

Quality Of Life: The HR Playbook 2021

Boosting employee motivation and productivity
in a new world

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Preface

Everyday millions of people put on their shoes and head to work. Or so it was true a few months ago. Now, more and more employees are settling into a home-office routine. In light of this change caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations are looking at new initiatives to engage with their employees. Motivation and employee engagement have emerged as critical priorities.

From virtual onboarding to hosting online meetings, reviews, coffee sessions and team lunches, managers are using several techniques to connect with their team in a contactless world.

While employees are adapting to these new changes, they're still seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth. All this with the hope to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

To help further understand these new changes, Sodexo BRS India conducted a study with CHROs across sectors like IT, BFSI and Consulting. This whitepaper brings forth key insights from the study, leadership views on Quality Of Life, and ways to attract and retain talent. More importantly, the whitepaper talks about creating great work experiences, while offering a good Quality Of Life to employees.

Chapter 1

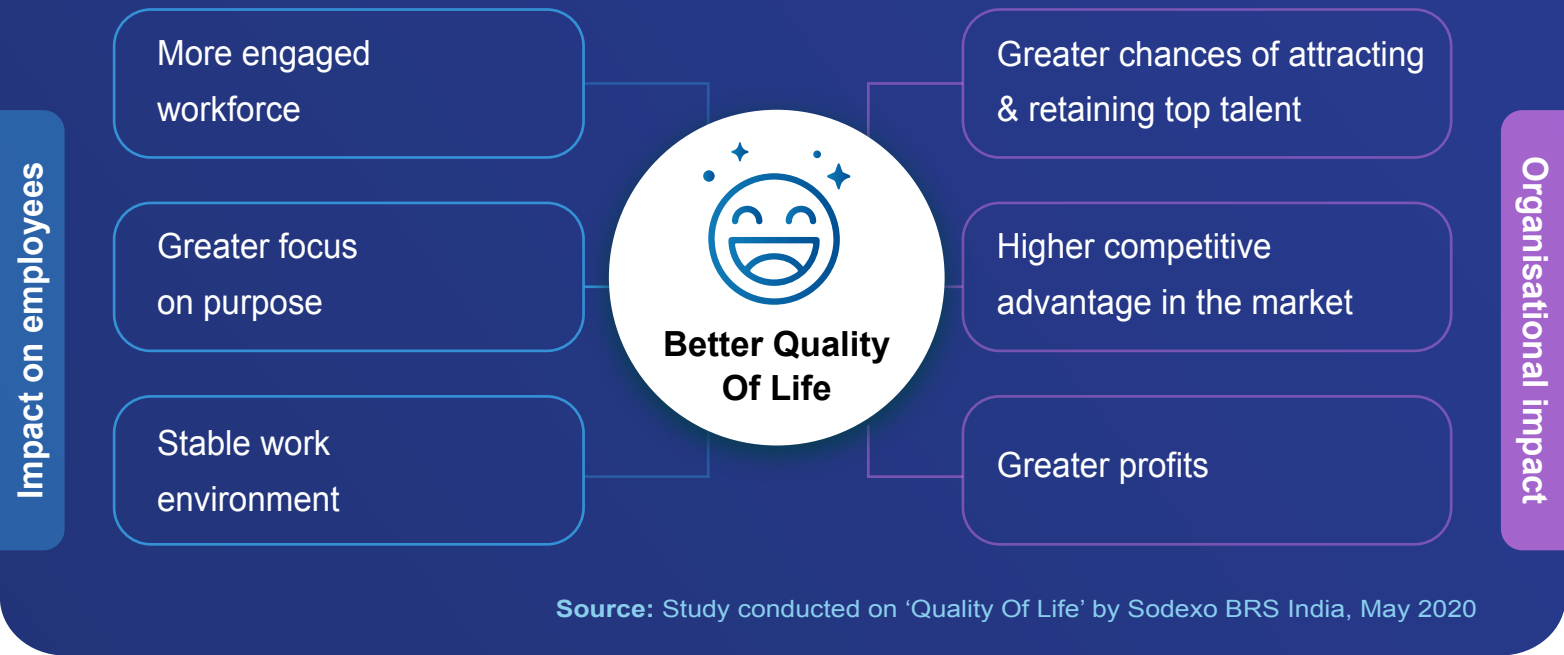
The Impact of Quality Of Life on Productivity and Employee Motivation

There's more success, where there are happy employees. Organisations can achieve this with the holistic concept of 'Quality Of Life' at work. It not only helps them retain, motivate and engage employees, but also bring work-life stability that in turn boosts productivity.



David Guest, Professor of Organisational Psychology at King's College London describes employee engagement as:
“A workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success and able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being”.

