

Mental Health and Productivity Roundtable

21st November 2018 - Summary of Discussion

What is already being done?

There is a growing concern in businesses about the mental health of their people, and what they need to do to foster health and wellbeing. The conversation has begun to shift from 'Why should we be addressing this?' to 'What shall we do?'. Organisations are starting to appreciate the reputational and productivity advantage. There is greater visibility; people are sharing their experiences, both in and out of organisations, and in different ways over social and traditional media. There is more training and support available which people will accept and budget for, such as mental health first aid. There are more resources out there, and technological developments such as mental health apps and information and resources available online.

Younger people are more open and expect their organisations to be so. And yet there are real concerns that we are only in the foothills, and far more needs to be done.

What are the challenges?

A major challenge lies in workplace culture, where there is a lack of understanding around the complex issues of mental health, and how they can be exacerbated by workplaces. The HR function are often held responsible for wellbeing but are also often seen as existing in a bubble. This, coupled with fears around the stigma surrounding mental health and potential detrimental effects on the individual's career if they speak up, can lead to mental health issues not being surfaced. For the employer, there are uncomfortable conversations to be had around fears of legal implications, being overwhelmed and unqualified to address employee issues. Although there are resources, it isn't always clear what works and how to spend budget wisely and for the best impact. There are also vast sector and cultural/global differences.

There is, therefore, a need for:

- A business case, a financial case and an emotional and/or moral, 'heart first' case.
- Evidence based, concrete research into what works
- Better language and terminology, to facilitate conversations
- A greater focus on creating cultures in which people flourish, which prevents mental health issues arising or developing
- Making stronger links between better productivity and better mental health.

Where do we go next?

We all felt our courageous conversation had only begun to scratch the surface. The discussion identified some key areas we feel need more focus, exploration and innovation. This will help us to shape our agenda going forward.

- What strategies actually work? How do we know?
- What is the role of investors and in this - how can they measure the return on and sustainability of companies?
- Where are there sector differences? How do we develop different strategies for example in the hospitality or logistics sector, to those in professional services?
- How does mental health relate to productivity and how do we prevent burnout?
- How does mental health intersect with other factors such as gender, race, poverty and ability?
- How do we manage the reality of people bringing their whole selves to work, when they may have baggage or issues arising in their lives?
- How do we address the different cases of wellbeing in the workplace vs. workplaces being welcoming and open to people with mental illnesses as they occur (when they are not workplace driven), e.g. neurodiversity, PTSD.
- What is the impact of technology?
- How do we create strategies for building mental resilience when organisations are experiencing change?
- What responsibilities actually lie within individuals and how do we enable people to better manage their own mental wellbeing?

Our approach

We want to bring together a group of organisations and individuals who will commit to change the approach to mental health and wellbeing for the long term. We believe that the best innovation comes from collaboration - across businesses, across sectors, and between business and civil society.

This is about having a business case for doing something, this is about finding evidence of what works, of new thinking that will have a real impact on employee wellbeing, building inclusive workplaces and increasing long term productivity.

Starting with the themes that emerged from the roundtable, we are launching a programme of work on Mental Health and Productivity. We have a four step approach: Issue framing, Interaction, Innovation and Impact. Over the next year we want to develop inspiring, innovative and practical recommendations that will make a difference to the issue of mental health, and demonstrate that business can be a force for good in society.

Issue Framing



Steering Group: A mental health alliance

We will form a steering group of leaders who are committed to addressing mental health issues in the UK.

We will launch an innovative programme of work in a press statement in January 2019. Tomorrow's Company research will support the Steering Group through the provision of background analysis, enabling leaders the space to think differently.

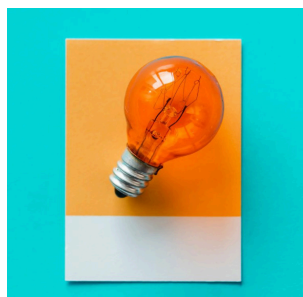
Interaction



Tomorrow's Leaders: Developing impact projects

The steering group will identify and nominate a body of future leaders from within their own organisations to work with us and with other civic society leaders and social innovators to look at how business can address issues around mental health. This will be supported by Tomorrow's Company research and facilitation experience, and a wider network of leadership development professionals.

Innovation



Developing and elevating insights

Through a series of workshops, innovation labs and collaboration events, we will develop inspiring and practical recommendations that will make a material difference to the challenges of mental health and productivity in the UK.

The insights developed through this project work will build into a substantive report published by Tomorrow's Company. The contributions and case studies by each of the members of the Steering Group will be prominently featured in the report.

Impact



Mental Health Summit

The individual projects and report recommendations will be presented at a Summit of leaders from business, professional and financial services, industry and civil society.

We will share 'next practice' and seek to establish a Cross-Industry Foundation to further develop and support the implementation of ideas we have jointly developed. This and the report will stimulate a different dialogue in the wider governmental and civic system.