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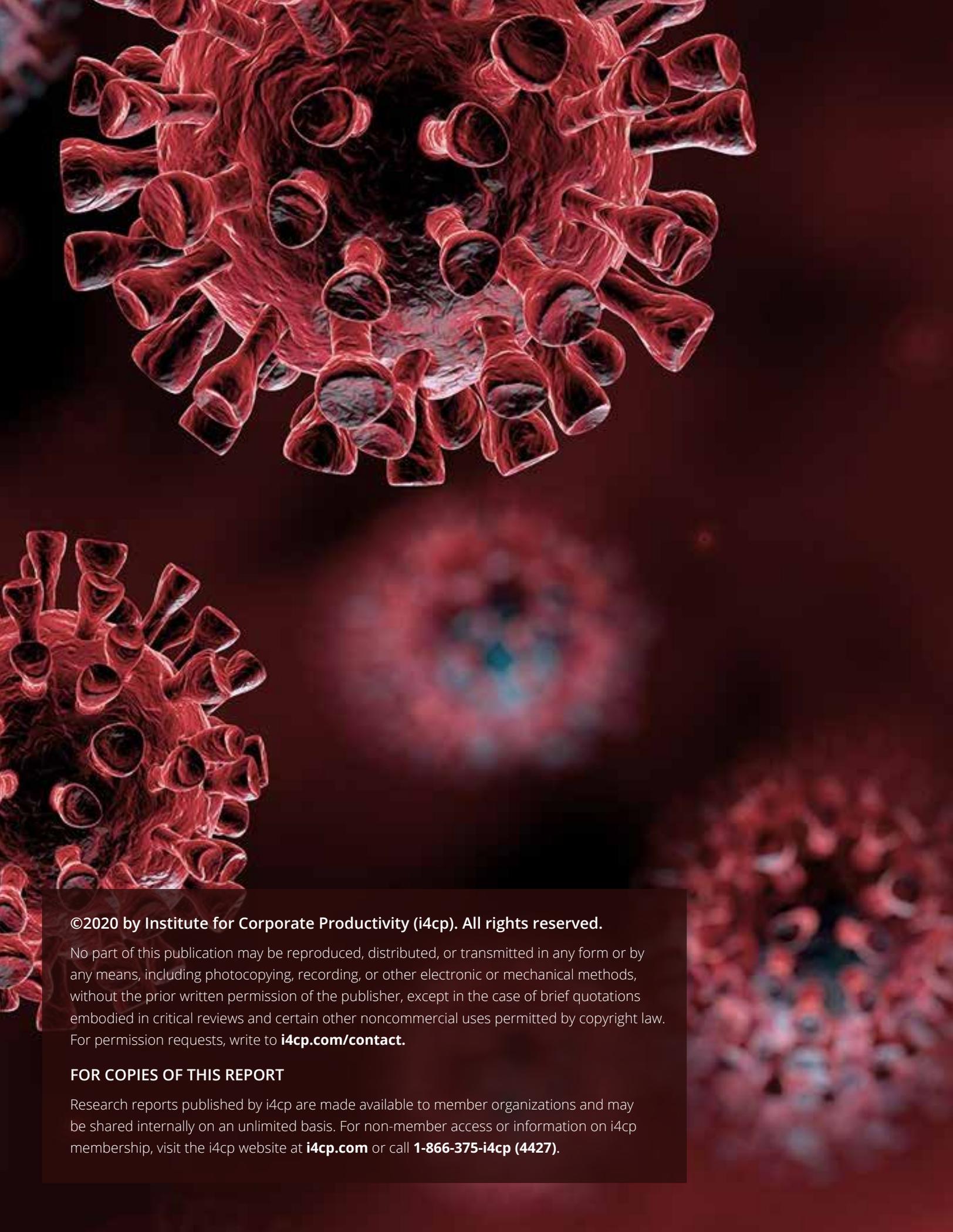
Includes insights from the following:
Humana **Genentech**
facebook  **Nationwide**

In Partnership with Professor Rob Cross



An i4cp Report

Next Practices in Holistic Well-Being: The Performance Advantage



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A message about protecting yourself from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is seen on an electronic billboard in a nearly empty Times Square in New York City on March 20, 2020. *Mike Segar / Reuters*

When the World Stopped



Kevin Oakes

CEO
i4cp



Sometimes I've gotten so busy, felt so overwhelmed, that I've wished the world would take a timeout—just stop long enough for me to catch up.

I'll never wish that again.

We began the research for this study well before most people knew what a coronavirus is. How quickly things change. Few companies had contingency plans in place to address a global event such as this—a pandemic that would cause such horrific loss of life and force life as we know it to come to a screeching halt.

In addition to disrupting most aspects of our lives as well as the daily operations of organizations worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely tested employer-sponsored health and wellness programs. While I doubt anyone discounts the importance of solid healthcare coverage, there's no shortage of debate about the right way to implement and administer the most effective programs.

Our original intent with this study was fairly straightforward. At the urging of members of i4cp's [Total Rewards Leaders](#) and [Chief Human Resource Officers Boards](#), we initially set out to explore wellness and well-being because it has become such a critical component of attracting and retaining talent. In fact, 46% of job applicants say health insurance is either the deciding factor or a positive influence in choosing who to work for, and 56% say that health coverage is a key factor in deciding to stay at their current job (Miller, 2018).

You likely already know that employer-sponsored healthcare is a huge business, but you might not realize *how* big. In the U.S. alone, healthcare as a percentage of GDP has increased from 5% in 1960 to over 18% today, and it has become a \$3.5 trillion dollar industry (Statista, 2020). Employers are the largest single providers and purchasers of health insurance in the U.S., covering over 150 million workers and their dependents. In 2018, the *Harvard Business Review* reported that employers paid 75% of costs for healthcare while employees contributed the rest (Blumenthal, 2018).

Despite the spend, we need to do more.

Employees continue to struggle with health-related issues, and unfortunately the job is often the culprit. In his excellent book *Dying for a Paycheck*, Stanford business professor (and [i4cp Thought Leader](#)) Jeffrey Pfeffer outlined some grim statistics about today's workforce:

In one survey, 61 percent of employees said that workplace stress had made them sick and seven percent said they had actually been hospitalized. Job stress costs U.S. employers more than \$300 billion annually and may cause 120,000 excess deaths each year. In China, one million people a year may be dying from overwork. That makes workplaces the fifth leading cause of death—and [they] account for about [U.S.] \$180 billion in additional healthcare expenses, approximately eight percent of the total healthcare spending

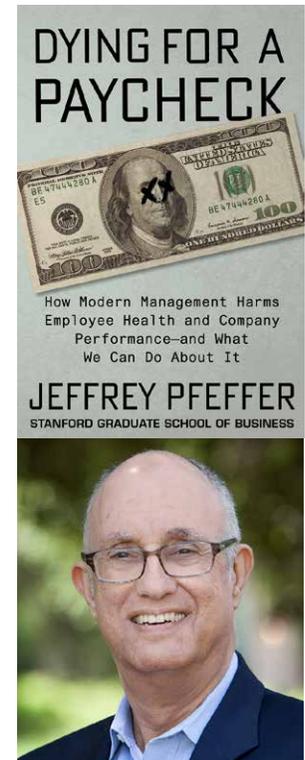
People are literally dying for a paycheck. And it needs to stop.

Pfeffer and his colleagues estimate that about 60,000 (or half of these deaths) and about \$63 billion (about one-third of the excess costs), might be preventable. Many organizations understand this, and we've seen a shift over the last few years from straight wellness programs to holistic (i.e., more expansive) well-being programs. In many companies that shift is paying off.

Companies that implement effective programs experience an average of \$5.93 to \$1 savings-to-cost ratio. They also experience a decrease in health-related costs of 26%, a reduction in worker's compensation and disability claims of 30%, and a decrease in sick days of 28% (ITA, 2019).

In addition to the cost effectiveness, successful well-being programs usually establish and reinforce a *culture of health* throughout the organization, which offers many ancillary benefits. For example, employers that create cultures of health see 11% lower turnover than employers that do little to prioritize employee well-being (Umland, 2018). Employer brand benefits as well; 89% of workers at companies that support well-being initiatives are more likely to recommend their company to others as a good place to work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely tested our employer-sponsored health and wellness programs.



Jeff Pfeffer

Author & Thomas D. Dee II Professor of Organizational Behavior Graduate School of Business Stanford University



While the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on our world, one positive outcome will be that the attention to improving holistic well-being will never be greater.

In organizations where employees do not view leadership as committed to their well-being, only 17% would recommend the company as a good place to work (Beheshti, 2019).

These statistics outline and support what most instinctively know: commitment to employee well-being pays off.

Now that we have experienced a global pandemic, the ramifications for employee well-being will extend far beyond physical health into emotional and mental health, along with financial, career, community, and social well-being. While the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on our world, one positive outcome will be that the attention to improving holistic well-being will never be greater.

I hope you use the data we've collected and the case studies we've documented to help make your well-being programs as effective as possible. If you haven't already started, the time to do so is now. We can't count on the world's stopping again in the future to give us time, and we certainly need to be better prepared if it ever does.

Sincerely,



Kevin Oakes
CEO, i4cp



INTRODUCTION

Holistic Workforce Well-Being: A Savvy Investment in Performance

Almost every leader knows this simple truth: providing for the health and well-being of employees is an expensive undertaking. And while the cost continues to increase, done right it can be one of the best investments a company can make—enhancing culture, agility, resiliency, and overall performance of individuals, teams, and the organization as a whole.

Global employers are projected to spend a whopping \$66 billion on workplace wellness and well-being in 2020, and that figure is growing at about five percent annually (Global Wellness Institute, 2020).

In the U.S. alone, employers' *per-employee spend* on health care costs topped \$13,000 in 2019—up more than 10% over four years (Statista, 2020).

Jaw-dropping as those figures may be, they of course were collected prior to the global COVID-19 crisis. The unparalleled pandemic is exacting incredible costs in innumerable ways from treating those infected by the novel virus and the heart-wrenching loss of life to business continuity, productivity, and organizational survival. Moreover, it is taking monumental tolls worldwide on community health as well as the physical, mental, financial, social, and career well-being of individuals.

When the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) partnered in late 2019 with Rob Cross, Professor of Global Business at Babson College, to examine well-being in workplaces worldwide, *coronavirus* was not yet a word etched into the collective vocabulary.

But this study, ***Next Practices in Holistic Workforce Well-Being: The Performance Advantage***, explores wellness and well-being insights that are relevant now and will continue to resonate long after the pandemic has passed.

The global COVID-19 crisis is taking monumental tolls worldwide on community health as well as the physical, mental, financial, social, and career well-being of individuals.



All organizations represented in the survey anticipate significant increases in their investments in mental health programs in the coming two years.

