

CORPORATE WELLNESS: THE CASE OF COCA-COLA POLAND COMPANY

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Abstract

Background. The data suggests that the general population's health is deteriorating. This generates ever higher cost of healthcare. Fewer well employees generate higher healthcare costs and loss of efficiency. Out of this problem arises the need to prevent diseases more effectively in order to lower the healthcare costs. One of the places where prevention and a health-oriented attitude might work particularly well is the workplace.

Research aims. This research has three main objectives. Those include presenting factors influencing wellness at work (during the course of the literature review), conducting empirical research among employees about their attitudes towards current wellness provisions, and giving tailored recommendations for future development.

Methodology. This research adopts the method of a case study with e-interviews. In total, nine e-interviews were filled out by the employees of the Human Resources Department at Coca-Cola Poland in April 2017.

Key findings. Key findings of this research suggest that the notions of work-life balance and job satisfaction are highly individualised and stress plays a major role in their perception. Moreover, the researched employees paid much attention to the physical environment of the workplace (air condition, lighting, etc.). Also, out of the ones in place in Coca-Cola Poland, the employee benefit of private healthcare was graded as the most important one.

Keywords: worksite wellness, Poland, wellness management, job satisfaction, employee benefits.

WORKSITE WELLNESS OUTLINE

OECD (2016a) data demonstrates the rising cost of healthcare in many countries. The Global Wellness Institute's industry report from 2016 claims that the World's workers are "increasingly unwell" (p. 9).

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What is more, the report estimates the cost of employee's unwellness (the contrary to wellness), which is a sum of the medical expenses and the loss of productivity, at a staggering 10–15% of the global economic output. The report assumes the cost of work-related diseases and injuries, health problems caused by work stress, chronic diseases, and employee disengagement in work in the United States to be about 12% of the country's GDP (Global Wellness Institute, 2016, p. i). One is inclined to wonder about the reasons of this phenomenon. Sedentary lifestyles and bad health habits contribute significantly to a less healthy population worldwide, as suggested by Thierry Malleret (2016a). Additionally, the scholar points to the negative impact of technology, work burnout, and depression on health globally (Malleret, 2017a, 2017b).

Charles Bens (2017) argues that prevention of diseases will cost less than treatment, especially among aging societies. According to Jim Purcell (2016), since the workplace brings together many people for a long time daily, it becomes the perfect place to start implementing health and preventative measures. The author argues that employee health and wellness will affect productivity at work and in turn company performance. Additionally, employers contribute significantly to the payment of health insurance and therefore should see the value of an employee's best health. In many countries, the workplace constitutes the biggest daily gathering of people. Moreover, those people usually gather at work for about a third of their day – a vast period of time. Given the part of the population involved in working, and the time spent at work, as well as the employer's interest in the employee's health and low health insurance costs, the workplace appears to be a proper venue for wellness. As a universal phenomenon, worksite wellness directly influences the employers and employees and indirectly employee families, governments, and individuals.

As worksite wellness develops, so do the threats and opportunities of tomorrow. The industry report (Global Wellness Institute, 2016, p. 17) names the global trends to affect the wellness industry. Those are economic insecurity and stress, environmental threats, adsorption of the Millennials generation to the workforce, workers' expectations to thrive at work, the rise of chronic diseases, 24/7 work culture and rapidly expanding technology, the problem of loneliness, and work-life balance issues. Worksite wellness will look for ways to tap the opportunities and eliminate the threats in order to have healthy and satisfied employees and in turn lower healthcare costs and staff rotation.

The future of worksite wellness might have a real, positive impact on employee health worldwide. Thus, on the health of the World's population in general. However, in order to further develop worksite wellness, a thorough investigation of employee attitudes towards the notion is necessary. It will serve as the base for improvement.

Worksite Wellness – Meaning

To define and understand “wellness,” one must recognise the links and differences between health, wellbeing, and wellness.

