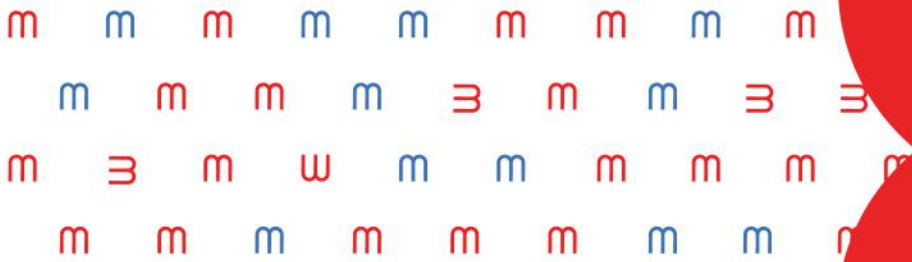




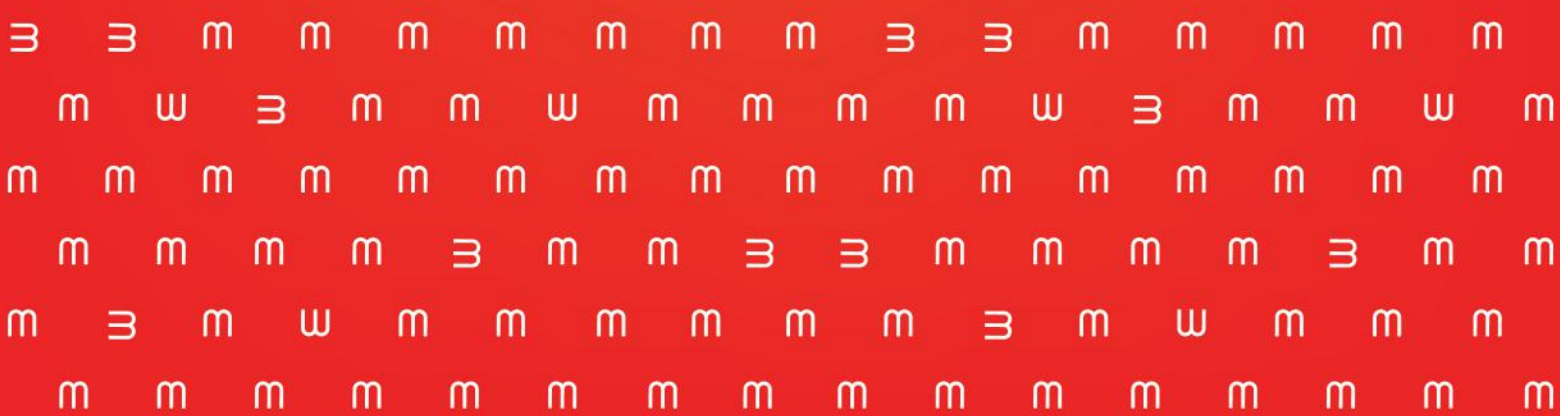
WELLNESS 360 RESEARCH STUDY:

A STUDY OF CORPORATE WELLNESS
PROGRAMS IN INDIA.



Contents

- 01** Foreword
- 03** Introduction
- 05** Wellness programs:
Set clear goals and ensure progress is assessed
- 09** The future of wellness programs
in the new world of work
- 12** Are investments matching expectations?
- 15** The growing role of wellness technology
- 17** Conclusion
- 20** Expert views



Foreword

2020 remains a year that'll be written into the history of humankind. Much of how we lived, worked and interacted with each other changed in a matter of weeks. With COVID-19 spreading like wildfire, the entire globe was brought to a standstill. For businesses the last few years have been about dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic. It resulted in an ever growing number of companies embracing the promise of digital platforms to make work possible.

While work rapidly shifted from remote to hybrid, adapting to the new business conditions, wellness programs were reshaped to reflect such changes. **MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study** is a benchmarking study that assesses how the employee wellness landscape has evolved and what have been some of the pivotal changes

whose impact are long going to echo. The study reached out to over 324 unique companies across the country and captured opinions from 16 different industries.

The study found that over **69 percent of companies today have dedicated employee wellness strategies. Still 55 percent of respondents lacked a structured body overseeing the proper execution of the wellness strategy.** When it comes to **decision-makers** that shape employee wellness programs, **35 percent of respondents state that it's the CHRO** who makes the vital decisions. **32 percent stated that CEOs** played a crucial role in ensuring their wellness programs were on the right track.



Ensuring employees are engaged with the wellness programs has grown to take centre stage in wellness conversations. The report shows that **78 percent of companies** believe that the **primary goal** of their wellness programs has been **to increase employee engagement**. Additionally, building a robust wellness culture (62 percent) and improving employee productivity (58 percent) remained important for companies.

Many companies however still struggle to measure their wellness impact. Only 13 percent of companies surveyed reported that they did

real-time tracking of employee wellness metrics. 18 percent claimed to do it annually while 14 percent said that they preferred to monitor progress quarterly. Around 35 percent reported not tracking wellness programs altogether. This challenge is also reflected when 48 percent of companies state that difficulty in measuring the ROI of their wellness programs is their biggest challenge.

Moving forward, companies will need more holistic wellness programs that leverage the right digital tools to showcase impact.

Introduction

For many, the pandemic proved to be a period of rapid shifts in employee wellness. The crisis meant companies sought to provide urgent medical care in the form of telemedicine and real-time consultations with healthcare professionals. As the ambit of employee wellness programs grew to support the needs of a remote workforce, companies realised they had to address other non-chronic lifestyle diseases. This meant addressing employee burnout by focusing on initiatives that enabled employees to take care of their mental health,

address social isolation, and ensure wellness programs prove beneficial in a time of falling productivity and rising disengagement.

The **MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study** delves deep into these facets to unravel trends that influence the employee wellness landscape. The study reached out to over **324 unique companies across the country and captured opinions from 16 different industries.**



Some of the key findings of the report were:

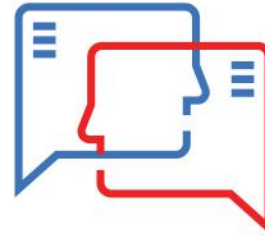
Employee engagement remained the top goal for wellness programs: The Wellness 360 report revealed that for over **78 percent of companies** the primary goal of their wellness programs has been **to increase employee engagement**. Driving employee adoption and engagement was also stated to be a major challenge of their wellness programs by over **52 percent for companies**.

A lack of assessments: Over **35 percent of companies** said that they don't track wellness progress and **only 13 percent said they did real-time tracking of employee wellness metrics**. As a result **43 percent of companies reported to not know whether they had achieved their wellness goals**.

Today, wellness programs have been brought to the forefront of the company's list of priorities. From addressing dropouts and absenteeism to providing employees with a positive experience, wellness programs are being deployed with a multifaceted agenda.

The MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Study provides you with an in depth picture of the wellness landscape in India. Explore the trends and best practices that will shape the future of wellness programs.

The top three priorities that companies reported while choosing a digital tool were:



Engagement
52%



Measurability and tracking
45%



Ability to integrate
44%

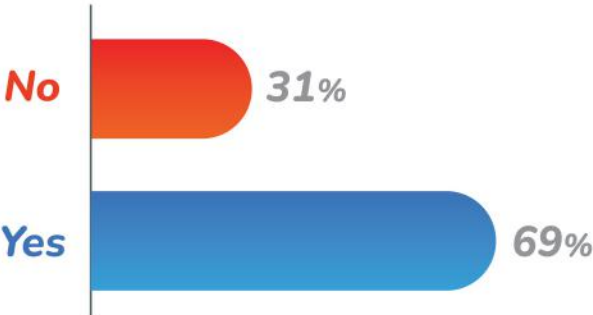
Wellness programs: Set clear goals and ensure progress is assessed

Having structured goals and a dedicated wellness strategy is the bedrock of an impactful wellness program. The MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study recognises this need. The findings reflect that companies across the board have grown to prioritise wellness. **Over 69 percent of the surveyed companies said they had a dedicated employee wellness strategy.** Yet **55 percent of respondents lacked a structured body overseeing the proper execution of the wellness strategy.**

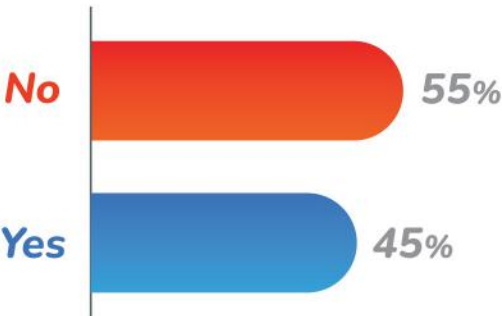
While addressing employee wellness concerns

remains the cornerstone of modern wellness programs, our findings reveal that companies are looking to create a larger change through their wellness programs. In addition to **identifying and mitigating health risks among employees (62 percent), the primary goal of wellness programs has been to increase employee engagement (78 percent).** Building a robust wellness culture (62 percent) and improving employee productivity (58 percent) remained the next big goals.

