

# The Undeniable Link Between Well-Being and Productivity

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What do most companies think about well-being?

When it comes to the who, what and why, some organizations aren't sure exactly where to prioritize well-being. While almost any good leader will tell you the well-being of their team members matters, many of them may also think of well-being campaigns as a value-added, feel-good project that's siloed in HR and that ranks far below their other leadership priorities. This is evidenced by the canceled or abbreviated meetings to discuss well-being and the largely missing business plans/strategic thinking that undergirds and sustains effective well-being programs.

Well-being is essential to the success, productivity and performance of high-achieving organizations. Here's the truth about well-being.

Well-being is not just about physical health.

Some companies participate in programs that provide objective measurements of their employees' BMI, waist size, cholesterol and a host of other metrics. While those measurements can provide some insight into ways to support employees, they don't give any insight into the overall well-being of a company's teams and key contributors.

A difficult workplace can take a serious toll on physical health. Employees who are at the peak of physical well-being can also face serious emotional and mental well-being issues that a leader may not notice unless they're genuinely tuned into their team's well-being and are able to cultivate a culture that normalizes sharing and solving well-being concerns.

Well-being is not just an HR responsibility.

Well-being is everyone's responsibility, and it's particularly the responsibility of leaders. How many times have you seen your company's internal teams roll out a program with great fanfare, only to watch it fall flat because of a lack of support throughout the organization?

Your company's leaders must treat well-being as a shared responsibility and align on ways the organization will meaningfully support well-being initiatives. When a well-being focus signifies a radical shift for an organization, it's even more critical that leaders throughout the organization are outspoken about aligning the ways they manage their teams with the company's well-being focus.

Well-being is not just a nice-to-have.

Well-being encompasses the physical, emotional and mental energy needs of the workforce, as well as its readiness and capacity for performance.

It's not a bonus that we focus on if we have time after the work is done. It's the very foundation of your people's capacity to perform. The equation for sustainable performance, integral to your talent strategy is:

- Competence: the skills and talents your people bring to the job, plus
- Capacity: the energy bandwidth required for them to bring their competence to life

When your people are tired, sick, anxious and overwhelmed, how much capacity do they have to perform?

Instead of thinking of well-being as a supplemental program that you'll get around to if you have time/bandwidth, think of it as a business discipline. When woven into the business, a focus on well-being can create a more sustainable, healthy and productive workforce—one that's ready to create, innovate and perform.

Well-being can make a difference.

As a business discipline, well-being connects directly to your business's ability to complete its core functions. From a simple, high-level perspective, well-being programs increase productivity. For example:

- When a manufacturing company dedicated time during their workday for employees to stretch before going on shift, work-related injuries declined by 50% and workers' comp costs decreased by \$800,000.

- Employers who create cultures of health see 11% lower turnover.
- Employers see astounding reductions in workplace burnout when they create a culture that prioritizes engagement, well-being and honoring individual strengths.

Well-being improves employees' health, their engagement and their ability to be sustainably productive.

Well-being and productivity are linked.

Teams that are drained tend to struggle with productivity. They spend more time on internal minutia and self-protective behaviors: in-fighting, solo-ing, silo-ing and being territorial.

When people are exhausted physically, emotionally and mentally, they can naturally be more defensive. They're not able to focus on things that matter, add value, or connect meaningfully with their colleagues because they just don't have the bandwidth to care and contribute.

On the other hand, leaders who focus on their people's well-being can build energy-inspired workplaces, where they keep their people fueled and encourage sustainable work. These leaders recognize that energy is the biggest differentiator in teams' abilities to perform and they equally prioritize performance and recovery as vital components of a healthy team.

Energy-inspired leaders connect well-being and productivity by:

- Communicating clearly and transparently. When people are unsure about where they stand, they funnel energy into stress and anxiety, which damages their well-being and reduces their productivity. In an atmosphere of clarity, people are 53% more efficient and their overall work performance increases by 25%.
- Building a culture of high trust, so less time and energy is spent on in-fighting and territorialism.
- Developing and enforcing boundaries, so people actually have time to rest and recover when they're away from work.
- Understanding the sum of their choices (sleep, nutrition, technology use, physical activity, etc.) has an impact on their well-being, which then impacts their productivity. When we're sleep-deprived, for example, we're measurably worse leaders and team members. When we allow technology to distract us and lure us into multitasking and context-switching, we're actively losing time and become more fatigued and less productive.

Productive people aren't productive by accident. Instead, productive people recognize the connection between their energy/well-being and sustainable high performance. They use their energy and commit to recovery as part of their overall well-being, knowing that the right decisions about energy can fuel their productivity and success.