

Improving Employee ‘Wellness’ to Achieve Revenue Growth and Improved Customer Satisfaction: Part 2

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In the March 2002 Edition of the European Retail Digest there were some very important questions posed including:

- How well are your employees? and
- Is their level of their wellness increasing or declining and why?

In this article, we share with you WellKom Corporate Services’ (WCS) innovations to help answer these questions and the emerging issues across Europe around wellness.

Firstly however, it is useful to present the business case on why there is value in answering these questions and why the current management tools are inadequate. The total value of wellness to an organisation can be evaluated in retail and service businesses using our return on investment model for wellness. This is based on the simple formula:

Well people + well managed = well customers

- Well people are physically and mentally in a condition each and every day, and throughout the whole day/ shift to be able to provide exceptional service.
- Well managed human resource practices are designed and delivered through line managers that lead to people being clear in what is expected, having the skills to deliver, and are

motivated to perform.

- Well customers stay with you, increase their average spend and recommend you to others more often.

So, ‘well’ employees are a fundamental part of the equation for business success. Yet in asking many organisations across Europe “how well are your people?” the answers we received were mostly based around:

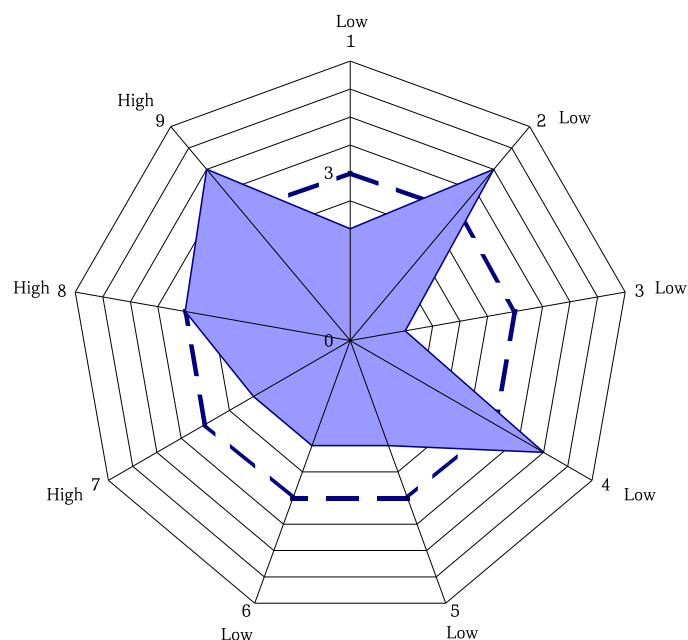
- stress claims
- absence levels
- number of leavers
- motivation at work
- employee satisfaction surveys.

Ask yourself how you and your organisation would answer the

question “How well are your people?” The chances are that you will focus on measures that are outputs of wellness such as days off sick that apply to only a certain percentage of people. Sickness data does not cover the 95% of people at work, and factors such as average spend levels, store sales and customer satisfaction ratings are also a part of the wellness equation.

In discussions with many senior managers and human resource professional, WCS has developed a wellness profiling tool - POWER (Personal and Organisational Wellness Effectiveness Results). POWER is reaching the final stages of development after being tested

Figure 1 | The WCS Wellness Profile



across Europe with a significant number of leading organisations; well over 1000 people in 5 languages including at least 50 HR professionals - many of them senior professionals.

For each of the nine dimensions of wellness, the closer you are to the centre of the circle the more you seem, compared to others, to be satisfied and/or have developed effective wellness habits. The closer you are to the outside of the circle the more you seem, compared to others, to be dissatisfied and/ or may need to develop more effective wellness habits.

The axes, representing the nine factors of wellness are:

- Satisfaction with Lifestyle (mid)
- Coping with Pressure (mid)
- Attitudes towards Wellness and Health (high)
- Attitudes towards Health and Medicine (mid)
- Attitudes towards an Active Lifestyle (mid)
- Mental Wellbeing (mid)
- Pace of Life (mid)
- Physical Ill-health (mid)
- Stress (mid)

The dashed line represents the European average.

