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# Why this startup is encouraging employees to microdose psychedelics at work

Employees at MUD\WTR are swapping out their morning coffee for mushrooms—including psychedelic ones.



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BY DANA G. SMITH

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There are several mushroom coffee companies on the market these days—coffee substitutes consisting of special types of fungi that purportedly boost energy and enhance clarity, like caffeine but without the jitters. Some employees at the [mushroom coffee brand MUD\WTR](#) are taking it one step further, adding small amounts of hallucinogenic mushrooms to their morning brew.

To be clear, MUD\WTR does not include psychedelics in the mushroom coffee it sells—yet. If the legal landscape changes, founder and CEO Shane Heath says that would definitely be something he would explore. But MUD\WTR does [support employees who want to microdose](#) magic mushrooms at work.

Speaking to *Fast Company*, Heath says that drug use in the forms of alcohol and caffeine are already commonplace and even encouraged in many office settings. “Seeing that, reflecting on how psilocybin microdosing has impacted my life in a much more positive way than caffeine or alcohol ever could have, I decided to make an open statement to our team,” he says.

Heath is quick to add that microdosing is by no means mandatory or expected at MUD\WTR. He estimates that about 20% of the company’s employees take part, including himself.

MUD\WTR isn’t the only private company that condones the use of psychedelics—Dr. Bronner’s has [encouraged its employees to try therapies involving ketamine and other psychedelic drugs](#)—although MUD\WTR may be the only one that permits microdosing on the job.

Microdosing involves taking a tiny amount of a drug, typically 5% to 10% of a full dose. Psychedelics like psilocybin, the active ingredient in hallucinogenic mushrooms, and LSD are the drugs most commonly microdosed. At that amount, people don’t feel high or experience any of psychedelics’ trippy effects, but users do say it improves their mood and well-being and enhances their creativity and focus.

Jordan Chiu, director of brand experience and innovation at MUD\WTR, microdoses psilocybin roughly every other day. He says it helps him make mental connections he wouldn’t normally. “It does, on a day-to-day basis, help me feel and be more creative,” he says. “A lot of the work that I do is very creative . . . so I think having a brain that’s feeling light and limber and open in that way is certainly a benefit to work.”

Senior designer Ryan Rosenthal, who’s microdosed for more than five years, agrees. “It’s really good as a designer because we’re really trying to think about the psychology of who’s visiting our platform, and so you can really tap into that and become more empathetic,” he says.



More recently, placebo-controlled trials in the [U.S.](#), [U.K.](#), and [Netherlands](#) all found no difference in mood or cognition between people taking a psychedelic microdose or a placebo, even after weeks of using the drugs.

Heath says he hasn't seen any impact on performance at MUD\WTR since the announcement, for better or worse. However, he says people have become more open with their coworkers.

"I wouldn't say I've seen an increase or decrease materially in the data," he says. "What I would say is that we have seen an increase in general openness. Even people who don't take psilocybin or microdose—or have any interest in doing so—I think just feel more free to express what they are interested in."

Chiu agrees. "The culture is really to bring your best self and to bring your whole self to work."

What happens if someone accidentally takes too much? "It happens," Rosenthal says. "Visually, things are a bit softer. My computer screen looks a little funnier. But ultimately it's nothing that a quick walk and a coconut water can't fix."

*Dana Smith is an award-winning health and science writer based in Durham, North Carolina. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, The Atlantic, Fortune, Scientific American, and more.*

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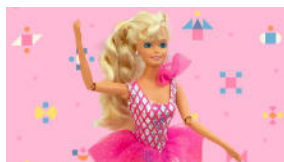
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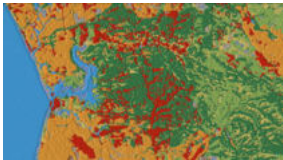
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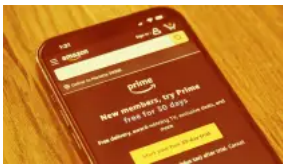
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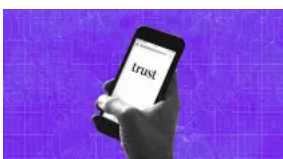
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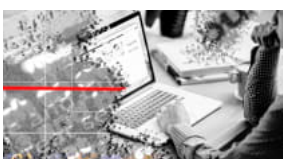
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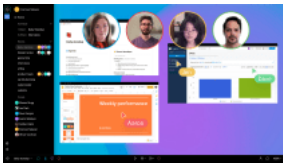
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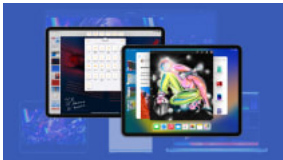
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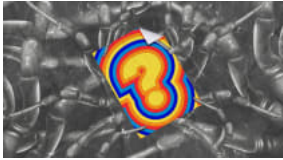
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