

2015 ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Redefining Workplace Wellness

JULY 15 NEW YORK, NY

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"Redefining Workplace Wellness"

What:

The Global Wellness Institute™ (GWI), an international think tank that brings together leaders from the private and public sector to positively impact the future of the wellness industry, held its seventh invitation-only roundtable. The topic was "Redefining Workplace Wellness". The organization's roundtables are unique for bringing experts together for honest, unscripted debates about the best ways to move a specific, global wellness sector or issue forward.

Where & When:

July 15, 2015 at Everyday Health's headquarters in Manhattan

The Topic:

This roundtable began with imagining the future of work which then led to a discussion on the future of workplace wellness. It was designed to reach beyond the narrow back-and-forth on company ROI, to identify the powerful ways that "work" itself - and global workforces - are now changing, and how workplace wellness approaches must also evolve.

Co-Moderators:

Susie Ellis, chairman and CEO of the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) and Renee Moorefield, PhD, CEO of Wisdom Works.

Conclusions:

This report summarizes the discussion by highlighting "Ten Ways that Workplace Wellness Must Evolve in the Future."

Roundtable Participants:

Jeremy Abbate, VP, Global Media Alliances, *Scientific American*; Publishing Director, *Scientific American Worldview*

Joel Bennett, PhD, President, Organizational Wellness and Learning Systems (OWLS)

Nancy Board, Strategic Account Director, Limeade

Dondeena Bradley, PhD, Global Head of Innovation, Weight Watchers

James Brewer, Workspace Consultant, Steelcase

Dr. Luba Burtyk, Asst. Medical Director, Live Well at Citi Health Services

Alfredo Carvajal, President, Delos Living LLC

Emily Dery, Head, Global Health Track, Clinton Global Initiative

Theresa DiMasi, VP Content & Editor in Chief, Weight Watchers

Susie Ellis, Chairman and CEO, Global Wellness Institute

Kim Fox, Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications & Public Relations, Everyday Health

Maggie Hsu, Chief of Staff; Vice President, Business Development, Downtown Project and Zappos

Dr. Fikry Isaac, Chief Medical Officer, Johnson & Johnson

Mia Kyricos, Chief Brand Officer, Spafinder Wellness, Inc.

Nazlie Latefi, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer, Pegasus Capital Advisors

Heather R. Lucas, National Health & Wellness Director, Macy's

Shawn La Vana, Head of Marketing, Virgin Pulse

Renee Moorefield, PhD, CEO, Wisdom Works

Dr. Kenneth R. Pelletier, Clinical Professor of Medicine & Professor of Public Health, University of Arizona & University of California Schools of Medicine

Dr. Michael F. Roizen, Chief Wellness Officer, Cleveland Clinic

Mary Ellen Rose, PhD, Founder, Chief Science Officer, Institute for Healthy Destination Accreditation

Veronica Schreibeis Smith, Principal Architect, Vera Iconica Architecture

Mim Senft, Wellness Director, Plus One Health Management, Optum

Paul Terry, PhD, Executive Vice President & Chief Science Officer, Staywell

Dr. Lori Zimmerman, Corporate Medical Director, Citi

Ten Ways that Workplace Wellness Must Evolve in the Future

The 25+ experts identified crucial new realities that workplace wellness most needs to address in the future, given what Dr. Roizen of the Cleveland Clinic called "the unprecedented speed of change" happening in work and workforces: from tackling the increasingly screen-trapped, sedentary, satellite and super-stressed worker - to taking a dramatically more "hyper-local" approach for multinational programs, that are relevant to that culture's health traditions.

1) Get Past Unscientific "Mud-Slinging" on ROI and Focus on Total Return-on-Value

Our current workplace wellness moment is dominated by negative media and unscientific "studies" that baldly conclude that, "workplace wellness doesn't work" - along with the "selling" of programs to companies as a pure profit-driver. But the roundtable concluded that in the future companies will shift from a narrow focus on ROI, to a recognition of wider "return on value": not just lower healthcare costs, but important gains in retention and productivity. After all, 93% of workplace wellness return in the first year is in productivity gains, not reduced costs.

