

STAFF WELLBEING & PERFORMANCE

By Anthony Klarica Six-Star Wellbeing Survey

Wellbeing emergence

Employee wellbeing is an area of emerging interest in organisations within Australia, and globally. While there is a wide range of definitions for employee wellbeing, the Australian Human Resources Institute defines it as “a measure of a person's happiness, psychological, emotional and mental state.” (1)

Wellbeing impact

Within organisations some key areas that employee wellbeing can impact include mental health, engagement, productivity, absenteeism and presenteeism, as well as staff retention or turn-over. In turn, organisational culture and performance can be significantly positively impacted by healthy employee wellbeing.

Wellbeing and positive impact

It has been identified that staff with higher subjective wellbeing have higher job performance. This arises from a number of possible factors including: increased cognitive performance and cognitive processes enabling greater creativity and problem-solving; a more positive work attitude enabling increased collaboration and cooperation; improved physical health, reducing illness, enhancing return from illness and securing greater levels of energy while at work. (2)

Mental health

Data shows that at any one point in time, one in six Australian workers experience a mental illness. Many others will be experiencing the initial signs of mental illness including insomnia, worry and fatigue. (3)

Within the general Australian population, it has been estimated that 20% of people will experience a mental health condition in any given year. More specifically, approximately 14% of people will experience an anxiety disorder and about 7% will experience depression in a given year, totalling about 3 million people. (4)

Mental health at work

It should be noted that within Australia mental health issues in the workplace have been estimated to cost the economy approximately 12 billion dollars annually. As a counter-balance, when organisations invest in mental health and wellbeing programs, return on investment has been estimated at \$2.30 for every dollar spent. (5)

Engagement at work

Employee engagement is one component of employee wellbeing that has contributed to a large part of the conversation. Research by Gallup has indicated that in Australia and New Zealand, only 24% of employees are fully engaged, while

60% are not engaged, and 16% are actively disengaged. This percentage of engaged to actively disengaged workers is one of the highest in the world. (6)

This is in stark contrast to highly engaged employees, who can perform up to 20% better at work and are up to 85% less likely to leave their organisation. (7)

Positive psychology at work

Historically, staff productivity has been viewed from a medical lens, where employees are left to work until something physically or mentally may interrupt their work flow or performance. Only then is an issue addressed (reactively). More recently, positive psychology attitudes have opened organisations and leaders' minds to monitoring and coaching staff on wellbeing topics in a preventative manner.

This is with the aim of not only preventing issues from arising but also to upskill staff in a range of personal and performance areas. These areas include: resilience, relaxation, communication and positivity, as well as mood and engagement. Such practices encourage staff and organisations to be healthier in a wide range of areas including culture and job performance. For this reason, measuring and educating staff in such positive psychology factors under a wellbeing banner should be considered best practice.

Why a wellbeing survey?

The first step towards reaping the benefits of enhanced employee wellbeing is to undertake a review of current staff wellbeing using the **Six-Star Wellbeing Survey**. The data from this survey provides insight into the mental health or **mood and engagement of staff, as well as resilience, relaxation, communication and positivity**, rather than simply investigating the ill-health of a workforce. The data is presented for staff overall, as well as for the sub-categories within an organisation. As well as providing important information to the organisation, the data from the survey lends itself to coaching a workplace to be emotionally and mentally healthier and in turn building workforce capacity in several ways.

***The following pages outline examples of the data reported in the Six-Star Corporate Wellbeing Survey**

1. Australian Human Resources Institute <https://www.ahri.com.au/assist/health-and-wellbeing>
2. Department for Business Innovation & Skill. Bryson, Forth & Stokes, 2014
3. Black Dog Institute <https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/default-source/factsheets/workplacewellbeing.pdf>
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008. National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results as cited at Beyond Blue: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/research-projects/statistics-and-references>
5. PWC Mental Wealth <https://www.pwc.com.au/agendas/mental-wealth.html>
6. Gallup. State of the global workplace, 2013
7. Corporate Leadership Council. Driving performance and retention through employee engagement, 2004