



Have You Taken The Whole Team's Temperature Lately?

Your people are your business and so is their mental wellbeing.

Research shows that organisations who place a focus on understanding how to really support their employee's wellbeing reap the benefits of increased morale, loyalty, commitment, innovation and productivity.

Put simply, successful organisations perform well “because they make employee engagement and mental wellbeing key priorities” (Mind: How To Take Stock Of Employee Mental Wellbeing)

Why Wellbeing Matters Now

Employers who don't take the temperature of their team's mental wellbeing don't have a full picture when it comes to taking action and measuring their current approach to good mental health. This has a negative impact on everyone – employees, employers and the bottom line – because no one is really benefitting.

Developing a wider picture of the mental health in an organisation allows it to:

- Understand the factors that affect mental wellbeing in your workplace.
- Identify what you're already doing that works and how this can be built upon.
- Assess the impact your current approach is really having.
- Benefit the whole organisation from top to bottom.

To do this, organisations need to know their people and understand their experiences.

So, how is this best achieved to ensure everyone's voice is heard?

Gathering this information needn't be complicated. In fact, if you already run surveys, you've probably either got a lot of it or the basis for it already!

“Wellbeing surveys are a great way of really involving people with why you are asking the questions, rather than just sending a survey out” says Lisa Whittleton, Director of Illuminate VR, who provide support and training that ensures a mentally healthy workforce, “Feedback should be shared appropriately with results, what they mean and what the organisation's priorities will be”.

The main point of contact and awareness for wellbeing challenges within teams often falls with managers, who are already stretched themselves.

How can managers effectively monitor mental wellbeing in their teams?

The CIPD found that fewer companies invested in leadership training through the pandemic than in previous years, due to being too busy and training costs being too expensive.

However, this was the area that was flagged as most needed by staff.

UNDERSTAND YOURSELF FIRST

How people are treated and managed on a day-to-day basis is central to their mental wellbeing as well as how motivated and engaged they feel.

Managers need to be aware of their own managerial style and how this supports team members.

A few questions managers could ask themselves are:

- Can I tailor my management style to suit the needs of each team member, or do I need other support?
 - Do I regularly ask the team what they need and how they're doing and is it an atmosphere of trust?
 - Am I working to ensure workload, including deadlines, are reasonable, and that team member's remits are clearly defined and matched to employee's abilities?
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CAPTURE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES

If your organisation already surveys employees around workplace experience, organisational culture and mental health, then this may provide some good insight and a basis for a team action plan around the key issues.

With the support of the HR department, managers can take this further by holding a team session to ask:

- What a mentally healthy team looks like to them in terms of values and behaviours.
 - Their thoughts on what the team does well to promote good mental health and how this can be built upon.
 - Share what is currently impacting negatively on their mental wellbeing in the workplace.
 - Understand as a team which of these issues are have in or beyond control and influence.
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MAKE A PLAN

The issues that you identify and have control and influence over form the basis of your action plan.

- Make sure you involve your team by asking them to prioritise what they think the key mental wellbeing issues are and agree timescales for resolution together.
 - You could explore if team members want to lead on certain areas of the plan, so everyone feels they have a role to play in maintaining a mentally healthy workplace.
 - It may be helpful to identify or recruit wellbeing champions, who are passionate for the topic and can help pull together useful resources and information to share that helps you deliver on wellbeing if your workload is already stretched.
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CHECK, CHECK AND CHECK AGAIN

- You can do this at an individual level by speaking regularly with your team members to check in on how they're doing and reflect on what might be challenging their wellbeing.
 - You can also do this at a team level by making sure you add a recurring item to team meetings, where people can talk openly about mental wellbeing and stress as a group, the aim being to embed a positive attitude and normalise conversations about mental health.
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Finding out what's really going on with employee wellbeing doesn't require organisations to reinvent the wheel, but it does require them to have a general awareness of the tools and insights they already have and build upon this.

Employees, particularly in response to the pandemic, have high expectations of employers and want to belong to organisations that really put people first and take action to create positive change in the workplace and community.

"It has become clear that managers really need to have had some level of leadership training before delving deeper into supporting wellbeing issues at work. Basic mental health awareness training is fine but in order for them to develop the soft skills and awareness needed, leadership training which enables them to understand who they are as leaders and empower them is needed first". (Lisa Whittleton, Director of Illuminate VR)

Taking the temperature allows organisations to ensure that the wellbeing support they are providing is meaningful, relevant and that it stays that way for everyone's benefit.

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