

How you can lead your own

Wellbeing revolution

Bupa 

The workplace wellbeing revolution is happening. Businesses now recognise the importance of supporting mental and physical wellbeing. Wellness programmes have become an established norm, with large corporations investing in employee health not just to show they care, but to boost performance too.

The issue has even become political, as you may have heard with the announcement of Theresa May's mental health plan for wellbeing in the workplace.

For you, the idea of on-site gyms, in-house life coaches, and away days to expensive yoga retreats may be unrealistic. And given the day-to-day pressures of running a business, trying to implement a wellbeing strategy can feel like one more addition to the countless other demands on your time.

Yet supporting your workers' wellbeing needn't mean forking out for expensive in-house luxuries. Some of the most effective changes you can make are cultural and effectively free to implement and maintain. You just need to shift your thinking a little.

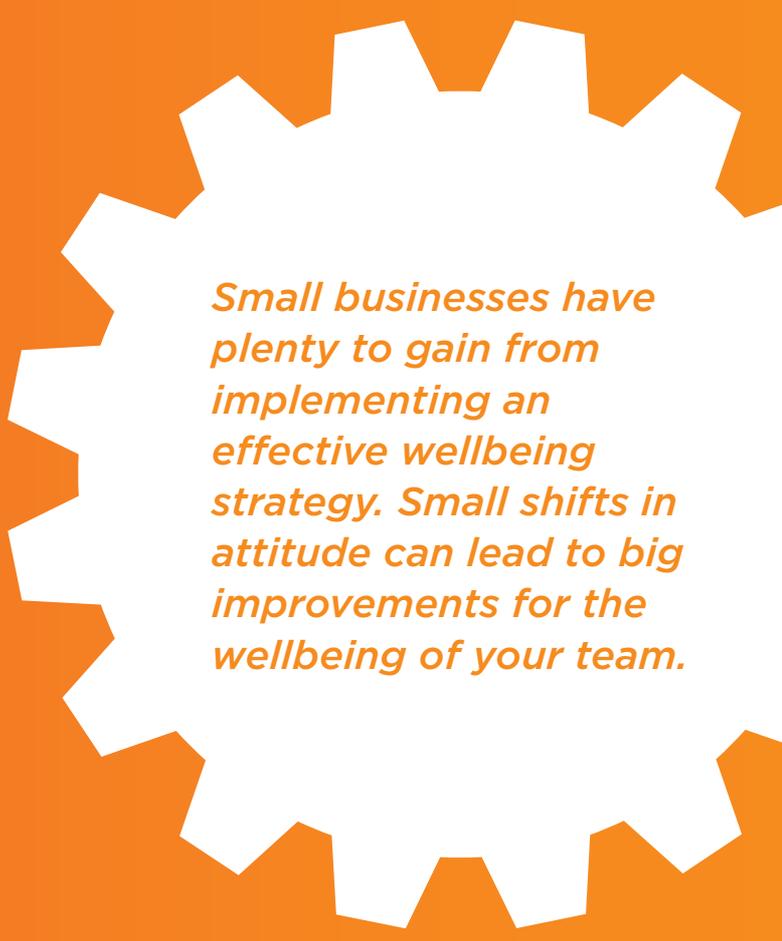
The business case for wellbeing

First, let's consider the business case. **Companies with fewer than 50 employees lose an average of 4 days per employee every year.**¹ For SMEs, even a single day of absence can cause a drop in service levels, and potentially a loss of business if customers become dissatisfied.

Meanwhile, a 2016 report² into absence management found that **three-quarters of respondents had observed 'presenteeism'**,

where employees come to work despite feeling unwell. Employees coming to work while sick can have a negative impact on productivity as well as health.

In your business, you'll probably have some form of procedure for managing sickness absence. But let's flip that idea on its head for a moment. Instead of reacting to incidents of ill health, what if you could help prevent your employees developing health problems in the first place?



Small businesses have plenty to gain from implementing an effective wellbeing strategy. Small shifts in attitude can lead to big improvements for the wellbeing of your team.

¹ CIPD Report (Absence Management Survey Report) 2016

² CIPD Report (Absence Management Survey Report) 2016

In our SME research, over a third of respondents say they are more stressed than they have ever been in their career.³

Easing stress with an idea

Here's an example. In small doses, stress and pressure at work can be useful. People push themselves to succeed and become more productive. Yet if stress does not subside, or gets worse, they can become mentally fatigued and even unwell.

For many it's juggling work responsibilities with commitments outside of work that causes them stress. They avoid sickness absence because they don't want to feel like they are overburdening their colleagues. One solution might be to encourage an open dialogue between your employees, so that they feel better able to discuss and manage their work-life balance.

You may feel you can't afford to implement a wellbeing strategy. But a shift in attitude costs nothing. And if you enjoy close working relationships with your team, where everyone feels like they're in it together, you'd be surprised how quickly new ideas can take hold.

To find out more about the latest in wellbeing visit bupa.co.uk/business/news-and-information/articles/wellbeing-edit



Tools for managing wellbeing

Finding out what makes your employees tick is the first step. Here, technology can help. For example, data from our own wellbeing app, Bupa Boost, indicates that the top three goals for most employees are to eat fruit, drink more water and get to sleep before midnight – not to get physically fitter, as you might expect.

Bupa Boost is just one of the tools you can use to engage your employees in looking after their health. By showing you care about their wellbeing, you're not just looking after your people, you're helping your business to thrive.

A healthy start

Looking after employee wellbeing is a long-term strategy. Small steps are often all that's needed for the idea to take hold and gain momentum.

Get it on the agenda

Business leaders have to make sure that health and wellbeing are a core priority for their businesses. That means getting senior staff to discuss it at board level, and establishing a roadmap for success.

Train the right people

Consider who is going to oversee the wellbeing strategy and make sure it sustains momentum. Give them the tools they need to make it work. This might involve sending managers on wellbeing training courses.

Start a conversation

An effective way to kickstart a wellbeing strategy is to invite employees to participate in its planning and implementation. By talking to employees, SME leaders can gauge what their health goals are, and what support might be most beneficial.

Think proactive not reactive

Health insurance gives your team access to eligible treatment. However wellbeing is not just about reacting to ill-health. Encouraging healthier lifestyle choices is a more proactive approach. As part of your health insurance, we give you tools like Bupa Boost, our health and wellbeing app. Bupa Boost is available to everyone in your team, whether they are covered by your health insurance scheme or not.

³ Bupa research, November 2016

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