



REIGNITE THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: YOUR TEN-STEP GUIDE TO CREATING A CULTURE OF WELLBEING.

Supporting employee wellbeing and mental health is now firmly on the agenda for today's forward-thinking business leaders. In a post-Covid world, where remote working is the new normal, savvy employers realise that their people need more support than ever before.

As well as being the right thing to do, looking after employee wellbeing makes sound business sense: invest in your work family, and you'll create engaged, motivated, and highly productive teams. Neglect them, and you risk damaging morale, eroding trust, and losing serious momentum in the progress of your people.

Yet the ideal formula for workplace wellbeing can be devilishly elusive.

That's where we come in.

If you're a leader who is genuinely looking to improve the wellbeing of your employees, then you've come to the right place.

When you've taken it all in, we'd love to chat more about your current approach to workplace wellbeing, and how **Lift Your Wellbeing** could help to change things for the better.

*Hi, I'm Kevin McAlister,
Founder of Lift Your Wellbeing.*

Our ethos is driven by the desire to significantly improve the employee experience through wellbeing – creating happier, healthier workplaces; even when they happen to be virtual.

Awarded for our innovative approach to employee wellbeing and our impact on organisational performance, we continue to have a profoundly positive impact on employee experience and team culture around the world.

Through a combination of first-hand experience, the very latest research, and the expert opinions of leading voices in workplace wellbeing, we've put together an easy-to-follow ten-step guide to creating a culture of wellbeing.

STEP ONE

Senior leaders must support and participate in wellbeing initiatives.

Supportive leadership means happier, more engaged employees: highly engaged employees are a massive 87% less likely to leave their job. And while you might not be overly concerned about attrition in the current climate, engaged workers deliver 89% greater client satisfaction levels, and make a company 21% more profitable. Which, from a pure business perspective, is reason enough to support your teams.

We partner with a lot of businesses around the world, and what's evident, time and again, is that the companies who achieve the highest engagement levels (and therefore the best results from their teams) are those with buy-in from senior leaders.

Now, that's not buy-in on a superficial front: we're talking active participation; open communication. When we run our virtual fitness sessions, engage in community WhatsApp groups, and offer up weekly wellbeing tips, the companies whose senior leaders really get involved are the ones who get the most bang for their buck.

Employees take their cues from on high – so if you really want to see results, a company-wide culture shift is where it's at.

If leaders hit the pause button on work a couple of times a week and show up to a Zoom fitness class alongside the rest of the team, they're setting the cultural tone. They're showing that not only is it acceptable to take time out each week to focus on health and wellbeing, it's actively encouraged.

This acceptance of and focus on self-care becomes contagious, and that's when we really start to see a culture of wellbeing develop – allowing individuals and teams to thrive.



STEP TWO

Make wellbeing a consistent offering in your workplace.

You don't want to focus on tackling wellbeing when it becomes a problem: you want to take dynamic steps to stop it becoming a problem in the first place.

Occasional guest speakers and annual wellbeing days are all well and good, but this isn't enough to create a culture of wellbeing, which is what we're aiming for. If you genuinely want to support your employees with their mental, physical and emotional health, the effort needs to be consistent and ongoing.

When Lift Your Wellbeing was born, this was the first model to be flipped on its head. We determined that if we were going to help companies make a difference, we'd need to be a constant presence.

So instead of showing up once a quarter and talking at a sea of faces for an hour, we set about building relationships; getting to know your employees; involving senior leaders. If you speak to our clients today, they'll tell you that our Lift Your Wellbeing coaches become part of the team. We know everyone involved, we get invited to the Christmas parties, and ultimately, we're available every day of the year to support employees with their wellbeing journey.

This is a real point of difference in the employee experience: people not only value what we do, but the simple fact that their employer has chosen to invest in them.

"I feel really valued as an employee that our partners are happy to support our physical and mental health and wellbeing."

This quote was taken from some invaluable client feedback on our wellbeing offering. But it's not about blowing our own trumpet; it's about showing you the difference that a decent wellbeing initiative can make to employee morale.

There's also a good chance that your competitors are not offering this level of care and support; giving you the chance to cement your reputation as an employer of choice.



STEP THREE

Look to create a sense of community.

How do we bring people together, allow them opportunities to engage with each other, and go beyond the small talk to really feel like part of something important?

Create community. This has become a key ingredient in our success.

Feeling like part of a community is a core component in wellbeing. The events of 2020 have made this far more challenging, but also far more important. Your employees are most likely working remotely; cut off from their usual social interactions. This can make them feel isolated, lonely, and disengaged – so whether you trust to us, or find your own methods for creating community, it's vital to keep workplace connections strong.

