

Press release

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Well-being important for Belgian employers but they miss to realise it

Robotisation is not perceived as a threat

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According to Deloitte's 2018 Global Human Capital Trends report, well-being is high on the agenda for Belgian organisations, but the purpose of their well-being programmes is mainly to ensure employee safety and meet regulations. Seventy-eight percent say they have only basic well-being programmes in place (47 percent) or do not address this topic at all (31 percent). Robotisation, though requiring retraining and acquiring new skills, is not perceived as a threat, nor hindered by government regulations.

Well-being is the top trend, but there is work to be done

"With burnouts and bore outs increasingly happening, it's great to see that well-being is getting a lot of attention. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of well-being programmes that go beyond promoting employee safety and complying with regulations," said Yves van Durme, Deloitte Belgium Human Capital Lead. "The workforce is becoming more complex as it consists of several generations at the same time and robotisation is slowly starting to enter the mix. It's important for organisations to be prepared and plan ahead. The survey results highlight a gap between the importance given to the respective trends versus how ready organisations are."

With 72 percent of respondents rating well-being as important or very important, well-being is our Belgian top trend of 2018. While this trend is of utmost importance for vice presidents (94 percent) and the C-suite (80 percent), well-being still remains mostly an HR topic. Eighty-one percent of HR respondents rated it very important or important, compared to 68 percent of non-HR respondents, which raises the question, is HR closer to their employees than their managers?

In our neighbouring countries, this trend also ranks highly. In the Netherlands, well-being is considered important or very important by 86 percent of survey respondents, making it the number three trend. In France and Germany, it is rated important or very important by 74 and 84 percent, respectively, resulting in it also being the number three trend in France and the number one trend in Germany.

Although well-being is the trend for which organisations in Belgium are most ready, 53 percent of respondents (55 percent business respondents, 49 percent HR respondents) indicate that they are not ready

or only somewhat ready. When looking at what is currently in place in organisations to deal with well-being and the blurring line between work and life, we conclude that the majority of organisations only have basic well-being programmes in place (47 percent) or do not address this topic at all (31 percent).

The two main reasons given by HR for developing well-being programmes are to promote employee safety and to comply with regulations. Supporting employee retention comes third, promoting employee productivity and improvement of bottom line results only rank fourth (42 percent), according to the survey.

Robotisation is perceived as an opportunity rather than a threat

According to the survey, it is not the fear of robotisation taking our jobs nor government regulations that prevent organisations from adopting these new technologies. Only 24 percent indicates Belgian legislation to be a limitation for robotisation and only 34 percent agrees with the statement that privacy laws make digitisation unnecessarily difficult. Clearly, organisations are not ready to cope with robotisation, but cannot hide behind the Belgian legislation.

When it comes to robotics and AI (Artificial Intelligence), 53 percent indicates they are currently not using any of these technologies and 45 percent says they have no plans to cultivate human skills required by robotics/AI. Thirty-five percent says they are only in the phase of spotting robotics/AI opportunities and 65 percent of respondents says they are not or somewhat ready for robotics/AI.

Organisations are aware that training and reskilling will be needed to deal with robotisation. Fifty-eight percent agrees/strongly agrees that extra training is required in the short term, while 57 percent agrees/strongly agrees that a higher level of knowledge and skills than currently available are required.

Thirty-four percent agrees/strongly agrees with robotisation creating job opportunities, while only 25 percent disagrees/strongly disagrees. Our conclusion is that the robots are coming, but Belgium is neither with or ahead of the game.

Older workers are seen by some as an impediment to rising talent

As lifespans increase and retirement is deferred, organisations have to deal with a workforce inclusive of many generations at the same time. However, our survey indicates that this is not obvious to organisations as this trend has one of the largest gaps in terms of importance (62 percent) versus readiness (34 percent).

This is concerning as older workers are left to manage their own careers within the existing job model. Fifty-one percent of the survey respondents indicate that their older workers manage their own career. Only 24 percent partner with older workers to manage their careers, and 14 percent even view older workers as an impediment to rising talent. Only 11 percent have created targeted roles for older workers.

Our rewards packages lag far behind

Another trend that emerged this year both in Belgium and globally is the topic of new rewards. Fifty-seven percent of respondents in Belgium indicate that making rewards personal is important or very important. However, the rewards landscape is not that innovative yet. Thirty-five percent states that their rewards programme is out of date and 39 percent that they have a 'typical' rewards programme. Only 19 percent offers some flexible and personalised rewards options and 6 percent indicate their rewards to be innovative, flexible and personalised.

The survey results clearly highlight that offering great rewards packages is less important to Belgian respondents. Globally, rewards rank sixth with 77 percent of respondents expressing that this trend is important or very important.

Losing focus on the changing workforce ecosystem

A few editions ago the 'gig economy' was already prominent as a trend, and also last year questions were posed on how to 'augment the workforce'. Although present in the top trends for some years, it seems that attention to this domain has dropped in Belgium with 68 percent rating it as important in 2017 versus 52 percent in 2018. Globally, 65 percent find managing the workforce ecosystem important.

Tackling the alternative workforce is taking centre stage for socially-conscious organisations. Globally, 37 percent of organisations expect a growth in contractors, 23 percent in freelancers, and 13 percent in gig workers by 2020. Despite this anticipated growth, only 16 percent said they have an established set of policies and practices to manage this variety of worker types. In Belgium, that number drops to 11 percent.

In this area, Belgium clearly lags behind some countries. France, for example, has a legal vehicle in place to enable and protect gig workers, while Belgium is still in the debate phase.

About Deloitte's Human Capital Trends

With input from 649 business (70 percent) and HR (30 percent) respondents, the Human Capital Trends report is a good representation of the challenges and opportunities both the business and HR recognise for their organisations in 2018.

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