

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF COMPANY CARING

The Path
to Improving
Employee
Wellness

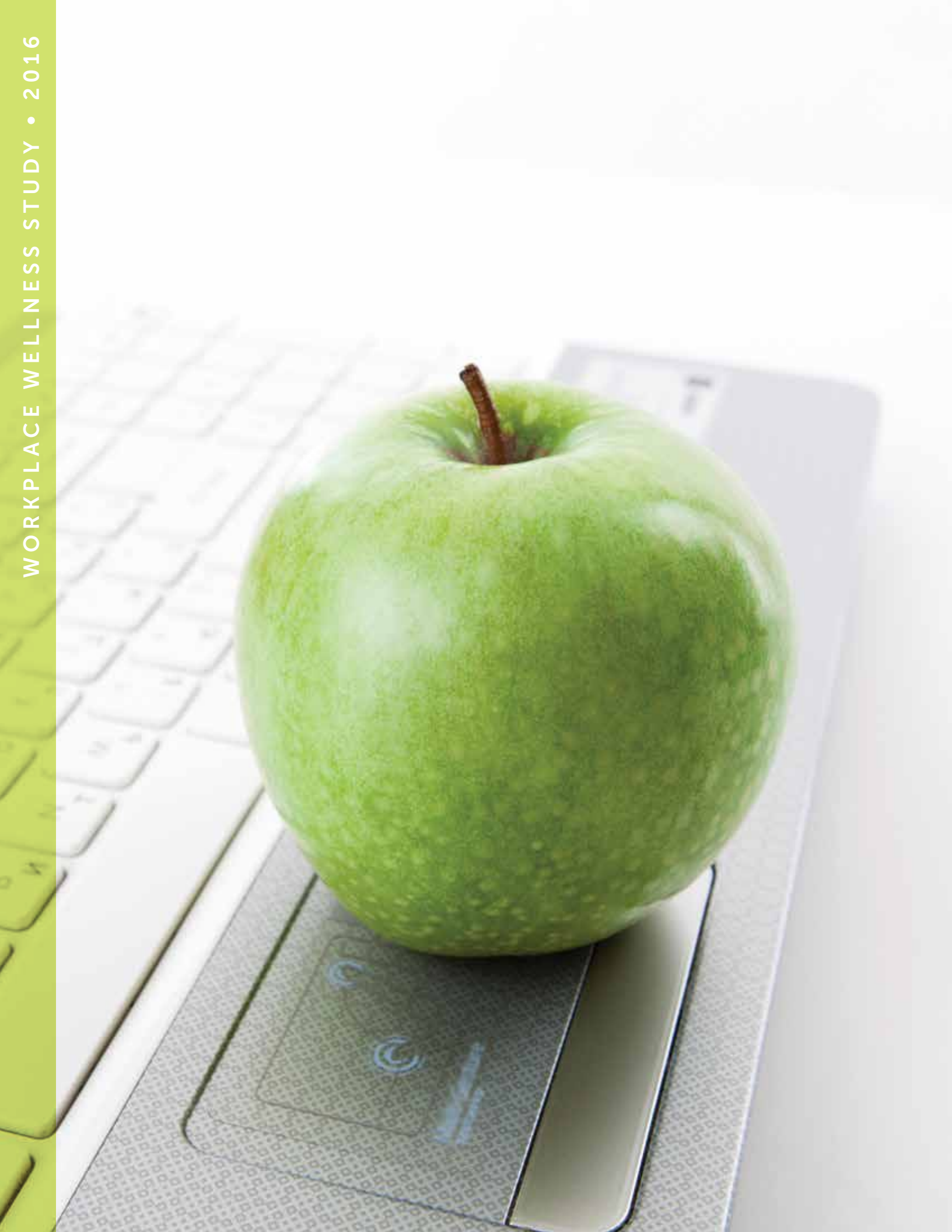
A SURVEY OF
AMERICAN WORKERS

WORKPLACE WELLNESS STUDY • 2016

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INTRODUCTION

The workplace, and the way we are made to feel within it, has a tremendous impact on how productive, happy and healthy we feel, not only at work but throughout our daily life. Given that full-time employees in America spend 38% of each weekday at work, averaging nine hours per day, it's common sense that the "culture," physical environment and wellness initiatives (from the kinds of work relationships we have to whether our workspace is comfortable) can pretty much "make" or "break" our physical and mental wellbeing.

A recent survey of over 600 full-time workers in the U.S., conducted by Everyday Health in partnership with the Global Wellness Institute, took an in-depth look at the impact the work environment has on productivity, health and wellbeing. And the study found that increasing wellness in the workplace may be more easily within our grasp than commonly understood.

