

## CASE STUDY

# SONY®

Our CEO, Tony Schwartz first met with Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) co-CEOs, Michael Lynton and Amy Pascal, in the summer of 2007. Pascal and Lynton saw the work of The Energy Project as a way to bring to life their vision of making Sony the most desirable studio to work for and of building a culture of high engagement. Initially, Tony worked with Lynton and Pascal and their team of 17 direct reports. The initial focus was on how they managed their own energy individually, and as an intact team. This senior group found our curriculum sufficiently valuable that they asked to bring it to the top 500 executives, all vice president or above.

### Approach

We created a three-day version of A New Way of Working that included a “renewal” day that provided participants with specific techniques to improve the quality, quantity and focus of their energy. This day featured individual consults with a nutritionist, exercise physiologist and massage therapist as well as group circuit training, yoga, and meditation. Group coaching was offered during the 3 day sessions and then on twice more two and four weeks after the end of the session. The purpose of the coaching was to support the participants in successfully launching and sustaining the rituals they built once they had returned to the challenges of their daily life. Tony continued to work with Pascal and Lynton’s senior team on a quarterly basis throughout 2008 to help them model the behaviors they learned and to drive the work down through their own teams.

### Results

The participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. To an overwhelming degree, participants reported that the program provided them with specific tools and techniques to sustain their performance. Some 97% of the 500 participants reported they successfully incorporated rituals into their day that helped them to sustain higher energy levels. Nearly 99% of the participants indicated that what they learned from A New Way of Working would make them better able to manage the demands at work. Almost 98% felt they would be more focused and productive, and 99% felt that what they learned would increase their sense of positive engagement at work. The follow up coaching offered by The Energy Project played a great part in supporting the leaders in identifying, implementing and ritualizing behaviors that served them well as individuals and as leaders, across all four dimensions. While voluntary, the attendance rate was consistently high and 94% of the participants stated the coaching was valuable and time well spent.

“There’s no question that this investment we’ve made in our employees has energized and motivated them and helped us as a company to stay strong in the midst of very tough times in our industry.”

**Amy Pascal, Co-Chairman,  
Sony Pictures Entertainment**

## CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

The majority of the leaders shared their experiences and the key takeaways with their team after going through the curriculum, many changes within their divisions to improve overall energy management. As a result of their experience with the curriculum, some leaders empowered their teams to take breaks during the day, including mid-day workouts at the new onsite gym Sony recently built. Many leaders intentionally altered the length of meetings from 2–3 hours to no longer than 90 minutes in order to optimize absorbed focus and attention among attendees. Some leaders created a “no email Friday” to encourage more face-to-face communication and others implemented an “8 to 8” rule under which people are not expected to respond to emails received between 8 pm and 8 am. This gave permission to their teams to disconnect from work and email in the evenings rather than encouraging people to work late into the night.

The curriculum was so well received that Pascal and Lynton decided to offer it to the remaining domestic employees and 150 international executives. To make this possible financially we conducted a train the trainer program with members of Sony’s Management and Organizational Development division. Ultimately, we certified 12 trainers to deliver a two day and one day version of the curriculum.

SPE had continued to develop various initiatives to create a new kind of workplace. Examples of their employee-focused efforts include healthier vending machine snacks; nutritional seminars; increased physical activity options through the onsite gymnasium; and opportunities available to volunteer in the community through an organizationally sponsored program.

