

# Creating Corporate Wellness

The importance of workplace leaders acting as role models to create work-life balance.

By Greg Kinnaird



Life is to be lived not worked!

Our lives and work collide in so many ways and the intensification of the workplace can seep more and more into what was once our personal space. Technology, like the ubiquitous mobile phone, which you would think might ease the load, actually makes us more accessible - particularly out of hours, on leave and interstate.

There is much more to life than working! Whilst many of us are passionate about our work, and absolutely committed to making a difference, it's really life itself that counts.

Consider for a moment how important your health is.

If the doctor told you tomorrow that you had 3 months to live, would you be spending those last 3 precious months at work?

I would hope not.

Life Is The Number One Priority...I Want To Be A Life-A-Holic Not A Work-A-Holic!

In modern times we have become too fixated on work and material things. We have become too regimented in our routines.

As senior managers and leaders, we need to get the message out to the broader society. Reprioritise and seriously think about what is important to them in your life. Let's think about doing things differently and diversifying our interests and relationships.

We will be more resilient in times of adversity if we do not have all our proverbial eggs in the one basket!

An article in a leading Australian Newspaper reported that Australians rate their happiness level at about 75% but more than half of us feel that our quality of life is decreasing. Singapore is the same.

It is essential in today's working environment that people have flexibility, choice and a sense of personal control. Workplace leaders need to be very strategic and ensure a holistic approach. As a leader there is no more powerful tool than role-modelling and walking the talk. After all, people listen with their eyes!

So, it is more important than ever to have leaders who model appropriate values and behaviour. We need to establish an organisational culture and climate which promotes flexibility, trust, self-regulation and a focus on results and innovation, not on hours spent behind the desk or weekends worked.

Today's leaders really need to have a human face to them and demonstrate a commitment to interests other than work.

They need to overtly and genuinely value family, friends and encourage outside interests and past-times.

Leaders need to appreciate that allowing for personal growth and development and enhancing individuals' self-confidence will make them happier and more complete people and better leaders who are able to motivate and inspire.

Leaders need to establish clear values and establish an organisational climate and culture that fosters so-called work-life balance or corporate wellness.

The objective of any workplace is to have a workforce that is PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY and EMOTIONALLY prepared for the demands of work and life outside of work. This is an INTEGRATED strategy which covers:

- Employee lifestyle practices
- Health and wellness
- Organisational improvement

As a workplace leader, you'll discover that the organisational benefits of having a "Corporate Wellness" include:

- Improved employee attitude towards the organisation
- Higher employee morale
- Improved productivity
- Reduced staff turnover

"Wellbeing" has been defined as "being engaged in a network of relationships and interests that give meaning to our lives".

I note with interest a Body and Soul article in The Sunday Times, Australia referred to the "Well-being Manifesto" as saying we should concentrate on "friendships, families and fun". There is no mention of work here!

I thought I would leave you with an apt quote from Monty Python's well-known movie "The Meaning of Life":

"Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations" ■

*This is the first of a series of articles on lifeskills by Greg Kinnaird. His book Make Create Innovate – A Quest for Innovation at Work has been designed to inspire and innovate people.*