

ABSL opinion pieces on wellbeing

WORKING WELL





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SUSTAINABILITY AS AN ENHANCER OF WELLBEING



Anna Berczyńska,
Vice-President Talents, ABSL

In the new normal we find ourselves in, it is clearer than ever that wellbeing has become a direction to restore meaning, a sense of common purpose and positive results about being in a virtual workplace. It is crucial for every organization to take up this challenge and learn about wellbeing best practices. Each of us has a different set of understanding and experiences about a sense of wellbeing. It is vital we can identify them together in the sector and actively transform into wellbeing organizations.

The term 'wellbeing' has become increasingly important for leadership as well in Poland, especially after the dynamic developments in the business service sector. Progressive-thinking companies who could see the shift in workforce population and understood the importance of personalization have implemented wellness into their corporate culture. Organizations have started to look for alternative and more scientific methodologies to build values, employer branding, engagement and retention mechanisms in order to differentiate and be better prepared to attract and retain talents. Employee wellbeing is also vital for organizational success.

Personally, my greatest inspiration about wellbeing was from the book *Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life* written by Arianna Huffington. It was a game-changing book already several years ago for me, in which Arianna

makes an impassioned and compelling case for the need to redefine what it means to be successful in today's world. As more and more people are coming to realize, there is far more to living a truly successful life than just earning a bigger salary and getting a corner office. Our relentless pursuit of the two traditional metrics of success – money and power – has led to an epidemic of burnout and stress-related illnesses, and erosion in the quality of our relationships, family life, and, ironically, our careers. By being connected to the world 24/7, we're losing our connection to what truly matters. We are now struggling with long-term tiredness resulting from physical and mental exhaustion. Wellbeing has become a strategic direction for all organizations thinking about long-term sustainability and success.

Investing in employee wellness schemes is as important as investing in technology and other workplace developments. Without a balance in the strategic approach between the individuals and the organizations they belong to, it will simply not be possible to achieve the long-term resilience of business operations and their development in the future.

At ABSL, we treat the topic of wellbeing from a holistic perspective based on our members' experiences, as well as valuable content from our strategic partners and experts. We learn from the best, which is why we follow the existing global standards, Sustainable Development Goals, set out by the United Nations,

with an extra focus on goals number 5 – gender equality, number 8 – decent work and economic growth and number 10 – reduced inequalities.

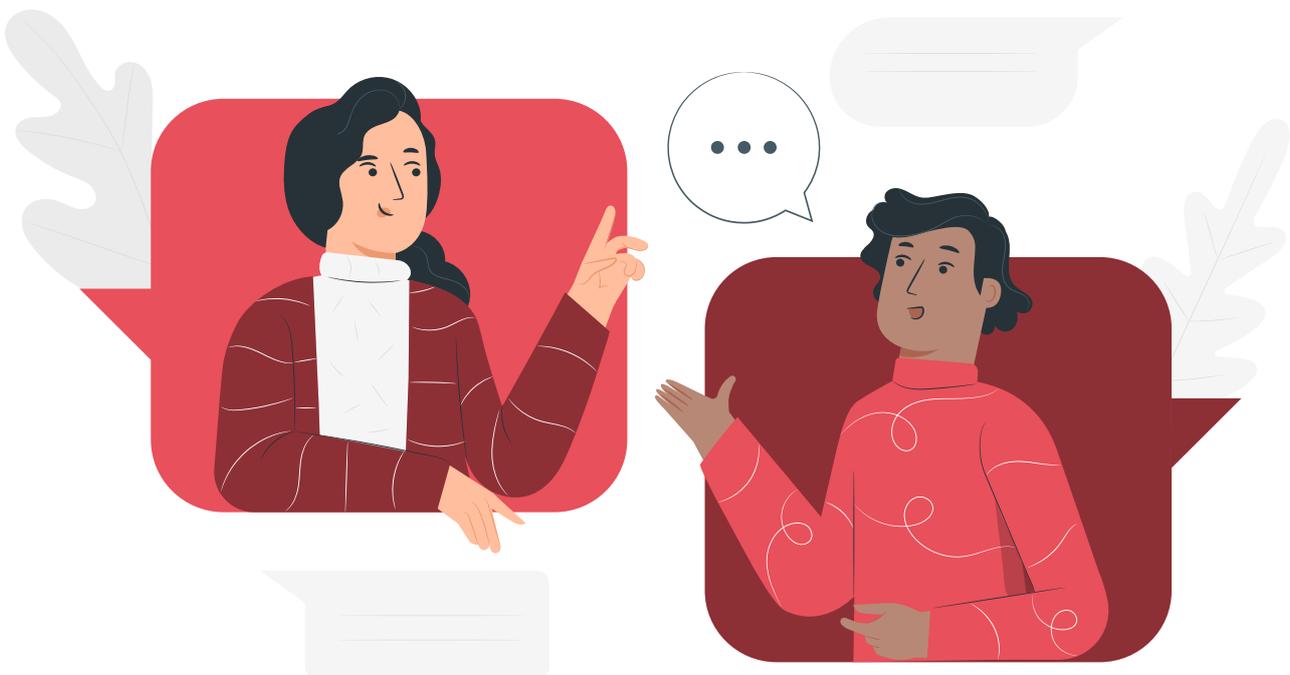
At ABSL, we would like to work on wellbeing from three perspectives. The first of these concerns corporate policies and benefits programs, and it includes flexible benefit packages, mindfulness and stress reduction techniques for employees, diversity and inclusion initiatives supporting equal parenting and pay projects, and also advocating sustainability and legal frame standards.

The second perspective is leadership competencies and education. Defining the new leader role model and providing development opportunities for managers is crucial, which is why ABSL offers a sector mentoring program. Additionally, ABSL will focus on virtual engagement and related technology enablers and current management, along with equal career opportunities and mapping skills of the future.

And last but not least, the third perspective is developing new hybrid working models that enable employees to move seamlessly between onsite and remote work, as well as thinking about the appropriate physical workplace conditions—both size and shape—for the hybrid office.

I will leave you with a quote from the already mentioned Arianna Huffington:

Success for me is going beyond money and power, and measuring success based on a third metric – one founded on well-being, wisdom, our ability to wonder and to give back. Money and power by themselves are a two-legged stool. You can balance on them for a while, but eventually you're going to topple over. Basically, success the way we've defined it is no longer sustainable.



