

We need to talk about microdosing in the workplace

Microdosing is the strategic practise of taking a small and controlled amount, usually around 1/8 to 1/10 of the normal dosage of a psychedelic drug such as LSD and magic mushrooms to enhance and compliment your working routine. But does it work and does it have a place in the UK workplace?

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This way of consuming psychedelics is said to produce positive effects such as increased focus, creativity, productivity and energy levels, and the benefits have been notably enjoyed by the startup and tech community in Silicon Valley.

Silicon Valley is the innovative tech centre of the planet. Entrepreneurs gain success through developing creative and disruptive new ideas that can catch the attention of the world. Microdosing is rife and has even been tried by tech billionaires Bill Gates, Elon Musk and the late Steve Jobs. The microdosing trend has expanded into businesses across the valley, with employees and entrepreneurs regularly dabbling in psychedelic use. Indeed, the millionaire investor Tim Ferriss mentions how many of the billionaires that he knows habitually take hallucinogens.

What psychedelics are used to improve focus at work?

LSD and Magic mushrooms are the substances most commonly used in microdosing to improve productivity and focus at work. LSD is a chemical hallucinogen that comes in tiny squares of paper, a liquid or in pellets and is taken orally. Tripping on acid after consuming the typical dosage makes people feel like they've entered another world as, for several hours, they experience a distorted view of reality with an intensification of their senses.

Magic mushrooms are wild, natural hallucinogenic mushrooms that come in varying strengths. The mushrooms have a horrible and bitter taste, chewy texture and are taken by eating or drinking. They also typically distort reality and intensify the senses when ingested.

Microdosing in the UK workplace

Like so many trends from Silicon Valley, the routine of microdosing has made its way into the UK workplace. Supposedly improving productivity levels, microdosing helps some people with the daily slog and routine. Users claim that the workday can be vastly improved by boosting their clarity and focus at their jobs.

We've all experienced a lack of motivation and tiredness at work, especially with the hectic work schedules and 24/7 email communication that we now live with. But can psychedelics actually help enhance our work lives? In the UK people who work in fashion as well as business owners, writers, university lecturers and Oxford and Cambridge graduates have all seen the benefits of microdosing in their work and often express how they feel more alert and awake throughout their working day.

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The science

It's hard to test the effects of an illegal substance, but that's not to say it hasn't been tried. The 2019 paper [*A systematic study of microdosing psychedelics*](#) details a study in two parts that delves into the world of microdosing and looks into its effects on human productivity.

In the first study, 98 participants (recruited from Reddit and Bluelight microdosing discussion communities) were asked to provide daily overviews of their microdosing experiences via email as well as complete a questionnaire at the start and end of the experiment. The experiment took place over a 6 week period and found that participants felt an increase across all psychological functions (wellbeing, mindfulness, creativity, attention etc..) measured on the days that they microdose. This increase didn't continue over the following days but focus and productivity rose two days after taking the dose (most users tend to have one day on and a few days off.)

In this study, participants mentioned a reduction in mind wandering, lower levels of depression and stress and a rise in absorption (being absorbed in mental imagery) which are all fantastic tools for working. Though, creativity and general quality of life were not reported to change at all.

The second study set out to test if people's expectations of microdosing had been influenced by media coverage (especially by big names like Gates and Jobs) and whether the 'wonderful' effects reported matched the real-life experiences. The participants of the second study had large expectations of microdosing, particularly in the areas of creativity, wellbeing and mindfulness. However, looking at the results of study one, increases in these areas were not found to be true.

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Conclusive evidence?

Overall, the study found that microdosing psychedelics can help with focus and productivity but didn't find much evidence to back the widespread belief that microdosing greatly improves creativity, mindfulness and life overall. Though, due to the illegality of the substance, the study had to rely on the honesty of

participants, which you may want to take with a pinch of salt.

Another study, led by the Dutch Psychedelic Society in The Netherlands where magic mushrooms are legal for 'personal use,' examined the effects of microdosing psychedelic truffles on participants' abilities to complete two tasks. The tasks consisted of the Picture Concept Task assessing convergent thinking (finding a concrete solution to a problem), and the Alternative Uses Task assessing divergent thinking (finding multiple possible solutions to a problem). The study found that both convergent and divergent thinking performance improved after microdosing and fluid intelligence (thinking abstractly) was not affected.

It seems that microdosing may well help with boosting focus and efficiency at work, but these improvements may also just be because people are expecting an improvement to happen. Though, with such well-known tech billionaires having dabbled in the trend, who wouldn't be tempted?

Final thoughts?

With that said, don't try this at home, or work.**

***LSD is a Class A drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act and is illegal to possess or supply. For possession, people can face up to 7 years in prison and a fine. For supply and production, people can face life in prison and a fine.*

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