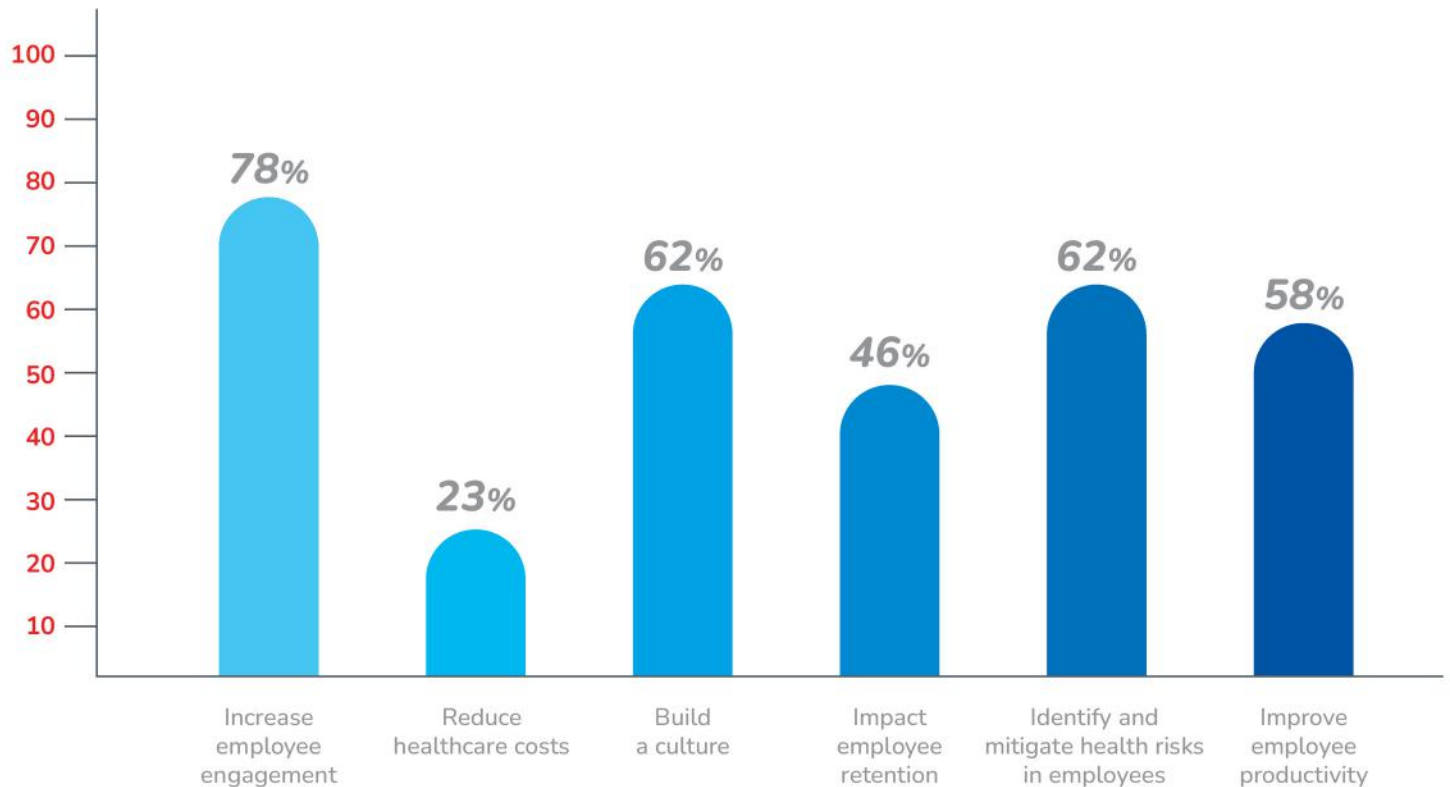
DO ORGANISATIONS HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WELLNESS STRATEGY?



DO ORGANISATIONS HAVE STRUCTURED COMMITTEES THAT EXECUTE WELLNESS STRATEGY?



GOALS OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS STRATEGY



For many, employee wellness remains a journey where achieving goals has been elusive. The findings of the MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study revealed that **only 17 percent of companies**

could claim that their wellness programs had achieved more than 50 percent of its goals in the past year. Out of this **only 4 percent reported being able to achieve 75 percent to 100 percent of their goals.**

HOW FAR HAVE WELLNESS PROGRAMS ACHIEVED THEIR DESIRED GOALS IN THE PAST YEAR?



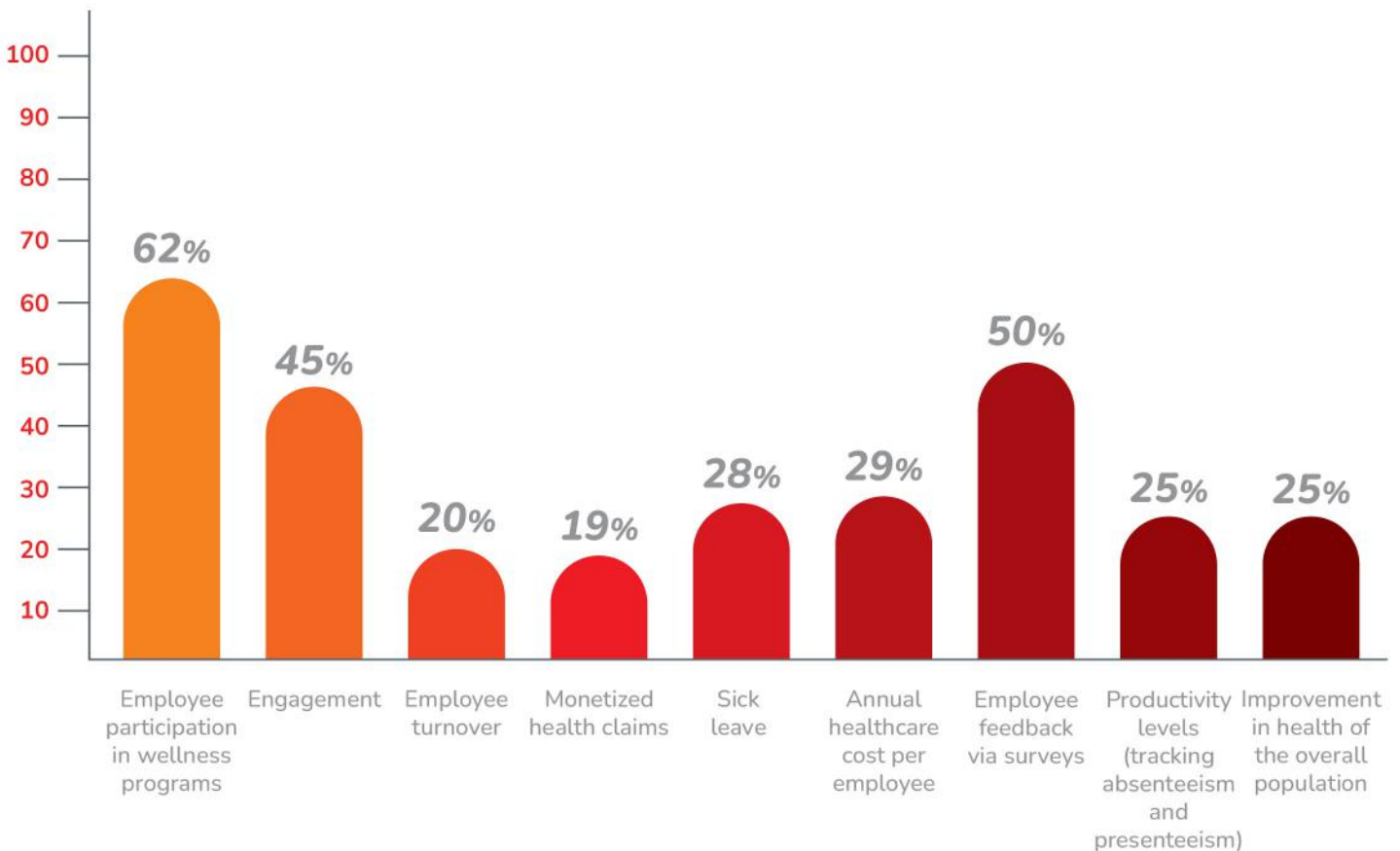
Assessments lagging behind planning

What paints an alarming picture for companies is that over **43 percent** of the interviewed companies **claimed to not be able to quantify the achievements of their goals**. Over **29 percent** of these companies were **companies from India** while **35 percent of MNCs** interviewed for the report reported not knowing the extent to which they achieved their goals.

To measure success, companies need clearly defined metrics. For companies surveyed in the

MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study, **Employee participation in wellness programs** remained the most important metric at **62 percent**. This was followed by **monitoring employee feedback (50 percent)** and the actual **engagement levels of employees in the wellness program (45 percent)**. This indicates a shift among companies from creating transactional metrics to more employee-focused metrics.

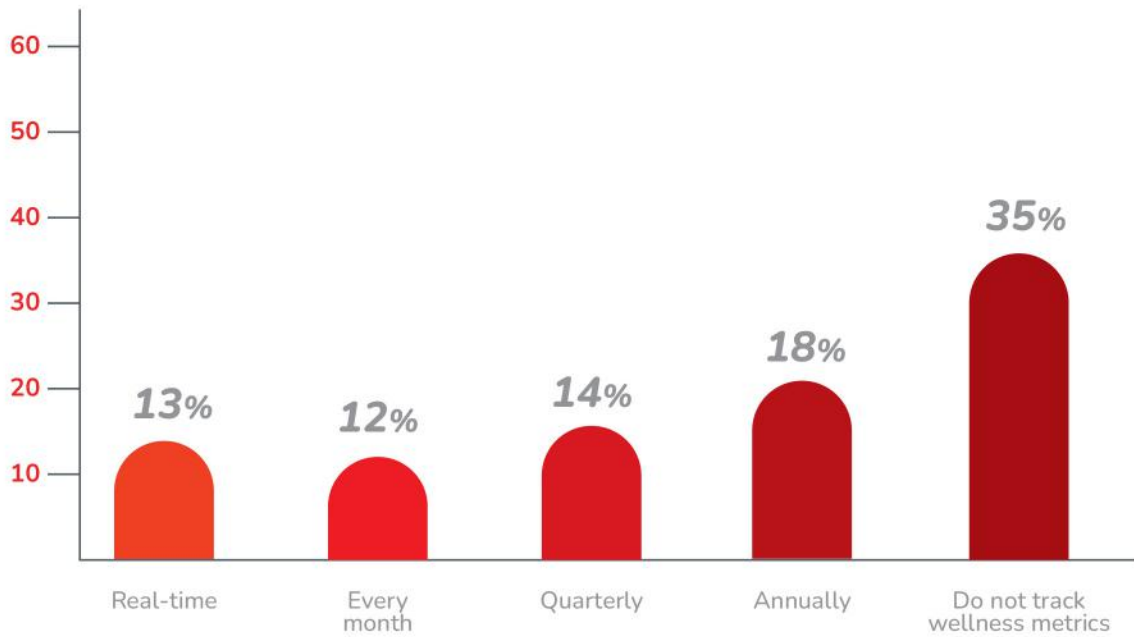
TOP EMPLOYEE WELLNESS METRICS TO MEASURE



While there has been a shift towards creating an employee-centric way of assessing wellness programs, companies are lagging behind when it comes to keeping a regular tab on their success. Out of all the companies interviewed for the MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study, **only 13 percent**

said they did real-time tracking of employee wellness metrics. Another 18 percent claimed to do it annually while 14 percent said that they preferred to monitor progress quarterly. **Around 35 percent reported not tracking wellness programs altogether.**

HOW OFTEN DO COMPANIES TRACK WELLNESS METRICS FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES?

