Embedding Employee Wellness and Engagement into Corporate Culture
Introduction

The positive business case for improving employee wellness and engagement is well established. Yet many organisations are unable to develop sustainable, impactful programmes that deliver improvements not only to the employee health agenda but also to bottom line performance.

This paper, through researched case studies and interviews with the BITC Workwell Leadership Team, seeks to determine common themes and learnings from leading organisations that have successfully developed an approach to employee wellness and engagement that works.

In particular this paper will address how these organisations have been able to:

- Shift from health and safety compliance to public reporting
- Foster a culture of wellness and engagement
- Move from tactical interventions to strategic workforce solutions
- Position as a strategic boardroom issue linked to securing business objectives

About BITC Workwell Campaign

BITC’s Workwell campaign aims to elevate ‘wellness’ and ‘engagement’ to being mission critical to long term sustainability. It takes a proactive approach to employee physical, psychological and social health and encourages organisations to take an integrated, strategic and holistic approach to maximising employee wellness, engagement and productivity.

The campaign’s vision is “To create the most engaged workforce in the world” by inspiring every organisation to help their people flourish by:

- Proving the case
- Spreading good practice
- Providing support

Methodology

The research was produced by Right Management and was conducted by interviewing members of the BITC Workwell Leadership Team who provided case studies to support the process model on page 5.

The objective of the research was to align the process model to the Workwell model and provide practical examples of organisations that have made this journey.

About the BITC Workwell Model

Developed by business for business, the BITC Workwell Model reflects the realities of the workplace and the complexity and interrelatedness of the factors that influence employee wellness and engagement as a strategic boardroom issue linked to securing business objectives. It provides a proactive, integrated and strategic framework for promoting employee wellness and engagement and articulates the inextricable link between wellness and engagement to driving sustainable performance.

The Model outlines actions that employers can take to provide a context for their people to flourish. It also promotes 5 ways to wellness that employees can take to improve their own emotional and physical resilience.

Wellness is comprised of the mutually supportive relationship between the physical, psychological and social health of the individual. (Towers Watson)

Engaged employees work with passion, commitment and trust to drive and sustain their flourishing organisation. (BITC) Engagement combined with wellness enables sustained employee performance.

The Model focuses on four principles that contribute to wellness and engagement. These are better work, better relationships, better specialist support and better physical and psychological health.

It demonstrates the top line business benefits of investing in employee wellness as better engagement,

Business benefits
Employee actions
Employer actions

www.bitc.org.uk

1 UN Millennium Developments Goals, MDG4, MDG5 and MDG6 www.un.org/millenniumgoals
2 “World of work trends” Manpower Inc., Milwaukee, February 2010
3 “Healthy people = Healthy profits” BITC, London, March 2009

* Using ‘good work’ criteria defined by Coats and Lehki (September 2008)
Organisations that understand the value of talent appreciate that performance, specifically that of the organisation is not determined by employee health alone. In fact, in the short term, organisational performance has very little to do with employee health. A healthy and engaged workforce consistently outperforms a disengaged and unhealthy workforce over both the short and long term.

It is also true that employee engagement flourishes in organisations that take an active interest in the physical and psychological wellbeing of employees. Taking such an interest can mean implementing formal wellness initiatives, but also designing better work processes. Employees are more engaged and productive when they have appropriate workloads, experience, manageable amounts of pressure and can maintain a reasonable balance between work and family life.

Employers need to develop their thinking and approaches to ensure that they have the right workforce models and people practices in place to attract and retain talent for the long term.

To help make sense of this Business In The Community (BITC) have provided leadership and guidance by publishing several papers to explain the issue and, more importantly, help organisations to implement and share best practice.

In 2010 the BITC paper “It’s not just about fruit. An employers guide to achieving corporate wellbeing” developed a model which outlines four critical steps organisations should adopt to maximise the long term impact of their wellness strategies. This model outlines the process which supports the BITC Workwell Model (page 3) which can be applied to any size organisation.

Through a series of researched case studies and interviews with the senior leaders of several of Britain’s leading organisations this paper brings together, for the first time, common themes and learnings from organisations that have successfully developed an approach to employee wellness and engagement that works.

