

Bringing Out the Best: Connecting Workplace Wellness to Business Outcomes

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matters more than ever

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Why **workforce wellness matters** more than ever

As we are all experiencing an unpredictable future, adapting to change is more critical than ever. Companies are redefining processes, technology, and infrastructure, but ensuring their employees feel supported throughout these substantial changes is essential.

In our current world, the personal and professional have never been more intertwined. This is why it's so critical to support your employees' well-being, helping them to manage stress, enhance focus, and build healthy habits that will keep them motivated, productive, and engaged.

Udemy is here to help. We provide topical content on personal and professional development, support learning whenever and wherever it's convenient, and promote customizing the learning experience with tailored learning paths.

This eBook is designed to help you think about your workforce wellness strategy and **meet your business outcomes**.

Use this resource to help guide and simplify this process.

Here's a quick overview of what we'll cover:

In **Part 1**, Building a workplace wellness strategy, we offer a framework to help you think about launching a wellness program at your company.

In **Part 2**, Unlock employee engagement, productivity, and resilience, we look at some of the skills and courses that will support healthy and happy employees.

And in **Part 3**, Prepare leaders to navigate change and drive results, we explore how leaders and people managers can prepare to succeed in their roles while taking care of themselves.

1

Building a workplace wellness strategy

Connecting Workplace Wellness to Business Outcomes



The 24/7 always-on and real-time notifications of workplace digital tools are inadvertently increasing employee stress. Sustained high stress at work is [linked to employee burnout](#), a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion, which *Harvard Business Review* estimates costs companies [\\$125 billion to \\$190 billion a year](#). In order to combat rising stress, more organizations are launching a comprehensive employee wellness strategy.

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Employee burnout costs companies between \$125–\$190 billion a year.

Employee wellness is more than yoga and meditation on Mondays (though that does help). When people are in a state of wellness at work, they're able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build positive relationships with others, cope with the normal stresses of life, and make a meaningful contribution.

One way to get started is by collecting employee feedback on ways they'd like to see a wellness program come to life. Once you know what wellness programs matter to people, you can take action where it's needed to build the most effective employee wellness strategy.

Here are **four tips** for communicating your strategy and integrating new wellness offerings for the whole company: communicate often and reach employees where they are, integrate wellness into new hire onboarding, offer wellness learning opportunities, and appeal to future employees.

1. Communicate often and reach employees where they are

What's the primary method of communication at your company? Do people use email and Slack or something else? Start your communications at an event like an all-hands meeting to allow time for questions. Follow up about your new wellness offerings via email, social media messages or Slack updates, and any other communication channels you use.

Tip: Use all of these tactics, or choose a few that are the best fit for your company. Remember, the more people understand and embrace your wellness strategy, the more successful it will be.

Communication tools to support your wellness launch

- Wellness calendars to share with the whole company
- Wellness guide outlining your company's philosophy and offerings
- Swag to celebrate the launch of your strategy (water bottle, t-shirt, reusable bag)
- Slack channels specific to wellness for questions and feedback
- Email newsletter
- Video announcements
- Customized learning paths or course recommendations for building wellness skills (we'll provide some ideas to get you started in Part 2)

2. Integrate wellness into new hire onboarding

To ensure the longevity of your wellness strategy, incorporate it into new hire onboarding. This shows new employees that you are committed to wellness. You may have a session led by a member of your People team that's dedicated to introducing your wellness offerings, or perhaps you can schedule time on new hires' calendars for them to take a wellness course.

Stacey Nordwall, Senior People Operations Manager at Culture Amp, championed the process of creating a well being guide. She says, "To keep the conversation about wellness going, we have included the guide as part of our onboarding journey and encourage all of our new Campers to give feedback on it."

3. Offer wellness learning opportunities

It's not enough to just talk about wellness. You'll also want to invest in wellness learning opportunities for your workforce. This may be through special live workshops or online wellness courses on Udemy Business that are available on-demand for your employees whenever they might need them.

Popular choices include [Learn Meditation](#), [Stress Management](#), or [How to Transform Your Life & Health](#).

