

# The four pillars of wellbeing in the workplace

How to help your colleagues thrive every day



# Executive summary

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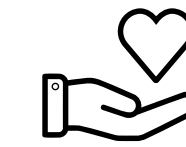
Here's the headline: Fostering wellbeing in the workplace is no longer a nice-to-have. Understanding and addressing the multifaceted nature of employee wellbeing is critical, not only for individual health and happiness but also as a linchpin for organisational success. This guide is designed to help you promote wellbeing and help your colleagues thrive every day.

Our analysis begins with a dive into the transformed landscape of work life, marked by significant shifts toward remote work, technological integration and changing employee expectations. We explain how wellbeing positively affects productivity and loyalty, as well as profitability, and how you can look out for warning signs like high absenteeism, conflict, lack of enthusiasm and health complaints.

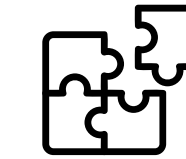
Central to our discussion are the four pillars of workplace wellbeing: Firstly, purpose and belonging, where research shows that people are 64% more likely to be engaged in high levels of innovation when they feel purpose (Great Place To Work) and that a lack of belonging was given as the reason for leaving a role by 51% of employees (McKinsey and Company). The second pillar, health (both physical and mental), is intrinsically linked to wellbeing, with 77% of employees saying that work stress has negatively impacted their physical health (Headspace). Thirdly, creativity is a crucial pillar of wellbeing that significantly impacts employee satisfaction, with 87.3% of BBC Maestro survey respondents rating creativity at work as very or extremely important. And investing in the fourth pillar, resilience, translates into numerous benefits for companies – reducing burnout, promoting good mental health and increasing collaboration. According to Deloitte, businesses that deliberately foster resilience outperform their peers and predict stronger growth.

This guide spotlights BBC Maestro for business as an example of how e-learning platforms can bolster the four pillars of wellbeing. BBC Maestro offers a solution that aligns with the aspirations of the modern workforce, catering to their desire for purpose and belonging, creative expression, wellness and resilience in the face of challenges.

Keep reading to learn:



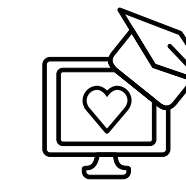
**The importance of wellbeing in the workplace**



**How to spot signs you have problems**



**The four pillars of workplace wellbeing**



**How e-learning supports the four pillars**



# Introduction

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# Introduction

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing work environment, the importance of wellbeing in the workplace cannot be overstated. According to the World Health Organisation, 58% of the world's population spends a third of their lives at work, and research by the Social Market Foundation shows that companies with happy employees outperform the competition by 20%. Recognising that employee wellbeing is important for company success as well as the individual, it's crucial for organisations to foster an environment where employees not only thrive in their roles but also feel valued and supported in all aspects of their wellbeing.

Drawing on the latest research, our own customer insights and real-world examples, this guide will explore the challenges and opportunities in today's work landscape, from navigating the complexities of remote work to addressing the rise in stress and disengagement. It will also explore the four pillars of wellbeing and spotlight e-learning as a powerful way to engage employees and promote wellbeing.

This guide is for everyone. It offers insights and practical strategies to help create a more positive and productive work environment wherever you fit in the company. By understanding and implementing the four pillars of workplace wellbeing – purpose, health, creativity and resilience – we can transform our workplaces into spaces where everyone feels empowered to bring their best self to work every day.

Whether you're a leader looking to inspire your team or an employee seeking to make a positive change, this guide will provide you with the tools and knowledge needed to promote a culture of wellbeing that benefits everyone.



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**The smartest of all business leaders will not only create an organisation that is successful, innovative and fast-paced, they will also include within their remit the creation of an organisation that is happy.**

**Mo Gawdat**

Bestselling author and former Chief Business Officer of Google X, in his BBC Maestro course, *Happiness*.