As they share their experiences we will see that their journeys often start in very different places, can look very different in delivery and yet embrace the guiding principles of the model.

Integrating wellness into organisational strategy needn't be complex, costly or just for big business. Simplicity is often more effective and, in this paper, we will learn how leading British organisations have built approaches which have far reaching, measurable impacts that are making a real difference.

1. Build a business case
Define wellness and engagement in the context of your own organisation and business strategy, physical environment, management structure, and operational activities. This enables you to decide what success will look like and how to measure it.

2. Get management buy-in
Identify the key stakeholders in your business: who has control, who has influence and who should be involved in the development and implementation of your wellness programme.

3. Create an A.C.T.I.O.N. plan
Create an ACTION plan with the following steps:

   A: Assess where you are on wellness and engagement
   C: Commit time and resources to take positive action
   T: Tell others about why, what and how change must happen
   I: Integrate with business strategy and objectives
   T: Organise programmes with measurable targets
   O: Nurture your key partners to achieve change

4. Monitor and report
Identifying Key Performance Indicators at the outset of your programme is crucial. You can assess your programme using a combination of measurements of process (numbers participating/uptake etc), impact (indicators and improvements) and outcome (changes that you wish to achieve).
Building a Business Case

Throughout our research the importance of the business case in developing a sustainable approach to employee wellness and engagement was identified as a critical initial step in every case.

It was rare to hear of a business case built upon simple measures of absenteeism, attrition or any of the more traditional health related outcomes. More often, as we will see, the wellbeing and engagement agenda is recognised as a driver of broader organisational objectives and strategy rather than limited to simple metric improvements.

By defining what employee wellness and engagement means for them, these leading British organisations understand the value not just to their bottom line but also to the broader community in which they work and serve.

A well positioned business case links employee wellness (the physical and psychological health of the individual) with employee engagement (the commitment, satisfaction, advocacy and pride of the employee) with that of broader organisational factors. In so doing their programmes have far greater acceptance, greater engagement across the business and, more importantly, greater impact for their business.

In setting their vision to become the “No.1 creative destination in the world” the creative agency, Mother, were faced with many challenges. The environment is, necessarily, highly pressured with demanding hours, across a global footprint and a very dynamic marketplace which can all lead to a real compromise on work life balance.

As with so very much, Mother looked at the problem from a different perspective and saw real opportunity. An opportunity to turn their creative skill set into realising their business strategy. Embedded deep within the partner’s philosophy and built into the culture - their product is their people, and that product can only be as good as the people.

Their strategy, embraced by all within Mother, is to:
1. Make the best work they possibly can
2. Have fun and
3. Make a living (in that order)

These guiding principles have defined their approach and ensured that this is aligned with their high performance culture.

“These principles influence all that we do and are reflected in Mother’s people and culture. They clearly signal to our people the importance Mother places on their happiness, being at the heart of the way we operate. They also provide everyone at Mother with a clear understanding of how they can directly contribute to the company’s overarching vision.”

NATALIE GRAEME, Head of Business Development, Mother

To ensure that the successful corporate merger with Boots flowed through to customer service excellence, Boots created the platform for employee wellbeing.

In recognising that the impact of improved employee engagement would drive a better emotional connection with customers and the customer experience, Boots were able to align the employee wellbeing agenda to their core business strategy, supporting their growth ambitions whilst shaping their brand ambitions.

“The business case enabled us to see this as more about the customer (relationship) than cost synergies during the merger. Without the business case, however, we could not have championed everyone’s right to feel good...”

ALEX GOURLAY, Chief Executive of Health & Beauty Division, Alliance Boots
With a deeply held belief in their unique people culture and long history driving a tangible level of high employee engagement, Marks and Spencer recognised the need to develop a 21st approach to employee wellbeing. Both in maintaining their market leading customer service ethos and in the development of an approach which met the needs of their business today.

Their business case enabled them to focus on those aspects of their employee health offering which made a real difference and to which their people placed great store whilst shaping future provision around the changing world of retail and Marks & Spencer’s place as a leader in the High Street.

“We needed to get to a point where everyone could articulate what our plans meant for our people. The business case needed to be right, not complex!”

