



**Well-being at the heart of the  
employee experience for the  
social enterprise**



**Introduction**

Although our world was already in the midst of shifting realities vis a vis the future of work, the pandemic brought a sudden change to the way we live and work. We found ourselves swiftly adopting new technologies, remote working and modified workforce strategies. One might expect well-being to have been placed center stage as a result of the pandemic, but our research tells us that it had already been emerging as one of the top 10 global human capital trends over the last few years.

In our 2018 Global Human Capital Trends report “The rise of the social enterprise”, we highlighted that while well-being was being seen as a corporate responsibility and a strategy to drive employee productivity, engagement, and retention, there was a noticeable gap between what employees valued and what companies were delivering around well-being<sup>1</sup>.

Subsequently, in our 2019 Global Human Capital Trends report “Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with a human focus”, in which we looked at the workforce experience beyond full-time employees, respondents ranked “compensation, flexibility, learning and development, and health and well-being benefits as the most important rewards in engaging the alternate workforce”<sup>2</sup>.

Following this, in our 2020 Global Human Capital Trends report “The social enterprise at work: Paradox as a path forward”, we found that the largest gap between importance and readiness across the year’s trends related to well-being, with 80 percent of organizations saying worker well-being would be important or very important for their success over the next 12-18 months, but only 12 percent saying they were very ready to address this issue<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, in our 2021 Global Human Capital Trends report “The social enterprise in a world disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive”, we emphasized the importance of designing well-being into work and life<sup>4</sup>.

As the focus on well-being continues to strengthen, organizations need to think of it in a more expansive and futuristic way. We believe that holistic well-being programs integrated with employee experience management are key to boosting organizational health and thereby performance.

**Undersanding well-being**

Well-being may be defined as the condition of an individual or group characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity. As organizations evolve and transition to being more digital, they are compelled to change their work, workforce and workplace arrangements. This shift raises many concerns around workforce displacement and redundancy. It has therefore become pertinent that organizations evolve as digital social enterprises that fulfil their responsibilities towards society and people.

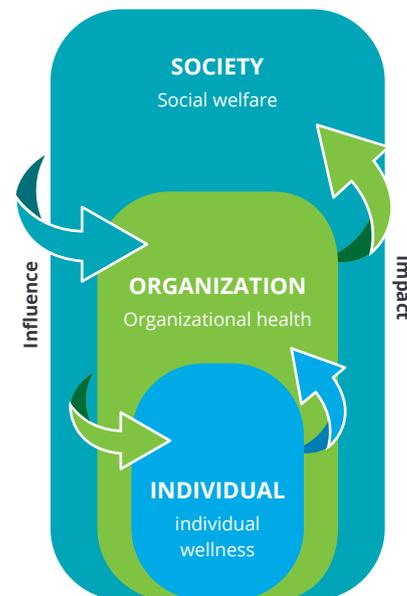
Well-being is at the heart of an organization’s responsibility towards its employees. Healthy employees positively impact their organizations and societies as they indulge in meaningful activities for the greater good. This also works the other way around as societies and organizations could very well influence individual well-being positively through policies and initiatives that bring awareness and support, and inspire individual commitment.

In recent times, mental health concerns have become more prevalent. Let’s look at how mental health can be addressed at multiple levels: societies or

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governments could begin with creating awareness through campaigns and provide free consultation to people as part of community programs and they could stimulate organizations through reward schemes. Organizations could support further by positively reinforcing the importance of mental well-being along with providing on-site counselors for their employees, and individuals who suffer from mental distress could make use of these services and embrace self-care practices to improve their condition (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



To enhance well-being, it is important to understand its key elements. Martin Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, developed a model with five core elements of psychological well-being and happiness<sup>5</sup>. These elements are:

- P** – Positive emotions: happiness and life satisfaction
- E** – Engagement: total absorption in task
- R** – Relationships: human connections
- M** – Meaning: belonging to and serving something bigger than self
- A** – Accomplishments: a sense of achievement

Although these remain the building blocks of well-being, we have classified well-being into six dimensions: physical, social, occupational, emotional/mental, financial and spiritual, defined in (Figure 2). We have also listed various factors (non-exhaustive) of well-being and grouped them in four quadrants (Figure 3) based on the level of individual and/or organizational influence, in order to assess how organizations can influence these factors to enhance a person’s condition and uplift their well-being.

