



Fuel50 Capability Trends Report™

Wellness in the Workplace Edition





At Fuel50, your future is our passion.

This Fuel50 Capability Trends Report™ brings you the latest capability trends from across the globe.

We encourage you to reflect on their relevance to your organization and hope that they inspire a vision for positive change within your people strategy and capability requirements.

Our dedicated team of Organizational Psychologists and HR Professionals is world-leading in capability design and research. Together, we have developed our own 'Fuel50 Talent Ontology™' to reflect the capabilities showcased in this report and many more. These capabilities are now available for use by all our clients.

For more information on any of the trending capabilities or to discuss how you could increase your organization's bench strength in these areas, please contact Fuel50.

Welcome to the future of work.



In this Fuel50 Capability Trends Report™, we explore recent world events and how those are informing crucial employee capabilities required in the workplace. This report is designed to help you harness the latest global capability trends to ensure that your organizational talent strategy is aligned to the current driving global forces.

The history of wellness in the workplace

Workplace wellness has existed for centuries. Records about wellness in the workplace date back to the 1600s where Bernardini Ramazzini, an Italian doctor, investigated the effects of work exposure on employees and explored the possibilities of preventive measures to help improve the wellbeing of workers. In 1810, Robert Marcus Owen, a Welsh textile manufacturer, philanthropist, and social reformer suggested a 10-hour workday to support the wellbeing of workers. In 1817 he proposed an even more drastic measure of an eight-hour workday. He argued for “eight hours labor, eight hours recreation, and eight hours rest.” Although it was suggested over 100 years previously, in 1914, Ford Motor Company was the first to implement the eight-hour workday to support employee wellbeing.

In the 1970s, workplace wellness started making waves with Johnson & Johnson’s “Live for Life” program. This program strived to support the physical health of employees through weight control, nutrition, and stress management. Fast forward to 1994, and the National Survey of Worksite Health Promotion Activities found that 80% of companies were offering educational activities to raise their employees’ health awareness. And in 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that 75% of organizations with more than 50 employees supplied workplace wellness programs covering health education, supportive social and physical work environments, and screening programs¹.

Why should organizations be prioritizing wellness in the workplace?

WellSteps², a Wellness consulting firm formed by Dr. Steven Aldana and Dr. Troy Adams, has spent the last 40 years in academia researching how to transform workplaces into healthy environments. Through their evidence-based interventions, they have highlighted the following workplace benefits associated with wellness programs:

1. Wellness Programs Improve Employee Health Behaviors and Decrease Absenteeism: Wellness programs promote healthy behavioral changes such as healthy eating and exercising. WellSteps found that when employees change their diet, get active, and give up tobacco, it results in lower health risks, improvements in employee’s ability to control their stress, improved blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose. These improved health behaviors are found to improve employees’ productivity and willingness to come to work.
2. Wellness Programs Reduce Healthcare Costs: A comprehensive review completed on the financial impact of workplace wellness programs, published in 2001, found that the savings from program participation were greater than the actual cost of the program. Researchers from Harvard³ recently published another summary of workplace wellness ROI research, which found that for every dollar spent on a wellness program, the organization saved \$3.27 due to reduced healthcare costs.

¹ The Interesting History of Workplace Wellness. <https://michaelrucker.com/well-being/the-history-of-workplace-wellness/>

² WellSteps - Effective Employee Wellness Solutions. <https://www.wellsteps.com/blog/2020/01/02/workplace-wellness...>

³ Harvard - Workplace Wellness Programs Can Generate Savings. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2009.0626>

3. **Wellness Programs Improve Productivity:** WellSteps reported that the estimated cost associated with presenteeism (employee physically being at work but not working) due to poor employee health is at least two to three times greater than direct healthcare expenses⁴. Their report stated that smokers were 28% more likely to have high presenteeism than non-smokers, and employees who didn't exercise were 50% more likely to have high presenteeism than employees who were regular exercisers.

“We find that workplace wellness programs can help contain the current epidemic of lifestyle-related diseases, the main driver of premature morbidity and mortality as well as healthcare cost in the United States⁵.”

– Soeren Mattke

Lead Author of the Rand Report

What impact did the global pandemic have on workplace wellness?