RUSSELL TURNER, Operations Manager, Occupational Health, Marks & Spencer

For Bupa there is a deeply held determination to be exemplars. The benefits of employee wellness and engagement go hand in hand with their values and drive to become the “healthcare partner”.

Benefits include the opportunity to test new innovations amongst a diverse population. Bupa’s leadership recognise that the benefits go beyond the bottom line, impacting their people, communities and partners in a positive way. Using a strong financial discipline and clearly defined metrics of:

1. Involvement
2. Impact
3. Investment

supports the measurement and development of all existing and future programme design. The inclusion of the employee wellness and engagement agenda in their annual reports demonstrates the commitment of their leadership to walk the talk.

“We are absolutely committed to being a healthcare partner, to our customers, our people, and our communities”

ALEX PERRY, Director, Bupa Health & Wellbeing UK

In 2003 the journey to improve the health of their consumer offerings, took a natural inward step with a focus on their associates. Providing clear insights to presenteeism, rather than managing illness, Mars began to track key metrics with a focus on keeping people well, defining the key strategy for the business. By writing it down Mars created transparency to all and held themselves accountable to their commitments.

“Mars have a long standing unique culture, we take our role as a supplier (of food products) and employer seriously…”

ROBERT HUGHES, Managing Director, Mars Food UK

Employee engagement, identified as one of a series of performance drivers, would enable Royal Mail to achieve their ambitions and, in particular, create a better place to work. Reinforcing the psychological contract, health and wellbeing provided a ready platform to achieve a workforce aligned to Royal Mail’s vision and strategy.

“(At that time) the business case was writing itself, we had the tools in place and now had a unifying focus…”

DR STEVEN BOORMAN, Chief Medical Officer, Royal Mail
In the absence of in house wellness talent, and relying heavily on consulting advice, American Express were unfettered in setting out their ambitions on a global basis. Working with external consultants American Express set about translating their global vision of “Healthy Living” into regional and local action plans, starting with the search and selection of talent to fill the key leadership roles.

American Express wholeheartedly believed that they could deliver a better return on investment from wellness efforts than any other form of employee benefit and, using empirical, actuarial and experiential evidence, they established a clear link between organisational performance and employee wellness and engagement.

“With the support of our CEO, Head of HR and the Global Head of Compensation and Benefits, our business understands and, more importantly, embraces the challenge...”

BRECKON JONES, Director of Healthy Living, EMEA, American Express

Passionately committed to the long-term success of the neighbourhoods that they design and deliver to, Places for People have a culture which focuses upon the importance of the employee experience in delivering excellence. Learning from earlier “big bang” initiatives which failed to have a lasting impact, Places for People built their strategy upon the findings of their employee engagement work.

This identified that employee’s saw the wellbeing agenda as a priority. Over a 3 - 6 month period the senior team aligned their approach with their core people mantra “SPIRIT” - Support, Positive, Integrity, Respect, Innovation and Together.

The outcome aligned, for the first time, policy and strategy with engagement drivers across the employee base.

“The alignment of our business case with our core strategy brought in senior managers, achieving their whole hearted buy in and engagement”

LIZ SHARROCKS, Places for People

Management buy in

Understanding why the employee wellness and engagement agenda is important is only one part of the equation. Achieving senior stakeholder buy in is equally as important in ensuring that programmes have lasting reach and impact.

Research has found that there is a systemic failure to articulate wellness within the context of broader organisational strategy and identified this as one of the prime drivers as to why wellness programmes, in general, aren’t seen as adding value. That which Senior Leaders cannot understand is unlikely to be supported during implementation or defended readily during budget season. As a result employee wellness and engagement is often seen as a satellite activity of HR, Occupational Health or Welfare and is all too often dependent upon the sponsorship of an inspired leader.

Having a great business case is irrelevant if management can’t see the value add to them or their functions. The research indicates that organisations that are able to articulate their employee wellness and engagement agenda in a manner which engages senior leaders, is aligned with the people vision and values and which is as easy to interpret as a Profit and Loss spreadsheet are more likely to succeed.

