



# The future of employee WELLBEING

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MERAKI HR

# Employee Wellbeing – Supporting Employees to Strive and Thrive in 2024

The pandemic exposed the strained relationship that many people had with work, revealing the stress and imbalances in many people's professional lives. During lockdown, people reflected on their lives and how their organisations treated them. A vision of commuting, presenteeism and general office life seemed less appealing, and at the end of "lockdown," huge numbers of employees reassessed their careers, and as a result, thousands of employees in the UK became part of the 'The Great Resignation'– the name given to the trend of people choosing to quit or change their jobs, or considering doing so in the near future, which was largely attributed to the work and life changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is a trend that is still occurring and research by LinkedIn reveals that almost 20 million Brits said that they were considering changing roles in 2023, with half (50%) saying they're confident in securing a new job. With so many employees considering leaving their roles in 2023, it's vital that employers make extra efforts to retain their top-performing staff as we enter 2024.

It's predicted in 2024, that there will be a shift in priorities from work-life balance to work-life fit as both employees and organisations re-evaluate their changing preferences and relationships with work. This means we will move beyond the constant balancing act between work and life to an integration of work and life that leads to mutual benefit and success in both. If organisations don't manage this well, they risk a workforce that becomes even more discontented with them as an employer. Workers will continue seeking a "perfect-fit" employer, possibly leaving after shorter lengths of service than we have seen before and organisations will struggle to manage their day-to-day people practices.

## Work-Life Fit

'Work-life fit' means looking at an employee's individual situation and what their intrinsic motivators are because success looks different for different people, and so will the trade-offs people will be willing to make. For example, if upward career progression and pay increases are important to an employee, they are likely to prioritise work in the context of their broader life decisions and would be willing to accept this trade-off. Similarly, if an employee wants to pursue interests outside of work, they might be willing to give up pay progression and a 40-hour work week for flexibility that allows them to dedicate time to these interests. Each approach is fine if each party are open to having honest and transparent conversations about the inevitable trade-offs that come with the changes required.

Organisations can help employees to facilitate a better relationship with work by redefining their employee value proposition (EVP) and accommodating what different employees want from work. Whether it is a four-day work week, working remotely, or in a hybrid setting – work-life fit allows employees to choose what works for them, within the boundaries of what the organisation is willing to accept. Organisations need to be much more transparent about what it really takes to succeed, and employees need to become clear on what they want from work. HR teams or Meraki HR can support business owners and leaders on what an organisations people expectations are and equip managers to lead employees in these new ways of working.

If managed well, work-life fit can create a renewed relationship with work for employees. One that sees work as a valuable contributor towards a happy life, as opposed to something that must be done to survive.

### The Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

It is also predicted that with the increased focus on retaining top talent through the employee value proposition and an ethos that strives to place employee health and happiness at the forefront of organisational success, the implementation of employee wellbeing strategies will reach unprecedented heights in 2024, characterised by innovative technologies, holistic approaches, and a revamped organisational ethos that places employee health and happiness at the forefront. Which is why we are partnering with Employee Wellbeing Platform **Pirkx**, and if you are a Meraki HR retained client, this is part of your retainer package with us.

In recent years, the emphasis on employee well-being has transitioned from a best practice approach, to a 'must-have' within a business. What employees are looking for from their employers continuously evolves and so do the methods and practices geared towards promoting a healthier, happier, and more productive workforce. As we look ahead to 2024, several employee well-being trends are poised to shape the landscape of organisational wellness.

Organisations should work in partnership with their HR teams or Meraki HR to design and implement well-being programs that address physical, mental, and emotional health to create a positive and supportive work environment.

## The Employee Wellbeing Strategy

Given that organisations will be more frequently looking at ways to tailor their approach to an employee's 'work-life fit', the best approach to employee wellbeing initiatives in 2024 is the holistic approach that considers every aspect of an employee's well-being. As well as a focus on physical health, there's an emphasis on emotional, financial, and even spiritual well-being. Organisations should understand that a truly healthy employee thrives in all areas of life and therefore areas for you to consider in your own business are;

### **Organisational Culture**

Workplace culture plays a vital role in the overall performance and satisfaction of employees in an organisation. It's the environment you create for your employees and the sum of your organisations' traditions, interactions, attitudes, values, and behaviours. A healthy workplace culture aligns the company policies and employee behaviours with the company's goals while focusing on the wellbeing of individuals. The most talented employees are not just looking for 'good' organisations they are looking for 'great' organisations with supportive employee policies and procedures that affirm their beliefs and values, these will often include policies and procedures that go 'over and above' in the following areas:

- Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- Time and attendance
- Health and wellbeing
- Work life balance
- Family friendly

### **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)**

An EAP is a service dedicated to helping employees with issues related to health and wellness. Services provided include counselling for interpersonal issues, grief, trauma and stress, diversity, conflict resolution and management training, onsite assessment, substance abuse issues and more.

