

Employee Wellness

Guidelines for Business for a Pragmatic Program

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Shadowmatch



Skillsgrid



Stressmapper



Career Report



Study Report



Coaching

Table of Contents

1. Introduction: Cultivating a Culture of Holistic Employee Wellness 3

2. The Building Blocks of Employee Wellness 4

 2.1 Physical Health and Safety 4

 2.2 Relationship Wellness 4

 2.3 Team Wellness and Collaboration 4

 2.4 Career Wellness and Growth 4

 2.5 Workplace Operational Success as a Key Wellness Builder 5

3. The Principle of Invitation and Participation 5

4. The Process of Success 6

 4.1 Compulsory Programs 6

 4.2 Experience Invitations 6

5. Employee Wellness as a Key Business Strategy..... 6

 5.1 Toxic Workforce - Productivity is Low..... 7

 5.2 Neutral Workforce 7

 5.3 Healthy Workforce 8

6. What makes the difference?..... 8

7. The Challenge 9

8. Shadowmatch Corporate Wellness Package..... 10

 8.1 Be Informed 10

 8.2 Where do you get this?..... 10

 8.3 This is what the business gets... 10

 8.4 The cost question 11

9. Roll Out Program: Year One 12

10. Roll Out Program: Year Two 14

11. Roll Out Program: Year Three 16

12. Roll Out Program: Year Four 16

13. Roll Out Program: Year Five..... 16

Employee Wellness Guidelines for Business for a Pragmatic Program

A Shadowmatch Service

1. Introduction: Cultivating a Culture of Holistic Employee Wellness

In today's fast-paced and demanding work environment, employee wellness can no longer be treated as a checkbox or a side initiative. It must be embraced as a core business priority—one that considers the whole person, not just their output. True employee wellness goes beyond physical health; it encompasses a holistic view of individual well-being, recognizing the deep connection between personal safety, emotional stability, physical vitality, career growth, and healthy relationships—both inside and outside the workplace.

This publication aims to explore the multi-dimensional nature of employee wellness, placing equal value on social connection, mental resilience, professional fulfillment, and personal stability. We will unpack how these areas intertwine, and how workplaces can become proactive spaces where employees are not only protected and supported but also inspired to thrive. Wellness is not a destination—it's a culture, a continuous commitment, and a shared responsibility. Let's explore what it takes to build that culture, one empowered employee at a time.

Workplace wellness also functions as a place where the holistic wellness of the individual is served. The workplace could provide employees with behavioral tools and programs that not only serves their wellness at work but also their wellness at home. This turns the employer to the next level of being an asset to society and not only to the shareholder. The interesting point is that when a business builds a holistically healthy workforce, that workforce becomes their brand carriers and social marketers which in turn grows the business and its brand. This is the way a company/enterprise builds a credible and sustainable position in the world of business and society.

2. The Building Blocks of Employee Wellness

Here is a clear and concise list of the key employee wellness aspects, each with a short description and what it entails:

2.1 Physical Health and Safety

Description: The foundation of employee wellness, ensuring employees are physically safe and healthy in their working environment.

What it entails:

- Safe working conditions and compliance with health regulations
- Access to healthcare, wellness screenings, and ergonomic support
- Encouragement of healthy habits (exercise, nutrition, rest)
- Proactive health education and preventive care programs

2.2 Relationship Wellness

Description: The quality of personal and professional relationships that support emotional and social well-being.

What it entails:

- Healthy work-life balance that allows time for personal relationships
- Respectful, supportive workplace interactions
- Conflict resolution mechanisms and emotional support resources
- Encouragement of empathy, trust, and emotional intelligence

2.3 Team Wellness and Collaboration

Description: A healthy team environment where individuals feel included, heard, and valued.

What it entails:

- Strong communication habits and shared goals
- Inclusion, psychological safety, and equitable participation
- Structures that support teamwork without overburdening individuals
- Recognition of team efforts and shared success

2.4 Career Wellness and Growth

Description: Opportunities for employees to grow, develop, and find meaning in their work.

What it entails:

- Clear career pathways and promotion opportunities
- Skills development, training, and coaching support
- Regular feedback and meaningful performance discussions
- A sense of purpose, autonomy, and alignment with personal values

2.5 Workplace Operational Success as a Key Wellness Builder

Description: A well-run organization creates stability, reduces stress, and gives employees the structure they need to thrive.