Ensuring that communication is clear, simple and early enough in the process is a consistent theme amongst these exemplars. In achieving initial management buy in, programmes are able to flourish alongside business demands, indeed often seen as part of business as usual. Leaders are no longer disengaged by the health message and will often become strong advocates for programme development.

Ultimately, as has been evidenced, if management buy in is not achieved there is rarely a positive outcome in behaviour change or sustainability.
"We were able to engage our most senior leadership by focusing on the simplicity of our plan. Of course we'd done a huge amount of planning and design beforehand and we knew everything stacked up. When it came to seek management buy in it really was as simple as asking “Would you agree that a happier, healthier employee performs better?” when our HR Director, Tanith Dodge, answered “Yes” we knew that we’d got it right.”

RUSSELL TURNER, Operations Manager, Occupational Health, Marks & Spencer

“A diverse organisation with multiple platforms, working across a variety of environments Centrica adopted an approach which recognised the business objective to “raise the bar”, in terms of performance, whilst maintaining the strong and necessary focus on Health, Safety and Environment.

The key was to learn and share experiences across the group within a framework which was readily accessible. The strategy was to develop a rigorous management system and performance metrics at every level within Centrica and develop a road map around the need for culture change. The provision of a common agenda identified and promoted leadership behaviours which linked to employee engagement with HS&E whilst providing a structure which could be audited for governance purposes.

“In creating our ‘Well, Flourishing People’ programme Centrica have been able to promote a unifying vision that has achieved the necessary level of buy in and commitment”

GRAEME COLLINSON, Group Director, Health, Safety & Environment, Centrica plc

With a business case which flowed from ARAMARK’s defined corporate social responsibility strategy it became a small step to demonstrate the value add at the Leadership Team level.

In re writing their strategy to place employee engagement centrally, with wellness as a defined driver, ARAMARK achieved management buy in that is collaborative from the start and which has engaged in the journey with every step. Built upon four pillars:
1. Health & wellbeing
2. Employee welfare
3. Environment and
4. Community

“The key (to success) was getting our people to do it, we designed the framework, shaped the vision and let them (leaders) fill it.”

VAL CARTER, CR and Training Director, Aramark

As market competition increased, the benefits of an employee wellness and engagement strategy became deeply entrenched within the performance of the organisation.

New commercial contracts and tenders increasingly asked for evidence on the engagement and wellness agenda, offering Royal Mail a readymade commercial differentiator that linked directly to their three strategic priorities; returning to profitability, delivering quality customer service and recognising that people are their greatest asset. Gains, measured by almost any metric, were consistently heading in the right direction and fully supported at all levels within the organisation.

“There were an additional 3000 people a day at work... with figures like that everyone took notice”

DR. STEVEN BOORMAN, Chief Medical Officer, Royal Mail

(“The Wellness Imperative; Creating more effective organisations” World Economic Forum in partnership with Right Management, Davos January 2010)
An Evolution of Health and Safety

The bringing together of Abbey, Bradford & Bingley and Alliance & Leicester under the Santander brand in the UK has presented the ideal opportunity for the organisation to develop and embed an employee engagement strategy that looks to help it become one of the best companies to work for in the UK. Supported by the HR Director and key to their new CEO’s vision, Santander’s HR team work closely with the business, to identify areas for improvement. By doing so, they aim to raise employee awareness of the services and benefits available to them, including a range of flexible working options, an employee telephone assistance line, discounted gym memberships and other support for their wellbeing. With statistics supporting the business case for change, metrics are reported regularly to the executive team.

“Our people are important to the success of our business and we want them to feel valued and proud to work for Santander”

SUZANNE HUGHES, HR Director, Policy, Employee Relations and Engagement, Santander

A successful, complex, global FMCG business Nestlé UK’s journey begins with the successful implementation of health, safety and environmental policy and strategy and the interpretation of their global agenda, the transition to a “Nutrition, Health and WellNes” company. The translation of global policy had to reflect the culture, business demands and people needs of Nestlé here in the UK. Ensuring that programmes were relevant is as important as their effectiveness and was led by their Head of Employee WellNes with the support of their CEO and leadership teams. With an ageing population demographic the positioning of the strategy and business case as business as usual supported buy in at all levels alongside the choice of simple interventions aligned to three key target risk areas:

1. Nutrition
2. Mental Resilience &
3. Exercise

“Each (of our) sites is already 100% non smoking for product safety so we swapped tobacco cessation for pressure management. It’s the fluid nature of our approach that has really aided buy in and engagement at each level…”

DR DAVID BATMAN, Head of Employee WellNes, Nestlé UK

In tying the external consumer vision to that of their associates Mars developed a forum for open dialogue across the business on health and wellbeing. Mars leaders recognise that “the top isn’t always right” and conversations are, culturally, two way.