In this report we will:

- Examine the components of personal wellness in order to better understand employees' wellness priorities
- Analyze how a worker's perception of how well a company cares for its employees impacts that individual's overall wellness, inside and outside of work
- Identify the tangible and intangible elements that constitute employer caring, and how what most comprises caring differs for Millennial, Gen X and Baby Boomer employees
- Offer recommendations for improving employee wellness, not only via programmatic wellness offerings, but also by leveraging the more impactful "intangibles"

About the survey and methodology:

An online survey conducted among 794 U.S. adults in September 2015. The findings in this report are based on 627 respondents who stated they work full-time.



Wellness [wel-nis]

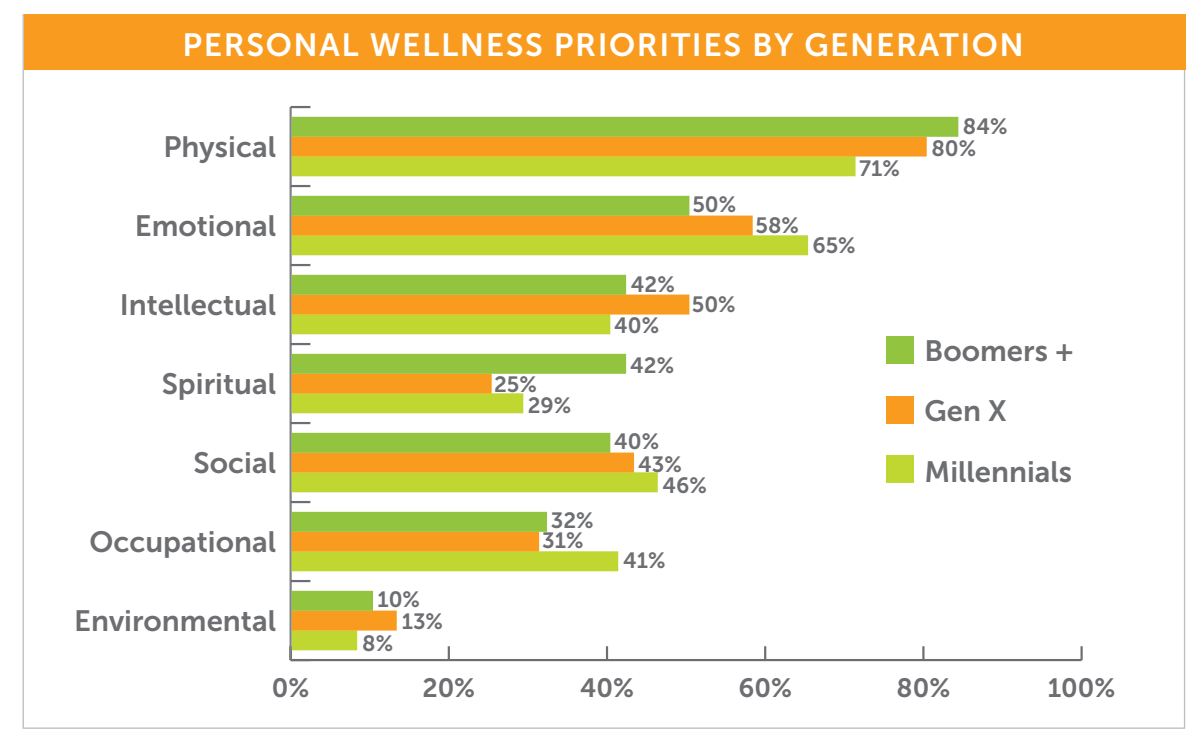
1. The quality or state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort.
2. An approach to healthcare that emphasizes preventing illness and prolonging life, as opposed to emphasizing treating diseases.

MAKING TIME FOR WELLNESS

What do 61% of full-time employees in the U.S. have in common?

They say they work more hours than contracted: an average of 46 hours per week. And those who say they work significantly more hours than contracted are clocking in 51.5 hours. That's almost **a day and a half** more work than the traditional 40-hour, 9-5 workweek.

Even with all this time spent working, people are finding time to take personal wellness seriously. Seventy one percent stated that they spend an hour or more per day on their personal wellness. Whether it's exercise, meditation, socializing, or family time, people recognize the importance of fitting healthy activities into their daily schedule.



Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015



This is a clear indicator that the emotional, social and intellectual sides of wellness need to be nurtured, especially in the workplace, where so many hours of the day are spent.

Findings suggest that formal wellness programs as they exist today are missing the mark.