In 2020, the world came to a halt as a state of emergency was declared due to the global pandemic. We were locked down and confined to our houses, isolated from loved ones and colleagues. It was not clear how long life would continue like this, nor how long the pandemic would last. The global economy faced massive strain, many companies had to downsize, and people lost their jobs. Organizational systems processes and structures had to transform rapidly.

“During the past 15 or so months, almost all non-essential workers were required to work remotely⁶.”

– Kevin Wheeler

We can all relate to the radical shift we had to make to get through a ‘normal’ day. The vast majority of people were required to live and work in the same space. And many of us had to rapidly assume new roles like an at-home schoolteacher, caretaker, or live-in chef while simultaneously maintaining our professional careers.

The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), a non-profit organization that reports national health issues, ran a poll in July 2020. They discovered that during July 2020, many adults reported reduced mental health and wellbeing, including difficulty sleeping (36%), difficulty eating (32%), increase in alcohol consumption or substance use (12%), and worsening chronic conditions (12%) due to the worry and stress brought on by the global pandemic⁷.

Indeed⁸, a global employment listing website, conducted a study earlier this year and found:

- Employee burnout has worsened over the last year, with more than half (52%) of respondents reporting feelings of burnout, with two-thirds (67%) believing this feeling has worsened during the pandemic.
- Fifty-three percent are working longer hours due to virtual or work-from-home arrangements, making unplugging much harder.

The World Health Organization (WHO) labeled burnout as an occupational phenomenon, describing it as a “syndrome conceptualized from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed⁹.” Recognized symptoms include feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one’s job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job, and reduced professional efficacy. With one in two employees experiencing burnout, this is something organizations need to be proactive in managing.

⁴ Pharmaceuticals and Worker Productivity Loss: A Critical Review of the Literature. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12802214/>

⁵ Workplace Wellness Programs Study. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4945172/>

⁶ Future of Talent Weekly Newsletter. <https://fotnews.futureoftalent.org/p/remote-or-in-person-work-the-debate>

⁷ The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF). <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/report/kff-health-tracking-poll-july-2020/>

⁸ Indeed. <https://www.indeed.com/lead/preventing-employee-burnout-report>

⁹ World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international...>

How has the pandemic affected the way employees approach their work?

Fuel50's 2021 Global Talent Mobility Benchmarking Study¹⁰ found that 47% of respondents said their employees' wellbeing decreased as a result of remote working practices.

Robert Walters¹¹, a leading Recruitment agency, surveyed 2000 workers and 500 managers, of which 87% started working remotely during the global pandemic. Respondents experienced heightened pressure to be more productive to help prove the case for working from home post-pandemic. 36% of workers reported their mental health and wellbeing had suffered because of working longer hours during lockdown, in some cases getting up earlier, working later and harder, and losing out on sleep. According to a

study by US Census Bureau, remote employees worked 1.4 more days per month than their office-based counterparts, resulting in more than three additional weeks of work per year. 29% of remote employees said they struggle with work-life balance, with 31% needing to take a day off for their mental health¹².

“46% of workers carrying out their jobs remotely during lockdown reported feeling more pressure to be ‘present’ for their employer and colleagues, with more than a third saying they had continued to work despite feeling unwell¹³.”

In Robert Walters report, they highlighted some eye-watering statistics that we should consider:



Robert Walters Survey, 2020

As aforementioned, wellness was regarded as an important consideration from the 1970s and continued to draw attention over the years. But the global pandemic has elevated it to a critical strategic priority for organizations globally. Governments, communities, and workplaces all need to do their bit to ensure people have support and resources to safeguard their wellness. Not only is it the right thing to do, but research has shown that those organizations that invest in wellness have healthy employees who are more productive and less likely to be absent. In return, organizations gain on their health and wellness investments and keep healthcare costs to a minimum.

¹⁰ Fuel50 Talent Mobility Benchmarking Study 2021. <https://www.fuel50.com/resources/talent-mobility-benchmarking-study/>

¹¹ Robert Walters. <https://www.robertwalters.co.uk/content/dam/robert-walters/country/united-kingdom/files/whitepapers...>

¹² Business News Daily. <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15259-working-from-home-more-productive.html>

¹³ People Management. <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/excess-workloads-and-fear-of-redundancy...>

With the growing importance of wellness in the workplace, what are organizations doing to support and enhance it?

