



“THEY CARE”

LEADERS 2025

APAC EDITION



PEOPLE LEADERS

WHO ARE BUILDING WELLBEING-FIRST
WORKPLACES. A BOOK OF THEIR LEARNINGS &
STRATEGIES

A Note from Kanika Agarwal

FOUNDER & CEO, MINDPEERS



World Mental Health Day has always been more than a date on the calendar for us at MindPeers – it's a reminder of why this work matters.

Over the past year, I've had countless conversations with leaders across APAC who are quietly revolutionizing how we think about workplace mental health.

Not through grand proclamations, but through daily practices, difficult conversations, and genuine care for their teams.

This book exists because these leaders were generous enough to share their lived experiences – the rituals that keep them grounded, the initiatives that actually work, the budget battles they fought, and the myths they're determined to dismantle.

Their insights aren't theoretical. They're forged in the reality of leading through transformation, crisis, and constant change.

We created this collection to bridge a gap: between good intentions and meaningful action. Because mental health leadership isn't about having all the answers – it's about creating spaces where people can be human at work.

**This World Mental
Health Day, we're
honored to share these
voices with you.
We hope you enjoy
reading this as much as
we loved learning.**

*With gratitude,
Kanika*

What to Expect from Our Book

The Reality We're Facing

Did you know that **92% of APAC employees** have experienced **burnout** in just the past one year? Yet many leaders still wonder:

- How do we turn awareness into action?
- How do we build cultures where mental health isn't just acknowledged – but actively supported?



What Makes This Collection of Stories Different

This isn't theory or consulting jargon.

It's the lived reality of **20+ leaders** across APAC's most respected organizations – from global corporations like Emerson, Nokia, Unilever, and Accenture to innovative startups and consultancies.

These are the people in the trenches, navigating budget constraints, cultural complexity, organizational transformation, and the daily challenge of showing up for their teams while protecting their own wellbeing.

**20+ leaders,
1 shared
mission**

**People-first
workplaces.**

Who All You'll Be Hearing From

- **CHROs and HR directors** leading workplace wellbeing across Asia Pacific.
- **Mental health ambassadors** transforming corporate culture.
- **Executive coaches and leadership advisors** guiding organizational change.
- **Psychotherapists** bring clinical expertise to workplace settings.
- **Total rewards leaders** connecting wellbeing to business performance.
- **People partners** pioneering flexible work innovations.



How to To Make The Most of These Nuggets of Wisdom

We've organized this book alphabetically by leader – each with their own dedicated section featuring their personal journey, insights, and hard-won wisdom.

Dip in wherever a name catches your eye, or read cover to cover to see the beautiful patterns that might emerge.

Either way, you'll find stories that resonate, ideas you can implement tomorrow, and perspectives that challenge how you think about workplace mental health.

**The format is simple: real leaders, real stories, real impact.
No corporate speak. No fluff. Just honest conversations about
what actually works.**

→ **LET'S BEGIN.**

THE LEADER WHO'S REDEFINING THE RULES OF PRESENCE

Abhinav Prakash

Senior People Partner, Delivery Hero



Abhinav Prakash has taken a beautifully conventional stance in a world rushing back to the office. While many companies mandate five days on-site, he's championed a different path – one that treats energy as a precious organizational resource worth protecting.



Rewriting the Rules of Presence

Abhinav's approach is elegantly simple: require just two in-office days, giving employees autonomy for the rest. But he didn't stop there. Meeting-Free Friday Mornings from 9 am to 1 pm have become sacred territory – not for catching up on emails, but for genuine thinking time.

"It reduces cognitive load significantly, giving people space to think, plan, and reflect," he explains. In an era of meeting fatigue, this creates breathing room that transforms how people approach their work.

His philosophy extends to how he helps teams establish wellbeing norms from day one.

Before diving into deliverables, he asks foundational questions:

- Is working after a certain hour acceptable?
- Should teams expect immediate responses via email or messaging apps?
- Is overtime the norm or truly an exception?

According to him, these conversations set the tone before pressure builds.

The Business Case for Humanity

Abhinav doesn't shy away from the classic challenge every wellbeing advocate faces: convincing leadership to invest.

His strategy is two-pronged and remarkably effective. First, make it personal – help leaders reflect on moments when they could have benefited from such interventions. Then, follow with hard data: clear ROI metrics that speak the language of business.



At the end of the day, a business is all about ROI, When the returns on wellbeing initiatives surpass the investments made, that alone makes a compelling case for their continuation and expansion.

Evolution of Understanding

Abhinav has witnessed a significant shift in how organizations perceive mental wellbeing. What was initially dismissed as a passing trend has evolved into something leaders recognize as fundamental. **"Mental wellbeing was initially thought of as a fad but with the passage of time, we have come to realize and appreciate that mental wellbeing is here to stay and is as important as physical wellbeing."**

His approach to Singapore's diverse workforce acknowledges that one size never fits all. Delivery Hero offers both modern solutions like mental wellbeing apps and traditional benefits through flexible plans – catering to younger employees who gravitate toward digital tools and mature workers who prefer customizable options that suit their specific needs.

What sets Abhinav apart is his focus on energy preservation rather than just workload management. He's shifted the conversation from "how much can we get done?" to "how can we enable sustained performance?" It's a subtle but profound difference – one that moves organizations from exhaustion toward genuine, renewable energy.

What We Can Learn From Abhinav Prakash's Leadership?

- 1** **Preserve Energy, Don't Just Track Hours** – Give employees autonomy over their workweek and create sacred thinking time to reduce cognitive load.
- 2** **Set Norms Early** – Discuss expectations around after-hours work, email responses, and overtime before deadlines pile up.
- 3** **Blend Humanity with ROI** – Make wellbeing personal for leaders and back it up with data to show real business impact.
- 4** **Customize for Your Workforce** – Recognize that one size doesn't fit all; offer both digital tools and flexible benefits to cater to diverse needs.

THE LEADER WHO LISTENS FIRST, THEN INNOVATES

Alex Png

Chief People Officer, Asia Pacific



Alex Png brings creative industry sensibility to mental health leadership, where understanding context has proven more powerful than imposing solutions.



When Teams Tell You What They Need

During peak periods, Alex noticed something troubling: morale dropping, absenteeism rising. Rather than immediately deploying a standard wellbeing program, he did something refreshingly simple – he asked.

After checking in with teams, the real issue emerged: people needed headspace and meaningful breaks. The solution? No Meeting Fridays during high-pressure periods. "It gave everyone the breathing room they needed," Alex shares.

“

Sometimes the best intervention is just giving people permission to think.

The Power of Protected Time

Alex practices what he preaches in his personal routine. He blocks focus time before the daily chaos begins – non-negotiable periods that allow deep concentration, meaningful work completion, and a sense of control over his schedule. In a world of constant interruptions, these protected boundaries aren't luxuries; they're the foundation of sustainable performance.

AI as Accountability Partner

When it comes to technology and wellbeing, Alex sees AI's potential beyond automation. He views it as a resource base for learning about wellbeing, a tool for journaling and tracking progress, and perhaps most interestingly, an accountability mechanism.

AI can remind you how far you've come on your wellbeing journey and what still needs attention – a digital companion that helps maintain momentum when motivation flags.

Starting Small, Starting Smart

Alex's advice for resource-constrained organizations cuts through the complexity: Start by surveying what employees actually need and want. Find the intersection between those needs and what the business can sustainably provide – and what leadership will genuinely commit to honoring.



You can then look at perks that cost next to nothing in the grand scheme of things, such as paid time off in small increments

What makes Alex's approach effective is its groundedness.

He doesn't chase the latest trends or implement programs because they sound impressive. He listens to his teams, responds to their actual challenges, and creates solutions that fit both the problem and the organizational reality. In an age of overcomplicated wellbeing strategies, this back-to-basics humanity stands out.

What Can We Learn From Alex Png Leadership?

1

Listen First, Act Second – Ask teams what they really need before rolling out programs; sometimes permission to think is the best solution

2

Guard Your Focus – Block non-negotiable time for deep work to boost performance and maintain control over your schedule.

3

Start Small, Start Smart – Use small, sustainable interventions – like short increments of paid time off or AI-assisted tracking – to support wellbeing without overcomplicating it.

THE LEADER WHO OPERATIONALIZES CALMNESS

Alf Carlesater

Founder, GROW HR Consulting



As the founder of GROW HR Consulting and former HR leader at companies like GE, Meta, and Braze, he's built his career on a counterintuitive principle: calmness isn't aspirational – it's operational.



When Loss Becomes Operating System

Losing his father at 17 gave Alf an armor of strength. Over time, he learned something more valuable: how to set that armor down and build real resilience. "That blend – Nordic simplicity, Asian pragmatism, and a faith-anchored rhythm – became my operating system," he reflects



When leaders operationalise calm, wellbeing stops being a poster and becomes the way we work

His daily S.I.M.M.E.R. micro-routine isn't just a clever acronym – it's a practical framework.

• Deep-work blocks and real lunch breaks	—	S	SETTING
• Sleep, movement, and journaling	—	I	INGREDIENTS
• Breathing resets and pauses between meetings	—	M	METHOD
• Weekly self check-ins	—	M	MEASURE
• Streamlined updates to cut meetings	—	E	EXECUTE
• Friday 'wins & learns' reflection	—	R	REFLECT

It keeps him steady and present through chaos.

Systems Over Heroics

Alf's most powerful insight challenges the prevailing narrative around resilience:



'Resilience = endurance.' Real resilience is recovery + boundaries + support, not grinding harder

This reframe transforms how organizations think about sustainable performance.

