

# Create a Culture of Wellness

## The Corporate Guide to Improving Employee Health and Happiness



# Introduction to Guide

Did you know that maintaining a healthy workforce is crucial for your employee's wellbeing and productivity at work? As a corporate company, you have the power to provide your employees with the tools they need to improve their health and wellbeing, while also benefiting your bottom line.

- Research shows that employees increasingly demand wellness benefits, with 87% considering wellness offerings when choosing where to work and 80% preferring a job with a comprehensive wellness program (1).
- The cost of healthcare per employee has increased by over 50% in the past decade, making it even more critical for employers to invest in preventative measures to mitigate these rising costs (2).
- The average return on investment (ROI) for employee wellness programs is six-to-one (3). In addition, companies with wellness programs have a 28% reduction in employee turnover; replacing them can cost up to 200% of an employee's salary (4).
- Wellness programs also positively impact presenteeism, which costs U.S. businesses over \$150 billion annually (5).

At Woliba, our mission is to help create a culture of wellbeing so employees can thrive. We understand the importance of **work-life balance** in achieving this goal, so we're excited to share this guide with you. Encouraging employees to adopt positive habits can reduce stress levels, increase job satisfaction, and improve productivity. In this guide, we'll cover three keystone habits that can create a ripple effect of positive change in the workplace. By incorporating these habits into your company's wellness program, you'll improve employee health and wellbeing, reduce turnover, increase productivity, and decrease healthcare costs. With Woliba, we're reimagining engagement, recognition, and wellness for companies, and we're here to support you in creating a happier, healthier, and more productive workforce.

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# The Benefits of Mindfulness in the Workplace

## 01. Building Mindful Awareness



Corporate life can be stressful, leading to employee burnout that costs companies billions annually. Mindful awareness can help employees manage their thoughts and emotions, build resilience, and reduce stress. By cultivating mindfulness, employees can become more aware of stress triggers and develop healthier coping strategies.

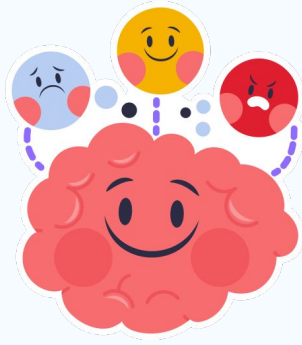
Corporate life can be stressful with the never-ending deadlines and emails and constant “pings” from internal notification systems that often invade home life and personal time. This can lead to unmanaged employee stress and burnout, which is more than just a buzzword.

According to a systematic review published in Occupational Health Psychology, **work-related stress costs the global economy approximately \$1 trillion annually**. This comes from costs associated with healthcare, absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, and reduced productivity [\(6\)](#).

Mindful awareness can help your employees recognize and manage their thoughts and emotions, building resilience and reducing stress and burnout. By cultivating mindfulness, we become more aware of stress triggers and develop strategies to cope with overwhelm in healthier and more productive ways.



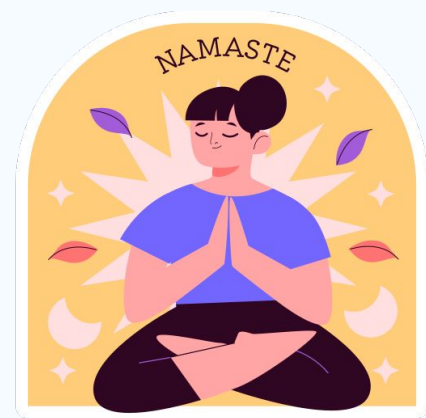
# 02. The Benefits of Mindful Awareness



Stress can have negative impacts on our health and workplace outcomes. Employers need to prioritize employee wellbeing and provide resources to manage stress and prevent burnout.

Mindful awareness is a simple tool that can be incorporated into workplace wellness programs, and it involves being present and engaged in the moment to regulate emotions, reduce stress, and improve wellbeing. Simple steps like breathing exercises, gratitude practice, and reflection can help bring more awareness into our daily lives.

Stress is an all too common experience for us. It's a natural response to challenging situations but can lead to adverse health implications if not managed properly. Research has shown that unmanaged stress can increase the risk of various health problems, including: cardiovascular disease, anxiety disorders, and depression. Unmanaged stress can also lead to burnout, which is associated with adverse workplace outcomes such as increased absenteeism, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover rates (7). Therefore employers need to prioritize employee wellbeing and provide resources and support to help employees manage stress and prevent burnout in the workplace. Mindful awareness is a tool that has been shown to be highly effective in helping identify and manage stress, and it can easily be incorporated into a workplace wellness program.



