RESILIENCY AND WELL-BEING:
WORTH THE HYPE?

PERKINS—EASTMAN
DESIGN RESEARCH

About the Series

New and accelerated shifts due to the pandemic have affected every aspect of life including how and where we work. These shifts include the untethering of work, wellness-centric migration, integration of technology, and higher demands for flexibility and equity. A comprehensive understanding along with how work will be performed is yet to be fully understood as they continue to evolve. Perkins Eastman's Workplace leaders in collaboration with Design Research, and contributions from experts in complementary practice areas, explored the roots of these shifts and imagined possible future scenarios in a multi-part series.

In our second installment, *Resiliency and Well-being: Worth the Hype?* **we explore resiliency and well-being, their importance, and ways of potentially supporting wellness through people-focused designs and policies.**

OAK HEALTH CLUB
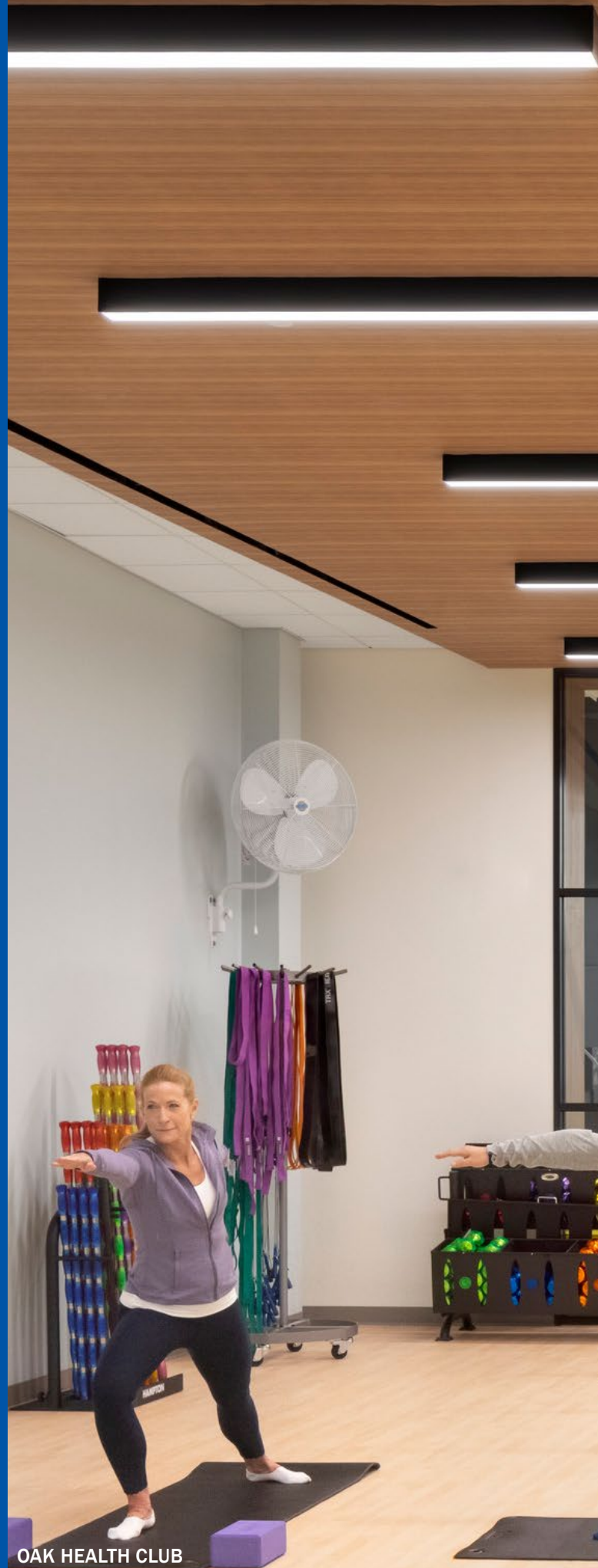
KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. All talent are requiring healthier lifestyles and looking for employers that actively support their well-being.

2. Companies are at an increased risk of losing talent and revenue if they overlook employee well-being.

3. In adopting a holistic mindset, resiliency training, increasing engagement, and acquiring a deep understanding of their talents' needs and barriers, companies can explore and apply relevant workplace designs and policies that best support resiliency and well-being.

AN EMPLOYEE PRIORITY

Colliding Crises. The COVID-19 pandemic collided with pre-existing environmental, health, and societal crises such as global warming, the loneliness epidemic, and concerning behavioral health conditions (i.e., depression, anxiety, and substance abuse). In fact, 61% of Americans surveyed in 2019 were classified as lonely (up from 54% in 2018),[1] and in mid-February to mid-March 2020 prescriptions for anti-anxiety medication increased by 34.1%.[2]

Nonetheless, in many cases, the sudden halt the pandemic brought to daily routines created precious opportunities for time with family, children, and hobbies, which may have contributed to internal reflections and prompted active changes to priorities.