By writing down their commitments Mars have translated their desired outcomes into their defined People Strategy, broadening its appeal and impact beyond health to include the attracting of talent and development of people. The People Strategy informs much of the business thinking and can make real improvements by challenging leadership thinking. Are jobs realistic, are they rewarding, are they stretching? A Mars manager recognises that getting the answers to these questions right creates an engaged and fulfilled workforce and enables wellness to sit effortlessly into the People Strategy development plan.

“We simply don’t believe that you can achieve performance without respecting the planet or your people.”

ROBERT HUGHES, Managing Director, Mars Food UK
As diverse as each organisation who took part in our research, so too are their approaches to delivery, their strategy for interventions and their outlook on what works for them.

Most organisations are already doing something on employee wellness and engagement, deploying certain elements of an effective programme. Whether that is an Employee Assistance Programme, leader development, health related benefits, attendance management or event sports and social clubs. However, it is the re-positioning of these points under the strategic umbrella that makes the real difference. The content and approach of any programme is driven as much by demographic as geographic considerations, whilst culture and the socialised agenda are growing in their importance.

As we will see, leading organisations are delivering programmes that are as complex, simple and varied as they are centrally planned or locally owned. What is important is that they are delivered in alignment with objectives, are targeted and identified needs of their population. Empowerment and Champions are consistent key themes which have provided much needed energy, enthusiasm and emphasis.

In 2010 Centrica published their Health and Wellbeing framework which focuses on four priorities for intervention:
1. Musculoskeletal health
2. Obesity
3. Mental health and
4. Late age workforce

Furthermore plans were put in place to segment the workforce based upon identifiable population requirements. This approach created the plan for three key population groups:
1. Be Well: Healthy with no underlying health conditions
2. Get Well: Underlying health conditions and absence
3. Stay Well: Employees with identified risks in their role

With the full support of their Partners Mother have stretched their wellbeing approach to fit their culture and expectations of their people.

Innovation sits at the heart of their programmes with initiatives not focused upon health but on their people. Examples include:
1. Enrichment Project - plotting the lifetime investment in all Mother people, mapping out their development and careers and aligning them with the values
2. Time Project - a goal to reduce time spent at work by 10%
3. Passion Audit - uncovering the personal passions which really engage people beyond their jobs and taps into the extraordinary people at Mother

“Our approach has allowed us to revise our health, safety and environment policy with a focus on holistic employee wellbeing for the first time across all businesses. This is something which is done in partnership with our people rather than "to" them

TRICIA O’NEILL, Group Head of Health, Centrica
Embracing a Champion led philosophy Nestlé UK have empowered local teams to take national and local wellness initiatives within the strategy and develop programmes that work for their people with enviable outcomes.

Really simple, yet consistent, messaging has seen significant employee participation and developed a desire amongst the population for more interventions. The ready energy of Champions eased the resource drain on programme managers and the HR and Occupational Health teams, allowing them to focus on programme consistency, measurement and design.

“The Global Corporate Challenge (exercise campaign) allowed our people to compete together, individually and in teams and boosted employee physical activity in the workplace. After three years participation continues to grow and the results are impressive…”

DR. DAVID BATMAN, Head of Employee WellNes, Nestlé UK

In recognising the importance of their business leaders in delivering the business strategy and embracing their employee wellness and engagement efforts Boots worked through their Leaders first, making clear links to their employee talent agenda and measuring accordingly. Cascading efforts through to the shop floor proved highly effective and ensured that the right services were delivered and owned where they were needed most.

