

Healthy people, healthy business

Executive summary

Embedding a culture of employee health and wellbeing

Work is the engine at the center of our economies. It lies at the heart of WBCSD's Vision 2050 where 9+ billion people live well, within the limits of the planet, and is essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

If not managed well, work can be a direct contributor to poor physical and mental health. It is estimated that almost 2 million women and men around the world still die due to work-related accidents or diseases every year. At the same time, work can be leveraged to drive significant positive health impacts. By fostering safe workplaces and cultures that protect and nurture the wellbeing of employees, businesses around the world and across all sectors have the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting the highest possible standards of health for all.

Ultimately this also acts in support of the long-term success of each individual business. A healthy and engaged workforce is critical to business performance, and investing in and embedding initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of employees can drive a number of key benefits.

More and more businesses are now embarking upon efforts to prioritize health and wellbeing, and to embed it into their operations and culture. This report seeks to support businesses on their journey towards embedding a culture of employee health and wellbeing by providing insights and guidance in relation to three fundamental questions:

1. Why is employee health and wellbeing business critical?
2. What is the role of business in protecting and promoting employee health and wellbeing?
3. How can business accelerate the transition to a workplace culture that fosters the highest attainable standards of wellbeing across a range of health and wellbeing dimensions?

Why is employee health and wellbeing business critical?

There are a number of factors why efforts to support employee health and wellbeing should be seen as business critical. This is at once an area where failing to take action presents considerable legal, reputational and operational risks, while proactive and innovative engagement can also generate a wide range of opportunities and benefits. WBCSD members have identified five areas that are important for businesses to consider as key drivers for action when it comes to scaling up efforts to promote and protect employee health and wellbeing:

- 1 Talent acquisition and retention
- 2 Staying ahead of an evolving regulatory environment
- 3 Improved business performance
- 4 Reputation and brand value
- 5 Enhanced access to capital

What is the role of business in protecting and promoting employee health and wellbeing?

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the workplace as one of the priority settings for health promotion in the 21st century. It is estimated that the average person will spend a third of their lifetime at work. Businesses from all sectors therefore have a significant opportunity and responsibility to ensure that the time their employees spend at work not only does no harm to their health, but also nurtures it.

This report identifies five dimensions of human health and wellbeing that business is well-positioned to foster through a variety of interactions with its workforce. These different dimensions of health and wellbeing are not felt in isolation, but rather, interact either to exacerbate or mitigate the overall impact on an individual.

	Occupational health and safety
	Physical
	Mental
	Social
	Financial

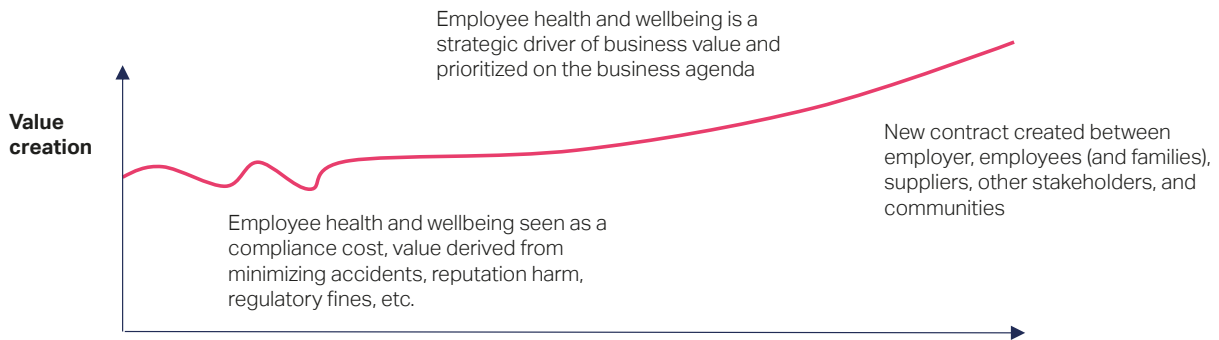
How can business accelerate the transition to a workplace culture that fosters the highest attainable standards of wellbeing across a range of health and wellbeing dimensions?

In order to fulfil their potential to realize positive health and wellbeing impacts across these varied dimensions, it is important for companies to embark upon a clearly defined process to embed a culture of health and wellbeing more centrally into their organizational make-up.

Whilst every organization's journey may be different, the objective to move towards holistic employee health and wellbeing embedded in business strategy, should be consistent. Top-level leadership commitment, a culture of wellbeing, customized and impactful programs, and a sustainable future-looking approach should be the ultimate goal.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, although tragic, has presented businesses all over the world with an important inflection point to explore in more depth how they are interacting both negatively and positively with the health of the individuals that are the engine for their success. Businesses that fail to grasp this opportunity run the risk of being left behind as wellbeing continues to establish itself as a critical determinant of talent attraction and retention, as well as an important and material pillar of ESG analysis and performance assessment.

The journey towards an embedded culture of health and wellbeing



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About the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

WBCSD is the premier global, CEO-led community of over 200 of the world's leading sustainable businesses working collectively to accelerate the system transformations needed for a net zero, nature positive, and more equitable future.

We do this by engaging executives and sustainability leaders from business and elsewhere to share practical insights on the obstacles and opportunities we currently face in tackling the integrated climate, nature and inequality sustainability challenge; by co-developing "how-to" CEO-guides from these insights; by providing science-based target guidance including standards and protocols; and by developing tools and platforms to help leading businesses in sustainability drive integrated actions to tackle climate, nature and inequality challenges across sectors and geographical regions.

Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than USD \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our global network of almost 70 national business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe. Since 1995, WBCSD has been uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability, united by our vision of a world in which 9+ billion people are living well, within planetary boundaries, by mid-century.

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