Among the key findings of our analysis of the data gathered from 557 organizations:

- ▶ High-performance organizations—those excelling over time in revenue growth, profitability, market share, and customer satisfaction—embrace a holistic approach to well-being. They focus on both the physical and mental/emotional elements of well-being at rates up to **4x** that of lower-performing organizations.
- ▶ High-performance organizations also differentiate themselves in terms of reaping the benefits of such well-being initiatives; they cite improvements in talent retention, customer satisfaction, and workforce productivity about twice as often as lower-performing organizations do. These top-performers are also **7x** more likely to report increased levels of innovation and creativity.

And high-performance organizations lead in their current and future focus on mental/emotional health as an element of holistic well-being; they expect a huge expansion, projecting this emphasis to grow by about 45% in the coming two years. In fact, all organizations represented in the survey anticipate significant increases in their investments in mental health programs in that time frame.

- ▶ Despite the massive investment in employee well-being, most organizations don't perceive their programs to be very effective; fewer than half gave high ratings to the effectiveness of their programs across all six well-being elements (physical health; mental/emotional health; financial; community; career; social/relational). While 45% of high-performance organizations report that their workers enjoy high/very high levels of well-being, just 13% of low-performing organizations said the same. The barriers to effective execution of well-being initiatives are many, ranging from culture and leadership issues to ineffective communication, lack of meaningful measurement, and missing the important aspect of social and relational elements in well-being efforts.
- ▶ Greater workforce participation in well-being programs is strongly correlated to better market performance and higher levels of employee well-being. High-performance organizations live the “we are stronger than me” mantra—they emphasize the power of relationships and social well-being at a rate **4x** more than lower-performing organizations. And they report that the majority (more than 60%) of their employees take part in well-being programs—a participation level **3x** higher than that of their lower-performing counterparts. Finally, high-performance organizations are leveraging well-being technologies or digital tools to enhance their well-being programs, with 46% reporting extensive use of digital technologies—more than twice the percentage of lower-performing organizations.

Just 13% of low-performance organizations report that their workers enjoy high/very high levels of well-being.

Definition:

Market Performance Index (MPI)[®]

This i4cp index defines high-performance organizations based on self-reported multi-year performance in revenue growth, profitability, market share and customer satisfaction.



Well-being typically considers the whole person, both body and mind, and includes emotional and mental health.

It's important to make the distinction between traditional *wellness*, and the more recent term *well-being*, because there are significant differences.

Wellness is most often associated with physical health, with emphasis on the adoption of positive health practices that result in enhanced fitness, losing weight, or lowering cholesterol, as well as cessation of habits such as tobacco use or excessive alcohol consumption. Outside of the physical aspects of wellness, the last couple of decades have had a strong focus on certain aspects of mental health. This generally revolves around work-life balance and an individual's ability to cope with workplace stress and other elements that can affect our mental state.

Well-being expands the view of wellness to more broadly cover not only an employee's mental state, but other elements that affect an individual's productivity. Well-being typically considers the whole person, both body and mind, and includes mental and emotional health. Happiness, engagement, fulfillment, and purpose are often associated with emotional well-being. Good well-being programs *combine* an employee's physical, mental, and emotional states, recognizing that these are all interconnected and will often have an impact on work performance.

What is Holistic Well-Being?

This study combines the concepts of wellness (traditionally defined as physical and mental/emotional health) and well-being to reflect a more expansive definition—commonly referred to as holistic well-being, which encompasses six elements:

Two customarily thought of as **wellness**:

1. Physical health
2. Mental/emotional health

And four broader areas reflecting the idea of **well-being** to embrace the whole person:

3. Financial – managing personal finances, savings, mortgages, etc.
4. Community – connectedness to communities where people live/work, volunteer involvement, philanthropy, etc.
5. Career – happiness with job, advancement opportunities, development, etc.
6. Social/relational – connectedness to others at and apart from work: family, friends, colleagues, etc.





High-Performance Organizations Recognize the Value of Holistic Well-Being

The importance of providing benefits to employees that support wellness or well-being isn't in question in most organizations. But to get to effectiveness requires understanding of the nuances of holistic well-being.

While most (86%) of the large organizations (those employing >1,000 people) that participated in this study provide some kind of wellness or well-being benefits or programs for their workers, for many, the emphasis of those programs remains on the traditional aspects of wellness. More than two-thirds (68%) reported that their organizations' programs focus primarily on physical health. Half (51%) reported that they emphasize mental/emotional health programs in their offerings. But by stopping here and not incorporating financial, community, social, and career aspects into their well-being efforts, organizations are in effect taking half-measures.

In contrast, the majority of high-performance organizations have embraced the whole-person approach to well-being and have expanded the focus to fully encompass the six elements of holistic well-being. And the whole-person approach is strongly correlated to better market performance and higher levels of workforce well-being.

With heightened understanding of the importance of well-being, investment in well-being programs is growing rapidly. Four in 10 of those surveyed indicated that their organizations invest up to 10% of their compensation and benefits budgets each year in employee well-being, and they plan to increase that spend in the near term.

Four in 10 of those surveyed indicated that their organizations invest up to 10% of their compensation and benefits budgets each year in employee well-being, and they plan to increase that spend in the near term.

The COVID-19 pandemic will likely produce lasting economic fallout and create long-term adverse impacts on the livelihoods, financial, and emotional well-being of individuals and communities.

High-performance organizations acknowledge their need to expand their focus to fully encompass the six elements of holistic well-being.

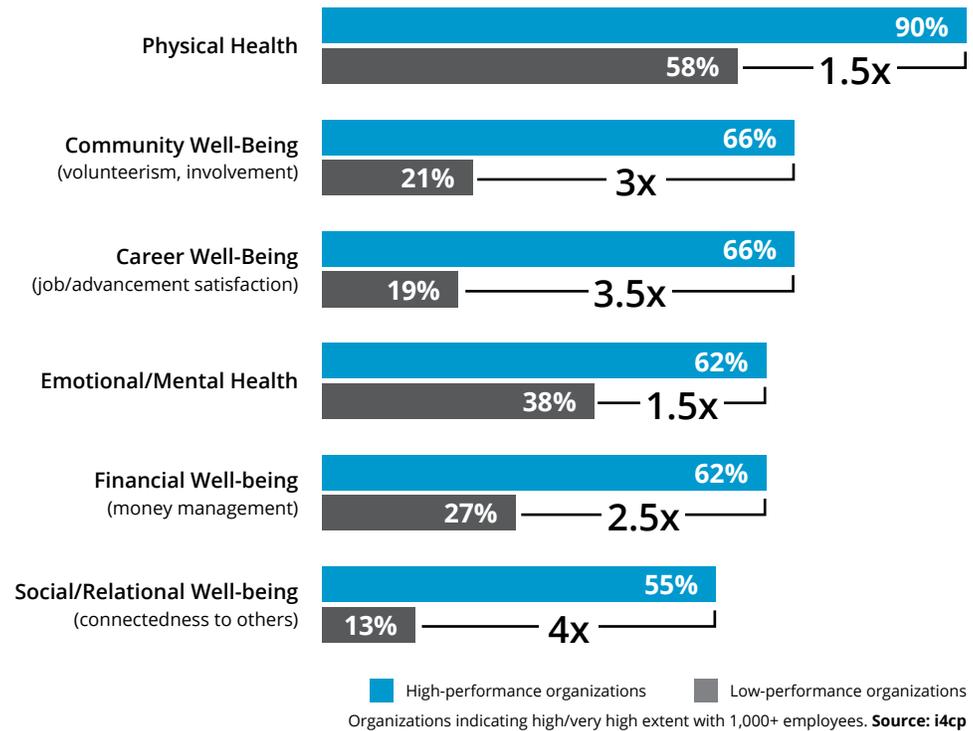
The COVID-19 pandemic will likely increase this focus—the lasting economic fallout threatens to create long-term adverse impacts on the livelihoods, financial, and emotional well-being of individuals and communities, as well as the profitability of business enterprises.

If organizations are to thrive, they must ensure that their employees are not only physically and emotionally well, but that they feel physical and psychological safety in addition to satisfaction about core facets of their lives. That makes whole-person, or holistic, well-being an imperative for employers.

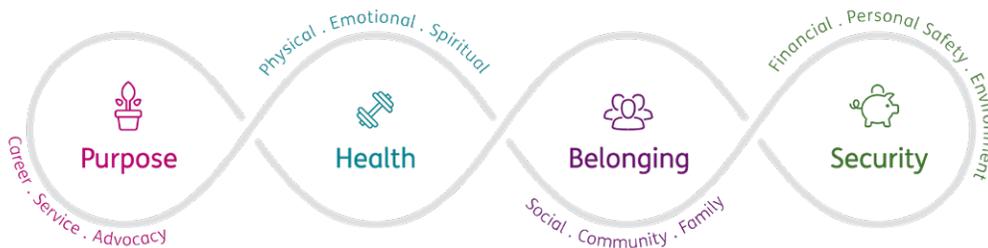
Our analysis found that high-performance organizations are **1.5x** more likely to emphasize physical and mental/emotional well-being, and are **2.5x – 4x** more likely to emphasize financial, community, career, and social/relational well-being.

Clearly, a sense of career, financial, social, and community wellness contribute to better mental/emotional and physical wellness for individuals. And anecdotally, we know that financial stress is among (if not the leading) indicators of stress and conflict in relationships, for example. This obviously spills over into every area of an individual's life, and most especially can affect their ability to focus and perform at work.

High-performance Organizations Place Greater Emphasis on Holistic Well-Being



The Humana Well-Being Model



“The business case for employee well-being—and whole-person well-being, in particular—is strong,” says Tim State, senior vice president of associate health and well-being at healthcare firm Humana. “When people thrive in every area of their well-being they are more engaged and much better positioned to create long-lasting relationships with customers, to build resilience in themselves, and to contribute to the many positive workplace outcomes that help companies thrive, too.”

“Historically, well-being is a topic employers have regarded from a benefits perspective,” says Nancy Vitale, former CHRO of Genentech and now a well-being thought leader. “As organizations and work have evolved, progressive companies are thinking more holistically about their cultures and how they operate, and how those elements affect the well-being of their people, as well as how employee well-being affects their business overall.”

Humana®



Tim State

SVP of Associate Health and Well-Being
Humana



PARTNERS FOR
WELLBEING



Nancy Vitale

Co-founder and Managing Partner,
Partners for Wellbeing and
former CHRO, Genentech



Read the Humana story in the i4cp report *Humana's Purposeful & Collaborative Approach to Holistic Well-Being*.

“We see the challenge that so many people have around debt and savings, so financial well-being is a part of our focus at Humana. We have metrics and encouragement around that. But we also see the basic blocking and tackling—that sort of Finance 101 piece—as vital in helping folks with education and tools to understand things like household budget management, debt avoidance, and planning for emergencies.”

Tim State

SVP of Associate Health and Well-Being
Humana



Facebook: Delivering Innovative, Holistic Benefits

facebook



Renee Albert

Sr. Director, Life@ (Benefits)
Facebook



Facebook's approach to well-being is viewed as caring for their people so that they can focus on Facebook's mission to "give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together."

Through Life@Facebook, their holistic approach to benefits including well-being is informed and designed by continuous employee engagement through surveys, focus groups, and more. The priority is to make sure employees have the resources they need to thrive.

