



Well-Being Strategies to Support Diverse Workplaces

Akira Heshiki and Dan Jolivet, The Standard
August 17, 2023



1



Presenters

Akira Heshiki, J.D.
 Senior Director and Assistant Counsel




Dan Jolivet, PhD.
 Workplace Possibilities Practice Consultant




2



Disclaimer

The following slides are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal or medical advice. You should not act or rely on any information contained in this document without first seeking the advice of an attorney or an appropriate treatment provider.



3



Wellness vs. Well-being
According to the Oxford Dictionary,

- **Wellness:** the state of being healthy, especially when you actively try to achieve this
- **Well-being:** is considered general health and happiness; a state of emotional/ physical/ psychological well-being



4



Agenda

- The Importance of Workplace Wellness and Well-being
- Current Workplace Wellness Gaps
- The Intersection of Well-being and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Tips for Workplace Well-being and Business Success



5



The Importance of Workplace Wellness and Well-being



6

Recent Events have Increased the Importance of Well-being Efforts

The pandemic and the subsequent transition to virtual work has made employee wellness programs even more important.

More workers are looking for mental health support

Accommodations are more frequently needed for remote workers

Demands related to childcare, eldercare, and remote school have increased the stress on workers

More employees are emphasizing work-life balance and are willing to leave jobs they don't feel support them



7

Workplace Wellness is a Key Driver of Business Success



Companies that prioritize well-being and employee engagement outperform their competitors



Healthy employees are more productive, less likely to miss work, and have lower healthcare costs



Workplace wellness initiatives have been shown to improve employee morale, lead to greater loyalty, and lower turnover



Source: The Growing Importance Of Employee Wellness: How Are You Responding? Forbes, April 2022.

8

Formal Programs Boost Success

For Example:

Data Dive: Leave and Disability Programs Boosted the Workplace Experience

Between 2018 and 2022, employers with formal leave and disability programs reported a sizable jump in factors that signal increased employee satisfaction.

Out of all the benefits reported, these four stood out:



Greater Retention
53%



Stronger Morale
48%



Lower Absenteeism
45%



Higher Productivity
42%

On average,

59%

of employers with formal leave programs reported experiencing greater employee retention in 2022.



Source: Keeping Pace with Employee Expectations: The Role of Leave and Disability Management. The Standard, 2023.

9



Current Workplace Wellness Gaps



10

Current Solutions May Include Gaps

- Disease Management
- EAPs
- Accommodations
- Leave policies
- Wellness initiatives (ex: smoking cessation, *yoga*, onsite fitness, physical/movement challenges)
- Caregiving resources
- Vaccination clinics / requirements
- Health maintenance screening
- Wellness apps




11



Four Reasons Your Workplace Wellness Initiatives May Fail

1. "Culture Eats Wellness for Breakfast"
2. Wellness initiatives not specific to the Workforce
3. People Managers Not Supporting Wellness Strategies
4. Employees Who Don't Feel Safe or Valued Won't Utilize Wellness Benefits



12

1. "Culture Eats Wellness for Breakfast"

Most wellness initiatives are focused on the individual, but the evidence is clear that:

Individual activities are **ineffective** when the company culture does not support well-being or is actively toxic

For example, practicing mindfulness may be of limited value when a worker feels they are being treated unfairly or excluded.

Well-being initiatives are **most likely to be effective** in companies with a positive wellness climate



13

2. Wellness Initiatives Not Specific to the Workforce

Even when companies do support the well-being of their employees, they frequently do so without first understanding the specific needs of their employees.

Employers frequently implement wellness programs without first asking employees what barriers they face with respect to improving their health

Most employees who participate are **already healthy**

Employees who could benefit the most frequently have **multiple complications** and are impacted by **Social Determinants of Health**



14

Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health are **the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that shape health.**



Source: Healthy People 2030, Health.gov.



15

3. People Managers Not Supporting Wellness Strategies

Wellness strategies are frequently implemented without considering the attitudes and tolerance of people managers.

