

SAP White Paper Health and Well-being

Using Health & Well-being Technology:

How to figure out what makes sense for your organization



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The past few years have seen an explosion of well-being technology solutions. These range from highly specialized mobile apps focused on specific well-being needs such as sleep hygiene or diabetes management, to comprehensive well-being platforms that integrate health monitoring, wellness education, physician care, counseling, and social support networks. This article provides guidance on understanding and navigating the complex and growing field of well-being technology.



Introduction

The well-being market is estimated by some to be a \$3.4 trillion industry², and is considered one of the fastest growing markets in the field of human resources. Sometime referred to as "Health & Well-being", well-being is related but distinct from healthcare. Healthcare is focused on regulated medical services provided by physicians, pharmacists, dentists and other licensed health professionals. Well-being focuses on behavioral and mental health practices such as stress management, exercise, sleep hygiene and other activities that do not require working with a licensed health professional. A similar distinction is sometimes made between "well-being" and "wellness". Wellness refers specifically to physical health, while well-being focuses on positive behavioral habits and emotional states.

The growing interest in well-being is fueled by societal trends focused on wellness and positive psychology, financial concerns about increasing healthcare costs, and business concerns about the impact accelerating levels of change and competition are having on employee performance, engagement and retention. This growth is further encouraged by a stream of research demonstrating organizational and financial benefits associated with investing in employee well-being.3 To quote a recent report on well-being,4 "a review of 72 studies published in the American Journal of Health Promotion indicated an average corporate wellness ROI of \$3.48 per \$1 when considering health care costs alone, \$5.82 when examining absenteeism and \$4.30 when both outcomes are considered".



^{2.} Global Wellness Institute, "GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE STUDY: \$3.4 TRILLION GLOBAL WELLNESS MARKET IS NOW THREE TIMES LARGER THAN WORLDWIDE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY, Sept 30, 2014, www.globalwellnessinstitute.org.

^{3.} Dr. Steven Hunt, "Work shouldn't kill you. Getting serious about employee health and well-being", Mar 16, 2017, Linked In.

^{4.} Stephen Miller, "10 Steps for Wellness Program Success", July 1, 2009, Society for Human Resource Management.

This growth has created an explosion of companies offering different types of well-being technology. For a quick sampling of available technologies, check out these "top 25"5, "top 40"6 and "top 50"7 lists of different well-being solutions. I am not endorsing these lists, but simply refer to them as a quick way to see the range of solutions in the market. Well-being solutions range from highly specialized mobile apps focused on specific well-being needs such as sleep hygiene or diabetes management, to comprehensive wellness platforms that integrate personal health monitoring, wellness education, physician care, counseling, and social support networks. And almost every week another new solution seems to appear in the market.

The large number of well-being technology solutions is both an opportunity and challenge for people charged with improving well-being in their organizations. On the positive side, there are probably well-being technology solutions somewhere in the market well suited to address your company's specific needs. On the negative side, how can you find the right solution when there are so many available and they do so many different things? And how can you ensure these solutions will work within the context of your company's broader culture? This article provides some tips and frameworks to help address these challenges. The first part of the paper looks at determining what solutions will best address the wellbeing needs of your organization. The second part discusses how to deploy and support these solutions considering the culture and resource constraints found in your organization.



^{5.} Dr. Steven Aldana, "Top 25 Corporate Wellness Companies,", Oct 31, 2016, www.wellsteps.com.

^{6.} Top 40 corporate wellness companies ", www.snacknation.com.

^{7.} The Greatist Team, "The 50 Most Innovative Health, Fitness and Happiness Startups", Mar 14, 2013, www.greatist.com.

What type of well-being solutions make sense for your organization?

Determining what well-being solutions make sense for your company starts with diagnosing your organizations well-being needs. The wellbeing needs of a company vary depending on the demographics of the workforce, the nature of people's jobs, and broader health and well-being trends within the community where the organization is located. It is a good idea to start any wellbeing initiative with a comprehensive assessment and prioritization of workforce well-being issues. There are many resources available to support this sort of comprehensive assessment. For example, the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) offers a variety of resources to help develop workforce health & wellness strategies.8 It may also make sense to enlist support from a health or well-being professional.

