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HR ELEMENTS®



HR & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS NEWSLETTER

Stay HR Savvy with HR Elements®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter, delivering insights into timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

HR Elements | February 2024

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Dear HR Manager,

How do I create a mental wellness strategy?

– Multi-tasking Professional

Dear Multi-tasking Professional,

Developing an effective [mental wellness strategy](#) is crucial in today's workplace, as 92 percent of employees value an employer that prioritizes emotional and psychological well-being.

Here are a few ideas to start you on your journey.

Make Support Accessible

Demonstrate your commitment to your employees' overall well-being with immediate and convenient access to mental health support. Examine your disability benefits plan closely to ensure it encompasses mental health. To offer timely support, remove financial barriers, and give easy access, consider enhancing your employee benefits package with supplemental mental health benefits incorporating online therapy services and mindfulness apps.

Communicate Clearly

Communication is vital in making your mental wellness strategy effective. Show your team that mental health is a priority with regular reminders and updates about mental health resources. Encourage utilization and reinforce the company's commitment to employee well-being with clear communication about the accessibility of mental health coverage in your employee benefits package.

Develop a Culture of Support

Beyond individual benefits, cultivating a supportive workplace culture is fundamental. Employees increasingly seek environments that promote work-life balance, recognize their contributions, and encourage positive interpersonal relationships. Such a culture supports mental health and enhances employee engagement and productivity.

Implementing cultural change involves both top-down leadership involvement and grassroots initiatives. Leadership should lead by example, sharing personal experiences with mental health to destigmatize discussions around the topic. Additionally, creating opportunities for employees to contribute to the conversation around mental wellness fosters a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Remember, the role of middle management is critical in this process. Training managers to listen empathetically and respond without judgment can significantly impact the effectiveness of your mental wellness strategy.

An [effective mental wellness strategy](#) combines comprehensive benefits, accessible support, continuous communication, and a culture that actively supports employee well-being. By adopting this multifaceted approach, you can create a workplace that acknowledges the importance of mental health and actively promotes and supports it.

– HR Manager

Workplace Culture: Cultivating a Culture of Connection

In the dynamic landscape of hybrid work, how do you maintain the vitality of your company culture? Adapting your culture to evolve with the changing dynamics of work is possible while staying true to your values and mission.

Why does your company culture need to evolve?

Company culture shouldn't be set in stone, as the transition to a hybrid model showed the importance of adapting. Now, you can shift to [fostering virtual connections](#) and meaningful in-person interactions in your company culture.

When employees feel acknowledged and valued, it fosters an environment where genuine connections can flourish. Discovering supportive allies within your organization cultivates personal and collective development, nurturing an inclusive atmosphere where everyone can feel a sense of belonging. Employees who feel connected to their work and colleagues are more engaged and are more likely to have satisfied clients.

How do you maintain a strong company culture in a hybrid world?

By incorporating a mix of hybrid team-building activities, you can encourage an inclusive, engaged, and cohesive team to ensure all employees feel connected and valued regardless of where they work.

By prioritizing and integrating well-being into your operations, you signal to your employees that their wellness is important. This approach can make your employees feel valued and deepen their connection to their work, peers, and the organization. By focusing on innovative team building and inclusion, you're laying the foundation for a [culture of connection](#) that nurtures a supportive and respectful environment.

Innovate with cross-departmental projects or “connection challenges” that encourage employees to interact with colleagues they wouldn't usually work with. These activities can break down silos and spark new ideas and friendships.

Consider implementing one of these team-building activities to bridge the gap between virtual and in-person environments and foster a sense of belonging and teamwork:

- **Simultaneous Cooking Class**
Organize a cooking class where an instructor leads employees through making a dish with the ingredients sent to employees in advance. This shared experience fosters a sense of community and enjoyment.
- **Interactive Storytelling Sessions**
Host storytelling sessions where employees contribute to a story, one line or idea at a time, building on each other's contributions. This activity can be conducted via a video call or a collaborative document, encouraging creativity, listening skills, and collective narrative building.
- **Hybrid Scavenger Hunts**
Create a scavenger hunt that individuals in both settings can complete. For remote participants, this could involve finding items or completing tasks at home or online, while office participants could do the same in their physical workspace.
- **“Show and Tell” Sessions**
Allow employees to share something about their personal interests, hobbies, or recent experiences in a relaxed, informal setting. This can be done via video call, with remote and in-office employees participating.
- **Hybrid Celebrations**
Celebrate employee milestones, birthdays, and achievements in a way that includes everyone by sending small gifts to employees' homes and having an unboxing during a virtual call.
- **Creating Terrariums**
Bond over creating miniature worlds with terrarium kits that showcase each team member's unique personality. Kits can be mailed to homes and provided in-office. A virtual show-and-tell meeting can include each participant describing the plants they selected, how they arranged the elements, and sharing ideas.

Hybrid work models vary across organizations, but one constant is the need for a culture that grows with your employees' changing needs. This involves nurturing connections at every level, ensuring your culture survives and thrives, benefiting everyone.

Employee Benefits: Attract and Retain Generation X with a Holistic Benefits Program

In the dynamic landscape of today's workforce, understanding and catering to the unique needs of Generation X is essential for employers. Known for their adaptability and resilience, Gen X employees bring a wealth of experience and value to the table. To attract and retain this key demographic, offering work [benefits that resonate](#) with their life stage and values is crucial.

Zooming in on Gen X

Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, comprises 27 percent of the workforce. This group, often navigating the complex "sandwich" phase of life, juggles the care of aging parents and their children while focusing on their own health and career progression. For employers looking to support Gen X effectively, benefits should offer a holistic response to their life challenges.

- **Offer Flexible Work Options**
For Gen Xers, who often juggle multiple family and personal responsibilities, flexibility isn't just a perk—it's a necessity. Embrace policies that honor this need by offering flexible work schedules and telecommuting options. Such accommodations acknowledge their life demands and demonstrate trust and respect for their work ethic.
- **Prioritize Health and Wellness**
Health concerns naturally become more pronounced with age. Therefore, Gen X employees greatly value comprehensive health benefits beyond the basics. Offer plans that include preventive health screenings and extensive dental and vision coverage for their families. Wellness programs that are thoughtfully tailored to their age group can also significantly enhance their quality of life and job satisfaction.
- **Support Financial Security**
Financial security becomes a paramount concern as the retirement horizon begins to come into view for Gen Xers. Providing robust retirement savings plans and resources for financial planning can offer them peace of mind. Additionally, consider offering student loan repayment programs and life insurance to alleviate financial stresses and bolster their well-being.
- **Enhance Mental Health and Well-being**
Mental health support is vital for all employees, but for Gen X—who navigated the complex transition of technological and societal shifts—access to mental health resources is especially meaningful. Initiatives that promote work-life balance and provide mental health resources can significantly impact their overall well-being.

- Foster Lifelong Learning

In an ever-evolving job market, the importance of staying current cannot be overstated. Gen X values opportunities or continuous learning and professional development. Investing in their growth empowers them to excel in their roles and reinforces their value within the organization.

By thoughtfully integrating these strategies into your workplace, you'll create an environment where Gen X employees feel valued, supported, and engaged. Remember, the key to retaining talented professionals is understanding their needs and offering benefits that genuinely make a difference in their lives.

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