Over the past ten years, Facebook has evolved its history of benefits surveying from simple ranking (wants) to choice modeling (value) and now well-being index and segmentation (needs).

"As a hyper-growth company that was evolving rapidly, it was critically important to our leaders to ensure that we use data to identify and invest in benefit programs that support the needs of our people," says Renee Albert, senior director, Life@ benefits.

"Given our growth and focus to adapt to the needs of our people, we needed to take a broader, long-term view. And, as we looked at the data, we knew it was time to make an intentional shift in our survey strategy to measure needs including well-being to better understand how our Life@ programs can meet the needs of our people and the growth of our company."

Assessing Physical, Mental, and Financial Well-Being

Gauging employee sentiment is a time-honored practice at Facebook. “We have a long history of conducting engagement pulse surveys every year, says Julie Mark, Life @ Benefit program consultant at Facebook. “Over time, we moved to better understand the well-being of our employees and how we can help them achieve optimal mental health.

We know they strive for more balance in their work and personal lives. This is all connected to how we care for them. However, we needed to dive deeper beyond work and life balance to learn more about their needs and wants regarding overall health—physical, mental, and financial well-being.”

In 2019, Facebook analyzed data from their employee survey as well as evaluated program utilization and outcomes, feedback from focus user demographics, local laws, and other inputs to further inform their strategy. As a result, they have clearer insights into well-being personas.

The impact of Facebook’s evolution in how they care for their people has been transformative, its leaders say. Today, they offer a variety of expanded and new benefits including financial planning support, flexible work, parental leave arrangements, and estate planning benefits. For example, they recently introduced Sitter City, a new offering that helps employees find eldercare givers to support the growing demands and needs in elder care. As Facebook continues to grow, continuously assessing the needs of their people and measuring impact of their offerings will be part of that growth.

facebook



Julie Mark

Life @ Benefit Program Consultant
Facebook





A Holistic Approach to Well-Being Yields Business-Critical Benefits

High-performance organizations are **7x** more likely than their low-performing counterparts to report increased levels of innovation and creativity.

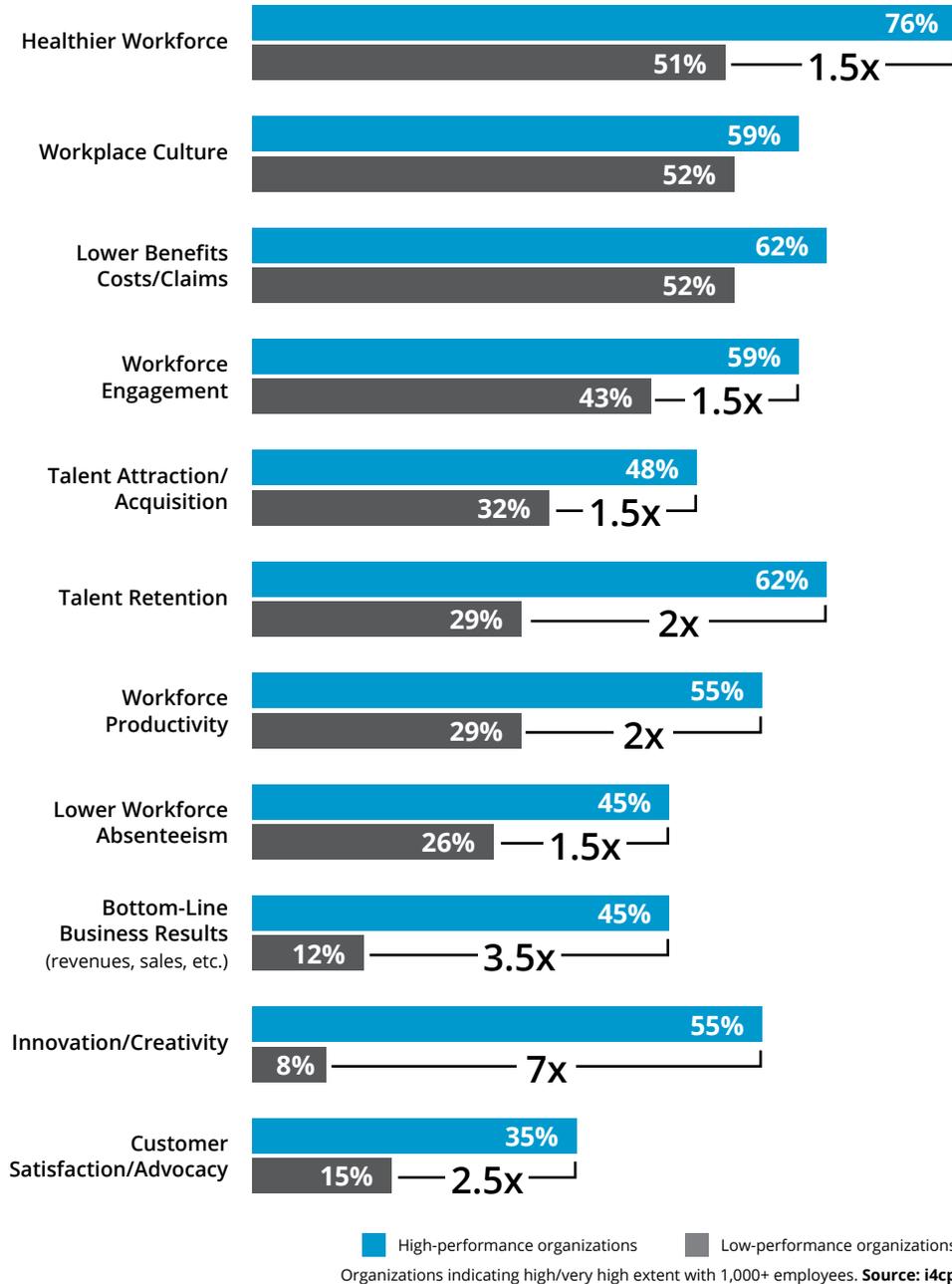
When employers invest in well-being programs, they expect to see returns on that spending. Healthier employees, stronger workplace cultures and lower benefits costs are major gains cited by all survey respondents.

High-performance organizations are reaping benefits in the forms of improvements in talent retention, customer satisfaction, and workforce productivity about twice as often as lower-performing organizations do.

Most impressive is that these top performers are also **7x** more likely to report increased levels of innovation and creativity. Other i4cp research has found that environments in which innovation and creativity thrive are those that emphasize experimentation and discovery, and constructive feedback and openness to new ideas abound.

All of these speak to environments that enable greater workforce well-being. Further, i4cp's research has shown strong connections between overall productivity, engagement, and retention and employees feeling good about their overall contribution and development.

High-Performance Organizations Report Business Returns for their Well-Being \$\$



"Putting money into making sure people can be taken care of physically, mentally, and otherwise, means they can be more productive when they are at work and they will be at work more often when they are taken care of. That presents a big advantage for companies that regard employees in this manner."

Genentech



Ivor Solomon

Head of Total Rewards
Genentech



Beyond the benefits already noted, well-being leaders interviewed for the study simply say that making a commitment to the well-being of their workforces is "just the right thing to do." Clearly those leaders see a moral imperative that goes along with the obvious business mandate for investing in employee well-being.



Awareness and Training: Next Practices to Support Mental/Emotional Well-Being

Definition:

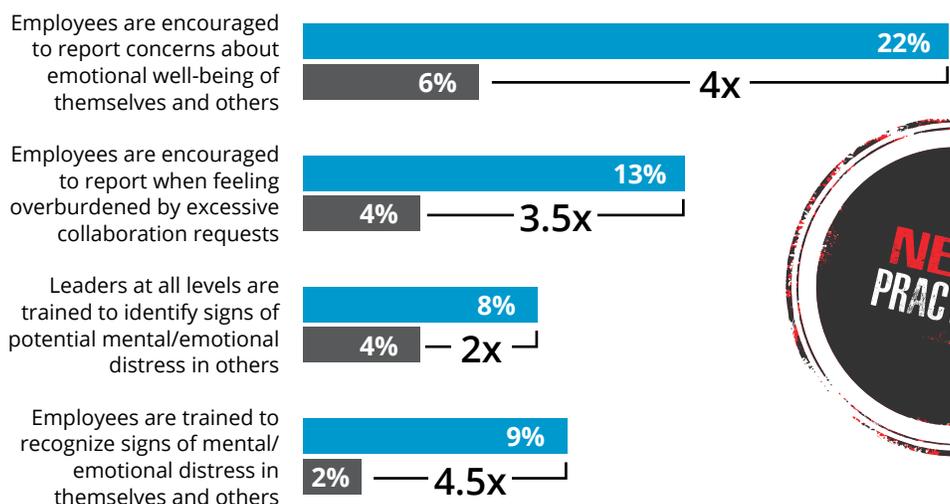
Next Practices:

Practices correlated to positive market performance that are used by a relatively small number of top-performing organizations—and that other organizations should consider implementing.

Several **next practices** emerged in the study—i4cp defines these as strategies that are strongly correlated to better market performance and utilized in a small percentage of top organizations, but not yet widely adopted.

Those from high-performance organizations were much more likely to describe their companies as those that demonstrate concern for psychological safety. Two areas of **next practices** in mental/emotional well-being that emerged from the analysis were awareness and training. Along with their correlations to better market performance, the practices also strongly correlate to greater levels of workforce well-being, making them solid choices for organizations seeking better outcomes from their mental/emotional well-being efforts.

Mental/Emotional Well-Being **Next Practices**



High-performance organizations Low-performance organizations
Organizations indicating high/very high extent with 1,000+ employees. Source: i4cp



“Mental Health for the Mentally Healthy”

“In the U.S, our nation is not doing a good job of addressing the mental health of people who are mentally healthy,” observes Kathleen Herath, associate vice president of well-being and safety at insurance and financial services firm Nationwide.

Herath says that’s because people don’t understand how emotional well-being is supposed to feel. “We as a country aren’t educating people about where they should be, how that should feel, and what to do when that swings out of balance. Instead, things are geared to crisis mode. People know if they are underweight, average weight or overweight. But they don’t know where they fit on that continuum from a mental health perspective. I would love to see that change, and I hope it will happen through the corporate approach to well-being. I think companies can drive that by making the need visible and asking for change.”

At Nationwide, educational efforts elevate mental/emotional health and promote greater understanding of the brain. A robust employee assistance program and other services enable associates to access treatment when it is needed. In addition, brain training, mindfulness and other programs and services aim to help prevent mental health issues and crises. Regular internal communications include emotional health concepts and other well-being content.



Kathleen Herath

Associate Vice President of
Well-Being and Safety
Nationwide



Specific training courses debunk myths about mental illness and teach Nationwide leaders and associates how to recognize signs and symptoms of current or potential emotional issues.



Gale King

Chief HR and Administrative Officer
Nationwide



For instance, Herath says, National Nutrition Month resources talk about healthy eating, but also “disordered eating, from bingeing disorders and anorexia to morbid obesity. We want to talk about the real stuff of well-being, not just the ‘fun’ things like challenges, contests, and giveaways, although we do some of that, too. We have to address barriers that arise—things like domestic violence, chronic depression, the financial threat of losing a home—or we really aren’t helping people be well.”