The Great Migration... Again! Similar to other historic migrations in the U.S. such as the Dust Bowl in the 1930s and post-World War II relocations in the 1940s, most moves during the COVID-19 pandemic were economically motivated.[3] Contrarily, a segment of the workforce population migrated during the pandemic to pursue a better quality of life and increased well-being. Such moves led to a boom in purchasing properties in small, suburban towns to capitalize on larger homes

for less, and greater access to nature.[4,5] While many moved out of cities, it is speculated that younger talent will continue to move into cities seeking valuable social, professional, and personal connections.

These migration patterns along with unprecedented resignation rates,[6] possibly portray a shift in workforce priorities and a focus towards seeking holistic well-being, engagement, and happiness in all aspects of life, including work. The perspective on work has perhaps shifted to one that acknowledges it is an invaluable part of life but not one that should be all consuming.

Focusing on well-being in the workplace is crucial since workplace stressors, (e.g., demanding tasks, economic insecurity, long hours, and work-family conflict), can be as harmful to health and well-being as second-hand smoke.[7] Additionally, with people spending approximately a third of their lives working (about 90,000 hours),[8] ensuring they are spending this time in a healthy, engaged, and happy state is crucial. After prolonged years of accepting a status quo that may not have placed well-being at the forefront of companies' decisions and offerings, leaders and talent alike, are now actively seeking change.

3 out of 4 employees expect companies to support their health, well-being, and nutrition.[9]

Employee Priorities Post-Pandemic[9]

72% Work-Life Balance

57% Working at a company that ensures physical + mental health
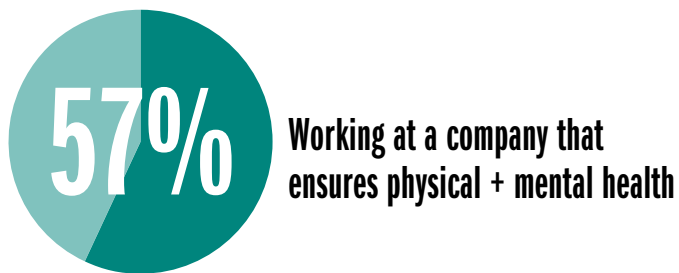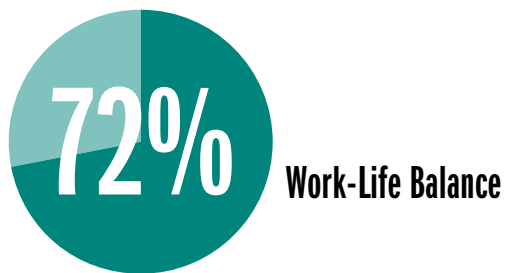
" After prolonged years of accepting a status quo ... leaders and talent alike, are now actively seeking change."

A WAKE-UP CALL FOR BUSINESS

The mass exudes and current slow return to jobs despite suspension of many unemployment benefits,[10] could serve as a clear indication to businesses that prioritizing employees' well-being is not only altruistic, but economically essential. Although it may be tempting to think of the current workers' and talent wellness demands as a blip businesses can overcome, studies predating the 2019 pandemic clearly demonstrate that ignoring well-being can cost billions of dollars in direct and indirect expenses such as diminished productivity and increased turnover.[11] Additionally, well-being can impact engagement,[12] an ingredient that can contribute to improved retention, sales, and profit.[13] Therefore, leaders seizing the moment and investing in the well-being of their talent are simultaneously making strides towards improvements in company performance and revenue.

Mental Health: Cost and Saving

$3.27
reduction in medical costs
for every dollar spent on
company wellness programs[14]

$105B
estimated cost of absenteeism
and presenteeism caused by major
depressive disorders[15]

Highly-engaged business units can achieve:

17%
increase in productivity

20%
increase in sales

21%
greater profitability

41%
reduction in absenteeism

59%
less turnover

Source: Gallup[13]

ELAINE CONSTRUCTION

"If you think that good design is expensive, you should look at the cost of bad design." —Sir Ralf Speth

AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT

With many company leaders and employees aligned in their pursuit of wellness centric workplaces for a variety of reasons, what can individuals and organizations do to better support workplace well-being?

We believe well-being requires:
- **A holistic mindset.**
- **Resiliency training.**
- **Engaging and involving people.**
- **Building resiliency and well-being into policies and places.**

Think Holistically.

