

Staff Health Issues

New research from GE shows that almost nine in ten (87%) of SMEs in the UK manufacturing sector currently have no schemes to encourage staff to exercise and eat healthily, and only 47% think that the provision of free health checks helps promote a healthy workplace. Only one in twenty (5%) do the bare minimum, and encourage their employees to take a lunch break and stretch their legs, and less than one in ten have an active scheme in place to encourage healthy living.

The findings, which are based on interviews with the owners and managers of 500 SMEs across the UK, show that more than a third (34%) of businesses in the sector indicated that they lose at least 25 days each year due to employee health issues (compared with a UK average of 30%), with one in ten losing over 100 days. As research from the CBI has revealed that the average cost of absenteeism per employee is £412/year for SMEs, the potential impact on earnings and growth is vast.

John Jenkins, CEO, GE Capital said: *"Against a backdrop of growing pressure on NHS budgets and a need for SMEs to drive economic growth, anything that can be done to encourage investment in promoting a healthier lifestyle has got to make economic sense. Healthy workforces will result in a higher level of productivity whilst minimising any health insurance costs that small firms may have."*

Professor Paul Gately, Carnegie Professor of Exercise and Obesity at Leeds Metropolitan University, added: *"Having a healthier workforce as a result of small firms offering structured support could dramatically reduce their costs, not to mention the benefits that employees themselves will gain. There are many excellent initiatives and schemes that offer workers a chance to gain and maintain a healthy lifestyle and it is important that employers offer such benefits and encourage greater participation."*

It makes Sense to Protect Premises

Despite the latest British Crime Survey, which was released in April, showing that burglaries fell by 12 per cent in 2009, robberies at business properties are continuing to increase according to Home Office statisticians.

Workplace equipment provider Slingsby has seen sales of security related products increase during the economic downturn but says too many businesses still don't take adequate precautions when it comes to protecting their premises. Lee Wright explains: *"A lot of businesses are seen as easy targets by burglars and it is thought that a lot of business crime goes unreported so the picture could actually be much worse than we think. We advise lots of businesses every week about security precautions and in many cases these can be very cost effective. Simply displaying signs highlighting that security measures are in place and improving lighting around premises helps to deter burglars. Businesses can also work in partnership with neighbours to tackle crime and share information about suspicious activity. It is also important to make sure quick getaways are made difficult by adding barriers or extra doors, and to remove any blind-spots where thieves can hide without being seen by staff or CCTV cameras."*

Follow us on **twitter**
www.twitter.com/MaintOnLine



New UK Manager is an Infrared Veteran

Leading infrared technology specialist, FLIR, has created the new post of UK Manager and filled it with someone who really needs no introduction to the industry. The man in question is Andy Baker, who was previously the UK Sales and Marketing Manager for Inframetrics, a company that developed the world's first portable uncooled thermal imaging camera and was subsequently bought by FLIR. Initially Andy chose a regional sales role with the newly-expanded FLIR but in recent years has been the company's Distribution Manager. He has just completed 20 years in the industry.

Now that FLIR has chosen distributor sales channels for its entire range of cameras for plant maintenance and building inspection, Andy was the prime candidate for the job. *"Distribution is a natural progression for us,"* Andy explains. *"We are no longer in a market dominated by cameras costing £30-50,000. Infrared is now a volume commodity that is best served by multiple sales channel and since the potential for infrared remains huge, it's great to be at the forefront of its development."*