When doing the assessment, be sure to focus on both health and well-being. "Health" reflects absence of illness or injury. "Well-being" reflects an active, energetic, enjoyable and thriving life. These two things influence each other, but are not the same. Many things that impact our health are unrelated to work (e.g. our genetics). In contrast, work has a major impact on well-being. In turn, well-being influences both our health and the quality of our work. For example, people who fail to get adequate sleep are more prone to health issues, take longer to recover from illnesses, and make more mistakes on the job.9 Improving employee well-being simultaneously increases workforce engagement and productivity while decreasing costs related to health care and absenteeism. Historically, companies tended to emphasize medical programs focused on physical health over programs focused on improving wellbeing. But focusing specifically on well-being activities may be more effective for improving overall company health and performance.



^{8.} Workplace Health Resources", Center for Disease Control, WWW.CDC.gov.

^{9.} Joe Sherwood, "You Snooze.. You Win?", Jun 1, 2017, HR Technologist, www.hrtechnologist.com.

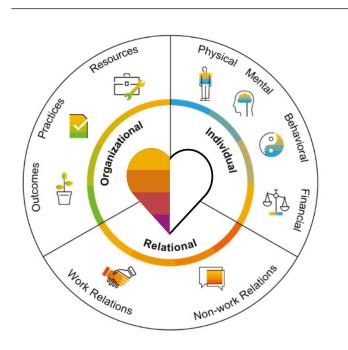
Once you have determined your well-being needs, the next step is to explore technology solutions that address these needs. Most well-being solutions can be categorized using the diagram shown in Figure 1. As illustrated in the figure, well-being solutions tend to fall into three major groups: individual well-being, organizational well-being, and relational well-being. Before you begin engaging well-being vendors, think about which type of solution illustrated in Figure 1 seems to be the best fit for your company.

INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING TECHNOLOGY

These solutions provide individual employees with specific tools and information to help improve their personal health and well-being. Individual Well-being technology solutions tend to focus on one or more of the following: physical health such as blood pressure, exercise or weight management, mental health including stress and depression, behavioral health such as diet, exercise, or smoking cessation, and financial health including debt management and retirement planning. Many of the technology solutions in this category can be purchased directly by consumers, as opposed to other types of solutions that may only be available through employers. The following are examples of common types of individual well-being technology solutions:

Different types of Health & Well-being Technology

Figure 1





- Physical monitors. Tools such as watches or other wearable technology that collect data on sleep patterns, physical activity, blood pressure and other physical well-being indicators. Most of these solutions analyze, summarize, and report this data in a manner that helps employees self-manage and improve their well-being over time.
- Diagnostics. Tools that help individuals assess their current physical, mental or financial wellbeing and set and prioritize personal well-being goals. Diagnostics can be as simple as asking an employee to complete a short online survey to as complex as machine learning tools that comb through online datasets to diagnose an employee's well-being risk factors.
- Knowledge resources. Tools that provide employees with training material and guides to help them address different well-being needs.
- Counseling. Tools that provide employee with the ability to ask questions and get advice from simulated well-being counselors using artificial intelligence "chatbots", or enable them to schedule and conduct online counseling sessions with actual human counselors.

Many technology vendors combine different types of individual solutions to comprehensively address specific well-being needs. For example, an integrated weight management solution might include physical monitors to track an employee's weight and exercise, a diagnostic tool to assess an employee's lifestyle, knowledge resources for managing weight, and access to online nutritional counselors to assist in following a healthy diet over time.

ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING TECHNOLOGY

These solutions are designed to help organizations manage programs and create work environments to improve the health and well-being of their workforce. Many of these solutions focus on supporting positive workforce management practices related to things such as job design and shift scheduling. Other solutions are designed to help employees find and utilize health and wellbeing resources such as training programs or medical provider services, to help companies track and manage the use of these programs, and explore how these program impact healthrelated outcomes such as attendance, retention. and healthcare costs. In addition to computer based solutions, this category of solutions can also include physical assets such as ergonomic office furniture, onsite exercise facilities, or healthy cafeteria food. Organizational well-being technology solutions tend to fall into one of three categories.

Well-being Resources. These technology solutions help manage resources offered to employees to support their health and well-being. In countries that rely on employer sponsored healthcare, this will include health resources like medical and dental benefits programs. But it also includes things like onsite exercise equipment, gym memberships, healthy food options in the office, meditation rooms, or exercise and stress reduction classes.



