

# BOSTON COLLEGE

## CENTER FOR WORK & FAMILY

### EXECUTIVE BRIEFING SERIES

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## Employee Well-being: A Comprehensive Approach *Enhancing the Employee Experience and Business Outcomes*

### Definitions of Employee Well-being

The definition of well-being has been expanded to include multiple components that contribute to employee satisfaction in all areas of life -- work, relationships, community environment, as well as physical, emotional/mental, financial and spiritual health. Organizations are motivated to foster an organizational culture of well-being since it's both a competitive advantage and a key driver of business success.

Five essential elements of well-being that transcend culture and location, according to the *Gallup-Healthways Well-Being 5*, include:

- Purpose (satisfaction with daily activities and the motivation to achieve your goals);
- Social (strong relationships with people who support and care about you);
- Financial (sufficient financial resources for economic security);
- Community (feeling safe, positive about where you live and part of your neighborhood); and
- Physical (in good health) (Gallup, 2014).

Occupational health psychologists currently utilize an expanded context for discussing well-being defined as “a good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness (emotional health), and prosperity (success, financial security),” (APA, 2013) while WorldatWork suggests an “integrated well-being approach” that includes physical health, mental/emotional health, financial health and spiritual health (WorldatWork, 2012). The Corporate Athlete encourages attention to four dimensions (spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical) to ensure high-quality output in important life areas (Human Performance Institute, 2014).

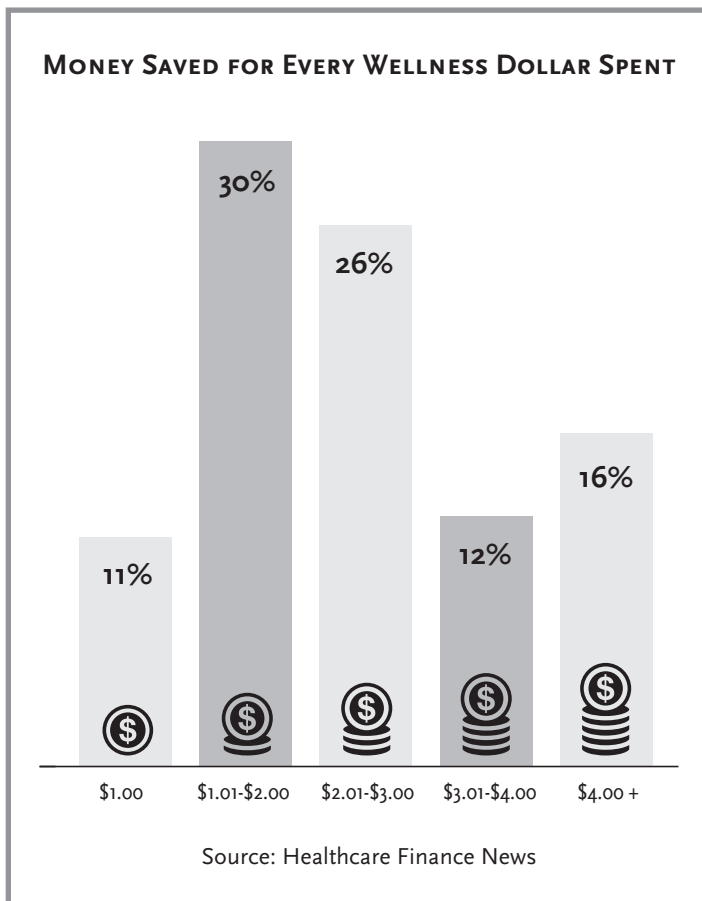
A recent report from Mercer, *Employee Well-Being: A New Way To Define Organizational Success*, found that we now embrace a broader view of well-being to include sleep and resilience. Well-being is defined as “the active state of pursuing health and life skills with the aim of achieving physical and emotional health and financial security. It's the confidence that a person has the ability, tools, and support to sustain individual health and productivity” (Mercer, 2015). Researchers at Work&Well-Being have established that “advancement, managerial and physical workplace considerations, as well as people's physical and psychological health” are the critical components of employee well-being -- the area of total well-being that can be affected by work and amenable to change through workplace initiatives (*retrieved from Work@Well-Being website*).

These varied conceptualizations of holistic well-being influence where well-being efforts are located in organizations, now commonly found in Diversity & Inclusion, Human Resources, Wellness, Medical, Employee Assistance or Work-Life. Well-being is broader than employee engagement, including life areas outside the workplace that can influence the work experience.

The focus of this Executive Briefing is on organizational efforts that create a work culture where employees can thrive for the benefit of the organization and themselves. The current research on well-being will be detailed as well as the organizational resources that can support employees to achieve their unique desired state of well-being, a condition that varies from person-to-person and fluctuates over time.