Wellable's 2021 Employee Wellness Industry Trends Report¹⁴ confirmed organizations are dedicated to investing in their workforces' mental health and wellness. They have reported the following wellness trends from Consultants and Wellness Directors from the health insurance industry:

- 88% of respondents have increased their investment in Mental health programs due to the pandemic. Specifically, organizations are increasing their investment in mental health programs such as stress management and resilience (81%) and mindfulness meditation (69%).
- Telemedicine programs (telemedicine refers to using technology to deliver health education and healthcare services from a distance¹⁵) experienced one of the most significant increases in popularity, of all wellness benefits. 87% of employers plan to invest more in the coming year—25% points higher than the previous year.
- Considering employers' heightened awareness of health concerns, 92% of Healthcare Insurance Brokers believe that the safety measures, sanitary practices, and social distancing guidelines companies established during the global pandemic will remain to some degree even after the pandemic has subsided.
- 94% of Healthcare Insurance Brokers expect that employers will expand their virtual wellness services and expenditure.
- 89% of Healthcare Insurance Brokers believe that employers will continue to offer flexible scheduling to support their caregiver-employees even after the pandemic.

What capabilities and specialist skills do organizations need to support a wellness culture?

Offering a range of wellness programs is one tactic for lifting levels of employee wellbeing in an organization. However, we know that to create a culture with employee wellness at its heart, you need to consider and elevate specific employee capabilities and skills. To achieve this, we have identified capabilities and specialist skills which need to be embedded across three levels of your organization. These are: Individual Enablers, Leadership Capabilities, and Organizational Strategic Imperatives.

In this report, we identify 15 of our trending capabilities associated with driving a wellness culture. They have been categorized under the following headings:

Individual Enablers: Agility, Cultural Competence, Verbal Expression, Situational Awareness, Time Management, Self-Awareness

Leadership Capabilities: People Centricity, Wellness Agility, Employee Health and Wellbeing, Employee Energy Risk Management

Organizational Strategic Imperatives: Mental Health Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Adapted Workplace Design, Remote Working Practices, Covid Workplace Safety, Digital Health and Wellness Products

We have included some reflection questions to help you evaluate the importance of each capability for your organization.

¹⁴ Human Resources Today. <https://www.humanresourcestoday.com/2021/trends/wellness/?open-article-id=15204616&article...>

¹⁵ eVisit. <https://evisit.com/resources/what-is-the-difference-between-telemedicine-telecare-and-telehealth/>

Individual Enablers

It all starts with self-awareness and understanding what is needed to promote your mental health and wellness in the workplace. Our research suggests the following capabilities are essential for promoting workplace wellness at an individual level:



Agility

Response to new circumstances and challenges is quick and effective. Adjusts response to the situation / interaction based on the evolving nature of it. Makes on-the-spot decisions.



Cultural Competence

Shows an understanding of cross-cultural conflicts, tensions, misunderstandings, or opportunities. Respects the cultural frameworks, values and norms, religions, and languages of others. Adapts communication style when faced with different dimensions of culture.



Verbal Expression

Expresses one's opinions, thoughts, or ideas clearly and convincingly. Confidently speaks up in any given situation.



Situational Awareness

Knows what is going on with regards to the industry, organization, and team/ function in which one operates. Reads and understands situations and anticipates what could happen next.



Time Management

Manages own workload and prioritizes competing tasks or deadlines effectively.



Self Awareness

Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses / development needs as well as the impact of own behavior on others. Adjusts behavior to be more successful.

Reflection Questions

- How would you rate the level of workplace wellness in your organization currently? How is this assessed, and how often?
- Are you able to pinpoint the biggest detractors to wellness for your employees today? Which of the capabilities above, with focused development, could help to alleviate this?
- Are employees able to access resources to support their mental wellness with ease, without fear of being judged by others?

Leadership Capabilities

Leaders role modeling and advocating for the importance of workplace wellness is an effective way to get buy-in across the organization. To this end, we suggest the following capabilities and specialist skills for leaders:



People Centricity

Shows a genuine awareness and concern for the human experience. Values people instead of their organizational role or value to self. Conscious of the feelings and opinions of others.



