

Insight Bulletin

UK Wellness Survey 2014

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Earlier this year we launched our sixth Global Wellness Survey, investigating emerging trends in employer-sponsored health promotion and wellness programmes. Over 1000 organisations responded to the survey, and the full results were published in July of this year.

A separate report has now been published which uses the same market leading data, but with a focus on UK organisations.

Overview

Before looking at the UK report specifically, it is worth putting the results in a broader context. 70% of Europe's respondents are currently offering health promotions to employees, compared to 55% in the US and 42% in Asia.

Within this 70%, however, the UK scored just 20% in having a fully implemented strategy, compared to 29% globally. Of those UK companies that do have a strategy in place, they tend to be early adopters; 61% having had a wellness programme in place for 2-5 years.

For those who do not have a wellness strategy in place, 33% cited differing cultures, laws and practices across global regions as the main reason, and 50% cited a lack of global oversight for healthcare.

Across all geographies, we are seeing organisations recognise the value of including family members in their programmes. Research shows that the health of an individual's family and friends greatly influences the health of the individual themselves, with a corresponding impact on absenteeism and productivity.

Headline Points from the UK

Across most regions, improving workforce morale and engagement feature in the top two objectives of a wellness programme. In the UK, stress and depression are the top two areas of concern. Interestingly, depression is not in the top 5 of any other region and ranked just 10th and 11th in the US and Asia respectively.

As you might expect, the various components that make up a wellness programme vary across the globe, however the UK's top three are HR policies, ergonomic adaptations and employee assistance programmes. Lagging behind in popularity were more costly interventions such as on site facilities, for example lifestyle or occupational health programmes.

What are UK employers doing?

Looking specifically at what companies are doing to increase productivity, the UK has a strong focus on flexible working with 83% of those responding having flexible working schedules, compared to 66% globally. Home working scored highly for the UK, with 62% of UK respondents offering this compared to 51% globally. Time off policies were also popular globally at 69% with the UK only slightly behind at 66%.

There is an exceptionally large difference between the UK and the US in the attitude towards provision of incentives as a driver of behavioural change. Only 34% of UK respondents offer incentives, compared to a staggering 90% in the US. UK respondents tend to lean towards applying the stick rather than the carrot, with penalties for unhealthy behaviours as opposed to rewarding the healthy majority. This was confirmed in a recent poll we conducted at [EB Live](#), with 63% of respondents agreeing that higher medical insurance premiums are a good way of changing lifestyle behaviours.

In terms of measuring success, there seems to be less emphasis on this in the UK with only 38% of respondents doing this compared to 52% globally, with lack of resource cited as the main reason behind this.

Finally, in terms of communication the UK led the way in terms of utilising a web portal or intranet with 81% of employers using this medium. Social media, although increasing slightly, is still not the favoured method with only 13% utilisation. Linked to this, taken from our EB live survey, 95% thought that fitness devices and apps on mobile technology will have a significant behavioural impact in the future.

Find Out More

If you would like to discuss the content of this briefing note and how it could impact your organisation, please contact your consultant.

Alternatively, you can contact us on: 0800 066 5433.

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