

Connecting Culture and Employee Wellbeing for Organizational Success



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When it comes to effectively containing long-term costs and developing meaningful employee engagement, aligning wellbeing strategy and culture is paramount. Knowing that every organization is different, and employees want and value different things throughout their lives and careers, determining the right path forward can be tricky. There are many facets to consider, ranging from employers' current culture to their organizational vision and mission, employee demographics, employee communications, and overall goals such as the attraction, retention and engagement of talent, retirement, and of course, cost containment strategies. With this in mind, many high-performing organizations are taking a look at their approach to culture and engagement through the lens of holistic wellbeing.

In the past, many wellness programs focused primarily on physical health. However, wellbeing strategies take into account the overall organizational goals in alignment with employees' emotional, financial, career, community and physical health. This broader approach is meaningful to designing impactful behavior-change strategies. Ultimately, an organization can have the best possible programs, but if the culture doesn't support success, it will be very difficult to impact behavior change.

What's Trending in Wellness?

Beyond the wellbeing evolution, wellness hot topics include:

- Becoming an employer of choice
- Employee engagement
- Financial Wellness
- Onsite healthcare
- Telehealth
- Corporate social responsibility/community involvement

Behavior is highly influenced by culture, environment and social norms; therefore, one of the biggest opportunities to improve employee wellbeing is to first assess an organization's current culture—noting the reality as well as aspirational goals. Based on the findings, a strategy can then be developed that meets both the employer and employees where they are now, versus pushing an approach that either organizational leadership or employees are not ready to embrace. While strategic wellbeing consulting is still catching on, those organizations that have engaged in this methodology find success by:

- Transforming culture to inspire and empower employees to make personal, internal changes for themselves rather than feeling “forced” or externally motivated. Imposed change can actually derail development of the intrinsic motivation needed for long-term positive behavior change.

- Assessing and integrating all total rewards aspects when developing a strategy—this means looking at healthcare data analytics, human resources and compensation information, retirement strategy, professional development opportunities and anything related to attracting and retaining talent.

A Tailored Approach

While developing a wellbeing strategy is exciting, it is not easy. Implementing an effective wellbeing approach is hard work and requires a heightened level of customization. This is not an “off -the-shelf” concept, but rather, a very tailored process. Gaining both leadership and employee input throughout the strategy development and implementation process is integral, and wrapping that strategy in the right communication bundle is just as important. The best way for employees to receive information varies, and building knowledge of those differences into a successful wellbeing approach is just one level of customization. This is not a turn-key solution.

When it comes to being valued as an employer of choice, a defined wellbeing strategy can make a significant difference in elevating productivity and employee satisfaction as well as enhancing culture.

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