According to the World Health Organization, “health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1948). The WHO's definition is broad and includes such aspects of health as: physical, mental, and social. Health is not merely the lack of a disease, but rather a comprehensive state one should pursue.

Rachel Dodge et al. (2012) see wellness as a balance, an internal homeostasis, between a person's experiences in life and the pool of resources he/she has to face those experiences. Whether it is problems that need tackling or life-changing adventures, wellness is the state in which a person can cope. Dodge et al. (2012, p. 230) state that wellness is “the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced.”

Based on the above definitions, wellbeing happens when one can handle life experiences well enough and health is comprised of numerous aspects, like social, emotional, or physical. Wellbeing increases health and health strengthens wellbeing.

According to The World Health Organization (Smith et al., 2006, p. 5), wellness is: “the optimal state of health of individuals and groups.” There are two focal concerns: the realisation of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually, and economically, and the fulfilment of one's role expectations in the family, community, place of worship, workplace, and other settings. This definition of wellness puts health and wellbeing together. Wellness is the potential to realise oneself in different life and health aspects (social, spiritual, economic, emotional) – leading to better health. Wellness also allows one to realise their role and therefore balance the obligations and possibilities in general. Wellness comes, then,

as a proactive life approach. Those leading a wellness-oriented life, strive to be healthier and realise full potential to bring themselves and the society maximum benefit. Worksite wellness is the wellness philosophy and approach implemented in the workplace.

In the report from 2016 by the Global Wellness Institute, *The Future of Wellness at Work*, the authors put forward the following proposition of wellness at work: “Wellness at work is the right to work in a manner that is healthy, motivating, and edifying. Everyone – workers, managers, and business owners – should endeavour to work in a way that improves our wellness and the wellbeing of others” (Global Wellness Institute, p. ii). Here, the authors pay attention to all the potential stakeholders taking advantage of a health-oriented workplace – owners, and managers as much as employees. Moreover, worksite wellness should inspire to be proactive and improve the wellbeing of others around. The common good is also addressed.

Worksite Wellness History

Long before wellness entered the business environment, after World War II, fitness made its way to the biggest companies. At first, corporations built their own fitness and training facilities and swimming pools which were available for the top-tier employees only. Year after year, health became more and more important in business. In 1970 The Occupational Safety and Health Administration was founded. It was a part of the American Department of Labor and it came to life with an aim to prevent workplace-related accidents and illnesses. The approach to treating and preventing illnesses only changed over the next years in decades. According to Jaime Reardon (1998), the very first wellness programs implemented in big companies at the time were a symbol of the shifting responsibility for health and wellbeing from the company to the individual employee. That could have been triggered by rapid changes in technology used at work which allowed the employees to lead a more sedentary lifestyle than ever before. What is more, as technology developed, the workload increased and work-related stress followed. All of this led to creating a “less healthy” workplace and work in general. In the American system, employers account for a big portion of health insurance financing. Therefore, it made much sense to them to try to minimise healthcare and health insurance costs by influencing their employees to become the healthiest possible.

Worksite Wellness Nowadays: Ways of Implementation

Employee-oriented wellbeing became a strategic priority in the U.S. The approach to employee wellness, however, has evolved, according to Malleret (2016b). The author claims that previously-implemented approach focused mainly on the top management making sure that subordinates stay healthy. Currently, implementing wellness in the business environment includes more efficient, human-oriented and modern management techniques. Not only is health perceived in holistic terms (including emotional or psychological health), it is also implemented by the top management as leaders and change-makers who motivate and support their employees.

According to Ann Mirabito (as cited in Carlson, 2014, p. 23), “best companies create a culture of health.” David Nash (2015) defines a culture of health as all the policies and regulations in place that allow employees to make healthier, better choices. A business environment that increases the likelihood of employees’ making healthier choices, at the same time also decreases health-related costs and absenteeism. Nash (2015) claims that implementing a worksite wellness program can help to establish a culture of health.

