



# Tailor-Made: Uniquely Personal Well-Being



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The saying goes “sometimes you have to go back to the beginning in order to move forward.” The well-being industry progresses from one trend to the next with new vendors constantly emerging with the latest and greatest unproven solution, claiming this is the one to transform the health of your workforce or build your culture of health. Employers who enthusiastically sign up find themselves often disappointed with lack of results both in terms of participation and improvements. Why then if you build it, don’t they come? Perhaps it’s necessary to go back to the beginning and determine how to best serve each individual working in your unique environment. From both the overall organizational and individual member perspectives, tailored and uniquely personal well-being plans are the key to realizing positive change.

Gallup has conducted extensive research around the five domains of well-being and their collective impact on individual engagement. Employers Health member Jackie Glaser, manager, business development & executive health operations from Cincinnati-based TriHealth Corporate Health commented that, “Well-being takes employee health back to a holistic definition by taking into account one’s personal status in all five dimensions...” She went on to offer: “TriHealth is working with clients to go beyond just the traditional ROI to VOI - Value on Investment, which looks at other areas that are positively impacted by having healthy, thriving employees.” This engagement is a critical factor of improved organizational performance as correlated by research, indicating engagement impacts the nine organizational outcomes:

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ① CUSTOMER LOYALTY<br>ENGAGEMENT | ⑤ SAFETY INCIDENTS                |
| ② PROFITABILITY                  | ⑥ SHRINKAGE                       |
| ③ PRODUCTIVITY                   | ⑦ ABSENTEEISM                     |
| ④ TURNOVER                       | ⑧ PATIENT SAFETY INCIDENTS        |
|                                  | ⑨ QUALITY (DEFECTS). GALLUP, 2016 |

It is imperative for individuals to take action to fine-tune each element of their personal well-being versus simply focusing on the physical which is often where company-sponsored initiatives begin and end. In order for them to engage at this level, employers likewise must give consideration to all domains when developing their internal offerings supportive of a healthy environment. With engaged employees defined as those who are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace, the current U.S. level of engagement sits at 33.6 percent as of August 2016. This leaves an opportunity for employers to have a great impact on their employees’ lives by building a supportive culture.

This is easier said than done for many. According to Willis Towers Watson, 75 percent of U.S. employers say stress is their number one workplace health concern. That stress contributes to many costly health concerns and productivity saboteurs. From where that stress originates is uniquely personal for each member of your team and by considering each well-being domain in your benefits/well-being plan, likelihood will increase that employees will engage with what they need at any given point along their path to well-being.

Here are some steps an employer can take to ensure their well-being initiatives offer employees the opportunity to personalize their experience:

>> Create a cohesive message so employees are aware of the resources available to them no matter where they are in their journey to overall well-being. In a recent survey of Employers Health members, 61 percent indicated they have branded their well-being initiatives to reflect their unique company culture and objectives. Communicating why your organization is providing tools and resources and what the collaborative goals are for both the organization and your employees will confirm the importance of the employees’ engagement. Helping them connect to the mission in this way can add to a sense of *purpose* within the overall organizational structure.

>> The *physical domain* still requires attention, just in the form of activities to meet people where they are. “Our research across broad populations suggests that at least 80 percent of those living with a chronic condition prefer to start with a lifestyle factor around which they have personal motivation,” says Dr. Jeff Dobro, RedBrick Health’s chief medical officer. “When we start with the person and let him or her engage the way he or she wants, we get higher commitment and—as it turns out—meaningful improvement.” (*RedBrick Health, 2016*). Don’t force employees to engage in a certain type of coaching or limited group activity, provide options through multiple modalities with ongoing, easy access.

# The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index



Gallup and Healthways have developed a comprehensive, definitive source of well-being measurement, the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. This scientific survey instrument measures, tracks and reports on the well-being of populations. The five essential elements of well-being are:

**PURPOSE:** liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

**SOCIAL:** having supportive relationships and love in your life

**FINANCIAL:** managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security

**COMMUNITY:** liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community

**PHYSICAL:** having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

>> Some activities can be provided in a *social* setting encouraging co-workers to work together and find support in each other. Nicole Fallowfield of Gibson Insurance notes, “We spend a significant amount of time at work each week, so it shouldn’t be surprising that developing friendships in the workplace can have a big influence on our well-being – and our engagement level” (Fallowfield, 2016). Does your company environment, workspaces, meetings and events encourage meaningful social interaction?

>> Getting more involved via volunteerism within one’s *community* is advantageous to feeling a part of where you live and work. Employers can not only make it easier for employees to volunteer on their own by allowing them time to do so or rewarding their efforts in this area, but you can also create opportunities to

volunteer as a team in the communities your company serves. Connecting this way socially builds teamwork and fosters both community and organizational pride.

>> Helping employees improve their “financial fitness” needs to go beyond 401(k) and retirement planning to meet the needs of all employees at different wage levels. In a recent publication, low-wage earners avoid beneficial use of health care services such as filling a prescription, following up on doctor-recommended treatment or testing or simply not seeking care when a problem arises, which can ultimately lead to great health care concerns in multiple well-being domains (Sherman, Lynch and Addy, 2016). Helping employees at all income levels manage their *financial* situations and resources should be factored into well-being efforts.

**FINALLY**, if you’re wondering whether it’s worth the extra effort to go back to the beginning, find out what employees need and work to ensure your culture and available resources support their individual needs in all well-being domains, the research should be more than encouraging.

Employees who are engaged and who have high well-being in at least four of the five elements are:

- 30% MORE** > LIKELY NOT TO MISS ANY WORKDAYS BECAUSE OF POOR HEALTH IN ANY GIVEN MONTH
- MISS 70% FEWER** < WORKDAYS BECAUSE OF POOR HEALTH OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR
- 42% MORE** > LIKELY TO HIGHLY EVALUATE THEIR OVERALL LIVES HIGHLY
- 27% MORE** > LIKELY TO REPORT "EXCELLENT" PERFORMANCE IN THEIR OWN JOB AT WORK
- 27% MORE** > LIKELY TO REPORT "EXCELLENT" PERFORMANCE BY THEIR ORGANIZATION
- 45% MORE** > LIKELY TO REPORT HIGH LEVELS OF ADAPTABILITY IN THE PRESENCE OF CHANGE
- 37% MORE** > LIKELY TO REPORT ALWAYS RECOVERING "FULLY" AFTER ILLNESS, INJURY OR HARDSHIP
- 59% LESS** < LIKELY TO LOOK FOR A JOB WITH A DIFFERENT ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS
- 8% LESS** < LIKELY TO CHANGE EMPLOYERS IN A 12-MONTH PERIOD
- 19% MORE** > LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME IN THE PAST MONTH (AGRAWAL, 2015)

No matter what industry your organization serves, employees like those above can move your company forward to the top of your game!

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