Responsible research¹ will continue to show that well designed, evidence-based, and "baked into the company culture" wellness initiatives do work - while those that miss these elements, don't. Dr. Kenneth R. Pelletier, Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco and the University of Arizona School of Medicine, noted that too many workplace wellness studies are deeply unscientific (they don't properly measure clinical and cost outcomes, and don't evaluate diverse program components' individual effectiveness and cost). And he argued: "Critics are misusing this 'ROI science'

^{1.} See "Do Workplace Health Promotion (Wellness) Programs Work?" - Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, September 2014, for an excellent overview of the faulty science behind many "ROI" studies, and how businesses could better measure workplace wellness' value.

to castigate critical, fledgling workplace health efforts. These critics are also imposing a 'standard of evidence' that doesn't exist for any other workplace investment—like a software upgrade. Successful companies (yes, Google is a shining example) have moved well beyond ROI, to embrace total value on investment (VOI), and workplaces where a culture of health is the norm."

2) Take Seriously How Technology - Enabling 24/7 Work - Is "Killing Us"

Technology has suddenly spawned new, global work realities: imprisonment by screens, and a powerful erosion of the line between now always-on "work" and "life." And assembled experts agreed that we have not yet begun to grasp the wide-ranging impact on employees' physical and mental health...and productivity. As Shawn LaVana, Head of Marketing, Virgin Pulse noted, "We're checking our smartphones 150 times a day, how focused can we really be? All of this time in front of screens, for work and in our personal lives, means we're not exercising and eating well, and all of this feeds into a vicious cycle of poor health choices. These are negative habits we've built, but we can build positive habits in the same way."

James Brewer, Workspace Consultant, Steelcase, added: "The disintegration of work-life boundaries is also being driven by globalization. When you have teams distributed worldwide, you have new realities like workers having to virtually collaborate with colleagues and business partners in the middle of the night." Brewer also noted that there seems to be a dichotomy in policy approaches to work-life balance between small "start-ups" and the larger, more established organizations. Smaller start-ups appear to be more proactive in implementing policies that help their employees define when it is okay to "turn it off" and disconnect (i.e., no emails in the evening or work-free vacations). On the other hand, these types of policy approaches are largely absent in larger companies.

The roundtable agreed that if we ask whether technology has freed or trapped us, the answer is firmly the latter. Paul Terry, CEO and president, Staywell, noted that "resilience" and "high-performance cultures" may just be colloquialisms for "high endurance cultures".

In the future, tackling the health enemy of 24/7 work and hyper-connectivity (and the many under-researched ways a screen-focused and sedentary work life are hurting worker health) will be a much more powerful workplace wellness focus. "Productivity" itself will be redefined.

3) Embrace Technology Opportunities: from Mobile to Telemedicine

Technology, the experts concurred, is very much a "double-edged sword" as it's also rapidly delivering so many once-unimaginable tools that are workplace health's friend. Telemedicine, allowing workers to connect with doctors via phone, text and online, is a major, more prevention-focused opportunity for employees' physical and mental health. Multichannel, 24/7 communications with medical professionals lets employees get care from doctors before they are very sick, and companies like Zappos are turning to companies like subscription-based Turntable Health for primary care support. And Dr. Pelletier stressed that telemedicine, online coaching and the new storm of mobile platforms/apps are allowing employers to reach and support the hardest-to-reach worker populations: remote/at home workers and isolated offshore/global populations.

Dondeena Bradley (Global Head of Innovation) and Theresa DiMasi (Editor in Chief) at Weight Watchers, which hosts thousands of support meetings for its members every week, stressed the importance of multichannel technology for meeting peoples' demands. The more that personalized, easy and immediate technology support can be available to enable healthier choices on demand, the more likely people will stay on their path to a better self. They reinforced that this on-demand healthy info and support via apps will become more "holistic" in the future, yet people will still want a mix of face-to face and digital support.

The use of health-tracking wearable devices/apps now grabs headlines, and a Healthiest Employer survey (7/2015) found that 25% of U.S. workplaces now use activity trackers and digital devices to capture workers' health info/activity. Dr. Pelletier noted that the future will look very different: rather than clunky wearables, invisible, ingestible nanotechnology, wireless Bluetooth, and the next

generations of the AppleWatch will capture a broad spectrum of employees' biometric data effortlessly and around the clock.