EAP Services are fully funded by an employer, leaving the employee with no fees to pay to access this service, whether for work or personal issues. As a business, you can benefit from introducing an EAP in many ways including a reduction in absence and an increase in retention. When employees feel valued, they are less likely to want to leave. If you introduce an EAP into your business, your employees will feel

supported and, therefore, more likely to think they want to stay. To be successful a business needs to have loyal employees in place to be productive and grow.

### ***A Mental Health at Work Plan***

Produce, implement, and communicate a Mental Health at Work Plan. This should include:

- Developing mental health awareness and knowledge amongst employees
- Destigmatising mental health discussions by encouraging open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling creating an environment where employees feel safe to seek help when needed.
- Conduct regular check-ins on the mental health of employees.
- Give employees access to training sessions and workshops on coping strategies.

### ***Digital Detox Initiatives***

In an era dominated by screens and constant digital communication, digital detox initiatives are gaining traction. Employers are recognising the need to promote a balance between online connectivity and real-world interactions. Scheduled breaks from screens, tech-free zones in workplaces, and even digital detox retreats are some of the measures that companies are increasingly integrating into their wellness programs.

### ***Integration of AI in Wellness Programs***

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising employee wellness by offering personalised wellness recommendations based on individual health data. From diet and exercise suggestions tailored to an employee's specific needs to AI-driven mental health chatbots offering immediate support, the potential of AI in enhancing employee well-being is vast and still unfolding.

### ***Virtual Fitness and Health Classes***

The rise of remote work has spurred the growth of virtual fitness and health classes. Be it yoga, meditation, or cardio workouts, employees can now join sessions from the comfort of their homes. This not only promotes physical well-being but also ensures that employees remain connected and engaged, even when working remotely.

### ***Mindfulness Practices and Emotional Health***

Mindfulness practices, including meditation and deep-breathing exercises, are gaining momentum. Employers are promoting these practices to help employees remain present, reduce stress, and enhance their emotional health. Regular workshops and integration of mindfulness techniques into daily routines are becoming prevalent.

### ***Financial Wellness Programs***

Financial stress can take a significant toll on an employee's overall well-being. Recognising this, companies are offering financial wellness programs that provide guidance on budgeting, investments, and retirement planning. Such programs aim to empower employees to make informed financial decisions, reducing stress and promoting overall well-being.

### ***The Evolution of Remote Work and Flexibility***

Remote work is here to stay, and with it comes an increased emphasis on ensuring well-being while working from home. Companies are offering ergonomic home office equipment, stipends for mental health apps, and more, ensuring that employees remain healthy and productive irrespective of their work location.

### ***Continuous Learning and Mental Resilience***

In a rapidly changing corporate landscape, mental resilience and adaptability are essential. Companies are offering continuous learning opportunities, helping employees navigate change, upskill, and remain relevant. This not only enhances job satisfaction but also promotes mental resilience, preparing employees for future challenges.

### **Embracing the Future of Employee Wellbeing**

We are set to witness a dynamic shift in the realm of employee well-being in 2024, shaped by technological advancements, a deepened understanding of holistic health, and the lasting impact of global events. Employers must remain abreast of these trends, ensuring that they create an environment where employees don't just survive but thrive.

If you'd like any help and support in getting your employees "Work Life Fit" or would like to talk to us about the benefits of Pirx, then please do get in touch and we'd be happy to help <http://bit.ly/CallMerakiHR>

## We are Meraki HR

We provide the perfect blend of practical and professional HR solutions that work for your business and for your bottom line.

Working with us will enable you to improve employee engagement, your culture, people processes and procedures, which in turn will help you to deliver your business goals. And we do it all with our special touch of 'meraki'.

Your people are your greatest business asset. Knowing how to recruit, manage, develop and retain them is key to your success.

To find out how we can help you, please contact us:



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