### Research on Employee Well-being

Research on employee well-being is a vast arena comprised of multiple disciplines with different concepts, methods and areas of focus. Researchers have explored numerous policies and factors that can influence employee well-being including -- Environment/Culture; Physical Health; Mental Health; Financial Well-being; Flexibility/Flexible Work Options; Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness; Sleep; Spiritual Well-being; Volunteering; and Technology.



### Environment/Culture

Organizations where employees have meaningful work, are valued for both their work and other attributes, and form connections between their job and organizational goals encourage positive employee well-being. This benefits employers as well, since both climate and culture combine for the organization to thrive. A well-being culture enhances productivity, health, and retention and can initiate a process where improvements in well-being lead to future gains in well-being, “completing a healthy organizational cycle” (Gallup, 2013). To build a healthy culture that promotes well-being, it is suggested that organizations should determine and actualize core values, provide opportunities to refresh and recharge, create physical space where people can do their best work, encourage time off and promote professional development (Talent Management and HR, 2015). In addition, organizations should target three elements to ensure the maximum benefit -- how health is viewed within workgroups, supervisor support of employee health, and organizational efforts to promote healthy employee behaviors (Zweber et al., 2015).

Companies with substantial health and wellness programs outperformed the S&P 500 stock market index over a six-year time period. Two additional studies confirmed that “high-performing health and well-being programs” also outperformed the S&P 500 Index. Although the reason for heightened performance cannot be attributed solely to wellness programs, the ROI is substantial for companies who invest in employee well-being (Mercer, 2016). ROI estimates vary from \$6.00 in healthcare savings for every dollar invested (single employer cardiac intervention); \$2.71 (Johnson & Johnson); \$2.30 (PwC); and \$1.50 (Rand Wellness Programs Study) (HBR, 2010; SHRM, 2015; PwC, 2014).

Some organizations are considering the Value on Investment (VOI) as it includes both the financial gains in addition to more abstract benefits such as fostering a healthy and productive workforce. VOI suggests more of a people focus and might fit better for organizations focused on a culture of health versus employee productivity (Huffington Post”, 2016).

Business leaders are encouraged to take an active role in influencing employees’ well-being. To do so, leaders must demonstrate a total commitment to well-being over the long term, communicate a clear definition of what well-being means to the organization, identify how individual and family well-being can positively impact the organization, become a role model for healthy behaviors that translate to every aspect of corporate life, and measure the impact

of well-being on business outcomes (Gallup, 2014). Along the same lines, well-being tends to be higher for individuals when employees experience the following conditions at work: control over their work, varied tasks, clear goals and regular feedback, supportive supervisors, good relationships with managers and co-workers, adequate compensation, job security with career advancement, and the sense that they are making valued contributions (GOV.UK, 2014).

Social connections — with family, community, and co-workers — have more recently been identified as a key aspect of well-being. Organizations that can leverage social supports at the workplace have found an effective way to contribute to a well-being climate (Mercer, 2015). Well-being was found to be “contagious,” so providing venues for employees to communicate their successful efforts and outcomes with each other also can encourage a culture of well-being (Gallup, 2012).

### Physical Health

Employers are paying close attention to employee health as research clearly demonstrates that health status has a direct effect on productivity as well as health care costs. Employees who are overweight, physically inactive, have untreated chronic health or mental health conditions,

smoke, abuse alcohol or report high levels of stress are less likely to be top performers. Employer health promotion programs can mitigate some of these risk factors resulting in lower health care expenditures and improved business outcomes including less absenteeism, greater engagement, higher retention rates, and being seen as an employer of choice (SHRM, 2011). Common health promotion programs include physical activity; healthy nutrition and weight management; tobacco cessation;

