leader with the longest average workweek.

In line with our findings, it's alarming that over **50% of tech professionals in India are clocking an average of 52.5 hours every week**, surpassing the overall national average. Many tech roles in India are inherently demanding, often necessitating a predominantly sedentary lifestyle. Collectively, these factors contribute to a detrimental impact on the well-being of these individuals.

According to the *WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury* released in 2021, a staggering 488 million individuals worldwide endure long working hours. Even more alarming is the revelation that over 745,000 people lost their lives in 2016 due to heart disease and stroke linked to

working more than 55 hours per week. These statistics firmly establish long working hours as one of the most significant occupational health hazards of our time.

In a curious juxtaposition, the founder of an Indian multinational IT company proposed a 70-hour work week, equating to 14 hours of work per day in a standard 5-day work week. Such a proposition begs the question: **what implications might this relentless schedule hold for one's health and well-being?**

47 hours?

That's not enough!



What's Making Techies Work Overtime?

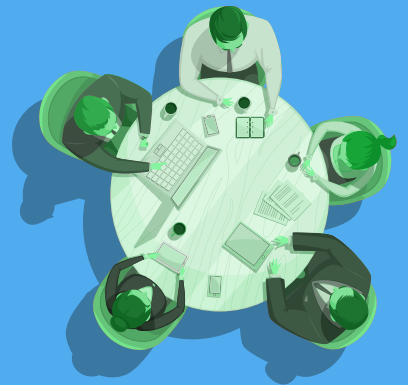


Unrealistic timelines and last-minute changes

Dissatisfaction with initial iterations of work completed



Pressure from management



Excessive meetings

Perceived career advancement opportunities tied to working long hours



Client priorities taking precedence



Commitment to surpassing expectations



A company culture that values and rewards overwork



How much time are techies spending at work?

5–8 Hours

47%

9–12 Hours

51%

12+ Hours

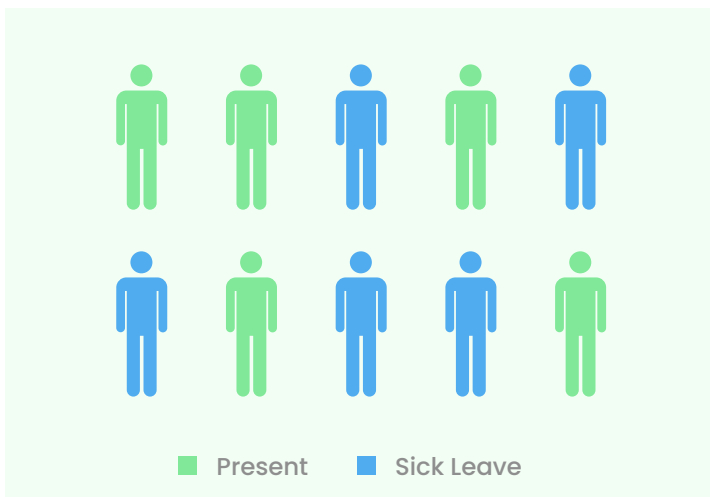
2%



Over 5 out of 10 Techies Report Physical Stress

While physical stress is a common issue across various professions, **a staggering 55% of tech professionals have voiced that working late hours significantly impacts their health.** Among their top concerns are acidity, gut problems, back and neck pain, erratic sleep cycles, muscle stiffness, eyesight-related issues, weight gain, and intense headaches.

It's not only their physical well-being that's under siege. Close to **45% of tech professionals have disclosed that their mental health is taking a hit.** Stress, anxiety, and depression are chipping away at their well-being, leaving them struggling to cope.



