

Briefing



July 2006 | WELL-BEING | www.icasworld.com

Well-being An approach to this business imperative

Employee well-being is an ever-more important critical success factor for the modern organisation. Concepts such as human capital development, health risk management, disease management and population health management come together as coherent strategies when companies seek to improve competitive edge and profitability by investing in their human capital. The central business fundamental of achieving return on investment is more and more the way in which these initiatives must be and are measured. Employee well-being has left behind its image as a "nice to have" and "the right thing to do" – it has moved from being a welfare initiative to being a central business strategy.

There is a wealth of research to support the measurable relationship between employee well-being and productivity – such as the meta-analysis done by Summex Corporation (USA) in 2003, the work of the AHPM (USA), the MediBank Private (Australia) Study of November 2005, work from the European Institute for Health & Productivity Management, and the UK's Health & Safety Executive's published research. This body of research is compelling and there are few who would dispute that well employees are more productive employees.

Most of the published research has looked at absenteeism as the best, and sometimes only, measure of productivity. Absenteeism is measurable, precise and thus lends itself to study. However,

presenteeism (productivity loss while at work due to distraction, worry and other factors external to the workplace per se) can also be measured, even if somewhat less precisely. There is growing consensus in Europe and elsewhere that presenteeism has a greater effect on productivity than absenteeism, by a factor of 6-10 (studies vary). There are also many studies that look at healthcare costs but these tend to only be applicable in the US.

Leading professional providers are responding by delivering more and more innovative products that focus on cost-effectiveness and measurable impact. So, what approach should be taken when considering an investment in employee well-being?

Positioning: who runs well-being?

Does employee well-being include EAP, health insurance, absenteeism management, occupational health, executive care, etc? Or do one or all of these services include well-being? Today's HR manager has to deal with an array of questions like these, and many become uncertain and indecisive when faced with the apparent complexity. The key is to have a simple strategy aimed at delivering employee support services generally, with a clear focus on organisational outcomes (productivity and profitability). It then becomes clear that a strong co-ordination role is needed to integrate and optimise the various services likely to be included in the bouquet. This role may be



performed in-house (well suited to larger organisations with dedicated well-being managers) or by external consultants (independent or semi-independent intermediaries) or by service providers (typically this is the current scenario in medium and small enterprises). Although the latter arrangement may not be ideal (there are potential conflicts of interest), it is likely to be the only practical option for many organisations. In such cases, the key is to understand the different roles such a provider has and to appoint providers with genuine consultancy expertise as well as solid professional reputation.

Continued overleaf

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ICAS acquires WMD!

ICAS is delighted to announce that it has just acquired WorkMedicalDirect (WMD), a national provider of Occupational Health services. This strategic investment will enable ICAS, through WMD, to offer a full range of Occupational Health services to its clients.

With the employee marketplace becoming more commoditised the benefits of integrating Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and Occupational Health services are obvious. With integrated reporting and data analysis, streamlined referrals and efficient account management, clients can save precious time and money without having to manage two or more providers.

Stephen Galliano, Managing Director of ICAS said, "There is a huge amount of synergy between Occupational Health and the provision of EAPs and employee support services."

Dr Munna Roy, Medical Director of WMD added, "We are delighted to be part of ICAS given their expertise in employee assistance and well-being."

For more information please visit www.icasworld.com or www.workmedicaldirect.com or email info@icasworld.com



Well-being continued

Best Practice: characteristics of sound programmes

There is growing consensus on credible well-being programmes, which should usually be characterised by:

- Organisational well-being (or health risk) assessment
- Individual well-being (or health risk) assessment
- Customisation to specific organisational needs
- Personalisation to specific individual needs
- Addressing the entire well-being continuum (well to unwell)
- Including (at least) lifestyle, medical, psychological, work-life balance, and practical life management support & services
- Professionally qualified service providers
- Multimedia delivery (using technology appropriately)
- Focus on, and measurement of, behaviour change
- Aggregation of data into risk analysis tools
- Integration with other support channels/services
- Solid provider-client partnership with senior management buy-in on the client side
- A well marketed brand or identity that employees can recognise and relate to

A programme that includes most or all of these features is likely to be worthwhile and is likely to deliver return on investment.