What it entails:

- Clear processes, roles, and responsibilities
- Effective leadership and consistent decision-making
- Fair workload distribution and realistic expectations
- A culture of accountability, transparency, and shared success

Each of these wellness aspects contributes to a workplace culture where people don't just survive—they grow, connect, and perform at their best.

3. The Principle of Invitation and Participation

A key challenge that always threatens the success of any initiative is nonparticipation and noncompliance. The fact that there is a gymnasium at work doesn't mean employees will go to the gym and keep themselves in good shape. The fact that there is a swimming pool doesn't constitute that people will swim and in doing so keep their fitness levels up. It has been proven over time that an invitation and the availability of services are not enough motivation for people to participate. The difference is experience. When people experience an activity or some form of program, the experience becomes magnet, and the invitation turns into active participation. This is a key point in providing wellness programs. When participation becomes such a positive experience that people start talking about it, they invite others to join, and the participation grows. This is a process. It happens over time of repetition and participation.

The challenge in many companies is that their wellness initiatives are only utilized by a very small percentage of the workforce. Sometimes a wellness intervention is a once-off event that is more driven by fun than by long term wellness and sustainable results amongst employees. This can then easily be seen as a waste of time and money.

4. The Process of Success

The question remains to be what increases the success of any program? There are two results driven processes that work.

4.1 Compulsory Programs. This is when force is used to get people to do what must be done. A good example is a law. If a government wants the people of a country to do what the government wants them to do, a law is passed, and people must comply. This is the same with a school college, university, a business or whatever institution where it is necessary to produce a certain result. The problem is that this way of getting things done can very easily become toxic. Another challenge is that compulsory programs have limits. You can't make a compulsory rule in the workplace that forces people to be happy in their marriages. Or to eat healthy food. Or to look after their pets in a humane way. Wellness therefor becomes very difficult because it doesn't function in the regulated framework of any institution. Not even amongst professional sports people. If the behavior is not part of the habitual framework of the individual, making rules and passing laws doesn't solve the problem.

4.2 Experience Invitations. This is when the individual is invited to experience something positive. That experience must be meaningful and fulfilling for the individual. It must then be repeated, and an iterative program must become part of the habitual behavior of the individual and/or the collective. It always starts with the early adopters. They then become the advocates who invite others, and the process of a collective movement starts. The next key point is that the initiative must never be left to chance. The energy that keeps the program alive then dwindles and the initiative dies down. It is for this reason that wellness initiatives are sometimes short-lived, and it might even be perceived by many employees as a negative wasteful initiative. This must be prevented. Rather do nothing for wellness than a *'flavor of the month'* initiative without sustainable value.

5. Employee Wellness as a Key Business Strategy

The challenge with employee wellness in many companies is that it doesn't fall into the central strategic paradigm of the business. In some instances, employee wellness is a talk show and not a working strategy. A working strategy is part of the central focus areas of a business. It is as central as product development, marketing, operational optimization and customer service, growth and sustainability. The workforce of a business is the foundation of enabling all the other strategies of a business. If this foundation is not optimally managed, the strategies of the business are not implemented properly.

Employee wellness can be divided into three scenarios as described below.

5.1 Toxic Workforce - Productivity is Low

There are specific symptoms that present amongst a workforce to be toxic. Herewith the list:

- Employees work only when they have to work. Whenever there is a chance, they don't work, and they have all kinds of ways to act as if they're working.
- Employees' engagement is low. What does this mean? Employees work in a mechanical way. They do things without any thinking, involvement or mindful participation. There is very little thinking. Only doing.
- Gossip is in charge of the workplace talk.
- People and groups work in isolation.
- The aim of most employees is to take as much as they can from the employer. This might even include stealing and dishonest claims.
- Backstabbing is the way to get promotion, and it is the way employees work against each other to get the attention of the leaders.
- Customer service is bad, and employees do not care for what clients experience.
- Retention of key employees is at risk. Staff turnover is high and the best people tend to resign leaving the company with a sub-standard workforce.

