



# Building a Healthy, High Performing Work Culture

## A Five Step Guide

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## About Us

We are Canada's first and only national association to support workplace wellness practitioners and employers with simple, evidence-informed resources, connection, professional development, and certification to build healthy, high performing work cultures.

Our vision is to build a healthier, higher performing Canadian population and economy. One organization at a time.

## About this Guide

The information within this guide is based on input from stakeholders and the Wellness Works Advisory Board and a paper entitled Strategies to Enhance and Sustain Organizational Health and Performance,<sup>1</sup>

The paper was developed from a rigorous review of effectiveness of six well known workplace wellness frameworks and best practices in comparison to strategy management, organizational effectiveness and human resource strategy theories. It was based on secondary sources from Proquest ABI/INFORM Global from the Athabasca Library as well as reports and documents from the World Health Organization, the Conference Board of Canada, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Alberta Health Services, Canadian Standards Association, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and more. An examination of the effectiveness of strategies were compared with various meta-analysis reviews of current practice and several conceptual research papers from the last 12 years.

This guide and the supplementary tools bridge the gap between health and business outcomes to support organizational performance through health.

The aim of this tool and supplementary resources, is to support healthy, positive, resilient, and performing work cultures where people and organizations can thrive.

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1. Grainger, V. (2018). Strategies to Enhance and Sustain Organizational Health and Performance. APRJ-699, A3, St. Albert: Athabasca University, Faculty of Business.

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# A Healthy Foundation for the Five Step Process

There are four foundational pillars and success factors required to create a healthy, high performing culture. These pillars and success factors are embedded within the five-step process. They include:



Business Practices & Philosophy



Physical Environment



Access to Personal Health Resources



Community Partnerships & ESG

## The Pillars for a Healthy, High Performing Culture

1. *Healthy business practices and a management philosophy* that values employee well-being and organizational performance. A philosophy that addresses the root issues is vital. For example, a philosophy that guides healthy practices may foster a work design that allows for flexibility, autonomy, manageable workloads, collaboration, trust, freedom to challenge processes, and creativity, without fear of judgment (psychological safety). Additionally, inclusive leadership that model healthy practices is required.
2. *A physical environment* that is safe and provides the ability to increase physical activity, reduce sedentary behaviour, and improve nutrition.
3. *Access to personal health resources* that support well-being, resiliency and productivity. Examples include employee assistance programs, workplace training for leaders, education on physical, mental and financial well-being for employees, and linkage to community physical and mental well-being programs. The possibilities are endless and based on organization size, sector and location.
4. *Community partnerships and ESG (environmental, social, governance)* that support social responsibility, sustainability, and shared social value for all stakeholders.

## The Success Factors

Key success factors necessary to ensure your strategy will impact both health and performance indicators include:

1. Leadership buy-in
2. Integration with business practices
3. Good communication
4. Adequate resources
5. Inclusive leadership

Follow the process and reap the rewards.

- Enhanced organizational reputation
- Financial success through cost avoidance and better net revenue
- Greater organizational efficiency and effectiveness
- Improved employee health, well-being and productivity
- Better customer experience – let's face it, the cliché is true. Happy employees = happy clients.

# Let's Get Started

The following model is a summary of the five steps. Flip through the next pages for detailed actions.



## Assess: Determine Current State



- A. Conduct a stakeholder analysis. Examine the current management philosophy, culture and external stakeholders that can impact buy-in, adoption and effectiveness at all levels.
- B. If leadership demonstrates readiness, conduct an employee assessment of health and performance to inform a targeted, segmented approach based on wants, needs and risk factors (i.e.: a health risk assessment that looks at well-being, preferences and performance). A comprehensive assessment is available through Wellness Works Canada. If readiness is not there, skip to step two, inspire.
- C. Assess organizational structure, current work design and systems to determine what may impact well-being and performance – for example a tall hierarchical structure can reduce sense of collaboration, ownership and autonomy over work. Work design with little flexibility and a high workload can limit motivation and productivity and contribute to occupational burnout. Understanding and addressing the root factors influencing employee well-being, organizational performance and the culture, is one of the most critical steps.