Managers who don't believe in the value of wellness programs **can easily undermine them**, overtly or covertly

Managers with a **high tolerance for unhealthy or inappropriate behaviors** by workers aren't likely to encourage team members to participate in wellness activities

Some managers **may be contributing to a toxic workplace culture** – i.e., not modeling healthy behaviors, not recognizing team members or lacking knowledge of wellness resources



16

4. Employees Who Don't Feel Safe or Valued Won't Utilize Wellness Benefits

Workers who lack a sense of psychological safety may be less likely to participate in well-being programs for a variety of reasons.

When a person doesn't feel valued or safe at work, they **may not trust their employer** to help them improve their health

Negative perceptions of the employer may lead to **negative perceptions about wellness initiatives**

Employees with privacy concerns may avoid programs they **fear may provide sensitive information to an employer they already don't trust**



17



The Intersection of Well-being and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging



18

Healthy Workplace Cultures Have to Incorporate DEI

A company's culture matters significantly not only to employees who are considering a job but also to employees staying in their jobs.

- A workplace respecting people of all races, backgrounds, genders and sexual orientations will attract and retain a wider, more diverse and better community of talent.

77% of employees consider a company's culture when considering a new job

Nearly 66% of employees cited a good company culture as one of the main reasons they elect not to leave

 Source: 15 Effective Employee Retention Strategies in 2023, Future Advisor, July 2023

19

Dimensions of Diversity

In addition to racial and gender diversity, employers must also recognize and incorporate other types of diversity. For example:

Age and generational	Culture and ethnicity	Disability, including apparent and non-apparent disabilities	Diversity of beliefs, including religious and spiritual diversity	Parental or marital status
Linguistic	Sexual orientation and gender expression	Socioeconomic	Geographic Location	Physical Appearance

 Reference: The Many Dimensions of Diversity, Bergen Associates, 2021

20

The Value of DEI

The value of diversity, equity, inclusion among teams is well documented and includes:

- Recruiting from diverse populations **increases the potential pool** of applicants and workers for an employer
- Diverse teams generate **more ideas** and are **more creative**
- Members of diverse teams are **more loyal** to their employers, **reducing turnover** and decreasing associated costs
- Diverse organizations achieve **better financial results**

 Source: Why Diversity Matters, McKinsey

21

Outcomes Associated with Effective DEI

When workplaces are diverse, equitable, and inclusive, outcomes can include:

- a sense of belonging
- psychological safety – the feeling that one can express a different opinion, ask a question, or admit a mistake without being seen in a negative light

Belonging and psychological safety help to unlock workers' potential.



22

Workplace Well-being and DEIB

Diversity is a fact.

Equity is a value.

Inclusion is an action.

Belonging is the (desired) outcome.



23

Healthy Organizations Foster Belonging

Belonging is essential to workplace well-being:

WORKPLACE STRATEGY IN EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING



- SELF-ACTUALIZATION**
purpose, values, empowerment
- ESTEEM**
trust, respect, autonomy, transparency
- BELONGING**
social needs, team dynamics, culture, connections
- SAFETY**
autonomy, privacy, safety, security fit
- PHYSIOLOGICAL**
lighting, temperature, food, movement, air quality, noise, health

References: What's Good for People? Moving from Wellness to Well-being. Kroll Workplace Research. Wellness vs. Well-being in the Workplace. KJL Marketing.



24



Tips for Workplace Well-being and Business Success



25

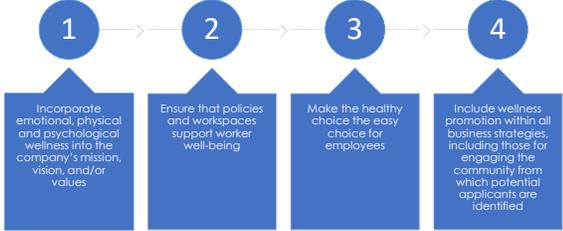
Creating an Effective Well-being Strategy: Nine Tips for Success

1. Make a Commitment to Employee Well-being
2. Take a Holistic View of Wellness
3. Seek Input Before Implementation
4. Consider Potential Barriers When Designing Programs
5. Identify Partners to Increase the Likelihood of Success
6. Assess Manager Attitudes and Beliefs
7. Get Ongoing Feedback from All Employees
8. Communicate Continually
9. Measure and Modify



26

1: Make a Commitment to Employee Well-being




27

2. Take a Holistic View of Wellness

Think about what you may have unintentionally ignored or not considered.