STATE OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Half (54%) of full-time employees said that their employer offers a workplace wellness program and two-thirds take advantage of programs when offered.

On the other hand, among wellness program users, less than half (40%) say that their participation actually helps improve their wellness or health. Nearly a third of employees with access to a program don't use it at all. And one in ten don't even know if a program is available. (For workers overall – both full- and part-time – the numbers are even more discouraging: half have access to a wellness program; only three in ten use it; and only roughly one in ten report it has any positive impact on their health.)



For Gen X and older workers, wellness programs lead to marginal improvement in self-reported health and wellness: 58% rate their wellness high when a program is offered, compared to 42% without access to a program. Millennials, however, report that the presence of a workplace wellness program makes absolutely no difference in their personal health/wellness.

NUMBER OF STARS THEY WOULD GIVE THEIR PERSONAL WELLNESS				
4-5 STARS	MILLENNIALS		GEN X / BOOMERS +	
	Wellness program offered	No wellness program offered	Wellness program offered	No wellness program offered
★★★★★	50%	50%	58%	42%

Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

These findings suggest that formal wellness programs as they exist today (typically siloed, run by the HR dept.) are missing the mark: engagement levels are too low, and they aren't helping enough people who do engage move the needle on their health. Better design and communication of wellness offerings, and stronger communication of their benefits, is sorely needed.

Who are workplace wellness programs benefiting? Cynicism Abounds

Only one-quarter (25%) believe their company offers a wellness program because management cares about employees' health and wellbeing. More than half (58%) believe wellness programs only exist to cut or control the company's health costs – while another 16% think they're designed to make employees work harder/be more productive. So, 75% of workers have become cynical: perceiving programs as self-serving, and only benefiting the company. If the intention was "wellness," an opposite effect has taken root.

THE PATH TO WORKPLACE WELLNESS: GENUINE COMPANY CARING

When asked if their company “cares” about their personal wellness, only a sobering **37%** agreed.

The survey captured insight into so many **workplace issues** (from gauging how employees feel about different aspects of their work culture, to whether their company is offering dozens of workplace wellness components, and, if available, the extent to which employees engage with those components). But the data in aggregate indicated that to understand what has the biggest impact on personal and workplace wellness, you need to look beyond the traditional “wellness program.” What we found is that it comes down to a commitment to authentic caring – this is what employee wellness, satisfaction and productivity overwhelmingly pivots around.

IMPLICATIONS WHEN A COMPANY DOESN'T CARE

The research reveals that employee wellness and motivation go beyond programmatic offerings and physical work environments.

A company's demonstrated commitment to people and to their wellbeing impacts overall feelings of wellness as well as work output.

We see significant, diverse positive implications when a company is perceived to be a “caring company”, i.e., a company that cares about employees' personal wellness, and very negative implications when it is perceived as a “non-caring company”.

Throughout the remainder of this report we will compare the responses of people who stated that their company cares about their health and wellness (4 or 5 rating on a 5 point scale), with the responses of people who stated that their company *doesn't* care about their health and wellness (rated 1 or 2).





PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL HEALTH IMPACT

Among the disturbingly low 37% of people who say that their company really cares about their wellness, we see that this caring has a wide-ranging, positive impact on everything from their overall health, to their stress levels, to their engagement at work. Fifty-seven percent of employees at caring companies rate their health/wellness high (4 or 5 stars), vs. only 39% of those at non-caring companies. Conversely, only 8% of those at caring companies report poor health, vs. 21% at non-caring companies. (Note: the presence of a workplace wellness program has almost no impact on overall health/wellness.) Only 17% of workers at caring companies report “very high” levels of stress, vs. 41% at non-caring companies. And workers at caring companies are dramatically more engaged: more than twice as likely to report that their work is satisfying (52% vs. 25%), exciting (33% vs. 16%) and interesting (66% vs. 30%). Workers at caring companies (68%) are also radically more likely to report that “they're proud to be associated with their company” than those at non-caring organizations (19%).

Additionally, people who work for non-caring companies (32%), say that when their job causes them to feel unwell, both their physical, emotional and mental health are affected and their family life is negatively impacted.

And when people feel unwell their job performance suffers. Six out of 10 respondents say that when they don't feel well, their ability to get work done, their motivation to do their job well and stay engaged, are compromised.

When the job causes one to feel unwell at a non-caring company:

-  **84%** say mental health is affected
-  **75%** say overall happiness is affected
-  **68%** say physical health is affected
-  **52%** say family life is affected

Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

WHAT DOES BETTER WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE LOOK LIKE?

