



MODULE 5:

MAKING AN EFFECTIVE WELLBEING STRATEGY



Making an Effective Wellbeing Strategy

By the end of this module you will: →

- 👍 Understand what makes an effective wellbeing strategy
- 👍 Understand why an effective wellbeing strategy is important
- 👍 Learn how to create, implement, and maintain an effective wellbeing strategy

Effective Wellbeing Strategy

<p>One Size Does Not Fit All</p>	<p>One of the first things to acknowledge is that not every employee’s needs will necessarily be the same as others. The modern-day workforce sees a lot of diversity with varying genders, ages, races, religions and so on. Furthermore, should a wellbeing strategy work then people may be in employment for a long time, meaning their needs will change. Obviously, it is not easy to address the individual needs of every single person but an effective wellbeing strategy will do its best to cater to the needs of a plethora of key groups throughout their time at the organisation. In order to do this, employee’s needs should be listened to and understood. The amount of data available on your employees should be vast, including their age, gender, salary, level of absence, performance, family circumstances and much more. This data can be used to identify the main groups in the workforce. From there it is important to find out what it is they want and value. This can help inform on strategies and initiatives that will address what the employees want addressed.</p>
<p>Getting Management to Buy In</p>	<p>Sometimes the issue with wellbeing strategies is the lack of belief coming from the top. When it comes to wellbeing there is very much a ‘trickle-down’ effect where the senior members’ attitudes towards wellbeing can very much influence how it is viewed and acted upon throughout the organisation. Therefore, convincing senior members to buy into and cultivate a wellbeing culture is important. The majority of the time, their main concern is the bottom line. When presenting a wellbeing strategy, emphasise the positive effect it can have on retention, absence, and productivity, and the influence that can have on return of investment. For more on this see Module 7.</p>

Effective Wellbeing Strategy

Ownership And Accountability

The responsibility of creating and implementing a wellbeing strategy often falls to HR. However, sometimes there is simply not enough momentum from a small singular group for it to have any real effect. Furthermore, the HR department is subject to particularly high levels of attrition; a constantly-changing team can lead to lots of confusion and miscommunication.

Employing a diverse team from all areas of the organisation can significantly benefit the implementation of a wellbeing strategy. First of all, it can dramatically increase awareness with all points of the organisation being reachable. What's more is it allows for a variety of different mind sets and expertise to be incorporated to make a more encompassing strategy. The recognition of the importance of wellbeing is an attitude that needs to be instilled at all levels of the organisation. By using representatives from all areas, it gives everyone in the organisation ownership and accountability for their workplace wellbeing.

Specify from which departments:

- IT
- Non Line Manager
- Health and Safety
- Union
- HR

Communication Is Key

Once a wellbeing strategy has been developed, the employees in your organisation will need to know what's available to them. If no one knows what's on offer then what's the point in having a wellbeing strategy. It's important to convey to the workforce what they can have and why it's going to help them.

When communicating the wellbeing strategy, consider the most effective ways to do this. If people are sat at a desk, what would work best for them? Are your employees always on their feet? How can you best communicate with them? **Once again, the key is to tailor to the audience you are dealing with – what works for one group might not work for another.**

Effective Wellbeing Strategy

Track Your Progress

With your wellbeing strategy implemented and everyone involved, it is then important to see what effects it is having. Monitoring the effect of your wellbeing strategy can enable you to demonstrate the return of investment to senior management, just as you promised. However, not everything will necessarily be perfect, and tracking progress can also help in identifying the areas that aren't working as well as the areas that do. Then necessary adjustments can be made to help keep your strategy running effectively in the long term.

When gaging the progress of the strategy, look not only at the employees' data (i.e. absence, productivity etc) but also at how the employees' feel and their thoughts on what they have on offer. Seeing as it directly affects them, the employees should be greatly considered when measuring just how well the wellbeing strategy works.