- Well-being Practices. These technology solutions are used to enable work practices that create healthier work environments and promote healthier behaviors. Examples include workforce scheduling tools to ensure employees have adequate sleep, safety programs to reduce the risk of work-related injury, fitness campaigns to encourage well-being related activities, and online tools designed to help employees make more effective use of medical benefits or financial savings programs.
- Well-being Outcomes. These technology solutions provide analytics and reporting tools to track well-being related metrics. Common outcome metrics include absenteeism, retention, employee engagement, accidents and near accidents, employee health metrics (e.g., % of employees with diabetes risk), utilization of health benefits or financial savings plans, and employer sponsored healthcare costs.

These three categories of solutions, while different in focus, are often highly interconnected in practice. For example, a company may implement a promotional fitness campaign (a practice) to encourage employees to eat healthier food in the cafeteria (a resource) with the goal of reducing healthcare costs associated with diabetes (an outcome).

RELATIONAL WELL-BEING TECHNOLOGY

These solutions are designed to help employees create and maintain healthy and supportive work and non-work relationships. The quality of an employee's relationships with their manager and coworkers has a significant impact on their overall health & well-being. The impact of work on the quality of an employee's non-work relationships also impacts employee health & well-being. This is the least developed area of well-being technology, but more solutions are becoming available as companies realize the importance of relationships on creating healthy, thriving workforces.



^{10.} Tori L. Crain, Leslie B. Hammer, Todd Bodner, Ellen Ernst Kossek, Phyllis Moen, Richard Lilienthal, Orfeu M. Buxton, "Workfamily conflict, family-supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB), and sleep outcomes", 2014, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Vol 19.

^{11.} Karen Korabik, Zeynep Aycan, Roya Ayman, "The Work-Family Interface in Global Context", 2017, Rutledge.

The following are examples of some technology solutions currently available to support relational well-being:

- Supportive relationship training. Supportive behavior does not involve providing well-being advice or acting as a counselor. It is simply about demonstrating awareness and appreciation of the value and challenges associated with well-being. For example, leaders openly talking about strategies they use to ensure they get adequate sleep. Or collaborating with employees to find ways to balance work demands and nonwork obligations. Solutions have been created that educate managers and employees on the concept of supportive behavior and provide them with ongoing feedback to help them develop supportive relationships.
- Well-being communities and partnerships.
 These solutions help employee establish relationships with other employees with similar well-being interests. Many of these tools are used to build online communities focused on different well-being topics (e.g., exercise clubs, pre-natal support groups). Others help individual employees find learning partners focused on similar well-being goals (e.g., walking partners).

Work-life integration tools. These solutions are designed to help employees balance work and non-work commitments. The lines between work and non-work activities have become increasingly blurred for many employees. Companies have long been developing technology so employees can "do work from home" (e.g., virtual office systems). Work-life integration tools might be thought of as technology that allows employees to "do home from work". For example, tools so employees can effectively manage and engage in childcare or eldercare activities while they are in the office.

There are not as many current solutions in this area as in others. But we can expect to see a lot of growth in this area over the coming years.

Companies often blend the different types of solutions listed in Figure 1 to create overall well-being strategies. For example, providing employees with wearable technology to track their walking (an individual health solution), giving them access to social collaboration tools to create employee fitness teams (a relational health solution), and then incenting participation by creating a program that provides rewards to teams that walk the most miles (an organizational health solution). This is the right way to think about wellbeing technology. Most successful well-being initiatives are multi-faceted and tend to leverage multiple types of technology. However, this creates another challenge: how to effectively deploy, manage, coordinate and support a complex array of well-being technology solutions?



Deploying and supporting well-being technology solutions

The first step in using Well-being technology is figuring out the solutions that best address your company's specific well-being needs. The second step is figuring out how to deploy these solutions in an efficient, manageable and sustainable way given your company's existing culture and resources. This second step is critical but often overlooked. Companies spend millions of dollars on well-being technology that is almost never used by employees. One reason it is never used is because the deployment process was not well thought out. When it comes to deploying wellbeing technology, some companies can be likened to people who impulsively buy an array of fitness gadgets or diet books only to abandon them a few months later to gather dust in the closet. The way to avoid this risk is to spend more time thinking through a deployment strategy.

