



Work wellbeing for talent attraction, productivity and retention

A playbook for employers



Work
Wellbeing



Attract top talent

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Work wellbeing for talent attraction, productivity and retention

In today's hiring landscape, people are seeking greater wellbeing at work – more happiness, satisfaction and purpose, and less stress. In fact, the majority of people say it's important to find companies that care about how you feel.¹

Organisations that prioritise wellbeing are more resilient, sustainable and ultimately exhibit stronger business performance.² That's why caring for employees' wellbeing is one of the best investments a business can make to maximise results and ensure overall success. This is true throughout the entire employee lifecycle, from recruitment to retention.

Read on for wellbeing strategies designed to attract top talent, boost productivity and retain happy employees.

Methodology

The information in this playbook is based on a systematic literature review of more than 3,000 academic studies to assess the efficacy of workplace interventions that drive work wellbeing conducted by Indeed's long-term partners, the University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre and the World Wellbeing Movement.²

¹ Indeed Work Wellbeing Report, 2023

² Cunningham, S., Fleming, W., Regier, C., Kaats, M., & De Neve, J. (2024) Work Wellbeing Playbook: A Systematic Review of Evidence-Based Interventions to Improve Employee Wellbeing. World Wellbeing Movement



Attract top talent

Over 92% of jobseekers say they would find wellbeing data helpful during their search.¹ They're looking for employers that not only offer fair pay but also flexible working conditions and a sense of belonging. To stand out in a competitive talent acquisition market, employers should focus on enhancing practices that influence employee wellbeing, such as:

- ✓ Compensation
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Inclusion and belonging

1 Indeed Work Wellbeing Report, 2023



Compensation

Employee compensation reflects an organisation's commitment to work wellbeing. Fairly compensated employees are more satisfied with their jobs, loyal to their organisations and better able to support their families.



Be transparent about pay and be open to giving pay rises to narrow inequalities.



Give employees opportunities to renegotiate pay and outline the process for negotiations.



Pay a living wage at minimum as this can improve health and reduce symptoms of mental illness.



Share profits with employees, for example, through stock options or bonuses.



Implement group incentive pay to foster greater information sharing, trust in management and a more positive work culture.

- Be sure to share work demands equitably and ask team members about any work stressors that may affect their wellbeing and performance.

Flexibility

Granting employees more freedom over where and when they work can improve their wellbeing and productivity. Flexibility can also be offered through periods of leave for personal or professional reasons, promoting rejuvenation and inspiration.



Give employees the option to work from home.

- Provide employees with equipment like headphones and keyboards to foster an environment of comfort and productivity.
- Remind employees to take breaks and consider implementing a digital disconnection policy to help them set boundaries.
- Ensure remote employees are equally considered for promotion, receive sufficient feedback and avoid working excessive overtime.



Let employees have autonomy over their schedule to reduce stress and improve work-life balance.



Jobseekers were willing to give up **20% of their income** in order to have a say regarding their working schedules.



Recharge employees with the option to take leave.

- Offer sabbaticals (paid leave to focus on professional development) and deferred compensation (leave that defers a portion of an employee's salary over time).



Encourage employees to take any available paid parental leave.

- Provide parents with paid parental leave beyond the statutory minimum to help protect their mental health.
- Promote gender equality by encouraging fathers to take parental leave.
- Establish mechanisms to mitigate negative career consequences such as missed training or promotional opportunities.

Inclusion and belonging

While **diversity** describes a group's demographic composition, **inclusion** is the degree to which all diverse groups are involved, heard and considered in organisational processes and decisions. **Belonging** happens when people feel accepted and supported as their true, authentic selves.



Promote inclusivity – diverse teams with an inclusive culture not only support employee wellbeing but can boost business performance through innovation and leadership.



Reduce systemic biases in recruitment and promotion processes.

- Remove words associated with gender stereotypes from job descriptions.
- Anonymise applicants to overcome stereotyping.
- Provide diversity training for recruitment managers.
- To reduce bias, test applicants at later stages of the recruitment process (e.g. work samples or cognitive ability tests).



Engage employees in decision-making to increase job satisfaction and spark innovation.



Improve senior-level representation through mentoring and sponsorship, especially for underrepresented employee groups.

Boost productivity and performance

How people feel about their work and their workplace can greatly affect job performance. When employees are happy, they are significantly more likely to work more effectively, energetically and creatively.¹ Employers can help workers thrive and improve productivity by supporting the drivers of wellbeing, including:

- ✓ Energy
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Management
- ✓ Achievement
- ✓ Purpose

¹ Indeed Work Wellbeing Report, 2023



Energy

Energised employees are more engaged, productive and happy at work when compared to tired employees. Work-related stress tends to drain people's energy, so getting this under control is key to improving work wellbeing.