Practical Solutions

	Practice	Why?
Creation	Study the wellbeing strategies of other organisations similar to your own.	Many companies are becoming aware of the need for effective wellbeing strategies and have made efforts to implement these. Have a look and take some inspiration from some of the companies that are spearheading this movement, especially in sectors similar to your own.
	Collect data on, study, and interview your workforce.	As previously stated, not everyone's needs are going to be the same. Look at the demographics of your workforce, find out what each group's needs are, and use that information to form your wellbeing strategy.
Implementation	'Wellbeing Champions'	Whilst a wellbeing strategy will most likely be run by a HR team, get other employees on board to help implement it. Having 'champions' throughout the organisation means workshops and classes can be run in-house, they can help spread the word quicker, and it makes someone easier to contact if any employees have queries or comments.
	Again... collect data on, study, and interview your workforce.	When it comes to conveying what's on offer and how it can benefit them, it is important to find out how the employees feel it is best to make contact with them. Some will have easy access to emails and some won't, some people stop to read posters and others don't. Find out how they feel they will best get the message and use that to build sources of communication.
Maintenance	Seek useful outside help.	Maintaining a wellbeing strategy using purely in-house resources may be a tall order. Therefore, looking for useful partners is a good practice. Try and find people that can offer a range of productive services that your workforce will need (i.e. legal advice, health services, financial services etc) eliminating the need to hire multiple partners. Finding good, reliable, and resourceful partners can help your wellbeing strategy go a long way.
	And once again... collect data, study and interview your workforce.	The best way to assess the effectiveness is to look at the changes in the workforce such as number of absences, level of productivity and so on. On top of that, interview the employees to find out what they think works well and what doesn't. Adjustments to the strategy can be made using this information to ensure it's working efficiently.

Case Studies



At Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust they offer services to adults and elderly people with mental health issues, those with substance abuse disorders, and care for people with learning disabilities. They found that stress levels were high amongst employees and that their health and wellbeing initiatives were seriously lacking with little funding, low awareness, and minimal guidance from managers. They wished to change this and so they reviewed their current benefits and staff data including sickness-absence data, turnover information, and occupational health data. On top of that they conducted their first health and wellbeing survey which assessed things like their general lifestyle and wellbeing, smoking cessation, awareness of benefits, and what more they feel the trust can do for staff wellbeing. Using this information they were able to get £8,000 in funding and now offer resilience courses, physical activity classes, staff benefits packages, and much more.



Unilever have consistently been considered top employers for their attitudes towards wellbeing. In their strategies they take a holistic view of wellbeing, in that it revolves around their employees feeling good and working well. They base their practices on addressing physical, emotional, and purposeful wellbeing of their employees. To do this they employ the use of several practices including 'agile working' (flexible working hours, appropriate technology and practices, and contingencies for poor-health) as well as encouraging employees to consider their purpose within the company. Having tracked their progress and reviewed the effectiveness of their strategies they found that for every €1 invested in their wellbeing programmes they see a return of €2.44.



Iceland

Iceland understands that in order for their customers to receive the best treatment then their employees also need the best treatment. This is done through a variety of practices. Frequent and open conversations happen with all areas of the company with the help of schemes like the 'Talking Shop forum' where an employee from every single shop is elected to represent that store's needs. They also want to improve the lives of their employees. This is done through competitive pay, good working conditions (i.e. free tea and coffee, state-of-the-art facilities etc), and other benefits (instore discount, flexible hours, financial support during hard times etc). This commitment to their employees led the Sunday Times 'Best Companies to Work For' survey to announce them as the 'Best Big Company to Work For' in 2014 and have ranked consistently high since.



Admiral have shown a real dedication to the wellbeing of their employees and it has certainly paid off. They have constructed a department dedicated to supporting the health and lifestyle of their employees known as the 'Ministry of Health' (MOH) which is voluntarily run by passionate staff members. They base their practices on four key principles: **Communication, Equality, Reward and Recognition, and Fun**. This has led to a vast number of schemes and initiatives that dramatically improve the health and wellbeing of their employees, including rewards of gym memberships and free fruit, as well as organised events like dry January, health road shows, cancer checks, and events committed to raising awareness of mental health. Their hard work has not gone unnoticed and in 2016 they won the Wellbeing at Work Award at the Business in the Community Awards.

Expert Opinions

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We read all the time about the “employee work experience” and the need to customise that to each employee. That might be a challenge given the structure of your company. However, one thing that can be done is to sit down with each employee and truly learn how they like to be communicated with, then do it.

Adapt your style to their desired way of communication. This will be more effective than making them change their way.