Programs focused on wellness can deliver cost savings.

A [study on the financial return](#) from wellness programs demonstrated that for every dollar spent, company medical costs decrease by approximately \$3.27. Employers who adopt employee wellness programs are likely to see substantial positive returns within a few years.

4. Appeal to future employees

A focus on wellness can be appealing to future employees as well. Put information about your wellness strategy and offered programs on your website. Work management tool Asana, for example, describes its healthy work environment, “Our culinary team serves three delightful and nutritious meals each day. We have yoga on-site daily and offer a monthly fitness reimbursement.” Consider including employee testimonials so future candidates can see that these programs are truly integrated into the company’s cultural norms.



Skills Boosters

Managing mental health issues in the workplace

2

Unlock employee engagement, productivity, and resilience

Once you've committed to building a wellness program, you may be wondering which topics or skills to include. We've curated the following selection of skills and courses to help you get started.

Change agility

Author: Shelley Osborne,
VP of Learning, Udemy

Change is a part of life, but it's safe to say that the entire world is coping with significant change at the moment. We're all dealing with change and uncertainty in both our personal and professional lives — working from home, caring for children and extended family, and limiting our physical interactions with the outside world. Considering the current climate, developing change agility as a competency has never been more important.

In order to adapt to market changes, customer needs, employee growth and attrition, or financial gains and losses, companies (and the people within them) must change.

If employees went in to work every day to do the same thing that has always been done, it's likely that company would not last very long.

Recent events have taught us that it is impossible to control every variable within — and especially outside — your organization. You will not be able to anticipate everything that comes your way, but you will need to be flexible when it happens.



Shelley Osborne

**Change Agility in the Workplace:
Become a Change Agent**

Growth mindset

Author: Diane Flynn,

CEO and co-founder of ReBoot Accel
and Udemy instructor

In recent years, the idea of mindset has changed the way organizations operate. Through her research at Stanford, Carol Dweck has observed that the mindset you choose can have a profound impact on how you live your life.

According to Dweck, individuals can be placed on a continuum based on their mindsets. Those who believe their abilities are based on innate talents — and therefore can't change much — have a “fixed” mindset. Those who believe that success is based on effort are said to have a “growth” mindset. They believe that with hard work, you can ALWAYS improve. One way of differentiating is that a fixed mindset focuses on proving how smart you are; a growth mindset is focused on improving.

Udemy business

Another important litmus test for a growth versus fixed mindset is a person's reaction to failure. People with a growth mindset see failure as a learning opportunity and can bounce back relatively quickly, while those with a fixed mindset see failure as a reflection of their ability and therefore do everything they can to avoid it. That's why people with fixed mindsets like to play it safe. As a result, they're not often game-changers in our world.

The good news is that a growth mindset can be cultivated. It just takes a little work to help people get over the roadblocks they are likely to encounter when trying to grow.



Diane Flynn

Growth Mindset: The Key to Greater Confidence and Impact



Andrew Luttrell, Ph.D.

Be Happier with Positive Psychology

Reducing stress and anxiety

Author: Gregory Caremans,

Founder of The Brain Academy and Udemy Instructor

We're all familiar with the idea of feeling stressed, but what exactly is stress? It's the brain's reaction to perceived danger. Although our lifestyle has evolved dramatically over time, the brain's reaction to stress is still located in the primitive part of the brain. Stress is a survival mechanism that developed from responding to real threats, like a bear attacking us. In the early stages of humanity, we only had three choices: to fight, run away, or play dead.

In the past, this response didn't last very long — just 15 to 20 minutes (because if you were fighting a bear, it generally wouldn't take longer than that for one of you to win). The brain then begins to release cortisol. This is bad news now because cortisol attacks our brain cells in the hippocampus, the part of the brain that's in charge of memory and one of the only parts of the brain where new cells are created. The creation of new cells or "neurogenesis" is linked to optimism, youthful energy, and lust for life. Low neurogenesis is linked to depression and anxiety. Stress lowers neurogenesis directly, so managing stress is critical for maintaining quality of life — and for keeping your employees happy and engaged at work.