His approach to team success focuses on stigma-reducing simplicity:

30-second 1:1 check-ins led by managers. Document-first, meeting-light rhythms that reduce context switching. Weekly load-balancing using "must/should/could" frameworks to prevent quiet overload. Published norms for response times and quiet hours that enable actual downtime.

These aren't grand programs – they're the operational details that make calm scalable.

Proving Impact Without Breaking the Bank

During high-volume mobility cycles, Alf combined doc-first decision-making, regular check-ins, and load-balancing across teams and vendor partners.

The results spoke clearly: fewer escalations, faster hand-offs, higher internal NPS scores, better SLA adherence. People had more predictable evenings and felt confident raising risks early.

His budget strategy is equally practical: Start with zero-cost habits like structured check-ins and clear guardrails. Measure basic metrics – after-hours messaging, individual meeting hours, pulse surveys. Demonstrate the cost of inaction through attrition, sick leave, and rework data.

Once you see small wins, reinvest into manager training and peer champion programs.

AI With Guardrails

Alf's vision for AI in wellbeing is characteristically measured: use it as a quiet co-pilot to summarize 1:1 notes, surface meeting-load patterns, flag out-of-hours messaging, and cluster anonymized pulse themes. But always with consent, data minimization, and strict access controls.

THE GOAL ISN'T SURVEILLANCE – IT'S FEWER MEETINGS, CLEARER PRIORITIES, AND EARLIER SUPPORT.

Cultural Design for Plurality

For Singapore's diverse workforce, Alf designs for plurality rather than prescribing one "right" way. Offer multiple options like walk-and-talk 1:1s or asynchronous updates. Respect organizational rhythms by scheduling around religious and cultural dates. Use plain-English documents and visuals. Ensure flexibility for different life stages, including caregiving, national service, and cross-border family considerations. Invest in manager capability to run effective check-ins without prying.

His closing wisdom crystallizes everything:



Calmness is actually operational. You set the tone through boundaries, clarity, and modelling recovery. People don't need a hero; they need a steady system.

And his recommended reading says it all: **Richard Sheridan's Joy, Inc.: How We Built a Workplace People Love** – a real-world case study showing how values become operating rituals that build psychological safety without app sprawl.



What Can We Learn From Alf Carlesater's Leadership?

1

Operationalize Calm – Build routines, boundaries, and small, repeatable habits that make wellbeing part of daily work, not just an aspirational idea.

2

Systems Over Heroics – Focus on scalable practices like structured check-ins, load-balancing frameworks, and published response norms to prevent burnout.

3

Measure & Reinforce – Track simple metrics like after-hours messaging, meeting hours, and pulse survey data to show impact, then reinvest in manager and peer support programs.

THE LEADER WHO CREATES LIFELINES FROM PAGES

Amanda Anderson

Mental Health Ambassador,
L'Occitane

L'OCCITANE
EN PROVENCE

Amanda Anderson has learned something most corporate wellbeing programs miss: sometimes it's not another person but words on a page that make you feel less alone.



The White Space Revolution

For years, Amanda thought productivity meant saying yes to everyone and everything – until she realized it left her drained. Now she guards her “**white space**” like treasure.

“On paper, it looks like wasted time; in reality, it's the only reason I can show up fully,” she explains.

This personal discovery shaped her entire leadership philosophy. She's learned to spot something most leaders miss: the quiet corners where people are disappearing from themselves. Over-functioning. Smiling through overwhelm. Saying yes when everything says no.

“

True productivity isn't about doing more – it's about bringing quality to what matters, and that starts with giving quality time to myself.

TOTALLY MENTAL: When Design Meets Desperation

Amanda's signature initiative challenges everything about traditional wellbeing communications. The TOTALLY MENTAL magazine isn't content – it's an experience. Beautifully designed, easy to read, something people actually want to include in their self-care ritual. What makes it powerful is its honesty: it covers struggles people rarely raise their hands to discuss.

Amanda shares



“

Readers can engage privately, in their own time, right in the middle of their struggles – without anyone knowing.

That privacy can be vital when you're suffering. Sometimes it's not another person but words on a page that make you feel less alone.

The magazine combines practical tips with inspiration, transforming from corporate communication into a genuine lifeline. It makes people feel seen, valued, and understood – without requiring them to perform vulnerability in front of colleagues.

Measuring What Matters

Amanda pushes back against the obsession with metrics: "I don't always measure mental wellbeing in numbers – honestly, I don't think you can." But she's seen the ripple effect. Teams running on empty start to breathe again. Tension drops, creativity returns, people genuinely want to be here.

She's witnessed individuals on the verge of leaving choose to stay – not because workload changed, but because culture did. They felt seen.



When you put mental wellbeing first, retention, productivity, and engagement follow naturally. That's psychological safety in practice.

Beyond Programs to Being Human

Amanda wants one myth to disappear:

"The idea that it's something you 'do' to fix people, rather than a responsibility we each carry as humans."

For Singapore's diverse workforce, she emphasizes listening first, never assuming. "Some people respond to open conversations, others prefer private resources they can access quietly. Some thrive in workshops, others want something tangible they can take away and reflect on in their own time." The key is flexibility – creating a wellbeing toolkit that isn't one-size-fits-all.

Starting Without Budget

Her advice for resource-constrained leaders is radical: Start with what already exists in your culture. Look in places most leaders don't – the quiet corners where people are disappearing from themselves. Notice where people are over-functioning, and call it out. Reward wholeness, not self-abandonment.



Audit language and rituals. Are you celebrating silence as loyalty? Praising 'resilience' that's really just people disappearing? These aren't expensive. They're deliberate.

Leadership as Frequency

Amanda's closing wisdom cuts to the core:

"Manage your mindset first. Everything else follows! Your mindset sets the tone. When you can stay grounded, aware, and intentional in how you think about stress, pressure, and people, your emotions respond, and your behaviours follow."

She's learned that teams mirror what leaders model. Protect your energy, regulate your responses, honor your own needs – and you give teams permission to do the same.

"The daily, invisible choices you make as a leader decide whether your team just survives or thrives."

Her insight on wellbeing captures years of experience in one breath:

"It's the small, daily choices we make to shrink, to be 'dependable,' to keep everyone else comfortable while we slowly disappear... Because wellbeing isn't a program. It's being encouraged to exist fully, openly, and humanly at work."

And her recommended resource? Any book on NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), which provides deep insights into human behavior and communication – essential tools for truly understanding and supporting teams.

What Can We Learn From Amanda Anderson's Leadership?

- 1** **Protect Your White Space** – Guard personal time for reflection and recharge; true productivity comes from quality, not constant output.
- 2** **Lead Through Presence** – Your mindset and daily choices set the tone; teams mirror the energy leaders model.
- 3** **Notice the Quiet Corners** – Pay attention to where people are over-functioning or disappearing; small interventions can prevent burnout.

THE LEADER WHO PROVES THAT COMMITMENT CREATES MOMENTUM

Anya Loh

Head HR, Watson-Marlow Fluid Technology Solutions



Anya Loh demonstrates that wellbeing isn't a seasonal initiative – it's a cultural commitment that requires constant reinforcement, creative engagement, and genuine organizational investment.



The Simple Reset

Anya's personal practice is refreshingly straightforward: she goes for a run and spends time with her kids to recharge. These aren't elaborate routines – they're grounded, accessible practices that create the space she needs to lead effectively across the entire APAC region.



By having them write on the whiteboard, open for all to see, we were part of the initiative to hold each other accountable

Public Commitment, Real Results

During the Mental Health and Well-Being Month, Anya's team created an online whiteboard where colleagues committed publicly to one thing they'd do for their health and wellbeing. While many set lofty goals, some kept to them for a month and beyond.

The results were tangible: colleagues slimmed down and sustained their commitment beyond the initial month. One colleague actually stopped smoking due to the commitment he made. **"By having them write on the whiteboard, open for all to see, we were part of the initiative to hold each other accountable,"** she explains.

The underlying philosophy is simple but powerful: a healthy mindset and body naturally lead to healthy mental wellbeing.

Bottom-Up Innovation

Anya's remit covers the whole of APAC – a region that's definitely very diverse, covering workforces across generations. Her approach challenges top-down program design. Initiatives are usually bottoms-up instead of top-down. They appoint Engagement Champions across their 13 APAC locations, and the champions initiate activities that would be well received by employees. This ensures relevance, ownership, and cultural fit rather than one-size-fits-all mandates from headquarters.

Positioning for Buy-In

Anya is thankful that her leaders are very supportive of the initiatives they put forth.



It's about identifying gaps and positioning the initiatives we believe would be good for our employees in a way the business can understand and relate to. Ultimately, we need to know that our leaders are employees too – if they see the initiatives as benefiting them, the buy-in would definitely be easier

Leading by Example

If Anya could mentor one emerging leader on sustaining team mental health, her lesson is clear: lead by example.



The team thrives or dives with the leader. When we have a leader who does not work till late and sends emails on weekends or in the wee hours of the morning, the team would be less stressed and more balanced in their work as well.

Leadership behavior sets the permission structure for the entire team's approach to work-life boundaries.

Culture, Not Campaign

Anya's most important insight challenges how organizations typically approach mental wellbeing: it's not just a day nor a month – it has to be a culture and lifestyle.

Companies often focus on it for a season and then forget about it after. But when colleagues face challenges and difficulties, they need to know where to get support and help. Most often such conditions and mindsets are quite negative and downward spiraling. The Asian mindset often deems these as negative or weak, and people put up a front.

