



LET'S GET (BEYOND) PHYSICAL:

CRAFTING A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

On 27th May 2020, CRF members gathered for *Let's Get (Beyond) Physical: Crafting a Multidimensional Approach to Employee Wellbeing*, a Zoom Interactive Event. CRF's **Carmen von Rohr** hosted Ericsson's **Lynda Guttenberg** and Mercer's **Wolfgang Seidl** in discussion about the need for organisations to take a more strategic, systemic, and evidence-based approach to wellbeing.

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CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

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APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE WELLBEING**

ZOOM INTERACTIVE EVENT

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THE EVENT HERE



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Wellbeing interventions need to be aligned with your business strategy and cognisant of the connections between health, performance, and demographics.



3 Many organisations are neglecting their people's financial wellbeing. Assess employees' needs around financial wellbeing, audit current provision and adjust accordingly.

5 It's essential to take an evidence-based approach. Use all the data sources available to build a comprehensive picture of the health profile of your workforce, tailor wellbeing interventions to different groups and their needs, and evaluate outcomes. Enlist healthcare providers to provide quality data.

7 Health and wellbeing practices need to be baked into the company culture. The crisis provides a unique opportunity to shift your culture, change the conversation and do things differently.



9 Employers' wellbeing strategies should continue to take into account the 'whole-person'. Building resilience is a key strategy for improving wellbeing at the individual level.



2 WE NEED TO THINK HOLISTICALLY ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLBEING: PROGRAMMES SHOULD COVER PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND FINANCIAL AS WELL AS BIOLOGICAL ANGLES.



4 Wellbeing strategies need to be systemic. Make senior leaders accountable and visible. Make sure line managers know what's available and train them in hard and soft skills. Build an inclusive, socially supportive, collaborative culture. Make sure the physical environment is safe, comfortable and accommodating. Design work that is purposeful, flexible and rewarding.

6 The wellbeing and D&I agendas need to be interlinked. We know that the health needs of demographic groups differ, for example by age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and even personality types. Blanket campaigns that treat everyone the same are increasingly looking outdated.



8 WE NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR SHARPLY INCREASING DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AS WE EMERGE FROM THE CRISIS.





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AUDIENCE Q&A

Q How can companies become more evidence-driven?

A *It's not that difficult to glean useful data. Most organisations will have access to basic information such as sickness absence, health insurance, long-term absence and EAP usage data, which gives you at least three data sets that you can triangulate to build a meaningful picture. Enlist the help of your healthcare suppliers, and insist they provide evidence, even if they are reluctant to do so. Beware of looking at data sets in isolation which can lead you into a one-sided strategy. For example, developing a health dashboard that combines data sets can give a more meaningful picture. The best companies use data to develop health pathways for the most common conditions based on evidence-based interventions with measurable outcomes. One company that developed mental health pathways reduced the cost of mental healthcare by 9%, therapy outcomes improved by 60% and absence fell by 40%.*

Q Given the economic challenges companies are facing, how do you deliver wellbeing interventions comprehensively but cost effectively?

A *Line managers are key. If this is not something that's already a core competence for managers, you can support them in building empathy and resilience skills by delivering training cost effectively online. Even if you don't have the capacity or skills to develop a comprehensive data dashboard, you can be more demanding of providers to give you meaningful data.*

Q How can we tackle the paradox of taking a personalised approach to wellbeing while creating a feeling of cohesiveness and delivering on organisation purpose?

A *Psychological research shows that having an internal locus of control buys more engagement, sense of belonging and productivity. It's about being pragmatic - giving people control over their workflow to the degree that's appropriate to the role. Research by Google found that creating a sense of psychological safety where people can bring their good ideas to work correlates with significantly higher performance.*

Q What challenges to health and wellbeing are you seeing as a result of Covid-19?

A *We have of course seen a rapid move to remote working and associated risks of poor mental health and increasing burnout. However, it's important also to not forget those who are still working on the front line, for example healthcare professionals, who may develop symptoms bordering on post-traumatic stress disorder. The impact of Covid on the mental health of the workforce cannot be overestimated, and we can expect demand for services such as EAPs to rise sharply. Employers that want to harness the opportunity of Covid will need to show the human face of the organisation, reengineering work around human needs rather than asking people to fit their lives around work. Flexible working will be here to stay, and questions of purpose are likely to be ever more centre stage.*

Q Why is it important to take an evidence-driven approach to employee wellbeing and what are the barriers?

A *One thing we are learning through the Covid crisis is the need for policy decisions to be driven by data and hard facts. For most organisations, the costs of treating ill health are highly visible in terms of rising insurance premiums and levels of absence. However, whilst maintaining wellbeing is generally much more cost effective than treating illness, the benefits of investing in employee wellbeing are less obvious so employers often fail to do so. Unless they invest in gathering data on the health status of their workforce, such as through health assessments, most employers are essentially managing a major business risk by flying blind.*

Q How can you best support staff who don't want to work from home?