When it comes to driving workplace wellness, healthy/fair financial benefits go without saying. And beyond financial rewards, other tangible factors certainly matter. But perhaps more importantly, the research shows strong evidence that the *intangible* benefits a company can offer increases the overall wellness impact as well.

In order to better understand the implications of intangible and tangible factors, we explored company benefits, workspace/design aspects, interactions with others, and career contentment. We uncovered significant differences in perceptions and outcomes between those who work for companies seen as more caring versus those seen as non-caring.



1 CORPORATE BENEFITS: Tangible factors

When it comes to tangible factors, compensation, benefits and recognition impact personal wellness the most. In fact, those that work for companies perceived as non-caring are **11 times** more likely to say that what they are currently offered in terms of pay, benefits, and recognition, has a negative impact on their wellness. When you take into account that people who work for non-caring companies are significantly more likely to say that their purpose in working is to support their family and make money, it's not surprising that absence of good financial benefits decreases their sense of wellness.

Caring companies are more likely than the non-caring (67% vs. 41%) to provide employees with a formal wellness program, and more likely to encourage healthy behaviors overall.



Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

Most companies offer employer-sponsored health/medical services (health, life, and disability insurance). But caring companies are far more likely to go beyond the basics and offer more tangible, proactive wellness benefits, such as exercise support, flexible work arrangements, stress reduction programs and even opportunities to have fun at the office, whether with a ping pong table or fitness challenges.

Because of how they are treated, and the many meaningful ways their work lives are made easier and healthier, it's no wonder that those who believe they work for a caring company are twice as likely to say that their work environment positively affects their overall health and wellness.

CARING COMPANIES ARE OVER 2.5X MORE LIKELY TO OFFER:		
	MORE CARING	LESS UNCARING
Subsidized gym membership	52%	20%
Breaks during day to exercise	43%	17%
Option to telecommute	40%	14%
Stress reduction	35%	13%
Privacy space	33%	13%
On-site recreation	24%	8%

Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

2 WORKSPACE FACTORS: Tangible factors

A number of workspace factors can be serious detractors to worker wellness and productivity. Comfortable workspaces are crucial and also impact perceptions of a company's commitment to employees. For instance, 83% of employees at caring companies (vs. 48% at uncaring) report that they are offered comfortable workspaces.

Whether it's getting down time during the day to reset and reenergize, having access to a breath of fresh air to sharpen one's mind and energy, or just a little privacy, many people simply don't get enough of it. Those who work for companies that care, however, are significantly less likely to report that these are detractors from their wellness.

Caring companies are significantly more likely to address healthy workspace elements/design than the non-caring: like providing nap/meditation spaces (33% vs. 13%) – standing treadmill desks (23% vs. 11%) – or a place for moms to breastfeed (38% vs. 18%).



Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

3 INTERACTIVITY: Intangible factors

Given the current length of the workday, it's no surprise that colleagues, managers, and company leaders have the ability to decrease or increase one's personal sense of wellness.



Interactions with coworkers and managers are six times more likely to have a negative impact on wellness for those who don't feel they work for a caring company. The lack of a company culture that supports and builds positive relationships and environments can weigh on one's health both inside and out of the workplace.

Having friendly support also improves wellness. As reported in the Global Wellness Institute's *Future of Wellness at Work* report, a Gallup study revealed that employees who reported having a best friend at work were 43% more likely to report having received praise or recognition for their work in the last seven days, and were 37% more likely to report that someone at work encourages their development.

When a company cares, people are:

5x more likely to feel employer is supportive

6x more likely to feel a sense of openness and honesty at their company

7x more likely to say leaders and managers lead by example



Those at a caring company are more likely to get energy and motivation from work friends, more likely to feel supported and respected by managers and co-workers and more likely to feel a cooperative spirit of teamwork. And a critical finding was how at caring companies, company executives/managers are far more likely to lead by example (59%) than at uncaring companies (9%). Employees at uncaring companies also reported that the top thing that could be improved at their work would be more executives leading by example (85% vs. 33% at caring companies).

4 CAREER CONTENTMENT: Intangible factors

Growth, motivation and job satisfaction levels are reflected in how well a person feels about their company.

Career growth and flexibility: Employees at caring companies are radically more likely to agree that they have opportunities for growth (64% vs. 19%), and that they have independence/autonomy on how they do their work (78% vs. 50%) and when they do their work (66% vs. 36%).

Clear expectations: Companies that care set clear expectations on work hours and work load. Those who work for non-caring companies are likely to work significantly more hours than they are paid for and go to work sick more often.