Although companies hire individual talent, it is important to recognize employees are part of a complex ecological system. On an individual level, leaders should strive to support employees holistically, targeting as many dimensions of their well-being as possible (see figure on page 10 for dimensions of wellness),[16] because supporting one dimension alone might not yield the best outcomes.[17] The importance of each of these dimensions vary from person to person based on their phase in life, lifestyle, abilities, and so on.

As part of supporting these dimensions, it is crucial firms also nurture and enable employees' connections with their families, company culture, social community, and the larger natural environment. Additionally, firms should not forget that physiological health is similarly critical to well-being and that the quality of the built environment, can have a profound impact. For example, improving indoor environmental quality (IEQ) through a variety of design decisions, such as avoiding materials that emit known toxins, is one way to address employee health and well-being.
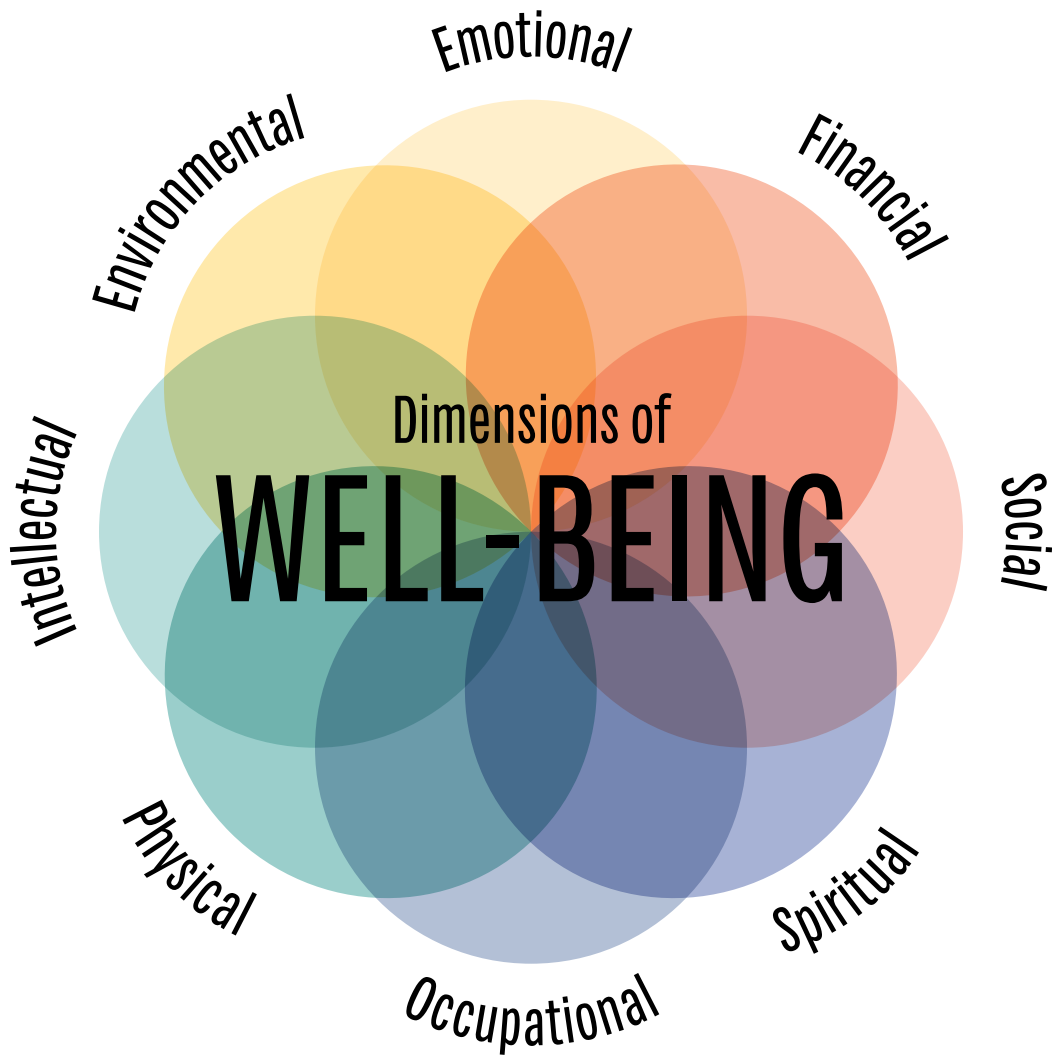
90,000 hours

Time average person spends at work.[8]

PHILIPS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Dimensions of Well-Being