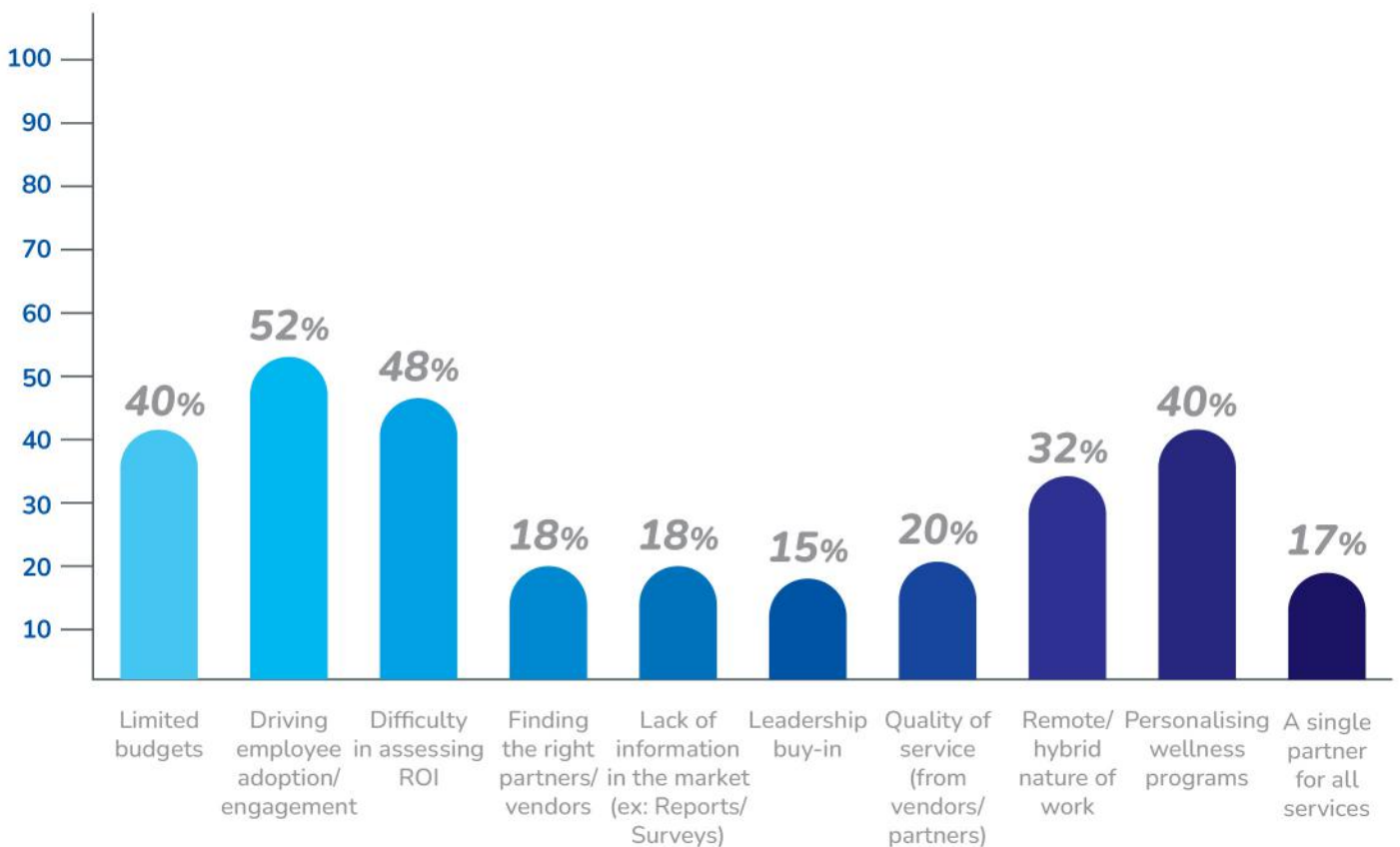


The future of wellness programs in the new world of work

Faced with a changing business ecosystem, companies have had to rapidly adapt to increased demand for a robust wellness program. But while doing this, many have had to overcome significant challenges that hampered the implementation of such programs. **The lack of employee adoption (52 percent)** followed by a **difficulty in measuring ROI (49 percent)** were the two most important

challenges faced by companies that took part in the MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study. Additionally, **budget constraints (40 percent)** and the **need to personalise wellness programs (40 percent)** to meet employee needs remained important barriers to overcome to build impactful wellness programs.

TOP CHALLENGES WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS



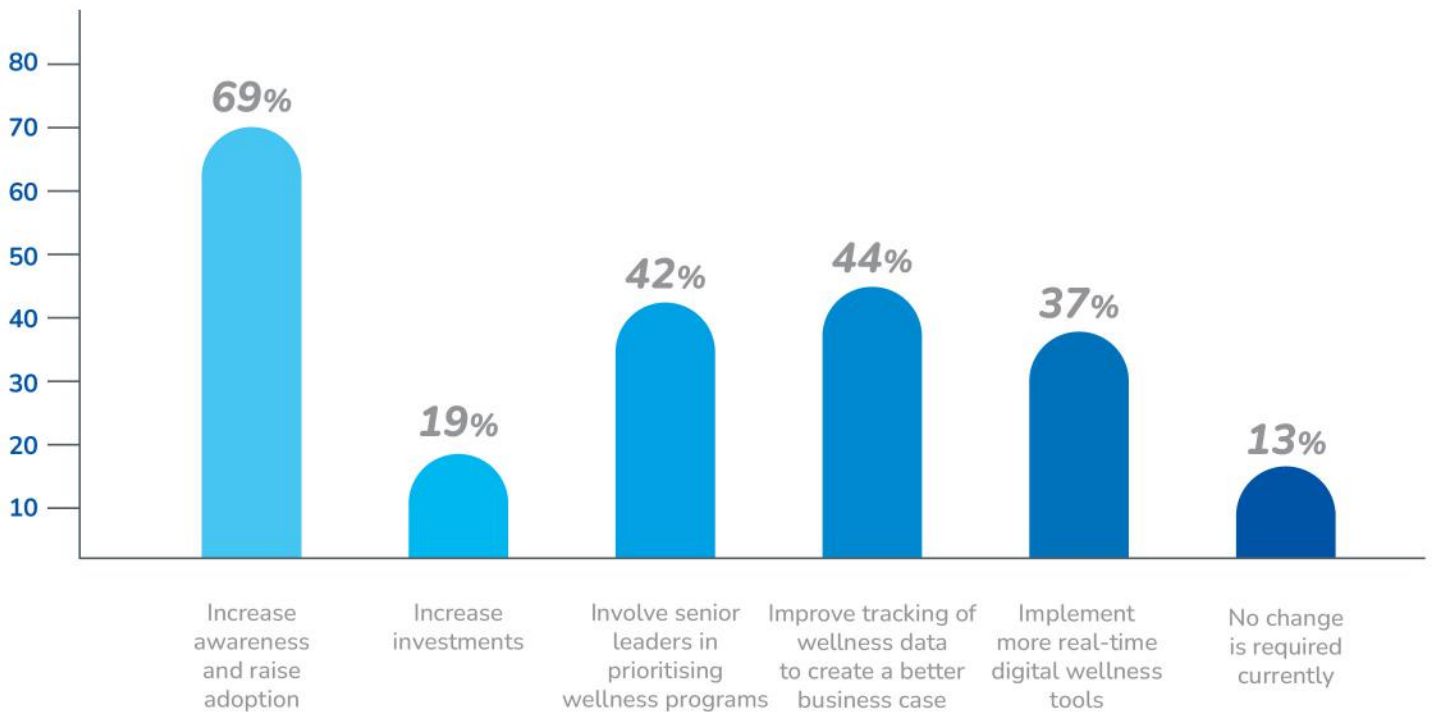
Stemming from these challenges, the future of employee wellness will be geared towards tackling the low adoption rate many companies are facing today. Over **69 percent of companies** in the survey said that **their main aim in the coming year is to increase awareness and raise**

the adoption rate of their wellness programs. 45 percent said they intend to upgrade their wellness programs by improving how they tracked wellness data to create a better business case. This will enable companies to create greater buy-in and increase budgets.

Underscoring the importance of senior management in creating a cultural change and raising adoption rates, 42 percent of companies also want to involve senior leaders in

prioritising wellness programs. This remains an important consideration moving ahead as only 48 percent of the companies say their leaders are actively involved in promoting wellness.

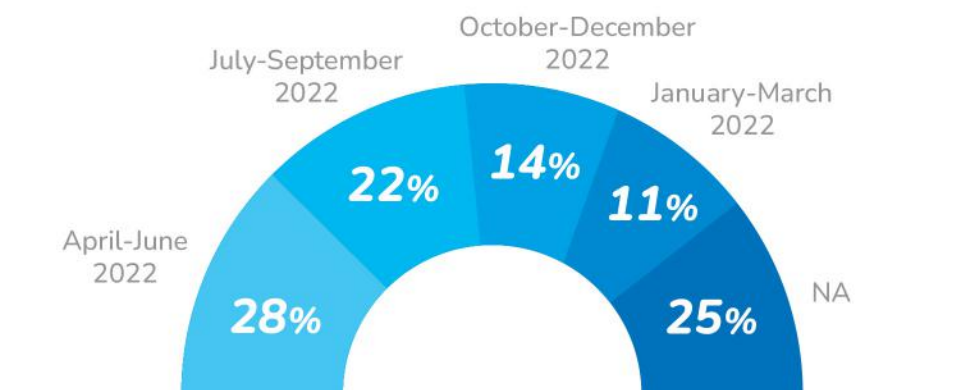
HOW ARE COMPANIES PLANNING TO UPGRADE THEIR WELLNESS PROGRAMS IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-23?