When it comes to vacation policy there are also clear differences. Those that work for a caring company are more than twice as likely to report that company policy encourages them to "unplug completely" while on vacation (39% versus 16%) allowing for proper recharging. Those that work for a non-caring company are discouraged from unplugging completely (40% versus 27%). Interestingly, those at a caring company are more likely to still check-in while away (36% versus 28%). *Caring companies seem to instill a deeper sense of obligation to the job and the company.*

Work/life balance: Employees at caring companies are more likely to agree that their work/life balance positively impacts their health and wellness (59% vs. 25%). When one feels their time is respected and balance is supported, they have a more positive outlook.

CONCLUSION:

The combination of career advancement, flexibility and autonomy leads to healthier, more satisfied employees. In fact, those working for caring companies are two times more likely to say that they find their job satisfying (51% vs. 24%).

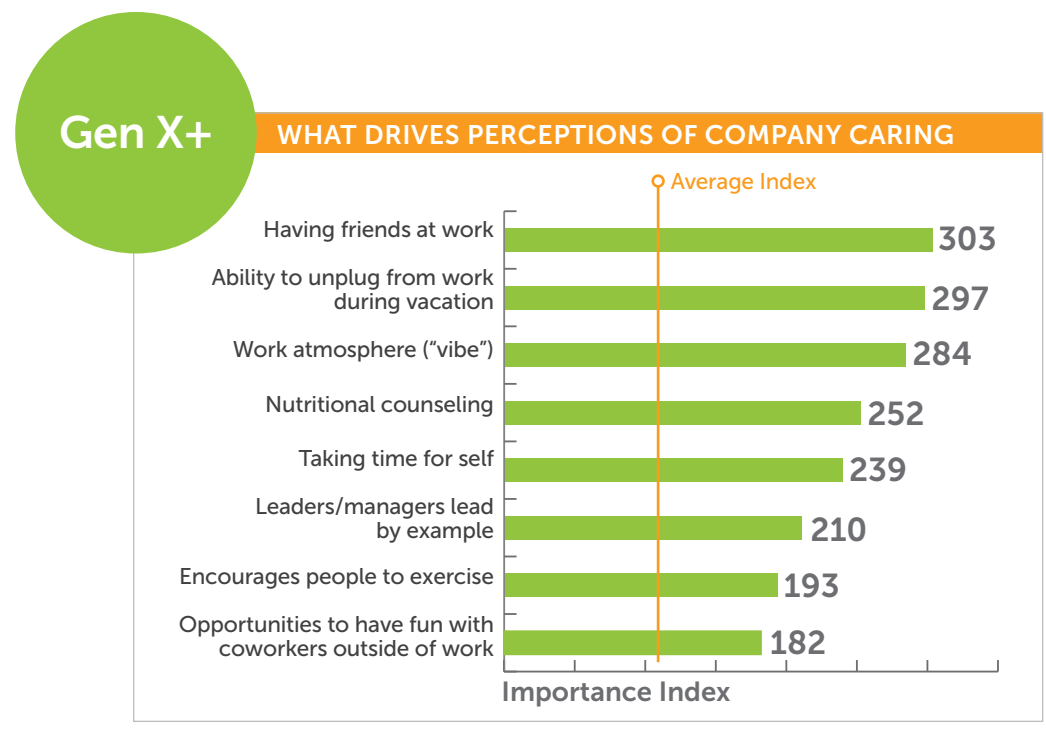
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF A CARING COMPANY

These tangible and intangible factors not only create an environment that promotes personal and professional wellness, they also influence how one feels about their company.