Emotional Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships

Financial Satisfaction with current and future financial situations

Social Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system

Spiritual Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life

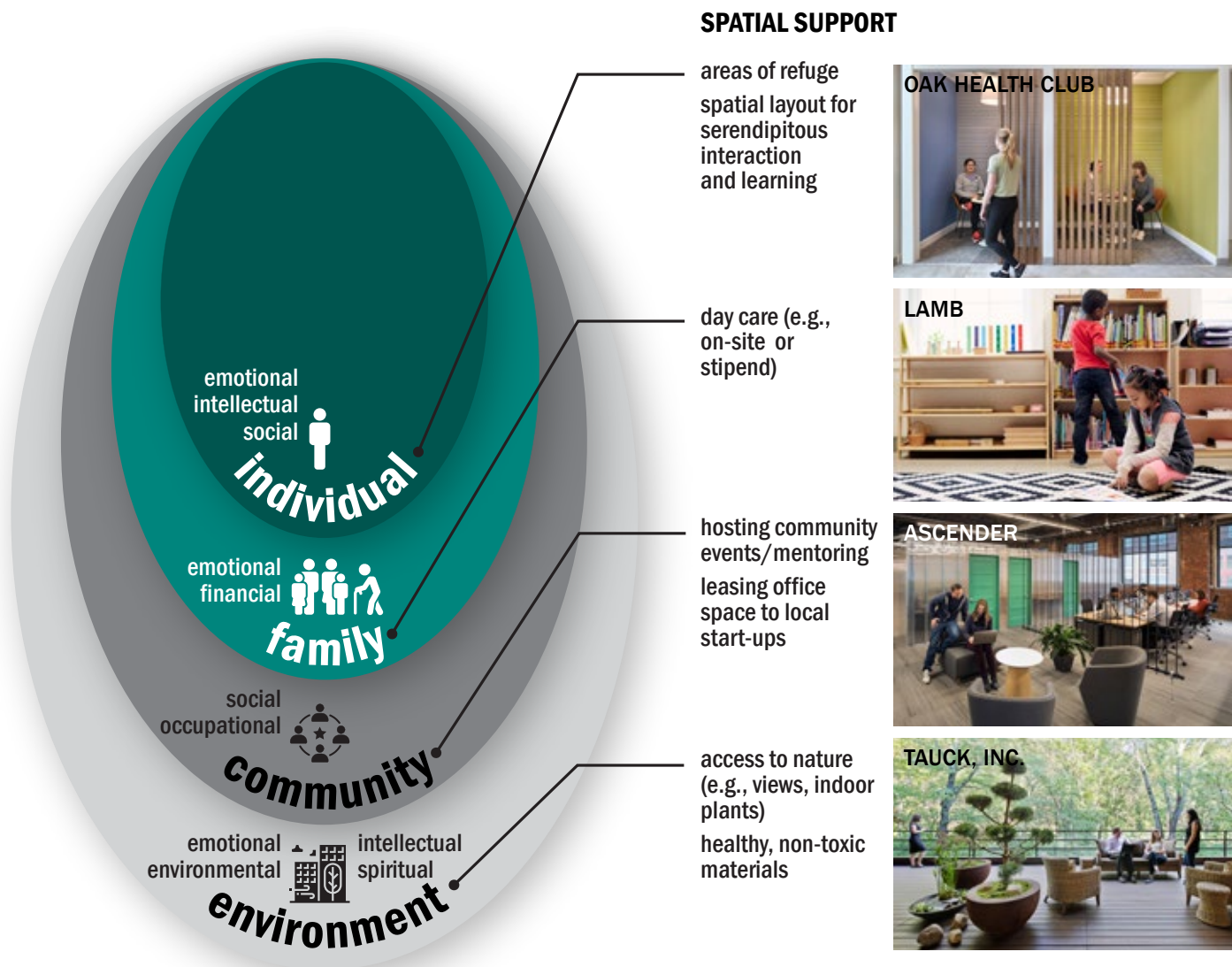**Occupational** Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work

Physical Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep, and nutrition

Intellectual Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills

Environmental Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being

Adapted from Workplace Wellness Lab[16]

Employees are part of an interdependent ecological system

SPATIAL SUPPORT

emotional
intellectual
social

individual

emotional
financial

family

social
occupational

community

emotional
environmental   intellectual
spiritual

environment

areas of refuge
spatial layout for serendipitous interaction and learning

OAK HEALTH CLUB

day care (e.g., on-site or stipend)

LAMB

hosting community events/mentoring
leasing office space to local start-ups

ASCENDER

access to nature (e.g., views, indoor plants)
healthy, non-toxic materials

TAUCK, INC.

Compared to those thriving in multiple levels of wellness, those thriving only physically are:[17]

68%
missed days of work

5X
more likely to seek new employment

3X
more likely to file a compensation claim

2X
more likely to change employers

Resiliency: the act of adapting, coping, and growing from difficult situations.

