
Careers, Wellness and Engagement

Ci Virtual Roundtable - 25th July 2018

The roundtable brought together key people with responsibility for wellbeing-related areas in large organisations in the UK and internationally. The purpose was to explore the links with ‘good work’, and the role of careers in promoting wellness and engagement.

PART 1: INSIGHT

The issue is important to organisations because:

- Poor wellbeing can lead to loss of talent, and loss of productivity at work.
- Today’s employees are expecting an emphasis on wellness, and support
- Work stress and broader mental health is a big organisational concern.
- This topic reflects the links that exist between health, safety, wellbeing, diversity, sustainability and development.
- Responses, however, are typically not joined-up.
- There’s tension between messages about wellness, and about productivity

The issues become more tangible at senior level, when there is convincing data such as:

- Employee engagement surveys
- Medical surveys
- Healthcare costs (in the US)
- Equality & diversity statistics

PART 2: INNOVATION

Today’s provocateur was Paul Roberts (Enlighten) who is a consultant and advisor to large organisations.

People can be afraid of wellness initiatives so Paul emphasised activities that help make it ‘business as usual’ e.g. standing meetings. He also emphasised the need for shared language, and business benefits - including engagement (one organisation achieved 88% as a result).

Paul also highlighted increase in inspections and expected improvement notices (relating to [work stress](#)) to be served by the Health & Safety Executive since the [Stevenson/Farmer Review](#).

Practices highlighted by the group included:

- Resilience programmes
- Purpose workshops (a growing trend)
- Wellness champions (they self-select)
- Mental Health First Aid
- Investing in manager capability (worthwhile)
- Nutrition gets attention - people love food
- Models e.g. ‘6 domains of wellbeing’ or ‘4 pillars’ (health, wealth, inner self, social)

“The inspectors are coming”

Rosemary McLean (chair) offered a viewpoint on career support as an under-used tool to promote self-efficacy. This led to discussion about goal orientation and purpose, and about ‘sponsorship’ to address one participant’s challenge with invisible barriers to senior ethnic diversity.

PART 3: IMPACT

The discussion highlighted tactics and key determinants of success as being:

- Acting at primary (organisation), secondary (team/mgr) and tertiary (individual) levels
- Focusing on ‘what is success’. Do the board, managers and wellbeing experts all agree?
- Once ‘success’ is identified, be clear on measures. If you want ROI, can you really measure it? If not, pick a different goal.
- People need ‘permission’ to devote time and effort or to admit problems - e.g. Legal & General ‘No red cards’.
- Embedding work/careers with wellness
- There are no silver bullets and it takes time! “Keep plugging away”



Paul Roberts’ concluding advice was two-fold:

1. Start with the individual and the organisation will gain too. “It’s true in healthy behaviours. It’s also true of careers.”
2. Know what you’re striving for. Set your target and be sure what you’ll measure to know if you’re on track.