# Adapting to new expectations

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## A disrupted workplace

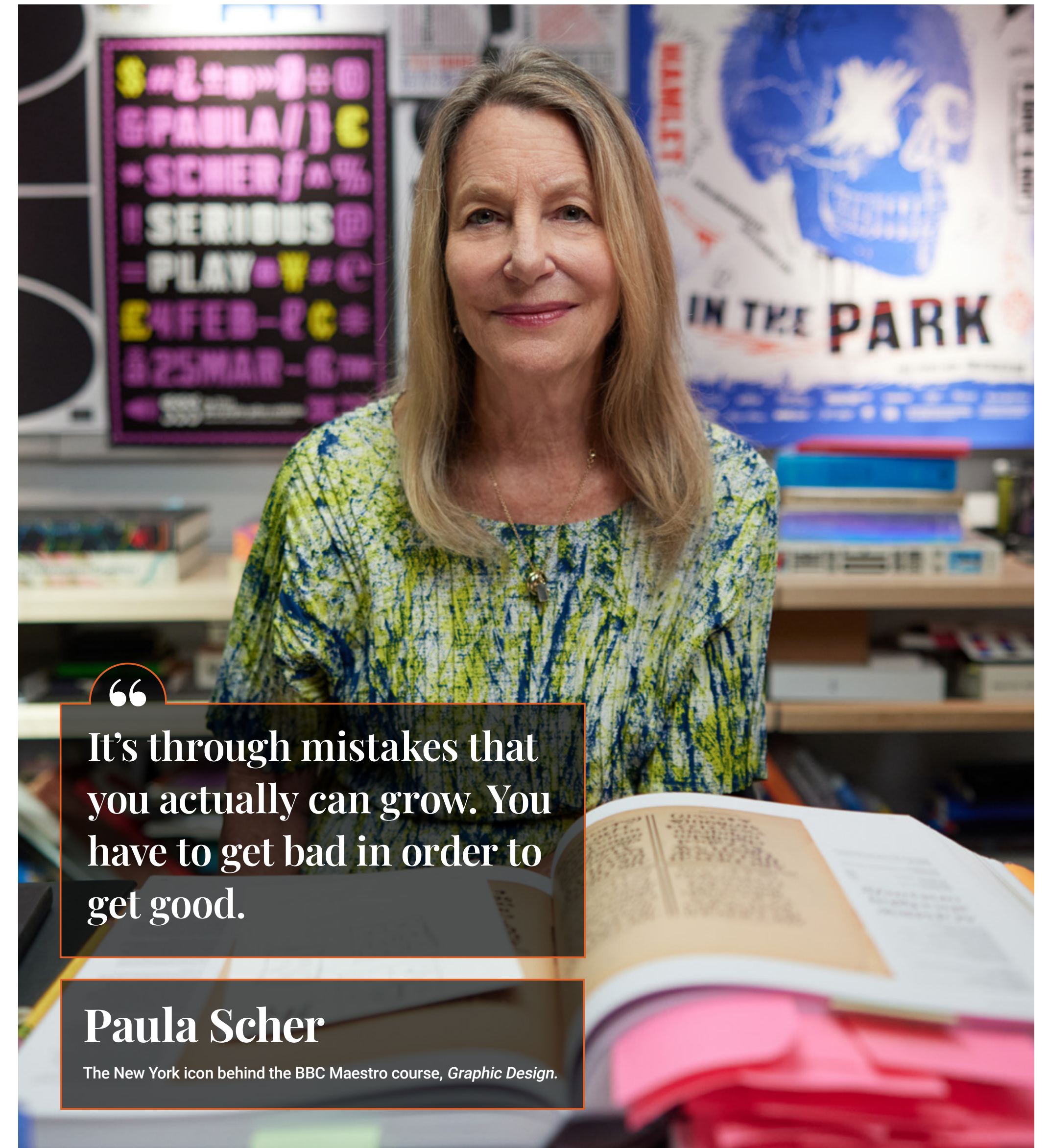
The workplace has undergone significant changes in recent years due to remote work, the rise of AI, and a loss of faith in institutions. This has resulted in a fractured workplace with low levels of employee engagement. According to Gallup, only 32% of employees are engaged in their work, with one in five actively disengaged. This is the lowest level of engagement since 2015, and active disengagement has risen each year since 2020. More are re-evaluating their position, and many are resigning – we’re all adjusting to a different kind of workplace expectation.

## Employees look to their employers for help

The COVID-19 pandemic has further challenged the traditional separation between work and life. Employees are experiencing stress, anxiety and burnout, and they are looking to their employers for support. A 2023 survey by LumApps found that 88% of employees had experienced burnout in the last two years. For Gen Z and Millennial workers, wellness programs are particularly important when making job decisions. Gallup has identified “My organisation cares about my wellbeing” as one of the most powerful factors influencing engagement since the adoption of hybrid and remote work has risen quickly since 2020.