Intense Headaches



Muscle Stiffness



Fatigue



Insomnia





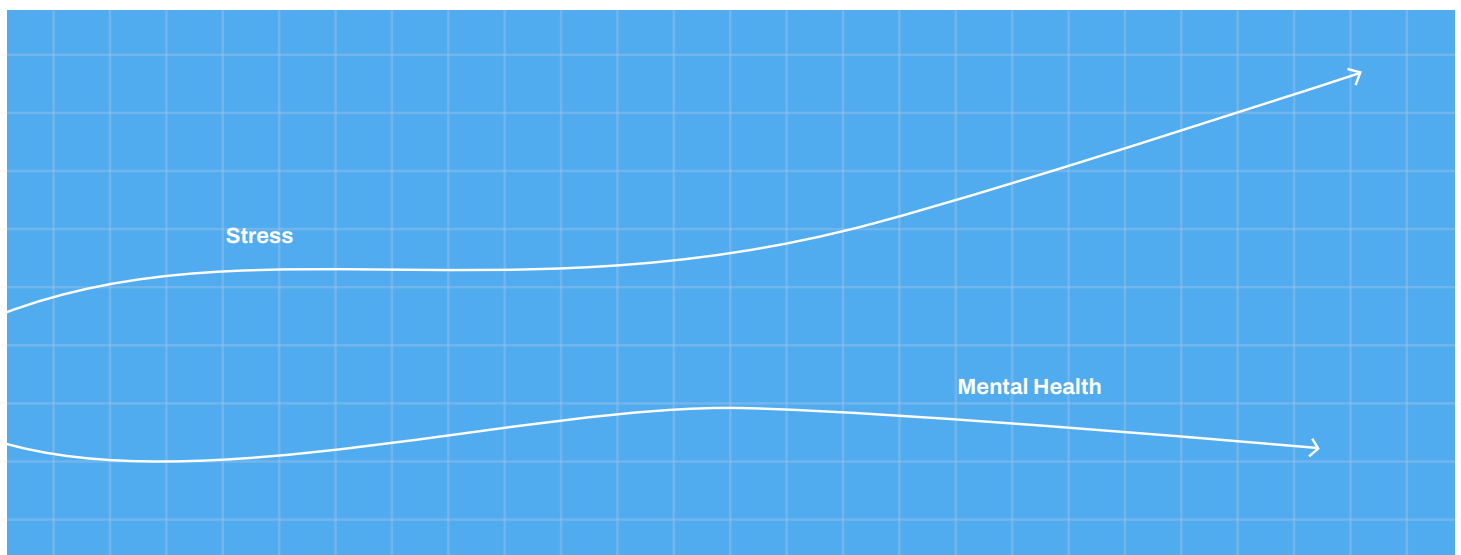
Stress and Depression Take Toll on Nearly 45% Techies



In an era marked by societal shifts that prioritise work and livelihood, human interactions have dwindled. As expectations soar, mental health bears the brunt, with close to half of respondents admitting to succumbing to stress, anxiety, and depression due to work-related pressures.

Despite this escalating concern, the response from companies seems somewhat inadequate. While many now offer healthcare benefits to aid employees in covering healthcare costs, the nature of these benefits

often fall short. Health insurance, commonly touted as a perk to attract talent, may not align with the evolving needs of today's workforce or adequately address the impacts of work-related stressors on overall health and wellness. Even when employers go beyond offering mere insurance, there remains a pervasive lack of awareness regarding the full spectrum of healthcare benefits available to employees.





Work Worsens Sleep for 26% of Tech Professionals


The impact of disrupted sleep patterns on overall health cannot be overstated, especially for individuals in the tech industry who often face demanding work schedules and high-pressure environments. Our survey found that **over 26% of tech professionals face exacerbated sleep patterns, with over 51% of them sleeping an average of 5.5 to 6 hours a day.**

Lack of adequate sleep can lead to a myriad of health issues, both physical and mental. Physically, it weakens the immune system, increasing susceptibility to illness and infections. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to an elevated risk of cardiovascular

diseases, diabetes, obesity, and even certain types of cancer. Moreover, it can impair cognitive function, memory, and decision-making abilities, which are crucial for tech professionals who often deal with complex problem-solving tasks.

Furthermore, sleep deprivation can exacerbate mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety, and depression, creating a vicious cycle where poor sleep leads to heightened stress levels, which in turn disrupts sleep even further. This can significantly impact productivity at work, creativity, and overall well-being, ultimately diminishing the quality of life for tech professionals.



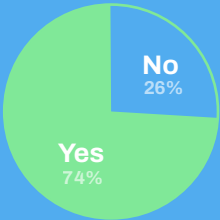
<div>Internal Website Way forward</div> <div>5:00 PM</div>	<div>Cancelled Wedding Anniversary</div> <div>5:30 PM</div>	<div>New Product: Go Live Discussion</div> <div>6:00 PM</div>	<div>26 SAT</div>	<div>External: Client Catchup</div> <div>1:00 PM</div>	<div>DevOps: Urgent Fixes and Way Forward</div> <div>4:00 PM</div>	<div>27 SUN</div> <div></div>
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74% of Techies Sacrifice Family Events Due to Work Demands

This statistic underscores a concerning trend in the industry. Missing out on important family or life events, whether it's a child's birthday, a wedding anniversary, or a family gathering, can have profound consequences on health and well-being. These events provide crucial opportunities for connection, support, and emotional fulfilment, which are essential for maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

When individuals consistently prioritise work over personal and family commitments, it can lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and burnout. Moreover, neglecting these important life events can strain relationships with loved ones, further exacerbating stress and contributing to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

Have you missed out on important family or social events due to work?