HAPPINESS AT WORK: A FAD OR A NECESSITY IN THIS DAY AND AGE?



Katarzyna Kern,

HR & Happiness at Work Consultant, First Polish certified Chief Happiness Officer, Partner at Woohoo inc Happiness at Work – an international network of happiness managers

Are you happy at work? Are the people you work with happy? The discoveries of positive psychology in the last dozen or so years have clearly shown that it is worth asking yourself these questions and transforming workplaces to make them more happy.

Why is that the case? Researchers from the University of Warwick, UK, have found that people who are happy at work are some 12% more productive. Shawn Achor, the author of *The Happiness Advantage*, estimated the benefits of a happy company to be: a 37% increase in sales, a 31% increase in productivity, and a 19% increase in task accuracy, in addition to a significant improvement in the health and quality of life of the staff. What is more, a 2011 National Academy of Sciences study found that happy people live longer.

There is more and more research in this field and all of it is clearly pointing to the fact that happier workplaces not only contribute to increased commitment, productivity, creativity, cooperation and motivation, but also translate into improved financial results for the company.

One might think that providing benefits, such as a high salary, a bonus system, free lunches, massage at the office, gym pass or free medical services,

would make you happy at work. It turns out, however, that although remuneration and benefits have a significant impact on attracting people to a given workplace, they are not sufficient to build a place where people feel happy. As shown by the Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman, if we believe that the remuneration or benefits are unfairly distributed, this may contribute to a feeling of dissatisfaction.

Although there are many takes on Happiness at Work, they touch upon similar pillars. In his PERM model, Martin Seligman, the father of positive psychology, recommends that we focus on positive emotions, strengthen our involvement, constantly build and strengthen relationships and look for meaning at work, as well as having a sense of achievement. Woohoo Inc., the Danish Happiness at Work pioneers, say that results and relations are the most important factors in keeping people happy at work. Happiness guru Professor Sonja Lyubomirsky, on the other hand, believes that 50% of the influence on our happiness is from our genes, 10% from random incidents, and 40% from how we influence our own perception of happiness. She also says that it is very important to have a variety of ways to increase happiness in your work environment, and to let the employees adapt these solutions to their needs.

There are a few key elements you need to ensure in order to make the workplace happier, including:

1. Encouraging unexpected, positive behaviour among employees, which is aimed at building relationships and supporting each other.

When was the last time you did something nice and selfless for a co-worker? Scientific research shows that the random element of these actions is of great importance. The pleasure and reward centre in the brain is less active when we know that something good, like the monthly bonus, is coming. On the other hand, it can be stimulated up to three times as intensively when something good and unannounced happens to us.

2. During the recruitment processes, do not only look for candidates who meet all the formal requirements, but also for those with a high level of happiness. The well-known global sandwich restaurant chain "Pret A Manger" believes that it is easier for them to hire happy people and teach them to make sandwiches than the other way around.

3. Restrain and prevent negative behaviour in the company while focusing on the good things that are going on (something positive happens every day!). Negative emotions are three times as contagious as positive ones. Focusing on gossiping, complaining, and negative behaviour doesn't lead to anything good. All it does is worsen your mood. It is a good idea to work on developing a daily habit of appreciating the good things that have happened. Some companies, for example, make a habit of posting "sticky notes" online with three good events of the day. These small, positive examples of behaviour contribute to a better atmosphere among co-workers.

4. Celebrate success. It is worth mentioning the example of LEGO, which verged on bankruptcy several years ago, as a result of introducing successive innovations with inadequate financial control. After several years of intense work, the new CEO Jorgen Vig Knudstorp announced the company's first profit at a meeting with all employees, but the news was met with silence. LEGO did not have a culture of celebrating success, so people just did not know how to react. Now, celebrating achievements is a must on the agenda of every meeting, and this has had a huge impact on the quality and productivity of all meetings.

5. Give your co-workers the right to make mistakes – mistakes are part of learning. If you do this, people will be more willing to admit that they made a mistake. Not being afraid to make mistakes also contributes to greater creativity, greater productivity, and ultimately greater job satisfaction.

6. As an experienced facilitator, I would especially encourage you to embark on regular dialogue among teams, and also between employees and leadership, through facilitation workshops.

The magic of facilitation allows not only to strengthen relationships and performance in the company, but it also increases the sense of ownership among employees and creates a more participatory work environment that leads directly to increased levels of happiness. I strongly believe that Happiness at Work should be the norm in organisations, not the exception, because work has a huge impact on our whole life, and when we are happy at work, we are also happier after work, which translates into being a better parent, partner, and neighbour. So let's start today. Happiness is something we do!

DOING WELLBEING WELL NEEDS MORE THAN AN APP OR A POLICY



Cynthia Hansen,
Head of The Adecco Group Foundation



Jacqueline Maag-Spieler,
Process Architect, Social Innovation Lab in The Adecco Group Foundation

COVID-19 has surfaced underlying issues about employee wellbeing for some businesses, yet it has also been an opportunity to drive innovation and accelerate good practice. Weary of ‘well-washing’ and shallow badges of corporate purpose, employees want a more holistic approach to their wellbeing.

Faced with the challenges of working remotely, or in many cases not working at all, people across the globe are struggling with how to hold it together, physically, mentally, and socially when so much of our infrastructure for interaction and support has disappeared overnight.

From 2018-2020 The Adecco Group Foundation developed a new approach to wellbeing, culminating the Workforce Vitality model. The holistic approach is now the cornerstone of how The Adecco Group supports its workforce. The starting point was our EIU research that showed most companies offer programmes orientated towards physical and mental wellbeing only, and significantly, they offer them in isolation from each other. We saw that businesses

often invest in convenience-based services, such as on-site facilities, and distractions, such as gyms or ping pong tables. Could this be so that they can drive productivity while making sure workers spend as much time at work as possible?

The study we ran with the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) showed that over 150 multinationals across 10 geographies consistently struggled to effectively ensure a holistic health-promoting environment for their employees. That was the beginning of our journey, and we were convinced that health and wellbeing were top of mind for most companies – but they struggled to know where to start and how to make interventions stick.