## Physical health policies are not enough

Traditional workplace policies that focus on physical health simply don’t cut it. Employees expect a more holistic approach that includes mental and emotional wellbeing, and organisations are responding with a 45% increase in the budget for these programs (Gallup). This is also reflected in the number of company leaders discussing mental health, which has grown from 35% in 2020 to 89% in 2024, according to Headspace.



“It’s through mistakes that you actually can grow. You have to get bad in order to get good.”

**Paula Scher**

The New York icon behind the BBC Maestro course, *Graphic Design*.

Why is wellbeing in the  
workplace important ?

# Why is wellbeing in the workplace important?

## Happy people get more done

Happy people produce more work at a higher quality. Forbes found that “Healthy workers are almost three times as effective as unhealthy workers” and the Social Market Foundation found that companies with happy employees outperform the competition by 20%.

## Care encourages loyalty

It makes sense that people are more likely to stick around if they feel looked after. And it’s important to address employee mental health as it results in a 500% return for every dollar spent on mental health. Not only will current employees work better and show up more often, they’re more likely to stay for the long term – companies with wellness programs are better positioned to attract and retain talent.

## Wellness boosts profitability

Investing in organisational wellbeing results in higher customer loyalty, employee productivity, and lower staff turnover, which reflects higher profitability. NZIER and Xero’s research found that “For every dollar invested in organisational wellbeing, the financial return average was between five and twelve times within a year”. Companies that received high scores in a corporate health and wellness self-assessment appreciated in value by 235% compared with the S&P 500 Index appreciation of 159% over a six-year simulation period, according to Mercer.

**58%**

of millennials consider wellness programs important (Gallup)

**67%**

with wellness programs are more likely to recommend their employer (Forbes)

**45%**

working at small to medium-sized companies would stay for wellness programmes (Forbes)



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Optimistic and happier people set higher goals and are more resilient in the pursuit of these higher goals.

**Doreen Lawrence**

Campaigner and member of the House of Lords in her BBC Maestro course, *Finding the Inner Strength*.

# Warning signs to look out for

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Recognising warning signs for workplace wellbeing is crucial for maintaining a healthy and productive work environment. Here are several indicators your workplace could improve its wellbeing offering:

## High absenteeism and turnover

Frequent absences or a revolving door of employees can signal dissatisfaction and stress among your team. When individuals don't feel supported or valued, they're more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere or take time off to cope with stress.

**Data from the CIPD and Simplyhealth shows that workplace absences have soared to the highest level in over a decade, with UK employees absent on average for 7.8 days over the past year. That's two days more than the pre-pandemic rate of 5.8 days.**

## Decreased productivity

A noticeable decline in work output or quality can be a sign of disengagement or burnout. Employees struggling with wellbeing issues often find it hard to maintain their usual levels of performance.

**Over 50% of employees surveyed by Champion Health rated their productivity as average, below average, or low. Just 13% rated their productivity as high.**

## Increased conflict

Tensions and conflicts among team members might indicate a deeper issue related to workplace culture or stress management. A toxic work environment can hinder working relationships and individual wellbeing.

## Lack of enthusiasm

If your team shows little interest in tasks they once found engaging or avoids participating in meetings and discussions, it could point to a loss of motivation and job satisfaction.

## Physical and mental health complaints

An increase in complaints related to physical strain, fatigue, headaches, or mental health concerns like anxiety and depression could indicate that the workplace environment is affecting employee wellbeing.

## Poor communication

When communication breaks down, it can lead to misunderstandings and a sense of isolation. A healthy workplace encourages open and supportive communication.

## Feedback on work-life balance

If employees express concerns about an unsustainable workload or difficulty managing work-life balance, it's a sign that the demands of the job outweigh their capacity to cope.

Addressing these warning signs promptly can help prevent further decline in workplace wellbeing. Creating a supportive environment where employees feel valued and heard is key to fostering a resilient and engaged workforce. Prioritising wellbeing through flexible work arrangements, mental health resources, and a culture of inclusivity can transform the workplace, making it a space where everyone thrives. How best to tackle that? With the four pillars of workplace wellbeing...

# The four pillars of workplace wellbeing

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# The four pillars of workplace wellbeing



## Purpose and belonging

Instilling a strong sense of meaning in the workplace builds meaningful trust and deeper relationships.



## Health

Learning to care for body and mind will ensure that all your employees are able to perform at their fullest capacity.



## Creativity

Nurturing creative interests allows employees to contribute more fully to work and be more innovative.