Wellness Agility

Adopts the evolution of values, behaviors, and capabilities. Enables the business to be more adaptive, creative, and resilient when dealing with complexity, uncertainty, and change - leading to improved wellbeing and better outcomes.



Employee Health and Wellbeing

Encourages employees to live healthier lifestyles. Educates employees on the various initiatives available to help them live a healthier lifestyle. Determines and communicates incentives to employees for participating in initiatives.



Employee Energy Risk Management

Strikes a good balance between the required levels of pressure and stress for an individual to perform optimally (and identifies triggers that push an employee beyond their stretched zone) to minimize the negative effects of pressure and stress on both the individual and the organization.

Reflection Questions

- Do your leaders talk about mental health and wellness in the workplace? What support/ resources are they given to help their teams?
- Are leaders encouraged to manage workloads and accommodate employees who feel overwhelmed? What resources do they have to support this?
- To drive feelings of belonging and connection, what remote collaboration tools are there in your organization? How effective are they at bringing people together? What improvements/ training could enhance this?
- Do your leadership programs dedicate enough time, focus, and resources to the topic of workplace wellness?

Organizational Strategic Imperatives

To avoid becoming an organization with a “chronic stress culture,” wellness needs to be promoted to all employees to cultivate a culture of wellness. Below are some capabilities and specialist skills for promoting wellness at an organizational level:



Mental Health Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

Designs Mental Health and Wellness DEI policies and programs that support all employees facing mental health challenges.



Adapted Workplace Design

Designs workplaces that promote social distancing, physical comfort and safety at the workplace, and budgeting for people to fit out home office spaces.



Remote Working Practices

Provides employees with alternatives to on-site work. Enables employees to perform effectively and productively from a different location. Provides employees with the necessary technology, systems, and processes.



Covid Workplace Safety

Enforces practicing social distancing in the workplace, restricts visitors to facilities, encourages the practice of good hygiene, and ensures employees are healthy and fit for work before allowing them on the job.



Digital Health and Wellness Products

Introduces and manages digital health and wellness products and services as part of medical and life cover strategies/policies.

Reflection Questions

- Does the organization have a wellness culture where employees feel comfortable and safe about sharing feelings, emotions, and challenges? If not, what is blocking this? What changes could you make to cultivate this?
- What programs, policies, and procedures do you have in place to support your employees' wellbeing? Which programs, policies, and procedures are working? Which are not?
- Does the organization run a wellness survey? If so, does it allow for open and honest input from employees? Does the organization report on wellness culture, wellness statistics, health issues? What actions do you implement to improve workplace wellness?

Employee Energy
Risk Management
Adapted Workplace Design

LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Cultural Competence

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

Time Management

Mental Health Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Employee Health and Wellbeing

Situational Awareness

Covid Workplace Safety
Wellness Agility
Verbal Expression

Self-Awareness

Digital Health and
Wellness Products

INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITIES

Remote Working
Practices

People Centricity
Agility

Fuel50 is the AI Talent Marketplace solution that delivers internal talent mobility and workforce reskilling.

With hyper-personalized AI and a deeply embedded commitment to diversity and inclusion, Fuel50 mobilizes your talent. Fuel50's ethical AI matches your people to opportunities in real-time, automatically maps your workforce architecture, and provides deep data insights for predictive talent and workforce planning.

We believe that a deep commitment to inclusive talent practices is needed and it must start with a charter that is built into your skills architecture & organizational DNA.

Using the Fuel50 Talent Ontology™ drives more inclusive working cultures through:

- Incorporating critical D&I capabilities in all executive and manager level roles, supporting a shift of mindset from the top down
- Amplifying behavioral standards around D&I and holding leaders accountable for driving positive change
- Putting a spotlight on unconscious bias throughout the organization
- Ensuring D&I practices are present in recruitment, performance management and leadership development

The trending capabilities showcased in this report are now available for use by all our clients.

Over 80 organizations around the globe saw immediate impact since deploying Fuel50, with up to 65% increase in lateral movement, 35% increase in internal recruitment, and 60% reduction in employee churn.

Learn more: www.fuel50.com

