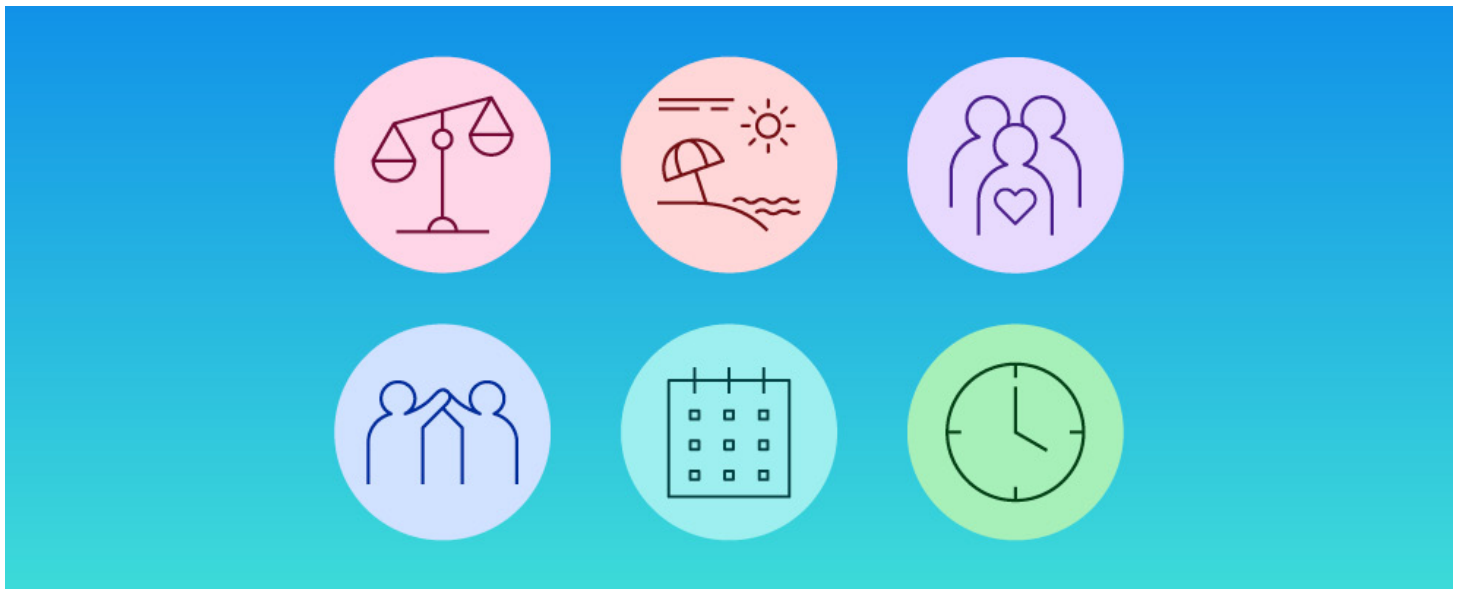


Supporting the holistic well-being of employees includes fostering work-life balance

June 01, 2021



2020 is a year that will be etched in our memories. As the pandemic impacted every aspect of daily life, companies, governments and communities looked towards 2021 to bring relief.

While we continue to see uncertainty, vaccine rollouts and anticipated re-openings bring hope. Companies are planning a thoughtful approach to returning to the workplace. At such time, employees play an essential role and are at the heart of our efforts to emerge stronger.

I am so proud and continue to be inspired by how IBMers in Canada have come together to support each other, our business, our clients and communities.

The hybrid workplace of the future, with employees working both in the office and from home, needs a strong focus on culture and an environment where employees can truly flourish. And this means more than just enabling employees with the right technology they need to do their jobs from home.

Prioritizing employee mental and physical well-being

The pandemic has brought a refreshing reinforcement among corporate leaders: the importance of the mental and physical well-being of employees. According to a recent [IBM CEO study](#), 45 percent of Canadian CEOs said they plan to prioritize employee well-being even if it affects near-term profitability.

On the face of it, this is pretty impressive. But this support can't be just well-intended – it must be well-received.

According to an earlier [IBM study](#), while four in five executives surveyed said they are supporting the physical and emotional health of their workforce, less than half of employees agreed.

Employee expectations of their employers have permanently changed, and leaders need to adjust accordingly.

Work-life balance most important to employees

Almost half of Canadian CEOs surveyed identified work-life balance and flexibility as one of the most important organizational attributes to engage employees.

But those leaders who aren't focused on this may face repercussions down the line. In a related survey, 51% of employees said work-life balance and flexible work arrangements were the most important offering provided by their employer – even more than competitive compensation or career growth opportunities.

In fact, 1 in 4 said they plan to leave their current employer, citing the need for more flexibility in work location or schedule or better support for well-being and benefits as top reasons why.

Action is clearly required. Here's an example of what we've done...

IBM Canada Work-Life Pledge

Just over a year ago, IBM shared its [Work From Home Pledge](#) with employees around the world. Created by IBMers, this grassroots initiative evolved into a company-wide pledge with the simple goal of making work (and life) a little easier while we're working at home.

Fast forward to today, many of us are still working from home and we're all feeling the effects from more than a year of juggling personal and professional responsibilities, online meeting fatigue and challenges to our mental health.

As a result, we created a supplement to the pledge called the [IBM Canada Work-Life Pledge](#) to specifically promote and nurture work-life balance today and as we prepare for a hybrid workplace in the future.

It's about giving yourself the time to take breaks and recharge and to take care of your family. Importantly, it's also about respecting your colleagues' time. I have encouraged all of our employees to take this pledge and make it their own so that we can best support and take care of each other – our IBM family.

Call to action to leaders

Proactively engage with employees to better understand what is really important to them and their careers. A purposeful focus on empathy and these kinds of initiatives that take into account employee feedback will help ensure that our workforce is engaged, empowered, and productive amid uncertainty from the pandemic and beyond.

Claude Guay
President and General Manager, IBM Canada

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ClaudeGuay>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudeguay/>

The IBM Canada Work-Life Pledge

Supplement to the Covid-19 work from home pledge

I pledge to:

Support work-life balance

.....

Take breaks and vacation days to recharge

.....

Take care of myself and my family

.....

Show appreciation and recognition

.....

Protect my calendar

.....

Respect other people's time

.....

[insert here]



Article Categories

Back to Stories

<https://canada.newsroom.ibm.com/Supporting-the-holistic-well-being-of-employees-includes-fostering-work-life-balance>