## Resilience

Building overall emotional elasticity – from managing stress to embracing failure – helps employees to adapt quickly, rebound swiftly and thrive under pressure.

# Purpose and belonging

Purpose and belonging significantly contribute to the overall wellbeing of employees in the workplace. When individuals find purpose in their work and feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated and committed to their organisation's goals.

Purpose in the workplace goes beyond day-to-day tasks — it's about understanding the bigger picture and how your work contributes to the broader team's objectives. When employees recognise the value of their contributions, they experience a higher level of job satisfaction. Forbes found that employee recognition increases the sense of fulfilment by 366% and community by 208%. This sense of purpose boosts morale and motivation, leading to increased productivity and creativity. Employees who believe in what they do are more resilient to stress and challenges, as they see them as obstacles to overcome on the path to achieving meaningful goals.

You can use your mission statement to align goals and encourage employees to go above and beyond in their roles. A strong sense of purpose aligns personal values with those of the organisation, fostering a deeper commitment and loyalty. And purpose-driven companies often report higher levels of employee engagement and retention, as individuals are drawn to work environments where they feel their work has a meaningful impact.

**When people feel they 'make a difference' at work, they are 64% more likely to be engaged in high levels of innovation.**

– Great Place To Work

Belonging, on the other hand, refers to the feeling of being part of a community. It's about feeling accepted, valued and supported by colleagues and the organisation as a whole. A strong sense of belonging is critical for mental and emotional wellbeing, as it combats feelings of isolation and disconnection that can arise, especially in remote or highly competitive work environments. When employees feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to express their ideas and opinions, contributing to a culture of openness and innovation.

So it's clear that purpose and belonging are essential for fostering a healthy and productive workplace. They contribute to employee wellbeing by providing a sense of meaning and community, which in turn drives engagement, productivity and loyalty. Organisations that prioritise these elements can cultivate a positive work culture that attracts and retains top talent, ultimately leading to long-term success.

**51% of employees attributed their leaving a role to a lack of belonging. In fact, it was one of the top 3 most-cited reasons, just behind not feeling valued by the organisation (54%) or their manager (52%).**

– McKinsey and Company



# Health

Physical and mental health are clear warning signs in determining an employee's wellbeing at work. Promoting good physical and mental health in the workplace extends far beyond the individual, influencing the entire organisational culture, performance and even the bottom line. There's a big opportunity here, with 77% of employees saying that work stress has negatively impacted their physical health (Headspace).

Firstly, employees in good physical health are generally more energetic and able to perform their tasks with greater efficiency. Regular exercise and a healthy diet contribute to reduced absenteeism, as physically healthy employees are less likely to fall sick or suffer from chronic diseases. This directly translates into fewer sick days, ensuring that projects progress smoothly without interruptions. Plus, a physically active workforce demonstrates improved concentration and mental sharpness – attributes that are crucial for problem-solving and creativity.

Equally important, mental health plays a critical role in how employees interact with their colleagues, manage stress and make decisions. Harvard Business Review reported that 86% of employees believe their company's culture should support mental health. A positive mental health environment fosters a culture of inclusivity and support, where employees feel valued and understood. This emotional and psychological safety encourages open communication, leading to more collaborative and innovative solutions. Employees with good mental health are more resilient, able to bounce back from setbacks and adapt to changes more effectively.

Workplaces that prioritise both physical and mental health often see higher levels of employee engagement and loyalty. When employees feel their wellbeing is cared for, they are more likely to exhibit higher commitment and motivation towards their work and the organisation. Mind found that 60% of employees "Feel more motivated and more likely to recommend their organisation as a good place to work if their employer took action to support mental wellbeing". You can begin to see how the four pillars of workplace wellbeing positively impact one another.

**86% of employees believe their company's culture should support mental health. – Harvard Business Review**

The benefits of a healthy workforce also extend to the company's reputation. Businesses known for their commitment to employee wellbeing are more attractive to top talent. And at a time where job seekers have a lot of power, being recognised for excellent health and wellbeing programs can be a significant competitive advantage.

Lastly, the financial benefits of better employee mental and physical wellbeing are very real. Investing in health and wellbeing initiatives can lead to substantial returns through increased productivity, reduced healthcare costs and minimised absenteeism. According to Harvard Business Review, "The ROI on comprehensive, well-run employee wellness programs can be as high as 6 to 1."

It's clear that the integration of good physical and mental health practices into the workplace is not just a moral obligation but a strategic imperative. Organisations that recognise and act on this stand to benefit from a more engaged, productive and loyal workforce and – ultimately – sustained business success.