4 ways companies and managers can reduce stress at work

Author: Ritu Riyat,

Mindfulness Coach, Workplace Culture Consultant,
and Udemy Instructor

1. Workplace culture

Research shows that positive culture supports innovation and productivity. Having a culture where employees feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and are valued as humans first creates a built-in support system to leverage as stress relief.

2. Mentoring and professional development

Having resources to support employee growth and development keeps them challenged while equipping them with tools and resources to complete difficult projects.

Connecting Workplace Wellness to Business Outcomes



Gregory Caremans, Brain Academy

Stress Management: 40 Easy Ways to Deal with Stress



Ritu Riyat

The Stress Detox: Reduce Stress and Burnout in the Workplace

3. Managers as agents for change

Managers can play a huge role in mitigating workplace stress with simple habits like starting a meeting with a mindful moment or encouraging employees to block out white space on their calendars.

4. Carve out time for well-being

Ensure employees have access to (and are encouraged to use) health and fitness tools, healthy food options, mental health resources, personal coaching, and more.

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of top performers
have high
emotional
intelligence or EQ.

Emotional intelligence

Author: Leila Bulling Towne,

Executive Coach and Udemý Instructor

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the secret ingredient for the vast majority of top performers in the workplace. In Emotional Intelligence 2.0, authors Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves found that 90% of top performers have high emotional intelligence or EQ. And only 20% of bottom performers are high in EQ. As Bradberry says, “You can be a top performer without emotional intelligence, but the chances are slim.”

People with high EQ excel in various ways: They make better work decisions for themselves, their peers, and their companies. Executives with high EQ are more likely to succeed. Salespeople with high EQ sell more.

One of the most exciting aspects of EQ is that — unlike IQ, which remains relatively consistent throughout a person’s life — it can be increased.

The 4 key elements of emotional intelligence

1. Self-awareness

Self-awareness is about identifying the moments when we have a strong emotional reaction and pinpointing what is causing us to feel that way: our “buttons.” Once we are self-aware of our emotions, we can then learn how to regulate them.

2. Self-management

Getting to the root of why something triggers an emotional response helps to create a connection between the limbic and logical parts of the brain. People who nurture this connection are less likely to have their emotions “hijack” their minds, behaviors, and actions.

3. Social awareness

Social awareness involves paying closer attention to those around us at work. It is our ability to observe what others are saying with their words — and with their bodies — and to examine how it affects us. Strong social awareness involves watching and listening to others and learning more about our coworkers to better understand how to partner with them. Shifting to a mindset of curiosity and eliminating judgment are also critical for developing social awareness.

4. Relationship management

Relationship management involves building, strengthening, and deepening connections with our coworkers. People who have this skill value teamwork and collaboration, and they are able to handle conflict in productive and thoughtful ways.



Barry Winbolt, Skills Boosters

Understanding and developing Emotional Intelligence



Robin Hills

Developing Emotional Intelligence in Teams



Robin Hills

Collaboration and Emotional Intelligence

Case study:

How EQ skills keep Intellective on the cutting edge

Udemy customer Intellective is a globally distributed technology consulting firm that recently had a round of expansion, which led to a lack of trust and understanding among consultants. To quickly scale trust and purpose, the L&D team focused on EQ training.

COO James Baldwin says, “The results of our EQ training were almost immediate and obvious. After the first teams completed the training, we noticed increased patience, more positive and productive peer reviews, and improved quality of work. The EQ training helped build the trust and emotional understanding necessary for effective global, virtual teams.”

Intellective’s recommended courses:

Collaboration and Emotional Intelligence
 Developing Emotional Intelligence in Teams
 Understanding and Developing Emotional Intelligence



Leila Bulling Towne

Emotional Intelligence at Work: Learn from Your Emotions

Time management and productivity

Author: Alexis Haselberger,

Time Management & Productivity Coach
and UdemY Instructor

The fast pace of the modern workplace is a common source of stress. According to UdemY's Employee Experience Report, half of the survey respondents (and 53% of managers) said they could improve their time management skills.

