

# “Wellbeing must be woven into the cultural fabric of a company. And it needs to be now.”

Alice Willis, Founder Realise

**Innovative thinking** from Upskill People. Creators of the ground-breaking new **Managing People series**.



Too often businesses suffer due to underperforming and jaded teams. That's why I set up *Realise* - to tackle big and broad issues around **wellbeing and workplace performance**.

There has never been more compelling or robust evidence for placing a focus on employee wellbeing. Research shows that companies with effective wellbeing programmes outperform the market.

Additionally, wellbeing-lost productivity is now costing the UK economy an estimated **£77.5 billion a year** (Britain's Healthiest Company). Put simply, it boils down to the fact that happy, healthy and engaged employees are more productive and less likely to leave or be off sick.

As Richard Branson once said: “*Take care of your employees and they will take care of your business.*” However, wellbeing at work is a multi-faceted and complex matter. It can't be ticked off with a subsidised gym membership, free fruit or once-a-year health screenings.

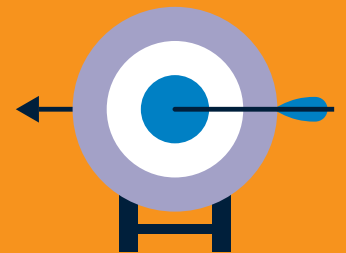
Wellbeing must be woven into the cultural fabric of a company and it needs to be now. You should take into account all the different aspects that can affect an employee. This includes mental and physical health, but also how they get on with their manager and colleagues, plus their overall

job satisfaction.

It's vital to take both a whole person and whole company approach so you can create the right environment for both your people and your business to thrive.

## Wellbeing helps improve:

1. Productivity
2. Growth
3. Service
4. Retention
5. Engagement
6. Energy
7. Collaboration



# Create your wellbeing culture in 7 simple steps

## 1. Listen to employees

Employee engagement and wellbeing are interwoven. Listening to your team members helps you understand how they truly feel, where they'd like to be supported and where the culture might need to change. Understanding employees' needs should be the base upon which you build your wellbeing culture. Set up regular opportunities for employees to provide feedback. Surveys or focus groups are a great way of doing this. They'll feel involved which increases their motivation.

## 2. Make the business case

To get buy-in, and for wellbeing at work to be treated seriously, you need to make the business case for it. What's the combined cost to your business of stress-related underperformance (presenteeism) and illness (absenteeism)?

Take time and money into consideration – how many hours are lost? How much missed revenue does that relate to? According to Britain's Healthiest Workplace, 31.6 days are missed per year, per person (through sickness or presenteeism). So, for example, if the cost of a missed day (through salary & missed revenue) was £350, the cost to a business is £11,060 per employee every year.

Use the total to make the business case for investment and also factor in any employees who leave the company due to wellbeing-related issues and the recruitment costs that come off the back of them. It soon adds up to a very large figure.

If your team are healthier and happier, they'll be more productive, more creative and more likely to stay.

**“Managers spend 25% of their time resolving conflict.”**

- University of Oklahoma

## 3. Utilise your managers

Your managers are at the front line when it comes to wellbeing issues at work. They should know – or be trained – how to spot warning signs and provide necessary support.

By equipping managers with relevant knowledge and support skills, a company can signal to its whole team that wellbeing is being taken seriously.

Some managers may be concerned about taking on this responsibility, so it's worth pointing out that you're not looking for them to become counsellors. Their role is to spot any concerns, listen and organise appropriate support.



**62%** have experienced poor mental health due to work

*Source: Business in the Community*

**11%** only 11% of those spoke about it with their manager

*Source: Business in the Community*

## 4. Encourage positive working relationships

Working relationships are one of the biggest influencers on an employee's wellbeing at work. If an employee feels supported and values the relationships around them, they're likely to thrive and enjoy their job. On the other hand, conflict at work can be toxic and is one of the main reasons people quit.

It's important to take positive action to create a mutually supportive environment with good work relationships at its heart. Avoiding conflict and encouraging fairness is a good way to promote positive behaviour, and ensure you have robust, well-publicised policies on workplace bullying and harassment. Regular social events are a good way to boost your team's dynamics and morale.

## 5. Don't ignore physical health

A more positive and open conversation has started around mental health, which is great. But it's important to maintain a focus on physical health, too. Physical health is still one of the biggest factors affecting workplace performance because sections of the British workforce aren't healthy enough to improve productivity.

Give your team the knowledge and motivation they need to take care of their physical health – promote positivity and celebrate success in newsletters and on social media.

## 6. Invest in development

Another major factor in employee wellbeing is whether they feel valued and are progressing in their roles. A culture that invests in employees' skills and development

builds engagement, which increases their commitment and enthusiasm to their company. Do you offer enough opportunities to your team? Do they agree?

## 7. Encourage openness

Finally, there's still a stigma around wellbeing and mental health at work. The only way to break this is to create more open dialogue around it and to normalise how people may be feeling. There are several good ways to encourage openness, such as building it into team meetings, getting employees (particularly senior members) to share their own stories and setting up ongoing communications around aspects of wellbeing.

"I'd never have opened up if Charlotte hadn't spotted my warning signs."

**Tom, Chef**  
**Rise & Dine Deli**



Alice and Realise endorse the ground-breaking new Managing People series. Explore it for yourself here:

[www.upskillpeople.com/mp](http://www.upskillpeople.com/mp)