## Inspire: Get Everyone on Board



- A. Develop a business case in alignment with stakeholder needs using the Wellness Works strategy map. The strategy map connects the dots between employee well-being and organizational performance.
- B. Secure necessary resources (people + budget) for planning.
- C. Utilize a change leadership process to:
  - Inspire representatives from business units and obtain a champion sponsor (a C-suite executive).
  - Develop a compelling vision with, rather than for, all stakeholders.
  - Develop a steering committee and embed well-being and performance into existing JWHS or social planning committees as required for the planning stage.
  - Develop a well-being ambassador network. Ambassadors help promote, educate and engage their team or department in the strategy. We encourage all supervisors and senior management to be well-being ambassadors. However, volunteer ambassadors in each department can also be effective. For very small organizations, one or two may be enough.
- D. If leadership is on board, and resources have been allocated, get recognized by applying for the Wellness Works Health and Performance Ambassador Employer of Choice certification.

## Plan: Develop Measurable Objectives and Measures

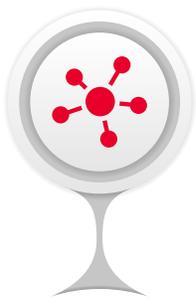


- A. Identify key objectives using the stakeholder engagement and assessment results ensuring alignment and integration with the organization's vision, mission, values and objectives. Use the Wellness Works adaptable scorecard to map out the baseline measures. To ensure integration, embed one or more objectives, outcomes and values in the following places as feasible:
  - The organization's overarching strategic plan
  - OHS or HR operational plan
  - Each business unit operational plan
  - Performance development plans and/or leadership competencies
- B. Develop an implementation plan.
  - a. Drill down actions and measures to achieve objectives ensuring broad accessibility and segmented approach as identified through the employee assessment. Actions may include:
    - Develop or amend an existing policy to address well-being and performance.
    - Plan steps to influence management philosophy and culture of well-being with trust at *all* levels through education and engagement. *Highly recommended.*
    - Develop a comprehensive multi-faceted communication plan.
    - Re-evaluate and/or adjust organizational and work design to support balance, flexibility, autonomy and workload. *Highly recommended.*
    - Integrate well-being measures into the performance development or talent management system for accountability (ideally using a 360-review between supervisors and employees). *Highly recommended.*
  - b. Develop accountability measures for any program components (using a project management approach) to ensure clear roles and responsibilities that promote shared ownership. Including measures in the organization's overarching strategic plan and business unit operational plans may be enough.
  - c. Obtain leadership support for additional resources and staffing if necessary.



## Implement

Implement the plan with regular check-ins using a shared responsibility approach. Use existing mechanisms where appropriate to simplify this approach. For example, leadership meetings, joint workplace health, safety and well-being, or social planning committees can review progress and promote change.



Implement



## Evaluate & Excel



### Evaluate & Excel

- A. Measure behaviour change, health outcomes, productivity and performance indicators via employee assessment and organizational assessment developed in step one.
- B. Fill in the measures from the Wellness Works scorecard using objective and implementation plan measures from the planning stage (note: organizational performance and cost of lost time results can be expected after two to four years while behaviour change and productivity improvements can be seen after one year).
- C. Adjust and refine the strategy and implementation plan based on learnings.
- D. Get recognized with a Wellness Works Health and Performance Master or Mentor level certification.



## Support

To access supplementary materials or obtain further support in strategy development or implementation contact [info@wellnessworkscanada.ca](mailto:info@wellnessworkscanada.ca). We are here to help.



Building a healthy, high performing Canadian  
population and economy. One organization at a time.  
**Together.**

[WellnessWorksCanada.ca](http://WellnessWorksCanada.ca)