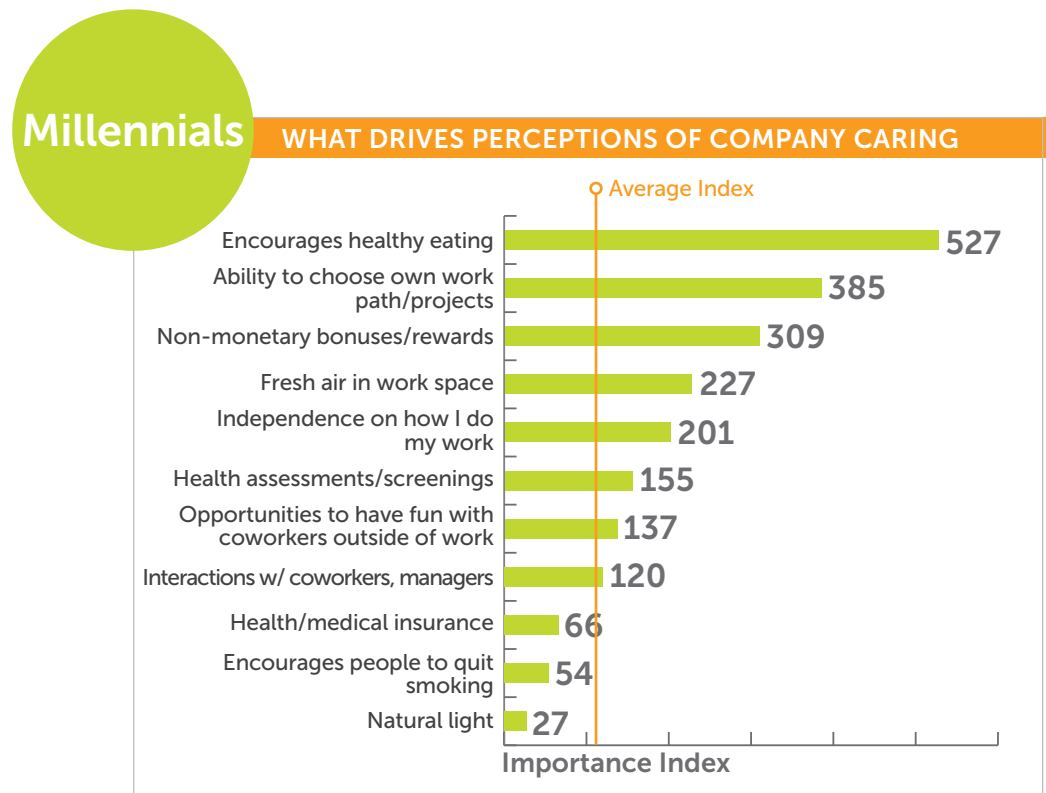
To identify factors that influence whether a company is perceived as being “caring” or “uncaring,” regression analysis was performed using workplace characteristics to predict self-reported rating of how well the respondents’ current employers care for the individual’s personal wellness. And we see some key differences about what factors most constitute caring when we compare Gen X and Boomers to Millennials.

For Gen X and Boomers, a company that cares is foremost one that offers a good work culture with strong leadership, provides authentic relationships and opportunities to foster those relationships, and promotes the ability to recharge (through vacation and time for self). Companies that “care” also offer programs beyond just basic health benefits and focus on fitness and food.

For Millennials, a company that cares is one that offers career autonomy and recognition, socialization and positive interactions, and a healthy environment that promotes fresh air, healthy eating habits and health assessments.



Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015



Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

CONCLUSION: When considering how to be more caring about employees’ (which profoundly impacts their health and wellness), one-size offerings do not fit all. It’s important to consider generational differences and create a culture that make all employees feel the company truly cares.

WHAT DRIVES WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE?

How do all these tangible and intangible factors really stack up when it comes to employees' sense of their own wellness? When it comes to self-reported, overall wellness, workplace factors that are emotionally driven are likely to have the biggest impact – especially among Millennials.

Earlier we saw that the top three wellness priorities for full-time workers are physical, emotional and intellectual. These findings are born out in an exploration of the individual workplace-related factors that drive the greatest health and wellness, according to employees.

Tangible aspects such as compensation, programmatic wellness benefits and the physical work environment are less important than **Intangibles** that speak more to the emotional and intellectual side of the wellness equation. And there are meaningful differences when comparing the important drivers of personal health and wellness across generations.

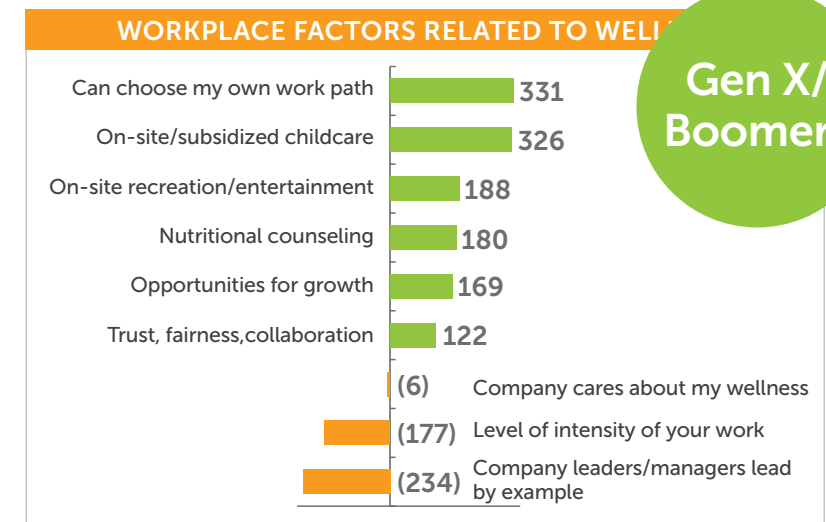
To identify the most important drivers of employee wellness, regression analysis was performed using workplace characteristics to predict self-reported ratings of overall wellness for full-time employees.



