



Workplace Reopening Guide #3:

8 steps and 40 ideas for building a workspace-centred, employee wellbeing programme

A practical guide for Facilities, Property and HR Managers & leaders

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This guide explores the newly heightened importance of employee workplace wellbeing, and how the workspace environment and workspace management fits into your employee wellbeing planning.

The guide is aimed at Facilities Managers, HR Managers and business leaders who are focused on building effective workplace models that deliver not only business efficiency, but employee wellbeing, productivity and loyalty.

Step by step we'll show you the benefits of an effective wellbeing programme to both staff and employer, and break down the key elements of an effective wellbeing programme, from the workspace itself, to employees' mental and social needs in work.

And we'll reveal the 8 crucial steps, plus 40+ success factors you need to know, to make it all work.



Introduction

The recent journey

The last 18 months have placed extreme pressures and stresses on workforces, not least on those people whose whole working-life experiences had previously been moulded by the office environment.

When that office environment was removed back in March 2020 by lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions, millions found themselves having to adapt to a whole new way of working.

From the office desk to the dinner table

Ongoing remote-working spared many people the daily grind and cost of the commute to the office. But it left the same people without so much of the stimulus that workplace environments provide:

The very stimulus that directly affects employee well-being (for the better, and sometimes for the worse).

At the same time, employers lost hold of so many of the levers they could pull to influence and encourage workplace wellbeing.

'Virtual' wellbeing solutions had to be quickly found, but were tough to prioritise in the midst of such huge upheaval and challenge for businesses in the midst of lockdown.

Where we're all at

Now that restrictions are being lifted globally and businesses are reopening their offices – albeit with far more flexible or hybrid working models - employee wellbeing is taking top priority in these reopening plans.

There are ways that employers can make office opening as people-focused as possible, right now.

But addressing employee wellbeing is a longer-term challenge that requires a long-term programme and commitment.

Today, wellbeing programmes need to be re-booted, re-energised, or re-built with even greater commitment.

Here we'll explore some of the key elements to consider in reviewing and building your new or re-booted employee wellbeing programme.



37%

have seen an increase in stress-related absence over the last year



60%

report increase in common mental health conditions in their workplace



44%

are implementing a standalone employee well-being strategy

The benefits of employee workplace wellbeing to a business

Let's first define employee wellbeing as the overall health (both physical and mental) and happiness of the people in your employ.

It's a broad metric, and the benefits to businesses and organisations who successfully raise it up, are equally broad and far-reaching:

- Greater employee productivity
- Improved creative thinking and creativity
- More effective problem solving
- Higher organisational performance
- Increased staff-to-company loyalty and lower staff turnover
- Reduced recruitment and training costs
- Greater talent retention
- Greater talent attraction
- Reduced sickness and absenteeism
- Improved customer service and relations

So, while it's natural that no management team wants a stressed-out, sickly, low-moral workforce, the tangible benefits of nurturing the exact opposite are fundamental to the success and growth of any organisation.



8 steps to designing a new employee wellbeing programme

The influencing factors

We referenced earlier the levers that employers lost hold of during lockdowns: the influencing factors that can help improve employee workplace wellbeing.

Now let's take a look at what those key factors are, and how they fit into an effective wellbeing programme.

The three core elements of workplace wellbeing:

1 Physical:

Workspace environment. Nourishment. Fitness

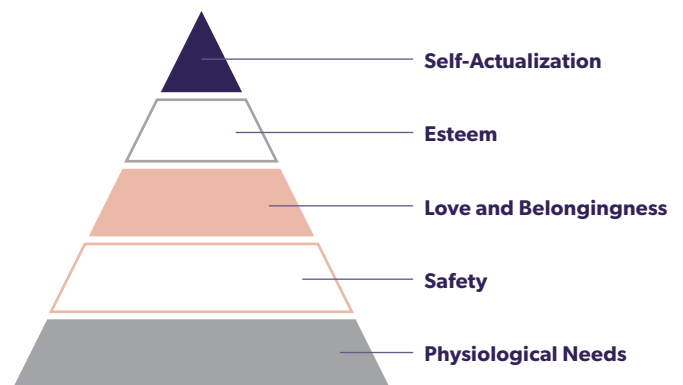
2 Mental:

Security. Cognitive needs. Stress

3 Social:

Belonging. Community. Connection. Appreciation

So, while the traditional 'Maslow hierarchy of needs' is built on basic physical needs, workplace wellbeing relies on all 3 elements working together in a synergistic, non-hierarchical way.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Step 1. Identifying the factors that matter



Different organisations will have different profiles in terms of which factors rank the highest in relative influence and importance.

With this in mind, step 1 in designing/re-booting a workplace wellbeing programme is to survey your staff.

An employee survey at the start of this process will help you understand your current company culture, and the needs and priorities of your workforce and the teams within it.