5.2 Neutral Workforce

- Employees work to meet the expectation of the leaders.
- The workforce does what needs to be done and they expect overtime pay for additional work.
- They work according to their employment contracts and job descriptions. Nothing more and nothing less.
- The process of appointments is done according to the rules of the game, and the process is followed correctly.
- People stick to working hours and they clock watch. They do nothing more than the expected minimum.
- Employees do not work actively against the interest of the business, but they also do nothing to build and grow the business.
- The overall culture is not to cause any shake-ups, not to step out of line and not to volunteer for work that needs to be done.
- The work gets done because if they don't do it, they might get fired. But they do the minimum.
- Customer service is mechanical. They do for clients what they have to do without being in trouble. (*'I smile because I have to smile'*)

- Staff turnover is normally at a level where the company keeps on struggling to retain competent employees. This leaves the company with a mediocre workforce.

5.3 Healthy Workforce

- People are brand advocates of the business. In their professional and personal capacity, they talk positive about the business, and they show their loyalty openly.
- Employees put the interest of the business high on their priority agenda.
- Staff support each other, they stand in for one another and they want the best outcome for the business.
- Competent individuals are promoted, and everybody supports them.
- Employees do not take from the business, they actively give to the business – their time energy, innovation and loyalty.
- Relationships are positive and friendly.
- People volunteer to do things.
- Customer service is excellent.
- Loyalty is a key building block to retain highly competent employees. This makes the workforce highly efficient with low cost of recruitment, training and development.

6. What makes the difference?

In many instances business leaders are of the opinion that they run a business with a very healthy workforce and when they discover the opposite they are surprised and, in some instances, they even do not admit to the facts. The question to be answered is: What causes a workforce to become toxic and what drives a healthy workforce?

This is a leadership issue. There is no doubt in all research papers. A toxic workforce is as a result of a leadership style that cultivates negative energy and eventually a destructive culture that functions in a toxic workplace. This is where things go wrong:

- Recruitment. This is a critical part of employee wellness. Recruiting people that are fit for the job, the culture and the team they will become part of.
- Performance Management. Positive performance management is not about policing the work employees but enabling them to do their best.
- Promotions to Senior Positions. This is said so many times that explaining is unnecessary. The bottom line it to get the best people for the position in question.
- Employee Support. Employees need to know what will make their lives better. Not only in their professional capacity but also in their personal wellness.

- Employee Development Initiatives. Employee development is a holistic program that includes primary and secondary development programs. Primary development programs are those aimed at the business productivity and fulfillment whilst secondary development talks to personal development programs that will enhance the well-being of the individual in areas that are not directly related to the work they do.
- Team optimization programs. Where employees work in teams, the well-being of the team becomes an energy source for individual well-being. When teams become neutral, or toxic it will have a compromising influence on individual success and the collective success of the business.
- Coaching and active mentoring of every employee. This is one of the lost critical components of employee well-being. To provide employees with the opportunity to be professionally coached is an investment in loyalty, retention and growth.
- Skills development programs. This program has a specific starting point. A live skill register, and skills audit per individual. This allows the business to invest in a targeted manner the development of skills amongst employees making it applicable to each individual staff member.
- Career growth and support to every employee to become their best self. Employees want to know what the future at a specific business/institution holds for them. The support for career development is an important program that not only benefits the individual but has great value for the business.
- Relationship caretaking and support. It is general knowledge that relationships can destroy the entire life of even a stable person. Relationships have serious implications on the well-being of every individual. A wellness program must include active practical support for the relationships of the individual. Be it professional or private relationships.

7. The Challenge

In most instances it is a combination of leadership, time and cost. To build a healthy workforce, the leadership team of the business must buy into the principle. They must understand that a successful positive and highly functional workforce doesn't happen all by itself. It must be built. It takes time and it carries a cost. The return on this investment is the sustainable growth of the business.

The second challenge is that a small Human Resource Team can't do this. It is just impossible. The skills set to do this and the time it needs to implement programs and structures are just too much for the normal HR team in a business.

The third is the cost factor. To invest in people carries a very high cost. This is where Shadowmatch has changed the game by building systems that facilitate all the interventions necessary to build a healthy workforce.