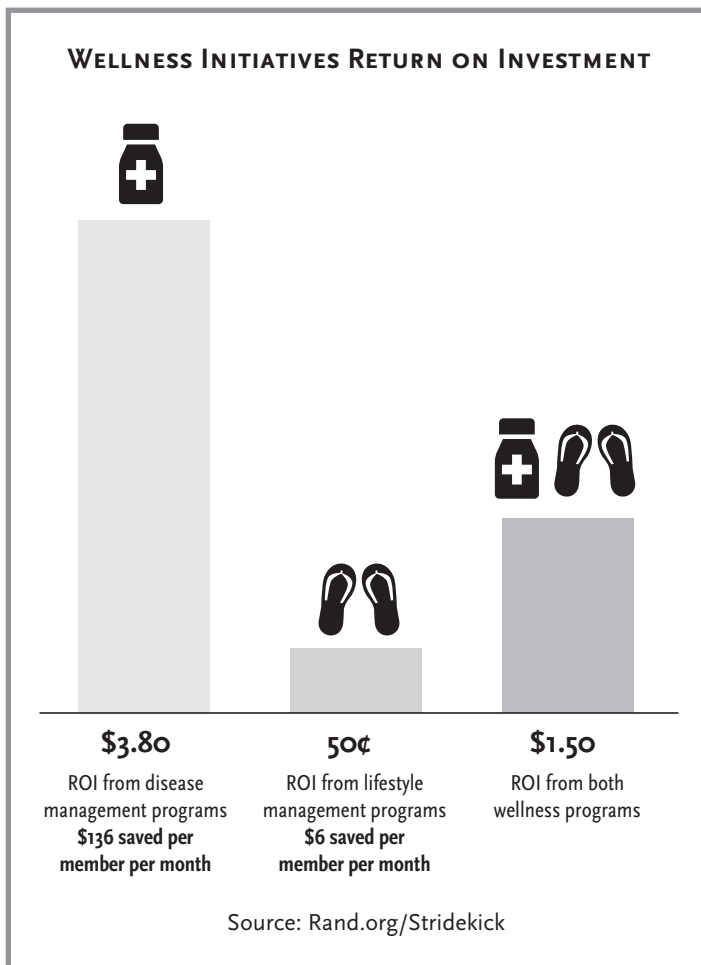
# Deloitte.

## Deloitte Empowered Well-being

Energy for Performance by Corporate Athlete is one of many learning programs Deloitte offers to their people to support them with the tools and resources so that they can be energized, confident, and aware in both their professional and personal lives. Working with the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute, this day and a half in-person course draws on the sciences of performance psychology, exercise physiology, and nutrition to create lifelong behavior change. Energy for Performance complements Deloitte’s well-being learning offerings by providing a multi-disciplinary methodology that connects body, mind and purpose, in line with Deloitte’s own approach to well-being. Strategic energy management helps Deloitte’s people become more productive and effective under pressure by teaching them how to manage their energy more efficiently in addition to managing their time. It helps connect personal purpose, mindfulness, and daily behaviors to ensure that energy investments are aligned with their own values and beliefs. Proper energy management helps Deloitte’s people feel more physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, stress resilient, and completely aligned with whatever mission is most important to them so they can ignite their full potential in work and life.

*“Well-being is not mutually exclusive to delivering value to clients, in fact it’s important in a high performance culture. Research tells us that people with less stress and more balance in their lives tend to be happier and more engaged at work. When they can produce high quality work and live their lives fully - everybody wins.”*

Jennifer Fisher, National Managing Director,  
Well-being, Deloitte



clinical preventive screenings and biometric assessments for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar; Diabetes management; and alcohol and drug abuse screening and intervention (Workplace Health Promotion Programs Guide, 2015).

Employers are also providing on-site nursing and other health services to enable employees to access preventative care while at the workplace. Eight in ten employers surveyed by the National Business Group on Health plan to offer nurse coaching for care and condition management while 72% will offer nurse coaching for lifestyle management. Nearly two-thirds will provide employees with self-service decision-making tools to help them become better health care consumers (National Business Group on Health, 2016). The National Business Group on Health also reports that telehealth services are on the rise: Nine in ten employers will make telehealth services available to employees and by 2020, it is predicted that virtually all large employers will offer telemedicine (National Business Group on Health, 2016).

## Mental Health

Research has shown that mental health problems reduce employee well-being, quality of life, and productivity at work. The economic impact is substantial, not only from absenteeism and disability, but also from the impact of the mental health concern. “Depression alone – occurring in one in ten adults at some point in their lives — cost more than \$210 billion in 2010, about half of which represents workplace costs” (Huffington Post, 2016). Yet, only 45% of working adults report that their employer provides the resources necessary to meet their mental health needs (APA, 2015).

Thriving employees have 41% lower health costs in addition to 35% lower turnover costs compared to those who are struggling (Gallup, 2012). Happy employees have, on average, 31% higher productivity and 37% higher sales, while their creativity is three times higher (APA, 2005). In addition, employees who score low on “life satisfaction” stayed home an average of 1.25 more days per month, which represents a decrease in productivity of 15 days per year (HBR, 2012). Lastly, it is important to be cognizant of physical space, as office design clearly affects the “health, wellbeing and productivity of its occupants” (The World Green Building Council, 2014).

Job conditions that are modified to reduce work demands and work-to-family conflict can promote employee mental health (Moen et al., 2015). In addition, having “decision authority” (control over work) positively affects job satisfaction and mental health, especially for older workers (Zaniboni et al., 2016).

## Financial Well-being

“Financial Wellness (also referred to as financial well-being) is a multi-faceted concept that describes the overall financial health of an individual” (Boston College, 2011). In 2015, more than 90% of 250 large employers planned to start or grow their financial wellness efforts (Aon, 2015).

