

Ten
Employee
Wellbeing
Trends You
Need to
Know in
2023



Introduction

In the rapidly evolving world of work, employee wellbeing has taken center stage. Recognizing that employee health, happiness, and productivity are fundamental to business success, companies are shifting from a traditional focus on physical health to a more holistic approach to wellbeing. This approach encompasses mental health, work-life balance, financial security, personal growth, and social connections.

As we navigate through 2023, we're witnessing the emergence of innovative trends that are reshaping employee wellbeing. These trends are influencing how companies support their employees and are changing the expectations employees have of their employers.

In this guide, we will delve into ten key wellbeing trends, each illustrated with an example of a company that has successfully integrated the trend into their culture.

This guide will offer valuable insights for both employers aiming to enhance their wellbeing initiatives and employees seeking to understand the changing landscape of workplace wellbeing.



1. Remote Work as the New Normal

The pandemic has accelerated the shift towards remote work, and many companies are making it a permanent option. This flexibility allows employees to design their work schedules around their personal lives, reducing stress and promoting work-life balance. Companies are investing in technology and creating policies to support effective remote work. This includes providing allowances for home office setups, implementing tools for virtual collaboration, and promoting best practices for remote work, such as setting boundaries to prevent overwork.

Example:

GitLab has been a fully remote company since its inception, long before the COVID-19 pandemic made remote work a necessity for many businesses.

GitLab's all-remote approach eliminates the constraints of geographic location, allowing the company to recruit top talent from around the world. GitLab's comprehensive remote work policy covers a wide range of topics, including flexible working hours, communication best practices, and tips for creating a productive workspace at home. This approach ensures that employees have the support they need to balance their work and personal lives effectively.



2. Personalized Wellbeing Programs

Personalized wellbeing programs use data and technology to tailor support to each employee's unique needs and circumstances. This could involve personalized learning and development programs, tailored health and wellness recommendations, or individualized mental health support. By personalizing wellbeing support, companies can provide more relevant and effective assistance, improving engagement and outcomes.

Example:

IBM's 'Your Learning' platform uses artificial intelligence to provide a personalized learning experience for each employee. The platform takes into account factors such as an employee's role, current projects, and personal interests to recommend relevant courses. This tailored approach to learning and development not only aids in career progression but also promotes mental wellbeing by encouraging continuous learning and personal growth.



3. Mental Health Support

As awareness of mental health issues continues to grow, companies are stepping up their support in this area. This can include providing access to counseling or therapy, implementing mental health days, and training managers to recognize and respond to signs of mental distress. Some companies are even appointing Chief Mental Health Officers, reflecting the increasing importance placed on mental health.



Example:

Starbucks has taken a proactive approach to mental health by offering its employees and their family members up to 20 free therapy or coaching sessions each year. The company has partnered with mental health providers to offer these services in person, over the phone, or through video call. This initiative, part of Starbucks' comprehensive benefits package, sends a clear message that mental health is as important as physical health.

4. Employee Financial Wellbeing

Financial stress can significantly impact mental health and job performance. Recognizing this, companies are offering support such as financial counseling, student loan assistance, and retirement planning services. Some companies are also exploring innovative solutions like early wage access, which allows employees to access their earned wages before payday.

Example:

PwC's 'Student Loan Paydown' program is an innovative initiative that provides financial assistance to employees struggling with student loan debt. PwC contributes \$1,200 annually towards an employee's student loan debt, easing financial stress and promoting overall wellbeing. This program, in addition to other financial wellbeing initiatives like retirement planning services, demonstrates PwC's commitment to supporting its employees' financial health.





5. Virtual Health Services

Telehealth and virtual wellness programs are becoming increasingly popular, providing convenient and accessible health support. This can include virtual doctor appointments, online fitness classes, and digital wellness platforms that offer resources on topics like nutrition, mindfulness, and stress management. These services can be particularly beneficial for remote employees or those who prefer digital interactions.

Example:

Google's telehealth services provide employees with access to physicians, mental health professionals, and wellness coaches without leaving their homes. These services can be particularly beneficial for remote employees or those with busy schedules, as they eliminate the need for travel and reduce waiting times. By offering telehealth services as part of its health benefits package, Google is ensuring that its employees have easy and convenient access to healthcare.

