

# 7 VITAL INGREDIENTS FOR YOUR WELLBEING STRATEGY IN 2023



A practical  
guide for  
improving the  
wellbeing of  
your people



# ENABLING YOUR COLLEAGUES AND YOUR BUSINESS TO THRIVE

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The emphasis on employee wellbeing has never been greater, with burnout estimated to cost the global economy \$323.4 billion each year.<sup>1</sup>

In today's unpredictable and constantly changing working environment, characterised by the recent shift to remote working;

- What are the critical components of an effective wellbeing strategy?
- How can leaders support and enhance the wellbeing of their teams in the medium to long term?

Here at GoVida, we have created this practical guide to share our insights and learnings, help you find the answers to the questions above and build a successful and sustainable wellbeing strategy.



# WHY EMPLOYEE WELLBEING?

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The premise for employee wellbeing is relatively simple – look after your people and they will look after your business. This is not a new concept. In the 19th century, corporate paternalism was introduced by ethical employers such as Lever Brothers and George Cadbury. These employers provided a range of provisions designed to improve the wellbeing of their teams such as; higher-quality housing, amenities, schools, sporting facilities, pension schemes and medical treatment.

History has proved this to be an effective strategy for success. In a world where the average tenure of Fortune 500 companies has reduced rapidly over time, both Cadbury and Lever Brothers (now Unilever) still enjoy global success. In today's hyper-competitive global economy, where the balance of power has shifted from employer to employee and success depends upon the effectiveness of teams, the impact is amplified.

Companies that do not invest in employee wellbeing face:

- Consistently lower **employee engagement**
- **Absenteeism** and consequential business disruption
- **Presenteeism** with the associated reduction in productivity
- Higher **employee churn**

On the other hand, in the “Experience Economy” where quality of life experience is valued highest by most people, a successful employee wellbeing strategy provides huge opportunities to build engagement resulting in higher performance, greater innovation, differentiation and ultimately success.

## HERE IS WHY:

### 1 YOUR EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ATTRACT AND RETAIN TOP TALENT

In the competitive world of business, attracting and keeping the best talent is challenging. The employee experience is crucial with 50% of employees willing to sacrifice up to 29% of their salary to work in a job they enjoy<sup>2</sup>.

People want to live well and experience life in the best way they can. Businesses that help their teams to achieve their personal aspirations thrive.

“WHEN PEOPLE  
CHOOSE A  
COMPANY TO WORK  
FOR THEY CHOOSE  
A WAY OF LIFE”

### 2 MOVE THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT DIAL REMEMBER ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Employee engagement and wellbeing are linked. Whilst almost every company will have a set of values and profess an organisational culture that puts people first, there is a marked contrast in employee engagement between those companies that “talk the talk”, and those that “walk the walk”.

Those organisations that live their values, demonstrate that the company does care and earn the trust of their people. Putting it plainly, a successful wellbeing strategy delivers successful engagement.

“FOR EVERY 1-POINT INCREASE IN 'HAVING A CARING AND SUPPORTIVE BOSS' THERE IS A 9% INCREASE IN ENGAGEMENT”

World Economic Forum and Right Associates 2016

### 3 VALUING YOUR PEOPLE DIRECTLY IMPROVES BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Your team is arguably the most critical asset in driving business strategy. Their wellbeing and ability to perform effectively have tangible value.

An effective wellbeing strategy protects this asset and increases business value. In fact, 96% of people see a direct correlation between wellbeing, performance and life success. And there is plenty of research that confirms this.

Making the wellbeing of your people a strategic priority improves engagement which in turn improves business performance. Productivity in organisations with highly engaged employees is on average 17% higher<sup>3</sup>, and companies that invest in their employee experience achieve 4 times greater profit per employee<sup>4</sup>.



# TODAY'S WORKPLACE WELLBEING CHALLENGES

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These unprecedented times have thrown our personal wellbeing into the spotlight more than ever. Although people are enjoying many of the benefits of remote working, we are seeing new wellbeing challenges:

**UNCERTAINTY**-People are feeling uncertain and are generally concerned about the future, leading to anxiety, self-doubt and fear.

**LACK OF SOCIAL INTERACTION**-The reduced social interaction and team play, normally experienced within the office environment, can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Where previously colleagues could chat freely around an awkward call with a customer, helping dissipate any negativity, these feelings can linger, increase stress levels and impact performance.

**WORK LIFE BALANCE**-With the home becoming the office, the delineation between work and rest is no longer there. People are in work mode for longer periods increasing the risk of burnout and affecting the home dynamic.