The nine factors of wellness are based on 20 years of research into wellness. What is unique is that a person's wellness is considered both at work and outside work. This is vital, as there are obviously spillover effects, either way. What happens at work can impact life

outside and vice versa.

Individual Wellness Profile

An individual wellness profile can be produced anonymously for each and every person in an organisation (normally within one hour) for a modest investment of about 15 minutes. An informative/educational commentary is contained in each profile to help the individual understand the nine factors and the 38 sub scales to enable the person to gain clear insights into their current perceived levels of wellness. Each person also receives personalised advice on how to improve his or her own individual (perceived) physical and mental wellbeing.

Organisational Wellness Profile

All nine factors and 38 subscales can be reported on in a very flexible way as the organisation requires providing it does not threaten the anonymity of individuals. You have the option of adding additional questions so you can include questions that perhaps in the past have been contained in an employee attitude/satisfaction survey. The profiling provides a benchmark for periodical assessment, for example, annually to understand the wellness levels and how they are changing.

What is interesting is that the organisations involved and others are interested in the wider applications of the wellness profiling and wellness

is becoming a growing issue which includes work/life balance and many other aspects.

Wellness is rising up the Organisational Agenda

Here are some of the areas that WCS is currently engaged in across Europe:

Acquisition integration / mergers

Wellness profiling sends a very strong message that the buyer cares about people and provides a comparative set of management information on the strengths and development points of the acquired organisation versus the buyer. In mergers, such as within the National Health Service in the UK, wellness profiling can provide a picture across all the different organisational parts.

Organisational mood indicator

When you want to know what people are feeling after a major event has been communicated such as a new owner or a press announcement, the systematic mood profiling data contained in POWER can be run separately and very quickly. This provides a graphic picture of the mood of the people in the organisation.

Leadership development from senior manager to front line leaders

If a leader is not well, for example if they are easily irritated, he or she is likely to be less effective. Individual profiling, combined with other development tools such as

Myers Briggs and Firo B, provides a rich and very attractive development 'cocktail' for management development professionals providing support to all types of leaders.

Leadership development from senior manager to front line leaders

The technique of 360 degree feedback, whereby an individual receives (anonymous) feedback from his or her leader; their peer group and the people they personally lead is well established. The wellness profiling process can be adapted and combined with other key performance information to produce feedback on the wellness and style of leadership. For example questions such as "how irritable are they?" "How approachable?" can be combined to provide a unique profile of the person as seen by others.

Feedback outside work: personal wellness development

Another option is to offer the wellness 360 degree approach to

an individual in the social context. This anonymous process can be used with a mix of relatives and friends to build up the wellness profile outside of work. This could, of course, be another part of the overall development information available to an individual and to the development coach. It helps improve not only work performance and satisfaction but also really helps to improve the increasingly sought after work/ life balance and overall life satisfaction of an individual.

Pace of life

One of the differentiators between organisations would seem to be speed at which things happen – what we call in our wellness research the 'pace of life'. An example of 'pace of life' in retailing in the UK is the speedy response to the change in Sunday trading law, which some retailers seized upon immediately. It can be in day-to-day operations such as price changes or speed of merchandising changes at store level.

How do you describe the speed of an organisation compared to others and help individuals match it to his or her desired pace of life? If there were a mismatch, too slow or too fast, then it would seem likely that within a few months the person will leave or performance will be below par. This is an area of research that WCS is beginning in 2003.

Conclusion

To conclude it would seem that through the research into personal and organisational wellness WCS has discovered that although well people are fundamental to business success in retail, and other sectors, this is an area where individuals and organisations are lacking tools to understand and systematically improve their wellness levels. WCS believes that the tools presented here will help European organisations and individuals discover their degree of wellbeing. The next challenge is to create solutions that help positively promote wellbeing.

Organisations or individuals who would like further information on personal and organisational research please contact: Anthony Phillips anthony@wellkom.demom.co.uk or telephone ++ 44 (0)1442 876748.

WellKom Corporate Services Ltd. is a European company that designs innovative products and services to build exceptional and sustainable performance through personal and organisational wellness.