The Holy Grail: measuring return on investment

Return on Investment (ROI) has become the "holy grail" of all employee well-being services. Rightly so. Where many organisations seem to become unclear is on how this ROI ought to be measured, given that most do not have the inclination or capacity to perform formal outcomes-based research. A fairly simple and practical methodology can be proposed:

1. Measure absenteeism effectively (amazingly, many very large organisations do not)
2. Acknowledge presenteeism as being at least as powerful as absenteeism (and quite possibly up to 10 times as powerful)
3. Implement a well-being programme along the lines described above
4. Measure impact longitudinally (over time). The basic questions here are:
 - Are the services being used by employees? (Utilisation data)
 - Are the services well received by employees? (Satisfaction surveys and opinion polls)
 - Are the services changing employee well-being? (Subjectively and/or objectively)
 - Are reports and analytics being used by the organisation/client? (Data-mining that supports decision making and risk management)
5. Spreadsheet modelling is a highly recommended method of estimating ROI in financial terms.

Service provider reports will provide much of this data, with supplementary opinion polls and surveys completing the picture. For example, it is quite practical to administer a simple employee survey once a year, which will deliver a good body of data on employee perceptions (subjective data). Gathering genuinely objective data is more onerous as it requires third party measurement (e.g. of blood pressure, weight, cholesterol) and so most organisations will rely exclusively on absenteeism for objective data (this is probably not a major concern since self-reported or subjective data has been shown to be reasonably reliable for the purposes envisaged here).

All the key variables and data described above can be included in such modelling exercises with high-road (optimistic) and low-road (conservative) projections being used to illustrate the various scenarios. A degree of approximation and estimation becomes necessary and it is important to note that such modelling is neither usually precise nor scientific, but is rather a management tool to be used intelligently.

This 5-step approach to measuring ROI will go a long way towards quantifying the impact of well-being programmes in most organisations. There is of course much more that can be done but this approach will give most organisations a place to start.

Well-being and Productivity: the missing link?

Well co-ordinated and configured within an integrated holistic approach, employee well-being programmes add cost-effective impact and they produce tangible results including return on investment that can be measured. Just what the doctor, and the CEO, ordered!

ABSENCE WORRIES

World Cup fever - an employer's nightmare?

Few people could have been unaware of the build up and excitement surrounding the start of the World Cup in June. The sense of expectation in England (on the 40th anniversary of the last time, surely 2006 must be the year!) reached fever pitch as shops stocked 'England' products, flags were waved out of car windows and red crosses adorned various parts of bodies, buildings and bars.

The challenge for employers has been to find a way of coping with anticipated employee absence during the national hype. A union website even suggested how its members could take 'sickies' to watch World Cup games.

Though absence from work costs the economy £13bn a year,

there have been some news stories indicating that England match days could have been some of the most productive in the year as staff made efforts to get jobs done quickly so they could leave work early.

For the daytime matches, retailers braced themselves for lower footfall and poor takings. On the day of the England v Paraguay match, the number of people shopping in central London fell by 23%, according to analysts Footfall.

Employers taking a firm but flexible approach have been the winners this time. Many employees have been working 'flexible hours', fitting in their time around the watching of their home country's and key matches, making up the time during the same day or week.

At the same time, employees are reminded that unauthorised absences or the inability to work through the effects of excess alcohol continue to be dealt with under the usual disciplinary procedures.

Banning the watching of World Cup matches during working hours is not a positive approach. Some organisations have taken quite the opposite stance and have used the opportunity for team building and creating a motivated workforce through TV provision, decorations, team games and even an office party.

Whatever your experience of the tournament this year, spare a thought for fellow employers on the other side of the world, coping with unsociable match hours. Early



estimates were that up to 25% of the workforce in Australia may stay home after matches to sleep off a late night and hangovers after the game.