The business leaders we partner with report that our community building efforts have improved team cohesion, become an important element of the onboarding of new staff, and helped to build relationships across business units, as well as different geographical locations.

Our participants enjoy getting to know their colleagues in a stronger, more 'human' way.

No matter what level of the business you're at, we all share a commonality in our wellbeing.

This helps to break down traditional barriers and ultimately helps individuals feel more comfortable and confident at work.

By building a stronger sense of community in the workplace, we increase trust, strengthen relationships, and improve communication.



STEP FOUR

Identify your internal wellbeing ambassadors.

Cast your mind back to your school days. You know the kid on the playground who would bring a yo-yo to school one day and by the next week every kid in the class had a yo-yo? Our wellbeing ambassadors effectively identify which kid should introduce the yo-yo; or in this case, which of your employees should champion your wellbeing programme. ***With the right internal support, we really see participation and engagement levels rise.***

As more and more businesses recognise the value of wellbeing initiatives, internal brand ambassadors are an increasing trend. This can be a really great way to ensure a consistent culture change, but it's also worth remembering

that employees can lack the time, resources and knowledge to carry out their new role effectively, on top of what's usually a pretty big workload.

This is why we created the Wellbeing Ambassadors Programme.

We partner with wellbeing ambassadors to provide them with all of the tools they'll need to run a new wellbeing theme each month within their team. This helps to really boost buy-in, without overloading your chosen champion. If you want to learn more about our Wellbeing Ambassadors Programme, you can read more about it ***here***, or contact us directly.



STEP FIVE

Consider value on investment.

Here's the honest truth. It can be really tricky to measure the *ENORMOUS* benefits of employee wellbeing, because mental health and happiness aren't that easy to quantify on an Excel spreadsheet.

But being difficult to measure doesn't make them any less vital to the performance of your team.

Employee wellbeing is intrinsically linked to high employee engagement; this in turn contributes to lower staff turnover, improved customer service, and higher profitability. So while wellness might not be easy to quantify, the results that come from investing in the wellbeing of your team are irrefutable.

The Global Wellness Institute believes that the most important qualities of employees are collaboration, creativity, empathy and constant learning, all of which demand the highest level of mental and physical wellbeing.

We believe it's less a question of whether you can afford to invest in the wellbeing of your people, and more a question of whether you can afford not to?

With UK employees once again urged to work from home where possible, increased levels of isolation and social estrangement stand to impact morale and engagement levels if swift action isn't taken to retain a sense of community.



STEP SIX

Clearly define your objectives.

We're incredibly passionate about improving workplace wellbeing, because the benefits are so diverse and far-reaching. Seeing the transformation in your teams – and the business benefits that come along with that – makes our job truly worthwhile.

Some of the most common reasons cited by our clients for engaging our wellbeing solutions include:

- To create a strong team cohesion
- To proactively support employee mental health
- To increase employee engagement
- To help energise employees and improve performance
- To gain a competitive edge
- To attract and retain the best people
- To add something meaningful to the onboarding of new staff

Think about your own motivation.

What do you want to achieve?

What do you want your workplace to look like as a result of a cohesive wellbeing initiative?

What do you hope your people will get out of it?

Setting clear objectives – in other words, determining why you want to support a culture of wellbeing – makes it much easier to define your return on investment, see the value of your wellbeing strategy, and influence future areas of focus.



STEP SEVEN

Personalise your wellbeing offering.

Not all wellbeing programmes are created equal.

To really make a difference to your employees, you need to introduce an element of choice. We're all different; we respond to different stimulus; we find different things inspiring, and we're motivated by different tactics. **A one-size-fits-all approach is rarely useful where mental health and wellbeing is concerned.**

As individuals, our wellbeing is forever changing in response to our daily challenges. This means that some days, we need more support than others. And that's where strong personal relationships, compassionate management, and empathy become so important.

One of the main benefits of our wellbeing programme is that the fitness and wellbeing coaches who are designated to each team become like part of the furniture. This means that when your people need to reach out for extra support, they feel comfortable enough to do so.

That's how we approach things. If you decide to do this without our help, we'd urge you to try and create a compassionate community that inspires trust from your people. But it is a little more challenging from an internal perspective: having daily access to wellbeing coaches from outside of the work circle is a big part of inspiring confidence in your teams.

It can be much easier to open up to somebody objective; that's one of the things that makes Lift Your Wellbeing's model so successful.



STEP EIGHT

Follow the 80/20 rule of effective workplace wellbeing.

This is not the 80/20 rule as you know it.

The problem with traditional workplace wellbeing offerings is a lack of buy-in. If you introduce a fitness initiative, you're likely to see participation from about 20% of your employees: usually, those enjoying the highest levels of health and fitness to begin with.