GEN X/BOOMERS

For Gen X and older workers, an important factor related to wellness is, 'I can choose my own work path and projects', indicative of the desire to find intellectual fulfillment in one's work.

Other important factors include on-site/subsidized childcare and onsite recreation (e.g., pool or ping pong), which aid in reducing stress levels while at work. These factors far outweigh compensation and presence of a health benefit plan, when it comes to increasing one's personal wellness.



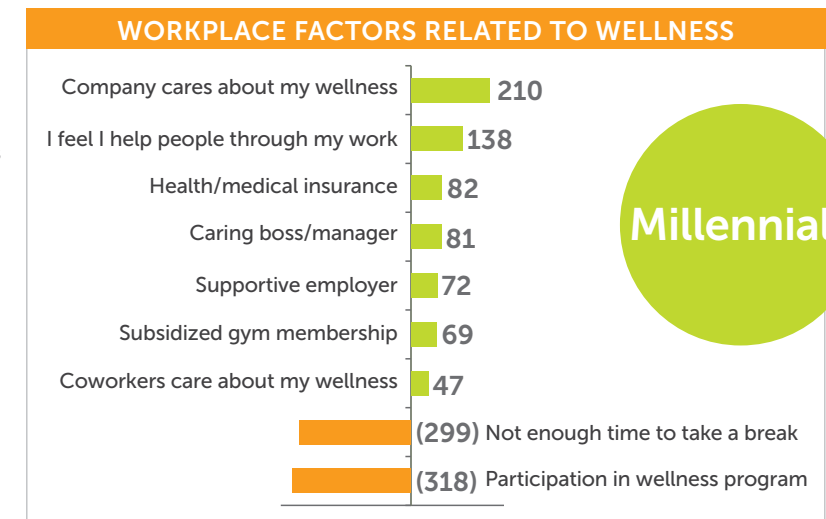
Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

MILLENNIALS

For Millennials, what constitutes wellness in the workplace is distinctly more intangible. Above all, Millennials want to know that their company cares. And not just the company generally, it's important that the boss/manager, and their co-workers, also care about their wellness.

The presence of health insurance plays a smaller role in driving overall wellness among Millennials and is less important than perceptions of corporate caring.

Other significant factors for the youngest workers include plenty of break time and subsidized gym memberships. And while the latter is often part of wellness initiatives, having a formal wellness "program" seems to detract from Millennials' perception of overall wellness. This reinforces the idea that whatever the wellness offering, it needs to be built in line with employee needs, and not as a one size fits all, or it will be seen as an empty gesture.



Source: Everyday Health Workplace Wellness Survey, 2015

CONCLUSION

Occupational fulfillment is a critical part of human wellness. And we've seen that when employees perceive that they're cared for, they are happier, healthier and better employees.

Being a company that cares is easier than management may think. And if "caring" and intangible workplace wellness components (whether encouraging friendships or honest communication at work) may seem "soft," we've seen that they have a very "hard" impact on employee health, engagement and productivity – i.e., a company's bottom-line. And much of what constitutes company "caring" has very little to do with current "add on" wellness programs, which are never a panacea for (or vaccine against) an unhealthy work culture or an unwell workforce. The relationship between companies and employees, managers and those they manage, is a human relationship, and caring human relationships, of course, involve personalized attention, empathy, respect and flexibility – and great listening and communication. Companies need to reorient their wellness strategies around what employees report best represents corporate caring to them, what has the biggest impact on their overall wellness – paying attention to how this differs across generations.

- **Healthy benefits should be people focused first**

While companies aim to reap the financial benefits (healthcare cost reductions, greater productivity) that come with successful workplace wellness programs, their design must take employee needs into consideration. And the benefits for, and investment in, employees must be well communicated and become an intrinsic part of the culture of the company.

- **Make the intangibles priorities**

Workplace intangibles, whether it's honest communication, creating a "vibe" of caring and teamwork, or ensuring workers are intellectually stimulated or free from harassment, are all important components in driving perceptions of on-the-job wellness. And companies that seize the most important intangibles will increase profitability through greater productivity, employee motivation, and less turnover.

