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Employee Benefits — Wellbeing Insights Q3 2026

Employee engagement and wellbeing are foundational to performance, retention, and organizational resilience; right now, both are under pressure. Gallup's latest data shows that while U.S. and Canadian workers remain among the most engaged globally, stress is high, job market confidence is declining, and managers are feeling increasingly strained[1]. At the same time, organizations are investing heavily in new technologies like AI. However, Gallup makes it clear: technology alone won't drive results. Manager effectiveness and employee engagement are the real differentiators. Employers who focus on these human elements will be best positioned to navigate change and sustain performance.

Engagement is holding, but not improving

About 31% of employees are engaged, among the highest globally, but growth has stalled.[1]

Stress is a major challenge

50% of employees report experiencing stress daily, one of the highest rates worldwide, indicating ongoing importance of employee wellbeing.[1]

What Employers Can Do

Invest in manager capability

Managers are the single most important driver of engagement, but many lack formal training. Focus on developing skills in coaching, communication, and workload management to unlock team performance.

Reduce employee stress through design not just benefits

With stress levels so high, revisit workload expectations, staffing models, and role clarity (clarity is kindness). Small operational changes can have a big impact on daily employee experience.

Focus on strengths and role alignment

Employees are more engaged when they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day. Leveraging strengths drives both performance and job satisfaction.

Build a culture of consistent recognition

Regular, meaningful recognition is one of the most effective (and low-cost) ways to increase motivation, connection, and retention

Prioritize engagement as a business strategy

Low engagement costs the global economy trillions in lost productivity. High-performing organizations treat engagement as a measurable, ongoing priority, not a one-time initiative.

Set clear expectations and priorities

Fewer than half of employees strongly agree they know what's expected of them—yet clarity is the most foundational driver of engagement and performance.

Invest in growth and development

Engagement increases significantly when employees feel supported in their development and see opportunities to learn and grow within the organization

Increase employee voice and sense of choice

Employees who feel they have choice in their work are more optimistic and engaged. Build in flexibility, career development opportunities, and clear pathways for growth that play to individual strengths

Even in a rapidly evolving workplace shaped by technology, the fundamentals haven't changed: how employees feel at work still drives how organizations perform. When employers invest in managers, reduce friction in day-to-day work, and create environments where people can thrive, they don't just improve wellbeing they unlock sustainable business results.

[1] Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2026

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