Split the survey into the 3 key areas above:

Physical needs

- Workplace and workspace environment
- Nourishment
- Fitness

Mental needs

- Security
- Cognitive needs
- Stress

Social needs

- Belonging
- Community
- Recognition

Consider using Likert scales (i.e., strongly agree – disagree) in your survey, to home in on the elements and specific factors that influence the wellbeing of your people.



Photo by Mikhail Berecha on Unsplash

Step 2. Building the programme



Once your staff survey has weighted the importance and influence on your organisation of each of these 3 influencing factor areas, you can brainstorm and scope out the initiatives that will help to shift the dial for each.

Use the checklist below to kickstart some inspiration, practical ideas and initiatives for addressing each of the key areas.

The checklist



40+ considerations, ideas and suggestions for your winning wellbeing programme.

Employee's physical wellbeing needs:

Workspace environment

- Flexible location working
- Desk and meeting space booking
- Workspace utilisation analytics
- Dedicated areas for brainstorming, discussing, and collaborating
- Zoning
- Break and break-out rooms
- Mixture of open and closed plan
- Workstation ergonomics
- Standing desks
- Light and daylight and temperature control
- Workspace décor: colour and personality
- Plants
- Noise
- Air quality

Nourishment

- Healthy snacks supplied
- Nutrition education
- Healthy 'bake-off' competitions
- Free nutrition apps subs

Fitness

- Group and team physical activities: Realtime and virtual
- Combat
- Cycle to work schemes
- Yoga
- Relaxation
- Fitness challenges – teams and individuals
- Free subs to health apps
- Walking meetings





Employee's mental wellbeing needs:

- Regular re-energising breaks
- Discouragement of long burn-out hours
- Clarity of job expectations and goals
- Work / task variety
- Training and personal/professional development
- HR policies and policy communication
- Virtual mindfulness – guided meditations – remote team wellness
- Free subs to mental wellbeing apps
- Emotional coaching
- Employee voice

Employee's social wellbeing needs:

Group social activities

- Team building exercises – face-to-face and virtual
- Online and real-time communities
- Support volunteering and 'giving-back' to the wider community
- Recognition & praise: Engender a spirit of appreciation and recognition – peer to peer (as well as leader to employee)
- Engender a spirit of positive fun and friendly competition
- Gamification - Sports team, Charity run.
- Engender a spirit of collaboration: virtual collaboration portal, where everyone can share ideas.
- Music (and dance!)



The next steps to take, once you've built the programme.

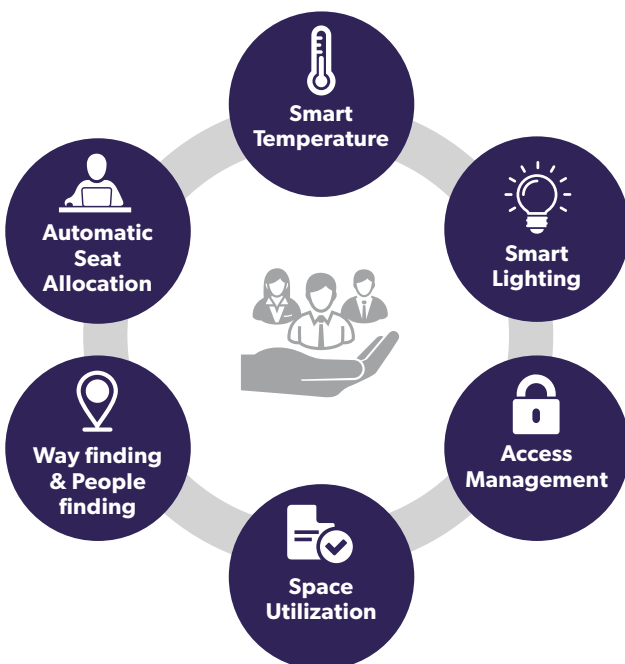
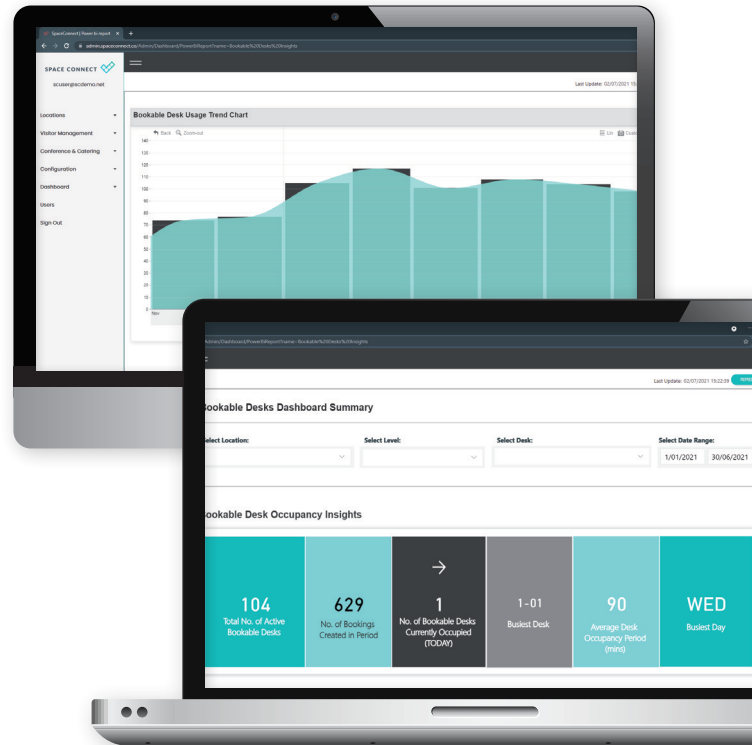
These next steps are the crucial, often-missed ones, that will ensure your employee initiatives deliver tangible ROI for your business.

