



The power of wellbeing: three ways to invest in your team

Savvy employers know that a happy workforce equals a productive one. According to mental health charity Mind, 60 per cent of employees feel more motivated if their employer takes steps to support staff wellbeing.

Many large corporations have already embraced the idea of wellbeing – and in recent years it's not unusual to see workplaces with access to on-site gyms, or even an in-house counsellor. Although small businesses may lack the same resources and infrastructure, they can still create an impactful wellbeing strategy for their employees.

Of course, the pandemic has drastically altered working life for almost everybody. Working from home used to be a perk, but since most of the office-based population has been forced to work from their bedrooms or kitchens, the reality has proven to be trickier than many anticipated.

SMEs typically consist of close-knit teams and many will be struggling with the disruption to their normal working lives, and a feeling of isolation - all of which can cause greater anxiety. Below we discuss three simple ways SMEs can use standards to invest in the wellbeing of their staff.

Culture

Staff need to feel valued and supported now more than ever, and a positive workplace culture is often cited as top of prospective employees' wish list.

Let's start with diversity and inclusion. Conversations around both have been louder than ever before, and forward-thinking SMEs will be increasingly sensitive to the needs of many different identity groups. The upcoming standard BS ISO 30415 is designed to help make work and workspaces diverse and inclusive, and optimize related human resources processes.

Furthermore, equipping each team member with the tools to do their job will mitigate any undue stress that could negatively affect wellbeing. The PD 760006 guide to learning and development provides a helpful framework to tailor and adapt employee development plans successfully to the new working environment.

Mind

Research suggests that over four in every five SME employees have been affected by an excessive workload. This is an example of what's called a 'psychosocial workplace hazard'.

Small businesses should take steps to identify, prevent and manage such hazards to safeguard their team's wellbeing and foster a supportive working environment.

Next year, BSI is publishing the much-anticipated BS ISO 45003, with the sole aim of managing psychosocial risks in the workplace.

However, due to the rapid change in people's working circumstances, BSI has produced Flex 45005, Safe Working Guidelines. It tackles both the practical and psychosocial challenges that have arisen due to the new ways of working, job insecurity, or role ambiguity.

Flex 45005's suggestions to mitigate these risks include allowing flexible working hours, promoting a culture of care and trust, and giving regular updates.

Body

Although occupational health and safety (OH&S) traditionally has a wider focus, its principles certainly contribute to staff wellbeing. Likewise, any wellbeing strategy would be rendered redundant if the physical safety of your team was not already under control.

ISO 45001 is the catch-all standard for OH&S that can be applied to any organization, regardless of size. It helps SMEs prevent work-related injury and ill-health – demonstrating to the public, stakeholders (and, crucially, your staff) that you're committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and ultimately happy workplace.

For businesses with staff that are working at home, BSI Flex 45005 also provides useful tools to navigate OH&S in this context, and reinforces the importance of providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

By addressing these three key areas, small businesses can prove that they are investing in what is arguably their most vital asset – their people. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to how SMEs can use standards to adapt in what's proving to be an ever-changing world.

Summary

- According to Mind, 60 per cent of employees feel more motivated if their employer supports staff wellbeing.
- Though small businesses lack resources, they can still create an impactful wellbeing strategy for their employees.
- Forward-thinking SMEs will use the upcoming BS ISO 30415 to help make work and workspaces diverse and inclusive, and optimize related human resources processes.
- Equipping team members with relevant skills will mitigate any undue stress that could negatively affect wellbeing using the PD 760006 guide to learning and development.
- Identify, prevent and manage psychosocial hazards using the upcoming BS ISO 45003 standard.
- Use the Flex 45005 guide to tackle the challenges that have arisen due to the new ways of working.
- Suggestions to mitigate these risks include flexible working hours, promoting a culture of care, and giving regular updates.
- By addressing these three key areas, small businesses can prove that they are investing in what is arguably their most vital asset – their people.

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