Another way in which wellness can reach the worksite, as per Marc Lavine (2012) is by the concept of Corporate Social Performance (CSP) and its relationship to work meaningfulness. According to the author, CSP is comprised of corporate citizenship, social responsibility, and sustainability (Lavine, 2012, p. 53). Lavine’s (2012) study has shown that companies with more commitment for Corporate Social Performance, enjoy more employees who believe their job is meaningful. This, most probably, stems from the fact that CSP allows for a better fit between an individual employee’s values and corporate values and visions. Thus, employees perceive their own job as more meaningful. An alignment of values between the employer and employee can, therefore, affect employee perception of job meaningfulness and satisfaction – and by that the realisation of one’s potential at work and the feeling of contributing to the society in general.

Another notion of increasing worksite wellness is the concept of a caring company. The report regarding company caring suggests that in a group perceived as caring, the employees are more likely to feel the employer’s support, be more honest and open, as well as say

that their managers and leaders lead by example (Everyday Health INC. & Global Wellness Institute, 2016, p. 11). This, too, shows that employees' attitudes towards employer wellbeing in the workplace can significantly affect employee attitudes and perceptions.

METHODOLOGY – RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE

Despite worksite wellness being a growing trend globally, the topic has not been investigated in detail in Poland, yet. The literature available on the theme is rather scarce. There seems to be a gap in the research. In order to fill this gap, this research was conducted in Coca-Cola Poland company, in its office in Warsaw.

In order to investigate employee attitudes towards worksite wellness, the case study method was adopted. According to Robert K. Yin (2004), the case study method is particularly useful while researching organisational, social, and management-related issues. Qualitative research, like case study, aims at discovering perspectives and building a common understanding upon them (Starman, 2013). The ontological approach to the research questions, according to Theresa Catalano and John W. Creswell (2013), suggests that the perception of 'common' reality is built upon the basis of multiple viewpoints.

This research adopts the use of a snapshot case study. This means that the study is carried out in a particular moment of time and the results reflect the current state of matters.

Chandra Bowden and Sebastian Galindo-Gonzalez (2015) state that the Internet has allowed for the creation of a relatively new method – e-interviewing. The authors point to Lokman I. Meho (2006) who claims that data obtained through the means of e-interviews and traditional face-to-face interviews does not vary in quality. Additionally, it appears that e-interviews' content tends to be more specific and concise than data obtained through regular face-to-face interviews (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015, p. 80).

The e-interviews for Coca-Cola Poland employees included eight questions, seven of which were open-ended type ones. According to David Stokes and Richard Bergin (2006), interviews which are composed of open-ended questions have proved to reveal the actual preferences of the subjects under study.

The questions used in the course of this research were developed on the basis of the literature review. The aims of the particular questions were accordingly as follows:

- 1) discovering the perception of the connection between health and workplace by the interviewees;
- 2) gaining insight into the perceived importance of particular employee benefits;
- 3) searching for employee wellness benefits development ideas;
- 4) looking for the potential positive spill effect that work can have on private life;
- 5) discovering the expectations and perceptions of the interviewees with regards to family-friendly provisions at work;
- 6) looking for the perception of Work-Life Balance;
- 7) discovering the attitudes towards the job carried out and job satisfaction, looking for a potential positive spill effect of job meaningfulness to general wellbeing;
- 8) seeking information about the needs and desires of the researched employees with regards to health-oriented changes at work, searching for improvement ideas and needs.