Build employee resilience.

- Help employees reduce work-related stressors, find solutions for conflict resolution, and decrease negative self-talk with cognitive behavioural therapy.
- Consider creating a communication policy to help prevent over-connectivity and excessive overtime.



Encourage employees to take short breaks throughout the work day to stabilise energy and productivity levels.



Educate employees on sleep hygiene.

- Educating employees about getting good sleep can reduce presenteeism and improve productivity. This is especially important for shift workers.
- Strategies such as morning sun exposure and evening screen-time reduction can help employees sleep better.



Offer mindfulness, meditation and yoga courses to support employee wellbeing over the long term.



Integrate wellbeing initiatives into workplace culture.

- Focus on improving job conditions to reduce employee stress and integrate personal development into the workday. Company-led initiatives should come before asking employees to manage stress through their own time and effort.

Learning

Empowering employees with autonomy and access to learning and development elevates engagement, flexibility and productivity.



Give employees autonomy to accelerate their learning.

- Employees who possess autonomy overcome workplace challenges more quickly through accelerated learning and adaptation.
- The benefits of autonomy are only revealed when employees feel trusted by their supervisors, so avoid micromanagement.



Offer relevant and diverse learning opportunities.

- Encourage your team to identify areas where they would benefit from enhanced learning support and invest in their professional and personal development.



Foster a culture of continuous learning.

- Integrate learning into daily activities. This can enhance employee engagement, job satisfaction and retention. It also increases ROI from training by motivating employees to apply their newly acquired knowledge on the job.

Management

Managers play a crucial role in promoting work wellbeing. Interventions that target managerial engagement, professional development, stress reduction and emotional intelligence benefit the entire organisation by enhancing a manager's ability to effectively support teams.



Continuously invest in manager training to equip managers with the knowledge, skills and resources to support their team's wellbeing.

- Prosocial training programmes can teach participants about issues like respectful and peaceful communication, understanding and tolerating other points of views, and learning to rely on others.



Reduce manager stress to give them more capacity to support others.

- Improving work conditions such as excessive work demands or low job security can help reduce stress.



Enhance managerial support and accessibility with frequent communication, especially during organisational change.



Strengthen emotional intelligence (EI) in managers through repeated training.

- Managers with high EI – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social competency – make successful leaders because they are able to identify and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others.

Achievement

Achievement results from overcoming challenges through skill, effort and dedication. Employees' wellbeing may be linked to the achievement of work-related goals that they consider valuable. Thus, organisations that support employees in accomplishing meaningful goals may see improvements in both wellbeing and productivity.



Co-develop the performance review process.

- Enlist employees to help design an effective, fair and supportive performance review process. This can help promote greater transparency, generate higher-quality feedback and improve performance outcomes, but it should not necessarily be used as a basis for compensation or rewards.



Set goals as a team to drive performance.

- Determining what goals to tackle as a team and basing individual goals on these targets is an effective approach to optimising group performance. Specific and challenging goals yield higher group performance compared to non-specific or easy goals.
- Individual goals that focus on contributing to the group's success positively impact group outcomes. Goals that focus solely on individual performance can create competition and reduce trust, ultimately harming group performance.
- Note that conscientious employees are more likely to be satisfied with jobs that involve goal-setting than others.

Purpose

Purpose can be a powerful motivator to drive workplace performance. Employees who derive meaning from their work are more engaged, productive, collegial, resilient and satisfied. Helping employees unlock their strengths and align with their purpose can improve both physical and mental health.



Highlight the prosocial elements of work to ignite employee motivation, encourage teamwork and improve performance.



Productivity among call centre workers increased by **51%** and among fundraisers by **400%** as a result of prosocial task framing.



Promote a strengths-based approach.

- Have employees reflect on their strengths and apply them in their job.
- Unlock employee strengths using questionnaires, group-based reflection and performance-management techniques.



Support employees through job crafting.

Encourage employees to identify where they can derive greater meaning from their jobs:

- **Task crafting:** altering the type, scope, sequence and number of tasks.
- **Relational crafting:** altering work-related social interactions.
- **Cognitive crafting:** altering perceptions of work.



Build reflection into workflows through conversations, coaching and workshops.



Connect employees' work to the organisational mission.

- Have one organisational mission and translate it into a concrete objective.
- Connect employees' daily work to the objective with inspirational language.