Concerns about personal finances may influence employee well-being with “money (71%), work (69%), and the economy (59%)” reported to be the most common sources of stress (APA, 2014). Older workers are particularly concerned that they lack sufficient funds for retirement, while younger workers describe difficulty meeting their financial needs, especially paying considerable student loan debt. Close to 70% of college seniors who graduated in 2014 had debt averaging almost \$29,000 (TICAS, 2015). Access to financial education programs can lower financial stress and reduce absenteeism, while increasing productivity and loyalty (Boston College, 2011).

## Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

Recent studies conducted by the Work, Family & Health Network (WFHN) represent some of the most comprehensive efforts to examine the impact of flexibility at the workplace. One of their major investigations examined how both supportive supervisors and employee control over their work impact employee well-being. An organizational intervention (STAR) resulted in “reduced burnout, perceived stress, and psychological distress, and increased job satisfaction.” In addition, employees who participated in STAR were 40% more likely to stay with their employer over a three-year period (Moen et al., 2016).

An intervention at BestBuy examining team-level flexibility found that a Results Oriented Work Environment (ROWE) “promoted employees’ health behaviors: increasing the odds of quitting smoking, decreasing smoking frequency, and promoting perceptions of adequate time for healthy meals.” ROWE participation (performance-focused work flexibility) reduced excessive drinking (Moen et al., 2013) and resulted in employees getting almost an extra hour of sleep on work nights, exercising more, visiting the doctor when ill and staying home when sick (Moen et al., 2011).

Employees at MIT who participated in a remote work pilot reported less stress as well as higher productivity. An unexpected finding was that 62% of the pilot employees described an “improved feeling of trust and respect” (HBR, 2016). Another survey of teleworkers found that employer training on effective remote work led to



higher employee participation in wellness efforts (EBN, 2016). Research indicates that “an additional hour of commuting has also been linked to a six percent decrease in health-related activities, cutting into time for sleep, exercise, food preparation and shared meals” (Psychology Today, 2015).

Predictable time off each week accompanied by a weekly group check-in about work-life dynamics resulted in improved work and personal lives for employees at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Results were so successful that more than 2,000 teams in 66 BCG offices in 35 countries were involved within four-years (Perlow & Kelly, 2014).

## Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

Stress is the top health and productivity concern according to 75% of U.S. employers with 36% of employees disclosing that they are “stressed, highly stressed or extremely stressed” and 39% reporting moderate stress (Willis Towers Watson, 2016). Highly stressed employees report poorer sleep quality, more fatigue, and lower productivity compared to less stressed workers (GCC Insights, 2014).

In a related survey, U.S. employees rated staffing, low pay, and company culture as their top three stressors. However, employers’ identified two different employee stressors in their top three lists-- difficulty with work-life balance and technology interference (low pay was included on both the employee and employer list). Employers’ understanding of the key sources of employee stress is critical in order for workplace interventions to align with areas of greatest need. The survey also found that nearly half of employees did not want their employer to be able to access their personal health information (Willis Towers Watson, 2016).

Researchers emphasize that employees’ response to stress determines whether stress enhances or detracts from performance and well-being. Stress can be helpful to complete an important project, but chronic stress can be debilitating. Employees who exhibit positive self-care, particularly physical exercise, tend to be more resilient which enhances coping skills for managing stress and difficult situations (GCC Insights, 2014). Employees can learn to be more resilient. An engineering firm created a “comprehensive resiliency-training program to help employees understand the difference between useful stress and harmful stress, and to give them practical techniques for reducing stress, ranging from physical activities to mental exercises” (Mercer, 2015).

Tony Schwartz suggests that doing less is the secret to accomplishing more, advocating that the quality of energy

put into work is more important than the amount of time spent working (NY Times, 2013). He purports that “a new and growing body of multidisciplinary research shows that strategic renewal — including daytime workouts, short afternoon naps, longer sleep hours, more time away from the office and longer, more frequent vacations — boosts productivity, job performance and, of course, health.” Recovery time is critical for successful personal and performance outcomes with the lack of recovery time estimated to cost companies \$62 billion each year in lost productivity (HBR, 2016).



**HARVARD**  
UNIVERSITY

Harvard University’s Sustainability Plan aligns a highly decentralized campus around the holistic vision of “enhancing the well-being of our community within and across generations.” Led by the Executive Vice President, Harvard’s Central Administration made a conceptual shift from stress management to resilience when in 2012 it launched a *Mindfulness at Work* initiative for its 5,000 employees. The call to action was straightforward and inclusive: “Focus your attention, respond skillfully to stress and enhance your overall sense of wellbeing by learning to practice mindfulness in one of several free training programs, held on campus during work hours.”