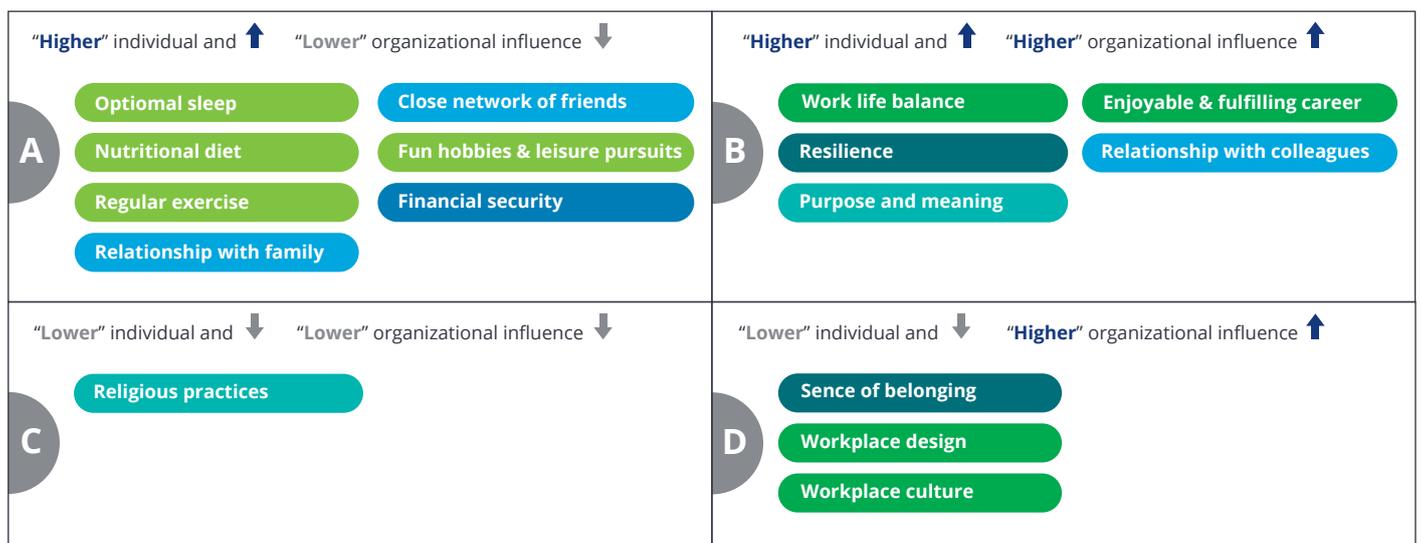
Figure 2



# WELL-BEING DIMENSIONS



Figure 3



Typically, organizations tend to focus on the well-being factors of quadrants B and D as these are closely related to occupational well-being. However, we believe that organizations should also include factors from quadrant A in their well-being agendas in order to maximize well-being returns through a more holistic focus.

To move well-being into action, organizations should focus on (Figure 4):

Figure 4



The prioritization of well-being initiatives is necessary to estimate budgets and ensure efforts yield the highest well-being return on investment (WRoI). It is also important to set up monitoring mechanisms to track if the initiatives are achieving their desired goals.

**Well-being practices**

The pandemic crisis has truly magnified the importance and criticality of employee well-being, and organizations in the Middle East have proved that they are not blind to this. Businesses in the region have begun to echo global trends in managing employee well-being. To give a glimpse of what organizations are currently doing to fulfill their social responsibility, we looked at well-being practices in the UAE and Saudi markets.

**United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

Not only is the private sector in the UAE giving a lot of importance to employee well-being, it has also been a key priority in the UAE National Agenda for the last couple of years, with the aim for 2021 of making the country among the best in the world in the Human Development Index and the happiest of all nations. For this purpose, a 'Business for Well-being Council' was launched in 2019 to support more than five million private sector workers in the country. The council is tasked with encouraging organizations to introduce work-friendly initiatives such as flexible working hours and regular mental health counselling sessions for their staff. Both private and public sectors are working hand in hand to achieve the national agenda, with eight private sector companies employing more than 250,000 staff, having been selected to sit on the council board: Cisco, Etihad, Emirates, Unilever, Majid Al Futtaim, Landmark, Aldar and Emirates NBD. Additionally, "500 government employees had been trained to roll out well-being initiatives in the workplace", according to the Minister

of State for Happiness, Ohood Bint Khalfan Al Roumi<sup>6</sup>.