Layer on Resiliency.

In addition to focusing on holistic well-being, it is important to layer on resiliency training, that can enable individuals to face inevitable adversity and negative emotions they will face in life. Everyone *will* experience a level of adversities, be it an illness, loss, or even a global pandemic, the key however, is to be able to bounce back, which is what resiliency focuses on-the act of adapting, coping, and growing from difficult situations.[18]

The concepts of well-being and resiliency are complex and closely related. Yet while well-being captures one's psychological state at a certain moment in time, resiliency is more dynamic and considers past, present, and future factors.[19] Layering resiliency onto our understanding of well-being can add an aspect of future-proofing and coping.

Resiliency often includes educational and training components from various fields such as positive psychology, relationship systems, and emotional intelligence. Resiliency training however can require both individual and organizational commitment.[20] Although often discussed in relation to reducing burnout among healthcare workers, resiliency can have universal applicability in equal or less stressful workplaces.

TD SECURITIES

Recommendations for individuals and leaders seeking to support resiliency and well-being[22]

INDIVIDUALS

Look inwards — Understand and discuss personal stressors with trusted professionals, seek meaningful work, practice self-care, and seek various trainings (e.g., resiliency training, conflict management, positive psychology).

Build bridges — strengthen familial, social, and work relationships, particularly in an increasingly digital world.

Pay kindness forward — regularly performing unsolicited acts of kindness over a period of time can boost a person's well-being.[21] Additionally, through social contagion phenomena, such positive emotions can spread to others.

LEADERSHIP

- **Care, genuinely**, about employees' well-being, whether motivated altruistically or economically

- **Commit** to enhancing well-being

- **Engage employees** to identify challenges, and set well-being goals

- **Normalize** a culture of vocalizing and seeking help

- **Model resiliency and wellness behavior** through sharing personal efforts

- **Train and equip leaders** (particularly employees' first line of contact)

- **Establish and communicate resources** available to all employees at all levels

- **Extend support** beyond an employee (especially caregivers) to include members of their household

- **Measure and be accountable** for the successes of plans that are created to achieve wellness and resiliency

An open, safe, periodic, iterative, and data-supported process can help leaders and employees uncover well-being needs and barriers.

Engage and Involve People.

Employee engagement is often defined as the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional energy employees invest in their work and organization.[23] Engaged employees care deeply about their work and go above and beyond.[24,25] In addition to positively impacting retention, sales, and profit,[13] as discussed above, engaged talent can demonstrate higher psychological well-being compared to those with low engagement.[23] Well-being and engagement are also reciprocal with well-being influencing engagement and vice versa.[26]

Considering their many benefits, leaders should aim to foster both engagement and well-being which can be accomplished through many means, including; involving talent in conversations.[26] An open, safe, periodic, iterative, and data-supported process can help leaders and employees uncover well-being needs and barriers. Needs and barriers will vary from individual to individual and depend on many aspects (e.g., familial situations, individual preferences, life stage, etc.), consequently, approaches to enhancing well-being need to be tailored to each unique workforce.

In addition to potentially contributing to engagement and well-being, involving talent in such a process is crucial because employees are familiar with their own circumstances and needs, and because asking for their input can bolster their satisfaction and engagement.[20] Based on an understanding of their workforce (i.e., people), leaders can then examine potential workplace designs and policies that strive to support their firm's particular well-being needs.

Examples of barriers to well-being across the workplace landscape

| BARRIER	
Commute	• Long-distance commutes can cause physical illnesses, negatively impact personal and social well-being,[27] and by some estimates may require a 40% increase in pay to offset the discontent.[28] • Losing a commute entirely can also decrease well-being.[29]
Distraction	• Office distractions can include noise from colleagues,[30] while home distractions stem from competing life / family demands.[31] • Digital distractions can include constant on-screen notifications (emails, chat platforms, etc.).
Work-life separation	• Depending on one's home / family composition, a lack of separation can be fatiguing, lead to longer working hours, and/or isolation.[31]
Choice, and decision fatigue	• Too many choices, or irrelevant choices can result in decision fatigue[32] while a lack of choice, especially on where to work, can result in increased turnover.[33]
Fear of missing out (FOMO)	• Working remotely can present a risk of FOMO.[34]
Isolation and loneliness	• Loneliness, in or out of the office, can impact individuals physical, mental health and cognitive functioning[35] along with their work performance.[36]

QLIC

Build Policy and Place.