Herath and her colleagues use a multi-pronged educational approach, ensuring that learning programs teaching leader and associate resiliency include emotional well-being conversations. HR business partners further the work by providing additional support to leaders throughout the company. Specific training courses debunk myths about mental illness and teach Nationwide leaders and associates how to recognize signs and symptoms of current or potential emotional issues. Emotional Well-being for Leaders and Recognizing Associates in Crisis are two of the offerings.

“Now more than ever, employers need to focus on the ‘total’ health of their associates to maximize their overall well-being. Your mental health impacts your ability to be totally productive,” says Gale King, chief HR and administrative officer at Nationwide. “We believe when we create an environment where our associates can receive the information, resources, and support they need, both professionally and personally, it enhances their effectiveness at work and their engagement to the company.”

Impairment is an area of specific focus for leadership education at Nationwide. “We are very proud of the fact that we have a substance-free workplace and that we have received awards from the National Safety Council and others for our work in mental health and addiction issues in the workplace,” Herath says. “We talk about signs and symptoms of someone’s being impaired, what that might look like or smell like, and what to do. We do not terminate at Nationwide. We help people get clean and get help. We have achieved really good outcomes that enable associates to come back to work, so we believe that the nicest and most caring thing that you can do as a leader is intervene.”





Employers will Likely Expand Focus on Mental/Emotional Health

Although work can be good for mental health, negative workplaces—particularly those where disrespect breeds bullying and harassment—can exacerbate existing mental health issues, such as depression. The World Health Organization reports that about 264 million people worldwide suffer from depression. Many others also suffer from anxiety, making these illnesses leading causes of disability and work disruptors (WHO, 2019).

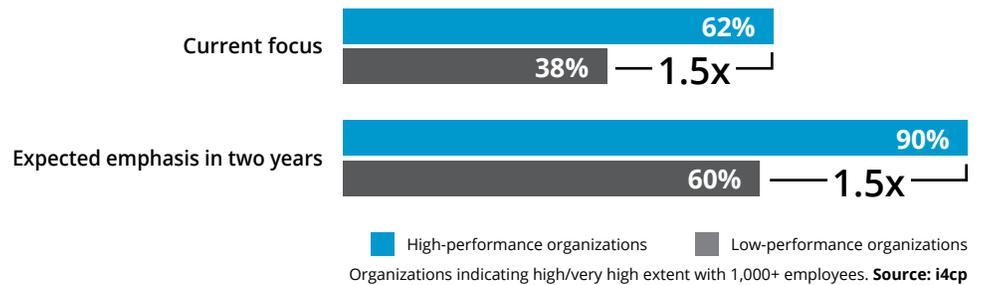
There's also the growing trend of cultures that apply (implicitly or explicitly) pressure on workers to be constantly “on”—expecting that they will respond to work emails and messages at all hours of the day and night, on weekends, and even while on vacation. It's common for people to say that they don't feel comfortable setting boundaries or raising an issue or concern without fearing negative consequences (such as being perceived as not fully committed or not being a team player). In a time of widespread worry and uncertainty related to the coronavirus pandemic, anxiety and other issues are surging, so the “always-on” pressure can be even more corrosive to employee well-being.

In a time of widespread worry and uncertainty related to the coronavirus pandemic, [...] the “always-on” pressure can be even more corrosive to employee well-being.

The good news is that the data showed that greater emphasis placed on mental and emotional well-being reaps rewards—especially for high-performance organizations—those organizations also show superior levels of effectiveness in addressing the mental/emotional needs of their workforces and in the effectiveness of their related well-being programs. In fact, their effectiveness is **2x** the degree of success noted by organizations overall and almost **3x** that of lower-performing companies.

The societal stigma associated with discussing mental health issues and seeking treatment for them continues to be a challenge.

Current and Future Focus: Mental/Emotional Health



Although they still need improvement in the efficacy of their mental/emotional health efforts, high-performance organizations surpass other companies.

Many factors influence the ability to meet workers' mental/emotional health needs effectively. In particular, the societal stigma associated with discussing mental health issues and seeking treatment for them continues to be a challenge.

In many cases, people don't understand what mental illness is. Consequently, signs that they, their co-workers, family, friends, or others might be experiencing emotional challenges go unnoticed. In turn, that means people don't get the early intervention that could prevent escalation into more serious issues.



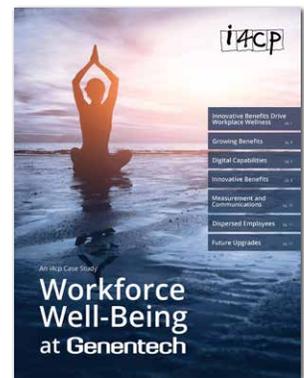
Despite Huge Investment, Well-Being Program Effectiveness is Elusive

Why Aren't Organizations Better at Well-Being?

With billions of dollars spent every year on employee well-being, the low levels of effectiveness raise questions. Why aren't companies achieving better results for their employees? And why are expensive well-being programs languishing?

To assess effectiveness in workforce well-being, the study looked at two considerations: Do employers perceive their well-being *programs* to be effective? And how do they rate the overall well-being of the *employees* who make up their workforces?

Despite admirable goals, concerted efforts, and dedicated investments in employee benefits, fewer than half of survey respondents give high ratings to the effectiveness of their programs across all six well-being elements. Not surprisingly, high-performance organizations lead in every element by a significant margin, though their reported effectiveness levels leave plenty of room for improvement.

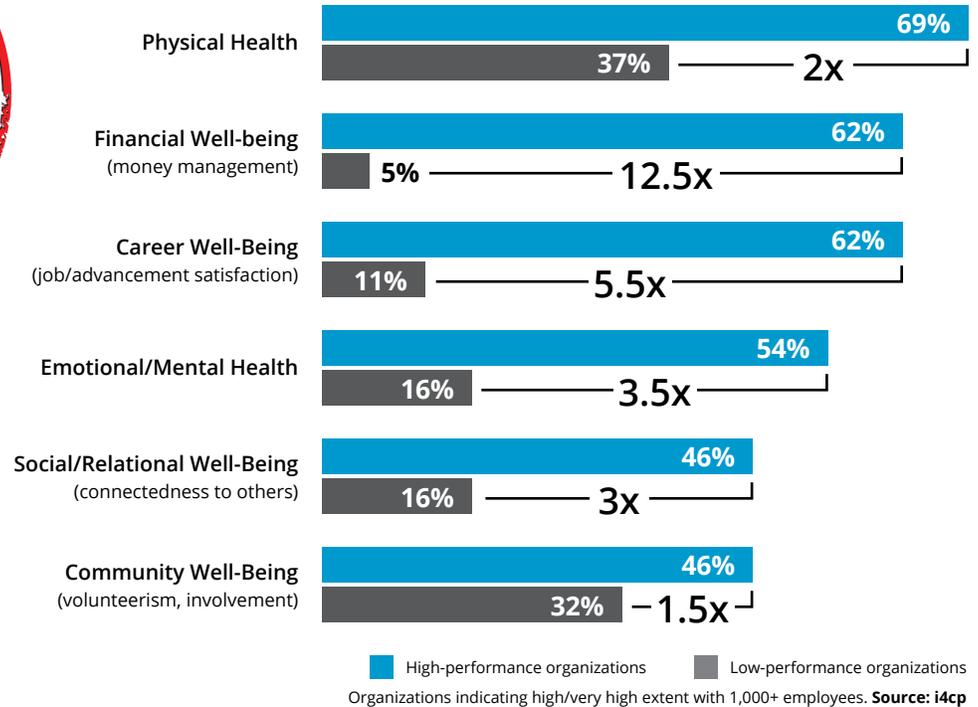


To read more, see i4cp's case study [Workforce Well-Being at Genentech](#).





High-Performers Report Greater Success, But Well-Being Program Effectiveness Lags



"When you think about all-around well-being of the people who work for your organization, it isn't about the programs. It's about the culture you create."

Nancy Vitale

Former CHRO
Genentech

The second lens into effectiveness—overall well-being of employees—is trailing as well. While 45% of high-performance organizations report that their workers enjoy high/very high levels of well-being, the figure for low-performers was a dismal 13%. And despite reporting significantly greater levels of well-being than other firms, top companies clearly have a long way to go in achieving widespread workforce well-being.

The data found multiple barriers to success:

- Cost
- Participation
- Awareness
- Measurement
- Leadership behavior
- Underutilization of technology

And there are other factors, including the challenge of organizational culture.

"Perspective is a contributing factor," says Vitale. "Virtually all HR and business leaders focus on programs and benefit offerings. But when you think about all-around well-being of the people who work for your organization, it isn't about the programs. It's about the culture you create. How does that culture enable people to engage in their own well-being to be at their best? How does it facilitate that engagement at a team level or across the organization?"

The global benefits director at a leading software firm concurs that culture is important: “Our global well-being strategy has three core principles: culture, the environment, and an engaged and productive workforce.” That combination enables the company to address diverse and holistic needs and interests. With leadership support, a culture of well-being drives growth, learning, and business outcomes.

Half of those surveyed noted that the expense of providing programs hobbled their prospects for success. However, since 40% said that their organizations intend to increase budgets in the year ahead, they are actively responding to that perennial challenge.

And of course, half of the battle is getting people to show up. Whether success is measured in program effectiveness or employee well-being levels, it can't be achieved unless people take part in the initiatives organizations offer.

Lack of awareness of well-being programs, cited by 47% of all survey participants, is a contributor to low participation. This is likely because these organizations aren't tying commitment to well-being to the foundations of its culture and values. Clear and consistent messaging that starts at the top of the house must be a priority in promoting well-being, and leaders need to set the pace by example—they must be visibly and consistently out in front championing well-being programs. Driving better outcomes calls for purposeful, ongoing communications organization-wide and can be further enhanced when learning and development content helps heighten knowledge of well-being topics and programs.

Metrics is another common challenge; more than half (54%) of respondents reported that difficulty measuring well-being program results also hampered their success. In fact, measurement is a glaring omission on the part of many organizations. Overall, only 39% of surveyed companies measure the effectiveness of their well-being programs, and an only slightly higher percentage (41%) report measuring employee well-being.

Our analysis found that the most common measurements of well-being program effectiveness (program-specific metrics, health insurance costs/claims, and employee engagement/sentiment surveys) are really lagging indicators (usage, costs, # of claims, etc.). The most impactful measures are those that provide insight into employee perception—leading indicators that speak to the health of the culture and sense of psychological safety (e.g., the raising of issues by employees such as the calling out of unethical or counter-cultural behavior). Identifying changes in business measures that can be linked to well-being efforts is also a measure that packs more punch in assessing well-being program effectiveness.

Whether success is measured in program effectiveness or employee well-being levels, it can't be achieved unless people take part in the initiatives organizations offer.

Clear and consistent messaging that starts at the top of the house must be a priority in promoting well-being, and leaders need to set the pace by example.

HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION



WELL-BEING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Fewer than **40%** of all companies assess well-being program effectiveness

High-performance organizations are **1.5x** more likely than lower-performers to measure

YES, WE MEASURE WELL-BEING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS



■ High-performance organizations ■ Low-performance organizations

Organizations indicating high/very high extent with 1,000+ employees. Source: i4cp

MOST POPULAR MEASURES:

1. Program-specific metrics
2. Health insurance costs/claims
3. Employee engagement/sentiment surveys

MOST IMPACTFUL WELL-BEING MEASURES USED BY COMPANIES REPORTING BETTER MARKET PERFORMANCE AND HIGHER LEVELS OF WORKFORCE WELL-BEING:

1. Workers' perception of inclusion or belonging with the organization
2. Employee engagement/sentiment surveys
3. Changes in business measures
4. Program evaluations/feedback
5. Reported complaints of unethical or counter-cultural behavior by employees

MEASURE WELL-BEING?

WORKFORCE WELL-BEING

Organizations are slightly more likely to measure employee well-being

High-performers gauge well-being at **1.5x** the rate of lower-performers

YES, WE MEASURE THE WELL-BEING OF OUR EMPLOYEES



MOST POPULAR MEASURES:

1. Employee engagement/sentiment surveys
2. Use of physical and mental/emotional health benefits
3. Healthcare costs/trends

MOST IMPACTFUL EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING MEASURES USED BY COMPANIES REPORTING BETTER MARKET PERFORMANCE AND HIGHER LEVELS OF WORKFORCE WELL-BEING:

1. Employee participation in social activities
2. Employee participation in community programs and volunteerism
3. Utilization of well-being benefits other than physical or mental/emotional health benefits

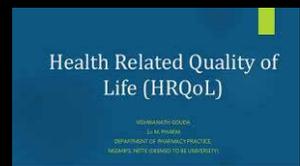


Healthy Days at Humana

One company that measures effectiveness well is Humana. Along with its own Humana Well-being Index that provides a quick assessment of associates' current status across the company's four dimensions of well-being (purpose, health, belonging, and security), Humana's many measurement methods include a free tool developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Healthy Days measure is part of the CDC's work in [Health-Related Quality of Life \(HRQoL\)](#) and asks individuals to respond to four simple questions—two on physical health and two on mental health. Tim State says the tool is helpful in his company's population health surveillance, and "as an outcome measure that enables a certain amount of intervention."

While Healthy Days is more of a macro population tool versus an individual one, State says, "It is very much a way to put the focus on the whole person, or holistic, view of well-being."



For more, see the CDC guidance [Health Related Quality of Life \(HRQoL\)](#).

The CDC's 4 "Healthy Days Measures" questions:

1. Would you say that in general your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?
2. Now thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?
3. Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?
4. During the past 30 days, approximately how many days did poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?



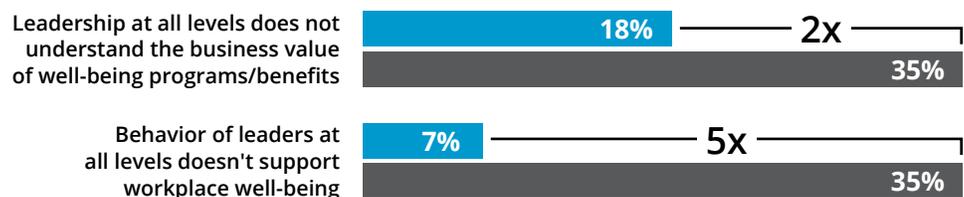
Remedying What's Ailing Well-Being Starts at the Top

Low-performance organizations are **2x** more likely than their high-performing counterparts to have leaders (at all levels) who do not understand the business value of wellness/well-being programs.

The behavior of an organization's leaders (at all levels) has a direct effect on the type of culture the organization has and on the overall level of workforce well-being. Leaders who believe that investment in employee well-being is not only a sound business move, but also the right thing to do, are critical to setting the tone of the culture to optimize both well-being and bottom lines.

Conversely, leaders who aren't committed to well-being can impede results. Low-performance organizations are **2x** more likely than their high-performing counterparts to have leaders (at all levels) who do not understand the business value of wellness/well-being programs. Clearly, the effectiveness of well-being programs is adversely affected when leaders don't understand this linkage. That's even somewhat of a problem for high-performance organizations, where 18% report that leaders simply don't get the value proposition.

Behaviors of Leaders Can Impede Well-Being Effectiveness



Legend: High-performance organizations (blue), Low-performance organizations (grey). Organizations indicating high/very high extent with 1,000+ employees. Source: i4cp

Leaders are typically visible role models for others, and their support of well-being initiatives directly impacts effectiveness, especially when they exhibit a lack of support. This isn't a big challenge in top companies where only 7% report issues. But the problem is **5x** greater for lower-performing organizations.

Those two leader-related issues clearly beg for better communication within organizations—perhaps more formal training—to enlighten leaders about the business case for workforce well-being and to provide guidance in the behaviors that demonstrate support for well-being.

Formal training can be a good move for organizations, a *next practice* in use in only 5% of organizations, and strongly correlated to better market performance and greater levels of employee well-being.

Definition:

Next Practices: Practices correlated to positive market performance that are used by a relatively small number of top-performing organizations—and that other organizations should consider implementing.





Dr. Rob Cross
Edward A. Madden Professor of Global Leadership, Babson College



To read more, see the i4cp infographic [How to Address Collaborative Overload](#).

One well-being leader says his company provides some basics to leaders about what it looks like and feels like behaviorally as a leader to demonstrate care for the total well-being of an associate. That gives them guidance in concrete behavioral terms.

Kathleen Herath, AVP of well-being and safety at Nationwide says that her organization has created specific development interventions around Nationwide’s mental well-being initiatives to educate leaders and instruct them in expected behaviors.

Through his partnership in the i4cp research, Rob Cross discovered a handful of roles that leaders assume to affect not only employees’ sense of purpose, but also specific elements of holistic well-being.

To positively impact career well-being of employees, leaders make a difference by endeavoring to see the potential in individuals that they may not see in themselves. Further support happens when leaders structure work in ways that synchronize with workers’ career growth aspirations.

Cross found reinforcement for community well-being when leaders encourage employees to become involved in, or to take on supportive roles, in their external communities. Within organizations, he says, leaders can strengthen social well-being through a couple of the actions that also support purpose: motivating people to co-create solutions with others and encouraging employees to be empathetic and attuned to the demands their colleagues face.

Finally, Cross says, leaders support emotional well-being by helping buffer their people from unreasonable demands or undue pressure. In other i4cp/Rob Cross research on collaboration, similar findings surfaced related to what leaders can do to help (both themselves and their workers) identify and avoid collaborative overload. And, if things go wrong for employees, leaders can make a difference by encouraging people to take time and first emotionally process the event before making a plan to move forward.

All of the leadership roles Cross highlighted are being applied more often in high-performance companies, and all are strongly linked to better market performance. Most also support greater levels of overall workforce well-being.



Technology is Underutilized

Wearable devices, such as Fitbits and Apple watches, have become ubiquitous symbols of well-being technologies. But the market is much more expansive, extending to health promotion technologies, telehealth, immersive wellness experiences, and apps such as Headspace, Noom, MindBody and many more that provide mobile support with diet, exercise, sleep issues, meditation, and other concerns.

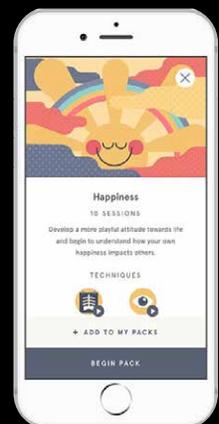
The survey found only 28% of organizations use well-being technologies or digital tools extensively to enhance their well-being programs. And more than one in five noted no use of them at all. High-performance companies were far out in front of others, with 46% reporting extensive use of digital technologies—more than twice the percentage of lower-performers. Yet, 46% is a still-modest level of usage.

Top reasons high-performance companies use well-being technologies:

- Enable 24/7 access to well-being programs
- Improve employees' engagement in well-being
- Enable personalized well-being programs at scale



Headspace®



Sleepio

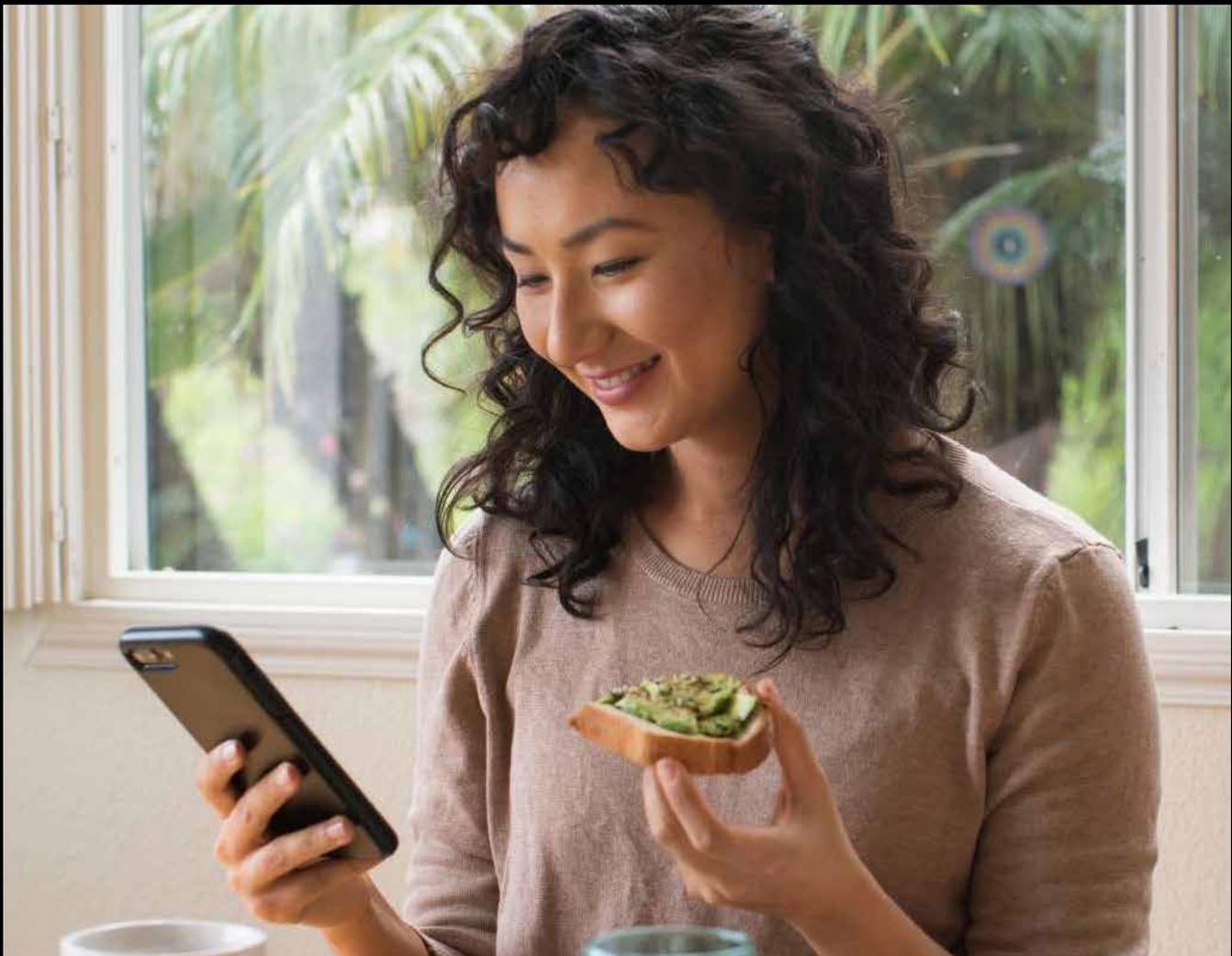


Doctor on Demand

When it came to effectiveness in leveraging well-being technologies, the differences were even more glaring. Although a relatively low 32% of high-performance organizations rated their effectiveness highly, only 10% of all organizations represented in the survey claimed top levels of success, and no lower-performing firms rated their use of well-being technologies more than moderately effective.