When it comes to time, it's important to recognize that we're dealing with a finite resource. We each get only 24 hours a day. And that's it. But we all have different personalities, experiences, circumstances, and skills. This means there's not necessarily a "right way" to do things, but there is a "right way for you" if you want to accomplish your goals.

Identifying common roadblocks to time management

There are three major reasons why most people struggle with time management and productivity.

1. Attempting to rely on memory

Memory can be a very powerful tool. But it shouldn't be the place where we store everything we have to do. Attempting to use our memories to keep track of what we need to do isn't very effective and it actually increases stress.

When people feel like they're not present at work, home, or on the phone, it's often because their brains are working overtime trying to hang onto everything they know they have to do. And when this occurs, it's very hard to focus on the present.

2. Not having a system for tasks and to-dos

Not having a system is another common roadblock to managing time effectively. A "system" will be different for each person, but at its core, a system is a method for capturing, organizing, prioritizing, and documenting tasks so that people can achieve consistent results and know they are spending the right amount of time on the right things.



Alexis Haselberger

**Time Management Mastery:
Do More, Stress Less**

3. Distraction and focus struggles

Distraction and focus struggles are real issues for most people. A recent study out of UC Irvine shows that it takes on average 23 minutes to refocus after an interruption. And that holds true even when we are distracting ourselves (say, when we decide to check our email in the middle of writing a big report). An average 8-hour workday breaks down into about 21 periods of 23 minutes. If you or your employees are distracted more than 20 times a day, it's no wonder it's a challenge to get everything done!

Conflict management

Author: Dr. Priya Nalkur,
Executive Coach and UdemY Instructor

At its simplest, conflict is a difference in perspective between two or more individuals. Conflict is common — it's one of the most human things to have a different perspective from someone else.

The CPP Global “Workplace Conflict and How Businesses Can Harness It to Thrive” report found that US employees spend 2.1 hours a week involved with interpersonal conflict, which amounts to about \$359 billion in paid hours, or the equivalent of 385 million working days.

Yet despite how often we encounter conflict, there's a common misconception that conflict is bad. Rather than fight against it, we ought to embrace conflict and recognize it for what it is: an opportunity to get closer to another person and clarify our relationship with them.

Learning how to deal with conflict is important because relationships matter so much in the workplace. With solid relationships, we can influence more, get more done, and be more productive. But we can also be more fulfilled — better connections foster more intimacy and trust, which creates a more collaborative and better work environment.

The right mindset for approaching conflict

Mindset is our attitude or approach to any given experience. We can be grateful, resentful, enthusiastic, or disgusted. There are a few mindsets that are effective at managing conflict well.

Curiosity is one of the most effective mindsets to adopt. When we approach conflict with a curious mindset and avoid becoming attached to an outcome, it helps us manage conflict well.

Not needing to win is another important mindset. When we take the mindset of learning and resolving and coming up with a mutually beneficial solution, we're less likely to approach our conversations in a hard manner.

Gratitude also helps when you're in conflict with someone. Make an effort to stop and say, "I admire and appreciate that you have a strong opinion." This invites the other person in and makes them more empathetic to your side.

Enthusiasm is helpful, too. When you approach a conflict and the process of finding resolution with enthusiasm, you're more likely to reach a mutually beneficial outcome.



Dr. Priya Nalkur

Mastering Conflict Management and Resolution at Work

3

Prepare leaders to navigate change and drive results

People managers and company leaders must remember to look after their own well-being, especially in times of change. A recent [Harvard Business Review](#) article explained, “Almost everyone needs connection to others and the opportunity to give and get support in the abnormal new normal of deep uncertainty and the fearful specter of a pandemic.” This is particularly important for leaders, writes Udemy’s Senior Vice President of People + Places [Cara Brennan Allamano](#): “As People leaders, we’re held to account to help our businesses work through crises, but that doesn’t take away from the level of uncertainty that exists all around us.”

Research has shown that there has been a crisis in management for the past several years. Gallup reports that just [18% of managers demonstrate a high level of talent for managing teams](#) and that promotions to managerial positions are typically based on tenure and performance in a past role, rather than potential to excel in the next one. This is a real liability, as the skills needed for management are completely different from those for an individual contributor.