Findings from Perkins Eastman's wellness studies across building types (e.g., senior living[37] and K12[38]), demonstrate the built environment can positively contribute to people's well-being and perceptions. Insights from these studies along with thoughts from the hospitality sector and workplace leaders were examined, adapted, and augmented for future testing and expansion. Drawing on this broader body of knowledge the **workplace well-being design guidelines** were built on a foundation that embraces the evolution of an individual from their first day on a job to their last, and all of life's moments in between. Along with human-centered benefits and policies, these guidelines can potentially help overcome some of the barriers to well-being across the workplace landscape as demonstrated below.

Work environment policies and spaces can contribute to well-being when applied thoughtfully and iteratively. Conversely, inflexible work environments that cannot adapt or respond to people's evolving needs, be it over the course of the day or their careers, can hinder well-being and exasperate burnout. To help with workplace agility, policies and spatial designs need to be tested, refined, and continuously improved throughout a company's lifespan based on the evolving needs of employees and the business.

180 MAIDEN LANE
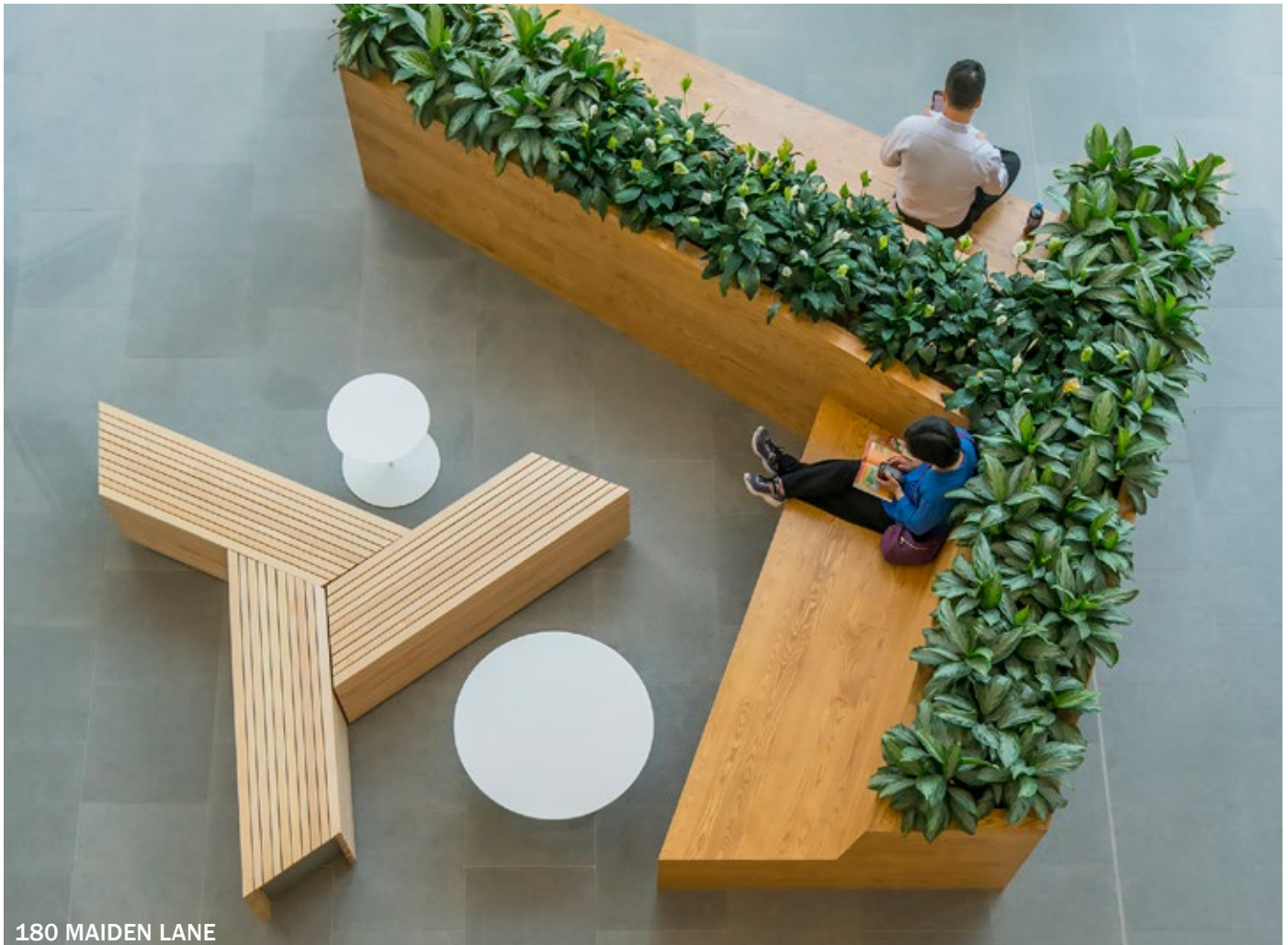
WELL-BEING DESIGN GUIDELINES
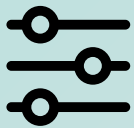
Support control, choice, and routine by providing options, and flexibility over when, where, and how to work.