**The ROI on comprehensive, well-run employee wellness programs can be as high as 6 to 1. – Harvard Business Review**



# Creativity

Creativity in the workplace is not just a buzzword or a nice-to-have; it's a crucial pillar of wellbeing that significantly impacts employee satisfaction, engagement and overall mental health. At its core, creativity represents the capacity to generate novel and valuable ideas, solutions and processes. It is a critical driver of innovation and competitive advantage. But beyond its commercial benefits, fostering a creative environment in the workplace plays a vital role in enhancing the wellbeing of employees, contributing to a more fulfilling and purpose-driven professional life.

**Feeling creative in work was rated very or extremely important by an average of 87.3% of our survey respondents.**

Creativity in the workplace contributes to a sense of purpose and meaning among employees. When individuals are encouraged to think creatively, they are often tasked with solving problems, designing new products or improving processes. This sense of contribution and the ability to see the tangible impact of their ideas can significantly boost an employee's sense of purpose and belonging within an organisation. Feeling that one's work is meaningful is closely linked to higher job satisfaction levels and overall wellbeing.

Engaging in creative activities has been shown to reduce stress and improve mental health. The process of creating and problem-solving offers an escape from the routine and can be incredibly therapeutic. It encourages mindfulness and can be a form of mental relaxation, like meditation. In environments that prioritise creativity, employees are likely to experience lower levels of stress and anxiety, contributing to a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Creativity also fosters a culture of continuous learning and growth. When employees are encouraged to think outside the box and experiment with new ideas, they are simultaneously learning and developing new skills. This not only contributes to their professional development but also to their sense of competence and self-efficacy. A workplace that values creativity is one that supports personal growth and development, which is a key component of overall wellbeing. According to new research from Nyenrode Business University and IE University, 50% of people think they could perform better at work if they were not worrying about making mistakes.

Plus, creativity encourages social connection and collaboration. Creative projects often require diverse teams to work together, share ideas and provide feedback. This collaboration can strengthen relationships among colleagues, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Social support is a critical factor in maintaining mental health and wellbeing, making the collaborative aspect of creativity especially valuable.

**Companies that show creativity grow 2.6X faster than their peers, according to Forrester data.**

Businesses would be smart to prioritise creative development. Give workers the necessary time and freedom to be creative, encourage unique voices, prioritise diversity and facilitate knowledge-sharing.



# Resilience

Resilience, often described as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, is not just an individual virtue but a crucial component of workplace wellbeing. In the post-2020, ever-changing landscape of the modern workplace, resilience stands out as a beacon of stability and strength. It equips both employees and organisations with the ability to navigate challenges, adapt to new circumstances and emerge stronger from adversity.

At its core, resilience in the workplace fosters a culture of continuous learning and growth. Employees who cultivate resilience are more likely to view failures and setbacks as valuable learning opportunities rather than insurmountable obstacles. This mindset encourages a proactive approach to problem-solving and innovation, driving personal and organisational progress. Plus, resilient workers are more adept at managing stress and maintaining focus under pressure, contributing to a more positive and productive work environment.

For organisations, investing in the resilience of their workforce translates into numerous benefits. Firstly, it enhances overall employee wellbeing by reducing burnout and promoting mental health. In an era where stress and anxiety are prevalent, creating a supportive environment that empowers employees to build their resilience can significantly improve their quality of life both inside and outside the workplace. Resilient teams are more cohesive and collaborative – they are better equipped to support one another, share knowledge and work together efficiently towards common goals, even in the face of adversity.

Resilience also plays a pivotal role in organisational adaptability and sustainability. Businesses that nurture a resilient culture are more likely to cope with market fluctuations and navigate crises successfully. These organisations are characterised by a strong sense of purpose and shared values, which provide a solid foundation for resilience. Employees who are aligned with their company's mission and feel valued are more committed and motivated to contribute to its success, even during challenging times.

It even helps attract and retain talent. A workplace that provides resources for employees to develop resilience skills is more appealing to potential candidates. It signals a commitment to employee development and wellbeing, making the organisation a desirable place to work.

Resilience is an invaluable asset for workplace wellbeing. It not only equips individuals with the skills to cope with challenges and embrace change but also fosters a supportive and adaptive organisational culture. By prioritising resilience, businesses can keep their people happy, drive performance and secure a competitive edge in the dynamic business landscape.