If you truly want to customise their experience, you have to work at it. Find out how they like to learn and then structure their opportunities to learn around that style.

Seeing you adapt to their ways should increase their engagement because you have shown that you listened to what they said.

Mike Haberman, Omega HR Solutions

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Analysing employee data is critical. The latest absence management data, joiner and leaver information, and details of claims under private medical insurance schemes reveal a great deal about the health of a workforce. Information should also come from staff, either through employee surveys, focus groups or a combination of both. This feedback will help identify what the employees are looking for and therefore what type of initiatives are likely to see the highest attendance rates.

Beate O'Neil, Head of Wellbeing Consulting, Punter Southall Health & Protection

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Whole business wellbeing is a relatively new discipline, so it's unlikely you've done this before. But there are people out there who have, stepping back and talking to the right people at the outset will save you a lot of time, money and effort in the long-run.

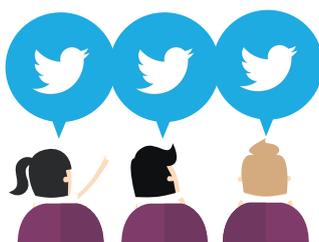
Professor Sir Gary Cooper, Founding Director and CIPD President

Fun Facts:

84% of companies say they now have financial security programs — such as access to **budgeting resources, debt management tools, or student loan counselling** — as part of their well-being strategies. ¹



The most common wellness benefit is **providing resources and information** (71% of companies), and 62% give wellness tips or information at least quarterly in the form of a newsletter, e-mail, column, or tweets. ²



Every pound spent on employee wellness results in a **saving of £2.50**, thanks to reduced sickness absence and improved staff retention. ³



Wellbeing can dramatically improve health and safety.

In 2016, Anglian Water put a greater focus on wellbeing and as a result direct employees, and those employed by contractors, partners and other affiliated businesses, worked 1.24m hours and recorded zero accidents — a first for Anglian Water. ⁴

love every drop.
anglianwater

Sources:

¹ <https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/develop-health-wellbeing-strategy/>

² <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/pages/2017-employee-benefits.aspx>

³ https://workplace.fidelity.com/sites/default/files/NGBH_WellnessSurveyResults_011817.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ft.com/content/1f06288a-898d-11e7-afd2-74b8ecd34d3b>

Ask Yourself...



- How effective is your current wellbeing strategy? How are you tracking this?
- What changes can be made to your current wellbeing strategy to improve it?
- Are you consulting your employees and allowing them to contribute to your wellbeing strategy? How can you increase employee contribution?
- What can be done to improve the implementation and maintenance of your wellbeing strategy?

Exercise:

Look at the below examples of poor wellbeing strategy practices , identify what is wrong and how this can be improved:

Practice	What's wrong?	How to improve it?
<p>55% of an organisation's workforce are aged 30-40 years, male, and have families. They believe that their wellbeing strategy should entirely cater to that particular demographic.</p>		

Exercise Continued:

Practice	What's wrong?	How to improve it?
<p>An organisation's wellbeing strategy has been formulated and is ready to be implemented. To let the employees know of what's available to them they rely solely on a single email that is across the entire organisation.</p>		
<p>An organisation's wellbeing strategy has been in use for a year and they have seen no change in absence, productivity, or overall happiness. Without consulting their employees they decide, due to nothing having gotten worse, that no change is needed.</p>		

Useful Links/Resources

Motley Fool is considered a leading figure in employee wellness and benefits, their website outlines a few of the things on offer for their employees:

<https://careers.fool.com/foolish/perks/>

Workable have outlined a template that presents a good starting point and lays out some of the key areas that a wellbeing strategy should address:

<https://resources.workable.com/employee-wellness-policy>

Hector De La Torre, executive director of the Transamerica Center for Health Studies, and Ron Goetzel, Ph.D., is senior scientist and director of the Institute for Health and Productivity Studies (IHPS), wrote an article on what makes an effective workplace wellness plan:

<https://hbr.org/2016/03/how-to-design-a-corporate-wellness-plan-that-actually-works>

The Stress Management Society have written an article on how an effective wellbeing strategy can help positively effect sickness absence:

<http://www.stress.org.uk/taking-control-absence/>



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