Participants in a series of six-week courses overwhelmingly reported that the experience helped them be more effective employees and they had applied techniques they learned in their daily activities. Other offerings included half-day retreats, hour-long workshops, and a guided meditation telephone line. The program was adapted for hourly workers, many of whom are English Language Learners, and departments beyond Central Administration have provided similar programs. The initiative, co-led by the Office of Work/Life and Center for Wellness, continues to grow through partnerships with teams across the University including the Office for Sustainability.

Mindfulness meditation is one resource to mitigate employee stress and has been found to reduce anxiety (5-10%), depression (10-20%), and pain according to data from 47 studies (Reuters, 2014). Many companies, including Google, Intel, Aetna, and Goldman Sachs are teaching mindfulness and meditation techniques to help employees cope (Stewart, 2015). When corporate call center employees participated in a mindfulness stress management program, they reported reduced stress and improved well-being in addition to increased support from their participating work colleagues (Allexandre et al., 2016).

## **Sleep**

Employers are beginning to recognize that sleep quantity and quality is critical for productivity, physical health, and psychological well-being. Arianna Huffington suggests that sleep will determine “our ability to address and solve the problems we’re facing as individuals and as a society” (Huffington Post, 2015). “The irony is that a lot of people forego sleep in the name of productivity,” she points out. However, “our productivity is reduced substantially when we’re sleep deprived” (Fast Company, 2016).

Forty-percent of Americans sleep less than the recommended amount of seven to nine hours each night (Gallup, 2013). Understandably, busy work and family demands can result in insufficient sleep (Crain et al., 2014). Yet, workplace interventions can improve sleep. In fact, employees with family-supportive supervisors and control over their work time were found to experience improvements in sleep quantity and quality (Olson et al., 2015). Employers such as NASA, Nike, and Zappos have instituted “nap rooms” at the workplace and encourage employees to use them to re-charge (Sleep.org, 2016).

## **Spiritual Well-being**

There are various perspectives about the meaning of spirituality in organizations ranging from a respectful work environment, responsible corporate citizenship, to integrating spiritual activities into the workplace (The Center for Visionary Leadership, 2009). WorldatWork defines spiritual well-being as “one’s strong sense of self or purpose through beliefs, principles, values and ethical judgments,” adding that connections with others, self, and community are major aspects (WorldatWork, 2016).

Spiritual well-being was associated with higher job satisfaction even in instances where employees experienced difficult work situations and demanding environments. This led researchers to the conclusion that spiritual well-being can potentially cushion the impact of challenging workplace events (Tejeda, 2014). Spirituality at the workplace

can strengthen employees’ morale, commitment, and productivity due to less stress and burnout, leading to positive employee well-being (Ajala, 2013). Spirituality was also shown to promote mental well-being and reduce stress and exhaustion (Arnetz et al., 2013).

## **Volunteering/Philanthropy**

Many organizations incorporate volunteering and days of service into their employee engagement strategies. Beyond doing good, providing assistance to charitable organizations can improve mental and physical health, as well as a person’s general well-being. Research also demonstrates that volunteers score much higher on self-evaluations of emotional well-being, personal independence, and overall life satisfaction. “These findings show that the benefits of volunteering help strengthen communities and have real, measurable health benefits for the people who volunteer,” said Kate Rubin, UnitedHealth Group vice president of Social Responsibility. “Employers enjoy the benefits of physically and mentally healthier employees; those that support volunteering programs in the workplace see added benefits that drive directly to their bottom line” (United Health Group, 2013).

In a survey of more than 1,000 U.S. employees ages 18 and over, 61% of participants said that community service helps them improve their sense of well-being and effectiveness at the office. In a separate survey of more than 3,000 adults, an overwhelming majority of participants reported feeling mentally and physically healthier after a volunteer experience (Triple Pundit, 2015).

## **Technology**

Much has been written about the tradeoffs associated with the use of information and communication technology. With increased connectivity, flexibility and easy access to information, we also see more stress, blurring of work and personal demands, and pressure to be available 24/7. More frequent use of technology has been associated with longer work hours, greater workload, increased pace of work demands and interference in employees’ personal lives (Chesley, 2010). Close to one-third of employees’ report that technology contributes to stress on the job (Chesley & Johnson, 2012). The results of recent research indicates “if an organization perpetuates the ‘always on’ culture it may prevent employees from fully disengaging from work, eventually leading to chronic stress,” per Professor Liuba Belkin, of Lehigh’s College of Business and Economics and co-author of the study (Belkin, 2016).