# 02. The Benefits of Mindful Awareness

Mindful awareness may sound like an abstract concept, but it's actually quite simple - it involves being present and fully engaged in the moment. When we practice mindful awareness, we consciously pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, and surroundings without judgment. This approach offers several benefits, including regulating our emotions, reducing stress and anxiety, and improving overall well-being. By taking regular breaks throughout the workday to focus on simple steps like breathing exercises, practicing daily gratitude, and reflecting on situations with a broader perspective, we can bring more awareness into our daily lives.



# **Three Keystone Practices to Cultivate Mindful Awareness in the Workplace**



# 01. Mindful Breaks



Taking mindful breaks during the workday, such as doing breathing exercises, has been shown to improve mindfulness in the workplace. Research has found that breaks during the workday are associated with positive outcomes such as reducing fatigue, improving overall wellbeing, and increasing productivity.

Incorporating mindful breaks and mindfulness-based activities like breathing exercises into the workday has significantly improved mindful awareness in the workplace (8, 9, 10). Deep breathing, for instance, is a simple yet powerful tool for bringing mindfulness into our daily routine. It can help calm the nervous system, reduce anxiety and stress, and increase overall wellbeing.

One simple technique is to focus on your breath as you inhale and exhale. You can count the breaths you take or simply focus on the sensation of air moving in and out of your body.

**Try it → Breathe in for a count of 1...2...3...4... and out for a count of 4...3...2...1...**

Continue counting and breathing through 10-20 repetitions, then reflect on how you feel after the practice.



# 01. Mindful Breaks

Taking a lunch break has been linked to better mood, cognitive performance, and job satisfaction, while working through lunch has been associated with increased stress levels and reduced productivity. Employers should encourage employees to take breaks.

Allowing employees to take breaks as needed provides space to practice restorative activities, allowing for a mental "reset." In addition, research supports the benefits of breaks for reducing fatigue and improving overall wellbeing. For example, a meta-analysis of 27 studies found that employees taking breaks during the workday experienced more positive emotions and felt fewer negative emotions than those working through their break [\(11\)](#).

Taking a "no work" lunch break has positive effects on employee wellbeing, job performance, and stress reduction. Studies have shown that employees who take a lunch break experience better mood, cognitive performance, and job satisfaction while also reporting lower levels of fatigue and stress. [\(12, 13\)](#).



However, research conducted by Mintel in the UK found that only 17% of employees take their full lunch break every day, with 26% taking a partial break and 56% working through their break. Similarly, a study by Tork found that only 20% of North American workers take a lunch break away from their desk or workplace, while a survey by TSheets of 1,200 U.S. workers found that only 30% took a full lunch break and 19% took no break at all [\(14, 15\)](#).

## 02. Gratitude and Recognition

Encouraging gratitude and appreciation in the workplace has several benefits, including increased motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction for employees. Research indicates that practicing gratitude can reduce stress levels by 50%.

Encouraging employees to start a gratitude journal is one way to cultivate gratitude and appreciation in the workplace and can contribute to a positive and supportive work environment. Taking the time to acknowledge and appreciate employee contributions can also significantly impact morale and motivation.

Incorporating gratitude and appreciation into the workplace has numerous benefits for employees and employers.



A survey by the American Psychological Association revealed that 93% of employees who feel valued at work reported being motivated to do their best, highlighting the importance of feeling appreciated in the workplace. Additionally, a study found that employees who practice gratitude experienced a 50% reduction in stress levels, leading to increased productivity and overall job satisfaction (16).

# 03. A Mindset of Connection And Support

As mentioned earlier, work-related stress costs the global economy approximately \$1 trillion annually in absenteeism, turnover, decreased productivity, and healthcare costs (17).

Negative mindsets, including pessimism and cynicism, contribute to this stress and have a detrimental effect on workplace outcomes. One study found that employees with negative mindsets had higher rates of burnout and absenteeism compared to those with more positive mindsets (18).

Research has found that fostering positive social connections and support systems in the workplace can improve employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall well being. In fact, a study of over 2,000 employees found that those who felt a sense of belonging and connection to their workplace had 56% higher job performance, were 50% more likely to stay with the company long-term, and reported 75% fewer sick days (19).



Providing workplace resources that support social connections and social support systems, such as employee resource groups or team-building activities, can play a vital role in building resilience and shifting a negative mindset. Social support is a powerful buffer against the negative effects of stress and promotes positive psychological outcomes. To encourage social engagement, companies can offer social incentives like team challenges, leaderboards, and internal social feeds (20, 21). When employees feel connected and supported by their colleagues and employer, they are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement and lower levels of stress and burnout (22).