The deployment of successful well-being programs involves coordination of multiple activities. It is rarely effective to just roll out a single standalone solution and hope people will use it. The solution needs to be part of an integrated strategy that includes communication, training, metrics, and cultural encouragement and support. Figure 2 illustrates the major challenges that an effective well-being technology deployment strategy must address. For well-being technology solutions to be effective, they must be accessible, enjoyable, and cultural.¹²

- Accessible. The easier it is for employees to access well-being solutions the more likely they are to use them. The following are a few of the questions you should consider from an accessibility standpoint. Can employees log in to the solution using existing technology platforms or do they need to download new applications and create new usernames and passwords? Is the solution positioned so employees will see it every day, or do they have to specifically seek it out? Does the solution integrate into your company's existing information technology (IT) suite, or will it create additional administrative demands on your IT department?
- Enjoyable. Improving well-being often requires spending time on activities that may not show significant results for months or even years. For this reason, it is important to make the activities themselves as enjoyable as possible. Well-being technology solutions should ideally include content and user interfaces that capture employees' interests and attention. The use of well-being technology solutions can also be made more enjoyable through gamification and peer-support methods. Gamification includes things such as rewarding employees for achieving different fitness goals, or allowing employees to compete with themselves and others to achieve well-being goals. Peer-support involves things like "fitness clubs" or other communities that bring together employees with similar well-being goals and interests.



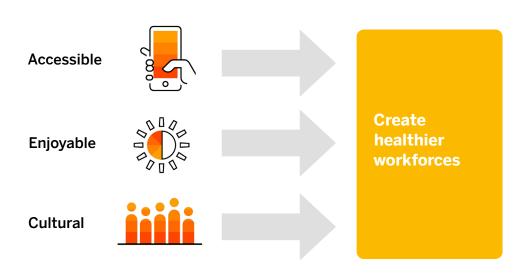
^{12.} Dr. Steve Hunt, "Improving employee well-being with Human Capital Management technology." Aug 7, 2017, Linked In.

^{13.} Paula Braveman, MD, MPH a and Laura Gottlieb, MD, MPHb, "The Social Determinants of Health: It's Time to Consider the Causes of the Causes", Jan 2014, US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, vol 129.

 Cultural. People's social environment significantly influences their commitment to well-being activities. 13 Organizational culture has a major impact on whether employees view well-being as a priority or something that is "nice but not important". Some organizational cultures even discourage healthy behaviors. For example, companies where employees are expected to forego sleep rather than miss deadlines. Or where company social events frequently involve excessive alcohol consumption. A major part of deploying well-being technology is ensuring the culture of the organization supports its use. There are two components to this. First, communicating the importance of wellbeing through leadership behavior and decisions related to how people are managed, hired, promoted and rewarded. Second, tracking wellbeing metrics. The old saying "what gets measured gets managed" is just as true for well-being as any other form of culture change.

The following story may help to further clarify the idea of accessible, enjoyable and cultural as it pertains to the use of well-being technology. A company decides to deploy well-being technology to help employees get adequate sleep. The first step is to send employees physical monitors to track their sleep using their company assigned smart phones. This is an example of making wellbeing technology easily accessible. Second, they installed sleep pods in the workplace so employees could take short naps in a quiet, relaxed environment. This is an example of making well-being activities more enjoyable. The company then trained managers on the importance of employees getting adequate sleep, senior leaders actively role modeled effective sleep hygiene by using the nap pods, and the company did a communications campaign on the virtues of "sleeping on the job". This made use of well-being technology an accepted part of the culture.

Using technology to overcome well-being solution deployment challenges Figure 2





Another critical deployment challenge is maintaining the long-term use of well-being technology. It is common for employees to show interest in well-being solutions when they are first deployed, but then quickly lose interest over time. This is similar to what many people personally experience when it comes to adopting a new diet or exercise routine. We get excited about it at first, but our interest and commitment quickly falls away over time. Well-being employment strategies should focus beyond the initial deployment to look at long-term sustainability. What can you do to keep people engaged and interested a year after the initial launch?

Many technology vendors offer platforms and features designed to support the deployment and management of well-being solutions. Table 1 groups these into four general categories or approaches: standalone solutions, well-being platforms, healthcare benefits platforms, and human capital management (HCM) platforms. Each approach tends to have different strengths and weaknesses as it relates to affecting the criteria of being accessible, enjoyable and cultural.