Tailor a variety of spaces and experiences to support the range of needs and workstyles most relevant to the employee composition.

Nudge people towards healthy choices (e.g., sit-to-stand desks, destinations for nourishment, reflection, activity, etc.)

Vary patterns of movement to include direct and winding routes for discreet physical activity, social connections, and moments of calm.

Foster serendipitous opportunities and chance encounters to help promote innovation and develop / sustain meaningful connections among employees.

Offer degrees of privacy, both acoustical and visual, to balance dichotomous needs: focus (cognitive need) and connections (social/work need).

Connect to nature and daylight to capitalize on their abundant benefits through incorporating Biophilic design patterns.

Design sensory experiences by varying textures, scales, colors, natural elements, and pleasant fragrances (lavender for calm[39] and cinnamon for enhanced cognition).[40]

Encourage moments of calm for emotional and cognitive rejuvenation through areas of refuge, and special software.

Foster pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors via purposeful design interventions.

WORKPLACE LANDSCAPE

Examples of design guidelines, policies, benefits and resources that can help mitigate potential barriers to well-being across the workplace landscape. The examples here are not meant to be exhaustive; rather they are a starting point for companies and their employees to consider in collaboration with their workplace strategists and designers.

HEADQUARTERS

OFFERINGS
- A home Base
- Host clients and visitors
- Collaboration and innovation
- Team meetings/work
- Social/collegial connections
- Connection to company culture

POTENTIAL WELL-BEING BARRIERS*
- Long commute
- Distraction
- Choice and decision fatigue
- Loneliness

WELL-BEING DESIGN GUIDELINES
- Utilize the Well-Being Design Guidelines (e.g.)
  - Control, choice, routine
  - Tailored variety
  - Behavioral nudges
  - Serendipity
  - Degrees of privacy

POLICY + ADVANTAGES
- Assuming people spend less time at an office:
  - Invest in a well-rounded concierge service for an efficient and stress-free experience and resource
  - Invest in technology/apps / interfaces that connect distributed groups equitably

AUGMENTED PLACES[i]

OFFERINGS
- Focused, heads-down work
- Work/life separation
- Social/collegial connections
- Connection to company culture
- Collaboration and innovation

POTENTIAL WELL-BEING BARRIERS*
- Distraction
- Choice and decision fatigue
- Loneliness

WELL-BEING DESIGN GUIDELINES
- Utilize the Well-Being Design Guidelines (e.g.)
  - Control, choice, routine
  - Tailored variety
  - Behavioral nudges
  - Serendipity
  - Degrees of privacy

POLICY + ADVANTAGES
- Devise rotation schedules for managers for equitable interaction with employees
- Invest in technology that connect distributed groups equitably

HOME

OFFERINGS
- Focused, heads-down work
- Managing work/life demands

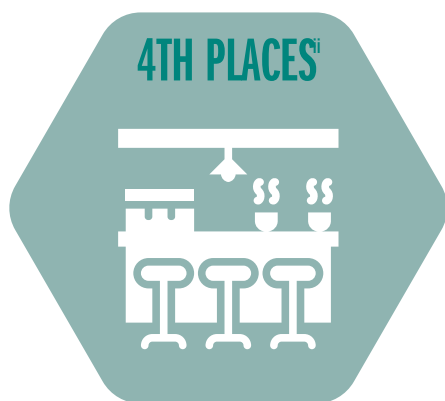### POTENTIAL WELL-BEING BARRIERS*
- Lack of commute
- Distraction
- Lack of work/life separation
- Fear of Missing Out
- Loneliness and isolation

WELL-BEING DESIGN GUIDELINES
- Provide home-office fund for furniture, technology, etc.
- Employees can consider applying the design guidelines to their home as applicable, (e.g.):
  - Degrees of privacy
  - Nature and daylight

POLICY + ADVANTAGES
- Safe-guard work/life separation: institute communication-free hours
- Invest in technology that connect distributed groups equitably

4TH PLACES[i]

OFFERINGS
- Focused, heads-down work
- Collaboration and innovation
- Team/client meeting
- Social/collegial connections

POTENTIAL WELL-BEING BARRIERS*
- Distraction
- Fear of Missing Out
- Loneliness and isolation

WELL-BEING DESIGN GUIDELINES
- Having experienced workplaces designed to support well-being, untethered talent may seek non-conventional workplaces (café, hotel lobbies) that embody them as well.