**According to Deloitte's 2021 Resiliency Report, successful organisations deliberately foster resilience and integrate it into different aspects of their businesses. These organisations not only outperform their peers in the current environment but also predict stronger growth.**



# Improving engagement and wellbeing through inspirational learning

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# Improving engagement and wellbeing through inspirational learning

So what can your business do to promote greater workplace wellbeing? Learning can be a powerful force in rebuilding a sense of purpose, passion and belonging at work and a key tool in engaging and retaining valuable talent. Our survey of BBC Maestro customers found that e-learning consistently promotes wellbeing.

**Feeling creative in work was rated very or extremely important by 87.3% of our survey respondents.**

**Participants experienced a significant increase in confidence after taking a BBC Maestro e-learning course, with the confidence level rising from 5.6/10 before the course to 8.27/10 after the course.**

**69.57% reported that taking a BBC Maestro course improved their sense of wellbeing.**

**88.8% said that they agreed or strongly agreed that taking a BBC Maestro course helped them learn new skills.**

**84.83% said that they agreed or strongly agreed that taking a BBC Maestro course contributed to boosting their creativity.**

## **It's not just our research...**

A 2012 report by the UK Government estimated that participation in informal learning raises wellbeing by as much as 11%. The Association for Talent Development showed that top-performing companies are nearly five times more likely than low-performers to have learning cultures.

## **Wellbeing trends for 2024**

### **Gut health**

McKinsey research reveals that gut health is becoming a top priority for individuals, with over 80% considering it important. In his BBC Maestro course, Professor Tim Spector talks about the increasing recognition that our guts and brains are tightly linked and how what we eat can affect our mental health.

### **Breathwork**

Glimpse reports that interest in breathwork has grown 41% over the past year. According to NHS Talking Therapies, if used regularly, breathing techniques “Can reduce the body’s physical symptoms of stress and anxiety and calm the mind”.

### **Financial health**

According to Forbes, up to 80% of employees are currently experiencing some level of financial stress, which is having a negative impact on their work performance. Mind, a UK-based mental health charity, reports that mental health issues can affect the way people deal with money and that money problems can, in turn, affect one’s mental health. Therefore, it is important to take care of both your financial wellbeing and your mental health, as they are closely interconnected.

# How BBC Maestro supports the four pillars of wellbeing through inspirational learning

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# How BBC Maestro supports the four pillars of wellbeing through inspirational learning



We've discussed that learning can bolster the four pillars of wellbeing, so where should you turn? BBC Maestro is a new way of learning – through a series of video courses taught by the greatest experts in the world.

### Trusted

In a world where faith in institutions is on the wane, it is essential to use a trusted brand to provide your employees with e-learning.

### World-class

Our instructors are as world-renowned in their respective fields as they are entertaining. They act as champions in your employees' corner to support them at every stage of their learning journey.

### Must-watch

Maestro courses are the opposite of 'checking the box'. They are purpose-built to be engaging and immersive – all to help your employees get started quickly and keep learning.

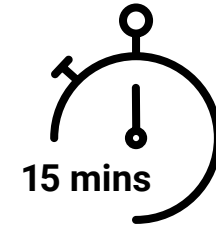
We currently have over 1,000 lessons available, and each course is beautifully created by our award-winning team. It's difficult to get employees to engage with e-learning, but BBC Maestro's courses are engaging and inspirational, so it's an easy sell to your employees.



Around 200 hours of content and long-form courses for an in-depth learning experience



Courses are available on desktop, laptop, TV or on our mobile app



The average lesson length is 15 minutes to suit on-demand learning

# Introducing BBC Maestro for business

## Inspire. Engage. Grow.

- Cultivate essential skills in life and work
- Improve your team's wellbeing with healthy habits
- Inspire a culture of learning and self-growth

## Our survey says...

**70%**

said taking a BBC Maestro course improved their sense of wellbeing

**69%**

expressed a desire for more e-learning opportunities from their employers

**74%**

are highly likely to recommend BBC Maestro to colleagues to improve wellbeing

## 1000+ lessons to unlock your team's potential

- Bitesize lessons created to engage and entertain
- Lesson guides with practical exercises
- Watch on computer, TV, phone or tablet
- Access to the world's greatest teachers
- Customised learning packages tailored to your needs

## Get in touch today

Email [hello@bbcmaestro.com](mailto:hello@bbcmaestro.com)

to start a conversation about how BBC Maestro can benefit your employee wellbeing and business success.