In the current context, I have ceased to count, let alone respond to the deluge of blogs, webcasts, town halls, op-eds, videos and expert talks about how to stay healthy during the crisis. My last Google search of ‘wellbeing COVID’ returned 114 million hits. Every demographic has its view, from healthcare workers to LGBTQ,

from blue-collar workers to student associations. The prevalence of the topic points to the fact that this is both a salient subject and an unresolved problem.

Of the top 12 hits in my Google search, 10 were related to mental health, one was general health, and only one was related to helping the most vulnerable. All of them were from employers, organisations, or pundits offering advice or laying out guidelines. However, none were from the ground up. Were current offerings by employers actually working before the crisis?

The EIU study found that most health and wellbeing interventions by multinationals fell short of the desired impact. A 2018 study by the University of Illinois also found no difference in health outcomes after one year of participation, including self-reported health and productivity, between employees who took part and those who did not¹. If this was the case then, will the current crisis exacerbate the problem, or will it drive innovation and accelerate good practice that might have been starting to take hold? We believe that the Workforce Vitality model in its simplicity can enable both.

The Workforce Vitality model: four elements and four enablers

We decided to start with a new bottom-up approach that is needs-driven. The model came from the Adecco Group's own need to adopt a more holistic approach to wellbeing, moving beyond programmes for physical and mental health. Purpose is the element that we found missing in most models. In the current context, a sense of purpose and contributing to the greater good is vital to staying connected, motivated and stable. Our unique and simple framework is explained through our Workforce Vitality Model. It hinges on the interplay of 4 elements of wellbeing: physical, mental, social and purpose;

and 4 enablers of interventions: policy and practice, culture, environment and technology and tools.

Four elements of wellbeing:

1. **Physical:** How physical state and lifestyle choices impact the health of our bodies and our ability to realise our full potential.
2. **Mental:** How our state of mind shapes our thoughts, perceptions and identity, and influences our behaviour.
3. **Social:** How a person connects with and engages with others – from their sense of belonging and the richness of their relationships, to how they exhibit empathy, exercise responsibility and express respect.
4. **Purpose:** How a person's beliefs, principles and preferences motivate them to invest time and energy beyond their basic needs in the service of others.

Four enablers of wellbeing:

While the physical and mental elements are well known – although often implemented in isolation – the social aspect relates to employees' ability to connect, engage with others, and ensure that everyone is included regardless of their position in the organisation. The sense of purpose, in turn, stems from their beliefs, attitudes and principles that motivate them to go the extra mile. And while these four elements appear in many different models, the key is what underpins effectiveness. According to experts at the Adecco Group, these are called *enablers*: a combination of fundamental aspects of an organisation's functioning that drive a successful

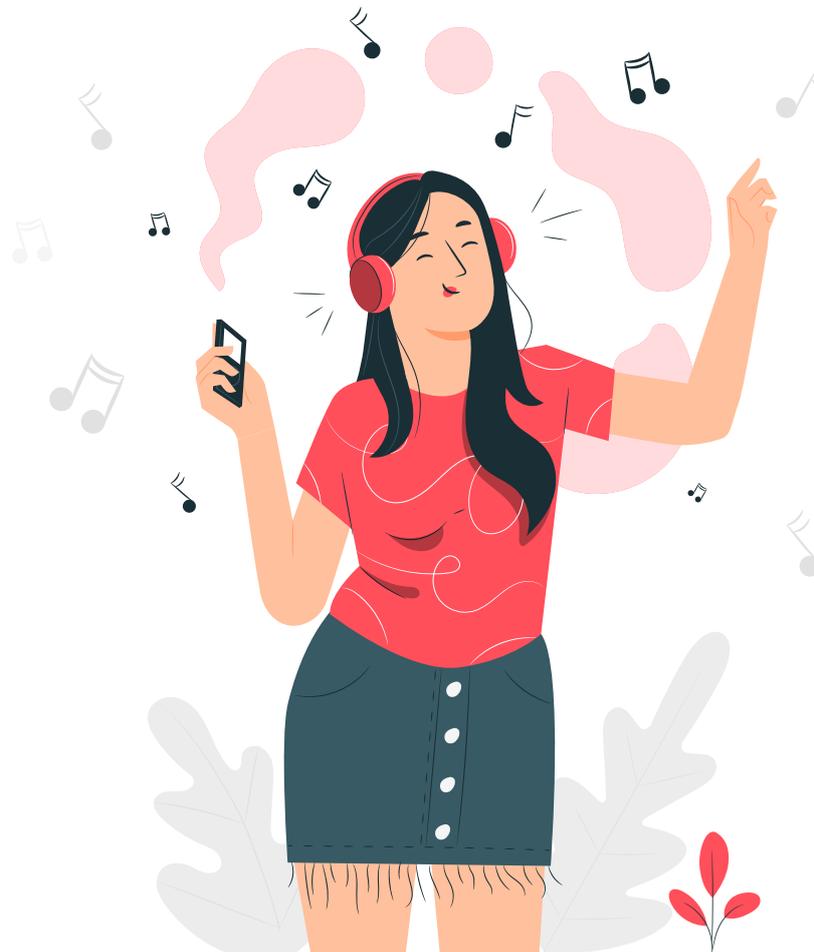
¹ http://www.nber.org/workplacewellness/s/IL_Wellness_Study_1.pdf

and lasting wellbeing programme. A successful programme incorporates all four enablers in a complementary and interrelated way. If any of the four are omitted, the model cannot be applied successfully.

- 1. Policy and practice:** Managers need to support and reinforce behaviour through both policies and motivation. Without strong policies to fall back on, practice can easily fall apart. Without motivation, in turn, policies can be difficult to enforce. For example, a work-from-home policy can fail if it is not supported by the manager's efforts to ensure that it is adhered to by the whole team.
- 2. Culture:** An enabling culture sets the precedent of 'how we do things and why', reinforcing intrinsic motivation and not just extrinsic rules. For example, a flexible working policy can be undermined by a culture that frowns on working from home, or reinforced by one that supports work-life integration.
- 3. Environment:** The physical and organisational elements of the workplace must support wellbeing. For example, a healthy eating initiative may be ineffective if employees don't feel they have adequate space to relax and socialise.
- 4. Technology and tools:** These need to be integrated, accessible, and simple. This is especially true in terms of how they are used and how intuitive they are – an employee misses the point if they are duplicating work by multiplying overlapping reports or cannot easily find the material they need in a maze of company resources.