Yet while 75 percent of companies have clear timelines to bring about this change - with around 50 percent reporting that it is their priority

to upgrade their wellness programs in the next six months - around 25 percent have no clear idea of when such changes will take place.

WHAT PART OF THE FY 2022-23 ARE COMPANIES BRINGING IN THESE UPGRADES?



Engagement is the name of the game

Engagement today remains key for companies across the board. Even within wellness programs, engaging employees remains one of the biggest challenges in front of companies.

Over 52 percent of companies said that driving employee adoption and keeping them engaged in the wellness programs was a major challenge.

The challenge of keeping employees engaged is also reflected in the goals companies have set for the coming year. While increasing

employee engagement remained a top priority for over 78 percent of companies in the past year, many are looking at ways to strengthen engagement in the coming financial year. One of the top areas where companies want to upgrade is the adoption and engagement within wellness programs.

To do this, **over 64 percent of companies want to invest in gamified wellness technology to raise engagement.**

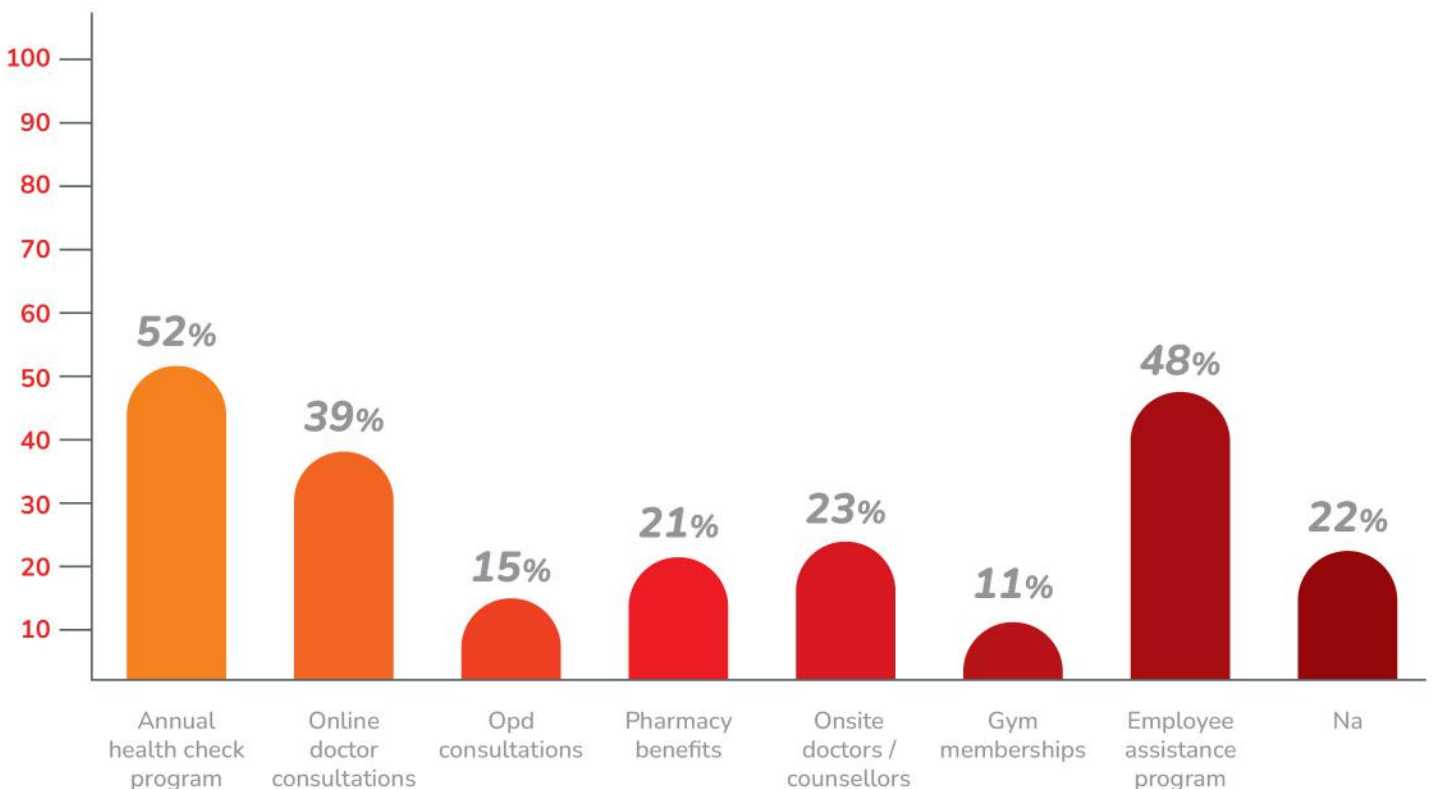


Are investments matching expectations?

When it comes to investments and healthcare budgets, **annual health check programs still dominate the roster**. Over 52 percent of companies stated to have allocated more than two-thirds of the health and wellness budget

towards it. Among others, holistic employee assistance programs (48 percent) were the second most invested health benefit followed by online doctor consultations at 39 percent.

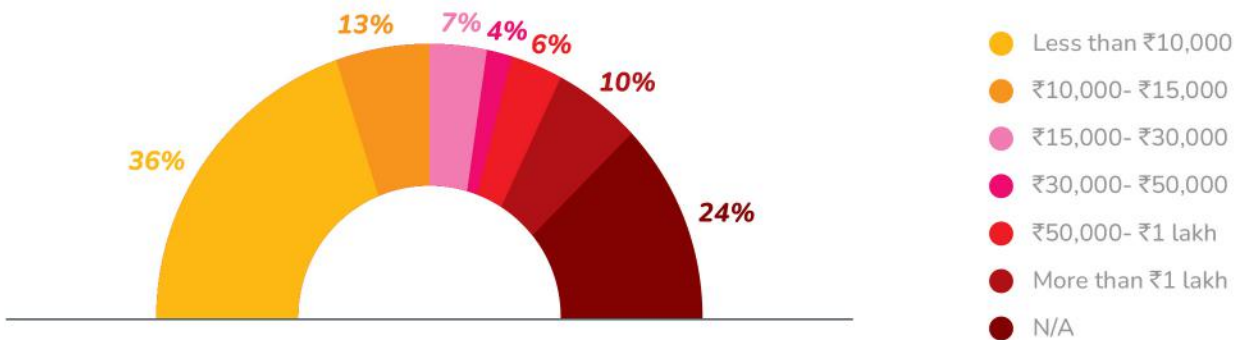
WHAT BENEFITS HAVE COMPANIES ALLOTTED MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THEIR HEALTHCARE BUDGET?



While companies have been prioritising employee wellness and building robust programs to support it, the MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study revealed that for over 49 percent of companies, the annual estimated budget for wellness

programs per employee was less than ₹15,000. **Out of this, over 36 percent reported having a per-employee annual budget allocation of less than ₹10,000. An additional 24 percent reported not having a clear per employee**

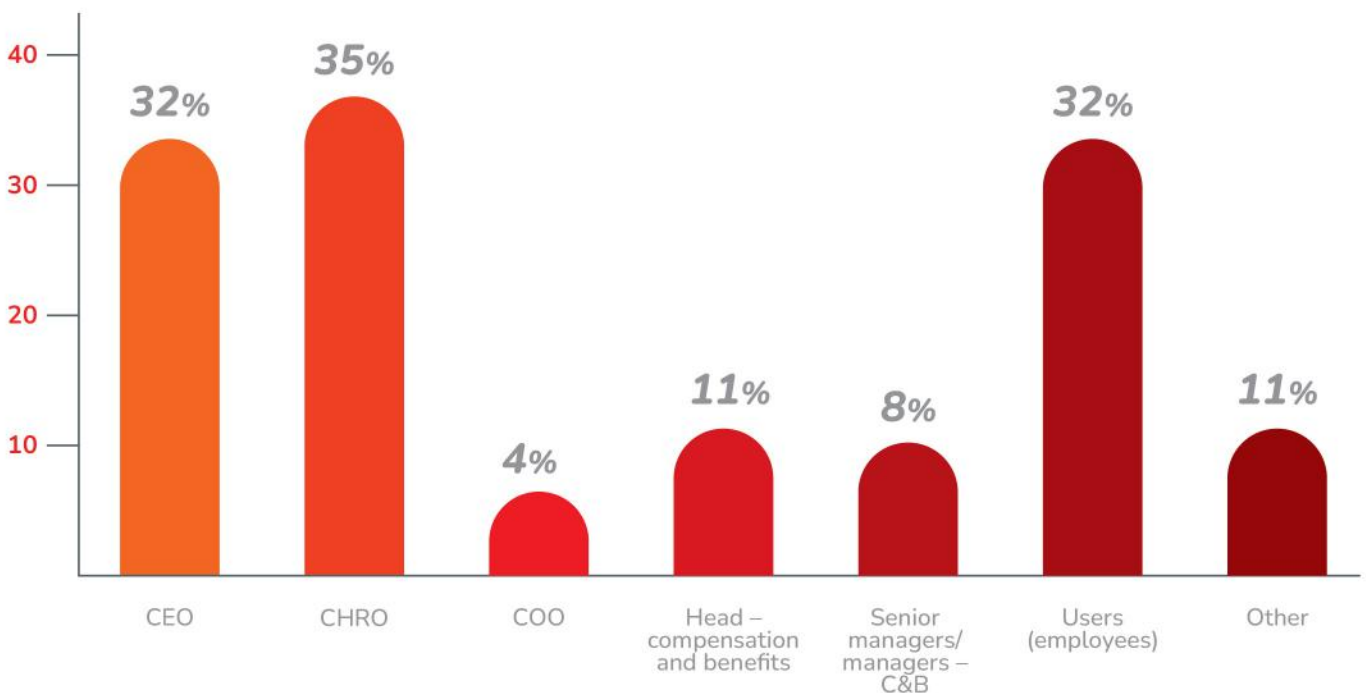
ANNUAL ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR WELLNESS PROGRAMS PER EMPLOYEE (APART FROM HEALTH INSURANCE)



When it comes to decision-makers that shape employee wellness programs, 35 percent of respondents state that it's the CHRO who makes the vital decisions. 32 percent stated that CEOs played a crucial role in ensuring their wellness programs were on the right track. While senior executives are often the ones who call the shots and set the direction

for employee wellness, the survey also found that companies have begun empowering employees to voice their opinions. Over 32 percent of the respondents to the MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research stated that employees were important decision-makers when it came to the future of their wellness programs.

