

PROMOTING EMPLOYEE WELFARE AND GENERAL WELL-BEING AT THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

The performance of a company is intimately linked to well-being at work, i.e. to the development of its employees internally. And for good reason, psychosocial risks at work are receiving increasing attention from managers.

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time, **work** has been regarded by employees as a simple livelihood, a means of providing for themselves without any consideration of **well-being**. Today, work has taken a considerable place in society and employees want to feel good about it. After the family, work is one of the essential components of our identity. Have you ever noticed that one of the first questions we ask when we meet someone for the first time is "what do you do in life?" More than a way to provide for ourselves, work is now a vehicle for self- **fulfilment** and self-realization: it gives meaning to our life and enables us to feel useful to society. The question of well-being and the quality of life at work is therefore very meaningful.

What is well-being at work?

Being able to flourish in one's job has become a strong concern for many people. According to WHO, well-being in the workplace is "a dynamic **state of mind**, characterized by a satisfactory harmony between the skills, needs and aspirations of the worker, on the one hand, and the constraints and opportunities in the workplace, on the other hand".

Feeling good at work therefore depends on several factors: health and safety, the interest of work, remuneration, the fight against stress, ergonomics, the working environment as well as relations between colleagues and the hierarchy within which they operate.

A Hot Topic

The ANACT, the National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions, notes that, in recent years, companies have become more and more interested in the well-being of their employees and have started to implement various measures in order to improve the working conditions.

The agency organizes a week every year for the quality of life at work. This event aims to inform and mobilize various actors in the world of work (business leaders, HR managers, employees, managers, institutions, social partners, occupational physicians ...) so as to promote the well-being of employees.

Well-being at work: A collective approach

While well-being at work is now a priority issue for social dialogue, there is still a long way to go before the employee is definitively put back in the centre of the company. "Well-being at work is no longer a taboo subject. Companies have now realized that the efficiency of their employees did not pass the consideration they had of their job, concedes PHILIPPE DOUILLET, project manager of the department "Health and Work" of the NAALC. However, they do not all call into question the organization of work as many are in denial. According to them, if their employees are not well, it is because they are fragile. However, it is precisely the company that weakens the individual. "

Moreover, while self-esteem plays a major role in the professional development of the employee, it is far from being the only factor. "Employees are not entirely masters of their well-being, says Catherine Bergin, consultant at CSP. Their field of action is even rather limited since they are part of a global system. It is therefore up to the management of companies to review their mode of operation."

Recognition promotes well-being at work

One of the first levers of action to develop the well-being of employees is certainly to value their work. This responsibility belongs to the proximity manager. "It should not focus solely on the results but on the efforts that his team has made. Especially in a context of economic crisis," said Catherine Bertin. This implies, for the manager, to evaluate the workload that each mission entails. "This must respect the rhythm of the individual and must not be at the

expense of the personal life of the employee," insists the consultant. "The manager must avoid entrusting too fragmented missions that leave no room for manoeuvre to employees and isolate them from the rest of the team," added Philippe Douillet.

Involving employees in decision-making processes

In order to stem ill-being at work, Loïck Roche, a teacher-researcher at the Grenoble School of Management, is banking on the concept of "slow management". A practice that allows you to go from "always more" to "always better" and that considers the man as the real driving force of the company. What is obvious, the rules that govern this concept are too rarely applied in business. "Slow management means giving more time to the people you lead and involving each individual in the performance of the company in order to make sense of your work," he explains. On a daily basis, this concept can be translated into simple actions: involving employees in company decisions, developing internal communication to highlight the results achieved, and accepting that employees are represented on the board of directors.

Professional development: a source of fulfilment

Reconciling the objectives of the company and the individual needs of its employees requires training. Every company has the responsibility to give each of its employees the opportunity to flourish in his position. "It should not put them in difficulty and must be able to offer them training when their new missions are out of step with their skills," confirms Philippe Douillet. Providing support and personalized support means investing resources and financial means. Concessions that companies still have trouble doing.

How to improve the well-being of employees?

Several factors can impact the quality of life at work. Before wages, one of the most frequently mentioned factors by employees is **interest in the workplace**. Employees seek to make sense of their work and grow professionally through challenging assignments.

The sense of **belonging to a company** or organization is also important. To feel fulfilled at work, employees need to know that they are useful to their business, that they bring their contribution to the organization. The need for recognition is essential to encourage employees: it goes through pay, which is particularly important for many of them, but also through verbal encouragement.

A calm **working relationship** is also a guarantee of a quality of life at work. Each employee must be able to benefit from a certain autonomy while being able to rely on his hierarchy. A well-defined work environment, company-specific values and responsible managers are the

keys to a better life at work. Maintaining good relations with colleagues is also important. Being able to chat over a coffee and interact informally is part of the spirit of friendliness of a team.

Finally, the **work environment** is essential. An airy and comfortable work space, adapted lighting and good ventilation are all factors that make it possible to fight against stress at work and improve the health of workers.

Other factors may influence the quality of life at work, such as work-life balance, transport time, career prospects and job security.

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