Detachment from work during non-work hours is imperative for employee well-being and on-going productivity (Knowledge@Wharton, 2012). Employees and employers can work together to customize policies that fit their unique business needs and create an organizational environment where technology can enhance, rather than detract, from achieving their best work (Chesley, 2014). Clear guidance from leaders and managers regarding expectations for being connected can provide employees with the explicit permission to disconnect during off hours and establish a protocol for urgent or emergency situations that require immediate response. This can help break the “cycle of responsiveness” described by Harvard Professor Leslie Perlow in “Sleeping with your Smartphone” (Perlow, 2014).

However, almost 70% of employees note that technology use allows them to be more productive (Chesley & Johnson, 2012). In addition, using technology to stay connected with family and friends helps employees to better manage stress at work (LIS US Center, 2014). Health-related apps and devices such as Fitbits can promote healthy living with 23% of full-time workers finding that mobile technology supports their wellness efforts. Employees are

using apps for calorie counting, healthy recipes, and fitness tracking (Gallup, 2014). There’s even a mindfulness app called Buddhify!

### Legal Considerations

Legal considerations need to be reviewed when implementing well-being efforts and wellness programs. On May 17, 2016, the EEOC amended its regulations (effective July 16, 2016), and employers are encouraged to be familiar with the specifics of these amendments in order to avoid liability. Compliance with several federal laws is critical, most notably the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA). Areas covered include, but are not limited to, voluntary versus mandated involvement in company-sponsored wellness initiatives; informing employees about information collected, how it will be used, and any restrictions on its usage; guidelines about offering incentives to participate; and full disclosure about the terms and conditions of the program. Information collected by employers must remain anonymous and is protected under HIPAA (The National Law Review, 2016; EEOC, 2015).



### Johnson & Johnson Healthy & Me™

Supporting the vision to have the healthiest workforce, Johnson & Johnson has launched Healthy & Me™, a dynamic mobile platform that conveniently connects employees to their everyday health and wellbeing. Unique to J&J, Healthy & Me™ is a confidential and customizable way to engage employees with a range of personalized health and fitness programs. The app lets employees and spouse/partners earn points for healthy behaviors that can be redeemed for charitable contributions and quarterly sweepstakes prizes. The app also lets users connect with colleagues around the globe through in-app social networking and company-wide challenges. It’s a new way for people to connect to their health goals – with lots of encouragement, rewards and fun along the way. Healthy & Me™ is currently available to all employees and their spouses in US, Puerto Rico, India and UAE and is expanding to global employees, one country at a time.

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*“Our employees are our greatest asset, and we believe that by investing in their health, we are investing in the success of our business.”*

Alex Gorsky, Chairman and CEO of Johnson & Johnson

## Components of Employee Well-being Efforts

Seventy-six percent of HR professionals report that their organization offered some type of wellness program, resource or service to their employees in 2014 (SHRM, 2015; SHRM, 2016). Below are the components and resources that can contribute to an organizational environment where employee well-being can flourish.

<p><b>A Culture/Organizational Climate of Employee Well-being</b> where:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The links between organizational success and well-being are articulated</li> <li>• Well-being efforts are aligned with organizational objectives, values, and priorities</li> <li>• There is an on-going, long-term commitment to employee well-being</li> <li>• Specific staff/teams throughout the organization are charged with championing well-being as their primary responsibility</li> <li>• Supervisors and senior leaders are rewarded for supporting employee well-being efforts</li> <li>• Employees at all levels are engaged, top down and bottom up</li> <li>• Barriers to well-being (long hours, travel schedules) are acknowledged with solutions designed to meet business and personal needs</li> <li>• The impacts of well-being efforts are measured over time</li> <li>• Family members are encouraged to participate</li> </ul>
<p><b>A Supportive Work Environment</b> where employees have:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful work that recognizes them as unique contributors</li> <li>• Positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues</li> <li>• Opportunities for career advancement and professional development/growth</li> <li>• Job satisfaction and a sense of purpose</li> <li>• A safe physical environment that enhances productivity</li> <li>• Time-off for recovery/stress-reduction/vacation/illness</li> <li>• Volunteering opportunities to give back to the community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supportive Supervisors/Managers</b> responsible for:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting and supporting employee well-being</li> <li>• Engaging in and being a role model with their own well-being behaviors to negate any stigma associated with involvement</li> <li>• Supporting employees in both their work and personal lives</li> <li>• Focusing on performance/outcomes rather than face time</li> <li>• Providing clear guidelines on availability, workload and work goals with regular feedback</li> <li>• Encouraging team-level communications on workload/work plans</li> <li>• Determining how to best accomplish individual/team goals with an eye toward well-being</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communicate</b> frequently and on an on-going basis about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links between well-being, organizational priorities and business goals/outcomes -- what well-being means to the organization</li> <li>• Resources available to achieve a culture of well-being</li> <li>• Your well-being “brand” or “messages” to reinforce commitment and involvement</li> <li>• Successful efforts and accomplishments</li> <li>• The importance of employee well-being in recruitment efforts</li> <li>• Employee feedback about areas of strength and improvement</li> <li>• Employee privacy must be respected, but make it known that workplace supports are available to assist interested employees</li> </ul>