The people who would actually benefit the most sit on the sidelines, feeling disengaged and cut off; a problem that will only increase in a virtual workplace.

For us, that's just not good enough – because the real impact happens when we strive to engage with the 80%. Those who are slightly more apprehensive; who may be lacking confidence, or not know where to start when it comes to improving their health and wellbeing.

Engaging the 80%, encouraging the bulk of your people to embrace positive changes in mindset and lifestyle, is when we really move the needle in terms of creating a culture of wellbeing. This is also when you see the biggest benefits: namely, increased engagement and performance from your teams.

The move from on-site fitness to Zoom-led classes has actually played a crucial role in this effort: we've experienced a substantial increase in the number of employees participating in our classes because they can do so from the comfort of their own home, with their cameras off.

This is a big goal of ours at Lift Your Wellbeing. *We aren't here to make the fit, fitter. We're here to make a genuine difference in the lives of every member of your team.*



STEP NINE

Communicate with intent.

Leadership communication style has a profound impact on team culture – and the wellbeing of every individual in that team.

The problem is, not a lot of leaders are given targeted training around effective communication or compassionate management. So you find yourself in a position of influence, with high stress levels and workloads to boot, and no clear direction on how to take care of wellness.

It's a lot. But it's also important.

School of Life, in their ground-breaking book on the emotional intelligence skills required in the workplace, teaches us that the most important element of communication is avoiding fear, anger and hurt.

Let's start with a look at our email style.

How often do you stop and reflect on your email habits, and how they could be impacting the mental wellbeing of your team members?

Some of the most damaging habits that we see include:

- Emails sent with a passive-aggressive tone
- The scatter gun approach of sending emails in the heat of the moment
- Ignoring emails
- Sending emails late at night, on the weekends, and whilst people are away

The French have a law known as 'the right to disconnect', which mandates that businesses set guidelines as to when employees can and can't send emails. It also gives employees the legal right to not read or respond to emails outside of working hours.

It's believed that this approach reduces the risk of stress, burnout, sleep difficulties and relationship problems. Pretty impressive if you're keen to take positive action on mental health in the workplace.

Would you implement something similar in your workplace? It's certainly food for thought, given that the line between people's personal and professional lives is becoming increasingly blurred as more of us work from home.

But what about face-to-face communication?

It's far easier to convey tone in person; we all know that. But one of the problems with our conversation style from a wellbeing perspective is the tendency to ask single-layer questions.

"Hey, how are you?"

How many people answer this question honestly? A quick "fine, thanks", and then we move on. It's a conversational norm, which does have its place, but if you actually want to know how your people are, your communication style might need a tweak.

As leaders we should be looking to add a second and third layer to our questions – such as

"How are your stress levels today?"

"Are you feeling okay in yourself?"

"Could you benefit from some down time?"

This allows people the opportunity to open up and give depth to their answers, which may be exactly what that person needs.

This subtle shift in your communication style presents an opportunity for you to form stronger, more trusting relationships, and ultimately supports the wellbeing of the people around you.

STEP TEN

Facilitate regular exercise for your team.

According to The Mental Health Foundation, the promotion of regular physical exercise is essential for supporting mental health. But we knew that already, right?

UK Government guidelines recommend two strength-based activities each week, in addition to 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity. This equates to approximately 30 minutes of intentional exercise every day.

As your people spend a hefty portion of their time at work (okay, this may be from home now, but they're still working hard), you have an opportunity as a leader to help them achieve their daily movement target – and give their wellbeing a healthy boost to boot.

Now of course the easiest way to do this is through Lift Your Wellbeing's Zoom fitness classes and wellbeing communities – where we work hard to make sure your team hits its activity targets every single week – but there are other ways that you can facilitate this.

I met an inspiring leader at a mental health conference last year that told me he doesn't allow meetings to occur between 13:00-14:30 each day, as this gives his employees the opportunity to step away from their work and have a break – with many of them taking the opportunity to get active.

This is truly inspiring leadership. And a huge tick in the box for corporate wellness.

Walking meetings are also a really effective way of incorporating movement into your workday. Shoulder-to-shoulder conversations can help to break down some of the traditional barriers that exist in boardroom-style meetings – leading to more in-depth and innovative discussions. But with the current restrictions, it's up to us (as leaders and innovators) to find engaging ways to get people moving.



Are you on board? Let's talk!

If you can sit back and think to yourself that you treated people well today then you're on the right track to creating a strong culture of wellbeing in your team.

To chat more about how Lift Your Wellbeing can help to enhance the culture of wellbeing in your workplace, **[click here to book a call](#)**.

I really look forward to speaking with you.

In the meantime, go ahead and check in with every member of your team. You never know what it could mean to someone.