Employer-sponsored benefits should address every area of workers' lives:

- Physical and behavioral health
- Career satisfaction
- Financial security
- Family and home life
- Connection to community



28

3: Seek Input Before Implementation Survey Your Workforce

Gallup has developed the Q12+ survey with specific questions – that incorporate DEIB – around employee needs to measures employee engagement:

0. How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?
1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
9. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a best friend at work.
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.
13. At work, I am treated with respect.
14. My organization cares about my overall wellbeing.
15. I have received meaningful feedback in the last week.
16. My organization always delivers on the promise we make to customers.



Source: Q12+ Employee Engagement Survey, Gallup.

29

4. Consider Potential Barriers When Designing Programs

Additional barriers that can prevent workers from participating in wellness programs include:

- Lack of information about benefits
- Lack of information about own condition
- Self-identification
- Finances
- Stigma



30

5. Identify Partners to Increase the Likelihood of Success

-  **Employees who are willing to be ambassadors**
Example: Collaborate with existing Employee Resource Groups, or ERGs
-  **Tie in with specific events**
Example: Mental Health Awareness Month or Go Red for Women (the American Heart Association's national movement to end heart disease and stroke in women)
-  **Consider using a third-party advocate vendor**
Also identify outcome measures for any wellness benefits to be implemented and develop a plan for measuring them



31

6. Assess Manager Attitudes and Beliefs About Wellness Initiatives

Proactively, ask people managers about their opinions and attitudes with respect to wellness and well-being initiatives in order to determine:

- How willing they are to address problems, particularly those that reflect issues for which wellness programs are being implemented?
- How likely they are to trust the wellness program and its resources for helping employees?



32

7. Get Ongoing Feedback from All Employees

- It can be beneficial to ask employees **who don't participate** in wellness programs what prevents their participation
- This may include asking about:
 - the **barriers** they face to participate
 - which **Social Determinants of Health** may be impacting their well-being
 - what **health complications** they are dealing with



33

8. Communicate Continually

It's impossible to over-communicate with respect to any wellness program.

- Don't make the mistake of only communicating the program when it's launched or at annual benefit renewal time – that can lead to **workers not thinking of the program when they most need it**
- Remind your workforce of the program **any time there is a significant change or issue** that might impact workers
- Consider **including information about the program in other communications** to employees, such as health insurance notifications or disability leave determinations

If employee well-being is an integral part of your culture, it will permeate everywhere.



34

9. Measure and Modify
Use Information to Improve Program Outcomes

As with any other corporate initiative, identifying the anticipated outcomes and building in measures to assess them is key to measuring the effectiveness of the program.

The program can be revised to address:

- Suboptimal outcomes
- Information about manager beliefs and tolerance
- Barriers identified by employees who don't participate

Effective program evaluation and modification can allow employers to continuously improve their wellness strategy.



35



Final Thoughts



36



37



38

Questions?



Akira Heshiki, J.D.
 Senior Director
 and Assistant Counsel
Akira.Heshiki@standard.com



Dan Jolivet, PhD.
 Workplace Possibilities
 Practice Consultant
Dan.Jolivet@standard.com

TheStandard

The Standard is a marketing name for StanCorp Financial Group, Inc. and subsidiaries. Insurance products are offered by Standard Insurance Company of 1100 SW Sixth Avenue of Portland, Oregon, in all states except New York, where insurance products are offered by The Standard Life Insurance Company of New York of 333 Westchester Avenue, West Building, Suite 300, White Plains, New York. Product features and availability vary by state and company, and are solely the responsibility of each subsidiary. Each company is solely responsible for its own financial condition. Standard Insurance Company is licensed to solicit insurance business in all states except New York. The Standard Life Insurance Company of New York is licensed to solicit insurance business in only the state of New York.

39

Resources

- The CDC: [Comprehensive Model and Resources for Workplace Health Promotion](#)
- The Standard: [Keeping Pace with Employee Expectations The Role of Leave a Disability Management](#)