# How to Implement Mindful Awareness into the Workplace

# 01. Supporting Time Away for Mindful Breaks



### Encourage employees to take breaks

- Implement a Woliba Wednesday “Work-Life Balance” Dedicate 30 minutes to personal wellness every Wednesday. If this feels like too much, consider starting with 30 minutes on the first Wednesday of every month.
- Managers can encourage their teams to take short breaks throughout the day to do something restorative such as a walk, stretch, or breathing exercise.



### Request that your employees block their lunchtime and work breaks on their calendars.

- Have a conversation during an all-hands meeting and emphasize the importance of taking this time for themselves throughout the day.



### Provide flexibility in scheduling

- Offer flexible scheduling options, such as a compressed work week or the ability to work from home. This can help employees balance their work and personal lives and may lead to a reduction in stress and burnout.

# 01. Supporting Time Away for Mindful Breaks



### Ensure employees are taking their paid leave

- Monitoring employee vacation and paid leave is important to ensure they get the time needed to support their mental health. Research has shown that taking time off work is critical for stress reduction, burnout prevention, and overall wellbeing.



### Create a designated space for mindfulness.

- Set aside a quiet room or area for employees to take mindful breaks. This could be a space for meditation, prayer, or a quiet place to relax and unwind.



### Offer short workshops, classes, or other mindfulness building resources

- Consider offering resources to improve mindful practices, such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, or stress management workshops during their scheduled breaks.

# 02. Creating a Mindset of Connection and Support

### Encourage and support employee resource groups.



- An employee resource group is a group of employees within an organization who come together based on shared characteristics or interests and have been shown to increase employee engagement, reduce turnover, and foster a sense of belonging and inclusion.
- Empower employees and provide work time to lead wellness initiatives as Wellness Champions for their teams.

### Offer emotional wellbeing support



- Mental wellness is a critical aspect of employee wellbeing, and providing educational resources, coaching services, mental health days, and stress management workshops can help to support employees and reduce stress levels.

### Schedule quarterly team-building activities



- Team building promotes communication, collaboration, and trust and can improve team cohesion and effectiveness. By investing in social connections and support systems, employers can help employees build resilience and cope with stress and improve overall team performance and job satisfaction.



# 02. Creating a Mindset of Connection and Support

**Foster a culture of support and encouragement where employees are motivated to learn, grow and tackle new challenges.**



- Encourage employees to share their ideas and opinions: Companies can encourage employees to share their thoughts and ideas through regular team meetings, brainstorming sessions, and open-door policies. This can help create a culture where employees feel their opinions are valued and heard..
- Provide opportunities for learning and growth: Offering opportunities for training, skill-building, and professional development can help employees learn and grow in their roles. Companies can also support employees who want to pursue additional education or certifications.

**Create Workplace Challenges**



- Workplace team challenges help employees build a sense of camaraderie and belongingness with their colleagues, leading to increased social connections and positive relationships.
- Challenges also provide opportunities for employees to learn new skills or develop existing ones, leading to personal and professional growth.

# 02. Creating a Mindset of Connection and Support



### Offer workshops or training sessions

- Providing workshops or training sessions to help employees develop resilience and a growth mindset can benefit employees and organizations.
- Research indicates that employees with a growth mindset are better able to handle stress, adapt to change, and persevere through challenges, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction.



### Empower employees to reframe negative thoughts and self-talk with more positive and empowering language.

- Encourage managers and leaders to provide regular feedback and recognition to employees, which can help build a positive mindset and improve self-talk.
- Allocate a budget to provide resources such as books, articles, or videos on positive thinking.
- Provide training or workshops on cognitive-behavioral techniques or positive psychology.

# 03. Cultivating a Culture of Gratitude and Recognition



**Regularly acknowledge your employee's birthdays, work anniversaries, and achievements.**

- According to a study by Globoforce, 82% of employees felt that being recognized on their work anniversary made them feel more connected to their company, and 76% said that being recognized on their birthday made them feel more valued as an employee..



**Start team meetings with a "gratitude circle," where each member shares something they are grateful for that day or week.**

- Starting team meetings with a gratitude circle is one way to incorporate a culture of gratitude into the workplace. A study published in the Journal of Business and Psychology found that team-based gratitude practices increased positive emotions and improved interpersonal relationships among team members [\(23\)](#). By starting team meetings with a gratitude circle, companies can foster a more positive and supportive work environment.

# 03. Cultivating a Culture of Gratitude and Recognition



### Provide feedback and support.

- Regular feedback can help employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Managers can provide guidance and support to help employees succeed and grow in their roles.



### Recognize and reward success

- Celebrating employee achievements and successes, both big and small, can help boost morale and motivation.
- This can be done manually through public recognition on your internal communication system or automated through reward and recognition software.