A *To a large extent, that decision is taken out of our hands at the moment. We will be taking a cautious, phased approach to returning people to the office, focusing on small numbers and critical roles. We are encouraging line managers to have regular one-to-one conversations so we can identify individual needs, make sure people don't feel isolated, and we can put in place the right support where it's needed.*



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Q What have you learned at Ericsson about implementing an effective employee wellbeing strategy?

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1. You have to make it meaningful by explicitly tying it to what's going on in the business. Ericsson's strategy is called 5Gs to Great Wellbeing, reflecting the company's transition to 5G mobile phone technology. It has five pillars: physical, mental, social, financial and community wellbeing. When we started to rethink our wellbeing strategy, we were going through a culture change and had recently moved offices. We realised we needed to focus more on mental wellbeing. We have also connected our agenda with other activities, such as linking to programmes to develop STEM talent.
 2. Start small and build from there. We didn't launch the 5G strategy all in one go – we ran a series of activities aligned to the strategy to build up momentum over time. For example, we began 2019 with a 'New Year New Me' event in January with participation by our wellbeing providers. In April we launched a dedicated wellbeing inbox and Yammer group. In May we ran walking challenges to coincide with national walking month, in August we launched our wellbeing hub and in September rolled out our mental wellbeing app, Thrive. It was only in November that we pulled all the activity together and launched the 5G framework.
 3. Don't just launch an app and think your job is done. You have to be intentional about deploying it to meet the specific needs of your workforce. For example, we've developed tools to help graduates with the transition from education to work. Usage data will help you understand what issues employees are seeking help with, so you can target resources where they're needed.

SPEAKERS



EMAIL

LYNDA GUTTENBERG is a People Business Partner for Ericsson, partnering with managers that sit within global functions and business areas to support their employees. Lynda also leads on the guidance for UK international mobility, and she has led the UK wellbeing agenda since 2019 when she launched a UK Wellbeing Hub to bring together and improve access to all current and future wellbeing resources. One of her key focus areas is mental wellbeing, having launched an NHS-approved mental health support and mindfulness app, 'Thrive', created a Wellbeing Champions Network of volunteers trained to support mental wellbeing, and provided access to manager mental health support webinars. In addition, she launched the UK and Ireland's wellbeing strategy: 5Gs to Great Wellbeing.



EMAIL

DR. CARMEN VON ROHR is a sociologist with extensive research and learning design experience. She began her career as a digital learning designer in higher education at Cengage Learning before joining CRF in 2018 to contribute to research and learning content.



EMAIL

DR. WOLFGANG SEIDL is a Partner and leads Workplace Health Consulting for Mercer in the UK and Europe, advising companies on health and wellbeing strategy, integrated healthcare, absence management and proactive interventions such as resilience programmes. He is a member of the Global Health Management team and founded the European Health and Wellbeing Network. Before joining Mercer, Wolfgang held senior appointments with Validium Group and Accor Services. He is a Doctor of Medicine with a Master's in Psychiatry, Philosophy and Society and an accredited Counsellor and Psychotherapist.



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FURTHER READING

CRF. 2020. **Let's Get (Beyond) Physical: Crafting a Multidimensional Approach to Employee Wellbeing.** Full Report. <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/lets-get-beyond-physical-crafting-a-multidimensional-approach-to-employee-wellbeing/>

CRF. 2020. **Let's Get (Beyond) Physical: Crafting a Multidimensional Approach to Employee Wellbeing.** Speed Read. <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/speed-read-lets-go-beyond-physical-crafting-a-multidimensional-approach-to-employee-wellbeing/>

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Mercer. 2020. **Dealing with the Impact: Covid-19.** <https://www.uk.mercer.com/our-thinking/dealing-with-the-impact-covid19.html>

Seidl, Wolfgang. **Data-Driven Corporate Health Management.** <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/data-driven-corporate-health-management/>

Seidl, Wolfgang. **Mental Health and the Coronavirus: A Best Practice Guide to Protecting the Mental Health of the Workforce.** Mercer. <https://www.uk.mercer.com/our-thinking/dealing-with-the-impact-covid19/mental-health-and-the-coronavirus.html>

CRF PARTNERS

CRF's partners are here to support your organisation during the crisis and beyond. Learn more [here](#).

crf UPCOMING CRF EVENTS



ONLINE:

Developing Adaptive Leadership for Times of Crisis and Beyond

4th June 12.00PM BST



ONLINE:

Building and Maintaining Resilience

10th June 12.00PM BST



ONLINE:

HRBPs: Reset and Thrive – Helping Businesses Prepare for an Uncertain Future

1st July 12.00PM BST