“It's on the shop floor that we win the customer satisfaction and that’s where our efforts needed to be most effective”

ALEX GOURLAY, Chief Executive of Health & Beauty Division, Alliance Boots

In embracing the BITC Workwell model Places for People rapidly aligned their business needs around a defined road map for delivery. In making the clear links to their “SPIRIT” employee brand they were able to create a real differentiator which had measurable impact in both the talent retention and attraction stakes.

Furthermore their existing suite of employee solutions were more readily taken up by the employees who saw real joined up thinking in their programme design. Finally the use of Champions enabled Places for People to support local charities and other 3rd sector organisations in the development of interventions; providing a strong demonstration of their own commitment to the communities which they serve.

“Seeing the change in people and realising that it is not just about health have been rewarding outcomes”

JASON TURNER, Head of OD, Places for People

Marks & Spencer already had a significant number of valued services in place for their people. In developing their approach they wanted to embrace Nudge economics philosophy to encourage behaviour change and were able to augment their delivery through a well designed PlanAhealth.com brand.

Participation is exceptionally high with new initiatives coming on stream in regular intervals, great employee feedback and demand. In not using more traditional health risk assessments Marks & Spencer have been able to focus upon key personal programmes supported by a variety of media, work plans and dedicated health coaching. In the first quarter alone over 10,000 employees have completed their own personalised four week programme.

“We listened to our people and identified that Sleep, work life balance, weight management and hydration were key needs. So we built around that and, as a result, participation has been exceptional”

JENNIE WALLACE, Head of Employee Support, Marks & Spencer
A network of Healthy Living Ambassadors, acting as champions, accelerated the translation of the global vision into local efforts whilst the leadership of the Director of Healthy Living, EMEA aligned the various programmes and initiatives under the guidance of their strategy.

For example, in the UK, using a simple quarterly calendar the framework of initiatives are easily built around key themes of awareness and education:
1. Quarter 1 - Nutrition
2. Quarter 2 - Exercise
3. Quarter 3 - Health Checks
4. Quarter 4 - Resilience

Supporting this is an impressive benchmark of population health exercise which shapes future intervention focus and tracks the needs of the population with accuracy. Combine this approach with existing use of health risk assessments, online portals and employee assistance programmes and the needs of American Express employees are well catered for.

“I am constantly moved by the individual stories and testimonials, hearing of the impact of change for one person brings into focus the true reason for this initiative…”

BRECKON JONES, Director of Healthy Living, EMEA, American Express

When looking to develop their policy into actions BITC needed to look no further than their own internal skill base and competence. Their people have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in developing and designing a range of initiatives to tackle the very points stated in their wellbeing policy. Communication has been clear, built around an Employee Wellbeing Calendar which promises a series of relevant programmes spaced throughout the year.

The focus on physical activity and sustainable travel to work has enabled the Environment and National Business Travel Network teams to provide leading expertise on travel to work programmes. Delivering a range of educational and practical solutions which have had significant social impact.

And their very own Workwell action group have, of course, been able to lead in the workplace health initiatives such as supporting managers using the Managing Emotional Wellbeing Tool, delivering best practice relevant programmes which have meaningful impact for the employee base.

“Is employee engagement increasing? We will be undertaking another staff survey next year so that will give us some feedback. We will be focusing not just on delivering objectives but to delivering in the right way through our new BITC values. And our people have responded really positively”

LIZ LYONS, HR Adviser, Business in the Community

Effective monitoring and reporting is a cornerstone of a successful programme. So far we have seen how leading British organisations have interpreted best practice on their own terms to reflect their people and business needs.

Programme design has remained varied and yet common themes are evident in each and every case. The approach to measurement is no different; we will see how some organisations place significant importance on clearly defined metrics at almost every level of their business whilst others have adopted a focus upon softer metrics. In either case the outcome remains the same, the business better understands the value of the employee wellness and engagement strategy whilst the employees have embraced a sustainable and relevant programme which supports them in making positive lifestyle behaviour changes.

Research indicated that, when it comes to reporting, organisations can be split into two very distinct camps. Those for whom the softer facts of evidence are appropriate and those for whom harder, more clearly defined metrics and key performance indicators are critical in evidencing the benefits of their chosen approach.