In the case of this research, the e-interviews were sent out to the representative of the HR Department at Coca-Cola Poland in April 2017. The representative then distributed the e-interviews – via internal e-mail – among other HR Department employees. The interviewees were given about 12 days to answer. Altogether, nine in-depth e-interviews were undertaken with employees of the Human Resources Department at Coca-Cola Poland. Altogether, thirty-five employees work in the Human Resources Department at Coca-Cola Poland. The study was voluntary. Nine employees of the HR Department staff decided to take part. The research sample was about 25.7% of the HR team. The participants were informed that the research is anonymous and voluntary. The interviewees could withdraw from the research and change their answers at any given time. The decision about anonymity has numerous benefits to the study. It allows for a faster and easier trust-creation. Therefore, it is more probable that the interviewee would give honest and full answers, according to Styśko-Kunkowska (2014), who also states that respecting the anonymity of the respondents is intact with the psychological standards of conducting research. Finally, no question about age or gender of the interviewee was asked as the research

sample is too small to make statistical generalisations. The questions about personal data were purposefully omitted.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

The compound results of the research, in the form of answers to the e-interview questions, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the e-interview questions

	Question	Answers
1	What influences your health at work in a negative and positive way?	Negative influence: physical aspects of the work environment (like light, air quality, time spent in front of a monitor); positive influence: sufficient time for home-cooked lunches during work, physical activity subsidies (gym cards) as well as the atmosphere at work and colleagues
2	Please rank the employee benefits from one to four starting with the most important benefit for you: cards to fitness centres, gyms, swimming pools, and active leisure centres; fresh fruit available for free at work; private healthcare; a share of Coca-Cola products for each employee	1 (most important) – private healthcare insurance 2 – gym card subsidy 3 – fresh fruit delivery to the office 4 (least important) – share of Coca-Cola products
3	What element would you like to add to the above list of benefits?	Group running, introduction of smartphone applications dealing with health and fitness and leisure time support (tickets for a family to visit a zoo)
4	How did Coca-Cola Poland influence you personally to introduce healthy changes in your life (if any)?	Influence by enhancing physical activity and regular eating times
5	Do you feel that Coca-Cola Poland would support you in having children? Are the maternity leave and childcare benefits sufficient in your opinion? Is there anything Coca-Cola Poland could do to help you balance work and motherhood (or fatherhood)?	Positive answers about the current situation: 'homey' atmosphere, the ability to take time off when needed and holiday subsidies; not many comments about maternity policies and family-friendly provisions
6	How do you perceive your work-life balance? Does working at Coca-Cola Poland help you achieve it? If not, how can it be changed?	Varied answers – some appreciate leaving work on time and not staying longer hours; some suggest that their balance is disturbed by stress and their life focuses too much on work
7	Do you feel your job is satisfying and positively influences your life? How does it translate into happiness in life in general for you?	Several sources of job happiness: result of a good payroll, atmosphere, and colleagues. Two answers suggest that the person is or might be unhappy at work
8	If you could, what and how would you change at work in order for your workplace to support your health and happiness better?	Reducing the stress factor and improving the physical environment at work

Source: author's own work.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The questions used in e-interviews were developed on the basis of the literature review. The questions regarded such notions as: the relation of health and the workplace, work and family affairs, thriving at work, work-life balance, job satisfaction, work and private life, and wellness benefits.

It turned out in the course of this research that some of the most important health-influencing factors at work related to the physical environment, like lighting, air conditioning, and office equipment like desks, chairs, and computers. In this case, the change of office interior design and furniture to better meet the employees' needs is recommended. The answers to this question suggest a few more ways in which the worksite could be enhanced. The most important seem to be reducing the stress factor and improving the physical environment at work, so it improves health (ergonomic sitting, limiting the time spent in front of a screen, adding plants and flowers). Placing plants and flowers in the workplace significantly increases the air condition in the office, creates a more 'homey' and natural atmosphere and can greatly uplift the spirit of employees. Adding, therefore, flowers and plants in the office area seems to be a worthy investment.

Additionally, expanding the portfolio of employee benefits offered by team-building events like group running or subsidising leisure time activities to better support the private and family life of the employees is advisable.