It has been noted that "companies in UAE are getting more and more creative when it comes to implementing wellness programs at work, not just to boost employee motivation and performance but also to win the honor of being the UAE's best workplace". The Daman Corporate Health & Wellness Awards are organized by Daman, the region's leading specialized health insurer, in collaboration with MEED, a leading business intelligence provider in the region<sup>7</sup>. These awards recognize companies in the United Arab Emirates that prioritize employee health and wellness and take steps to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workforce. In 2019, 105 applications were received from companies demonstrating their commitment to well-being and to corporate wellness programs. Among those recognized were Schneider Electric for social well-being in the workplace and In2 Consulting for work-life balance.

The winner of 'most improved company' in fall 2019 was Alpin<sup>8</sup>. As part of its initiatives, the company introduced ergonomic office furniture: adjustable computer screens, footrests, keyboard trays, mouse trays, and laptop stands, desk height flexibility and seat flexibility. Noise levels, water quality, and air quality, which exceeds ASHRAE standards by 30%, were also monitored. To help employees stay healthy, the company provides exercise balls, mini exercise bikes, and subsidies for activities like walkathons, races, fitness events or team exercises. Team-building events are also organized and the company created its own employee wellness program, Alpin Healthy, which offers organic fruit and green tea to help employees snack healthily and maintain their energy levels. Employees are also educated on topics related to health and wellness.

Caesars Bluewaters Dubai has launched a new initiative called #CaesarsHealthChampions to encourage colleagues to choose a healthier lifestyle through a fun, physical colleague-engagement campaign<sup>9</sup>. As part of this campaign, 12 individuals go through a four-week challenge where best practices are introduced through daily training and nutritional advice.

Schneider Electric put employee wellness and health at the top of its strategic priorities in 2020, when the human resources team in North East Africa and Levant helped employees cope through a focus on mental health and psychological and professional resilience<sup>10</sup>.

Dubai Holding has been implementing a wellness program since 2007 to develop organization-wide wellness policies and initiatives, and encourage health and well-being in a variety of forms. From simple healthy eating campaigns and sponsorship and participation in national events and initiatives such as the Dubai Marathon, Dubai Holding SkyRun and Blood Donation Drive, to organized treks to Mount Kilimanjaro and Nepal, Dubai Holding actively encourages employees, their families and the wider community to reap the benefits of a healthier lifestyle<sup>11</sup>.

Finally, Unilever, the second most popular employer for fresh university graduates in the UAE, according to the latest research by GulfTalent, supports its employees through a strategy that addresses their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as their 'sense of purpose'. This includes providing them with tools to promote, maintain and enhance their health so they can maximize their physical and mental fitness. Unilever supports its approach with a range of global and local programs, which help as a guide to tackling the identified health risks across the business<sup>12</sup>.

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### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

Vision 2030 is currently Saudi Arabia's northern star, a true revolution of ideologies, practices, offerings, and ways of working across every pillar under the Kingdom's sun. The goals of Vision 2030 are to enable social responsibility, increase employment and enhance government effectiveness, all of which, coupled with the onset of the pandemic, have shed a brighter light on employee well-being. For this purpose, in February 2020 the Kingdom's Ministry of Human Resources issued a resolution that aims to regulate the management of health and safety in the workplace. This followed the health and safety management regulation of July 2018, which set out reasonably practicable requirements and measures that employers are obligated to implement in their day-to-day operations in order to ensure the safety of employees.

Saudi Aramco, one of KSA's largest organizations, had developed its own wellness program and policy in 2005. However, in 2015 Saudi Aramco grew this into a new strategic business driver known as Human Energy Management. This entails Saudi Aramco conducting cutting-edge research on collecting and analyzing data to highlight the association between an investment in health and the productivity of employees, organizational health, and healthy human capital. Additionally, the company endeavors to harness the power of big data and deploy artificial intelligence, with an overlying goal of empowering employees to pursue

a healthier, productive lifestyle, through preventing illness and injuries on the job<sup>13</sup>.