Wellbeing that sticks

The model is not an app, not a platform, but a combination of policy, practice, culture, environment, technology and tools to create stickiness. In sharing our model and methodology, we hope that others will be able to adapt it to their own contexts. Our vision is that in the future, health and wellbeing will be a seamless, nearly invisibly integrated part of what employers offer and will be seen as essential to doing business.



A HEALTHY WORKPLACE



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The concept of *wellbeing* has been present in the business world for several years now, as a necessary element of building the employer's image. The pandemic has further strengthened the trend towards caring for the health and wellbeing of employees. However, a clear definition of this concept and a transparent scope of practices are missing, as a result of which many companies implement improvements selectively, often focusing on superficial health and comfort initiatives that bring about limited impact, but without approaching the matter in a comprehensive way, based on scientific foundations or clearly defined parameters.

Without denying the value of those activities, it is worth treating wellbeing more broadly: as **a set of practices to create a healthy and engaging organisational environment**, which may become one of the central tenets of the organisation's business strategy. In this approach wellbeing is at the centre of key decisions made by the employer – from the choice of the building and the design of the workspace to the management decisions pertaining to the organisational culture or remote work. In the knowledge-based economy, people are the most important asset of an organisation, and human costs account for about 90% of the costs of running a business. Creating

an optimal environment in which employees realise their full potential is one of the key factors influencing the long-term effectiveness of an organisation.

The physical aspects of the work environment

The most important factors impacting wellbeing include the physical working space and the internal conditions:

- » air quality is one of the most important parameters affecting health and comfort; according to WHO research, up to 7 million deaths worldwide in 2013 resulted from poor air quality,
- » the air quality inside the office may be much worse than outside; factors that help maintain good air quality include: good ventilation, the use of low-emission carpets, paints, varnishes and furniture, and frequent cleaning with environmentally-friendly cleaning agents,
- » the amount of fresh air also affects comfort at work and employees' health; according to research conducted in the USA, 35% of sick leave is a result of insufficient amount of fresh air in offices,

- » ambient temperature perceived as too cold or too warm may cause a 15% drop in productivity,
- » adequate lighting of the workplace and access to daylight contribute to a 5% increase in productivity,
- » poor acoustics and high noise levels may reduce productivity by as much as 66%.

Promoting the right habits and behaviour

The physical aspects of the office are the foundation of its users' wellbeing, but what is also of great importance is the use of available amenities and the promotion of healthy behaviour.

- » Providing healthy food in vending machines or the canteen allows you to promote healthy eating habits. Diabetes and excess weight are just some of the diseases associated with a harmful diet. It is estimated that about 20% of deaths worldwide are caused by an unhealthy diet.
- » A well-thought-out layout of the office kitchen and its equipment can encourage employees to prepare meals at home. Research shows that eating out results in an increased BMI, whereas employees who bring their own meals from home maintain a healthier diet than when eating out in town.
- » Drinking fountains located conveniently in the office help maintain the right hydration levels, thereby contributing to productivity and wellbeing.
- » Promoting physical activity, encouraging the use of stairs, providing active desks, financial support for sports activities and offering health-related training can improve the health and wellbeing of employees. A sedentary lifestyle is the fourth largest cause of all deaths in the world according to WHO: 70% of working people will spend 10 years of their lives seated.

- » Psychological support, educational workshops and the organisational culture all affect the level of stress, helping to reduce anxiety and the risk of depression. Approximately 30% of the population may be affected with depression episodes. 94% of people perceive work as stressful, and 25% consider it the most stressful aspect of their lives.

Due to the pandemic and the need to increase employee safety, certification systems dedicated to the sanitary standards have appeared on the market, such as WELL Health-Safety Rating (WELL HSR) and Fitwel Viral Response. Both are used to promote and implement good safety practices by assessing disinfection procedures, air filtration and ventilation efficiency, and assorted amenities such as contactless access control or the bathroom facilities. In addition to technological solutions, post-pandemic procedures include ensuring distance at workplaces, developing a plan for possible remote work of employees at various levels, promoting vaccinations, and psychological support.

Developing an organisational culture and a work model to support wellbeing

The physical aspects of the working environment have a direct impact on the wellbeing and efficiency of employees. Genuine care for wellbeing at work should, however, also include the establishment of organisational conditions in which the employees can fulfil themselves in a safe and healthy way. Such environment consists of many elements, from the preparation of physical space, through the work model implemented in the company and the technologies supporting it, to the management culture and managerial practices. In this context, in the post-pandemic world, it is a good idea to ensure thorough organisational insight and to use it to develop the fundamentals of a future work model. In order for the new work model to contribute to the development of a healthy environment, it should give employees flexibility and the ability to choose where and how they perform their professional duties. Care must be taken to ensure that the implemented

solutions suit the functional needs and working style of individual teams, and that there is adequate support for the managerial staff, especially in terms of the competences necessary to manage a dispersed team.

In the hybrid working model, the employer's support and concern for the employee's wellbeing should also pertain to their remote activities. It should include ensuring that the workplace at home is furnished in an ergonomic way, promoting habits that help maintain work-life balance when professional relationships are partly or fully virtualised, support and care for the psychological wellbeing of the employee, and monitoring the risk factors related to long-term remote work.

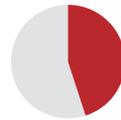
If properly implemented, flexible work contributes to boosting efficiency, commitment, and satisfaction on the employees' part, while becoming a foundation of their wellbeing at work. At the same time, remote work and distributed models may entail a number of risks, the identification and regular monitoring of which is necessary.

Two risks that employees cite most often as contributing to the sense of imbalance between work and private life are extended working hours and the need to always be available online.



85%

of employees indicate that they feel a greater need to be available online.



48%

employees believe that when working remotely, they put in longer hours than during normal work at the office.