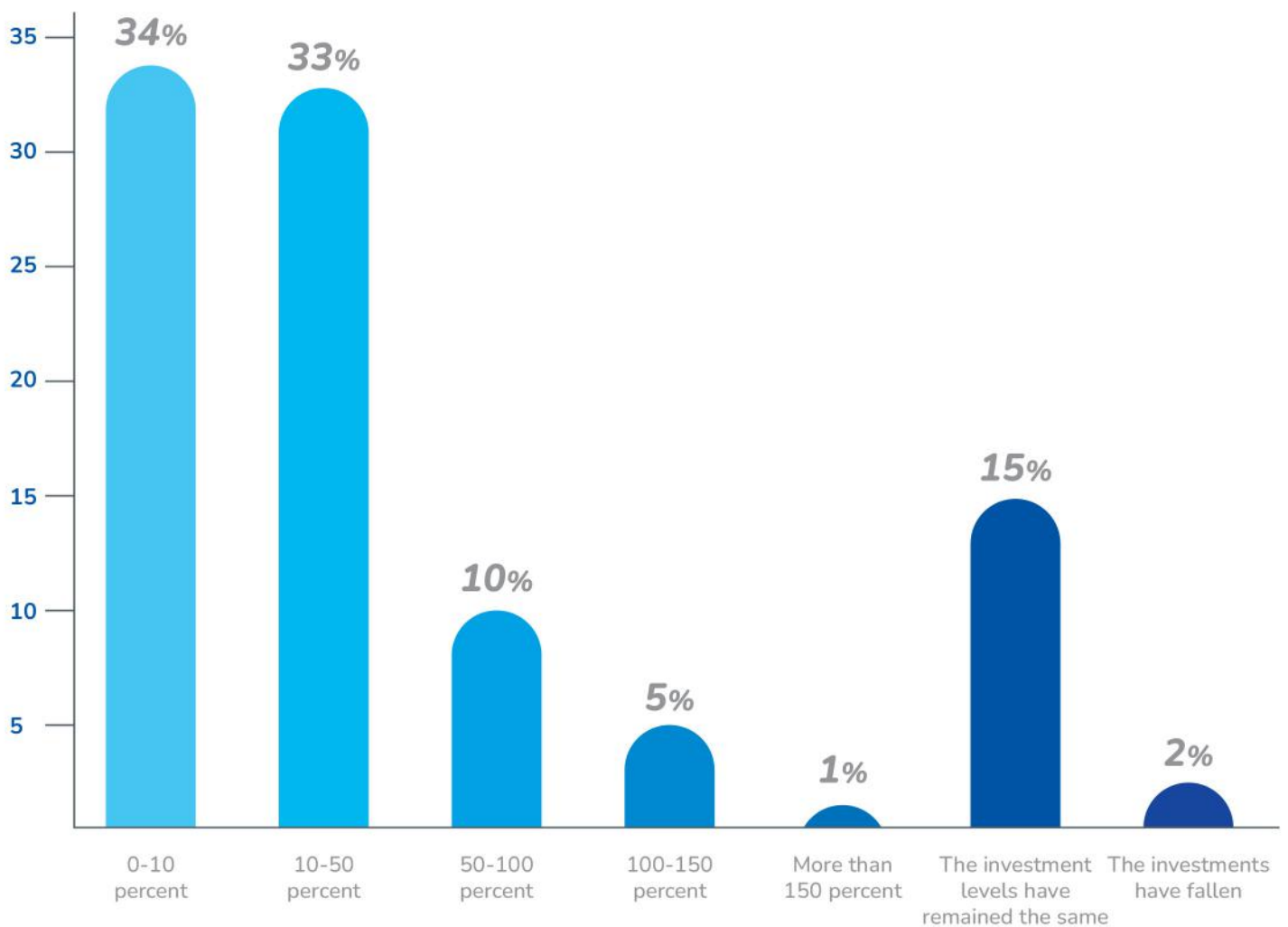
WHO ARE THE DECISION-MAKERS ON EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS?



Another indicator that reflects the investments going into employee wellness was the average increase in spending on employee wellness programs in the last three years. The survey noted that **67 percent of respondents reported an average increase being less than 50 percent.** While another 15 percent said that investment

levels have remained the same across the past three years. With employees demanding more robust wellness programs, companies will have to assess how efficiently they can dedicate resources to improving the state of their wellness programs.

AVERAGE INCREASE IN SPENDING ON EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

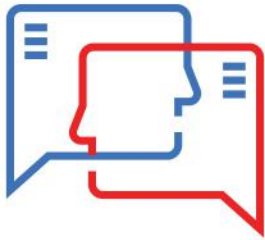


The growing role of wellness technology

Technology today plays a ubiquitous role in improving people processes. The use of digital platforms helped companies rapidly adjust to the new working conditions during the pandemic. On similar lines, digital wellness technology has grown in importance across the board, making

wellness programs far more impactful.

Choosing the right wellness technology remains a tough task. **The top priorities while choosing a digital tool** have been:



Engagement
52%

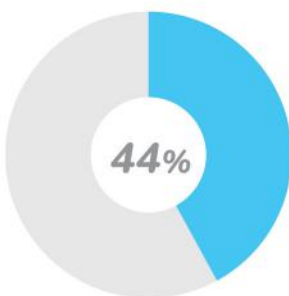


Measurability and tracking
45%

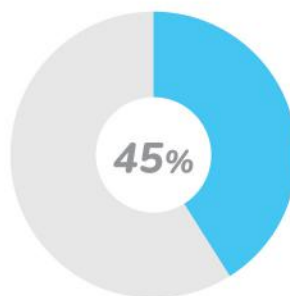


Ability to integrate
44%

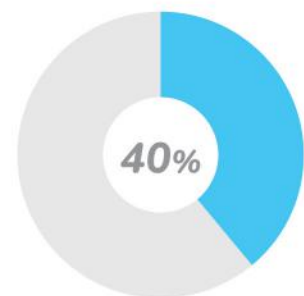
KEY ATTRIBUTES TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A DIGITAL TOOL TO ENHANCE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS



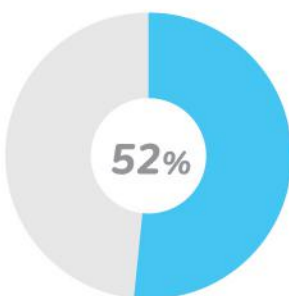
Ability to integrate with other HR systems



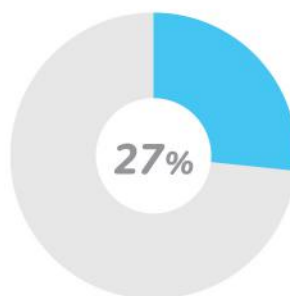
Measurability



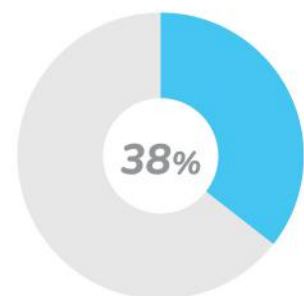
Accessibility and mobility



Engagement



Analytics



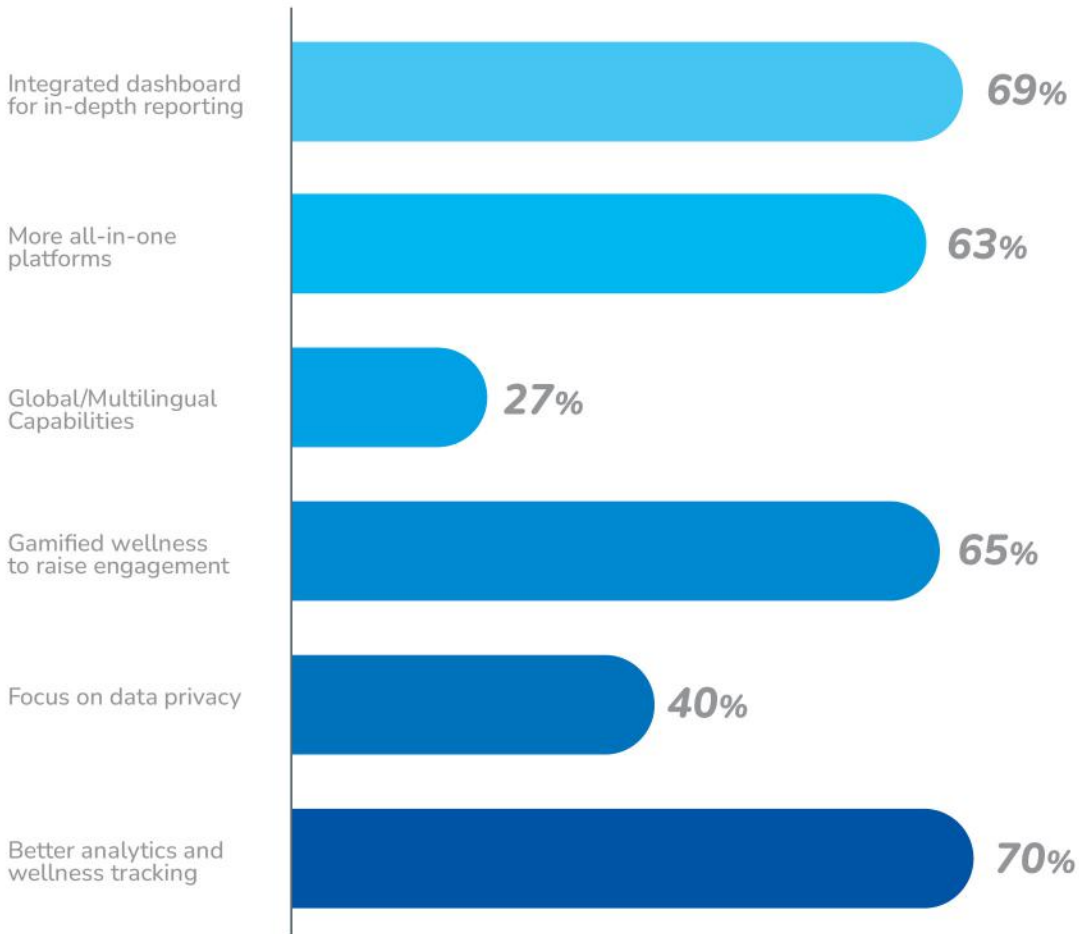
Ease of use

When it comes to the future, companies state their topmost expectation is a platform that allows for better analytics and wellness tracking (70 percent). This provides companies with a wide range of benefits, all from making wellness programs responsive to employees to generating ROI and helping create a business case. The need for better analytics was followed by 69

percent of respondents expecting better, more integrated dashboards which allow for real-time and in-depth reporting.