In 2019, Johnson & Johnson, a multinational healthcare company, launched its first series of monthly employee wellness initiatives in Saudi Arabia. The initiative aims to build a culture of a healthy and active workforce focused on adopting healthy habits with a balanced lifestyle, promoting physical activity and mental wellness. The key themes Johnson and Johnson focused on in its first year of launch were healthy eating, sleep habits and stress management, as well as ergonomics and improving posture. The initiative was rolled out in association with 'My Saudi Wellness', an integrated digital health and wellness provider<sup>14</sup>.

Even though many organizations in the region have already incorporated well-being programs in their strategy, a lot of work is yet to be done to cope with the new norm and not just because it makes financial sense (reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity), but also because the current pandemic has demonstrated to organizations once more that their most critical asset is their people, whose health, safety and well-being are the pillars upon which all organizations operate. Organizations are urged to rethink well-being and integrate it into the design of work at the individual, team, and organizational levels, in order to build a sustainable future in which workers can feel and perform at their best.

### Well-being for the future of work

It is evident that the pandemic has become the catalyst for a future of work that might otherwise have taken years to attain. It has heralded the start of the Virtual Age, which is tectonic enough to qualify as the Fifth Industrial Revolution and has us all re-imagining work, workforces, and workplaces. Rather than a new normal, we expect the new abnormal will continue to evolve.

As Stacy Brown-Philpot, CEO of TaskRabbit, puts it, “The future of work is really about people deciding how to live and work in the way that they want”<sup>15</sup>. It is time to say farewell to the constraints of the office cubicle and normalize the workday beginning and ending at a variety of times, from a variety of locations and through a variety of ways. Work is set to become significantly more meaningful and personalized.

### Re-architect work

Technology may be disruptive; it will eliminate and augment many jobs as well as create new ones. However, it hides a great potential, if well capitalized upon, which can raise productivity levels and benefit individuals, organizations and societies. Companies need to find a way to orchestrate and facilitate workforce augmentation by integrating machines into work to increase productivity and by leveraging human skills to drive unique competitive advantages. Business leaders will need to determine the overlap between human activity and machine activity to elevate capabilities and increase productivity.

Organizations will shift from traditional talent management to re-architecting work itself to maximize what humans can do and create a high-impact workforce. They will transform jobs by leveraging technology to automate manual and repetitive tasks and elevate workers to focus on addressing unseen problems and opportunities.

### Unleash the workforce

The workforce is no longer thought about as full-time employees; it has extended to the gig economy, contractors, alliance partners and more. Simultaneously, the diversity of workers in terms of generational background, experience and viewpoints is poised to increase as well. This complexity has implications for employee engagement, inclusion, talent development and productivity.

The use of a data-driven approach to better understand workers’ unique attributes, needs, and dimensions, and segment the workforce accordingly, becomes crucial to help identify and unleash human potential within and beyond an organization. Employers must plan for how to encourage and offer opportunities for workers to continue to grow and adapt based on their potential, rather than solely on their existing skills or certifications.

Beyond reskilling, organizations will start investing in resilience for uncertain futures. As mentioned in our 2020 Global Human Capital Trends report<sup>3</sup>, “a system that invests not just in workers’ near-term skill needs but also in workers’ long-term resilience can help build long-term organizational resilience in a world where the only constant is change”. This includes retaining the magic that comes from empowering people to break through hierarchy and bureaucracy, lead at all levels, and roll up their sleeves to get the job done.

### Adapt the workplace

Flexi or remote working will be a way of life, although office spaces will not completely disappear. Workplaces will be designed to stimulate creativity, collaboration, well-being and high-performance and this is already happening. Ben van Berkel, a Dutch architect, wants to combat stress-related illness with secluded pods. But rather than just building a room to hide in, he’s creating interactive spaces where

people can “physically and mentally reset themselves.” Surrounded by light-up walls, you can think, meditate, practice yoga, scream or even drum your stress away<sup>16</sup>.