An accurate diagnosis of the organisation, combined with a regular monitoring of the effects of the implemented hybrid working model, will allow you to consciously shape the company's wellbeing policy and embark on the activities that have the highest likelihood of producing a real impact on the organisation. From the point of view of the wellbeing of our employees, a properly implemented new working model and an optimal work environment will be crucial in the post-pandemic world.



EMPLOYEE WELLBEING IN A NEW NORMAL



Krzysztof Nowak,
Partner, Mercer Marsh Benefits™

Wellbeing has become another iconic word for the HR community. In HR management we are always looking for something fresh, more attractive and better expressing the subject and objectives of various HR processes. Wellbeing is for sure one of the most interesting concepts. It covers much more than just benefits, compensation or company culture. It is employers' answer to employees' concerns and fears, which they experience today in the pandemic (post pandemic) world.

What does wellbeing mean for us?

Why is it a hot topic for many organizations? It certainly is not just a new type of benefit or employer offer. It is a new concept of designing and managing the relations between an employer and employees. Wellbeing covers almost all aspects of this relation, from the traditional compensation and benefits elements to physical and mental health, and financial wellness. However, there is also a new component of this concept, which is a "social" and environmental element that includes, among others:

- » CSR activity
- » diversity & inclusion practices
- » a pay equity strategy
- » the employer's vision and culture.

It should be added that one of the most important elements of an efficient wellbeing process is empathy in defining the rules and designing the system. More and more companies are trying to better understand their employees, asking for regular feedback and opinions, and regularly communicating their own values and EVP (employer value proposition). This trend is clearly visible, however sometimes still in theory only: Mercer surveys, e.g. 2020 Benefits & Remote Working Trends survey, found that only 60% of Polish companies ask employees for their feedback and expectations regarding benefits. The abovementioned wellbeing elements have a direct impact on business results, productivity and individual engagement. Therefore, wellbeing as a concept should not be treated as a compensation strategy, but as a complete and consistent HR management strategy.

Two perspectives

Wellbeing can be analyzed from two perspectives: employee's & employer's. As far as the employer's perspective is concerned – every employer is looking for the most efficient relation between cost and value. As always, costs can be easily defined and calculated. The "value" is a much more complex issue. It can be measured by employee engagement, the competitiveness of our compensation & benefits package (e.g. comparing to market practice), employee satisfaction etc.

Regarding the market practice and benefits component of wellbeing, let's look at current market trends and observations. Based on the abovementioned Mercer Benefits & Remote Working Trends survey, few new trends have emerged on the benefits market as a direct result of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. These changes pertain to almost all benefits, but the top 3 were: no. 1 is a new approach to work-life balance, including mental health and physical health (50% increase in the expenditure on workshops and similar activities). Change no. 2 pertains to work-related events, including integration events (expenditure down by 23%), while change no. 3 relates to working hours and the work-from-home model, including of course the shift from a fixed to flexible working hours model.

In many wellbeing offers, there are still many well-known and standard elements, like financial wellness or physical and mental health. However, some detailed features of those benefits have changed during the pandemic. For instance, before COVID-19, financial wellness typically covered financial and legal services for employees. That type of benefits has existed on the market for many years, but they were not overly popular (at least not in Poland). The same concerns mental health, which was sometimes included in the standard packages of medical coverage offered by medical clinics in Poland or alternatively available within global EAP programs (Employee Assistance Programs). But they were certainly not as popular, especially in Poland Covid has changed this situation.

Changes in employee benefits

There are also many other traditional benefits which have changed significantly. The change does not mean only the structure, scope and similar details. This is also a change in employee perception. It includes among others: family & child benefits, flex benefits, personal insurance, emergency grants and employee financial supports, including long term savings and pensions. In the case of the latter benefit, one tendency is clear: at the moment, there is no employer in Poland

without a pension scheme after the mandatory PPK automatic enrolment schemes were introduced in 2019. It means that the PPK reform has changed the general picture of corporate pension benefits. It is definitely not enough to offer a pension scheme today, one must offer much more in order to be a market leader – and it does not mean, the employer should spend more money on contributions, but it is a question of additional elements in the employer's offer, such as: investment education, pension awareness, access to regular information etc. PPK seems to be the entry stage in our Polish pension "journey". Due to demographic changes (ageing workforce), pension gap (low income replacements) and further changes in the pension system, corporate pensions will surely remain an important element of every benefits discussions in Poland in next 5/10 years.

