



Building a Culture of Well-being

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- With trends of continued high medical costs and the demand to recruit and retain top talent, well-being is becoming an increasingly important part of organisations' overall business strategy and employer value proposition in Hong Kong and throughout Asia Pacific.
- Asking the right questions at the beginning of the planning process allows for a more strategic and purposeful approach to employee well-being and, in the long run, can help create a greater impact for employees and the organisation.

This time of the year is an exciting and busy period for many organisations, when there is a lot of reflection on what was accomplished in 2019 and what is to be achieved in 2020. Today, more companies are beginning to appreciate that investment in well-being is an integral part of their overall business

strategy according to the National Business Group on Health *2020 Health Care Strategy and Plan Design Survey*. But despite this growing interest, as well as evidence that strong employee well-being is linked to positive business outcomes such as higher engagement, talent retention and productivity, only five percent of employees in Asia

Pacific had access to a workplace wellness programme, according to a 2018 report released by the Global Wellness Institute. Additionally, based on the findings in Aon's *2019 Asia Pacific Wellbeing Study*, the current satisfaction rate with existing well-being initiatives in the region is only 50 percent.

While these numbers could appear discouraging, this is a big opportunity to move the needle in the region to help improve the everyday life and health of employees. However, as HR professionals tasked with creating and implementing well-being initiatives, it can be difficult and overwhelming to even know where to start. In the spirit of a season marked by planning, what follows are nine key well-being considerations for the HR function to contemplate when tackling the planning process.

Crafting a business case

According to Aon's *2019 Asia Pacific Wellbeing Study*, inadequate budget is one of the top challenges for organisations delivering successful well-being programmes in Asia Pacific. Therefore, before implementing an ambitious well-being strategy, press pause – think of what resources you may need to be successful. Taking inventory of existing programmes, understanding governance structure, conducting benchmarking and researching costs, can help create a business case to not only set the HR function up for planning success, but also provide a mechanism to build on.

Securing buy-in

As stated by a panellist at Aon's recent Well-being Client Forum in Hong Kong, "Well-being isn't just an HR responsibility – it's a leadership responsibility." Think through which senior stakeholders need to be engaged and at what points in time, as well as which employees may have a passion for health and can help contribute and champion initiatives.

Understanding your needs

Gathering data and information related to the current state of health and well-being within an organisation across emotional, social, financial, and physical dimensions, can help determine the future direction of the programme. Across the HR function, step back and ask why well-being is crucial to the organisation.

Programme inventories, stakeholder interviews, employee surveys, and claim reviews are all useful ways to garner answers to this question.

Identifying bigger picture objectives

Creating objectives for what the HR function has set out to achieve provides a North Star by which to tailor the programme, align with stakeholders towards a common purpose, and measure the progress of the well-being programme over time.

Finding the right partners

Getting suitable expertise internally and externally will help ensure successful delivery. With the workplace well-being market blossoming, it is sometimes hard to know which third parties are credible, of high quality, and appropriate for the intended needs. Sourcing the right vendors and subject matter experts can also be time-consuming for HR professionals. If it is necessary to engage a third-party for additional support – such as an employee

assistance programme provider or a nutritionist – map out what selection criteria are the most important and use the criteria to compare options against each other.

Engaging with employees

Aon's *2019 Asia Pacific Employee Wellbeing Study* found that while employee engagement is the top objective for companies implementing well-being initiatives, it is also the second biggest challenge to launching a successful programme. Extensive efforts may be made to produce a comprehensive strategy but, if it is not communicated effectively, employees may not know the extent of the resources available. Crafting a communications strategy, engagement calendar, or branded campaign can help ensure strong participation. Additionally, communicating transparently and honestly about where the organisation is on its well-being journey, where you intend to go, and what this means for individual employees will help build trust.



Encouraging employees to take responsibility for their own well-being

Programme adoption is a two-way street between employers and employees. In reality, motivating behavioural change can be a tall order, particularly when it comes to health and well-being. Ways to help increase employee buy-in and participation could include fostering feelings of ownership through an employee working group to build, implement, and refine the plan over time; identifying well-being ambassadors within the organisation to amplify your message to their peers; and including initiatives that help provide personalised support to employees. Furthermore, introducing well-being-related incentives and loyalty programmes to encourage participation, can also help reinforce and assure employees that the entire endeavour is crafted for their benefit and overall well-being.

Using technology to support your goals

Balancing human touch with technological solutions is another effective way to engage employees. According to a report by We Are Social on the usage of internet and social media in Hong Kong in 2019, Hong Kongers spend over six hours per day on average using the internet across all devices; 15 percent of people use social media for work purposes; and eight percent use sensors and wearables. Reaching employees through new technology, social media and on their mobile devices presents a huge opportunity within a well-being strategy. Leveraging digital well-being apps can provide employees with a go-to source of aggregated health information, give them a way to track their health and well-being efforts, as well as provide data-driven insights that enable the HR function to strategically design future interventions.

Measuring your programme

Once a well-being approach is put in place, it is important to create a measurement framework to validate its impact. Return on investment (ROI) and value on investment (VOI) are the two most prevalent ways of evaluating the success of well-being programmes. While ROI has historically been the most common methodology for measuring success, it is limited to tangible savings and does not fully recognise other measures of success that may be of equal or greater value to an employer. VOI, however, is a flexible method that allows relevant stakeholders to choose which outcomes are most important, to better measure the full impact of well-being strategies. Having the right measures in place can help to monitor the impact of well-being initiatives on an ongoing basis. VOI can also reveal how the programme can be

tailored over time based on evolving needs or areas of success, as well as demonstrate value both internally and externally.

Ultimately, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to workplace well-being. However, by keeping these considerations in mind, the HR function can shape a well-being plan in a more strategic and engaging way. 