6. Wellbeing-Focused Leadership

Leaders play a critical role in shaping a company's culture and values. Wellbeing-focused leadership involves leaders modeling healthy behaviors, openly discussing wellbeing, and making decisions that prioritize employee wellbeing. This can also involve training leaders in areas like emotional intelligence, empathy, and active listening, equipping them to better support their team's wellbeing.

Example:

Salesforce encourages its leaders to prioritize their wellbeing and lead by example. Leaders are encouraged to schedule regular 'Wellbeing Breaks' during the workday and share their wellbeing practices with their teams. This initiative not only promotes healthy habits but also fosters a culture where wellbeing is valued and prioritized at all levels of the organization.



7. The Rise of Green Spaces

Green spaces and biophilic design can reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance cognitive function. As such, companies are incorporating elements of nature into the workplace, such as indoor plants, natural light, and outdoor workspaces. Some companies are even creating 'green retreats' natural spaces where employees can relax and recharge.

Example:

Amazon's 'The Spheres' in Seattle is an indoor garden workspace that houses over 40,000 plants from around the world. This innovative workspace provides employees with a calm and peaceful environment to work, fostering creativity and reducing stress. By incorporating elements of nature into the workplace, Amazon is promoting wellbeing and demonstrating the positive impact of biophilic design.



8. Importance of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is key to preventing burnout and promoting overall wellbeing. Companies are implementing policies such as flexible working hours, unlimited vacation time, and 'right to disconnect' rules that limit after-hours communication. These policies allow employees to balance their personal and professional lives, contributing to their wellbeing.



Example:

Volkswagen has implemented a policy that prevents emails from being sent to employees outside their working hours. This policy is designed to ensure that employees can disconnect from work during their personal time, promoting a healthy work-life balance. By implementing this policy, Volkswagen is taking a proactive approach to prevent burnout and support employee wellbeing.

9. Recognition and Rewards Programs

Recognition can boost morale, motivation, and job satisfaction. Many companies are creating innovative rewards programs that go beyond traditional performance metrics, recognizing employees for things like collaboration, innovation, or living company values. These programs can involve peer recognition, 'spot' rewards for exceptional performance, or experiential rewards like travel or learning opportunities.



Example:

Accenture's 'Kudos' program allows employees to send thank-you notes to their colleagues, acknowledging their contributions and efforts. This simple yet effective program fosters a culture of appreciation and recognition, boosting morale and promoting a positive work environment. By acknowledging and rewarding employees' efforts, Accenture is enhancing employee wellbeing and fostering a sense of belonging.

10. Emphasis on Inclusivity and Diversity

Inclusivity and diversity can foster a sense of belonging, which is key to wellbeing. Companies are implementing policies to promote inclusivity and diversity and providing training to tackle unconscious bias. They are also establishing diversity and inclusion councils or employee resource groups to provide a voice for diverse groups of employees. These initiatives create a respectful and inclusive culture where every employee feels valued and heard.

Example:

Microsoft's commitment to inclusivity and diversity is demonstrated through its Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). These ERGs include groups for employees who are veterans, disabled, or part of the LGBTQ+ community, among others. By providing a platform for these diverse groups, Microsoft is fostering a culture of inclusivity where everyone feels valued and heard.



Conclusion



In conclusion, 2023 marks a significant evolution in the landscape of employee well-being. The trends highlighted in this guide demonstrate a comprehensive approach to well-being, acknowledging the interconnectedness of physical, mental, financial, and social aspects of an employee's life.

The companies featured are trailblazers in their approach to employee wellbeing, implementing innovative policies and programs that address the multifaceted nature of wellbeing. They demonstrate that a supportive and inclusive work environment, coupled with a holistic approach to employee wellbeing, not only boosts employee morale and productivity but can also be a key differentiator in attracting and retaining top talent.

These trends and examples should serve as inspiration for other companies looking to enhance their well-being initiatives and create a workplace culture that truly values and supports employee well-being.