<div>Cancelled Batch 2007 Reunion</div> <div>8:00 PM</div>	<div>Internal Stakeholder Catchup</div> <div>7:30 PM</div>	<div>Fixes for New Prod Launch</div> <div>8:30 PM</div>	<div>04 FRI</div>
<div>05 SAT</div>			
<div>Cancelled Maya's 1st Birthday</div> <div>8:00 PM</div>	<div>Urgent: Investor Relations Meet</div> <div>5:45 PM</div>	<div>06 SUN</div> <div></div>	

<div>Team Standup</div> <div>11:45 PM</div>	<div>New Client Onboarding Checklist</div> <div>12:30 PM</div>	<div>D1 2023 Data Analytics</div> <div>3:30 PM</div>	<div>03 THU</div>
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You Cannot Pour from an Empty Cup

Bharat Patel, Chairman and Director at Yudiz Solutions Ltd., is at the forefront of leading a team of over 350 tech enthusiasts, pioneering innovative solutions in the ever-evolving tech landscape. His expertise lies in empowering clients towards a successful tomorrow, navigating through complexities, and fostering a culture of creativity and efficiency within his team.

Can you briefly introduce yourself, including your role and expertise in the tech industry



I am the Chairman and Director at Yudiz Solutions Ltd. My team of 350+ techies are dedicated to pioneering cutting-edge technologies and empowering our clients towards a successful tomorrow. At Yudiz, our focus is on exploring innovative solutions for our clients and helping them navigate through the complexities of the tech landscape.

How can one balance between meeting work deadlines and maintaining personal well-being



Juggling between professional and personal responsibilities is a tough task. It does impact your overall health and well-being. However, there are some strategies that need conscious commitment, and some

that you unconsciously end up implementing in your daily lives.

The first thing you should do as a promoter is, lead by example. Be your team's inspiration, help them understand the importance of an active lifestyle, and guide them to achieve it.

Then, there's utilising the right set of tools for managing time and tasks. A disciplined and less procrastinating schedule is more beneficial. Leverage on tools that allow to break big tasks into smaller manageable ones.

Time management is a fundamental skill, extremely significant. It impacts the way you make decisions, counter setbacks, and your ability to learn.

Bharat Patel





How does working in the tech industry affect one's mental and emotional well-being



People working in a dynamic industry are susceptible to challenges that might affect their mental and emotional state. A demanding environment can trigger stress, anxiety and burnout. Soon, it starts to affect personal and professional life both.

A simple miscommunication in workflow can disrupt the whole process. Such miscommunication happens due to lack of composure. If not mentally prepared, techies feel burned out when they step into competitive atmospheres. While everybody needs to grow, it's important to not get drained out mentally during the learning stages.

Constant innovation overload is something people are less aware of. While trying to consume too much, we end up overwhelming ourselves in that process. Prioritising mental and physical well-being is important if you need to be successful in any industry.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance while working in the tech industry



The answer lies in scheduling.

I remember a Buddhist teaching about finding the balance through not focussing on two separate extremes. It talks about avoiding how we confuse our mind to find balance between work and life. One can prioritise and practice methodologies that let you find the balance.

Schedule 'me time' and 'meeting time' and know the difference between them. Use the resources your organisation provides for maintaining work-life balance.

It also comes down to the organisation. It's essential for them to establish an open communication channel, driving clear understanding between team members and creating an encouraging environment.



Do you have any recommendations for techies struggling to cope with their health and well-being



I want to quote a saying to all the tech workers around the globe – You cannot pour from an empty cup. Easy to say, hard to implement; but a very strong one to think about. To take care of others, to contribute for a greater good or to give your best, you need to take care of yourself first.




Technically Speaking

Opportunity Cost at the Cost of Personal Well-being?

Sid Mandal, Product Architect Lead & Engineering Manager at a top accounting firm, gets candid about his work-life.