Hot Topic

Depression in the Workplace

Today the major cause of sickness absence for non-manual workers is depression and anxiety. It has had a major impact upon UK businesses costing approximately £9 billion a year. [Source: *The Guardian May 2006*]

Depression is now extremely common, affecting 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men at any one time.

Depression can be a very frightening, disruptive and debilitating condition for the individual and can have adverse effects in the workplace.

Depression is a complex condition with a variety of causes. For many it develops as a result of severe or prolonged anxiety, loss or stressful life events. If left untreated it can become a serious and sometimes life-threatening illness.

Signs of depression can include:

- Marked withdrawal from or conflict with colleagues
- Marked lack of motivation, concentration and energy
- Poor performance
- Acute anxiety or fear
- Lowered mood and negative thinking
- Increased alcohol intake
- Self-neglect and low self-esteem

What Can Be Done? Good practice for managers and supervisors

- Contact an ICAS case consultant to discuss options and form an action plan
- Support your employee with regular documented meetings
- Monitor workload and performance
- Be clear about the standards you expect
- Encourage the employee to take responsibility and adopt a proactive approach
- Ensure you follow any internal organisational policies
- Discuss appropriate support systems – OH, GP, HR, contacting the EAP
- Do not become over-involved with the employee and compromise your managerial responsibility
- Keep any relevant parties informed of your actions

If you are concerned about any of the above issues contact ICAS for a confidential discussion.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING PROGRAMME LAUNCH

The full spectrum

...or just a dash of colour.

Everyone's heard of an EAP – there are loads of them out there. Many companies tick the box marked EAP just to protect themselves from disgruntled employees. They all do the same don't they? Well, the answer is "No they don't!". A well publicised, comprehensive, fully managed EAP provides an organisation with a crucial element of its Behavioural Risk Management strategy. At the same time as providing valuable personal support to employees and their families, an EAP should be designed as an organisational resource first and foremost.

While this stands true today the market and the needs of many organisations has moved on apace. "Well-being" is the buzzword of the moment but it is more than just a feeling, it is a total shift in attitude. The drivers of this are companies who are looking to provide for their staff a work environment that does more than look at an employee's productivity but seeks to engage with and encourage employees to fulfil their potential mentally, physically and emotionally.

Compared to employee risk well-being is a positive concept and the benefits are much more than simply a state of mind. Corporate health and well-being programmes provide more than an attractive and workable employee benefit, they can actually be a profitable investment. The health of employees is a key determinant of long-term profitability and competitiveness.

The new ICAS Employee Well-being Programme (EWP) looks to build on the bedrock of over 17 years experience in providing employee assistance whilst integrating dynamic elements such as:

wellbeingworks™

- Online Health Risk Assessments and Health Profiling
- Personalised ongoing health promotion and advisory series

ICASxtra Online EAP

- Access to a wealth of worklife information
- Legal & consumer issues
- Email a LifeManagement™ consultant