Neither approach is necessarily any better. The emerging themes indicate that it is the appropriateness of the measurement which matters most based upon the demands of the organisation and, as we will see, very often the prevailing culture of leadership.

Monitor and report

Effective monitoring and reporting is a cornerstone of a successful programme. So far we have seen how leading British organisations have interpreted best practice on their own terms to reflect their people and business needs.
Journey of satisfaction
Embedded in business as usual

Adopting a series of soft measures Marks & Spencer have been able to continue to achieve high levels of voluntary employee participation.

There is a focus upon extracting data from existing measurements such as employee engagement exercises, developments to the environment and, of course, ongoing programme participation rather than developing new layers of complex data collation. In the long term employee satisfaction will be mapped alongside the key touch points of the journey that PlanAhealth.com takes the individual employee on.

“The level of employee engagement and voluntary buy in are real highlights. Creating and building the opportunity and seeing the pride develop (in the wellbeing offer) and the tangible difference on our shop floors.”

RUSSELL TURNER, Operations Manager, Occupational Health, Marks & Spencer

Employee wellness and engagement was a safe area with which to engage the support and insights of the unions. Starting with an audit Royal Mail recognised that they had little consistent data and somewhere close to 33 different data sources!

In introducing a simplified method of data gathering Royal Mail provided a focus on key metrics which linked directly to league tables track performance and support goal setting.

Amongst a wide variety of innovative interventions and programmes, their Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme and engagement efforts worked alongside key health data gathered from a Health Risk Assessment to better understand the presenting issues and, importantly, directly link to organisational performance drivers.

Open dialogue with their CEO and Chairman in “Ask Adam and Alan” sessions provided the employee population with clear evidence of the importance and commitment that Royal Mail placed in their approach.

“Dignity and Respect at Work (DRAW) was a breakthrough approach, creating teams of champions within Royal Mail who could reach our population faster and more effectively than any centrally planned initiative would have done.”

DR. STEVEN BOORMAN, Chief Medical Officer, Royal Mail

In defining 8 key performance metrics at the outset Centrica have been able to successfully track their journey through a balance of organisation wide standards and procedures, which drove governance, and softer evidence to support their cultural journey and internal brand.

Measures are reported on a monthly basis and are taken to Business Unit level management which helps to engage Centrica at all leadership levels. This ensures that the journey to effective boardroom reporting progresses effectively.

“We have always been an integral part of Centrica’s success. Today, with the support of management, we are able to touch more people in a proactive way than ever before and to make a real difference for our people.”

TRICIA O’NEILL, Group Head of Health, Centrica

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Sustainability

Places for People have taken the approach that the journey is more important than any specific outcomes. In doing so they have created an approach which has secured total leadership cooperation and almost unilateral employee engagement.

That’s not to say that measurement is not an important activity; metrics have been put in place for almost every stage of delivery from assessment to partnering with external parties. What is important is how this data is used, with links to their Corporate Social Responsibility agenda and clear measures around programme efficacy and participation.

“So sustainability is really important to us. (The BITC Workwell model) gave us a platform to build our strategy upon and a reference point for measurement. What’s important is that we’re doing the right things more often and our people and communities benefit…”

LIZ SHARROCKS, Employee Engagement Advisor, Places for People
Collaboration

Their 4 pillars provide a strong platform to enable effective measurement and organisation wide buy in. Measurement is part of the culture within ARAMARK and bring a strong focus to the employee wellness and engagement agenda. This results in increased perceptions of integrity and value, both of which have proven critical in delivering high levels of employee participation.

Measures are not isolated to health alone and include sickness absence and performance alongside data from their external employee engagement survey provider. Often measurement has proven a challenge and whilst measurement is an obvious benefit, Aramark recognised that not having explicit hard metrics on direct impact needn’t hold them back. Knowing that their actions were the right thing to do became a guiding principle too. This collaboration has provided Aramark with a level of transparency and visibility across the business which has supported their position as a leader in their field.

“Whilst the (CSR) delivery has shifted over time our guiding principles have not. Collaboration and staying the course are the hallmarks of our programme success.”