The researched notions of work-life balance and job satisfaction brought up data to suggest that those are highly individualised notions and employee perceptions vary significantly. The collected answers suggest that there might be a few sources of job happiness. According to some answers, job satisfaction is mostly the result of a good payroll. Others claim that the atmosphere and colleagues make them happy. There are two answers which suggest that the person is or might be unhappy at work. Stress appeared to be one of the major factors influencing work-life balance negatively. The advised measures on improving the perception of work-life balance include individual counselling and coaching and tailored training on stress management and relaxation techniques. Job satisfaction perception was also highly individualised. To enhance this aspect of

wellbeing at work, regular employee surveys and tailored solutions are recommended.

There were also differences in the employee perception of employer family-friendly measures. In the case of this question, the ability to take time off and holiday subsidies were mostly appreciated by the interviewees. It appears that there is room for developing a more family-friendly environment at Coca-Cola Poland. Steps taken to benefit the fathers, mothers, and fathers- and mothers-to-be can be especially appreciated and increase the talent acquisition in the company while enhancing turnover and decreasing the potential perception of gender bias at work.

The importance of management engagement and employee recognition should not be omitted. The atmosphere at work turned out to be an important factor of work wellbeing perception. Therefore, it is advisable that management in Coca-Cola Poland tries to create an environment that allows the employee to feel appreciated and welcomed. The stress should not be exerted on the employees if not necessary.

Finally, the need to innovate and develop a business should not only concern the business' commercial activities but should be aimed internally as well to address the changing needs and requirements for a healthy and happy team of employees.

CONCLUSIONS

It appears in the course of this research that employee attitudes towards worksite wellness provisions can vary significantly. Therefore, it is vital to carry out regular employee research connected to wellness at work. This research will allow generating improvement ideas and evaluate the current wellness-related actions in the organisation. Additionally, on the basis of this research, ideas regarding future research can be generated. One of them is to conduct deeper research on the values of the company and employer brand management and its connection to the perception of the company internally and externally. This can significantly influence job satisfaction and employee engagement levels and future talent acquisition. Moreover, additional research on companies operating in the FMCG market appears interesting. It would be advisable to explore employee attitude towards the product manufactured by the employer in case of Coca-Cola. The perceived

health impact of the products offered could be examined in correlation with the companies' health-approach. The notion of Corporate Social Performance is another strain of research to pursue in the future on the Polish market.

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DOBROSTAN KORPORACYJNY: PRZYPADEK COCA-COLA POLAND COMPANYY

Abstrakt

Tło badań. Dane statystyczne dowodzą, że poziom zdrowia światowej populacji stale się obniża, co przyczynia się do podniesienia kosztów opieki zdrowotnej i obniżenia wydajności pracy. W wyniku pogarszania się kondycji zdrowotnej ludności pojawia się potrzeba prewencji chorób, między innymi przez promowanie programów prozdrowotnych w miejscu pracy.

Cel badań. U podstaw badania leżą trzy cele. Pierwszym jest zaprezentowanie czynników kształtujących dobrostan pracowników, drugi to przeprowadzenie badania mającego na celu ocenę dotychczas stosowanych przez Coca-Cola Poland programów prozdrowotnych, a trzeci to zaproponowanie rekomendacji służących lepszemu dostosowaniu tych programów do potrzeb pracowników.

Metodologia. W badaniu zastosowano metodę *case study* wzbogaconą o wywiady internetowe przeprowadzone z pracownikami działu zasobów ludzkich Coca-Cola Poland w kwietniu 2017 roku.

Kluczowe wnioski. Wyniki badania wskazują na wysoki poziom zróżnicowania rozumienia przez pracowników równowagi między życiem prywatnym a zawodowym oraz satysfakcji z pracy. Dowodzą one również istotnej roli, jaką w tym rozumieniu odgrywa stres. Wskazują one także, że pracownicy przypisują duże znaczenie środowisku fizycznemu pracy oraz prywatnej opiece zdrowotnej gwarantowanej przez Coca-Cola Poland.

Słowa kluczowe: programy prozdrowotne, Coca-Cola Poland, zarządzanie dobrostanem pracowników, satysfakcja i korzyści pracowników.