STANDALONE SOLUTIONS

This approach involves providing employees with direct access to specific well-being technology solutions. For example, giving employees log-in access to online knowledge resources or allowing them to purchase wearable fitness technology directly from the vendor. The main advantage of this approach is it is quick and easy to implement.

Deploying standalone solutions by themselves tends to have a lot of limitations. First, the solutions may require employees to maintain separate log-in accounts outside of their normal computer operating environment. This makes them harder to access. Second, many stand-alone solutions provide little to no tools to make them more engaging and enjoyable to use. Third, most standalone solutions have no way to influence organizational cultural norms that will impact their adoption.

WELL-BEING PLATFORMS

This approach leverages the growing number of well-being platform providers found on the market. These platforms act as a library or catalog to access different well-being solutions. Well-being platforms can have several advantages, depending on the features contained in the platform. These platforms make it easier to coordinate the delivery of multiple solutions as part of an integrated well-being strategy. They also provide employees with a consistent interface to access different well-being solutions. Many well-being platforms include gamification and social support features to make well-being solutions more enjoyable. For example, providing employees with redeemable credits based on use of well-being solutions, or creating online communities built around different well-being solutions. Last, some well-being platforms have pre-existing data interfaces enabling companies to more effectively track and report well-being metrics. Companies can leverage these metrics to enable the creation of cultures that emphasize the importance of well-being.



There are several potential disadvantages associated with using well-being platforms. First, some well-being platforms may require employees to log-in outside their normal computer operating environments. This decreases accessibility. Second, well-being platforms tend to have little functionality to address broader cultural norms that may affect the use of well-being solutions (e.g. influencing how employees are managed or rewarded). The extent of these limitations will vary depending on the specific platform and how it is being used.

HEALTHCARE BENEFITS PLATFORMS

Many companies have technology platforms designed to help employees enroll and access licensed medical services (e.g., physician care, pharmacy prescriptions). Some of these platforms also include functionality to support well-being solutions. An advantage of healthcare benefits programs is they are already accessible by employees. In addition, they can make it easier to coordinate licensed medical services with complementary well-being solutions. For example, coordinating behavioral weight management programs with medical treatment for hypertension. They can also facilitate reporting of data that compares participation in well-being programs with healthcare costs and clinical health outcomes.

Table 1:	Standalone	Well-being	Benefit	HCM
Advantages and disadvantages of different well-being technology	solutions	platforms	platforms	platforms
Accessible				
Time to deploy	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak
Ease of access	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Frequency of access	Weak	Moderate	Weak	Strong
Enjoyable				
Gamification	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Peer support	Weak	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Cultural				
Behavorial change	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong
Analytics & measurement	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Strong



There are several potential limitations to using healthcare benefit platforms to deploy well-being solutions. First, while these platforms are accessible to employees, they may not be accessed on a regular basis. Many employees only go into these systems when they enroll in benefits plans. The platforms are not typically accessed on a daily or weekly basis. Second, these platforms may not include features that are focused on making well-being solutions more enjoyable. Nor do they include tools to support creation of organizational cultures that support well-being. Third, and perhaps most important for global companies, these platforms vary widely across countries based on their local healthcare systems. Healthcare benefits platforms that make sense in one country may have no applicability in another.

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT (HCM) PLATFORMS

Virtually all large companies have some form of HCM technology platform to support talent acquisition, management, and development. Many of these platforms have capabilities that make them well-suited as a tool to manage the deployment of well-being solutions. This is particularly true for fully integrated HCM platforms that include onboarding tools, social collaboration sites, learning management systems, career development tools, employee recognition systems, and integrated analytics dashboards. HCM platforms can increase accessibility by integrating well-being solutions into HCM home pages or learning solutions that employees already visit regularly for their day-to-day work. They can increase enjoyment by linking well-being solutions to social collaboration and support tools. HCM platforms can also encourage the use of well-being solutions by linking them to reward and recognition systems. HCM platforms can also be used to increase cultural support by integrating deployment of well-being solutions with the use of goal management, performance management and development tools reinforcing the value of employee well-being. Cultural support can also be created by integrating well-being data with HCM data to illustrate how well-being impacts employee engagement, attendance and retention.



The main limitation of using HCM platforms to enable and support well-being technology is that not all HCM platforms contain the same functionality. For example, the ability of HCM platforms to make well-being solutions more enjoyable through social collaboration depends on whether the HCM platform supports creation of online well-being communities. Another potential limitation is the time and resources that may be needed to configure a company's existing HCM platform to include well-being applications. A third limitation is the ability to transfer data between HCM systems and other systems containing sensitive health related data (e.g. medical costs).