Mim Senft, Wellness Director, Optum at Goldman Sachs, cautioned that the negative side of all this technology-enabled transparency into workers' personal health info (PHI) is the serious, mounting data breaches. And she argued that in the future, "what's private and what's not will go through many iterations, and workers' PHI will need to be defined, redefined and protected."

Whether its tools like sensors in an employee's chair that alert them when they need to stretch/move, or all the proliferating sleep, meditation or workplace vacation technologies, there are huge, future opportunities to harness technology to much better manage an employee's physical and mental health. And technology will radically change the design and delivery of workplace programs worldwide.

4) Extend Wellness to an Increasingly Remote Workforce

With a galloping percentage of global employees working remotely/virtually or offshore, workplaces need to extend meaningful wellness initiatives to these employees who may need it most (suffering more loneliness and lack of peer support in both work and health). So the conversation in the future will increasingly shift from "workplace programs" to total "workforce" solutions.

And Dr. Fikry Isaac, Chief Medical Officer at one of the most successful global workplace innovators, Johnson & Johnson, noted, "Yes, large corporations still have headquarters, but sustaining a culture of health across the increasingly remote workforce will be utterly key in the future. And in order to impact these remote and at-home workers, smart companies will touch on, and include, the family, significant others and the communities where they live." And in general the roundtable agreed that for all workers, educating and including the family (and family dynamics) will be key to driving and sustaining real lifestyle changes. Companies will need to pay more attention to everything from the changing role of men in families, to paid childcare and maternity/paternity leave.

Alfredo Carvajal, President, Delos Living LLC, noted that far too few companies pay attention to the home work environment for remote workers, but in the future more will support them in setting up a healthy, productive home workspaces: from noise management, healthy lighting and air quality, to ergonomically-optimized desks, chairs, etc.

Theresa DiMasi explained that the Weight Watchers workforce is geographically dispersed, but is using new technologies to encourage collaboration and communication. And the roundtable agreed that not only will collaboration sharpen over the next few years, the virtual collaboration model will be an important way to better enable health and wellness.

5) Adapt Global Programs to Local Realities, Culture & Resources

The roundtable strongly concurred that the future of global/multinational wellness initiatives is to throw out cookie-cutter programs, and get beyond the U.S./Western roadmaps, because delivering wellness successfully varies wildly by global region. Not only because the health challenges vary so intensely worldwide, but also because each region has different wellness resources at their disposal and different entrenched traditions. And these regional hyperspecificities aren't just interesting anecdotes, they can make or break programs. Advice: "live there, listen and learn" first.

Dr. Roizen argued that the unique, genetically determined health profile of populations needs to be taken into account. For instance, as populations in China, India and the Middle East adopt our western food and stress habits, their genetic profile hits them "much harder" with complications from obesity and diabetes – and that needs to be a top workplace focus.

Dr. Pelletier shared how when they took their Corporate Health Improvement Program (CHIP) out internationally, how surprised they were by the extraordinary degree of specificity in each local environment. "In China, a diabetes risk appraisal about reducing white potato consumption will be met with, 'what's a potato?"—In Russia, a successful smoking cessation program needs to involve

the grandmother—birth complications in India are the #1 cost driver—and in countries in Southeast Asia (like India) if you exclude Ayurveda, you're going to exclude the vast majority of the worker population. You cannot simply address the company and the individual, you have to adapt to the total culture."

Nancy Board, Strategic Account Director, Limeade, agreed, adding that it was her experience delivering wellness initiatives in 18 countries that confirmed the importance of abandoning a U.S.-centric way of thinking. For instance, in high-density cities like Shanghai or Beijing, air quality and upper respiratory diseases are #1 issues, and in some areas of the world, women's safety in the workplace, just being able to get to work, is the huge concern."

Because it's such a wide world of health realities, the current focus of wellness programs is (and has to be) different. Dr. Isaac of Johnson & Johnson (which has had a global wellness program since 2007) noted that a focus on healthy eating, more physical activity and stress is right for the whole world, but the adoption and delivery of programs varies widely. "Adoption of workplace health programs in Asia-Pacific is very high, but you see more resistance in regions like Eastern Europe, where the culture, laws and lack of resources make it hard to deliver programs. The good news is that globally, workplace wellness is seen as a real attraction and retention differentiator and multinationals have great influence on this market, mandating what's out there and changing how it's delivered."

