

RECOVERY BETWEEN MOMENTS

Version 2.0

From Mindfulness
to Neurowellness

An Executive White Paper on
Recovery Between Moments in
Hospitality, Wellness and Leadership

Ian Matthews | Zenbok Founder
& Neurowellness Advisor

Former British Army Foreman of Signals
Cisco Systems Training Programme Manager
Corporate Mindfulness & Wellbeing Coach
Integrative Wellness Specialist



MINUTE TO RESET



RETURN TO YOU



READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

02. Executive Summary

Hospitality, wellness and leadership sectors continue to invest heavily in helping people perform through technology, training, wellbeing initiatives and sophisticated devices. On the surface, this appears to be a success story. Yet a different picture of reality lives beneath the investment. Recent workplace wellbeing research indicates that approximately *76% of employees report high levels of stress*, while 92% receive little support integrated into the workflow. Meanwhile,

the \$6.8 trillion global wellness economy is forecast to approach \$10 trillion by 2029.

The contradiction is difficult to ignore. As investment in wellbeing continues to increase, so does overwhelm. Our people are struggling to access clarity, perspective and good judgement under pressure.

Zenbok believes the next competitive advantage for hospitality lies in operationalising neurowellness through Recovery Capability. Increasingly, organisations are recognising this as more than a wellbeing issue - it is a performance, retention, leadership and guest experience issue.

Over twenty years working in hospitality and wellness environments - the challenge was rarely capability. More often I saw that *people lost access to the qualities that made them effective in the first place*. In high demand environments, performance is most often lost through the accumulation of pressure, distraction and carryover between moments. Yet recovery is usually prescribed *after* work, or once a crisis has passed. Maybe an important part of human sustainability is

recovery inside the work.

This paper explores why Recovery Capability is fast emerging as a strategic organisational capability - **connecting guest experience, practitioner performance and operational excellence.**

03. The Evolution of Mindfulness

Like many people working in wellbeing, my early focus was on **mindfulness based stress reduction**. I was fascinated by the clear relationship between mental state and behaviour, particularly why capable people often seemed to lose access to their best qualities when pressure increased. The results were good, but I wanted more.

I still saw intelligent leaders lose perspective under high demand. Experienced managers become reactive. Creative teams narrowed their thinking. People who possessed the knowledge, experience and judgement required to perform well would often struggle to access those qualities when *carryover stress* started to accumulate.

I developed a new approach, through the lens of practical mindfulness and nervous system regulation. The goal was to first ground people in presence, to be less distracted, and more capable of responding, not reacting to the difficult moments. The new results were significant.

People experienced greater clarity. Stress reduced. Communication improved. Creativity returned. Teams became more engaged. Leaders felt calmer, more focused and more capable of navigating complexity. I viewed these outcomes as evidence that the approach was working. I realised mindfulness and nervous system regulation was working, but not in the way I had originally assumed. Beyond reducing stress, they helped recover access to qualities that pressure had obscured.

People had regained access to themselves.

My years as a radio engineer helped me realise that when they *reset* themselves in the moment using my short recovery tools - the mental chatter (noise) had reduced and their signal (capability) reappeared. It seemed to me that their capabilities had become obscured by the pressure, distraction and accumulated carryover of stress. I began to ask - *What if the real opportunity was through helping people recover access to themselves, and deliver under pressure more consistently?*

04. The Same Pattern. Everywhere.

Opportunities soon emerged across very different environments.

I began to work with corporate leadership teams across Asia and internationally. I observed real people who were navigating increasing levels of uncertainty, complexity and pressure. I also worked with hospitality organisations seeking ways to support teams operating in demanding service environments. I spent a decade working with wellness organisations interested in stress reduction and performance enhancement. In private I helped senior leaders responsible for large teams, high budgets and complex challenges - to reset and recover.

Despite all of the differences between these environments, the same pattern kept appearing at the same level of the human organism:

People carried one stressful moment into the next.

For example: a difficult guest interaction affecting the next one. Or an unresolved conversation which influenced the next meeting. Often, a stressful decision lingered long after the decision had been made.

The event itself was over. The residue remained.

The more I observed this phenomenon, the more significant it appeared. Pressure was certainly a factor, but what appeared more important was what happened after pressure occurred. Some people recovered quickly. Others did not. In fact they became burdened by it.

Those who recovered quickly regained access to clarity, perspective, emotional regulation and effective decision-making. Those who did not recover carried the residue of one experience into the next, often creating a compounding effect that became increasingly difficult to interrupt. This affected their performance, and that of the people around them. This observation heavily influenced my approach.

05. The New Challenge

Looking back, my work and observations describe neurowellness years before the industry had a name for it. Today I´m drawn to the new reality of wellness tourism expanding rapidly. Luxury hospitality brands investing heavily in wellness offerings and neurotechnology. Longevity is a major industry focus. Wellness workshops outside the work, sleep optimisation, and sensory experiences attract significant attention. *These developments are both necessary and encouraging.*

- *Yet, why does attrition and overwhelm in our people continue to rise, despite unprecedented investment in traditional wellness training interventions?*
- *Why are so many leaders, managers and frontline teams still struggling despite having access to more data, and more devices than ever before?*
- *Why is recovery capability so overlooked, when it may represent one of the most practical pathways to better mental wellness, stronger leadership performance, improved guest experience and human performance?*

The answer lies in where the usual wellness interventions take place.

Much of the wellbeing industry focuses on performance *before work, after work or away from work*. All of these have value, yet the most intense, accumulated pressure rarely occurs outside of the work.

Pressure occurs inside operations.