For all companies, including high-performers, employee privacy concerns and inability to measure behavior changes were the leading stumbling blocks to effective use of the tools.

The findings related to use of technologies in well-being programs leave no doubt that this is an area of largely untapped opportunity for organizations.





Employee Participation: Connecting Hearts and Minds = Results

Greater workforce participation in well-being programs is strongly correlated to better market performance and higher levels of employee well-being.

High-performance organizations report that the majority (more than 60%) of their employees take part in well-being programs, a participation level **3x** higher than that of lower-performing organizations. And as we noted earlier, our research and that of Rob Cross shows that one's feeling of relational connectedness (to co-workers whom one gets to know, like, and trust) has a huge impact on retention.

In other words, it's not about the shiniest new programs, but the connections for which organizations create structures and support to drive and influence employee engagement with well-being programs. High-performance organizations recognize that the power of effective well-being programs resides in the strength of networks and relationships.

Our analysis of the data found that high-performance organizations are:

- **4x more likely** to emphasize social well-being
- **4x more likely** to leverage champions to promote well-being
- **3x more likely** to emphasize community well-being
- **3x more likely** to have online social communities related to well-being
- **3x more likely** to apply specific practices that enable individuals to help each other maintain good health habits
- **2x more likely** to design well-being programs to leverage collaboration

High-performance organizations report **3x** higher employee participation rates in well-being programs than that of lower-performing organizations.

The Power of Relationships

High-performance organizations emphasize social well-being at a rate more than **4x** that of lower performers.

Top companies recognize the value of healthy relationships, both within and outside the workplace. Rob Cross's conclusions about individual purpose, and the study's discoveries about the roles of leaders, confirm that the relationships that develop inside organizations create effective collaborations that strengthen outcomes in both business and well-being.

However, this social/relational idea is one that many organizations overlook. Only 26% of all survey respondents said their programs focus on the importance of social well-being. High-performance organizations emphasize social well-being at a rate more than **4x** that of lower performers.

"The data makes it really apparent that the high-performance culture comes into play here," says Cross.

"Culture creates the conditions where these powerful relationships in the workplace can, or can't, develop. The culture is either going to help facilitate and cultivate these developmental connections or it is going to facilitate and focus purely on instrumental outcomes.

That project-centered, what-do-we-have-to-do-to-get-this-work-done framework leaves no room for leaders to know what others care about, so they won't be able to shape work in a way that creates those connections. We clearly see that leaders in high-performance companies who understand that and create the conditions in which these relationships can happen are able to generate a more positive impact."

Relationships Drive Well-Being

True effectiveness in well-being is about relationships, says Rob Cross.

"There is definitely a trend toward purpose-oriented interactions occurring more in high-performance organizations.

Creating cultures or context where people derive a sense of purpose and growth from their relationships with leaders and others at work really matters. It is essential to well-being effectiveness, and it's associated with high-performance."

The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying social distancing mandates have created many challenges. But the event has also sparked innovation in organizations dedicated to not allowing barriers to physical proximity among colleagues to derail the well-being of their workforces.

While social distancing and new work-from-home arrangements for many have been trying in so many ways, it also presents opportunity to take a new look at the spatial barriers already present in remote workforces and think about ways to be more inclusive of those who work as part of cross-geography and/or virtual teams.

The key for employers is to ensure that distance among co-workers does not manifest as feelings of isolation, loneliness, or lack of belonging for workers.

The key for employers is to ensure that distance among co-workers does not manifest as feelings of isolation, loneliness, or lack of belonging for workers.





Harnessing the Social Factor

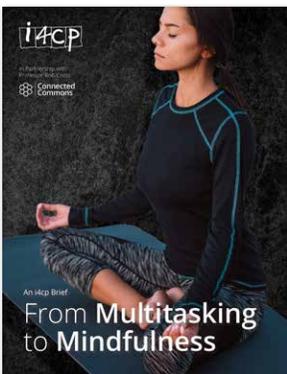


Sanctuary
Studios, Inc.



Leah Adams

Educational Advisor,
Sanctuary Studios, Inc.



To read more, see the i4cp's brief
[From Multitasking to Mindfulness.](#)

Two **next practices** that emerged in this study illustrate ways top companies tap the power of relationships to enhance well-being programs. First, they encourage individuals to help each other maintain good well-being habits. That can happen through simple, informal conversations and team discussions, and encouragement can be reinforced in learning content and organizational communications.

The other **next practice** is more deliberate: intentionally designing well-being programs to leverage collaborative approaches—group exercise classes or community volunteer projects are examples.

“We are social creatures who are wired for connections,” says Leah Adams, a yoga instructor, ayurvedic wellness counselor and workplace well-being teacher who also serves as educational advisor to Seattle-based Sanctuary, an immersive wellness firm. “Our way of being literally affects those around us. So practicing mindfulness and gratitude in community with others is a simple but potent approach.

“Some progressive corporations are starting meetings with those present saying something they’re grateful for about another attendee. Because we are relational beings, that exploration of gratitude in meetings is a great way to do team-building. It also enhances psychological trust and employee engagement.”

In her work in organizational well-being, Adams’ group classes leverage a collaborative approach. “Bringing people from divergent areas of the company together to practice yoga or mindfulness is really powerful. These are people who ordinarily wouldn’t be working or meeting with each other, but they relate because they are together in class. That is a really progressive way to use community to strengthen connections. It is a valuable tool in the workplace and in life.”



Vibrant social interactions also take place online. Humana’s social media community, Buzz, provides a platform where associates can share their stories, and many center on the various elements of well-being.

State says that Buzz offers “a particularly great opportunity for storytelling to happen organically in real time, and it plays out almost every day. People share their journeys, the challenges they’re dealing with, and their ups and downs—in effect, crowd-sourcing ideas to help them overcome issues. Others provide support and suggestions, and share their own stories. The number-one most-posted topic for years now is well-being. Culturally, that is so important because it normalizes the pursuit of well-being in a way that is very open, encouraging and transparent.”

Similar interactions happen elsewhere. Employee resource, or affinity, groups provide workers with opportunities to build relationships and interact in online communities. A well-being leader at a company that permits any employee to create a group, says that flexibility has resulted in “probably 1,000 different groups—everything from salsa dancing, to pets. Well-being is a big focus. There are groups around bipolar disorder, autism, running, yoga—we have them all. And all are employee-created and led.”

Employee resource or affinity groups provide workers with opportunities to build relationships and interact in online communities.





From meditation to deep breathing to no-excuses sleep rules, Salesforce global leaders prioritize their wellbeing.

Well-Being Champions Provide Powerful Connections

Well-being advocates build relationships that support employees enterprisewide with information, activities, and encouragement.

At a grass-roots level in high-performance organizations, well-being advocates build relationships that support employees enterprisewide with information, activities, and encouragement.

One global company's well-being champions—known as ambassadors—currently number about 70 employee volunteers. The firm's benefits director describes their work:

"We have ongoing awareness campaigns around well-being topics. The ambassadors take three-to-five tangible actions to their groups and encourage people to do something each month. For example, to recognize Heart Month, ambassadors might share heart-healthy recipes with their teams and plan a group potluck. For CPR Month, a group might take a CPR class together." Ambassadors also provide meditation exercises that can be applied at the start of team meetings. The company plans to grow the group and have ambassadors in place across its global workforce.

In another organization the network of well-being champions and advocates numbers about 1,000. "These teammates have day jobs in addition to their real passion for well-being," says the company's well-being leader. "We work with them so they are empowered at the front lines of the organization to drive outcomes, either by helping to deliver experiences or by being listening posts for associates. We also provide some input. But the champions are the inspirational engine at the local level to keep the well-being movement pushing forward."



How Humana Develops Leaders to Drive Emotional/Mental Well-Being

Leading organizations are working to achieve what Humana's Tim State describes as "normalizing the discussion of emotions and related behavior as just another aspect of highly effective teams, organizations, and people."

Humana uses training—especially development for leaders—to help address the stigma surrounding emotional and mental health issues by providing leaders and their teams with "a common language and a consistent framework," State says. "That helps overcome stigma, reinforces the importance of whole person well-being, and creates the psychological safety needed so that these needs and experiences can be brought forward and talked about."

A common form of measurement also helps leaders support emotional well-being effectively, State explains. Every Humana leader of 200 or more associates (employees) receives a custom digital snapshot quarterly that provides a single team well-being score derived from about 70 relevant metrics. Leaders can compare that to the rest of the company and to their team's history, using it to determine if they are on the right track or if action is needed to improve well-being issues.

"Our work with leaders gives them a common language, a common way of measurement, and a process for talking about the well-being of their teams."

Tim State

SVP of Associate Health and Well-being
Humana

State says that when leaders receive the snapshots, they're also given guidance in the behaviors they can apply to thoughtfully and respectfully demonstrate care for whole-person well-being. "So our work with leaders gives them a common language, a common way of measurement, and a process for talking about the well-being of their teams."

Humana also uses virtual and in-person team-based experiences designed to help leaders and their teams work together to build emotional and behavioral resilience. "Learning the skills, the language, and the drivers of that in a safe, guided way as a team means that leaders don't bear the whole burden of responsibility for emotional well-being," State explains. "The leader's role is clear, but we don't ask them to become experts. Instead, the team goes through this learning journey together—using experiences built by a psychologist and behavioral expert. It's an approach that builds awareness and helps leaders and associates practice together simultaneously."





Yoga classes, like this one at Genentech, is one of the health-related benefits supported by Roche.

The Foundation of Well-Being: Culture and Leadership

Just as multiple elements comprise holistic well-being, creating a culture in which workforce well-being can thrive relies on a number of components as well.

The coronavirus pandemic highlighted the need to unite remote workforces around the world with messages that reinforced corporate culture. Uniting employees around a shared purpose and creating an atmosphere that intentionally enables and supports all aspects of holistic well-being draws on and contributes to a healthy culture. Of particular importance is the idea of purpose (both individual and organizational), alignment of talent and business practices, and the active support and participation of leaders.