Tell us a bit about yourself and your day-to-day responsibilities 

I've been in the tech industry for 19 years now and currently, I am the Product Architect Lead/Engineering Manager in a reputed accounting firm. As an Engineer Manager, I manage a 70-people team in roles and functions such as application developers, data scientists, ML engineers, in aspects such as performance management, matching work stream demands and resource allocation, continuous training and development and so on. As a Product Architect, I'm responsible for technical design and implementation of tools and products that our teams build. The dynamic nature of my role requires overseeing lead in adoption and incorporation of hyper-automation solutions such as the current wave of AI/Gen AI and leveraging its potential for business outcomes.

Could you describe your work environment and the typical demands of your job 

This is tough. Our work environment demands both business creativity and technological

empiricism at the same time. There are continuous context switches, managing up, down, and peers. There are constant moving parts, shifting businesses, and technical expectations. So, for me it's always about making the right trade-off, with a bit of self-interest and large parts of business and team's interests. More specifically, it entails and ties back to the day-to-day responsibilities I mentioned earlier.

How do you manage the balance between meeting work deadlines and maintaining your personal well-being 

I've been sacrificing my personal well-being, terming it as an 'opportunity cost' to rationalise bad life habits. This needs to change, as I'm getting older and age 40 makes



Sid Mandal



felt. I'm not sure exactly how I'll change it. It might entail slowing down or choosing a more trimmed down set of responsibilities, a role change, or may be a predefined set of focus areas or a combination of it all.

How do you perceive the impact of your work on your physical health? Are there any specific challenges or issues you face?

Well, all of my prioritisation has gone for a toss. Long days of sitting and working takes a toll, I can tell, for example, shortness of breath and inability to lose weight.



How does your work affect your mental and emotional well-being?

It's mixed. My intellectual well-being is served by working through tough and sometimes novel challenges. It's an adrenaline rush to crack hard-to-solve technical and business problems. However, it would feel saner if I could decouple more from work, take breaks and holidays. In my position and the kind of risks I manage, it's hard to do so.

What strategies do you employ to mitigate any negative effects on your physical and mental health caused by your work?

I try to take breaks in between work, get a 30–40-minute power nap, eat fruits and drink more water. I try to incorporate swimming, although work schedules get in the way of it.

I pursue competing interests. For example, I follow geopolitics, economics, technology, psychology, and military science intently. I'm heavily invested in the growth and development of my family and friends. I feel perpetually burnt out, stressed and anxious. Reading a lot of philosophy and authors like Dostoevsky, helps me find some meaning and calm.

What support systems or resources are available to you within your workplace to address issues related to well-being?

The usual – a normal number of holidays through the year and a paid medical insurance.

Do you have any recommendations for employers or policymakers to create a more conducive environment for tech workers' well-being?

Well, there should be processes for results and not for the sake of it. Well-being should be a KRA embedded within each role and team, with an accountable leadership. It shouldn't be a segregated responsibility of one well-being tracking team.



Elevating Well-being to Corporate Priority



We reached out to tech professionals to gather insights on how employers could contribute to fostering a better work-life balance. While various suggestions emerged, including timely recognition of achievements, setting boundaries around work hours, and providing flexible work arrangements, two recurring themes surfaced prominently: the desire for regular wellness initiatives and enhanced access to healthcare benefits

beyond basic insurance coverage. These findings emphasise the increasing recognition of holistic well-being support as an essential component of a healthy work environment.

We engaged in conversations with a few tech professionals about what actions companies could take.



Aashish J, Principal Data Scientist at an investment banking firm, said:

“Organisations can bolster employee well-being by fostering flexible work environments. Acknowledging the hurdles of commuting and granting increased flexibility, coupled with provisions for time off, showcase a dedication to the health and welfare of employees.

In times of health and well-being challenges, individuals should feel empowered to seek assistance without hesitation.

Whether reaching out to colleagues, mentors, or professional resources, seeking support is paramount. There should be no doubt in prioritising self-care and well-being, and individuals should proactively seek aid without reservation.

Prioritising mental and physical well-being involves incorporating regular breaks during work, engaging in physical exercise, and practicing mindfulness. These strategies can contribute to a healthier work-life balance and help cope with the negative impacts of a demanding work environment. For example: intentionally switching off from work during non-working hours, engaging in hobbies to recharge, practicing yoga for mental well-being, and taking occasional holidays to alleviate accumulated stress, will go a long way in helping techies find the right balance.”