The approach you will want to use to deploy well-being technology will depend on multiple factors. This includes:

- The capabilities of your existing technology platforms. If your company's HCM or health-care benefits technology platforms contain tools that can be used to support your well-being strategy, then leverage them! But if they do not, then you may want to consider investing in a dedicated well-being platform.
- The scope and duration of your strategy. If you only plan to use a single well-being solution for a limited amount of time with a limited audience, then a stand-alone deployment may make the most sense. But if you plan to make well-being an ongoing focus of your organization that will ultimately involve the use of multiple solutions, then you will want to leverage a more comprehensive deployment platform.

- Whether you are focused on decreasing health-care costs versus increasing employee well-being overall. If your strategy is primarily about reducing specific healthcare costs, then focusing on use of your company's benefits platforms may make more sense. If the strategy is more about increasing overall employee well-being, engagement and productivity then it probably makes more sense to focus on using your company's HCM platform. If you want to focus on reducing healthcare costs and increasing workforce productivity, then you may want to explore using a mixture of both platforms.
- How much culture change will play a role in successful use of well-being technology. If success of your strategy requires creating significant change in the mindsets of leaders, managers and employees about the importance of well-being then using your HCM platform is probably the best approach. This assumes that you have a full-suite HCM platform that integrates social collaboration tools, development features, reward processes, and other tools used to drive culture change.

The earlier you start thinking about deployment the better. Your deployment approach should not dictate what types of well-being solutions you choose to use, but it may influence what specific vendors you decide to work with. Particularly if you are looking to integrate multiple types of solutions as part of a comprehensive well-being program.



Conclusion

The reason the well-being technology market is growing so quickly is because well-being matters. The increasing pace of change and accelerating levels of competition living in an "always on" world is taking a toll on employees' mental, physical, behavioral and financial well-being. Companies cannot maintain healthy, profitable business growth without alert, fully engaged and healthy employees. Something must be done to address this growing concern. There is no shortage of things your company "could do" to help improve employee well-being. The challenge is figuring out what makes the most sense for your company to do given its needs, and determining how to do it in way that drives lasting and meaningful results. The following steps will help in achieving this goal:

STEP 1

Assess your organization's well-being needs.

Do not assume that you already know what well-being needs are most important based on what some people are telling you. A lot of employees will hide their well-being concerns and "suffer in silence" rather than risk being perceived as weak or whining. It is valuable to implement a comprehensive approach to determine what well-being needs are most important across the workforce. Otherwise you may create a program based on who is complaining the loudest, as opposed to focusing on well-being solutions that will provide the greatest overall value.

STEP 2

Review the capabilities of your current technology systems to address well-being.

Before rushing to purchase new well-being solutions, look at your current human capital management and healthcare benefits platforms. They may have features you can leverage to address well-being. For example, using social collaboration technology to create well-being clubs, mentoring tools to create fitness partnerships, or leveraging learning management solutions to provide well-being knowledge and training. Also explore the ability to use these platforms to provide "single sign on" access to external well-being solutions.



STEP 3

Identify additional well-being solutions.

Systematically review well-being solutions to identify additional tools that match your organization's needs. Focus on finding solutions that complement and integrate with any other technology solutions you will be using to support well-being. The most effective well-being solutions tend to be multi-faceted combining individual, organizational and relational well-being solutions.

STEP 4

Create a comprehensive well-being deployment strategy.

Define how you will create the cultural change necessary to support use of new well-being solutions. This may include communications campaigns and incentive strategies. Also, determine the actions required to ensure managers and leaders effectively support employees in achieving well-being goals.

STEP 5

Deploy well-being technology and track results.

Capture metrics that provide insight into the adoption and impact of different well-being solutions. Proactively look for ways to maintain momentum and enthusiasm toward the use of well-being solutions. And if a solution, for one reason or another seems to be failing, don't be afraid to look for another solution that employees may find more accessible, enjoyable and cultural.

STEP 6

Return to Step 1.

The iterative nature of these steps is very important. Well-being is not something you have. Well-being is something you maintain. As such, it requires ongoing attention and effort. But the rewards created by well-being are more than worth the effort it requires.







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