Keep employees (happy)

Increasing feelings of happiness, purpose and satisfaction while reducing stress at work goes a long way towards cultivating a motivated workforce. To enhance these four wellbeing indicators and avoid losing valuable workers, employers can focus on the drivers that impact them, including:

- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Appreciation
- ✓ Support
- ✓ Stress



Trust

Trust fosters a safe work environment where employees feel supported and valued. Employees who trust their organisation, managers and coworkers are more likely to express their ideas, feel encouraged to innovate and collaborate, exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction, and manage stress more effectively.



Practise corporate social responsibility (CSR).

- Studies show that employees of companies that practise CSR, for example by donating to charities, exhibit higher levels of organisational trust and job satisfaction, which are known drivers of retention.
- CSR activities can demonstrate to employees that their organisation cares about more than just profits, which can improve employee-management relations.



Create a climate of psychological safety (PS).

- Trust is a critical component of PS and, in turn, a strong catalyst for work engagement and mental wellbeing. Employees who feel a high sense of PS are more likely to share ideas, ask questions and voice concerns.
- PS helps teams navigate remote working challenges more efficiently.
- PS helps diverse teams find common ground, build inclusion and spark engagement, especially for minority workers.



Establish multiple communication channels.

- Failure to share critical information can result in negative attitudes, low job satisfaction and employee turnover. Create multiple lines of communication across and within teams to provide employees with timely and relevant information, as well as ways to raise questions or concerns.



Facilitate collaboration to build coworker trust.

- Offer training courses, team-building workshops, regular meetings and social events to facilitate a more collaborative and inclusive work environment where employees feel a sense of belonging.
- Employees often build informal social groups based on shared background characteristics such as race, ethnicity or native language. Formalising these groups into Employee Resource Groups with the mission of building inclusivity can improve mental health and wellbeing.

Appreciation

Expressing genuine appreciation to your employees can have a profound impact on their wellbeing. This simple action can help increase job satisfaction, decrease burnout, improve daily emotions and strengthen coworker relationships.



Cultivate a culture of recognition.

- Recognise both team and individual performance to enhance collaboration and trust and foster a sense of belonging and organisational commitment.
- Encourage peer recognition and self-recognition. In fact, managers should schedule team gatherings to express gratitude towards one another and one's self.
- Seek feedback from clients, customers or patients, and celebrate positive reviews.



Be SAGE in how you deliver recognition.

Employee recognition must be thoughtfully delivered to improve work wellbeing.

- **S**pecific about what the employee is being recognised for.
- **A**ppropriate in terms of delivery timing, setting and mode of communication.
- **G**enuine, authentic and sincere.
- **E**quitably distributed across the workforce (ensuring remote, hybrid and independent workers are not overlooked).



Reward employees for their effort.

- Consider employee motivations and needs when designing reward systems. Evaluate the impact of rewards to ensure they do not increase work-related pressure, competition or inequality.
- Offer monetary rewards to offset the negative impacts of demanding or low-intrinsic work.
- Offer non-monetary rewards such as extra paid leave and flexible working options to foster work-life balance and wellbeing.



Prioritise decency, kindness and civility to amplify the wellbeing impact of recognition.

Support

Employees who feel supported at work are less stressed, more satisfied with their job and perform better than employees who feel neglected. To create a culture of support, ask employees how they are feeling, communicate more often with those who are struggling, facilitate peer support and nurture work-life balance.



Seek feedback from your employees through one-on-one meetings, team meetings and employee surveys.



Support the autonomy of employees by considering their perspectives, providing greater choice and encouraging self-initiation.



Facilitate peer support to foster positive emotions and improved career satisfaction in individuals, as well as generate an atmosphere of collegiality and appreciation which can lead to stronger business performance.



Nurture work-life balance to reduce employee stress and improve job satisfaction.



Stress

Employee stress can pose serious risks to work wellbeing if left unaddressed. Stress can arise from various work-related factors like an excessive workload or low autonomy and can lead to mental and physical health issues such as anxiety, depression and burnout.



Involve employees in workplace decision-making to reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing – as well as the chances of successful implementation.



Redesign or customise jobs.

- Restructure or reschedule tasks and duties to improve workflow and remove frustration. Consider creating more task variety or role clarity.
- Let employees reshape their work tasks, relationships and mindset through job crafting, which seeks to reduce the stressful conditions that hinder wellbeing or productivity while supporting personal needs, goals and skills.



Take care of your leaders as their wellbeing influences employee stress levels, absenteeism and job satisfaction.



Workplaces with leaders who were perceived to be considerate and supportive by their employees had **higher wellbeing scores** and **fewer illness-related absences**.



Promote relaxation techniques such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga in combination with other interventions that improve working conditions.

