



# Global Well-being:

Employee Needs and  
Employer Offerings

# Introduction

Increasingly, global employers are turning more attention and resources to their well-being efforts outside the U.S. In 2022, 66% of employers have a global well-being strategy. While most employers with a strategy allow well-being programs to vary by country, a growing number of employers seek a consistent set of offerings, regardless of where the employee resides.

At the same time, employees around the world are looking to their employer for support in meeting well-being goals. Employees have expressed the need for improvement in work/life balance, sufficient time off from work and a work culture that prioritizes well-being. Employees have also encountered barriers to living well, such as finding ways to eat a healthy diet and reduce stress, with two-thirds of employees believing well-being priorities take too much time, attention and money to be effective. These employee sentiments about well-being highlight the need for employers to consider the true needs of their own workforce in their well-being approaches.

This article uses two surveys on global well-being—one on employers, another on employees—to create a set of actionable insights for employers to consider when developing their well-being strategy. Areas where employee needs and employer offerings may differ are highlighted, along with how they align across the following well-being pillars: 1) mental and emotional well-being, 2) physical well-being, 3) financial well-being and 4) social well-being.

## EMPLOYER DATA:



Based on the practices of 163 large employers, collected between December 2021 – January 2022.<sup>1</sup>

## EMPLOYEE DATA:



Based on perspectives, attitudes and behaviors of 10,004 employees in the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany and Netherlands, collected between February 2022 – March 2022.<sup>2</sup>



# Global Well-being:

## Employee Needs and Employer Offerings

1. Business Group on Health and Fidelity Workplace Consulting. 13th Annual Employer-Sponsored Health and Well-being Survey: The Great Recalibration. <https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/resources/13th-annual-health-and-well-being-survey>. Accessed July 5, 2022.
2. Alight Solutions and Business Group on Health. 2022 Alight International Workforce and Wellbeing Mindset Report. <https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/resources/2022-alight-international-workforce-and-wellbeing-mindset-report>. Accessed September 20, 2022.

# Mental and Emotional Well-being



## EMPLOYEE STATUS AND NEEDS

Seventy-three percent of employee respondents reported high/moderate stress levels, and higher stress levels were reported among women, people of color (POC), parents, caretakers and younger populations (Generation Z). Job-related stress is manifesting globally in a variety of ways; for employees in the U.K., Denmark and the Netherlands, the most common manifestation of stress was inability to sleep. On the other hand, French employees are more likely to experience reduced motivation levels.

Among those surveyed, 43% of employees have sought counseling in the past year, whether for a mental health condition, stress levels, family issues or substance use disorder. Counseling rates for those who sought counseling varied by locale, with employees in the U.S. and Netherlands the most likely to receive counseling and U.K. employees the least likely. What's more, 45% of employees spoke about their stress with their supervisors, with the largest percentage coming from the Netherlands (56%). Although employees are experiencing high levels of stress, many are not seeking support to address their emotional and mental health needs.

## EMPLOYER EFFORTS

Mental health is the leading well-being priority for global employers. In 2022, mental health is the most common dimension of well-being included in a global well-being program. Global employers offered mindfulness, stress management and resiliency programs. Other offerings included telephonic EAP (66%), mindfulness (48%), sleep improvement programs (29%) and yoga/meditation classes (29%).

From a work culture standpoint, global employers are promoting anti-stigma campaigns (62%) to dispel myths about seeking mental health support, as well as work schedule flexibility so employees can seek care during regular business hours, thus widening the number of providers to choose from.





## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Employers can benefit from tailoring content for vulnerable populations that are predisposed to experiencing poor mental and emotional health outcomes, which include people of color, women and caretakers. This can be done through targeted emailing or interacting with and gathering information from employee resource groups (ERGs).
- Seek employee feedback to figure out why some employees don't engage in mental health initiatives. Most global employers (60%) measure their global well-being initiatives through enrollment only. Collecting employee feedback and measuring health outcomes may be an additional way in which employers can discover any possible disconnect between program offerings and what would resonate with employees. Also, keep in mind how employees may experience mental health initiatives and messaging differently based on cultural and other local contexts of where they work.
- Given that the majority of employees experience high stress levels, a particular focus on stress management for employees in the workplace would be beneficial. Some on-site services are offered by employers such as yoga/meditation classes and counseling/therapy. Employers may consider incorporating these on-site services into a stress management program and adding additional offerings like quiet and meditation rooms. These additions would be welcomed, especially since 52% of global employees with access to stress management programs believe they are valuable.



# Physical Health Well-being

## EMPLOYEE STATUS AND NEEDS

Fifty percent of global employees placed a high value on nutrition, healthy eating and/or weight management classes, just second after a reimbursement for working remotely. Other physical health programs like fitness reimbursements (54%), on-site health centers (50%) and physical therapy/musculoskeletal programs (52%) are also valued highly by global employees.