“However, if the message on well-being is constantly being shared and widely acknowledged and accepted, then it's easier for colleagues to step forth and be open to share that they are not in the right place and need help. This I feel is more important and should be embraced by companies.”

This insight captures something fundamental: mental health support can't be performative or seasonal. It must be woven into daily organizational life so deeply that seeking help feels normal, not exceptional.

What Can We Learn From Anya Loh's Leadership?

1

Public Commitment Drives Accountability – Visible goal-setting creates peer support and sustains behavior change beyond initial enthusiasm.

2

Signal Value Through Action – Additional wellbeing days, comprehensive EAP programs, and leadership support demonstrate organizational commitment more powerfully than any policy statement.

3

Empower Local Champions – Bottom-up initiatives driven by engagement champions across locations ensure cultural relevance and employee ownership.

4

Lead by Example on Boundaries – When leaders respect work-life boundaries and avoid after-hours emails, teams naturally follow, creating healthier, more balanced work cultures.

5

Culture Over Campaign – Mental wellbeing must be continuously reinforced, widely acknowledged, and deeply embedded in organizational life – not treated as a seasonal initiative that fades after the awareness month ends.

THE LEADER WHO CREATES SPACE FOR CONVERSATIONS

Binesh Menon

Director Learning & Organization Development, Emerson



Binesh Menon has built his leadership philosophy on something deceptively simple: **the transformative power of just being heard.**



When Walking Becomes Strategy

In Singapore's urban landscape, he's found that movement creates the space thinking needs. Binesh's personal wellbeing practice centers on regular long mindful walks that help him declutter and ground his thoughts.

These walks aren't about fitness – they're about mental reset, reflecting on priorities, and approaching work challenges with greater clarity and focus.

The Human Math of ROI

Binesh encountered a team member dealing with serious illness in their immediate family. By showing empathy and offering flexibility, the results went beyond humanitarian – there was a noticeable increase in the employee's commitment and overall performance.

This experience reinforced what data often misses: compassion compounds. His view on business impact is refreshingly straightforward:



At the end of the day, a business is all about ROI. When the returns on wellbeing initiatives surpass the investments made, that alone makes a compelling case for their continuation and expansion.

Inclusion as Default, Not Addition

For Singapore's diverse workforce, Binesh ensures all events and initiatives are planned as inclusively as possible. Often this means running multiple initiatives concurrently to address varied preferences and needs effectively.

It's not about finding the one perfect solution – it's about creating options that respect differences.

The Universal Need

Binesh wants one misconception to disappear:



There is a misconception that mental health support is only relevant for a select few individuals. In reality, every employee benefits from attention to their mental wellbeing, and it should be considered a universal workplace priority."

This perspective shift – from selective intervention to universal support – transforms how organizations design their approaches.

The Underrated Skill

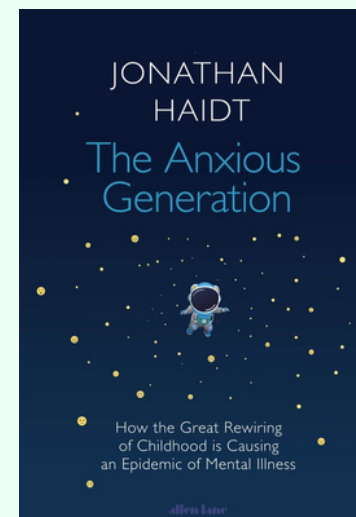
His closing insight names something most leaders overlook:

"One of the most underrated skills in supporting workplace wellbeing is the power of listening. Simply creating space for employees to be heard can have a profound impact on engagement, trust, and overall mental health."

In a world obsessed with solutions and interventions, Binesh reminds us that sometimes the most powerful thing you can offer is presence and attention.

Learning from Modern Pressures

His recommended resource, **The Anxious Generation** by **Jonathan Haidt**, helped him better understand the pressures faced by modern employees – particularly younger generations navigating unprecedented technological and social complexity. This understanding has informed his approach to fostering resilience and support in the workplace, acknowledging that today's stressors are fundamentally different from previous generations'.



What Can We Learn From Binesh Menon's Leadership?

1

Listen to Understand – Sometimes the most impactful wellbeing intervention is simply creating space for employees to be heard.

2

Compassion Compounds – Flexible, empathetic responses to personal challenges boost both human trust and organizational performance.

3

Inclusion as Default – Design initiatives that respect diverse needs and preferences, rather than chasing a single “perfect” solution.

THE ONE WHO PROVES THAT BIG CHANGES DON'T NEED BIG BUDGETS

Dawne Lee

**Strengths Coach with
5+ years experience**

Dawne Lee's experience as a team lead demonstrates something revolutionary: positive culture doesn't require elaborate programs – it requires intentionality and constant attention.



The €1.1 Million Story

Leveraging a Strengths-based approach, Dawne focused on allowing each team member's strengths to show up and become a positive force for the team.

The results were extraordinary: the lowest team turnover and the highest revenue beyond projections – to the tune of €1.1 million. Team members were allocated projects based on their strengths and provided opportunities to showcase what they did best. What makes this remarkable is that Dawne implemented this approach without any formal framework or training.

“

The approach I took by leading with Strengths was something I did without the framework & knowledge – it was pure intentionality

Positive Culture by Design

After leaving her organizational role, Dawne became a Strengths coach, now teaching others what she once practiced instinctively.

Her core message challenges the assumption that culture change requires significant investment:



Positive culture is something that doesn't require big budgets, it does, however, require intentionality and constant attention."

This insight liberates leaders who feel constrained by resources. The most powerful interventions – recognizing individual strengths, allocating work that energizes people, creating space for talents to flourish – cost nothing but awareness and commitment. Dawne's story proves that when you help people bring their best selves to work, business outcomes and human flourishing aren't competing priorities – they're natural companions.

What Can We Can Learn From Dawne Lee?

1

Intentionality Over Budget – Positive culture thrives on deliberate attention, not expensive programs.

2

Play to Strengths – Align team members' work with their natural strengths to unlock both engagement and performance.

3

Small Acts, Big Impact – Simple interventions like recognizing talent and creating space for it can drive extraordinary results.

4

Culture Fuels Business – Helping people bring their best selves to work naturally boosts outcomes—human flourishing and business success go hand in hand.

THE LEADER WHO CHAMPIONS GROWTH OVER PERFECTION

Deepali Jain

Global HR Leader, Coach & Speaker

Deepali brings a growth mindset to workplace wellbeing that has shaped successful transformations across 11 APAC markets.



The Space Between Perfection and Learning

Deepali protects her non-negotiable pockets of space – whether with her children, in meditation, or quiet reflection. But what truly defines her approach is a fundamental mindset shift:

This philosophy extends to how she leads teams through change. During a major APAC transformation program, the instinct was to push harder on metrics. But Deepali realized the pressure was wearing teams down. She shifted the rhythm: **short check-ins, celebrating small wins, creating space for people to voice concerns.**

“

I also practice a growth mindset, reminding myself perfection isn't the goal – learning is. This mindset shift fuels clarity and energy.

When Culture Shifts Everything

The results of that rhythm change were undeniable – higher engagement, smoother collaboration across markets, and milestone delivery with stronger buy-in. It proved that how you pursue goals matters as much as the goals themselves.

Her insight on visible leadership captures years of experience:



The key is to start with visible leadership behaviors that show people wellbeing is valued. Once you build that culture of care, any investment you make later – whether it's in wellness apps, coaching, or structured programs – has a much higher chance of sticking.

AI as Thoughtful Enabler

Deepali sees AI's potential to transform workplace wellbeing if applied thoughtfully. It can personalize learning journeys around resilience and stress management, or provide micro-break nudges during the workday. It can help leaders spot early patterns of burnout or disengagement – while ensuring privacy and ethics are respected.

"For me, AI should be seen as an enabler that frees up human capacity for the deeper, more empathetic connections that truly drive wellbeing," she explains.

The Free Interventions That Work

Her budget wisdom challenges assumptions about what wellbeing requires: Under significant budget constraints, she gave managers permission to have honest conversations about workload and stress.



I often remind leaders that wellbeing doesn't have to begin with expensive platforms. Some of the most impactful interventions I've seen have been simple, human, and cost-free.

Another practice - 'meeting-free hours' during the week - cost nothing but improved productivity because people felt trusted to manage their energy.

"This cost nothing, but feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and productivity improved because people felt trusted to manage their energy."

Deepali's leadership demonstrates that a growth mindset isn't just personal philosophy - it's organizational strategy. When perfection stops being the standard and learning becomes the goal, space opens for both innovation and humanity.

What Can We Learn From Deepali's Leadership?

1

Prioritize Growth Over Perfection – Focus on learning and progress rather than flawless execution to sustain energy and clarity.

2

Lead Through Rhythm and Visibility – Short check-ins, celebrating small wins, and modeling care build a culture where wellbeing sticks.

3

Leverage AI Thoughtfully – Use technology to enable personalized learning, micro-breaks, and early burnout detection without compromising ethics.

4

Free Interventions Can Work Wonders – Simple, human actions like honest workload conversations and meeting-free hours improve trust, engagement, and productivity.

THE LEADER WHO FINDS MAGIC IN SMALL GESTURES

Emily Draycott-Jones

CHRO, Digital Edge DC



Emily Draycott-Jones has discovered that the most successful team initiatives often start with small, intentional actions that create cultures of care and efficiency.



The Details That Reveal Everything

Emily's approach is beautifully practical. Opening the space for support before small issues become crises.