**REDUCED ACTIVITY** - Without the dynamism of the daily office commute, people are becoming more static. As a result, and also partially due to inadequate workspace ergonomics, we have seen increased musculo-skeletal issues. During certain months, when the weather is less conducive to outdoor exercise, this can affect physical activity levels even further.

# GOVIDA'S PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR IMPROVING EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

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## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING GO HAND IN HAND

Improvements in one area often see enhancement in the other. We are all aware how exercise strengthens our bodies, improves our cardiovascular health and burns calories, but it also has other significant benefits. Physical movement has been shown to reduce anxiety, increase hope, build confidence, enhance mood and trigger creativity and innovation.

Individuals who are engaged in physical exercise both inside and outside of work are more likely to have fewer sickness absence days<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, they are less likely to report feelings of stress and burnout and more likely to report job-security<sup>6</sup>. Exercise releases endorphins, providing energy to the body, raising stamina, improving coping mechanisms and making us feel better in general.

This is an important message for your colleagues, and incorporating both physical and mental health elements in your wellbeing strategy is crucial in delivering effective outcomes.



**"INACTIVITY IS NOW THE FOURTH LEADING RISK FACTOR FOR PREMATURE DEATH WORLDWIDE"**

World Health Organisation



## 1 FIND THEIR 'WHY'

In a diverse and distributed organisation, people are motivated and driven by different things. Individuals who are already active don't need much encouragement. On the other hand, engaging other, less active colleagues to increase their physical activity can have a more transformative impact. However, the **"call to action"** may be different:

- Consider broadening the appeal of physical activity by offering a variety of different levers. For some, this will be aligning wellbeing activities with a charity fundraising event, or a company social occasion. For others, it's about rewards and incentives, whilst there will be a contingent that enjoy competing with their peers.
- Level the playing field by introducing non-familiar physical activities and sports that offer a new experience to the majority of people. This reduces the inhibition and apprehension associated with being "a beginner."
- Give people an opportunity to find something they enjoy, whether this be dancing, team-sports, racket-sports, or something entirely different! Positioning the activities in terms of a range of benefit levers allows the individuals within your team to find their own reason to engage.



## 2 A WELL TRODDEN PATH

Tracking steps is an effective way of increasing physical activity. According to the American Council on Exercise, people who track their steps take an average of 2,500 more steps per day than those who don't. Smartphones and wearables provide this insight and enable simple, realistic step targets to be set.

With these tools at your disposal, it's relatively simple to implement a wellbeing challenge that is highly inclusive and engaging.

## 3 THE POWER OF THE GROUP

Physical activity is shown to be more enjoyable when completed with colleagues. Team sports and games enable each participant to explore their skills and how best they contribute to the team goals. The effort of the individual and the proper functioning of a group inspires success.

The sense of belonging and contribution one picks up from a team sport reduces stress, builds relationships and improves communication. Use team challenges and group initiatives to encourage physical activity and build winning teams.



## 4 SCHEDULE IT

At school, regular activity breaks, as well as dedicated Physical Education classes, formed part of the weekly timetable. Activity breaks enable students to refresh themselves in readiness for the concentration required in subsequent lessons.

Why not apply the same principle at work? Scheduling a daily 15-30 minute activity break in the morning and afternoon will result in greater performance and lower stress. If schedules don't allow this, why not schedule a meeting or a call with a colleague whilst walking? Finally, starting or closing out your working day with physical activity can help you energise and clear your mind.

## 5 FUEL FOR BODY AND MIND

There is plenty of research that connects healthy eating with improved performance and concentration levels. Innovative, forward-thinking companies have been offering free fruit and healthy snacks in the office for many years.

With the rise of remote working, the effectiveness and relevance of these initiatives is diminished, but there is scope to promote the same initiatives within a working from home environment. Providing your colleagues with the option to request a monthly delivery of healthy snacks as part of their benefits package is a differentiated perk that enhances the overall employee experience and supports wellbeing.

# IMPROVING MENTAL WELLBEING - SMALL CHANGES GO A LONG WAY

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In work and in life, stress and anxiety are unavoidable and on the increase.

Prolonged stress leads to burnout and burnout is estimated to cost the global economy **\$323.4 billion** each year<sup>7</sup>.

[www.govida.io](http://www.govida.io)

## 1 HOW DO YOU RELAX?

The opposite of "**stressed**" is "**relaxed**". Learning how to relax and scheduling periods of relaxation into your day can help reduce stress and anxiety. This is a simple message to convey to your team and an actionable starting point for a colleague suffering with stress.

Within a diverse team there will be many ways people relax whether it be through traditional practices like yoga, meditation and mindfulness or through a hobby such as singing or painting.

One of the simplest calming techniques is to take a minute of deep breathing every hour.