Employees in France (58%) and the U.K (55%) spend the most amount of work hours focused on physical health-related factors such as non-serious illness, condition management and doctor visits, while employees in the U.S. (39%) and the Netherlands (48%) spend the least amount of work hours on physical health-related factors.

## EMPLOYER EFFORTS

Physical health is the second most common dimension, after mental health, of an employers' global well-being program. In addition, the second most common objective of employers' global well-being programs is to lower their employees' health risk. And while the employer survey didn't gather details on physical well-being initiatives, there was data collected on incentives for physical health-related activities. Some employers in the U.S. are offering incentives for physical health programs like tobacco cessation and chronic condition management.

## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Employees value physical health-related programs. By offering incentives or by funding lifestyle savings accounts, employers can optimize and increase participation rates in physical health-related activities such as the use of fitness centers and on-site health centers.
  - For example, in the U.S., given that fewer employees completed activities to earn well-being incentives in 2021 compared to 2020, employers can increase their communications about incentives and conduct surveys to find out why there was a slight decrease in completing incentive-related activities.
- Employers should diversify their physical health programs to meet the various needs and interests of their employees, which can range from fitness opportunities to nutrition support to physical therapy.



# Financial Well-being

## EMPLOYEE STATUS AND NEEDS

Across the board, the majority of employees want to manage their budgets (63%), save for short-term needs (65%) and establish emergency funds (57%). More employees in the U.S. (47%) feel in control of their finances but are more intimidated by financial matters compared to employees outside the U.S. Employees in the U.S., U.K. and the Netherlands are more likely to say they could use employer's help or direction with long-term savings, whereas in France and Germany, some employees want specific advice to improve credit scores. Regardless of location, many employees need support saving for retirement – only 39% indicated confidence in planning for this life event.

Table 1 shows where financial areas rank in priority among employees around the world.

**Table 1: Financial Well-being: Financial Priority Areas Among Employees**

	US	UK	FR	DE	NL
<b>PRIORITY AREA #1</b>	A sense of control over your financial future				
<b>PRIORITY AREA #2</b>	Saving for long-term financial needs				
<b>PRIORITY AREA #3</b>	Reducing debt	Sticking to a budget	Sticking to a budget	Establishing an emergency fund	Sticking to a budget
<b>PRIORITY AREA #4</b>	Sticking to a budget	Reducing debt	Saving for short-term financial needs	Sticking to a budget	Saving for short-term financial needs
<b>PRIORITY AREA #5</b>	Establishing an emergency fund	Saving for short-term financial needs	Reducing debt	Saving for short-term financial needs	Reducing debt

## EMPLOYER EFFORTS

In 2022, the top three most common financial well-being programs among global employers are general financial well-being education (45%), discounts on products and services (19%) and locally relevant solutions tailored to specific country needs (18%). The majority of global employers (45%) in 2022 are gearing their financial well-being programs toward general financial well-being education taught using webinars, articles and other resources.





## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Because a majority of employees want to manage their financial matters on their own, employers may consider prioritizing financial programs like financial seminars and lunch-n-learns, where employees can learn key financial skills to utilize independently.
- Employees have varying financial needs across the globe. Therefore, focusing on helping them achieve long-term goals is key. The best approach is for employers to build their financial well-being programs to specific country sentiments, not just rely on a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Despite the promise of employer financial well-being initiatives, employees have low levels of trust globally. Therefore, identifying the reasons behind this doubt is critical - either through surveys, focus groups, message boards and/or conversations with ERGs.



# Social Well-being

## EMPLOYEE STATUS AND NEEDS

Sixty-two percent of employees feel that their employer actively encourages social interaction among employees; however, 44% report feelings of loneliness and isolation. The majority of employees (70%) believe it is important that their supervisor cares about their life, highlighting supervisor care and support as a social need for employees.

## EMPLOYER EFFORTS

Globally, employers have developed programs and groups to cultivate social connectivity between employees in the workplace. Employers in almost all/most countries also developed ERGs/affinity groups (54%), in-person or virtual get-togethers (39%) and support networks like mental health and parent support (26%).

## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Employers can promote resources that address loneliness among employees both in and outside the workplace. At the workplace, employers can organize activities and events to connect colleagues or form relevant social circles, such as lunches, walks with a friend, summer concerts or museum trips. For employees who seek social connection outside the workplace, employers can create challenges like “acts of kindness,” which encourage employees to engage in selfless acts like volunteering in their neighborhood or helping a friend.
- Remote and hybrid workers who are working from home may receive minimal to no interaction with their fellow colleagues on-site. Employers can enhance social connectedness through the use of community online channels/platforms for employees to chat and share news and ideas; online calls centered around activities like a game night on Zoom; or virtual check-in meetings between teams.





## Conclusion

One in five employees have left their previous employer in the past 18 months, pointing to the increased importance of employee well-being needs. For employers, key strategies include promoting remote work, addressing employees' need for time to take care of their well-being and helping to lower employee stress levels. Improving all three of these areas can help bolster workforce well-being, which may drive greater job satisfaction in the long run.