Numerous examples of how global workplace wellness approaches are now changing and vary were shared. For instance, the U.S. may be out in front with smoking cessation, stress management and food choices, but lags woefully behind with physical activity. Mim Senft noted: "In India the focus on women's financial education/wellness is climbing, while in London we're seeing bankers groups include mindfulness training for employees. And while it has been difficult to talk about emotional/mental wellbeing in high-stress Asia because of cultural norms, we are now seeing more of a focus on mental health in Japan. What's most important differs dramatically in each region."

And if the U.S. has had the luxury of taking a company-based, "programmatic" approach, in Europe and elsewhere workplace wellness comes via government policy,

and is more focused on the environment. Emily Dery, Head of the Global Health Track at the Clinton Global Initiative, explained how important it is to work with public entities and local governments. For instance, members of the Clinton Global Initiative have launched a tobacco-free workplace challenge, successful because it can be adapted to a local context by working with local governments.

The future will also be about more global companies recognizing that cultures like China (with their millennia-old Traditional Chinese Medicine) and India (with their ancient system of Ayurveda) already know just a few things about maintaining wellbeing. Wellness programs need to focus on what's available, accessible, affordable and evidence-based across global regions and draw on indigenous resources and traditions.

And if in the West we call all this "alternative medicine," and have been unusually slow to embrace even highly evidence-based "alternative" approaches in the workplace, that will change: benefits programs are already starting to include things like acupuncture.

6) Address the Sharpening Age Divide: Both Millennials and Extended-Work-life Baby Boomers

Much has been written about how millennials and their tech-focused brains/ world are redefining work, workplaces and wellness approaches. The round-table argued that this is not just a splashy news angle, but also a powerful truth. In a nutshell, millennials demand far more work flexibility and simply expect all manner of health and wellbeing. As Dr. Pelletier put it, "Millennial worksites and their idea of 'wellness' will look very different. I'm still astounded when I visit Google: this generation is taking us into an expectation of health, and doesn't' find working yourself to death until 10 PM a desirable model."

Joel Bennett, president, Organizational Wellness & Learning Systems (OWLS) noted that both work structures and wellness programs for millennials need to acknowledge that this "emerging" group, as well as the older "wisdom" group, "represent a real evolution in the human developmental lifecycle as we've known it, with emerging adulthood and the aging workforce extending in years. The

social fabric of aging is changing such that all age groups will benefit from a total "We" in the wellness perspective where all can learn from each other."

There was agreement that while it is hard to invest in wellness for young people who may only spend 1-3 years at a company, it's precisely a healthy-minded work culture that will retain them for years longer than their natural horizon. The conclusion: because of millennials the workplace wellness focus needs to expand beyond healthcare costs, to recruitment, motivation, productivity and retention – and you have to give them a culture of health, because they expect it.

At the same time, in most parts of the world, working populations are aging, and Baby Boomers are now extending their work-life long into traditional retirement years. These "seniors," or workforce "wisdom groups" also have unique behaviors and needs. For instance, many are part of the remote worker surge, wanting to work at home and not travel into an office. And as Dondeena Bradley noted, they want to migrate in and out of work, and, "companies need to create new work structures that allow them to be all in, or part time out. If a company only has face-to-face health support systems, how sustainable is that for this group? And for both the flexibility-demanding millennial and the in-and-out Baby Boomer, if they choose only to work a few hours some weeks, how do you keep them engaged with the work and health life you've established?"

Two very distinct age groups are increasingly mingling in the workforce. And more businesses will need to rethink their one-size-fits-all-ages approach to work structure and wellness.

7) Mental Health Focus Must Ramp Up

Most global workplace wellness initiatives have focused on physical health (from more fitness, to more healthy food). But given people's new hyper-connected, never-stop-working lives, and, as Paul Terry noted, the fact that research suggests companies post-recession are putting greater emphasis on more "efficiency" and doing more with less (which is seldom being proactively addressed)—we have a once-silent, but now getting louder mental health, stress and "burnout" epidemic on our hands.