She advocates resetting your calendar to default to 25 or 50-minute meetings. This gives people time to breathe between calls, grab coffee, or prepare for the next discussion – improving productivity for everyone. It's a tiny adjustment with outsized impact.

“

Something as simple as saying "hi" to everyone can help you notice when a colleague isn't quite themselves.

Technology for Consideration

Using the "send later" function for emails ensures you can clear your to-do list without burdening others with after-hours notifications. This small habit shows respect for boundaries while maintaining your own workflow.

Data as Early Warning System

Emily believes in letting data guide interventions.

Spotting who hasn't taken annual leave or who is consistently first in and last out can help uncover hidden stressors and prompt timely support. These patterns often reveal struggles people won't voice directly.

What makes Emily's approach distinctive is its accessibility.

She doesn't advocate for complex programs or sophisticated systems. Instead, she shows how attention to small details – greetings, meeting design, email timing, leave patterns – creates the foundation for genuine care. It's wellbeing through a thousand small choices, each one signaling that people matter.



What Can We Learn From Emily Draycott-Jones's Leadership?

1

Notice the Small Details – Simple gestures, like greeting colleagues, can reveal hidden stress and create early support opportunities.

2

Design Meetings Thoughtfully – Shorter meetings with built-in breaks improve focus, productivity, and mental breathing space.

3

Respect Boundaries Through Technology – Tools like “send later” for emails help maintain workflow without overloading others after hours.

4

Use Data as an Early Warning System – Track patterns like unused leave or extended hours to identify stress before it escalates.

THE LEADER WHO TURNS EMPLOYEE CARE INTO ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

Hong Siu Ming Cen

**Managing Director & CHRO,
Fullerton Fund Management**



Hong Siu Ming Cen has mastered something many wellbeing advocates struggle with: **translating human needs into business imperatives.**



The Discipline of Disconnection

Cen's personal practice is straightforward:

Regular exercise and disconnecting from work at least two hours before sleep – no emails, no work-related activity.

This boundary isn't luxury; it's operational discipline that enables next-day performance.

When Sabbaticals Save Talent

Fullerton Fund Management's approach to retention demonstrates the ROI of genuine support. By offering sabbatical leave to burnt-out employees, they retained key talent. When these employees returned, flight or fight risks dropped, engagement climbed, and overall team morale improved significantly.

The math was simple: the cost of temporary absence was far less than the cost of turnover, knowledge loss, and rehiring. But more importantly, it signaled that the organization valued people beyond their immediate output.

Beyond Programs to Culture

Cen wants one myth eliminated:



Many people still think that mental wellbeing is about implementing EAPs, 'lunch and learn' sessions, or offering free counseling sessions to employees.

In reality, mental health support requires ongoing, proactive engagement and a culture that normalizes checking in, seeking help, and practicing preventive wellbeing measures.

This perspective shifts the conversation from episodic interventions to continuous culture.

Data-Driven Problem Solving

His advice on budget constraints reflects strategic thinking:



We should not create solutions to look for problems. Problem statements should first be established and understood through a data-driven approach: what is happening, how it is affecting the organization, and what needs to be done to turn the situation around and achieve outcomes.

Speaking Leadership's Language

Cen's closing wisdom is tactical and essential:



Communicate about wellbeing in the language of business. Leaders should connect mental health initiatives to concrete business challenges, demonstrating how addressing wellbeing can directly improve performance and outcomes.

This translation capability – moving fluidly between human needs and business metrics – makes Cen effective where others flounder. He doesn't choose between compassion and performance; he shows how they enable each other.

What Can We Learn From Hong Siu Ming Cen's Leadership?

1

Disconnection is Discipline – Regular exercise and unplugging from work before sleep boosts performance and resilience.

2

Sabbaticals Retain Talent – Supporting employees through burnout with sabbaticals reduces turnover and signals genuine care.

3

Culture Trumps Programs – Ongoing engagement and normalization of wellbeing matter more than episodic initiatives or perks.

4

Speak Business, Show Impact – Frame mental wellbeing initiatives in terms of performance and outcomes to gain leadership buy-in.

THE LEADER WHO TRANSFORMS QUIET STRENGTH INTO ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Jayita Roy

**Founder, Leadership Mentor &
Coach**

Jayita Roy has built her practice on a powerful insight: the strongest leaders aren't the ones who pretend to be superhuman – they're the ones willing to be authentically human.



Guarding Inner Quiet as Strategy

For Jayita, protecting mental wellbeing isn't optional anymore – it's operational. She learned the hard way that without boundaries, she runs on empty, and when drained, she can't give anything of value.

Now, she weaves small pauses into her day, blocking "me-time" in her calendar as seriously as client meetings. Sometimes that means learning something new, sometimes journaling, and other times simply doing nothing – what Italians call *dolce far niente*. Combined with regular Pilates and gym sessions that keep her grounded physically, these rituals provide the reset she needs to show up fully.

"It's the little rituals that give me a reset," she explains.

"They help me recharge and come back clearer."

When Visibility Creates Safety

In her corporate HR leadership, Jayita discovered that rolling out Employee Assistance Programs wasn't enough by itself. The real shift came when leaders started talking about these programs openly, using them themselves, and showing that seeking support takes strength, not weakness.

"That kind of visibility made people feel safe enough to take the first step," she reflects. In her coaching today, she sees the same pattern with busy professionals: when life gets hectic, wellbeing is the first thing to go. But she's learned that even 20 minutes to pause, catch your breath, or sit quietly can shift how you feel and show up.



Performance isn't about pushing harder – it's about workplaces remembering there's a human being behind the job title.

Psychological Safety as Business Lever

During a major APAC transformation project, Jayita noticed many people held back from raising risks because they worried about being judged. Not surprisingly, the early stages didn't go well.

Working with managers to model vulnerability and invite open conversations changed everything. Issues surfaced earlier, collaboration improved, and the project ran more smoothly with fewer delays. What began as a wellbeing focus ended up driving stronger business outcomes.

She sees the same lesson in her coaching. One client – a quiet mid-career leader – was always available, running on empty, and her team carried that same stress. As she started to set boundaries, block off no-meeting time, stop sending late-night emails, and show up more fully in one-to-ones, things shifted. Within months, her team's energy lifted, engagement went up, and she herself felt lighter.



When leaders make mental wellbeing a priority – by building safety, setting limits, or modeling balance – performance doesn't drop. It actually gets better.

Leading With Humanity

If Jayita had to name one lesson about team mental health, it's this: **the strongest teams are the ones where leaders create psychological safety by being real, not by pretending to be superhuman.**

In her career across India and APAC, she saw too many leaders try to be perfect, always strong, never tired. But that creates distance. When leaders allow themselves to be real – admitting they don't have all the answers, sharing their own challenges, showing vulnerability – it signals to the team that it's safe for them to do the same. Now, in her work with quiet, introverted mid-career women, she sees the impact every day. The moment they stop chasing an image of the "ideal leader" and start leading authentically, their teams relax, open up, and perform better.

"Because when a leader is willing to be human, the whole team flourishes."

The Moments That Matter Most

One thing Jayita has learned is that mental wellbeing at work doesn't come from big initiatives. It often comes from the smallest signals.

During her corporate HR days, people rarely talked about the wellness programs they rolled out. What they remembered was whether their manager respected their time, whether a leader really listened, or whether they felt safe admitting they were having a hard day. Those everyday choices mattered more than any formal program.

“

**Mental wellbeing isn't built through policies or posters.
It's built in the moments, in how we show up for each
other.**



What Can We Learn From Jayita Roy's Leadership?

1

Guard Your Inner Quiet – Protect non-negotiable personal time for reflection and renewal; boundaries enable sustainable performance, not hinder it.

2

Psychological Safety Drives Results – Creating environments where people can be real and set boundaries doesn't hurt performance – it strengthens it.

3

Menu Over Mandate – Offer diverse wellbeing options that respect individual preferences, cultures, and communication styles rather than imposing one-size-fits-all solutions.

4

Mindset Before Money – The most impactful interventions often cost nothing: empathy, boundary-setting, honest conversations, and modeling healthy behavior signal care more than any program budget.

THE LEADER WHO MASTERS THE ART OF “DELIBERATE PAUSE”

Kathy Teoh

Global Inclusion Leader & Workplace Change & Transformation Coach, Acradis



Kathy Teoh combines governance expertise with deeply personal wellbeing practices to lead with clarity, presence, and impact. Her approach to leadership demonstrates that sometimes the most powerful action is knowing when to stop.



When Everything Spirals

In moments of overwhelm – when emails pile up, decisions demand immediacy, and global responsibilities converge – Kathy has mastered an elegantly simple yet profoundly effective practice: the deliberate pause.

She slows her breathing, tunes into her senses, and incorporates gentle movement – stretching or walking – to reset her perspective.

In these moments, reaction gives way to response, and urgency is transformed into thoughtful action. In a culture obsessed with speed and constant output,

Kathy reminds us that stopping can be the most productive act of all.

Pausing as Leadership

For Kathy, pausing is not a luxury or a weakness – it’s a leadership superpower. Across her roles in global inclusion and board governance, she has observed a critical truth: the deliberate pause creates clarity, strengthens decision-making, and models emotional regulation for teams. Her practice shows that presence, awareness, and reflection are as crucial to performance as any strategy or KPI.



The deliberate pause creates clarity, strengthens decision-making, and models emotional regulation for teams.