### Encourage collaboration and teamwork.

- Companies can create a culture of collaboration by fostering teamwork and encouraging employees to work together to solve problems and achieve goals.

# 03. Cultivating a Culture of Gratitude and Recognition



### Foster a culture of gratitude

- Encouraging employees to express gratitude for one another and the work they do can help to foster a positive and supportive work environment.
- This can be done through regular recognition programs, gratitude journals, or other activities such as a company-wide gratitude wall, where employees can write and share their moments of gratitude..



### Schedule employee engagement surveys

- Employee engagement surveys provide valuable insights into employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity within the workplace. Research has shown that companies with engaged employees have higher productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction rates [\(24,25\)](#).
- Implementing changes based on the data from engagement surveys is crucial for companies to achieve higher profitability and employee engagement rates. In fact, studies have shown that companies that take this approach are 16% more profitable and may experience up to a 22% increase in employee engagement rates compared to companies that don't prioritize data-driven changes. So, it's not just about collecting data; it's about taking action on that data to drive positive change in the workplace [\(19\)](#).

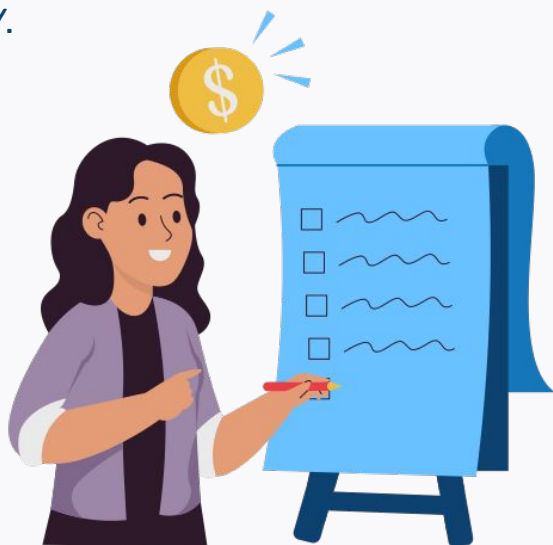
# Action Plan

# Creating your Action Plan



Lead by example to promote workplace wellness and gain buy-in from all levels of management. Encourage breaks and start with small changes, such as creating a culture of support and providing low-cost resources for stress management. Recognize and engage employees with low to no-cost options or use a platform like Woliba.

Leading by example to promote workplace wellness is crucial for creating a healthy, engaged, and productive workforce. Two of the most important steps include allowing employees to take breaks and gaining buy-in from all levels of management. Research has shown that taking breaks can improve productivity, creativity, and overall well-being. It is also essential to have buy-in from the C-suite and managers to implement wellness initiatives effectively and consistently. Leading by example is KEY.



Starting with small changes can significantly impact employee well-being, and companies can gradually build upon these changes over time. Encouraging managers to create a culture of support and providing low-cost resources for stress management, such as time away from desks and resilience training, can also make a huge difference. Likewise, recognizing and engaging employees can be done with low to no-cost options, such as intra-network software, post-it notes, and emails. However, utilizing a recognition and engagement platform such as Woliba can streamline the process, saving time and money while contributing to employee wellness. But Woliba does more than recognition and engagement. Woliba is the all-in-one wellness solution built to empower your employees, offering diverse resources that focus on all areas of workplace and employee wellness, including mental and physical wellbeing.

# Creating your Action Plan

Our platform puts behavior change solutions at your fingertips, with continuous wellbeing data delivered in real-time. By integrating with your company's HRA, Woliba can streamline and centralize your wellness initiatives. In addition, our approach meets your employees where they are, embedding customized wellbeing content directly in their daily workflow through real-time stress-reducing tools, inspirational storytelling, and science-backed microsteps that help them build better habits

By prioritizing employee wellness, organizations create a positive and supportive work environment that benefits both employees and the organization. With Woliba, it's never been easier to achieve this goal. Our recognition platform streamlines the process of recognizing and engaging employees, saving time and money while contributing to employee wellness and the 6:1 ROI that investing in wellness programs can yield. If you found this guide helpful and want to learn more about how to automate these wellness tips in your workplace, we invite you to visit our website and discover how Woliba can help you create a happier, healthier, and more productive workplace.



**Woliba offers an all-in-one wellness solution for companies that integrates with their existing health risk assessment. The platform delivers customized wellbeing content to employees in real-time, helping them build better habits and reduce stress. Prioritizing employee wellness creates a positive work environment, and Woliba's recognition platform streamlines the process of recognizing and engaging employees, leading to a 6:1 ROI.**



# Annexure I

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# Annexure II

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