New trends – market practice observation

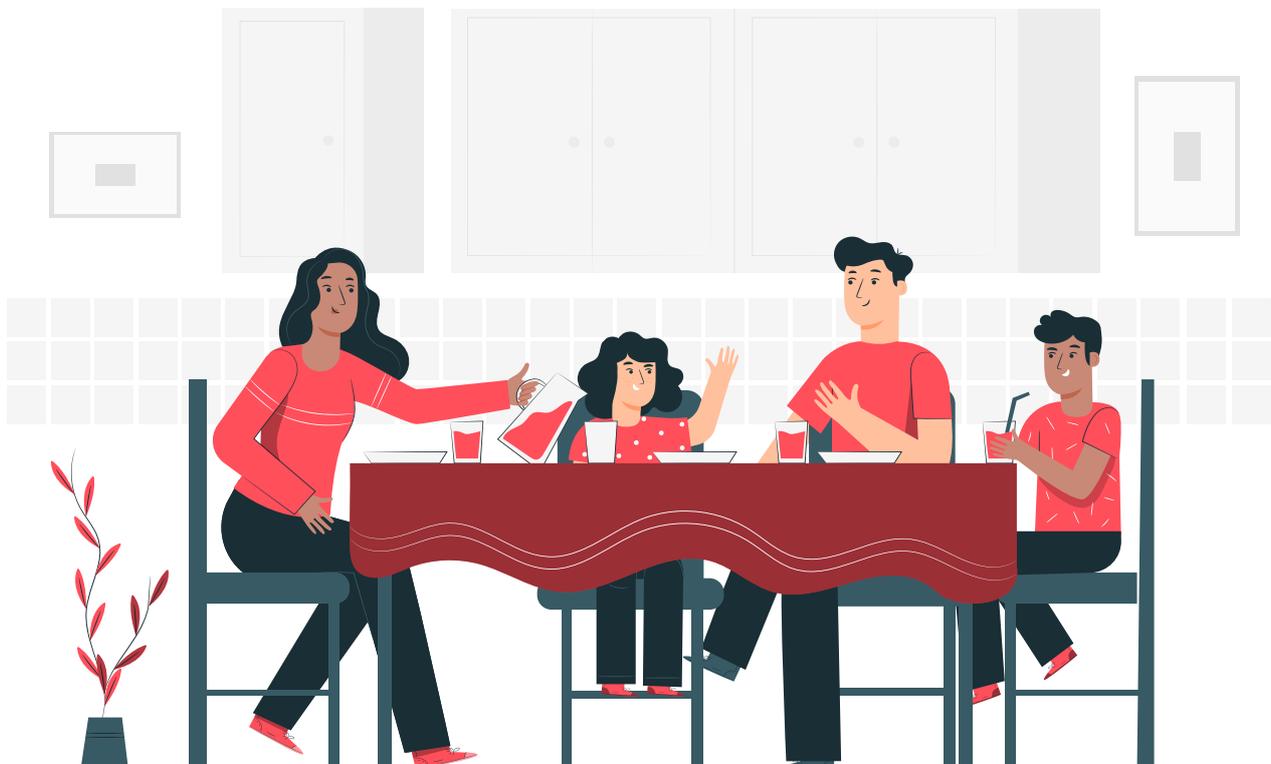
As far as new benefits are concerned, it is worth mentioning that 50% of Polish organizations introduced new benefits in 2020. Many of them were implemented because of the lockdown and economic slowdown, for instance: a new model of working, primarily remote work, flexible working hours etc. Many new benefits were introduced as employers' response to the consequences of COVID-19, for example Covid insurance and wellbeing sessions, which address key problems resulting from a lack of social interactions between employees, stress, health and lifestyle problems, financial concerns about the future etc. Among the new benefits, mental health & psychological support seem to be among the most important ones. Of course, these benefits are not really new, but their importance and their specific features are different. For instance, the eligibility criteria have changed, which results in wider groups being eligible for those benefits. As a result, they are now more prevalent and common. This is obvious and easily understandable if we look at employees' opinions on the COVID-19 situation.

A 2020 *Mercer Life Style* survey (carried out in Poland among employees) showed that the most negative consequences of the Covid pandemic are

1) the stress related to work and the financial instability & families (50% respondents), 2) relationship with work colleagues (45%), 3) access to medical clinics (70%) and 4) physical activity (39%). What does it mean for wellbeing? If we were to listen to the employees and react appropriately, our mental health programs should most probably be extended and address all these issues – typically by providing specific workshop sessions or assistance programs (e.g. psychological consultations, chats with specialists, psychotherapeutic sessions, financial education

sessions etc.). Without a doubt, programs like these are important elements of every wellbeing system, not just today, but also in the future. Many of them are also available on the Polish market, and, importantly, are delivered by local providers and in the local language.

It is obvious that wellbeing strategies will evolve in the future. Today we concentrate more on the Covid-related issues, while in a few months other elements will become more important. Diversity, inclusion, and pay equity will surely be among them. It is likely that wellbeing as a general concept of empathetic management will stay with us for a long time.



7+ HABITS OF WELLBEING PEOPLE



Magdalena Betke,

Business Relationship Manager & Wellbeing Pillar Lead,
Fujitsu Technology Solutions

At Fujitsu, the sphere of wellbeing is taken very seriously. It has always been and still is an area under constant improvement, so as to continuously increase the comfort of our employees, both in their professional and personal lives. These days, it is a topic that simply cannot be overlooked. In our company, we genuinely enable our employees to shape their working environment – it is they who are the prime movers. As a result, they influence themselves, and their physical, mental, and social health.

At Fujitsu, we take great pride in having created an unrivalled wellbeing programme, which draws upon Covey's ideas. We have dubbed the programme 7+ Habits of Wellbeing People. It is in line with the company's policy of creating a friendly workplace (*Human Workplace*). The programme covers all areas where employees can develop.

As part of 7+ Habits of Wellbeing People, a number of events are organised:

- » **sports teams** (running, cycling, volleyball, basketball, futsal),
- » **breathing and meditation sessions** that teach how to control stress,
- » **yoga classes,**
- » **cooking classes** (including thematic classes such as vegetarian) and recipe sharing,

- » **a reading club,**
- » **flu vaccinations on the company's premises,**
- » **playing board games together.**

Support first and foremost

At present, in what is a difficult time for our employees, we decided that psychological support is paramount. We have implemented a global programme focused on support in its broadest sense, i.e. not only psychological, but also legal and financial. Every year in mid-May, we organise the Mental Health Week, which gives the employees an opportunity to participate in activities and events that suit their needs. During this "remote" year, also our employees' children have had a chance to participate in all sorts of workshops, such as dance classes. Their repertoire is constantly expanding and changing in line with the employees' needs. Last year, we were proud to be awarded with the Wellbeing Certificate.



WELLBEING IN ACTION AT ALCON GLOBAL SERVICES



Małgorzata Radziszewska,
Training Manager Alcon

At Alcon Global Services (AGS) in Warsaw, the case for a wellbeing program emerged organically. The program was tailored on feedback from our 100+ colleagues and supported with market research. Our holistic program integrated theory and practice, with maximum flexibility for our colleagues to engage in the activities catering to personal schedules and needs. After a 3-month pilot, we recorded favorable, tangible results. Based on popular demand, the program is now extended by a year, till March 2022 and available for all Alcon Poland employees.

The case for a wellbeing program

AGS Warsaw is a newly-formed team. The first employees joined in late 2019 and by March 2020, COVID-19 restrictions sent everyone to work from home. With strong IT support and our people's resilience, remote onboarding worked out well and the team spirit was strong despite the lack of in-person meetings.

As the year wore on, we heard more conversations about lockdown fatigue. Our people started asking for support for physical and mental wellbeing, and mentioned problems such as weight gain,

back pain, and loss of concentration. Furthermore, our people were missing the chance encounters at coffee and lunch breaks, and other social aspects of working in the office. Our market research also confirmed the imperative to address wellbeing to avoid the negative impacts on morale and performance.