Making Pause Practical

Kathy also integrates structured pauses into her organizational routines. Whether it's encouraging micro-breaks for her teams, modeling mindfulness before high-stakes meetings, or ensuring reflection time during strategic planning sessions, she operationalizes pause so it becomes a cultural habit rather than a personal indulgence.

What Can We Learn From Kathy Teoh's Leadership?

1

Master the Deliberate Pause – When stress peaks, slowing down before responding helps transform reactive decisions into thoughtful ones.

2

Lead by Example – Modeling pauses for your teams encourages healthier, more reflective workplace behaviors.

3

Reframe Urgency – Not every task needs an immediate response; discernment in action improves outcomes and reduces burnout.



THE LEADER WHO PROVES THAT INVESTMENT BUILDS RESILIENCE

Kavitha V. M. Vijayaratnam

Head of HR, Zurich Insurance



Kavitha Vijayaratnam has implemented comprehensive wellbeing programs that directly demonstrate the link between people investment and business performance.



Morning Rituals That Set the Tone

Kavitha starts early with mindfulness and deep breathing, then listens to motivational podcasts or reads positive quotes during her commute. These rituals aren't indulgence – they set a strong tone for her day, creating the mental and emotional foundation for leading others effectively.

Putting Investment Where Values Are

Zurich Singapore reinforced their wellbeing commitment by enhancing mental health benefits, sustaining hybrid work arrangements, and introducing Wellness Days. These initiatives boosted morale, engagement, and productivity measurably.



For me, it proves a simple truth: when we invest in people's wellbeing, we build sustainable performance and long-term business resilience.

AI as Productivity Liberator

Kavitha sees AI's transformative potential for workplace wellbeing through productivity gains that create personal time and reduce stress.

Her HR team implemented an HR chatbot providing 24/7 support to employees - answering queries instantly and freeing the team to focus on strategic initiatives. This improved service quality while reducing stress among HR staff by eliminating repetitive tasks.

The result: better support for employees and healthier, more engaged HR professionals.

Authenticity as Foundation

Her closing wisdom emphasizes genuineness



Start by being authentic in your intentions. When we say we care, it must be reflected in our actions.

Begin by understanding your team at a personal level; i.e., what matters to them and the challenges they face. Most impactful initiatives start with empathy, open conversations, and simple gestures that make people feel valued.

Kavitha demonstrates that wellbeing isn't about choosing between people and performance - it's understanding they're inseparable. Investment in one naturally strengthens the other.

What Can We Learn From Kavitha's Leadership?

1

Start With Your Own Rituals – Mindfulness, deep breathing, and positive routines set the emotional and mental foundation for effective leadership.

2

Invest in People to Build Resilience – Comprehensive wellbeing programs, hybrid work flexibility, and wellness initiatives drive engagement, morale, and sustainable performance.

3

Use AI to Free Human Capacity – Tools like HR chatbots can reduce repetitive work, enhance service, and give teams more time for strategic, high-impact efforts.

4

Lead With Authenticity – Genuine care, open conversations, and empathy create trust and make wellbeing initiatives meaningful.

5

Performance and Wellbeing Go Hand in Hand – Supporting employees holistically isn't a trade-off – it strengthens both people and business outcomes.

THE LEADER WHO PRIORITISES BUILDING SAFE SPACES

Kim Ng

Global Associate Director, Total Rewards, Aspire



Kim Ng has discovered a deceptively simple truth that transforms leadership: the most powerful intervention often isn't solving problems – it's creating the space for others to find their own solutions.



The Minute That Changes Everything

Kim's daily practice is small yet profoundly effective.

He intentionally carves out as many single minutes of quiet as possible – away from emails, notifications, and demands –

to breathe, reflect, and express gratitude. These tiny pauses aren't just personal rituals; they are resilience builders, mental resets, and emotional calibrators that allow him to show up fully for his team.

Over time, he's realized that cultivating this emotional capacity isn't optional – it's essential for leading in a high-pressure, complex global environment.

The Transformative Power of Safe Spaces

Kim's most significant leadership evolution came when he redefined what his role truly required.



As a leader, I used to think I needed to solve every problem, he admits. I've since learned that often, the most powerful thing I can do is simply listen.

By intentionally creating safe spaces for open communication, his team members feel empowered to access their own insights and solutions.

The pressure to have all the answers is removed, and innovation, autonomy, and engagement flourish naturally.

Kim's insight challenges a dominant narrative in corporate culture: that leadership is measured by how many problems you solve. Instead, he demonstrates that leadership can be measured by the clarity, confidence, and independence you cultivate in others. Presence, attention, and deliberate listening become the instruments of influence, making every interaction a subtle yet profound intervention in team wellbeing.

What Can We Learn From Kim Ng's Leadership?

1

Safe Spaces Empower Teams – Creating environments where people feel heard enables autonomy, creativity, and engagement.

2

Listening Beats Solving – Sometimes the most impactful action is presence, not providing answers.

3

Small Pauses Build Resilience – Even brief moments of reflection or gratitude equip leaders to respond thoughtfully and support their teams effectively.



THE LEADER WHO SCALES CARE WITHOUT LOSING THE HUMAN TOUCH

Krystal Tang

Director, Wellbeing Solutions, AON



Krystal Tang demonstrates that mental health support can be both systematic and deeply human. She combines structured processes with empathy to create scalable, meaningful wellbeing interventions across diverse organizations.



The Daily Disconnect

Krystal begins with herself. Her personal practice centers on daily disconnection – whether for reflection, mindfulness, or exercise. These intentional breaks recharge her, sharpen her focus, and strengthen her resilience.

By modeling this practice, she sets a standard:

“

Quality engagement at work comes from showing up fully, not endlessly pushing forward.

Turning Crisis Into Care

A defining moment in Krystal's career came when a client lost an employee. The team was shaken, morale dipped, and stress levels spiked. Rather than waiting for burnout to escalate, Krystal activated proactive support: mental health first aid, EAP check-ins, and on-site psychologist consultations.

The crisis became an opportunity to demonstrate authentic organizational care, reinforcing trust and boosting productivity.

Building Psychological Safety at Scale

Krystal believes that wellbeing must be embedded, not siloed.

Mental health first aid training equips employees to support each other, creating a culture where conversations about mental health are normalized. By embedding support into everyday work life, teams become more resilient, communicative, and connected.

AI as Proactive Partner

Krystal's team harnesses AI to proactively support mental wellbeing through intelligent tools offering both personalized and scalable solutions. They partner with AI-driven EAP providers that offer instant, confidential support, with platforms equipped to recognize early signs of stress or burnout based on language patterns or self-reported metrics. AI-powered analytics help monitor wellbeing trends – always with privacy safeguards – allowing identification of emerging challenges or at-risk groups and tailored interventions accordingly.

Cultural Adaptation Through Listening

For Singapore's diverse workforce, Krystal begins by actively listening – using wellbeing surveys to identify unique preferences and challenges faced by different communities. Programs are intentionally flexible, offering workshops, awareness sessions, and resource materials in multiple languages and formats. They celebrate cultural and religious observances, integrating them into wellbeing activities.

Making the Budget Case

Her approach to financial constraints reframes mental wellbeing as strategic investment with measurable impact on productivity, retention, and organizational culture.

Start by leveraging data: pilot low-cost initiatives and track outcomes, demonstrating clear ROI through metrics like reduced turnover, improved engagement scores, or decreased absenteeism.

Seek partnerships with local mental health organizations or utilize digital platforms offering scalable, cost-effective support. **"Many high-impact interventions, such as peer support networks, mental health days, or manager training, require modest resources but yield substantial results,"** she notes.

Leadership Through Vulnerability

Krystal's closing wisdom emphasizes modeling: "Model vulnerability and openness yourself. Leadership sets the emotional tone



When you demonstrate that it's okay to acknowledge stress, seek support, or prioritize self-care, you give your team permission to do the same.

Her surprise insight captures something profound:

"One surprising insight I've discovered is that moments of genuine connection often arise from the smallest gestures – a quick check-in, a shared laugh, or simply acknowledging someone's effort. Sometimes, the greatest lesson is that wellbeing doesn't always require grand, sweeping changes – often, it's found in the everyday moments where we choose to see and support each other as whole human beings."

What Can We Learn From Krystal Tang's Leadership?

1

Scale Care Without Losing Humanity – Structured systems and empathy can coexist, enabling meaningful support for large, diverse teams.

2

Proactive Intervention Beats Reaction – Anticipate stress, activate resources early, and normalize psychological safety before crises escalate.

3

Small Gestures Make Big Impact – Daily check-ins, vulnerability, and acknowledgment of effort create trust and connection that sustain long-term wellbeing.

THE LEADER WHO TRANSLATES PERSONAL RHYTHM INTO TEAM RESILIENCE

Larissa Murmann

Digital CHRO, Unilever International



Serving dual roles as Digital CHRO for Unilever International and CEO of InfinAlte Frequency, Larissa Murmann merges cutting-edge digital innovation with deeply human leadership. Her secret? She understands that sustaining team performance starts with tuning the energy - and wellbeing - of the leader first.



Sunrise and Sunset Rituals

Each morning, Larissa practices a sunrise meditation that grounds her in how she wants to show up. Evenings close with reflection and release.

These bookend rituals create containment - a deliberate start and close that prevents work from bleeding into all hours and consciousness.

“

Staying intentional, connected, and growth-oriented allows me to lead with calm instead of pressure.

Recharge Days That Actually Recharge

At Unilever International, one of the most impactful initiatives was Recharge Day.