And because of this the experts agreed that a much stronger, and more engaging, mental health focus will be integrated into more workplace wellness initiatives in the future. It's inevitable as the impact of stress on physical health (the root of so many high-cost chronic diseases) and productivity continues to skyrocket. More stressful jobs and lives mean emotional wellbeing is taking a toll from East to West. Twenty percent of the U.S. population (at any given time) has a diagnosable mental health issue, and the research on the state of employee mental health/stress in places like Asia (Japan is very high-risk) is sobering.

In most parts of the world (particularly Asia), mental health has not been something people have been willing to talk about. But that's also changing, and as more emotional issues grip more people, sheer need is leading to more openness.

The mental health/stress crisis has, of course, led to more addictions and prescription drug taking: sleeping and anti-anxiety pill use just keeps climbing.

But the experts agreed that they were excited about the research around neuroplasticity, and studies on the effectiveness of approaches like positive psychology, meditation and mindfulness. And they predict that we will see more – and more innovative – mental health and stress management strategies in workplaces in the near future...and not just for Silicon Valley and Wall Street executives.

8) You Can Mock Holacracy - But Top-Down Power Hierarchies Will Change

There has been much recent media derision of companies like Zappos' experiments with holacracy, a new "no boss," "curb the egos" approach to running businesses that removes the management hierarchy and distributes power across roles. But while holacracy's early fumbles may be easy to mock, the roundtable argued that less paternalistic, hierarchical, top-down power structures will only continue to rise within companies. And this model of more self-responsible, self-actualized employees could have positive implications for companies' well-ness initiatives – which have been plagued by lack of engagement and passivity.

Maggie Hsu (Vice President, Business Development, Downtown Project, founded by Tony Hsieh of Zappos.com), spent time within a Holacractic model, noting that it had both positive and negative results. "This restructured idea of work empowers people to be entrepreneurs and their own bosses as it explicitly asks everyone in the company to identify problems and do something about them. And it lets people fluidly move in and out of work, which resonates particularly well with millennials, who often want to work on what they want, when they want to. But it fails to address the human aspect, including compensation, promotion, and professional development. While self-management is something that all companies might consider in some form, pure Holacracy is ironically a closed-source system with a set of rules, the "Holacracy Constitution", which reads like a bad Shakespearian play."

But Hsu and others argued that less rigid company power structures (with fewer power "layers") are the ascendant model, in part because more women are in higher positions than ever before. More experimentation is needed and coming, not only because the redefinition of power in companies can itself be a form of "wellness" for many workers, but because more open business structures enable cultures of wellness where there is more self-motivation and shared responsibility.

9) Design Healthy Workspaces & Focus on Environmental Health

Despite the fact that most people spend the majority of their waking lives working (whether at a business or at home), there has been too little attention paid to designing workspaces that are conducive to human wellbeing and productivity. As Alfredo Carvajal of Delos put it, "Even big companies will still house their employees in what are essentially unhealthy spaces. We will see the design and building of workplaces change in the next decade, with a much-needed new focus on natural light, healthy air, worker privacy and comfort, and flexible office design—and incorporating different types of biophilic design, which reimagines there relationship between nature, human biology and the built environment."

For instance, Delos has been part of the founding of a new International Well Building Institute that consulted with doctors from institutions like the Mayo and Cleveland Clinics to create new standards for air, water, light, nourishment, fitness, comfort and mind in offices (and every type of building). This new standard measures how dozens of design components affect numerous aspects of human health and productivity, from the cognitive to cardiovascular. Going forward more businesses will not only optimize their buildings for human physical and mental health, they will focus on the remote worker, especially in assisting with ergonomic workspaces.

More broadly, the roundtable agreed that future workplace wellness approaches need to have a more powerful focus on the environmental. For instance, in high-density cities (proliferating worldwide) in places like China, Russia or Mexico, terrible air quality is becoming the #1 issue in worker health, and is killing people with lung cancer, COPD and heart disease. Tackling these deadly environmental issues is beyond the scope of companies, and will have to involve collaboration between governments and businesses.

And as Joel Bennett noted, it's the U.S. that has been the most narrowly "individual-focused" in its workplace wellness efforts, and that more workplace strategies should adapt a systemic or integral approach that includes policy, the environment, as well as programs. And, importantly, this includes full integration and alignment with behavioral health and Employee Assistance Services, which can have a positive impact on psychosocial aspects of the work culture.