Gamification of wellness to make it engaging and all-in-one platforms were the other most reported demands of digital wellness technology in the future.

TOP EXPECTATIONS FROM DIGITAL TOOLS IN THE COMING YEAR?



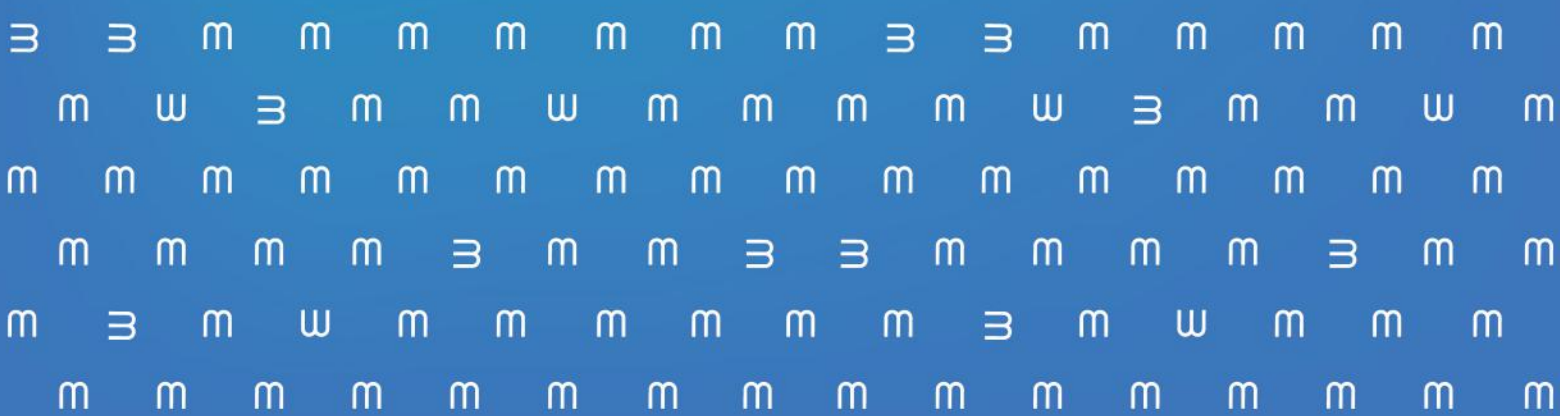
Conclusion

The MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study: A study of corporate wellness programs in India explored the wellness landscape across the country. While annual health check programs dominate the wellness budget allocation, holistic employee assistance programs are slowly rising in importance, being the second most invested health benefit followed by online doctor consultations.

Engaging employees in their wellness programs remains the top concern among companies. Over 52 percent of companies said that driving employee adoption and keeping them engaged in the wellness programs was a major challenge. **Employee engagement was also a top priority for over 78 percent of companies** in the past year. Many are looking at ways to strengthen engagement in the coming financial year. One of the top areas where companies want to upgrade in the coming year is the adoption and engagement with wellness programs. **Over 65 percent of companies also demand wellness be gamified** so that employees can interact and engage with wellness programs for longer.

Engagement (52 percent), Measurability and tracking (45 percent), and the Ability to integrate (44 percent) remain core features that companies look for in a digital wellness tool. Moving ahead, companies demand better analytics and wellness tracking (70 percent) and more integrated dashboards which allow for real-time and in-depth reporting (69 percent) from their digital wellness tools.

The average increase in investments toward wellness has been less than adequate. The survey noted that over 67 percent of respondents reported an average increase of spending on employee wellness being less than 50 percent. While another 15 percent said that investment levels have remained the same across the past three years. Additionally, for over 49 percent of companies, the annual estimated budget for wellness programs per employee was less than ₹15,000 while 24 percent reported not having a clear per employee budget allocation.

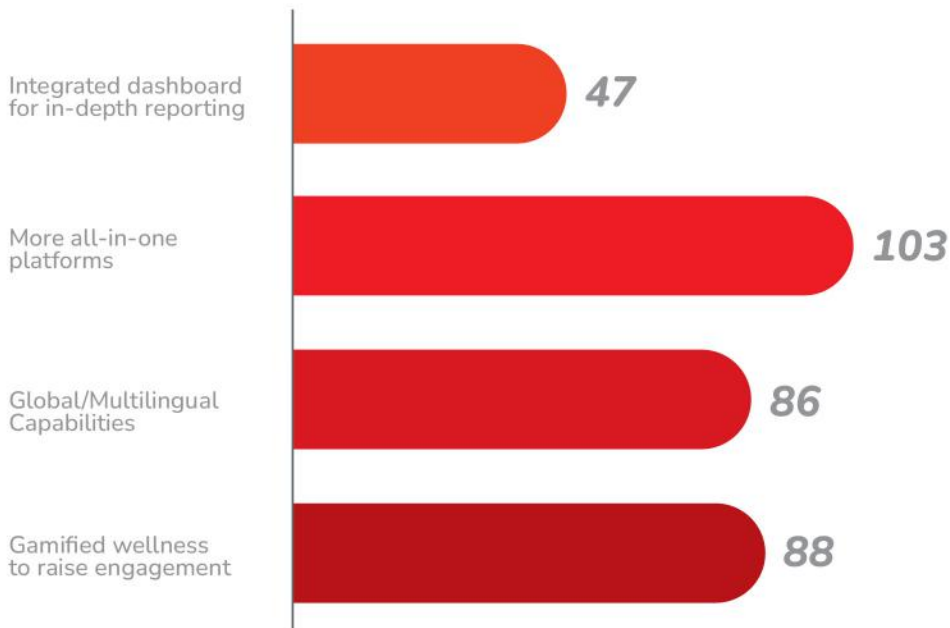


Demographics

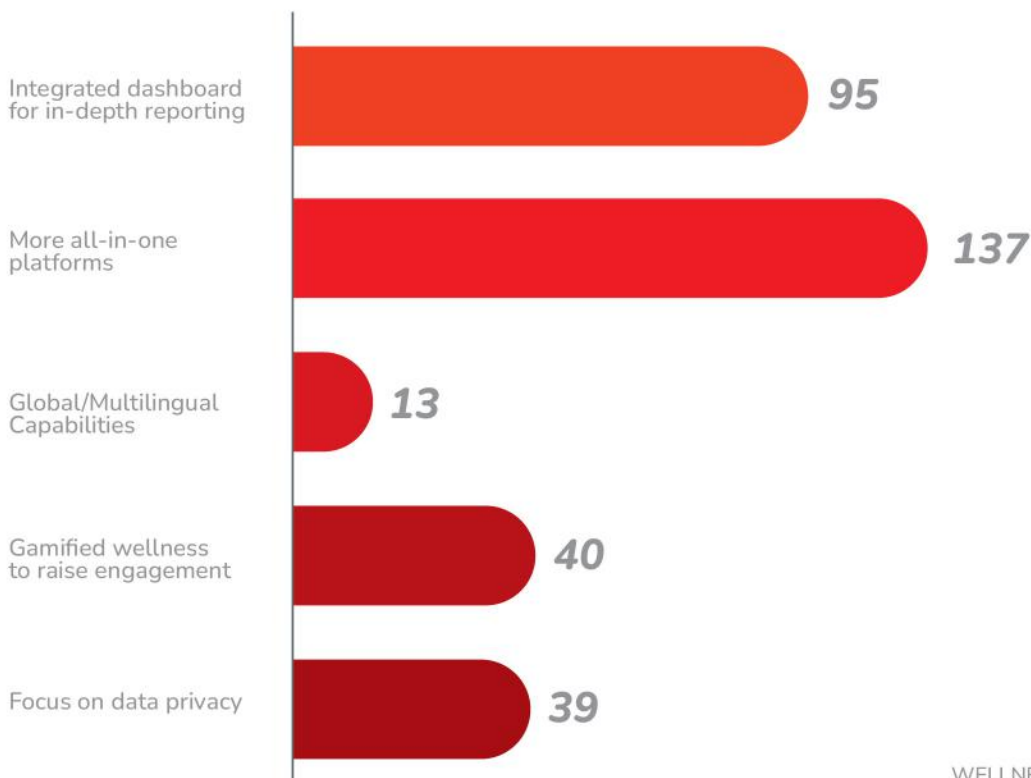
The MediBuddy and People Matters Wellness 360 Research Study: A study of corporate wellness programs in India, saw the participation of **324 unique organisations across India across 16 different industries.**

Following is a quick snapshot of the type and size of the organisations that participated in the study:

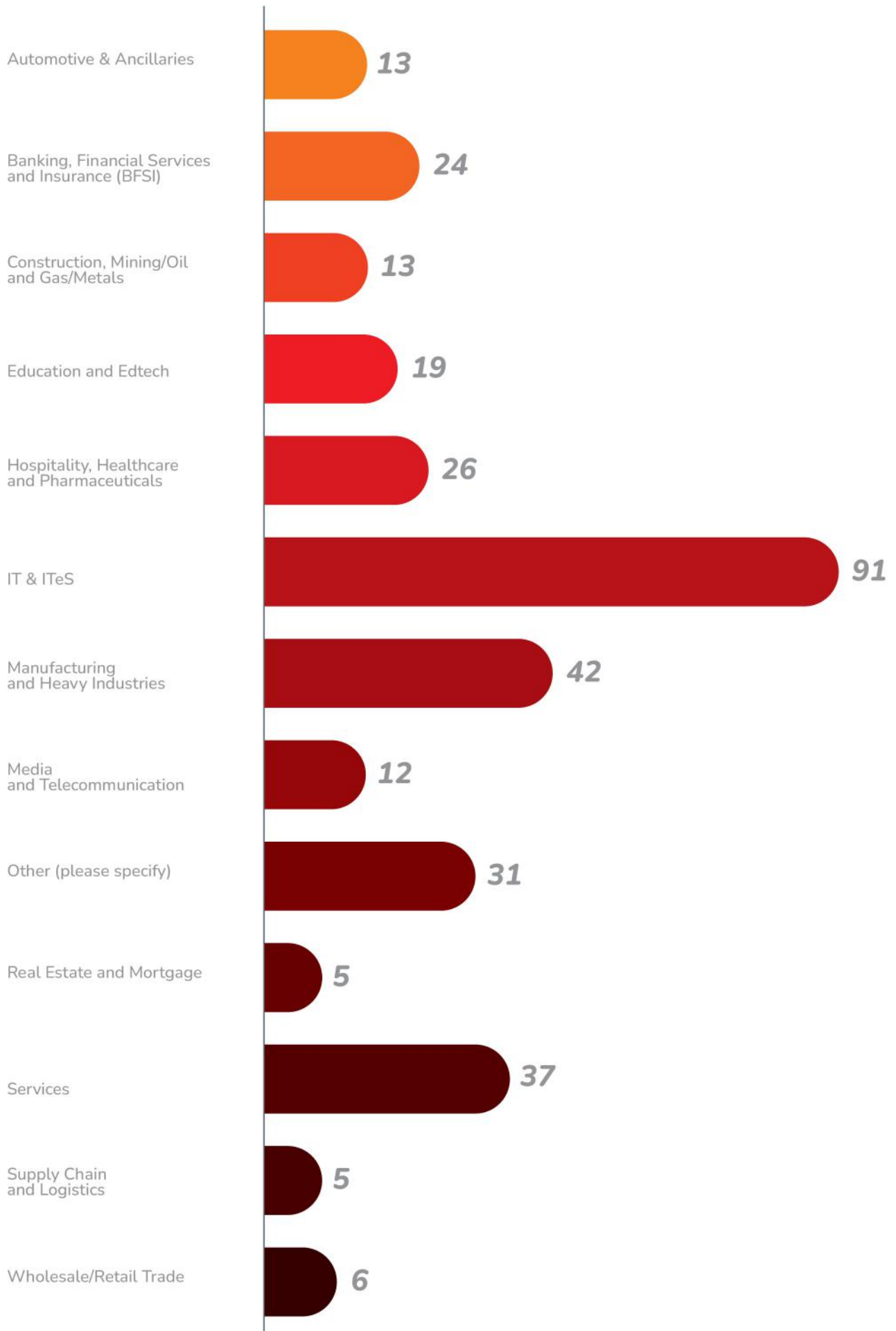
ORGANISATION STRENGTH



ORGANISATION TYPE



INDUSTRY



Expert Views



Creating a culture of wellness is necessary



**KURIAN
PARAMBI**

Executive Director (HR),
BPCL

Any wellness program should improve both mental and physical fitness while enhancing the productivity of the employee. By conducting surveys on personal wellness interests and needs HR professionals can design impactful wellness programs. This also proves crucial in articulating a well-defined and clear goal for the wellness program; one that is aligned with the company's objectives. **To further enhance the effectiveness of wellness programs, companies should support their programs by providing adequate budgets.** Without this last step, the overall wellness program suffers, impacting the efficacy of the overall healthcare costs of the company.

The two years of the pandemic have accelerated the digitisation and adoption of technology across all sectors. It enabled many to engage with employees continuously. At BPCL, digital tools were leveraged with the intent of building a multimodal communication platform. This all-encompassing platform helped us connect with our employees and provide them with regular wellness information by way of webinars, wellness journals and tips. We also provided counselling sessions.

To make wellness programs engaging for employees, **companies need to look at creating sustainable changes.** Though the wellness programs are intended to improve productivity and employee engagement, the program should also have an inherent culture of going beyond. Wellness programs need to be user-centric **and designed keeping in mind the interests and needs of employees** from various age groups and cultures. Right incentives for participation could bolster the adoption rate. Additionally, engaging employees need in how wellness programs are designed and executed.

There are two aspects to measuring the ROI in wellness programs. One is quantitative and the other is qualitative. Most companies only focus on quantitative aspects of the programs, failing to understand that qualitative aspects are equally and sometimes more important for an organisation in the long run. Quantitative measures like healthcare costs and rates of absenteeism remain important markers for ROI. However, qualitative factors such as lower attrition rate, employee morale, team effectiveness and even job satisfaction are important ways to assess ROI for wellness programs.

Accessibility and flexibility should be top priorities for wellness programs



**BISWAROOP
MUKHERJEE**

Head HR - Commercial
vehicle business unit
at TATA Motors

One of the top priorities of wellness programs should be **accessibility**. Employee experience has today taken the centre stage and companies want to position themselves as a great company to work in. With wellness programs becoming an important concern for companies, ensuring that they remain accessible is a cornerstone of how companies build and use wellness programs. Not only should wellness programs be accessible to employees but also to their families.

The other top priority that companies have to focus on today is ensuring their wellness programs are flexible. As a multi-generational workforce become the norm, HR leaders need to ensure that their wellness programs are flexible in meeting a diverse set of expectations. **Personalization** and **flexibility** become important for companies as we move ahead. Different geographies and demographics need to be considered to be diverse and wellness programs need to be tweaked to meet their needs.

These priorities should also reflect how technologies also become a part of the wellness programs. Digital tools like chats, real-time conversations, feedback etc are increasingly becoming a larger part of wellness offerings. That is because they offer flexible healthcare options and provide anytime anywhere access. Yet it is important for companies not to completely do away with analog tools and forms. This helps promote inclusivity and ensures employees of older generations can access wellness benefits. While the uptake of digital tools is on the rise, a blend of both physical and digital care is still necessary.

The adoption of wellness programs can be broken down into two broad factors. One component of all wellness programs is based on the need of the employee that doesn't require companies to drive adoption. If someone is unwell, they will automatically use the healthcare benefit offered that suits them. Where HR leaders need to step is to increase the awareness of their wellness programs through roadshows, mailers, interactions etc. Using internal channels of communication strategically is vital to drive both awareness and engagement. Another way of doing this is putting wellness programs in the compensation basket for employees. This is successful, especially for white-collar employees.

There are no overnight improvements in health and wellness



**ANKIT
GUPTA**

Head of engineering and
Org operations, Cult.fit

Health and wellness journeys are personal and unique to each individual. One size does not fit all. HR leaders should focus on creating a variety of plans with multiple options that employees can choose from. This will add a level of customization, allowing them to make the most informed choices regarding their health.

*Keeping motivation levels high is the real challenge. To keep employees motivated about their health and wellness lifestyle, HR leaders need a plan that combines a wellness infrastructure and multiple touchpoints. At Cult.fit, technology is at the core of our wellness program offerings. The use of **technology greatly enhances the user experience** - from locating nearby classes/gyms to scheduling. It also makes it easier for the user to find the right information instantaneously. Features like AI trainer and live energy meter let users experience and understand the logic of fitness. This, coupled with experts in the gyms/GX centres, help users design a regime “fit” for them as per their current level of fitness.*

*Improving health and wellness take time and sustained efforts. There are no overnight improvements. Ideally, ROI should be measured over a long period of time, with the key factors being increased engagement and a boost in productivity. Moreover, **understanding employee needs and enabling time for personal health and wellness are critical factors**. Programs can fall flat if they are not mindfully created. Business leaders need to spend more time understanding what their employees want out of these initiatives and how they can integrate these into their daily lives.*

Wellness is a long term commitment to build sustainable and resilient organisations



**PRATIBHA
PRIYADARSHINI**

VP - HR,
SHELL INDIA

HR leaders should pay attention to the following wellness priorities: 1) **Personalising wellness** offerings so they are meaningful to diverse employee needs - by addressing demographics, career timelines, skills, and nature of work. In Shell, holistic wellness means to support physical & emotional well-being of individuals & teams to engage and perform. 2) **Ingraining a culture of care & psychological safety** through capability building, visible leadership, policies and practices and a regular dialogue. 3) **Linkage to purpose & strategy**: An organisation is more powerful when each employee is at their best & is able to be Who They Are. Learner mindset coupled with our values of honesty, integrity & respect are enablers while we move towards our business vision & targets.

Participation & flexibility while working in a hybrid mode and in global team settings is how technology has enabled us to leap the last lap on wellness and care. Our teams leverage virtual meeting platforms, and conduct wellness sessions like Shell Talk Show, Expert Speak, Money Mantra, Yoga

events etc. **Accessibility** & technology go hand in hand. Health and Insurance support for telemedicine, testing and hospitalisation options through digital apps were received well by individuals and families especially during pandemic when health infrastructure was strained.

To drive adoption, companies must focus on:

Leadership commitment & role modelling:

Business leaders in Shell play an active role in supporting wellness through regular check-ins, sharing their vulnerabilities in panel discussions and thus engaging and inspiring others.

Employee networks like Women's, enABLE, LGBTQA+ provide a safe space to empower and discuss the challenges and solutions faced together as a community.

The key attributes of measuring impact may vary across industries. At Shell, **health, safety, security & environment incidents are monitored** & tracked closely. **Employee Engagement** measures also give clear indicators while measuring ROI around Wellness. Our annual engagement survey provides a reference to the motivation, psychological safety and other factors which contribute to the engaged teams. Feedback post engagements activities are also necessary.

Wellness is an evolutionary journey and a long-term commitment to nurture a sustainable, resilient, and optimistic organisation.