The Shadowmatch Employee Wellness Program:

8. Shadowmatch Corporate Wellness Package

8.1 Be Informed

As stated above, an effective wellness initiative must address physical, mental, and social dimensions, integrating elements like team dynamics to strengthen collaboration and relationship-building support and content to enhance smooth interpersonal functioning. Personalized development plans, informed by skills and behavioral analysis as well as stress measurement and management tools, empower employees to address challenges and leverage strengths. Adding career guidance and adult study methods for employees who are engaged in further studies ensure alignment between personal growth and professional goals. This comprehensive approach cultivates resilience, reduces burnout, and drives engagement by transforming wellness from a perk into a habit-driven culture that evolves with employee needs.

8.2 Where do you get this?

From Shadowmatch, the unparalleled system providing a comprehensive wellness framework for employees. No other solution globally matches the capabilities of Shadowmatch. Each employee benefits from:

- A detailed Shadowmatch Full Report on their habits.
- Unlimited relationship reports across eight categories, including work, friendships, love, and marriage.
- A personalized Career Guidance Report.
- A Study Methods Report for those pursuing further education.
- The Stressmapper worksheet, offering a visual outline of stress and a comprehensive report on stress management.
- An Industry Mindset Questionnaire to help employees understand the way they prefer to engage the world of business and services.
- The Skillsgrid questionnaire, delivering a complete visual skills map.
- Access to professional coaches for personal development.

8.3 This is what the business gets...

All the functionalities of the Shadowmatch system becomes available to the business. All the training on how to use the system is systematized and automated. The business

has access to many additional worksheets for both Shadowmatch and Skillsgrid for recruitment purposes.

The Shadowmatch head office handles the implementation and roll-out of the system with the HR department of the business. A specific roll-out project is followed to ensure that everything is covered, and the full capability of the system is utilized.

8.4 The cost question

The business pays a monthly fee per employee. Because of the different pricing structures in different countries, the monthly fee per employee equals the cost of three cappuccinos in the country where the business is located, irrespective of the number of employees. For the first two years, the Shadowmatch team runs a monthly virtual work session with your HR and in some instances with all employees to ensure full use and roll-out of the system.

9. Roll Out Program: Year One

Month One. Roll-out Workshop.

Shadowmatch Head Office Consultant will facilitate a workshop with HR to decide on the roll-out program, actions allocated and kick-off dates.

Month Two. Worksheets Completion.

Get everybody in the business to do their Shadowmatch Worksheet, Skillsgrid Worksheet and Stressmapper Worksheet. The workshop at the end of month one is to get all the files clean and train HR on the basics of the system. It includes training for recruitment.

Month Three: Recruitment Workshop.

Workshop with all involved in Recruitment to showcase the full recruitment capability of the system. HR will now be able to use this functionality and the Shadowmatch Team is on stand-by for support should it be necessary.

Month Four. Employee Workshop.

Virtual workshop with all employees to nudge them to visit their personal portals to see what is available. At the end of month two the workshop is aimed at training HR on how the personal portal can be used by employees and how to support them.

Month Five. Stress Management Workshop.

Stress Management and Group Stress Analysis workshop. This should include HR and all line managers and Team Leaders.

Month Six. Skills Search and Audit Analysis.

Workshop 1: Skills Audit. HR will now be able to search for skills in the business, do skills audits per working division or group in the company and learn how to address skills shortages as well as skills development.

Workshop 2: Data analysis and behavioral trends feedback to the business Leaders.

Month Seven. Personal Development.

Personal Development and motorship programs to align working habits with behavioral job-related behavioral demands.

Month Eight. The Need for Professional Coaching.

How to access and make use of professional coaches for interventions that needs in-depth support.

Month Nine. Team Optimization.

Teams: analysis, development and growth. HR will learn how to use the Shadowmatch Team Analysis function. Line managers should also be part of this work session.

Month Ten. Stress management Support.

Understanding stress for individuals. What support is necessary and how to address stress in the life of an individual. How to prevent burn-out and the stress of an individual to filter into the team.

Month Eleven. Group Stress Analysis.

Address high stress divisions and identify specific collective stress areas in high stress working groups. Collective stress management practices can prevent stress amongst employees to turn the workplace negative and even sometimes toxic.

Month Twelve. Redeployment with Purpose.

