

Press Releases

Steelcase Unveils New Research Redefining How Companies Should Approach Wellbeing

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Findings show that organizations must consider a holistic, new definition of wellbeing and reveal that environments can influence productivity, collaboration and creativity.

Grand Rapids, MI, August 26, 2014 – Steelcase today announces the release of its newest global research, which unveils an evolution in the definition of wellbeing in today's workplace. This new definition necessitates a holistic approach to wellbeing, uncovering that the mind, body and environment are intrinsically linked. No longer can organizations think of wellbeing as just physical or mental health, but rather organizations must consider the physical, psychological and cognitive needs of workers.

“In today’s workplace, we’ve seen a growing assault on so many aspects of wellbeing: around the world obesity is on the rise, the workplace is filled with a high concentration of germs – and people who come to work sick, stress levels from work continue to negatively impact our overall health, and two-thirds of workers believe that information overload had lessened job satisfaction and damaged their personal relationships. When looking closely at these issues impacting health and happiness in the workplace, we realized that these factors were far beyond just a physical issue,” continued Donna Flynn, Director, Workspace Futures at Steelcase.

“For organizations to move the needle on their employees’ wellbeing, our research has identified a need for a holistic approach to wellbeing – and the demand to find solutions that consider factors – not just the physical barriers to wellbeing,” continued Flynn.

While workers worldwide are experiencing an assault on their wellbeing, organizations are demanding more of their employees than ever before, and the pressure for creative work has never been higher. According to IBM’s CEO survey, the most wanted leadership traits today include collaboration, communication, creativity and flexibility – employees with the ability to constantly reinvent themselves. The desire for these traits is driven by the need for increasing innovation, creativity and the ability to break through the complexity of today’s business problems.

These demands, always-connected devices, and an increasingly unhealthy population leave many workers struggling to survive, let alone thrive. The pressure for innovation in today's workplace has turned wellbeing into a serious business need, and this new definition demands a new way of working.

Steelcase's research reveals that the places where people come together to work should be designed to have a positive impact on a variety of dimensions of worker wellbeing, and when intentionally considered and designed, the workplace can help foster healthier, happier and more creative – and thus, more innovative – employees. Steelcase has identified six dimensions of wellbeing that can be impacted by the design of the physical environment, and all play a key role in today's newest leadership traits. These dimensions are:

- Mindfulness: Staying fully engaged in a world filled with distractions
- Authenticity: Bringing your whole self to work
- Optimism: Fostering creativity and innovation
- Belonging: Feeling connected to others
- Meaning: Finding a sense of purpose at work
- Vitality: Engaging the body in movement to support physical and mental vigor at work

To create a workplace where employees can thrive physically, cognitively and psychologically, Steelcase reveals that organizations must create a variety of work settings that address these six key dimensions of wellbeing, using the principals of a palette of place (the ability to choose where you do your best work), a palette of posture (the opportunity to change postures between sitting, standing and walking during the day), and a palette of presence (the chance to involve employees near and far).

“We found that with a little effort and emphasis on these six dimensions, organizations can help employees leave the workplace feeling healthier and happier. Changes that today’s leading organizations know can have a profound, bottom-line impact,” said Flynn.

About Steelcase

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