Access to the ICAS Vocational Rehabilitation team

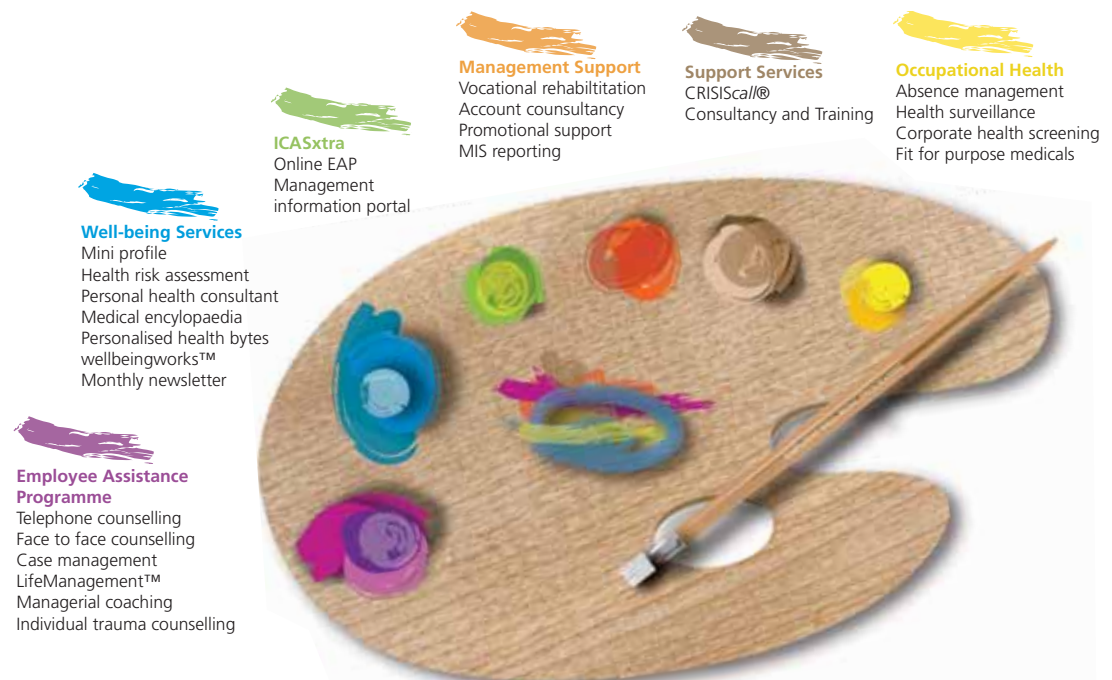
- The majority of long term absence involves a mental health issue – find out how to get your people back to work quickly
- Proven return to work rates of up to 89%

New Occupational Health services

- Absence Management
- Health Surveillance
- Corporate Health Screening

Please do not hesitate to contact our Sales Team by freephone on 0800 068 68 58 or email us at sales@icasworld.com for further information or support.

Employee Well-being Programme



NEW SERVICE LAUNCHED BY ICAS FOR SMES

EAPconnect™ for small to medium size businesses



The smallest companies can have the greatest need of an Employee Assistance Programme.

Absence and performance are issues for all companies - no matter what their size. In a competitive market, where small companies may find margins becoming ever tighter, they need to ensure that staff performance is supported, managed and optimised.

However, small HR teams have to focus their resources on day-to-day work and may not have the time or skills to manage employees who are facing personal or work-related issues that affect performance. Sometimes they need someone independent to turn to, just to consider how best they can manage a situation.

SMEs have the same duty of care as larger companies and should be providing the right level of support for their staff. The risk of potential litigation is the same as for larger companies.

Cost is always an issue, so it can be a struggle to find the right EAP for smaller businesses.

ICAS has come up with a solution that blends the proven

excellence of service with a more affordable cost. EAPconnect™ is specifically (but not exclusively) designed for small to medium sized companies.

EAPconnect™ gives a company four essential and high quality EAP elements:

- Telephone counselling
- LifeManagement™ to provide support around debt and finance, consumer issues and family care
- Three sessions of face to face counselling
- Managerial coaching

To keep costs down, each client receives an interactive CD-ROM that includes filmed briefings that employees can watch in their own time plus downloadable pdf files of posters and leaflets and other literature to promote the service, which a company can print off as required.

The briefings allow new employees to have instant access to information about their EAP, rather than waiting for a group briefing. It also cuts down the time (and therefore the cost) needed to promote the scheme internally. The downloadable literature allows a company to print off and promote when they need to, rather than having to predict what quantities they might need.

EAPconnect™ is a solution that allows companies to take ownership of their EAP whilst always being fully supported by ICAS. It is for anyone who currently thinks EAPs are simply too expensive for their growing business, but who needs to start addressing the essential issue of providing the right support to their staff.

Please call 0800 068 68 58 or email sales@icasworld.com



Dates for your diary



cipd annual conference & exhibition 2006

Visit ICAS on stand C62
24th to 26th October 2006,
Harrogate

National Awareness Weeks

- Alzheimer's Week
(2nd to 8th July)



- Sport Relief
(15th to 16th July)
- Sexual Health Week
(7th to 13th August)



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