Case study:

Creating digital leaders at [24]7.ai

[24]7.Customer, a call center based in India and the Philippines, recently underwent a digital transformation to become [24]7.ai, shifting their focus to customer experience software and AI to automate more routine calls. In order to prepare employees for this change, [24]7.ai created a Digital Leader Profile program to develop a growth mindset and train customer service team leaders in 7 traits that would encourage learning, risk-taking, experimentation, digital fluency, and openness to change.

We wanted our leaders to realize their world is not confined to the world they know. There are endless possibilities out there for those that are open to new ideas and make it their mission to learn continuously.

Mel Dolera, Head of the Organization
Transformation Team at [24]7.ai

Millennial workplace consultant Aaron Levy explained in the [2018 Udemy Employee Experience Report](#) that, when people move into management, 30–40% of their time shifts from “doing work” to dealing with people issues. Udemy instructor [Ron Carucci’s research](#) has shown that “the vast majority of leaders say they felt unprepared for the challenges of leadership they discovered when they took bigger jobs. And more than half of them didn’t have any ongoing coaching to help them once in the role.”

New managers often aren’t getting adequate soft skills training on how to handle stress and team dynamics, let alone guidance for managing themselves. We see from the responses to the [Udemy Workplace Boundaries survey](#) that, compared to their non-manager coworkers, managers are feeling more pressure to blur their personal-professional boundaries.

For example, managers are more likely to say they let work take precedence over meals and relaxation time, with 59% of managers (vs. 46% of workers) revealing they feel pressured to work through lunch.

This research shows us that for people managers, soft skills and their own well-being go hand in hand. If they haven’t yet mastered skills like time management, emotional intelligence, and handling conflict or difficult conversations, they’re likely to struggle in their role and compensate by working overtime. Companies can try to prevent overwork and burnout by helping their managers develop the skills that will help them cope with the challenges of being a people leader.

4 key leadership skills for digital transformation and workplace change

It takes a new kind of “digital leader” who’s capable of adapting to technology and workplace change. Unfortunately, many leaders aren’t able to adapt to these changes — often with serious repercussions.

A study published in HR Dive found that poor leadership and uncertain direction of the company is the largest driver of employee burnout.

Here are four skills that will help leaders adapt to the digital transformation of the workplace.

1. Cultivating a growth mindset

Openness to learning and discovery is essential in today’s work since leaders face many challenges that they’ve likely never encountered before, and new technological developments are changing the very nature of work itself.

2. Prioritizing communication and influence

Employee burnout is often a result of unclear communication from leaders: When employees don’t understand the company’s direction or vision, they’re much more likely to become disengaged.

3. Ability to navigate innovation and change

Embracing change can mean adopting new technology, but it might also refer more broadly to changing established processes, team structure, or expectations.

4. Effective collaboration with other leaders and across teams

With more agile networked and distributed teams, collaborative skills are critical in the digital age. New disruptive technologies are rapidly redefining roles and requiring collaboration across teams that haven’t worked together before.

Here are a few of our recommended soft skills courses to help managers maintain balance and well-being.

[Change Agility in the Workplace: Become a Change Agent](#)

[Growth Mindset: The Key to Greater Confidence and Impact](#)

[Emotional Intelligence at Work: Learn from Your Emotions](#)

[Mastering Conflict Management and Resolution at Work](#)

[The Essential Guide for Effective Managers](#)

[Exceptional Leadership: Leading at a Higher Level](#)

Promoting wellness so employees can thrive

While the future remains uncertain, one thing we can be sure of is our continued need to change and adapt. In today's remote work environment, the lines between personal and professional are blurred and skills like change agility, growth mindset, time management, and communication matter more than ever.

The coming months hold challenges we may not even be able to envision yet. But no matter what, helping your employees and leaders take care of their well-being will be a key to your company's ability to thrive. Putting your employees' wellness first will give them the mental capacity and strength to innovate and take on whatever's next.

Find out how our online library of courses and digital learning tools on Udemy Business can help support your employees' well-being. [**Learn more here.**](#)

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