<p><b>Health and Wellness Programs</b> such as:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coverage for mental and behavioral health assessments/treatment and mental health supports</li> <li>• Health risk assessments/screenings/coaching and disease management programs</li> <li>• Access to fitness programs and physical fitness support</li> <li>• Nutrition counseling including access to healthy foods at work</li> <li>• Programs for substance abuse counseling, smoking cessation and weight loss</li> <li>• Telemedicine resources, 24-hour nurse line and, if possible, on-site medical care</li> </ul>
<p>Employee <b>Resources</b> including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee Assistance Programs/ Work-Life Programs offering resources and referrals</li> <li>• Childcare referrals, on-site centers and back-up care</li> <li>• Eldercare supports, resources and information</li> <li>• Educational information/supports for children of all ages, including college counseling</li> <li>• Supports for parents advocating for children with special healthcare needs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Flexible Work Options</b> that allow employees to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craft a schedule that fits best with their work style and job tasks</li> <li>• Match job requirements/workload with lifestyle needs over time</li> <li>• Have predictable schedules that can reduce stress as well as be able to adjust working time to meet personal needs – self-care, medical/mental health appointments, and family care</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seminars, Workshops and Training</b> on:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the organization looks like when everyone lives the core values of well-being</li> <li>• The importance of resilience and recovery time</li> <li>• Healthy behaviors and stress management/mindfulness</li> <li>• Being a supportive supervisor</li> <li>• Effectively working remotely/flexibly</li> <li>• Managing flexible workers and teams</li> </ul>
<p>Leveraging <b>Connections/ Relationships</b> via:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)</li> <li>• Diversity &amp; Inclusion efforts</li> <li>• Support groups, group fitness activities and opportunities to join with colleagues around well-being events</li> <li>• Worksite spaces that encourage connections and conversations</li> <li>• Employer-supported volunteering opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Health</b> efforts can include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial education seminars/counseling</li> <li>• Adequate compensation and regular performance reviews</li> <li>• Job security transparency</li> <li>• Retirement and other saving plans</li> <li>• Assistance with student debt</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spiritual</b> needs addressed to encourage a focus on:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful work</li> <li>• Purposeful work</li> <li>• Feeling connected with others</li> <li>• Opportunities to share one’s spiritual side, when appropriate</li> </ul>

## Creating a Healthy Workplace

The presence of employees who are successful at work and in their personal lives will increase an organization's productivity, retention, engagement and business results. So how can your organization decide which of the components listed above reflect your employees' needs, business goals, and organizational values? First, you need to develop a vision and comprehensive strategy for all business functions and employees at various levels that emphasizes a holistic approach to employee well-being. Your ultimate goal is to create an organization where employees are able to do their best work because all aspects of their lives are nourished.

It is critical to examine the culture and current practices of all areas of the organization to determine how they impact well-being. Organizations sometimes make the mistake of having their efforts in silos rather than adopting an integrated approach. A thorough assessment can help to develop a well-being strategy that is tailored and customized to fit an organization's population, work environment, and workplace culture. Workplace champions are needed who focus on well-being as their primary responsibility.

It is suggested that organizations focus on the areas of greatest need to select the components that are the best fit. Don't just start a fitness program, offer healthy options in the vending machines, or follow the lead of your competitors. Rather, consider what components will yield the highest return on investment for both your employees and your business. Ask employees about their greatest stressors and solicit their input about the aspects of their workplace environment that interfere with their productivity and health. Get senior leader and manager buy-in as they influence how efforts are translated and impact how employees experience well-being efforts. Consider developing a well-being "brand" and consistent messaging to engage employees in on-going programming and initiatives.

Lastly, make sure that you have baseline measurements of important employee and business outcomes so you can chart your progress over time. By delivering a multi-faceted approach to enhance employee well-being, your enterprise can create an organization where people want to go to work and have the resources to accomplish their best work (APA, 2015).

### Prudential

Prudential's comprehensive corporate health strategy focuses on Personal, Organizational and Community Health

- **Personal:** Services that support the overall health of individual employees
- **Organizational:** Services that support the business groups and overall organizational health
- **Community:** Events that improve the health of the communities where we live and work

Prudential has taken their well-being efforts to an even higher level by leveraging organizational resources to impact the well-being of their local community. In addition to Prudential giving back to the neighborhood through volunteering or other health-related efforts, employees report that community involvement helps to enhance their well-being and performance at work.