During our online year-end celebration in 2020, our people shared their new year's resolutions. Most were aspiring to a healthier lifestyle: exercise more, quit smoking, jog regularly, eat healthily, and drink less coffee. And this sealed the case for implementing a wellbeing program.

Wellness à la carte

Our answer was developing a program that inspires positive ownership of health and safety matters, no matter if working in the office or from home.

The "Well with Alcon" (WWA) program covers four wellness pillars: exercise, mental health, nutrition and regeneration. We launched the pilot in early January 2021 in order to tap into the energy of new year's resolutions.



Additional informative support:

- dedicated **WVA web page**,
- **weekly posts** on AGS WAW yammer group,
- **happiness calendar**-sharing

Each of the four pillar has both theoretical and practical activities conducted by healthcare professionals including psychologists, dieticians, and physiotherapists.

Individual and group sessions are available so that our people can modulate their level of engagement. Group sessions include lunchtime meditation and exercises as well as webinars for sharing experiences, which also address the need for social interactions. Additionally, our people can choose sessions during working hours or individual sessions to suit personal schedule, including access to expert support after hours.

The variety of activities meant there is something for everyone to help take better care of ourselves, regardless of our working location and personal situations.

Staying well long term

By tracking participation rates and in-session feedback, we were able to re-schedule activities to more conducive hours. We used various channels for engagement, such as calendar invitations and Yammer posts. Other than the program owner driving the communications, very little was needed from the managers to advocate for the program.

At the end of the 3-month pilot run, the program recorded over 1700 unique participations, which is above the benchmark compared with other companies where the provider had hosted similar programs. In a post-program survey, our people recorded over 80 changes in their daily habits as a direct result of WWA activities. The post-event poll to assess whether the pilot was beneficial and should be extended came back with a resounding yes! WWA will now run until March 2022.

In conclusion, taking care of wellbeing is important and even more so due to the circumstances of 2020. Having put an effective wellbeing program in place, we can not only be confident of our people reaching their goals and best performance, but we have also reached the next level of the feeling that we can move mountains and experience happiness in our daily work.



WELLBEING AT AON: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BALANCE



Dariusz Pastuła,
People Director, Aon

I've been fascinated by the topic of employees' wellbeing for years. When, a few years ago, Aon's Global Employee Experience Measurement study showed that the key to increasing the employees' efficiency is to care for their wellbeing and high energy levels, I realised we must focus on long-term wellbeing strategies and consider it one of the most important elements of building employee engagement.

We developed a wellbeing model based on 4 pillars:

1. **physical** – *my health, fitness, and eating habits;*
2. **emotional** – *how I feel about myself;*
3. **social** – *how I feel among the people around me; and*
4. **financial** – *the impact of my financial situation on my wellbeing and how I live.*

Research shows that only 1 person in 10 maintains a balance between emotions, body, relationships with people, and finance. As an employer, we feel we have a duty to help our employees achieve a balance between all the pillars that make up the overall picture of human wellbeing. That is why we equip employees with the right tools and share our expert knowledge, just like we share it with our clients every day.

We started developing a long-term welfare-building strategy from an analysis of the activities that we had been implementing in the company for a long time, back when the term "wellbeing" was not yet widely

popular in the world of business. We checked which actions matched the 4 components we had defined, and we verified the elements that did not fit this puzzle. In effect, we obtained a structure of activities and benefits related to the 4 defined pillars of wellbeing.

Aon wellbeing pillars

The introduction of every new programme begins with an analysis of employees' needs, awareness-raising and communicating the reasons why we are doing it. It is a long-term process, because the goal is to change attitudes and improve the quality of operations, which always requires time and carefully thought-out decisions.

1. **Physical.** It entails a general concern for the health and fitness of our employees. At a time when a sports package has become a precondition and is no longer a distinguishing feature on the labour market, we went a step further and focused on the availability of a wide range of medical care, including access to a number of specialists, such as dental care, vaccinations, annual medical examinations and even a "birth school" for future parents. The employees' health and vitality at work and at home, which we treat as a priority, were the reason why introduced a 100% paid sick leave programme, so that employees, without feeling that they are losing out, can recover in comfortable physical

and mental conditions. In order to consider mutual benefits, we made the programme dependent on seniority.

In its physical dimension, wellbeing prompted us to introduce a new model of work called *Activity Based Working*, which is a step towards creating a “future” working environment. It is up to the employee to decide where and in what form they want to work. In our office, you can sit, stand, walk on a treadmill or use a massage chair while working. The idea behind the model is to design the workspace which accurately corresponds to the activity that is being performed at the moment.

2. **Emotional.** The employees’ mental health is an area we have been investing in for several years. Our activities focus on supporting employees in their everyday challenges, taking care of their health, coping with stress, and preparing managers to be a responsible leader who gives a sense of security to their team.

Every employee at Aon can benefit from the support of specialists: psychologists, sex therapists, and psychiatrists. Flexible working hours are possible so that everyone can adjust their professional duties to family obligations. On the other hand managers are offered development programmes to learn how to recognise the first symptoms of burnout or depression, or how to manage people who have experienced psychotic episodes in the past.

3. **Financial.** It is important to build the employees’ awareness of personal finance, different ways of managing them, saving and investment opportunities. An important aspect of the financial pillar is explaining what an employee’s pay consists of. As part of our detailed report on the components of remuneration and benefits (Total Salary

Statement), we break down the employer’s expenses incurred per individual employee during the year into constituent parts.

The report includes not only information on the salary, but also bonuses, rewards, training, medical care, additional days off, and financial and non-financial benefits.

4. **Social.** It is the strengthening of building healthy relationships in the workplace and involvement in important matters for the community formed by employees. The most obvious activities supporting this pillar of wellbeing are the organization of various integrating meetings, such as the Aon City Game “Scavenger Hunt”, meetings for enthusiasts (board games night, meeting with a barista, book club) or joint charity events. However, this is just the small part – we want to build relationships from the very first days of employment at Aon. For this reason, we decided to implement the new employee tutor program “Aon Connector” or “Buddy” for comfortable and friendly adaptation in the workplace. It is worth mentioning that the office space itself is also designed as to support both everyday cooperation and relaxation in social spaces, or the so-called “Social wellbeing room”.