### Approaching holistic well-being

Organizations must take into consideration that the elements of well-being are multi-faceted, and their impact is both tangible and intangible. In order to maximize the benefits derived from well-being, organisations must adopt a systemic, agile, data-driven yet humanized and forward-looking approach that takes into account the different aspects of its people’s needs and requirements. Such an approach will assess thoroughly the maturity of the existing well-being activities and initiatives, leverage leading practices, balance organizational and employee priorities, ensure integration with all HR practices and monitor impact.

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The following essentials can help organizations in planning, building and implementing a holistic approach for designing well-being programs that cater to the physical, social, occupational, emotional/mental, financial and spiritual well-being of their employees:

#### • Ensure support from management:

One of the most critical aspects of designing an effective well-being program is engaging the biggest influencers of any organization, its managers. Of all levels, management has substantial influence

on the success of well-being programs. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the engagement of management in the different phases of planning, designing and delivering well-being programs.

- **Establish effective governance:** Establish a committee that encompasses employees of different levels, ages, genders and ethnicities that would be responsible for managing, planning, communicating and facilitating all aspects of your organization's well-being program. Ensure that the committee is enabled with the required level of support and autonomy as well as financially; and ensure a committee coordinator is assigned/elected to ensure effective management of the committee.
- **Ask for help:** Not all organizations are built equally; while some are innovators in designing well-being programs, others are late adopters but are also eager to get on track. Depending on the size, needs and goals of the organization, sometimes it is more sensible for organizations to cooperate with third-party service providers who are specialized in designing and delivering well-being programs.
- **Assess, assess, assess!:** Assess the culture of your organization. This will help in spotlighting cultural areas of the organization that require improvement or that in fact provide positive support for the well-being of employees. This "culture health audit" can simply be done by referring to checklists and/or questionnaires that are available online. As your organization's well-being program is being rolled out, continuously assess your employees' responses to understand to what extent the program is effective and how it can become even better; this can be easily done by issuing and analyzing the results of a simple and straightforward survey shared with employees.
- **Engage your people:** This may come fifth, but only in count, not in priority.

The measure of a successful well-being program rests in the hands of an organization's employees. To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of your organization's well-being program, methodically engage your employees in different phases of designing and implementing a well-being program. This can be done by sharing a company-wide survey that can enable the assessment of the employees' greatest needs and stressors.

- **Make it law:** A truly robust and effective well-being program is one that evolves into becoming part of an organization's foundation and essence. Organizations must provide a backbone of organizational values, policies, procedures, tools and systems that not only support but also enable well-being to serve as a cornerstone of the employees' experience.

At Deloitte, we are putting well-being at the heart of our business internally and externally. We are continuously thinking about our responsibility towards the well-being of our people. Our holistic approach is powered by a robust monitoring mechanism and gives our people support to make choices that help them deliver the impact that matters on a sustainable basis. Our well-being programs are designed around four pillars – an engaged mind, an energized body, a sense of purpose and a culture of well-being based on flexibility, choice and support. We appointed a chief well-being officer, a mental health and a well-being advisor among other roles to drive our well-being agenda.

In addition, Deloitte's Global Chief Executive Officer, Punit Renjen, is one of the founding members of the Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health, which was recently launched to raise awareness of the importance of mental health in the workplace. "The pandemic has cast a

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spotlight on the need to address mental health in the workplace," said Punit, and "as business leaders, we have a responsibility to break down the stigma associated with mental health issues like stress and anxiety to ensure everyone can thrive at work."<sup>17</sup>

At Deloitte we are truly committed to supporting our clients in designing the best suited well-being solutions that add significant value to their businesses. Deloitte was recognized as the global leader in Health and Wellness Consulting by ALM in 2019 for providing a holistic approach to well-being to maximize impact, empower continuous worker engagement and drive sustainable performance.

### Conclusion

Today, more than ever, organizations understand the importance of healthy employees. The role that social enterprises are playing in the survival of society is inevitable. We believe that employee well-being will evolve as the top priority of corporate agendas and many organizations like ours have already made a great start. But as the whole world moves with countless changes and uncertainties, a fit-for-purpose well-being program is essential to guarantee the preparedness and resilience of human capital.

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