An example of a recent health-related partnership with Prudential's headquarters city Newark, NJ is the "Newark Walks" Walking Trail, set to launch on October 7, 2016. The "Newark Walks" Walking Trail is a formal

3-mile walking path in Downtown Newark that will highlight over 50 iconic and culturally historic points of interest in the city. Through a collaborative partnership between The Prudential Foundation and Prudential Global Health Organization (formerly Health and Wellness), the trail promises to showcase the city's rich history, encourage a culture of health through increased mobility and pride of place, and reiterate Prudential's commitment to the city of Newark. The trail is complemented by a digital mobile application that guides users as they navigate the trail while highlighting the distance they have walked and links them to additional online resources for the city.



**NEWARK WALKS**  
explore our city



takecare

Go.Be.Happy.

## Marriott Take Care

The essence of the culture at Marriott is based on the deep belief developed by the founders that first and foremost in business, Marriott must remain committed to put people first and take care of the associates. Marriott launched the TakeCare Wellbeing program in 2010 to expand on these core values. This past year, TakeCare evolved to a new level. Marriott now calls it the TakeCare Movement – an elevated focus on associate happiness and wellbeing. Marriott is carrying forward the “put-people-first” legacy of the founders and building a culture of wellbeing and happiness by providing the tools associates need to live their best lives – focusing on their physical, emotional, career and financial wellbeing. TakeCare sponsors associate signature programs that correspond to three pillars of associate wellbeing and happiness:

1. **Me:** Taking care of individual body, mind and spirit, as well as embracing opportunity to build a more financially secure future, including a wealth of new career opportunities
2. **My Co-Workers:** Fostering unity and feeling valued as part of Marriott’s family of associates
3. **My Company:** Feeling pride in Marriott’s role in promoting a better society

TakeCare is more than an initiative for Marriott. It’s a movement—one that supports every associate in the pursuit of happiness and wellbeing that spans physical, emotional and financial realms and includes feeling like they belong and are valued in the workplace, and have a role in their communities. It is powered by the passion and grassroots efforts of associates, led by volunteer TakeCare Champions, at locations throughout the world.



ABBVIE VITALITY

Balanced Lives | Active Bodies  
Fulfilled Selves | Healthy Minds

## AbbVie Vitality

Vitality is AbbVie’s overall approach to employee well-being. It is a sustained state of healthy behaviors: physical, mental/emotional, workplace, financial and work/life (including flexibility), resulting in resilience and energy for the “whole self.” In other words: Vitality helps employees perform their best both inside and outside the workplace—ultimately, equipping employees to make a remarkable impact on patients’ lives around the world.

Launched in 2014, this global internal brand includes many events, programs and resources for managers and employees, and is closely aligned to AbbVie’s culture. Thousands of employees from more than 50 countries participate annually in AbbVie’s two signature Vitality events: (1) AbbVie World of Well-Being, a global health awareness event that includes a week of education, games and activities followed by a 30-day wellness challenge encouraging peer-to-peer engagement and the development of healthy habits; and (2) AbbVie in Motion, a global four-week team exercise challenge that motivates employees to increase their physical activity each week.

The combination of the company’s efforts to focus on Vitality, culture initiatives and other programs continue to demonstrate to AbbVie employees that the company takes employee well-being seriously. AbbVie’s annual employee survey results continue to show an increase in work-life balance scores each year and 88% of those surveyed after participation in Vitality programming say AbbVie cares about their overall well-being.

## Conclusions

There are many variables to consider when developing well-being efforts, particularly since the workplace is comprised of employees from diverse backgrounds. Employee well-being is affected by the organizational culture, supervisory style, and cohesiveness of work teams at the workplace as well as the societal, community and family environments where employees reside. Individuals should be able to customize their well-being involvement to take advantage of the programs and initiatives that resonate best with their personal needs. Therefore, well-being initiatives need to be comprehensive, yet flexible enough to embrace the diversity among employees and their situations.

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A complete list of references is available at [www.bc.edu/cwf](http://www.bc.edu/cwf)

## A Publication of the Boston College Center for Work & Family

### About this Series

Written for an executive level audience, the Boston College Center for Work & Family Executive Briefing Series addresses topical and strategic issues of particular relevance to the current business climate. The series highlights research findings, data trends and best practices in a concise format, aiming to foster action-oriented dialogue within organizations. Each issue features an accompanying PowerPoint presentation that captures key points and includes a section for practitioners to customize and add organization-specific data.

### About the Center

Since its founding in 1990, the Boston College Center for Work & Family (BCCWF) has been a leader in helping organizations create successful workplaces that support and develop healthy and productive employees. We provide a bridge linking the academic community to leaders in employment settings who are committed to promoting workforce effectiveness. With 100 employers as our corporate partners, the Center for Work & Family positively impacts the lives of nearly 4 million employees through research, education and contributing a leading voice to conversations on contemporary issues around work and life.



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