Wellbeing today

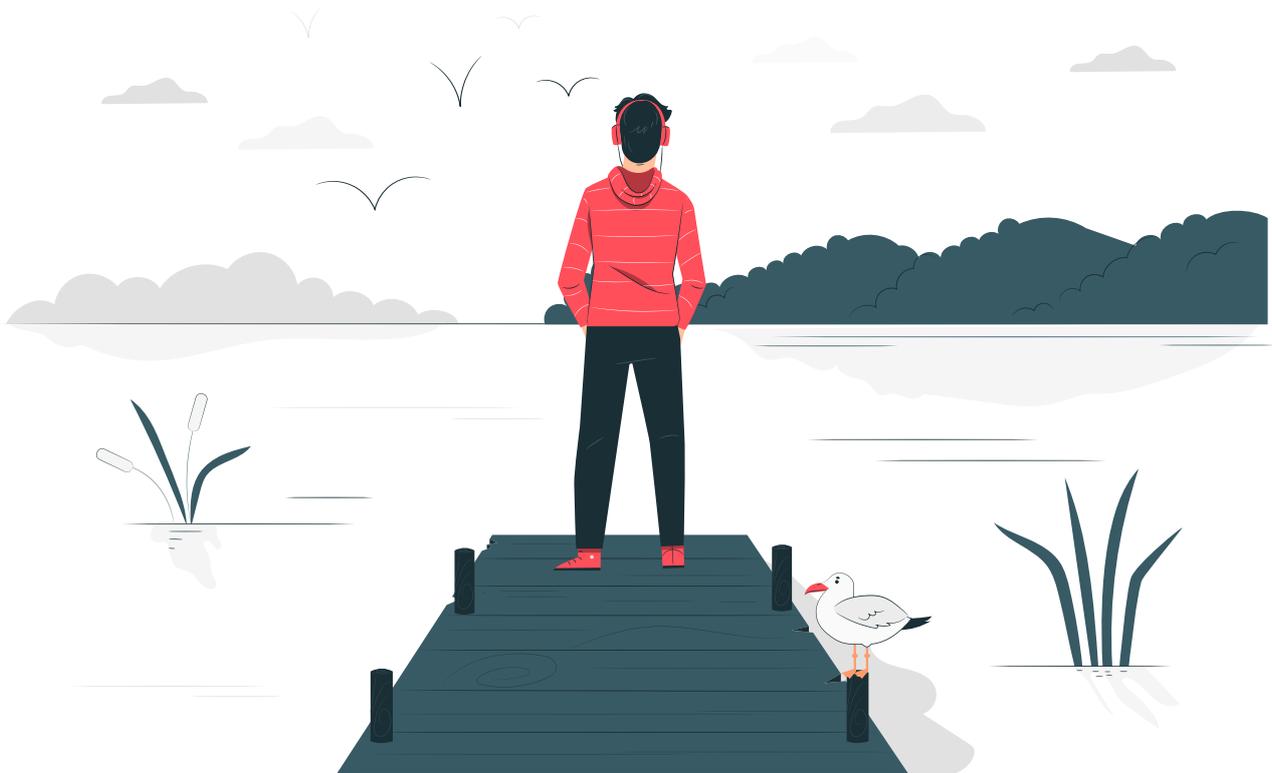
The experiences of recent months have forced employers to change their approach to their employees’ wellbeing. Many benefits have lost their popularity, the best example being gym passes, which cannot be used during lockdown. Certain needs no longer exist, such as travel insurance. At Aon, we have also reviewed different aspects of each wellbeing pillar, redefined their significance, and adapted them to the new reality. The social pillar, which used to be based on common spaces in the office, such as cafeterias or relaxation rooms, and on interpersonal interactions during

company team-building events or regular meetings, now requires a completely different approach and its activities need to be transferred to the virtual world. The situation is similar with the physical wellbeing aspect – we have replaced mass sports events with regular online meetings with trainers, like “Morning Flow” and “Aon Fit Challenge” or “Well One” application activities.

The difficult pandemic situation did not discourage us from acting – it is quite the contrary. We continue our activities in each of the pillars, but we changed the hierarchy of priorities and during the ongoing pandemic we focused on the emotional aspect related to the health and mental wellbeing of our employees. Bearing in mind the difficulties faced by employees at the present time, we have decided to launch the “Mental Health Help Line”, we have provided additional vacation days: the so-called “Thank you days” for all employees as a thank you for their daily commitment,

and “Recovery Time” as a time to return to wellbeing after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. We have replaced traditional integration meetings with “Krakow Walking Tours” that are safe from a pandemic perspective, and numerous clubs such as the cycling section, badminton and tennis. Finally, it is worth emphasizing that we also took care of the colleagues’ home workplace by distributing chairs, monitors and paying a financial allowance for working from home.

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to completely revise our plans, our experience in the area of wellbeing helped us quickly propose new solutions and employee actions. It is extremely important as in the “new reality” employees especially need support in maintaining harmony between work and private life, mental and physical health, social and financial aspects. At Aon, we strive to maintain this balance.



MENTAL WELLBEING: NOW MORE THAN EVER



Piotr Dziwok,
President of ABSL

The pandemic has forced organizations to start a new journey, where one of the key guideposts is wellbeing. No matter whether each company has a different understanding and experience about a sense of wellbeing, every employer should take employee mental and physical health seriously, if they do not want to pay too high a price.

Research carried out by the Barrett Values Centre compared personal values in pre-pandemic times with now. It shows that new values have emerged as top priorities during the pandemic, with wellbeing one of them, rising from #26 to #5 in importance to people personally during COVID.

When personal values are in alignment with those of the organization, employees feel a sense of connection and are able to bring their full selves to work feeling committed to its goals. Recalling Richard Barrett's words:

When you feel a sense of commitment to an organization, you identify with it; and whatever you identify with you care about. However, you will only feel a sense of commitment to an organization if you feel supported by that organization in meeting your needs.

This is more obvious now than ever before in our history – employees want employers to be partners in their wellbeing.

When companies taking employee wellbeing seriously, it creates a workplace with stronger connections to the company, improves engagement and thus productivity, profitability and loyalty. People with thriving wellbeing simply do better in life. And companies with thriving employees do better business. And the world can be much better. Let's make it happen!





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