Once per quarter, the entire company took a collective day off to mentally disconnect. Knowing that colleagues and clients were also offline gave people genuine peace of mind.

When year-end results allowed, this extended into a full Recharge Week.



These weren't just holidays – they were intentional pauses that created space for real renewal

Since introducing Recharge Days and Focus Fridays (no internal meetings – people can recharge, learn, upskill, spend time with family, or focus deeply on client work), there's been a clear impact on wellbeing and performance. Some leaders feared performance would dip, but the opposite happened. There was no negative impact.

Your Energy Sets the Team's Frequency

Larissa's closing wisdom captures something most leadership books miss:

"The most important lesson is that sustaining mental health starts with the leader's own energy – you set the frequency for your team. You must take responsibility for the wellbeing of your group by reflecting not only on how you act day to day, but also on how you manage your own state."

She emphasizes monitoring how teams are truly doing:

Are they taking time off? Showing signs of stress? Do seemingly small issues feel overwhelming?



"A sensitive leader empathizes with these signals and creates space for care and renewal."

Larissa's dual role in traditional corporate leadership and innovative AI ventures gives her a unique perspective on how technology and humanity intersect. She doesn't see them as competing forces – she sees digital innovation as a tool to create more space for what matters most: genuine human connection and renewal.

What Can We Learn From Larissa Murmann's Leadership?

1

Lead With Your Energy – A leader's state of mind directly influences team wellbeing and performance.

2

Intentional Pauses Prevent Burnout – Structured rituals and collective recharge initiatives create sustainable focus and engagement.

3

Technology as an Enabler, Not a Replacement – Digital tools can free space for human connection and growth rather than adding pressure.

4

Small, Repeated Actions Compound – Daily mindfulness, reflection, and Focus Fridays may seem minor individually, but their cumulative effect sustains energy, morale, and innovation.

THE LEADER WHO CHAMPIONS HOLISTIC INTEGRATION

Meenakshree Nanda

Senior Wellbeing, Inclusion & Diversity Leader, APAC

Meenakshree Nanda brings a regional perspective to workplace mental health, understanding that true wellbeing requires addressing interconnected dimensions.



The Small Joys That Sustain

Meenakshree's personal practice centres on meaningful pauses: listening to music, writing, chatting with her child, or sipping matcha. "These small joys go a long way in protecting my mental wellbeing," she shares.

In leadership roles spanning continents, she's learned that sustainability comes from these accumulated moments of presence and pleasure.

“

These small joys
go a long way in
protecting my
mental wellbeing

Building Infrastructure That Reaches

A major milestone under her leadership was the successful launch of an EAP across the APAC region, ensuring colleagues had confidential support in times of need. She spearheaded the design and rollout strategy, collaborating with internal and external experts to strengthen resilience-building initiatives and securing visible endorsement from senior leaders.

She also led the integration of an app offering self-help content, coaching, and 1:1 clinical psychologist sessions – expanding accessibility across the region’s diverse workforce. By introducing a structured usage tracking system, she enabled the organization to move from reactive wellbeing interventions to a proactive, data-driven approach to employee support.

Starting From Real Needs

Her budget advice is grounded in market understanding:



It is important to position mental wellbeing as an important dimension of overall wellbeing for our workforce.

For anyone who would like to start from scratch, it is important to map out the real needs of your target audience,

followed by thorough market research if external partners are necessary or if this can be managed in-house to start with.

The Interconnected Whole

Meenakshree's surprise insight challenges siloed approaches:

"Wellbeing initiatives are often addressed adequately, but it is equally important to emphasize a holistic approach. Mental wellbeing is interconnected with social, financial, and physical dimensions, and a truly supportive program should address all these aspects."

This system's thinking prevents organizations from treating mental health as an isolated issue when it's actually woven through every aspect of employee experience.

What Can We Learn From Meenakshree Nanda's Leadership?

1

Small, Intentional Practices Sustain Leaders and Teams – Regular personal moments of presence and joy create resilience that scales into leadership effectiveness.

2

Wellbeing Is Infrastructure, Not an Event – Build systems, tools, and data-driven processes that integrate wellbeing into everyday organizational life.

3

Start From Real Needs – Design interventions grounded in genuine employee requirements rather than assumptions or trends.

4

Think Holistically – Mental wellbeing is inseparable from social, physical, and financial dimensions; addressing all creates a stronger, more resilient workforce.

THE LEADER WHO VALUES PRESENCE OVER PERFECTION

Pauline Loo

Senior Vice President, Human Resource, Nippon Sanso Holdings Corporation



NIPPON SANSO HOLDINGS

Pauline Loo brings quiet strength to wellbeing leadership, emphasizing that meaningful support often comes through consistent presence rather than flawless programs.



The Quiet Ritual

Pauline's personal practice centers on protected daily time to just be still. Whether walking in the park, journaling beside her cat, or reflecting on scripture - these moments give her clarity, balance, and emotional bandwidth.

In a role spanning multiple countries and cultures, this stillness provides the grounding that enables everything else.

Creating Intentional Safety

One of Nippon Sanso's most effective initiatives has been creating intentional space for psychological safety. Employees know they can speak openly without fear of judgment. Multiple channels support this: engagement surveys, regular hybrid meetings, check-ins with new hires, and peer support networks like their HR Community of Practice and Next Generation Leaders program.

After rolling out a high-pressure transformation project, they introduced structured post-implementation check-ins with HR and the workforce. Instead of pushing harder, they paused to prioritize wellbeing – adding reflective sessions and weekly project meetings.

The result: improved morale, higher-quality deliverables, and stronger stakeholder relationships.

AI as Quiet Champion

At Nippon Sanso Holdings Corporation, they're embracing AI not just as a workplace innovation tool but as a quiet champion for wellbeing – especially mental wellbeing.

In Japan, AI-powered health systems allow employees to monitor their physical and mental health at a glance, supported by wearable devices and predictive analytics. This technological support reduces the burden of tracking while providing early warning signals that enable proactive intervention.

Flexibility as Respect

For Singapore's diverse workforce, Pauline recognizes that one-size-fits-all approaches simply don't work. **"Singapore's workforce is beautifully diverse – spanning cultures, generations, and work styles,"** she notes.

What's been effective is offering six flexible work arrangements that employees can choose from based on what resonates with them, plus inclusive communication respecting different languages, beliefs, and scheduling considerations.

Starting Small, Proving Impact

Her budget wisdom emphasizes beginning with what's achievable: **"Budget constraints are real, but they should not be the end of the conversation** – they should be the beginning of a smarter one. What has worked well for me is always starting small and proving impact. Simple HR initiatives like structured check-ins, peer support networks, or wellbeing conversations cost very little but can generate significant insights and improvements in team dynamics."

Permission to Be Human

Pauline's surprise insight captures something transformative:



One insight I have come to value deeply is that sometimes the most powerful wellbeing initiative is simply giving people permission to be human at work - to have off days, to ask for help, and to prioritize their wellbeing without guilt or fear of judgment.

Her closing wisdom emphasizes authentic leadership:



Your presence matters more than your perfection. Teams thrive when leaders show up with empathy, consistency, and a willingness to listen - not just when things are going well, but especially during challenging times.

What Can We Learn From Pauline Loo's Leadership?

1

Presence Trumps Perfection – Consistently showing up, listening, and being empathetic matters more than rolling out flawless programs. Leadership impact is in the steady, human presence.

2

Start Small, Prove Impact – Even low-budget initiatives like structured check-ins, peer support programs, or wellbeing conversations can yield measurable improvements in engagement and team dynamics.

3

Flexibility Demonstrates Respect – Offering employees multiple ways to work and communicating inclusively respects diverse needs, making wellbeing initiatives far more effective.

4

Permission to Be Human – The most transformative wellbeing support may simply be allowing employees to acknowledge limits, ask for help, and prioritize self-care without guilt.

THE LEADER WHO MAKES WELLBEING A PERSONAL MISSION

Priya Tiruviti

Rewards & Performance Lead,
Accenture



Priya Tiruviti has learned that the most effective wellbeing programs feel personal rather than institutional – and that silence often signals the greatest need.



Discipline as Foundation

Priya's personal practice centers on disciplined boundaries. Yoga, reflection, or long phone-free walks act as her reset button.

"When I don't prioritize this, I react instead of lead – and that doesn't serve anyone," she explains.

This self-awareness transforms personal practice into leadership capacity.

Peer-Led Authenticity

What stands out in Priya's experience are peer-led support circles – safe spaces where employees could share or simply listen. Because they weren't top-down programs, they built authentic connections. People felt ownership and trust. **"That's often what wellbeing programs lack,"** Priya notes.

Even before remote work became standard, Accenture introduced flexible working during a demanding transformation project. Instead of productivity falling, engagement scores rose, absenteeism declined, and project delivery accelerated. **"It reinforced for me that wellbeing isn't a 'soft issue' – it directly drives performance."**

Menu Over Mandate

For Singapore's wonderfully diverse workforce, Priya found that one-size-fits-all approaches don't work. What's effective is creating a "menu of choices" – from mindfulness workshops to financial wellbeing sessions to coaching circles.



This way, individuals can choose what resonates with them. Respecting cultural differences and generational preferences is key in making wellbeing relevant here.

AI as Human Amplifier

Priya sees AI as enabler, not replacement. Tools like AI-powered pulse surveys or chatbots can help surface early signals of burnout or disengagement.



But the real value is when leaders act on those insights with empathy. I always stress that AI should make us more human in our approach, not less."