Step 3: Understanding the role of workspace management and optimisation tech

The right workspace management tech can contribute significantly to employee workplace wellbeing.

Your tech is critical in the enablement of flexible working, giving individuals control over their environment and location preferences, their desk and other workspaces.

For the employer, workspace management tech, including desk management and meeting room management, enable leaders to adapt and configure spaces for optimum staff wellbeing.



Workspace management and optimisation technology should enable your facilities and property management teams to understand space usage and demand, and to respond in agile and creative ways to those demands, including:

- Flexible location working
- Hybrid working
- Hot-desking, hotel desking, desk booking, desk/location preferences
- Dynamic space reconfiguration
- Employee workspace interaction, movement and behaviour analysis
- Forward capacity and space usage optimisation planning

The employee workspace experience

Workspace management tech can enable leaders to enrich the employee journey (such as seamless access, automatic room and desk booking, and colleague or desk finding) from the moment they enter the office.

Face and voice recognition for automated visitor registration and ID labels

Workspace analytics and self-configurable admin portal

Interactive floor plans make it easy to find a free desk, meeting room or colleague

Seamless meeting room booking integration with your calendar

The right workspace tech can enable your employees to find and reserve the space they want, the type and position of desk, even the temperature and lighting environment they prefer.

Step 4: Goals, objectives and KPIs



While employee wellbeing encompasses a broad range of factors, the success of any workplace wellbeing programme needs to be focused on specific goals and KPI's that represent ROI for the organisation.

Consider specific metrics such as:

- Absenteeism rates
- Productivity/output rates
- Staff turnover levels
- Recruitment costs
- Customer Net Promoter Score (NPS) values

Against each KPI you chose, your programme needs benchmarkable, quantifiable and trackable objectives and goals.



Step 5: Communication, promotion and engagement



A common barrier to success for employee wellbeing programmes lies with the employees themselves – or more specifically, with the extent to which they engage with the elements of the programme.

So, a crucial part of the plan needs to address how the programme will be:

Communicated:

To employees and to the programme leaders.

Promoted on an ongoing basis:

The programme launch is just the beginning. Each element needs to be promoted throughout the year to maintain awareness among staff and leaders and bake the initiatives into company culture.

Engagement-driven:

All sorts of incentives and encouragements may be needed at different stages to help drive and maintain employee engagement in the programme.

Gamification and friendly competition are effective engagement tactics. Engagement reward points, redeemable against anything from a barista coffee to a half-day holiday are all tactics that are being successfully used to encourage employee uptake of wellbeing initiatives.



Step 6: Leadership

Leadership plays a fundamental role in the success of any employee wellbeing programme.

Leaders need to fully buy into the programme, have the capacity, resources and support to deliver on each of the initiatives, understand their own roles in the success of the programme, and be fully committed to and rewarded for delivering on that success.

Be clear from the outset about who the key stakeholders are, eg:

- Facilities/property management
- Human resources
- Function, department and team leaders
- C suite



Step 7: Measurement and reporting

Measuring employee engagement with each of your programme initiatives needs to be straightforward, doable and reportable.

Measuring and reporting on your agreed programme KPIs needs to be a clearly defined process, with clear leader responsibilities. The right workspace and wellbeing tech can help with this.

These engagement metrics and reports will be essential for honing and shaping the programme, going forward, to maximise ROI.



Step 8: Feedback

While an annual employee survey can and should track employee satisfaction levels and trends, ongoing employee feedback on the programme and its elements is crucial for maintaining engagement and building trust.

Online community channels and portals (as suggested under Employee's social wellbeing needs in Step 2) are ideal for enabling ongoing feedback around any aspect of the wellbeing programme and ensuring the programme grows and develops with your people.



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