

How sleep will change in the future

Chances are you had a dream last night. Mine was about business and rugby. Again! Each night we leave behind our day job and become a movie director. We ride roller coasters between slow wave slumbers and rapid-eye moving (REM) dreamscapes. This year you'll sleep for about 122 days. When you hit 75 years of age, you'll have spent 25 years asleep and have had 136, 875 dreams. Plug and play and you've got a great a home movie.

Sleep is the Bermuda Triangle of science and the El Dorado of enterprise. It's a zone of mystery, magic and power. What if we could capture some of that creative REM energy? Charge it up? Project it? Make it a competitive advantage. Apply it to a greater good? Well we can. We will.

Where, when and how we sleep is crossing a second threshold. The first was over a century ago with Edison's electric light bulb. Thank heavens Thomas was a night owl. If he hadn't required only two hours sleep, who knows, we might still be poking around in the dark. Artificial daylight set the stage for a 24/7 world. With new solid-state technologies for developing rural regions, this is increasingly and affordably so.

Scientists will be dueling through eternity over why and for how long we should sleep. Good luck to them. We do know that too little sleep is bad. Deprivation causes everything from depression, irritability, stress and memory loss to fuzzy logic and slow reactions. It's been linked to disasters ranging from the Exxon Valdez and Three Mile Island to Chernobyl and Challenger. New research from Columbia University says it makes us obese. Hormones apparently... Four hours or less makes you 73% more likely to be obese. Five hours 50%. Six hours 23%.... Help!

Seven to eight hours is par. The dilemma in a hi-tech, flat-out world is that we're getting less and less sleep. Ever more to do, longer commutes, 24-hour stores, flickering lights, e-mail, screenery, night shifts, long-haul flights, and 24/7 work pressure. Some scientists believe we sleep 1.5 hours less than a century ago, causing a sleep-sick society. Today one in three has trouble nodding off or wakes up tired. One in ten suffers from bad insomnia.

We're still *circa dia* in our rhythms, but sleeping at night as a default option is behind us. Paradoxically, that's as bigger opportunity as it is a threat. It's time for new ideas and fresh angles for Peak Performance. We need smart (not drugged up) ways to optimize 24/7 living. So let's start in daylight with the siesta. Thierry Paquot is right. The siesta is an

art of living, a glorious way to decelerate and reclaim strength, spirit and power. Not breaking news to Italy, Spain, Mexico or India. Or China, where the midday snooze is apparently protected by law.

Sanctioning siestas in the workplace is a hot debate. Is the meridian an excuse for sloth *a la* Corinne Maier's "Hello Laziness"? Or a huge opportunity for energizing progress? New British research suggests progress. It found 30% of people have their best ideas in bed compared to 11% at their desk (I had the idea of Lovemarks around 3 am while I was punishing a second bottle of fine French Bordeaux).

Harvard researchers have confirmed that a 15-30 minute midday nap helps re-energize the mind. In the US, lack of sleep costs businesses over a \$100 billion a year in lost productivity, sick leave, medical costs, and property / environmental damage.

Nine-to-five workdays and human sleep patterns simply don't align. For sleeping on the job, I've seen some shockers. It's comical! But we've all been there. In Australia 38% admitted to nodding off during work hours by one survey of 425 workers. A recent online poll of 21000+ Euro workers found 24% had fallen asleep at work and 39% had trouble staying awake there at times. And a poll based on a 1000 interviews found one in five UK workers had slept during office hours.

Work is stressful!! Why outlaw power naps when you can regulate time and place, and plug them into productivity? I say bring it on. An Inspirational Dream is the most powerful force for change in the world. What do Albert Einstein, JFK, Winston Churchill, Thomas Edison and Leonardo de Vinci have in common? All power-nappers. All Inspirational Players with ideas that moved the world.

Snooze is on the rise. Spain (of course) has siesta salons for an after-lunch workers snooze. Many Japanese firms provide a room for a nap, and some smart Anglo-American firms are bypassing stigma and prejudice. The market, as always, will decide and New York will lead. A young friend of mine, Christopher Lindholst, has built MetroNaps in the Empire State Building. Stressed-out New York workers and tourists can now snooze for 20 minutes in a sensuous pod.

Or try the Dream Hotel on Manhattan's West Side. A surreal fantasy lobby. Suites aglow in blue light with 37" plasma TVs, iPods with Bose speakers, cashmere robes, floating LED clocks in mirrors, and hi-tech sleeping masks that signal and project REM dreams. Not excessive. Not fantasy. The future.

Alertness enhancers, from caffeine to modafinil, have their place - definitely in health and transport safety. But turning people into Nexus-6 androids won't do the job. Peak Performance is not about go-pills. It's about optimizing Flow. It's about aligning internal rhythms, signature strengths and external pressures to make the world a better place.

We've all been in Flow. Those transcendental moments when we are "In The Zone." You stop feeling self-conscious. Time stands still. You develop extraordinary awareness, confidence and power. Nothing seems impossible. You feel part of some greater entity. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi works the positive psychology of flow in creativity. Philosopher Daniel Dennett locks it down: "The secret of happiness is to find something bigger than yourself and then to devote your life to it."

Most people spend a fraction of their work lives in flow. Imagine the uplift if the world's most enterprising people, if all of us, could constantly be in Flow. If we could supercharge our creative output? Through the mystery and magic of time regained, we can.

There's huge competitive advantage in enhancing and extending natural sleep. Look at how technology companies now mobilize global R&D teams around the clock. They work the time zones to bring fantastic choice and quality to consumers at breathtaking speed.

For people driven to make a difference – from merchant to mother - quality sleep is a huge issue. The flat bed flying experience across the Atlantic is a glimpse of the future. Virgin's Upper Class is like a flying on a cloud. From limo and massage to "snack and snooze" lunch and a dream sleep. It's the start of a revolution. Sleep enrichment will move into economy. Watch this space. From travel and workplace to store and restaurant, sleep will go mainstream as a commercial offering.

Auto-drive cars and shopping carts. "Napasiums" in the office to revive body and spark mind. Snooze pods floating through buildings and shopping malls. Supermarkets that offer scent-infused naps. Electronic stores that let you drift to their tunes (new Samsung, Sony and Apple Mini stores are now on this track). You'll soon be able to re-charge when your body and your schedule - not some nutty institution's - demands it.

We can't take back our last breath. We can make every breath count. We can calibrate and connect dream with action. We can have a full and creative life - together. Now go get some sleep.

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