VAL CARTER, CR and Training Director, Aramark

MARS

Simplicity and consistency

With over 65000 people worldwide Mars are focused on empowering their people and demonstrating that they “walk the talk”.

Even with their size this is still a storytelling telling culture, a culture that is all about leaders showing up and delivering on their commitments.

Measurement is a critical step, but one which is embraced in Mars’ unique way - it’s necessary but needn’t be complex. Change can only be achieved through their people and measurement begins there. To ensure that there is a sustained focus initiatives are never one off and are continually reinforced through repetition.

In addition to their regular employee engagement survey simple measurement tools produce metrics that are reviewed by the Leadership Team on a quarterly basis and discussed at board level, determining the financial and physical health of the business.

“A good manager cares for their people and this is all about being intentional, being part of the fabric...”

ROBERT HUGHES, Managing Director, Mars Food UK

Bupa

Executive Reporting on the 3 ‘i’s: Involvement, Impact and Investment

Bupa have developed a measurement and reporting competence based upon the needs of the business. Overall health status, engagement and broader business metrics, such as absenteeism, are measured to inform and shape their intervention planning – and shown in a health and wellbeing dashboard format. Finally, Bupa have made great strides to include such measures within their annual reporting, driving accountability across the business.

“IF I could offer three key learnings they would be: i) to understand the very specific issues of your organisation, ii) be clear on your proposed solutions and expected benefits and iii) ensure that any and all recommendations tie back to your overall strategy...”

ALEX PERRY, Director, Bupa Health and Wellbeing UK

Boots

Balanced scorecard

In developing an approach to measurement and reporting Boots looked to their existing approaches, recognising that a balanced scorecard approach would help to reach their stated objectives in a faster and more impactful manner.

By identifying the three key measures which drove customer care and experience Boots have been empowered to drive changes to i) People, ii) Operations and iii) Customer Excellence in a highly satisfactory manner. Change has been rapid as ownership of these measures has driven improvements to key business measures such as their talent agenda and external recognition through organisations like “Great Place to Work”.

“In focusing on the customer experience it has been far easier to embed (the initiatives) and enable our people to really flourish...”

ALEX GOURLAY, Chief Executive of Health & Beauty Division, Alliance Boots
The implementation of a Global Wellness Steering Committee achieves governance and provides leadership in a consistent way, supporting future programme roll out and the monitoring of existing programme effectiveness. On a regular basis key measures roll up from the local to global data dashboards, informing annual reporting at a regional and global level. American Express have a particular focus on population behaviour change evidenced through:

1. Utilisation
2. Engagement
3. Risk and
4. Healthy Living Best Practice

Building upon sound evidence and metrics American Express are able to scale their plans to fit the changing needs of their people and market places and create the link between employee wellness, engagement and performance in an enviable manner.

“Our expectations have been exceeded, we've managed significant change in a short space of time and, as a result, we're more committed than ever to the employee wellness agenda...”

BRECKON JONES,
Director of Healthy Living,
EMEA, American Express

The positive business case for improving employee wellness and engagement is well established. Empirical evidence is ample in supporting that the benefits and return on investment gains alone should validate decisions on implementing effective employee programmes.

Clearly these gains are not achievable when it is limited to fruit and exercise. Yet many organisations are unable to develop sustainable, impactful programmes that deliver improvements not only to the employee health agenda but also to bottom line performance, often citing the complexity of the issue as a reason for not going further than simple and predictable interventions.

This paper highlights several key points; that making gains in the employee wellness and engagement agenda need not be complex, reliant upon significant resource investment or the preserve of big business.

Rather, real measured gains are available to all immediately when planning and expectations are realistic, communications are inclusive at all levels and when programme design is based upon the needs of the population.

In the coming years businesses will face even greater talent challenges as the world of work continues to shift and influence the way in which strategic workforce planning must be designed. The changing demographics of the British employee population bring with it new demands which should be challenging the thinking of employers.

What is clear is that, irrespective of what the future holds, the employee wellness and engagement agenda will continue to grow in importance and that those organisations, irrespective of their size, industry or geography, who embed a proactive approach within their core business strategy will outperform their competition for a sustainable future.