“There have been many books telling us that people get a sense of purpose and meaning from the nature of the work they do,” says Rob Cross. “And that has kept HR and business leaders laboring for years to identify and communicate the deeper meaning behind the jobs people perform and the missions companies work to fulfill.” But that isn’t the whole story—or the only way employees find purpose at work.

Cross and his associate Jean Singer, principal at Collaborative Analytics, look at individuals’ well-being as a function not only of physical health but also of personal growth, resilience, and purpose. The two developed the perspective that a person’s sense of purpose is a product of the interactions they have, many of which occur in the workplace.



Jean Singer

Principal,
Collaborative Analytics



"[Purpose] is a product of behaviors that an organization's culture and leaders encourage around the work. We see these influences happening much more often in high-performance companies."

Rob Cross

Edward A. Madden Professor of Global Leadership, Babson College

"People derive purpose from interactions with leaders, with peers, by mentoring others, by taking care of their teams and through their work with clients," Cross notes. "Away from the job, purpose grows out of interactions within the community, through philanthropy and volunteerism, and of course, it is found in relationships with family members."

"What is interesting about our current research is that so many people continue to treat purpose as being embedded or intrinsic in the work. But our findings tell us that it is a product of behaviors that an organization's culture and leaders encourage around the work. We see these influences happening much more often in high-performance companies."

How People Say They Gain a Sense of Purpose at Work



Survey responses to all seven options Cross and Singer examined reflect strong correlations to both market performance and greater levels of workforce well-being.

What this means for organizations, according to Cross, is “companies need to ask if the programs they are implementing encourage or help create these relationships associated with well-being. Without thinking about how you cultivate that connection side, you’re not making choices that are most likely to help your employees thrive.”

Having a strong purpose that underlies the organization’s work serves as a guiding force for many high-performance organizations and provides a clear connection between companies and their employees. When that governing purpose is well-being, the results can be powerful.

“A commitment to well-being has been a part of our culture for a long time and is connected to our company’s mission—*doing now what patients need next*,” says Julie Tuggle, director of benefits at biotech firm Genentech. “That’s a common purpose across our organization, and it focuses our efforts and decision-making.”

Genentech



Julie Tuggle

Director of Benefits
Genentech



Measuring and Managing

The New Corporate Currency

Purpose, Culture, and Brand



Leadership, Workforce Well-Being, and The New Corporate Currency



For more, download i4cp's [Measuring and Managing the New Corporate Currency: Purpose Culture, and Brand](#).

With everything being equal (pay, benefits, development, opportunity) the best and brightest talent want to associate with organizations that have a strong sense of purpose (i.e., what it does and what it stands for beyond profit).

It's that sense of purpose that also shapes the organization's culture (i.e., how people experience the leadership, its workforce, and the workplace as a result of what is condoned, rewarded, encouraged, and penalized in the organization).

What people experience from an organization as an employee, a consumer, or a supplier will dictate how they talk about the organization among colleagues, friends, and acquaintances, and in social media. All of this shapes the organization's reputation and identity (i.e., its brand).

i4cp refers to this interconnectedness as **The New Corporate Currency**, an equation that links purpose and culture with brand. Though this interconnectedness has always existed, it's become more visible during the COVID-19 pandemic than ever before, with the well-being of the workforce at stake.

Aligning Talent Practices and Well-Being

Healthy cultures require talent practices that support well-being by reinforcing the behaviors that create the desired culture. This alignment helps companies realize the major gains they expect from effective well-being initiatives. High-performance organizations realize this and are two to three times more likely than lower-performers to use their commitment to workforce well-being as a means to strengthen talent attraction and retention.

Aligning key talent programs to reinforce well-being goals needn't require extensive resources or effort. It simply calls on functional leaders to be mindful of well-being and think purposefully about options for integrating it into existing processes.

How do top companies do that? High-performance organizations apply three **next practices** far more than lower performers to help ensure that talent programs reinforce well-being:

1. Add discussions about well-being issues to **performance** conversations—**6x**
2. Leverage **recognition and rewards** programs to focus attention on and reinforce employees' achievements in well-being—**4x**
3. Design **learning and development** programs to include content that enhances knowledge about well-being—**1.5x**

High-performance organizations are **2 or 3x** more likely than lower-performers to use their commitment to workforce well-being as a means to strengthen talent attraction and retention.



gRIDE, Genentech's employee commuting program, serves about 1,700 employees every day. Photo by Monica Semergiu.





Designing Workplaces that Support Well-Being



For more, download i4cp's [How Genentech Designs Buildings to Promote Workplace Well-Being](#).

Workplaces designed with holistic well-being in mind include elements that foster psychological safety as well as physical safety and comfort. This extends to buildings and workspaces that leverage the powerful influences of innovative designs, layouts, systems, and features to enhance employee well-being and productivity.

Elements of workplaces that support well-being include:

- Workspace design promotes well-being
- Designated areas for collaboration
- Designated private areas
- Outdoor spaces contribute to well-being
- Cafeterias, food services, and vending machines provide healthy food and beverage selections
- Onsite amenities that include daycare



Although far fewer employees work in office settings during (and probably after) the COVID-19 pandemic, workplace design will remain a relevant consideration, especially in organizations where remote work is not an option. It is not a stretch to suggest that as a result of this pandemic, organizations will revisit open-floor concepts and shared office space in order to mitigate and manage health concerns related to both.

For more on this well-being strategy, download i4cp's [The Well Workplace: Shaping Organizational Environments](#)

Leveraging Performance, Development, and Collaboration Supports Well-Being

At Nationwide, Herath says performance conversations can offer valuable insights into well-being issues. "Things often come to light as performance issues when employees are experiencing well-being challenges. We see the resulting behavior on the job, but we have to get to the real cause, so we work closely with the company's Associate Relations team to identify any underlying problems that may be contributing to changes in performance."

Herath points out that her group collaborates extensively within Nationwide to ensure that education about well-being for leaders and associates takes place not just through formal classes and training. Instead, it simply becomes a part of daily work.

"Too many companies put great resources in place, but managers and supervisors don't know about them. Making a real difference in well-being requires a 360-degree company view," she says, crediting HR business partners with providing valuable informal education about well-being through their interactions.

"Things often come to light as performance issues when employees are experiencing well-being challenges."

Kathleen Herath

Associate Vice President of Well-Being and Safety
Nationwide





Many firms use talent acquisition to both support and benefit from well-being programs by leveraging their web and social media presence to publicize their commitment to employee well-being. While most provide information on benefits upfront to job applicants, insights into the organization's purpose (i.e., why it does what it does) and its position on flexible work arrangements (for example) may be emphasized more as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Philanthropy programs offer another avenue by which well-being efforts contribute to talent acquisition. Participation in volunteer efforts and other types of community support provide visibility for companies' commitments to well-being and enhance appeal to potential employees.

By highlighting employees' achievements in well-being, recognition can support company objectives, while also showcasing well-being programs. This can be as simple as publishing stories of well-being accomplishments on intranets or other company communications channels.

How High-Performance Cultures Drive Greater Career Well-Being

A sense of career well-being is a reflection of an employee's satisfaction with their job, prospects for advancement, professional growth, and development options.

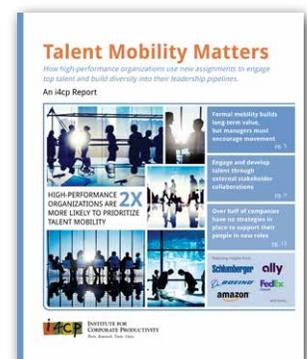
But career well-being ranked low in emphasis among surveyed companies overall (31%) and among lower-performing companies (19%). It fared poorly in effectiveness ratings, too: a third of all companies and 11% of lower-performance organizations gave their career well-being efforts top marks. But two-thirds of high-performance organizations say career well-being is a focus, and 62% rate themselves as highly/very highly effective at career well-being.

Career well-being seems an element over which most organizations would have more influence, so why are high-performance organizations so much more effective in this area?

They apply a handful of strategies—all strongly correlated to better market performance and higher levels of workforce well-being—that encourage employees' positive feelings about jobs and organizations, and permit career growth without sacrificing well-being:

- Design flexible **talent mobility programs** to avoid making employee well-being a compromise required for career growth or advancement—**2x**
- Encourage use of **vacation and personal leave time**—**2x**
- Offer **options for better work/life blend**. Offering flexible work schedules (such as time during the workday to run errands, transport children, or handle family matters) and work from home options—**1.5x**. This is especially important as companies (amidst the COVID-19 pandemic) look to return to some semblance of normal operations
- Accommodate employees' **special needs**: related to physical issues—**2x**, and to mental/emotional issues—**1x**

Career well-being ranked low in emphasis among surveyed companies overall (31%) and among lower-performing companies (19%).



For more, download i4cp's [Talent Mobility Matters](#).



During *Give Back Week*, this Genentech team helped package over 80,000 healthy meals in two days for national and global relief efforts.

Diverse Communities Benefit from Genentech's Activities

"Give Back Week is about doing things for the community, especially parts of the community that are underprivileged."

Ivor Solomon

Head of Total Rewards
Genentech

Genentech's annual *Give Back Week* embodies the high-performance approach to community well-being. The week is dedicated to an array of projects that enable employees—wherever they may be located—to participate individually and in groups in activities that benefit others.

By way of example, head of total rewards Ivor Solomon describes how *Give Back Week* unfolds at the company's South San Francisco location.

"There will be many different events in which people can sign up to participate—things like cleaning up beaches or rivers, going to schools to paint or clean the grounds, packaging food to be sent to places where children are undernourished, making blankets or toys for children in need, or assembling bicycles or skateboards," describes Solomon. "Activities happen on different days during the week, and participation normally ranges from two to four hours. If you went to a school to paint, you might be there for four hours. But some of the smaller activities take less time. Packaging food items, for example. A team will go in and work for two hours, then the next group will come in and work for two hours, and so on.

"Give Back Week is about doing things for the community, especially parts of the community that are underprivileged. And a community may not be our immediate neighbors. Activities benefit children in Africa, Haiti or other places where they need food or other support."

Solomon says almost all employees participate in the week, and many choose to take part in multiple projects. The activities are scheduled during work hours, and managers support the effort.



The Rewards of Investing in Volunteerism

Futurelab is Genentech's science education program to inspire the next generation of scientists.

Genentech also makes it possible for workers to volunteer for other community projects of their choosing. Some even venture overseas, contributing their special skillsets to physician groups and other philanthropic entities working to benefit communities worldwide. The company provides paid time for volunteerism and has a website designed to track the number of hours people contribute in individual and group efforts and in *Give Back Week* activities.

With its Futurelab program, Genentech combines support for employee social relationships at work with a sense of community belonging.



