

MARCH-APRIL 2024

Employee Well-being in 2024



Facing a continued tight labor market and a gig economy that offers unprecedented flexibility, smart organizations are investing in employee wellness, which has become even more of a focus for employees since the pandemic, to increase both retention and productivity.

“There’s been a growing awareness of the importance and value of supporting employee well-being in recent years, and organizations are getting very intentional in how they’re responding to employees’ growing expectations in this area,” says Jessica Ricciardi, FCCS Human Resources Director. “Employees who feel supported are more satisfied in their role, achieve more and are more creative, so employee wellness benefits the employee as well as the organization.”

Employee wellness encompasses physical and emotional health as well as social and financial well-being. Many traditional HR programs target individual aspects of overall wellness, including medical insurance and paid time off. Professional development programs and opportunities also contribute to employee wellness, as do employee recognition programs. Progressive companies are taking such support further with a variety of creative programs. For example, FCCS enhances medical coverage with free access to registered dietitians through Husk Nutrition as well as access to Teledoc for free telemedicine consultations.

Less formal programs also contribute to employee wellness, such as FCCS’ Employee Ambassador Team that plans events, celebrations and activities that help employees connect, not just birthdays and work anniversaries, but things like wellness challenges and volunteer activities.

Work/life balance is a major component of employee wellness, even more so now that so many employees have experienced the flexibility working remotely provides. Many companies are offering flexible hours and remote work options; FCCS also provides unlimited, though manager-approved, PTO.

“Employee wellness is top of mind for applicants today. They want to know they’re coming into an organization that will support them, and they want concrete examples of the programs in place,” says Jessica.

Emotional health is an enormous component of overall well-being, and an area where there are changing employee expectations. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are a traditional approach to supporting employees through difficult situations, providing access to one-on-one professional support. New tools include Villyge, implemented by FCCS in 2023, which helps guide managers on how they can support employees through a life event.

“Employees who feel supported are more satisfied in their role, achieve more and are more creative, so employee wellness benefits the employee as well as the organization.”

— **JESSICA RICCIARDI**
HUMAN RESOURCES
DIRECTOR, FCCS

"Managers need to know that it's ok to care about and be empathetic to their employees, but they don't always know how," says Jessica. "Villyge provides a framework for the manager to provide the right kind of support at the right time, based on the individual's situation."

Villyge is a software platform through which employees can alert their managers of major life events they're experiencing, and managers are provided best-practice prompts on how to provide empathetic support. For example, a pregnant employee may be concerned about her role upon return from maternity leave, or how to continue her career progression as a mother, or what lactation support she'll have back at the office. Each life situation – divorce, family illness or death, caring for elderly parents, parental issues – carries its own concerns, and Villyge enables managers who may not have experienced these events themselves to explore these ancillary issues so both managers and employees feel more fully supported. Villyge also includes on-demand self-service support for employees, as well as confidential access to Villyge experts.

"It's important that managers show up with empathy for their employees while still holding them accountable for pushing their work forward," says Debi Yadegari, Villyge CEO and Founder. "When employees feel fully supported in this way, they have an increased commitment to their manager and to the company."

The impact of empathetic management can be enormous: a 2023 study by The Workforce Institute at UKG found that managers have the greatest impact on the mental health of employees, on par with the impact of their partner and more than the impact of their doctor or therapist.

A robust employee well-being program encompassing employees' whole selves can offer dramatic benefits in employee recruitment, engagement and retention, as well as increased productivity and innovation. To have the most impact, though, says Jessica, "It's critical that leaders recognize the value and encourage their managers to embrace the initiative, and that the organization continue to promote the program so employees remain aware of what's available to them."

For more information on FCCS's employee wellness program, contact Jessica Ricciardi [via email](#); learn more about Villyge [here](#).