Ansh Puri, Software Developer and UX Designer at a Bengaluru-based startup, said:

"Of course, I face burnout every now and then. Stress is a common driver in the industry; it comes and goes in cycles. I take days off or go home early at times, if needed. There have been times when I have just avoided going to work only because I did not want to. It's great that my employer understands when I say that I need a break or a new project. If I'm working weekends or extra hours, I am granted compensatory day-offs."

I strongly believe amazing things can happen when work isn't seen as work, but instead seen as play. As someone who's struggled with ADHD, I need different ways to stay motivated. **If employers can think of ways that would excite their employees to come to work, that would be more conducive to everybody's well-being while also maintaining good levels of productivity."**





What Tech-focused Companies Can Do To Prioritise Well-being

The importance of proactive initiatives by the employer to create a conducive environment for employee well-being, cannot be stressed enough. It's crucial to include policies, programmes, and resources to promote well-being, foster a supportive work culture, and provide necessary support systems, given the duty employers have towards employees.

By partnering with an employee health and wellness platform such as Onsurity, companies can initiate additional measures encompassing strategies to promote physical and mental health.



Investment in Workplace Wellness Programs



Allocate resources towards comprehensive wellness programs that include regular health screenings, fitness and mental health sessions, and awareness to promote a culture of preventive healthcare.

Access to Mental Health and Therapeutic Support



Provide easy access to mental health and therapeutic support, equipping employees with the right resources to ensure their mental well-being.

Progressive Insurance Coverages



Offer insurance plans that adapt to the evolving lifestyles of employees, ensuring comprehensive coverage for their diverse needs, on-the-go access, and easy claims processing.



Healthcare Plans that Go Beyond the Basics



Include benefits such as doctor consultations, discounted health check-ups, doorstep delivery of medicines, and discounted dental health consultations and screenings.

Encouragement of Physical Activities



Provide wellness benefits such as discounts at top gyms that offer various workout formats, including Yoga and Zumba, to keep employees energised and healthy.

Regular Nutritional Guidance and Support



Implement programs that offer regular nutritional guidance and support, helping employees make informed dietary choices for a healthier lifestyle.

Employers have a vested interest in the well-being of their employees, as it directly impacts productivity, morale, and overall organisational success. Proactive measures demonstrate a commitment to creating a healthy and sustainable work environment.

By acknowledging the importance of implementing additional measures and efforts, employers can play a significant role in safeguarding the health and well-being of their employees, thereby fostering a positive and productive work environment.



About Onsurity

Founded in February 2020, Onsurity is a Bengaluru-based employee healthcare benefits provider for India's SMEs, start-ups, and enterprises. The company has served 10,00,000+ lives and currently works with 5,000+ companies, including Jupiter Money, CleverTap, Porter, Zepto, Sobha Developers, DBS Bank, Naturals Ice Cream, and Pantaloons, among others.

Onsurity's mission is to make healthcare accessible for India's missing middle. Through holistic healthcare and wellness solutions, the company offers businesses the flexibility of monthly subscriptions for payments, and the convenience of usage through its Super App. Onsurity's broader mission extends beyond safeguarding health; it encompasses a holistic commitment to fortify SME businesses.

Onsurity is backed by International Finance Corporation, Quona Capital, Nexus Venture Partners, Whiteboard Capital, and other technology and impact investors. In October 2022, cricket legend Anil Kumble joined Onsurity as a strategic advisor. The company was recognised as "Dun & Bradstreet Start-up 50 Trailblazer 2023" by D&B India.

Atmanirbhar Suraksha Insurance Private Limited (AS IPL) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Onsurity Technologies Private Limited | IRDAI Corporate Agent Registration Number: CA0836 | Category – Corporate Agent (Composite) | CIN – U74999KA2021PTC143928

About KCCI

KCCI is swiftly emerging as one of India's most rapidly growing apex business organisations and holds the distinction of being the Youngest Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the country. As a not-for-profit entity, KCCI plays a proactive role in India's developmental landscape, serving as a knowledgeable advocate for the country's business and industry sectors.

With operational wings spanning across more than 22 cities in India and presence in 10 countries globally, KCCI's reach is extensive. The organisation conducts a wide array of initiatives throughout the year, both nationally and internationally, often in collaboration with various State Departments and Ministries. Additionally, KCCI serves as a Chamber of Chambers, boasting associations with over 50 chambers and associations nationwide. Through its multifaceted efforts, KCCI is instrumental in fostering growth, collaboration, and innovation within India's business community.





**“We care for
our techies.”**

But, do we?

