Employee Relations and Wellbeing

Lecture Title:

Designing Effective Wellbeing Strategies

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Masters in
Human Resources Management

Learning Objectives

- Identify key dimensions of employee wellbeing
- Analyze the business case for implementing wellbeing programs
- Design strategic interventions to improve workplace wellbeing

Key Dimensions of Employee Wellbeing

Physical - The state of an employee's physical health and energy levels.

Psychological – The state of an employee's mental and emotional health.

Social – The quality of an employee's relationship and social interactions in the workplace.

Financial – An employee's sense of financial security and capability to manage personal finances.

Work-life/ Life Balance – The ability of employees to balance work demands with personal life and responsibilities.

Group Discussion

- What are the 3 top wellbeing challenges in modern workplaces?

- How does wellbeing link to organizational performance?

Top Wellbeing Challenges in Organizations

- Mental Health & Stress –

The World Health Organisation identifies poor working environments, marked by excessive workloads, job insecurity, low job control and discrimination as serious risks to mental health in the workplace.

- Work Life Balance & Flexibility –

The 2024 workplace wellness survey reports that work-life balance (56%) and Meaningful work (47%) are the biggest contributors to employee's wellbeing.

- Financial Wellbeing & Security –

A 2025 Australian study reveals that financial stress is the most significant factor affecting mental wellbeing. 48% cited money concerns and over 60% felt financially behind.

Link Between Wellbeing & Organizational Performance

Area	Impact of Strong Wellbeing Programs	Impact of Poor Wellbeing
Productivity	Higher focus, creativity, and efficiency. Employees are more energized and resilient.	Presenteeism, errors, slower output, higher fatigue.
Engagement	Stronger commitment, sense of being valued, higher discretionary effort.	Disconnection, low morale, disengagement, “quiet quitting.”
Retention	Lower turnover, stronger employer brand, higher loyalty.	Higher attrition, recruitment and training costs, loss of institutional knowledge.

Case Examples of Wellbeing Programs

Company	Wellbeing Strategy/Initiatives	Reported Outcomes
Google	Onsite healthcare, fitness centers, mindfulness and resilience training, healthy food programs.	High employee engagement and satisfaction, consistently ranked as a top employer, low voluntary turnover.
PwC Australia	Mental health strategy including manager training, employee assistance programs, and open conversations about wellbeing.	Improved employee satisfaction, reduction in stress-related absenteeism, stronger wellbeing culture.
Unilever	Global wellbeing framework addressing physical, mental, social, and financial wellbeing; flexible working options.	Drop in absenteeism, improved morale, recognition as an employer of choice in multiple regions.

Evidence & Metrics for Employee Wellbeing

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Employee satisfaction/engagement scores (from surveys such as Gallup Q12, Great Place to Work).
- Absenteeism and presenteeism rates.
- Healthcare/insurance claims data.
- Staff turnover and recruitment costs.

Qualitative Metrics:

- Employee feedback on workplace culture and wellbeing initiatives.
- Focus groups and anonymous surveys to capture perceptions.
- Narratives of employee experiences.

Evidence & Metrics for Employee Wellbeing

Type of ROI	Examples / Metrics	Impact on Organization
Financial ROI	- Reduced absenteeism and presenteeism costs - Lower healthcare/insurance claims - Reduced turnover and recruitment costs - Deloitte study: Every $1 invested in wellbeing leads to $3–6 return - Johnson & Johnson saved $250M over 10 years. ROI of $ 2.71 for every $1 invested.	Direct cost savings, measurable return on investment, improved profitability
Non-Financial ROI	- Higher employee engagement and satisfaction - Improved employer brand and talent attraction - Greater innovation and productivity - Reduced risk (burnout, legal cases, reputational harm)	Stronger organizational culture, competitive advantage in talent markets, sustainable long-term performance

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Designing Strategic Wellbeing Interventions

- **Align with Business Objectives and Workforce Needs**
- Wellbeing should not be "bolt-on" or cosmetic; it must tie into core goals (e.g., productivity, innovation, retention).
- Example: A sales organization may need stress management and resilience training, while a healthcare provider may prioritize fatigue reduction and trauma support.

- **Preventive vs. Reactive Approaches**
- *Preventive*: Proactive strategies to avoid burnout, stress, and illness (e.g., flexible scheduling, workload management, financial literacy programs)
- *Reactive*: Support after problems arise (e.g., Employee Assistance Programs, crisis counselling).

- Best practice: Combine both for a comprehensive framework.

Designing Strategic Wellbeing Interventions

Integration with HR Policies and Culture

- Policies (leave, flexibility, diversity, inclusion) directly shape wellbeing.
- Leadership role modeling is critical—wellbeing programs fail if culture rewards long hours and “busyness.”
- Example: If the company promotes “unlimited vacation” but leaders never take leave, the policy is ineffective.

Types of Wellbeing Interventions

Category	Examples	Purpose / Impact
Wellness Programs	Fitness programs, nutrition support, mental health counseling, mindfulness sessions	Promote healthy lifestyles, reduce stress, boost resilience
Work Design	Flexible hours, hybrid/remote work, workload management, job redesign	Support work–life balance, reduce burnout, improve productivity
Leadership & Culture	Manager training, coaching, psychological safety, open communication	Build trust, foster inclusion, create supportive culture
Technology-enabled	Wellbeing apps, digital health monitoring, online counseling platforms	Increase accessibility, personalize wellbeing support
Financial Wellbeing	Employee assistance funds, financial literacy workshops, salary advances	Reduce financial stress, improve employee security
Social Wellbeing	Team-building activities, peer support networks, volunteering programs	Strengthen relationships, increase belonging and morale

Case Study

- Split into groups
- Choose a case study from the worksheet provided
- Come up with a wellness strategy based on the following questions -

1. If you were an HR leader, how would you justify a wellbeing program to senior management?

2. Which argument(s) would resonate most with a CEO or CFO? Why?

3. What is the right balance between moral/ethical responsibility (employee care) and financial ROI?

4. Suggest 2–3 strategic interventions for the organization.

Case Study Example

Section	Example for FinEdge Bank (from earlier case study)
Objectives	1. Reduce turnover from 25% to 15%. 2. Improve employee wellbeing score by 10%. 3. Strengthen employer brand to attract top graduates.
Interventions	- Leadership training on psychological safety - Mandatory “no email after 7 pm” policy - Flexible working pilots in 3 departments - Launch a digital wellbeing platform for burnout prevention
KPIs	Turnover %, absenteeism days, engagement survey results, usage rates of wellbeing tools
Expected Outcomes	Lower recruitment costs, increased productivity, stronger reputation, healthier work culture

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