The Story That Sells

Her budget advice is practical and compelling:

"In my experience, the most powerful way to overcome this is to start small, measure impact, and tell the story in business terms. For instance, linking reduced absenteeism or higher retention to a simple initiative creates a compelling case. We are in times where most leaders don't usually resist wellbeing. Show them the data and they're often more supportive than you'd expect."

Living What You Preach

Priya's closing wisdom emphasizes modeling:



Your team watches how you live, not just what you say. If you burn out, push through without rest, or dismiss mental health, they will follow your example. Leading by example, whether that means taking time off, being open about your own struggles, or simply asking 'how are you really doing?' makes all the difference.

Her surprise lesson challenges assumptions about engagement:

"One surprising lesson I've learned is that silence doesn't mean indifference. If employees aren't speaking up about mental health, it doesn't mean they don't need support – sometimes it means they need it most."

What Can We Learn From Priya Tiruviti's Leadership?

1

Wellbeing Works When It Feels Personal – Programs are most effective when employees feel ownership, whether through peer-led circles, choice-based initiatives, or safe spaces for honest sharing.

2

Menu Over Mandate – Offering a variety of wellbeing options respects diverse cultural, generational, and personal preferences, making engagement more meaningful and inclusive.

3

Data-Driven Empathy – Using tools like AI-powered pulse surveys is valuable, but only when insights are paired with empathetic action and human connection.

4

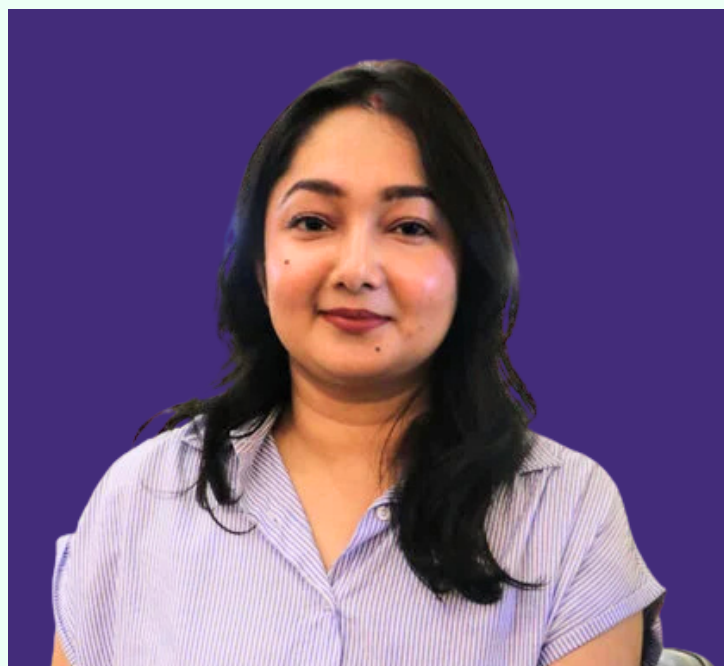
Silence Can Signal Need – Quiet or non-engaged employees may be struggling the most; noticing and responding to subtle cues is critical for effective support.

THE ONE WHO CONSTANTLY BUILDS BRIDGES OF CARE

Rashi Tripathi

Psychotherapist & Victim Care Officer

Rashi Tripathi brings a rare combination of clinical expertise, empathy, and organizational insight to workplace mental health. What sets her apart is an unwavering recognition that those who care for others often need to care for themselves – and that building systems of support for caregivers is not a luxury, but a necessity.



The Community That Sustains Caregivers

Through her work, Rashi discovered a striking truth: **therapists, HR professionals, and frontline supporters often neglect their own mental wellbeing. Burnout can silently erode even the most resilient caregivers.**

To address this, **she co-created a therapist community** – a dedicated, safe space to share challenges, decompress, and recharge. “It has been deeply re-energizing,” she reflects.

This initiative revealed a universal insight: the helpers need help too.

In workplaces, this translates to creating structured support mechanisms for employees whose roles revolve around supporting others – because sustainable care is impossible without replenishing the caregiver.

AI as Early Bridge

Rashi's vision for AI in workplace wellbeing is both practical and visionary. She imagines a scenario where an employee is silently struggling with anxiety before a key presentation. An AI-powered wellbeing platform could detect early signs of stress through mood reports, behavioral cues, or subtle patterns in engagement, and provide personalized coping strategies before the stress escalates.



AI doesn't replace human connection – it acts as an early bridge, she explains.

When combined with empathy, ethical safeguards, and thoughtful integration, technology can reduce stigma, promote psychological safety, and make mental health resources accessible to everyone – not just those actively seeking support.

Integration, Not Isolation

Rashi's dual expertise in clinical practice and organizational consulting gives her a unique lens on wellbeing: professional mental health support and workplace culture aren't separate domains – they are interconnected systems.

She exemplifies a philosophy that is both deeply human and strategically wise: bridging care across people, systems, and technology to make wellbeing accessible, sustainable, and inclusive.

What Can We Learn from Rashi Tripathi?

1

Support the Supporters – Even those whose roles involve caring for others need structured, intentional support to prevent burnout

2

Proactive Tools Amplify Empathy – AI and technology, when used ethically, can act as early bridges to provide timely, personalized mental health support

3

Integrate Care, Don't Isolate It – Workplace wellbeing is most effective when embedded into culture and systems, rather than treated as a standalone program.

THE LEADER WHO LIVES BY THE MANTRA "WORK HARD, PLAY HARDER"

Sajjad Parmar

CEO & Founder of The Talent Accelerator



Sajjad Parmar has built organizational culture on a simple philosophy: genuine support creates the foundation for exceptional performance.



Grounding Through Practice

Sajjad's personal wellbeing centers on non-negotiables:



Daily exercise, prayer, and gratitude. These practices keep him grounded, help him refocus, and remind him of all that's going right. In the chaos of building and leading a company, these anchors provide stability.

Culture as Sacred Trust

The Talent Accelerator lives by "work hard, play harder." Their culture is deeply collaborative and supportive. They celebrate often, play sports together, and Sajjad spends time coaching team members personally.

The result is openness and trust – people feel safe sharing challenges, knowing he'll support them. "That trust is sacred," he emphasizes.

When one team member was going through a tough family situation and struggling at work, Sajjad had an honest conversation and encouraged her to take two weeks of paid leave to focus on herself. When she returned in a much better state, having resolved things at home, her productivity at work rose significantly.

Balancing Diversity with Core Support

For Singapore's diverse workforce, Sajjad believes in balancing varied needs with plans that work for everyone. Lifestyle wellbeing offerings can meet diverse needs through tailored solutions. **"This must be underpinned by a core offering that provides support at a very basic level. This ensures that everyone, despite individual differences, is supported."**

Affordable Solutions Exist

His budget perspective challenges assumptions about cost: **"Wellbeing initiatives are not as expensive as most of us think they are. You can have solutions that you only pay for when they are used, like a subscription model. This ensures that the real needs are met and at a cost that is affordable."** Making leaders understand importance is the starting point

"We must educate and influence the leadership team and get their buy-in,"

Normalizing the Universal

Sajjad wants one myth eliminated:



Most of us struggle with some form of mental health challenge. We need to understand that this condition is normal and is not something to be ashamed about.

This normalization – treating mental health challenges as part of human experience rather than aberration – transforms how organizations approach support.

What Can We Learn From Sajjad Parmar's Leadership?

1

Ground Yourself to Lead Effectively – Personal wellbeing practices like exercise, gratitude, or meditation aren't indulgences; they provide stability and perspective, enabling leaders to show up fully for their teams.

2

Trust and Support Are Culture Catalysts – Genuine care, open conversations, and support for employees during personal challenges build trust, psychological safety, and long-term engagement

3

Balance Diversity with Core Support – While individual needs vary, having a core, universally accessible wellbeing framework ensures every employee feels supported without losing inclusivity

4

Affordable Solutions Can Be Powerful – Wellbeing doesn't require a huge budget; scalable, pay-per-use, or subscription-based interventions can meet real needs effectively.

THE LEADER WHO BELIEVES IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF QUIET IMPROVEMENTS

Saurabh Duggal

Senior Manager of Total Rewards,
Cloudflare



Saurabh Duggal has become a quiet revolutionary in workplace wellbeing. He doesn't just advocate for mental health – he observes, measures, and magnifies its ripple effects, showing that real change often comes in subtle, consistent ways.



The Post-COVID Shift

For Saurabh, the pandemic was a watershed moment. Organizations began to see wellbeing not as a “nice-to-have” but as critical infrastructure.



Post-COVID, budgetary constraints for wellbeing initiatives have become less of an obstacle,” he notes. “Companies now genuinely want to invest in the mental health and wellbeing of their employees, recognizing the long-term benefits for both staff and business outcomes.

This marks a fundamental cultural shift: wellbeing is no longer discretionary – it's essential.

The Power of Quiet Improvements

Saurabh's approach isn't flashy or headline-grabbing; it's the quiet improvements that accumulate into transformative outcomes.

While metrics only tell part of the story, he observes profound qualitative shifts: teams collaborating more smoothly, individuals approaching challenges with renewed energy, and resilience becoming the default response to setbacks.



“Sometimes the most powerful evidence isn’t captured in numbers,” he reflects. “It’s in the energy in the room, the way people support each other, the subtle but consistent improvements that elevate the organization over time.”

From Should We to How Do We Invest

What sets Saurabh apart is his perspective on organizational investment in wellbeing. He sees the evolution from questioning whether to invest, to asking how to invest most effectively.