Workshop 1: Redeployment of employees for optimal growth and productivity. Employee success is a function of the way the individual fits into a specific working environment. Performance improvement could be as easy as redeployment of the employee.

Workshop 2: Data analysis and behavioral trends feedback to the business Leaders. Data analysis on the collective stress amongst employees with an outline of the stress segments that might need attention.

10. Roll Out Program: Year Two

Month One. Re-do and Update Worksheets.

All employees to update their skills profile, re-do Shadowmatch and Stressmapper.

Month Two. Data Clean-up Exercise.

Clean-up of files, keeping the system updated in terms of internal data and how to organize and re-organize employees when changes in the business take place.

Month Three. All Relationships.

Understanding relationships. This empowers everybody in the business to use the relationship reports with maximum value for the business and individuals.

Month Four. Personal Development Programs.

Assess progress with PDPs. Make everybody aware of their recommended PDPs and how to make use of the availability and purpose of PDPs.

Month Five. Stress Progress Workshop.

Stress Analysis for the business and progress analysis. The aim is to determine whether the collective stress amongst employees has been addressed successfully.

Month Six. Collective Stress Analysis.

All to re-do Stressmapper to do a Collective Stress Analysis. The results of the second and third wave of Stressmapper results to determine what the difference are and where the differences need attention.

Workshop: Feedback to business leaders on the collective stress in the business with data comparison to the previous analysis.

Month Seven. Skills Register Update.

Skills Audit and Skills Gap Analysis to determine if employees in need of a skills development program did something to improve their skills necessary for their respective jobs.

Month Eight. Culture Study.

Company and divisional culture profiling to indicate to the leadership team what the culture of the business is and what the culture in every division looks like.

Month Nine. Career Report Workshop.

Personal Career Reports: A workshop with all employees to show them how to use their Career Report to help them understand what they can do to align their behavioral patterns with the demands of their job/career. This includes a job-to-habits frustration analysis.

Month Ten. Succession.

Succession planning and development in every aspect of the business is as important as retention of top performers. It is a critical business strategy. Shadowmatch has a full succession planning capability.

Month Eleven. Hand-over Training.

The aim is to hand-over all functions to HR. This is a workshop with HR to determine what knowledge they still need to run the system in the business.

Month Twelve. Data Audit and Clean-up.

Business is dynamic and the structure of the business continuously changes. This workshop is to compare the system mirror data with the actual structure and employee data to ensure all files are clean and true.

Workshop: Working session with the leadership team to determine where Shadowmatch needs to provide specific services to keep the program running. In some instances, the HR team will be capable to run the program internally. If not, the Shadowmatch team can do it but on the second cycle the consulting work done by the Shadowmatch Team carries a cost. What the Shadowmatch team provides without cost is the following:

Monthly Check-in Workshops with HR.

All HR employees who have been part of this two-year process receive certificates of competence, and they are qualified Workforce Optimization Consultants. This is a six-month training process facilitated by the Shadowmatch Team. This certification process doesn't carry a cost, provided the business keeps on using the system.

Quarterly Check-in Workshop with Exco.

The aim is to provide trend analysis data to the business leaders, specific recommendations based on the data and feedback on potential wellness gaps that might emerge.

11. Roll Out Program: Year Three

The Shadowmatch Team facilitates quarterly workshops with the inhouse human resource team, feedback to senior management and employees that are new to the business. The program rotates:

First Quarter: Workshop with all employees to introduce them to their Shadowmatch Portal. Focus on new employees.

Second Quarter: Planning workshop with HR.

Third quarter: Data analysis feedback to Exco.

Fourth Quarter: Work session with all employees on stress management.

12. Roll Out Program: Year Four

First Quarter: Workshop with all employees to introduce them to their Shadowmatch Portal. Focus on new employees.

Second Quarter: Planning workshop with HR.

Third quarter: Data analysis feedback to Exco.

Fourth Quarter: Work session with all employees on Relationship Management.

13. Roll Out Program: Year Five

First Quarter: Workshop with all employees to introduce them to their Shadowmatch Portal. Focus on new employees.

Second Quarter: Planning workshop with HR.

Third Quarter: Data analysis feedback to Exco.

Fourth Quarter: Work session with all employees on coaching.