Pressure occurs during guest interactions.

Pressure occurs during leadership decisions.

Increasingly, the challenge facing organisations is not simply wellbeing, but human sustainability: helping people remain healthy, effective and engaged in environments where pressure has become a constant rather than an exception. Our approach *helps people to reset and regain flow inside everyday work*. Your people learn to recover access to capabilities that the pressure had temporarily obscured.

We call it the **recovery between moments**. Often overlooked, it is one of the most important opportunities for change. It is available today.

o 6. Recovery Capability Is A Business Capability

The business implications of sustainable recovery are substantial.

Our research (listed on page 10 of this white paper) consistently demonstrates that stress-related absenteeism, presenteeism, disengagement, turnover and burnout carry significant costs.

Gallup estimates that low engagement alone costs the global economy trillions of dollars annually. GWI repeatedly shows corporates are facing increasing challenges associated with staff turnover, guest experience, and operational sustainability.

This represents one of the least visible, yet potentially most expensive challenges facing modern organisations. Because when the recovery capability is absent, the consequences rarely appear as dramatic single events. Instead, they emerge gradually. They accumulate.

This begins to show up as:

- A frustrated employee negatively influencing the guest arrival.
- Increased conflict on the floor affecting team morale.
- Accumulated fatigue reducing discretionary effort.
- Toxic relationships in the boardroom.
- Poor psychological safety.
- Increased attrition.

The costs compound.

Installing recovery capability represents more than another wellbeing initiative. It is an operational investment in the quality, consistency and sustainability of human performance.

07. Recovery Between Moments

Recovery Between Moments is how Zenbok operationalises neurowellness inside hospitality. Imagine,

if recovery was not something that only happened outside work?
if recovery could occur invisibly during work - inside your shifts?

- *Between meetings.*
- *Between guest interactions.*
- *Between treatments.*
- *Between decisions.*
- *Between moments.*

The principles underpinning recovery capability have long been visible in elite performance. Zenbok adapts those same principles for leadership, hospitality and everyday operational environments.

It's not about adding more complexity. Not about competing with your existing personal beliefs, onsite leadership training, wellness programmes, or longevity strategies. They all play an important part.

Zenbok exists to *complete* your ecosystem - by introducing a missing operational layer. One that tackles the problem of carryover head on:

Recovery Between Moments.

Recovery capability may become an essential component of human sustainability. We install the ability to reset fully, operationally, before the next important moment arrives. Capability re-emerges. This can be encapsulated in a single sentence:

**One difficult moment does not
get to decide the next one.**

o 8. The Zenbok Framework

Everything we do sits within three connected layers:

Guest Recovery - Helping guests recover access to themselves through nervous system regulation and recovery experiences.

Practitioner Development - Helping them maintain the condition required to consistently create exceptional guest experiences.

Property Advisory - Helping owners and operators operationalise neurowellness across guest experience, leadership and organisational capability.

Together this framework creates a recovery ecosystem to support individuals, teams, and organisations across multiple levels of work.

CONCLUSION

20+ years of research, field-testing, and practical experience revealed a larger pattern: People and organisations that perform consistently are not necessarily those experiencing the least pressure. They are often those organisations that recover from pressure most effectively.

- In an increasingly demanding world, organisations may need to install and develop the recovery capability as deliberately as they develop leadership, service, and operational capability.
- The future of leadership may depend less on eliminating uncertainty and more on ensuring that capable people can continue to access their best qualities under pressure.
- The future of wellness may depend less on helping people escape pressure and more on helping them recover effectively within it.

Neurowellness is rapidly emerging as one of hospitality's next operating philosophies. Zenbok exists to help organisations operationalise it.

09. The Evolution of 20 years field-tested work

Available in Asia and internationally

Selected References:

Gallup. State of the Global Workplace (2023–2025).

Global Wellness Institute. Global Wellness Economy Monitor (2024).

Global Wellness Summit. The Future of Neurowellness (2025).

Global Wellness Institute. Build Well to Live Well: Wellness Real Estate and the Built Environment.

Global Wellness Institute. The Wellness Economy: Workplace Wellness Sector Reports.

World Health Organization. Burn-out: An Occupational Phenomenon (ICD-11).

McKinsey & Company. Articles and reports on workplace wellbeing, resilience and organisational performance.

Harvard Business Review. Articles on psychological safety, stress, decision-making and leadership under pressure.

Porges, S. W. The Polyvagal Theory.

Kabat-Zinn, J. Full Catastrophe Living.

Benson, H. The Relaxation Response.

Davidson, R. J., & Goleman, D. Altered Traits.

Dispenza, J. Research and publications on neuroplasticity, meditation and self-directed change.

HeartMath Institute. Research on Heart Rate Variability (HRV), coherence and psychophysiological self-regulation.

Kotler, S. The Rise of Superman; The Art of Impossible.

Zenbok Field Research and Practical Application

More than two decades of practical application across hospitality, wellness and leadership environments, including nervous system regulation programmes, recovery interventions, Heart Rate Variability (HRV), consumer remote photoplethysmography (rPPG), clinical grade electroencephalography (EEG), neurotechnology testing, executive coaching and operational implementation across Asia and internationally.

PEOPLE DON'T LOSE THEIR CAPABILITY.
THEY LOSE ACCESS TO IT.

RECOVERY CAPABILITY HELPS THEM
FIND IT AGAIN.

THAT IS NEUROWELLNESS.

THAT IS ZENBOK

www.zenbok.org
support@zenbok.org

Ian Matthews | Zenbok Founder



RESET



REGULATE



RECONNECT