Genentech



Ragnar von Schiber

Associate Director of Corporate
and Employee Giving
Genentech

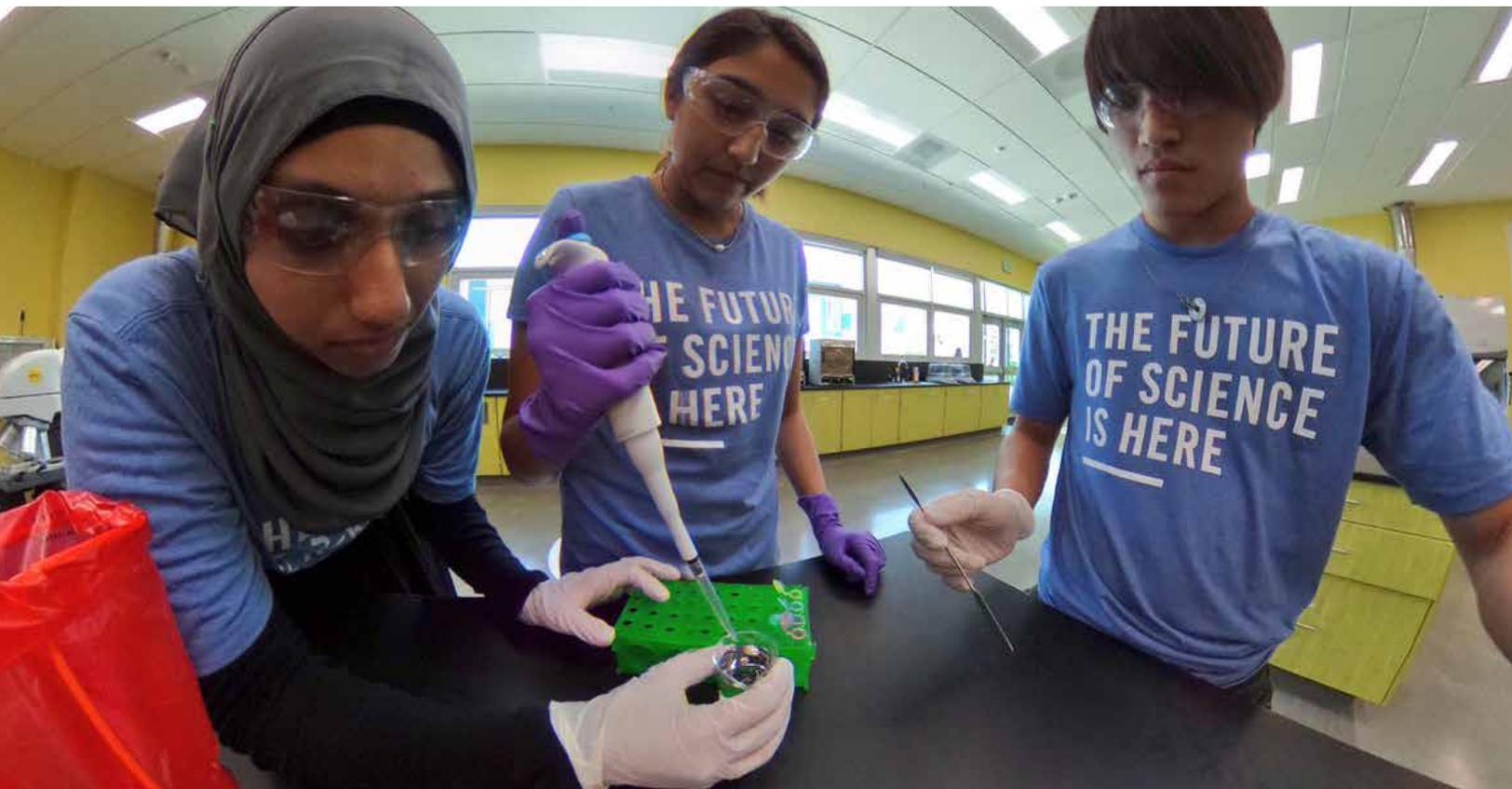


The company describes Futurelab as “a corporate citizenship program that benefits employee well-being while supporting all 9,000-plus local K-12 public school students in the South San Francisco (SSF) Unified School District.” The project aims to excite students about science, improve their college readiness and inspire them to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields by featuring unique programs for different ages:

- **Gene Academy** is a weekly mentoring and science program for 3rd-5th graders.
- **Helix Cup** is a science competition that engages 8th grade students and emphasizes teamwork, communication and persistence.
- **Science Garage** is a \$7.8M state-of-the-art lab and classroom, plus a four-year, hands-on biotech curriculum created by a collaboration between SSF teachers and Genentech.

Annually, more than 1,300 Genentech employees volunteer with Futurelab during work hours. Volunteer mentors play a key role in each of the project’s programs, serving as role models, teachers and friends.

Commenting on the program’s success, Genentech associate director of corporate and employee giving Ragnar von Schiber says, “Our employees love mentoring the next generation of local innovators. Helping kids learn and watching them grow brings so much joy to our Genentech community; sometimes it is hard to tell who’s benefitting more.”



Conclusion

Workforce well-being is the result of organizations committing to whole-person, or holistic, well-being and then creating the context in which well-being can thrive by shaping three critical factors: culture, leadership, and relationships.

While the COVID-19 pandemic caught most organizations by surprise, it certainly shines a brighter spotlight on workforce well-being. As the data outlines, well-being is far more advanced in high-performance organizations where the perspective is *holistic*.

Better business outcomes and greater levels of employee health are associated with many of the practices of high-performance organizations today. In fact, a number of their strategies embody ***next practices***, making them solid choices for organizations seeking the advantages of early adoption to strengthen their own well-being programs—strategies that help during a pandemic and beyond.

More broadly, this study exposed critical components that come together in specific ways to help leaders create powerful outcomes in their well-being programs and initiatives. Whole-person well-being—and organizational well-being—rests on a foundation of meaningful and nurturing relationships, healthy cultures that unite people around well-being and provide aligned support, and an expanding commitment to shattering the barriers hampering emotional wellness.

What we believe is ahead is significant expansion of holistic well-being efforts and greater investment on the part of employers. Along with heightened interest in mental/emotional well-being, organizations are more keenly aware than ever of the impact of stress and burnout. Expanding adoption of evolving technologies and digital tools (including AI) to enhance employee experience with well-being programs will help with this. So too will building design for occupants' well-being become the norm, although the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that we must also design for distance if necessary, and be ever mindful of the need for agility in the face of uncertainty, shifting employee preferences, and changes in the ways in which work gets done.



4 Practices for Driving Holistic Well-Being

To promote greater levels of well-being in organizations and their workforces, i4cp recommends:

1. Adopt a holistic approach

Leading organizations recognize the validity of adopting a whole-person philosophy to well-being across all six elements outlined in this study. In pursuing that expansion:

- Consider which of the six elements of well-being featured in i4cp's research—physical, mental/emotional, financial, career, community and social/relational—your organization already emphasizes. Or use your own multi-element model.
- Use well-being assessments and/or free tools from credible sources such as the CDC to identify and prioritize unmet needs in your workforce.
- Create and execute plans to expand your organization's focus into untapped elements of well-being for which needs have been identified.
- Measure, adjust and evolve your approaches to well-being as progress is made and workforce and organizational needs or preferences change.

2. Encourage relationships

From workplace interactions; to involvement in the communities where companies operate and employees live; to the sustaining and enriching relationships workers enjoy with friends and family members—the social element emerges as an under-recognized, under-emphasized, yet potent aspect of well-being.

- Review the design of your company's various talent management and well-being programs and benefits with a relational lens. For example, ensure new hires make connections during the first days and weeks with your firm. Also, provide structure that encourages collaboration. For example: walking groups, exercise classes, cohort-based learning centered on well-being topics (think Leah Adams's group yoga and mindfulness classes).
- Establish or expand your company's use of well-being champions or advocates to broker relationships and provide information and encouragement to individuals across your organization. Consider conducting an Organizational Network Analysis to better understand who the positive energizers are and where healthy (i.e., purposeful) collaboration is occurring or where it needs encouragement.

- Look beyond the walls of your enterprise and find innovative ways to encourage employees and leaders to become active participants in their communities. Genentech's *Give Back Week* projects and mentoring programs demonstrate how outreach can enrich participants and recipients while also remaining relevant to a sponsoring organization's mission and industry. Other examples: time-off for volunteerism, matching charitable donations, advisory work for local businesses and non-profits.
- Ensure support for employees' family relationships with benefits and practices that emphasize work/life balance and enable employees to be present for spouses, children, parents and others who need care or attention. For example: eldercare, childcare, flex time to run errands or transport children, financial management education, adoption assistance, legal counseling, family support programs.

3. Focus on mental/emotional health

i4cp found that only 15% of all organizations feel they are highly effective in addressing employees' mental health needs, though the percentage more than doubles in high-performance firms. With emphasis on mental/emotional health projected to grow significantly in the next few years, now is time for organizations to take decisive actions.

- Work intentionally to remove the stigma associated with talking about and seeking treatment for mental/emotional issues:
 - Offer robust EAP programs that provide a variety of counseling sessions.
 - Use mobile apps to speed access to mental health interventions.
 - Leverage speakers, films, and other resources to open ongoing conversations about emotional well-being issues and solutions.
 - Include mental health topics in content of regular internal communications.
- Try these next practices high-performance organizations apply to drive better outcomes in mental/emotional health:
 - Train leaders and employees to recognize signs of mental/emotional distress in themselves and others.
 - Encourage employees to report concerns about their own and colleagues' emotional well-being.
 - Urge employees to report feeling overburdened by excessive collaborative requests.



To read more, see i4cp's report [Culture Renovation™ A Blueprint for Action](#).

4. Create a culture that promotes workforce well-being

The level of workforce well-being has strong, positive correlation to a firm's ability to achieve superior market performance. Make sure your leaders and employees view workforce well-being with a shared sense of purpose. Tim State at Humana suggests that the purpose-driven culture demands "a common way to think about, talk about, and measure well-being."

- i4cp research provides an invaluable resource to help organizations re-tool their cultures. [Culture Renovation: A Blueprint for Action](#) examines leadership behaviors, metrics, and actions to create a strong culture. The study provides leaders with step-by-step guidance for successful culture change.
- Leadership support for well-being requires executive buy-in, gained by effectively communicating and demonstrating the business value that an organizational commitment to well-being affords.
- Apply next practices related to leadership behaviors by training leaders to talk effectively about well-being concerns with employees. Include guidance in specific leader behaviors that reinforce well-being. For example: conducting walking meetings and structuring work to align with employee career goals.



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About i4cp

i4cp is a research and advisory firm that discovers next practices in human capital. Our member organizations rely on i4cp to ensure that their efforts will make the greatest impact on the business today and in the future. Through superior research, peer collaboration, tools, and data, we provide insights that help organizations better anticipate, adapt, and act in a constantly changing business environment.

About the Study

This study is based on analysis of the responses of 557 business professionals, the majority of whom identified as mid-level leaders or above, to a survey fielded in late 2019. The data analysis presented herein represents larger organizations (those employing >1,000 people). Respondents represented varied countries and industries, with 85% from commercial enterprises; 47% represented global or multinational organizations. In addition, numerous follow-up interviews were conducted by i4cp with senior executives to gain additional insights.

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