HR must focus on a more holistic view of employee well-being



SUMATHI SWAMY

Head of Total Rewards,
3M INDIA

Employees perform better when they have the flexibility and they thrive when leaders support their well-being. Investment in mental health and well-being programs drives productivity by not only enhancing their ability to perform but also by boosting self-confidence and improving life on their personal front. With a positive workplace experience, organisations can retain talent and build a thriving workplace culture

*Expanding and Modernising health and well-being programs today should be on HR's agenda to better their wellness programs. This can only happen once HR sets goals that take a more holistic view of employee well-being. Holistic wellness programs also mean that employees are much more enthused to participate in such programs. Further, it is important to have strong leadership support to spur wellness program participation. Other measures that companies can involve are 1. **Create a wellness committee** 2. Develop an employee needs and interest survey and **create wellness programs from what employees demand***

*3. **Review and design a benefits plan**, and finally 4. **Develop a strategic communications plan.***

Leveraging digital tech, at 3M we were able to provide our employees with a Pocket Clinic, an easy way to get doctor consultations. Our employee assistance program leveraged real-time tech to help employees with personal and/or work-related problems. Additionally, we were able to create health challenges like Stepathon to encourage employees to exercise and challenge their limits.

When measuring the ROI of wellness programs, quality of wellness initiatives should drive employee satisfaction rates upward. Promoting a culture of health and well-being makes employees happy, especially when the company makes a concerted effort to help them achieve their health goals. Happy employees are more productive overall, and less likely to leave.

While key indicators can provide an excellent starting point for calculating real results, it is important to remember that it's not an exact science. Working to craft, implement, and maintain a well-supported wellness program may be difficult, and it will almost certainly take a few years to see measurable returns. Nevertheless, it is worth the investment if it has a measurable impact on the health of your workers and the profitability of your enterprise.

Health and wellness is a part of the new employee value proposition



**NEHA
SINHA**

Human Resources
Director at CGI

The pandemic has ensured that physical and mental wellness is a top business priority. And today, many organisations have a business-driven health and wellness strategy. It has, therefore, become a part of the new employee value proposition.

*The use of technology is becoming an integral part of delivering health and wellness initiatives. It has enabled solutions to be available just in time. For example, mental health applications and bite-sized sessions that offer employees instant access to breathing exercises can significantly reduce stress and anxiety. The second **advantage of leveraging technology is the potential to gamify health programs**. At CGI, we have seen health challenges work extremely well - initiatives like the gamified wellness week saw active online and on-site employee participation. A third critical aspect is that technology helps bridge the communication gap and builds awareness.*

The success of a wellness strategy depends on several factors. It is essential to have a

*dedicated team that can look into your wellness strategies. And you need to ensure that there is senior leaders' sponsorship. **At CGI, wellness is linked with the EVP and the business strategy**. It is a part of the annual business planning process for our employees. And there's a focus on implementing it at each level - individual, team, and organisational levels.*

A key challenge for companies is the adoption of wellness programs: What are the best ways to measure impact? And how can you make sure the results are visible so that they can drive adoption further?

To ensure employee adoption, it is critical to capture what employees want and what they want out of the program. The data is then gathered by internal surveys, employee satisfaction scores, and feedback gathered from the program. Over the last two years, the priorities for health and wellness changed every few months - right from covid related care to mental wellness and a growing emphasis on preventive healthcare. Companies need to align and realign their wellness priorities regularly.

For greater success, wellness programs must be tailored to individuals



**LOKENDRA
SETHI**

VP and India HR Head
at DXC Technology

As the barriers between work and life blur due to the pervasive work-from-home culture, it is imperative for HR leaders to shift the focus from mere employee health to the overall employee well-being. The goal needs to be around improving employees' overall wellness by looking at the aspects such as emotional, social, financial, and physical health. This is necessary to make wellness programs holistic.

***Enabling leaders to be an active part of the company's well-being programs and initiatives by HR/business leaders has shown to have a significant impact on employee engagement. It facilitates the adoption of wellness programs and encourages employees to prioritise their wellness. Wellness committees** can also be an asset. They help assist with program promotion, activity planning, communication with management and staff, and program evaluation. Additionally, we at DCX focus on the right usage of technology in employee health and wellness programs. This today leads to higher levels of employee participation*

and engagement. Using relevant digital tools in wellness programs increases accessibility while also allowing employees to customize their programs based on their goals, track progress, and so on.

Employee adoption, involvement, and advocacy are also important factors in the success of a program. Thus communicating effectively plays an important role. The first step in increasing employee adoption of wellness programs is to have engaging and well-written communication that fosters a strong sense of connection with employees and a work culture that supports employees' health and well-being. It is rightly said that a poor plan properly communicated is better than a perfect plan badly communicated.

*A wellness program can be considered a success if it attracts extensive participation from a diverse range of employee groups, including those of different levels, ages, genders, and ethnicities. **Customized programs, therefore, are a necessity.** Rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach, wellness programs must be tailored for individuals or teams to follow. For greater success, organisations must give their employees the freedom to customize their wellness plans and goals depending on their requirements. HR leaders should also look to link incentives and rewards to spur the usage of their wellness programs.*

How employees experience work remains a central question to their well-being



**RAHUL
SURYAVANSH**

Vice President & Head HR
Sales, ITC Limited

*The goal of the wellness program is crucial. Well-being, in the workplace context, is an outcome of the workplace itself. What happens in the workplace will impact well-being. And thus, the kind of work environment that employees experience at their place of work. The well-being of employees falls into three broad areas: physical well-being, emotional well-being, and a sense of belonging. **While attending to physical well-being needs is necessary, they are often prioritised over the latter two.** For an effective wellness program, we need to focus on all three.*

*To provide holistic wellness, employees must find purposefulness in their work and feel a sense of accomplishment and validation. We at ITC pay close attention to not only job design and holistic careers but also create avenues for validation through multiple recognition initiatives. It is also important to focus on where and **how employees get the psychological anchorage** in the organisation and do the organisation's culture encourages*

building meaningful and fulfilling work relationships. Further, an organisation's empathy in addressing employee concerns is pivotal to how they address employee well-being.

Technology remains a great enabler for us in building the right wellness program. Even before the pandemic, ITC worked on a life-stage based segmentation approach to employee wellness.

We realised that the wellness needs of our employee cohorts were different based on employee demographics. Using the right technology, we personalised offerings and ensured diverse and different groups get the right well-being inputs. We also use predictive analytics to create a 'listening culture' enabling us to address employee concerns and provide timely solutions.

*Usage of mental well-being offerings remains a challenge for many organizations. While talking about physical well-being is easy, talking about mental health is difficult for most people because of multiple reasons including the social construct. To improve the adoption of well-being initiatives, **critical to normalize well-being conversations**, especially, emotional well-being. Leaders can play an important role in this, through dialogues that legitimize expression and acceptance of well-being concerns.*

When it comes to employee wellness, authenticity matters



**SAYAN
BANDYOPADHYAY**

AVP-HR, HDFC Life

We've all seen wellness programs transform from a good-to-have option to a must-have. But to be successful and holistic in their approach, companies have to contextualize their wellness programs to the needs of their industry and the maturity of the organisation. A tech startup will have very different talent expectations than a consumer-facing enterprise. Wellness programs need to capture and reflect such differences to be impactful in improving the marker of employee well-being.

*The first step to ensuring employees participate in your wellness programs is to help them prioritise their well-being. They then need to be provided benefits that make sense to them. Communication is also vital to raising adoption. HR leaders have to look at how they can **decentralize wellness communication** and ensure employees across all levels of the organisation know and can access wellness initiatives. **Wellness champions** can be created within the*

*organisation to push the cause of employee wellness. Utilising top management to speak about employee wellness while discussing business outcomes also remains a powerful tool to raise adoption. This shows that business performance and employee goals are both equally important. To facilitate the adoption of our wellness portal, we **gamified participation** and passively nudged our employees to take part.*

The strength of an impactful wellness program lies in its authentic and sincere approach to providing employees with the tools to better take care of their health and well-being. Employees can look through superficial and tick in the box approach to wellness. To get the right result and make wellness programs stick, one needs to truly address employee wellness concerns.

*However, **companies need to remember that wellness is a journey.** While certain indicators like retention and engagement scores prove to be valuable metrics, companies need to be in it for the long run. We are yet to get the golden measure that links better health to productivity but there are multiple other ways to measure change and ROI. The need of the hour is to continuously engage with the employee to understand their wellness concerns and address such concerns.*

Behavioural change is imperative for long-term success



**MAYUKH
MAITI**

Exec Vice President (HR),
Tata Capital

To bring long-term sustainable changes around health and wellness, companies need to focus on behavioural change. One cannot force wellness initiatives on employees beyond a certain extent. Organisations, therefore, have to focus on creating the right culture that sustains employee wellness. Organisations can begin by figuring out the 'why' behind their employee wellness programs and then imbibe these as a part of their culture. This is the vital first step towards creating a cultural change that can influence behaviours.

*In the case of a financial company like Tata Capital, the higher attrition we face means that efforts to **prioritise wellness cannot be a one-off activity**. Companies have to work constantly towards creating awareness and behavioural shifts to make their wellness programs a success. The fact that in the financial industry, employee wellness is yet to gain priority, makes it more challenging.*

We need to overcome these challenges to provide employees with holistic wellness. To

facilitate our efforts, we at Tata Capital use an external certification that assesses the effectiveness of our organisation's culture in creating a safe working place. By looking at various parameters of organisational health, the certification process helps us understand whether we're on the right track.

Employee wellness cannot be looked at in isolation. Often the larger cultural changes brought in are equally impactful in making wellness programs successful as it diversity of wellness offerings. This makes quantifying the ROI of wellness programs particularly difficult. When measuring the impact of wellness programs it's important to remember it's very difficult to establish a direct correlation between wellness initiatives and employee productivity. The measures need to be indirect. ROI should be quantified by a mix of both lead and lag indicators. To make assessing ROI a successful endeavour, companies have to ensure that they establish what they want to achieve out of their wellness programs right at the beginning. Whether it is employee engagement or better health outcomes, a clear goal will help choose the right metrics to be monitored.

Technology today plays an important role in making wellness programs more relevant to our employees at Tata Capital. Going forward, a key part of this journey is to leverage predictive analytics. We have started using

data from our annual checkups of our employees to **create predictive models** of what ailments might rise in certain pockets. This information will in turn help us build targeted programs for these segments of our

employee population. Additionally, we are also exploring real-time health and well-being offerings and use technology to monitor our employee's health comprehensively.