Another small change that can have a significant impact is to make it culturally acceptable to implement a clear boundary between work and non-work time by encouraging colleagues to disable email or switch off digital devices outside of working hours. Not only does this support relaxation, but it can also lead to better sleep and rest patterns, which is proven to improve performance.

## 2 ZOOM FATIGUE



Remote working has brought in a new concept of “Zoom Fatigue” Being on video for hours a day can be exhausting and the extra intensity of being on camera without the natural break and relaxed chat between meetings takes its toll.

Enabling colleagues to turn their camera off during meetings can help and also enhance the listening experience without the distractions that the visual brings.

## 3 CUT OUT DISTRACTIONS

Multi-tasking, where your attention is split between numerous tasks, has shown to result in a 10% reduction in your IQ as you switch focus from one job to another. As a result, neither task is completed optimally and increases in stress and fatigue may be felt.

Encourage your people, where possible, to finish one task before jumping to the next and see productivity and performance improve.

Similarly, by turning off notifications and, instead, scheduling time slots, such as 9-10am, 1-2pm and 4-5pm, to answer emails and messages (rather than checking them continuously throughout the day) gives you more control of the day, increases productivity, reduces stress and prevents the day becoming a reactionary experience.

## 4 IDENTIFY YOUR STRESS TRIGGERS

Research on emotional intelligence or EQ has shown that 80-85% of decisions are based on emotions, and that those people with higher levels of EQ are more resilient and effective in dealing with stress. There is a correlation between higher EQ and greater levels of success and performance<sup>8</sup>.

Encouraging teams to build a better understanding of emotional reactions to common workplace scenarios brings greater awareness of

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” *Aristotle*

personal stress triggers and an improved ability to manage and adjust the response. Emotions should rather be viewed as signals or data to assist us in guiding our subsequent actions. As with other types of data, we need to take time to analyse our emotions.

For example, although it sounds obvious, in stressful situations consider taking a pause before responding (the old adage “**count to 10**”) or ask a question to buy yourself time to think. The additional time taken to analyse the emotional reaction and respond rationally can be the difference between diffusing conflict or escalating the tension.

# 7 VITAL INGREDIENTS FOR YOUR WELLBEING STRATEGY IN 2020

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We have identified 7 principles for delivering sustainable employee wellbeing:

## 1 PREVENTATIVE

“prevention is better than cure”. Promote and create the right behaviours and embed them into your culture so that it becomes habitual.

## 2 HOLISTIC

It's not one-size-fits-all. Every individual will have their own wellbeing goals and these may change over time. Your wellbeing initiatives must have the flexibility to support the diverse needs of your team.

## 3 POSITIVE

The term “**health**” may have negative connotations and should be avoided when promoting wellbeing. Brand your wellbeing initiatives in a positive, exciting, aspirational way to encourage engagement. Use memorable and / or light-hearted names for your events that capture the interest and attention of your team.



## 4 GAMIFY

The power of setting realistic and achievable goals is well understood. Applying goal-setting principles to your wellbeing strategy using gamification is a fantastic way to drive adoption and engagement with your wellness agenda and improve outcomes.

## 5 TEAM BUILDING

Use wellbeing initiatives as an opportunity to create stronger teams, break hierarchical chains and build camaraderie.

## 6 COMBINE WITH CHARITY

Combining charity fundraising initiatives with your wellbeing strategy increases the awareness and impact of both with wellbeing driving your Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and your CSR supporting your wellbeing strategy.

## 7 LEAD FROM THE TOP

For any strategy to work, the genuine buy-in must be there from the top. Wellbeing is no different and, when ingrained into your company values and culture, the results speak for themselves.



# DIGITAL IS TRANSFORMING WELLBEING

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Whilst the concept of employee wellbeing has been around for a long time, technology is enabling businesses to transform the wellbeing of their colleagues and create engaged high-performing teams within a people-centric culture.

As history has shown, investing in and valuing your people is also a strategy for long-term sustainable profitability, innovation and success.

## DIGITISE YOUR WELLBEING STRATEGY WITH GOVIDA

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With market-leading levels of adoption, the GoVida platform digitises and powers your wellbeing strategy by applying the **7 vital ingredients** for sustainable employee wellbeing, allowing your business and colleagues to thrive.

Our platform connects colleagues across your business, promoting and creating positive wellbeing habits. Whether it be through our; activity challenges, mindful suite, goal-setting gamification, incentives or charity campaigns, GoVida empowers your team to stay engaged, connected and well.

We would love to hear from you and ignite your wellbeing strategy.

To find out more, get in touch: [hello@govida.io](mailto:hello@govida.io)