10) Think Beyond Workplace Wellness 'Programs' - and Get Serious About a Healthy Work Culture

Companies hear incessantly that if they want to succeed in creating a healthier workforce that they need to make it a company-wide mission, and have it baked into the DNA of their organization's leaders. The mantra: health and wellness needs to be infused throughout that business' culture, no matter how big or small, or what kind of management structure exists. Companies are bombarded with this message, but because so very few companies have actually realized it,

the roundtable agreed that this basic truth cannot be broadcast often enough. The future of workplace wellness will not be inserting some "antidote" (third-party-delivered) healthy program into an overall unhealthy work culture: giving people gym memberships over here, while dishing out brutal work hours and disrespect over there. Currently, the gaps between the formal wellness program and a company's overall philosophy of worker health can almost seem laughable. Mia Kyricos, Chief Brand Officer, Spafinder Wellness, Inc., noted that, "It's not unusual to see a company reward an employee for losing 30 pounds with a gift card to, say, Outback Steakhouse...the rewards and programs are often so incredibly disconnected."

Too many "workplace wellness programs" are failing to inspire employees to make healthy changes. And finger wagging about how bad high-calorie, processed foods are does not incite lifestyle change (the hardest thing to incite). It involves deep, company-wide, "we're all in this together" change, participation and support.

The experts at the roundtable expressed great hope for the future: successful companies will increasingly think beyond the "external wellness program" and strive to create healthy "whole culture" businesses. Those businesses will succeed in lowering healthcare costs, and in attracting, retaining and motivating employees, and their example will spread. One can get distracted by all the negative media spin on workplace wellness, but as Dr. Pelletier neatly put it, "In the future, a culture of health in workplaces will be normal, common, and global."

And as conversations about work and wellness heat up, they're inevitably moving from a company discussion to a political discussion: acknowledging the reality of the work and wellness "haves" and "have-nots". Company cultures where top executives are at mindfulness retreats while the least well, least wealthy workers are getting hit with program penalties for unhealthy behavior are not only wrong, but unsustainable. And the roundtable agreed that it's rather insincere to talk about workplace wellness if we don't also address living wages, racial/gender inequality at work and the widening wealth divide.

Closing Thoughts: This is a Young Concept

Despite the exhaustion that the constant media questioning of workplace wellness ROI can create, the roundtable's consensus is that there is cause for great optimism: strides towards healthier work have been made, and there is so much more to accomplish. This was reflected in each participant's rating of the "state of wellness" in their own companies: the scores ranged from 4 to 9.6, and the average was 6.6. Positive, but still so much to do.

Jeremy Abbate (VP, Global Media Alliances, *Scientific American*; Publishing Director, *Scientific American Worldview*) reminded everyone how relatively new this healthy work concept is. It was only roughly 100 years ago (1911) when the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in Manhattan killed 146 immigrant garment workers (where owners had locked the doors to prevent workers taking breaks or stealing). "A century ago there wasn't even a concept of basic occupational safety, and there was so much stalling, because no-brainers like having safe exits was an expense. I think we will look back 100 years from now and feel the same way. At how much we will have accomplished in creating healthier, less stressed employees, and wondering why we were stalling in the first place."

Concluding remarks from moderators Ellis and Moorefield

Renee Moorefield, CEO, Wisdom Works Group, agreed. "We have much possibility in front of us for our companies and our planet. By creating the conditions where people truly thrive at work, companies also advance wellbeing in communities and societies worldwide. This will require a new kind of leadership, one that makes wellbeing a priority equal to that of making a profit."

Susie Ellis, Chairman and CEO, Global Wellness Institute, shared her final thought that given how diverse this group of thought-leaders was, and how complex any discussion around "redefining workplace wellness" is by nature, that there was a surprising amount of consensus about what next steps need to be taken. She also noted that the final question put to the roundtable (that there was no time to elaborate on) - "What can we accomplish together, that none of us could accomplish on our own?" - was where everyone's thoughts were heading, and would make an excellent starting point for a future roundtable discussion.



333 S.E. 2nd Avenue, Suite 3750, Miami, FL 33131 www.globalwellnessinstitute.com