This mindset represents a maturing of leadership thinking – a recognition that wellbeing initiatives aren't just HR programs but strategic drivers of engagement, productivity, and retention. By focusing on continuous, incremental improvements, he ensures that mental health initiatives become embedded into the organizational DNA rather than treated as episodic interventions.

What Can We Learn From Saurabh Duggal's Leadership?

1

Invest Quietly, Measure Wisely – Not all success is visible in numbers; observing qualitative improvements – team energy, collaboration, and resilience – can signal the real impact of wellbeing initiatives.

2

Wellbeing as Strategic Infrastructure – Treat mental health support not as discretionary but as essential infrastructure that fuels sustainable business outcomes.

3

Small, Consistent Changes Compound – Transformations don't always need grand gestures. Quiet, deliberate improvements, consistently applied, can ripple through an organization and create lasting cultural change.

THE LEADER WHO CREATES RITUALS OF RECOGNITION

Sreejata Bhattacharjee

**Strategic HR Advisor &
Leadership Coach**

Sreejata Bhattacharjee has discovered that wellbeing often flourishes through structured opportunities for connection and celebration.



Coffee with Self

Sreejata schedules weekly "Coffee with Self" to reflect on her actions and learn from them. She also dedicates one evening to music and books – decluttering her mind for the week ahead. These practices create rhythm and renewal, transforming wellbeing from aspiration to routine.

Recognition as Culture Builder

When employees feel supported in their wellbeing, engagement and creativity rise naturally. At her previous organization, they introduced monthly Recognition Rituals and Lunch & Learn sessions. Within months, interactions increased, positivity spread, and people reported greater psychological safety.

These simple structures – regular recognition, learning together over lunch – created permission for connection. They transformed isolated individuals into communities.

AI as Pattern Detector

Sreejata sees AI as an early signal system:

"Like decoding survey results, spotting patterns in engagement, predicting attrition rates and burnout risks that humans may miss. It can personalize learning experiences, nudge healthier habits, or free up time from repetitive admin tasks, allowing people to focus on meaningful, strategic and challenging work."

Wellbeing as Mindset, Not Budget

Her perspective on resources challenges conventional thinking: Wellbeing has always been associated with physical, mental, and emotional health and considered intangible. It is an emotional state linked with organizational relationships, corporate culture, physical health, and overall happiness.



**Wellbeing does not really require an additional budget;
it just needs the mindset and approach the organization
wishes to adopt.**

This reframe liberates leaders who feel resource-constrained – the most powerful interventions aren't purchased but practiced.

What Can We Learn From Sreejata Bhattacharjee's Leadership?

1

Rituals Build Resilience – Structured personal practices create rhythm and renewal, turning wellbeing from a vague aspiration into a sustainable habit.

2

Recognition Fuels Engagement – Simple, consistent opportunities for acknowledgment and connection can significantly boost psychological safety, positivity, and creativity.

3

Wellbeing Is Mindset, Not Budget – Effective mental health support doesn't always require large financial investment; a thoughtful approach, intentional practices, and organizational mindset can drive real impact.

4

Connection Over Complexity – Creating simple, repeatable structures for learning, recognition, and reflection strengthens community and transforms isolated employees into engaged, collaborative teams.

THE LEADER WHO SPEAKS EMPATHY AS FLUENTLY AS DATA

Tan Swee Kiat

Senior Regional Executive, Total
Rewards, Kering



Tan Swee Kiat brings data analytics and genuine care together to design wellbeing strategies that honor both business needs and human complexity.



Movement as Mental Clarity

Swee Kiat's personal practice centers on daily exercise – whether jogging or workouts – to disconnect from work, regulate stress, and recharge.

In total rewards leadership spanning multiple markets, this practice provides the mental clarity essential for strategic thinking.



**Physical activity
clears the mind,
fuels creativity,
and sharpens
decision-making**

Data-Driven Cultural Design

Kering's approach starts by examining workforce demographics and considering how various wellbeing pillars can support their population.

They leverage data analytics tools to dissect populations, providing clearer pictures of how to shape wellbeing strategy while considering factors like life stages.

They draw on multiple data sources including claims data from insurers, working with brokers to discuss how best to support people and achieve a healthy workforce.

Employee

Culture as Foundation

Swee Kiat's budget perspective emphasizes starting at the top:



I believe an organisation's leadership values, the vision of how they want to be positioned, and the EVP is the best place to start from.

This sets the company culture and how senior management behaves, which trickles down to managers and how employees perceive the organisation."

In organizations with culture valuing people, managers aren't shy about checking in or genuinely caring about others. Peers check in to ensure everyone is fine and provide listening ears when needed.

"With the understanding that mental wellbeing is a priority, such initiatives will be well supported by management and employees as it is ingrained in the culture."

The Myth of Willpower

Swee Kiat wants one misconception eliminated: "Mental health issues happen to those who lack willpower or strength." This damaging myth prevents people from seeking help and perpetuates stigma around universal human challenges.

EAP as Self-Discovery Tool

His surprise insight offers practical encouragement:



If your workplace offers an EAP program, give it a shot and speak with the coaches or counsellors. It can be on any topics you wish to discuss, go into these sessions with an open mind, and you may uncover insights about yourself, your behaviours, and your perceptions. The best part - it is confidential.

Creating Safe Spaces

Swee Kiat's closing wisdom names what matters most:

"Be empathetic, create psychological safety, and show genuine care. Leaders who genuinely care about their team's mental wellbeing make a difference, as team members can feel it and this creates a safe space for them to speak openly. Being empathetic is another huge win as we live in a world of constant hustle, and some team members need someone who can listen and understand their struggles."

What Can We Learn from Tan Swee Kiat's Leadership?

1

Empathy as a Strategic Skill – Genuine care isn't just “nice to have”; it builds trust, psychological safety, and creates a culture where employees feel supported to speak openly.

2

Data Meets Human Needs – Combining analytics with empathy allows leaders to design wellbeing strategies that are both impactful and tailored to diverse employee populations.

3

Culture Starts at the Top – Leadership behavior sets the tone. When leaders embody wellbeing priorities, it cascades through managers and employees, making initiatives more effective and sustainable.

THE LEADER WHO NORMALIZES THOSE CONVERSATIONS

Uday Burra

Head of People Care – APJ & India,
Nokia



As Head of People Care for APJ and India at Nokia, Uday Burra brings something essential to workplace mental health: the conviction that conversations about wellbeing should be as normal as discussions about any other aspect of work.



Awareness and Acceptance

Uday's personal practice centers on fundamental acceptance: "Accepting who I am and what I'm feeling, and believing that everything will be alright is my way to begin. Awareness and acceptance – of myself and the moment – are critical for me, as they help me remain balanced and resilient in both personal and professional situations."

This self-acceptance creates the foundation for authentic leadership – you cannot guide others toward something you haven't practiced yourself.



**Accepting who I am and
what I'm feeling, and
believing that
everything will be
alright is my way to
begin.**

Beyond Token Gestures

Regular conversation is key for Uday.



I'm not a fan of token gestures. True progress is when mental wellbeing is treated like physical health - no different from taking time off for the flu.

He's noticed how powerful it is when leaders share their own failure stories. It makes them relatable and creates stronger team connections.

This vulnerability isn't weakness - it's the bridge that allows genuine support to flow

Appearances Deceive

Uday wants one myth eliminated:



Someone who looks okay does not mean they are okay. Appearances can be misleading, and it's important to check in with colleagues and create safe spaces for them to share their true feelings.

This insight challenges the assumption that high performers or seemingly successful people don't need support - often they're the ones struggling most silently.

Budget as Excuse, Not Barrier

His perspective on resources is direct:

"I do not believe budget is the primary barrier to implementing wellbeing initiatives. If leaders truly prioritize mental health, the necessary resources can always be allocated, but more importantly, the conversation about wellbeing must become part of our daily culture and language, rather than just another program."

Guidance Over Grand Gestures

Uday's surprise insight addresses a common leadership challenge:

"I believe most leaders genuinely want to support mental wellbeing, but many struggle because they are unsure how to do it effectively. Providing guidance, frameworks, and simple actionable steps can make this process much more achievable."

Leading Through Vulnerability

His closing wisdom emphasizes first-person disclosure:

"Normalize discussions about mental health by sharing your own experiences and vulnerabilities first. Your team must see genuine care and authenticity from you to trust that wellbeing is truly valued within the team."

Uday represents a growing movement of leaders who understand that mental health support isn't about implementing programs – it's about fundamentally changing how we talk, listen, and show up for each other at work.

What Can We Learn from Uday Burra's Leadership?

1

Normalize Wellbeing Conversations: Make discussions about mental health routine, just like talking about performance or deadlines.

2

Vulnerability Builds Trust: Leaders who share their own challenges create psychological safety and stronger team connections.

3

Culture Over Budget: You don't need huge resources – embedding wellbeing into daily practices and leadership behavior has a far greater impact.



ABOUT US:

MindPeers is Asia's fastest growing mental fitness platform — proudly backed by Shark Tank, recognized as a LinkedIn Top Startup, and supported by JETRO.

We know mental health tools are everywhere, yet employees rarely use them.

That's why we build things differently. Our practical modules and tools are designed for real engagement, helping people build resilience, reduce stress, and function better in everyday life.

For leaders and HRs, we offer data-driven insights into culture, psychological safety, and talent retention — ensuring teams don't just perform, but truly thrive.

Our mission: to make mental fitness not just available, but impactful and usable for everyone, every day.

**ASSURED 54% EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT, MORE MOTIVATION &
INCREASED RESILIENCE. SCAN HERE**