- **Create better bosses**

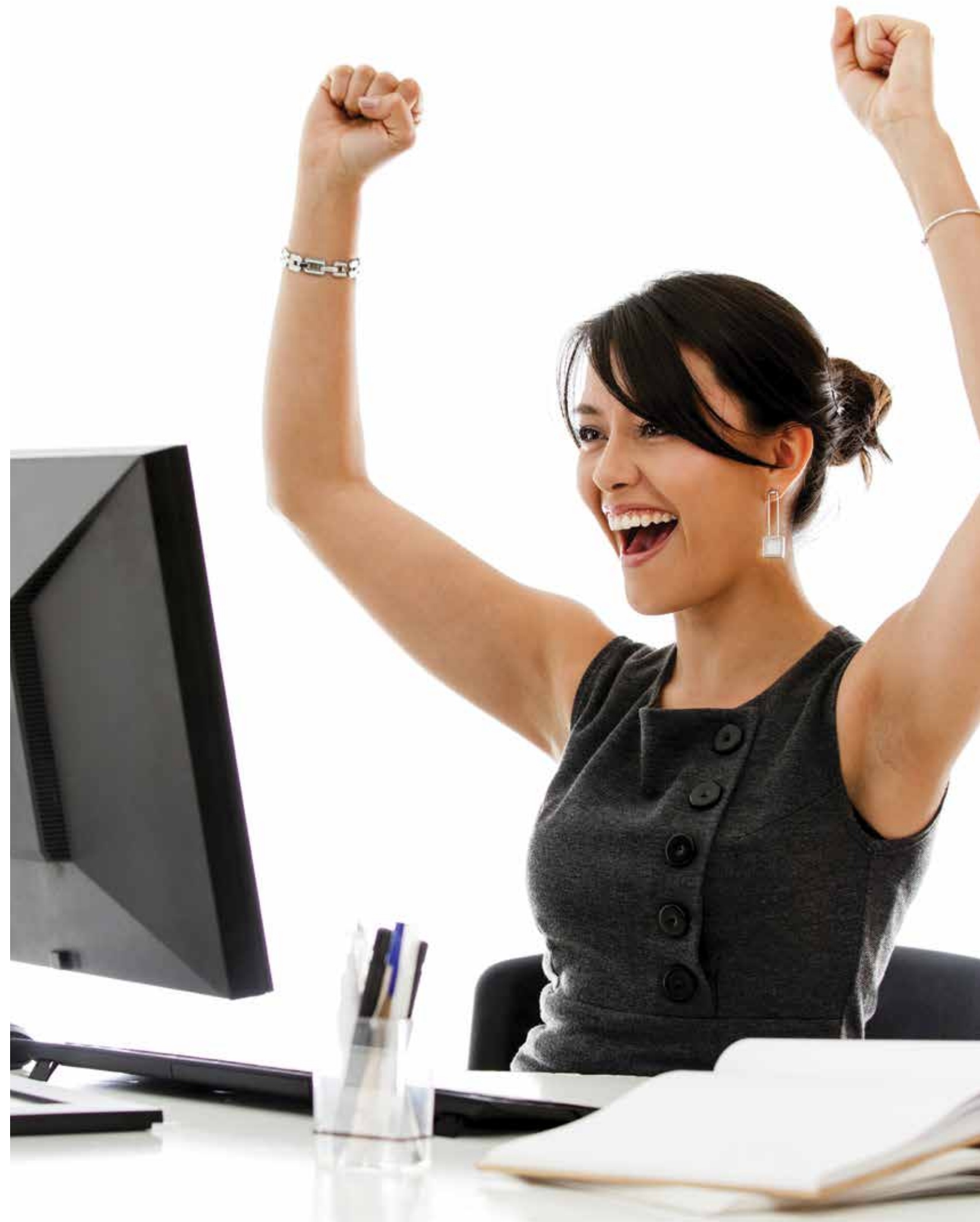
People (desperately) want managers and leaders that model positive behavior. Walk the talk. Communicate openly and honestly and help employees feel valued – and if you want them to be "well" and make lifestyle changes, executives and managers need to start and lead the movement.

- **Provide the right environment for relationship building**

People want support in conflict resolution and positive communication to help perpetuate stronger workplace relationships. Social and emotional connections at work have major physical and mental health outcomes.

- **Acknowledge the importance of respect, cooperation, trust and contribution**

People feel better when teamwork and empathy is central to the work atmosphere. This translates to making workers feel valued for their contributions, giving them input on their career path, and ensuring they understand and feel part of the company's goals. And workers want to feel that their work matters and has an impact on society at large.



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