POLICY + ADVANTAGES
- Provide easy and secure access to company networks and resources from anywhere
- Invest in technology that connect distributed groups equitably

DIGITAL SPACES

OFFERINGS
- Collaboration and innovation
- Team/client meetings
- Social/collegial connections

POTENTIAL WELL-BEING BARRIERS*
- Lack of commute
- Distraction
- Lack of work/life separation
- Fear of Missing Out
- Loneliness and isolation

WELL-BEING DESIGN GUIDELINES
- Workplace designers and software engineers to collaborate on creating healthy virtual spaces

POLICY + ADVANTAGES
- Invest in optional software that limits distractions (pop-ups/notifications), and nudges towards desired behaviors (e.g.) break reminders, do-not-disturb functions, meditation moments, gaze breaks, etc.

POLICIES + ADVANTAGES

OVERARCHING WORK LANDSCAPE POLICIES + ADVANTAGES
- Provide optional and continued well-being and resiliency training
- Provide a variety of resources and behavioral health coverage plans that align with workforce needs
- Scrutinize fads, instead research, test, and adapt successful existing policies (e.g.):
  - Shorter more productive work-weeks
  - Parental leave
  - Flexible hours
  - "Vab" the Swedish term for taking the day off to care for a sick child. Expand to include anyone in an employee household who is in need.
  - Paid vacation
  - Stress leave

* To explore the Workplace Landscape further, refer to our previous publication: *Work from Anywhere?*[39] **DOWNLOAD**

i As described in the first installment of this series: *Work from Anywhere*, Augmented Places can include smaller dispersed offices in major cities or suburban residential pockets.

ii Fourth Places include a network of spaces located in convenient, accessible, and distributed locations, like; local cafés, hotels, etc.

FROM HYPE TO SILVER LINING

The COVID-19 pandemic's multifaceted impact on people is undeniable and has led to many changes and reactions, including employees choosing to migrate towards wellness-centric life styles be it out of desire or necessity. Whether fully relocating to new geographic homes, changing careers, seeking change from current employers, or leaving the workforce entirely, employees' priorities have shifted towards personal care and well-being. Employers will therefore need to be deliberate and take actions to support these shifts. By the same token, employees should reciprocate and continue to put leadership's minds' at ease through demonstrating enhanced commitment and productivity. If we can capitalize on this disruption and use it as a meaningful pivot towards healthy workplaces, and expanded access to global talent, then this can be an opportunity as well as a silver lining that emerges.

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."
— Maya Angelou

SMITH+NEPHEW

Up Next...

With our buildings, systems, and technologies, becoming increasingly smarter, what does the future of work and well-being look like when environment and technology experts integrate? Tech companies, scientists, and engineers, are already making strides towards incredible futures where the gap between humanity and technology is reduced, and perhaps closed. In our upcoming publication we explore technology, and its impacts on the future of work.

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CONTACT US

Mark Van Summern
Principal
Stamford
+1 203 251 7429
m.vansummern@perkinseastman.com

Connor Glass
Principal
New York
+1 212 353 7311
c.glass@perkinseastman.com

Sabret Flocos
Principal
Washington DC
+1 202 236 6231
s.flocos@perkinseastman.com

Heather Stonebraker
Senior Associate
Raleigh
+1 984 255 0378
h.stonebraker@perkinseastman.com

Iramis Luz Audet
Associate Principal
Boston
+1 617 241 5248
i.audet@perkinseastman.com

Deacon Marvel
Associate Principal
Boston
+1 617 449 4048
d.marvel@perkinseastman.com

Jeff Young
Principal
Pittsburgh
+1 412 894 8308
j.young@perkinseastman.com

Barbara Mullenex
Principal
Washington DC
+1 202 495 7428
b.mullenex@perkinseastman.com

Robert J. Pizzano
Principal
New York
+1 212 353 7416
r.pizzano@perkinseastman.com

Heather Cain
Associate Principal
Chicago
+1 312 873 6297
h.cain@perkinseastman.com

Shannon Cole
Associate Principal
Stamford
+1 984 255 0378
s.cole@perkinseastman.com

Danya Hakky
Design Research
Washington DC
+1 202 384 1895
d.hakky@perkinseastman.com

AUTHORS

Danya Hakky, PhD, Design Research and Workplace

Sabret Flocos, IIDA, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP, Principal, Workplace Practice Leader

Connor Glass, IIDA, Principal and Board Director

Heather Cain, NCIDQ, LEED AP ID+C, Associate Principal, Workplace

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Graphic design by Kim Rader.

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