Quality Of Life: How it affects Employees and Organizations



Organisations aren't new to this correlation between employee productivity and their general well-being. Yet, the concept of 'Quality Of Life' largely remains unexplored. Tangible benefits such as team offsites, flexi-work hours and cafeteria set-ups among others have helped organisations ensure good employee experiences. This did work until the time when working from office was the norm.

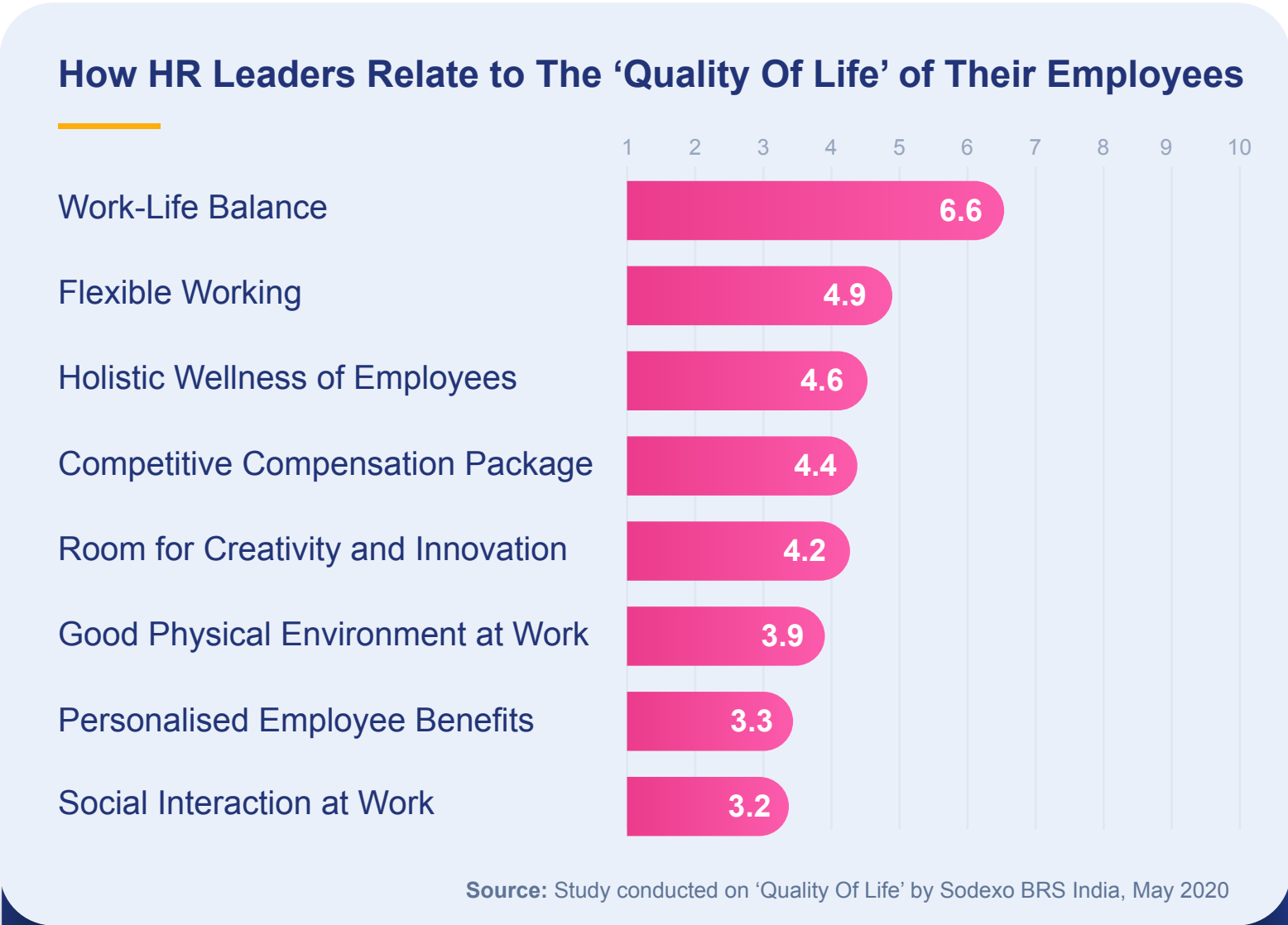
But, with the outbreak of COVID-19 in the early 2020, the ways of working and living changed. Organisations were quick to adapt to the remote working routine, enabling their workforce with digital tools to ensure continued productivity. However, with minimal or no in-person interactions, employee engagement initiatives that worked in a physical office setup were no longer relevant.

This social isolation adversely affected employee well-being, pushing organisations to relook at their strategies to enhance overall productivity.


Chapter 2


Quality Of Life: A Pre-COVID HR Perspective


Around 96% of the business leaders who participated in the study believe that Quality Of Life is undeniably a major enabler to attract and retain good talent. Being able to cater to employee needs and ensuring their continued well-being has become an indispensable initiative for employers. These are some of the aspects of Quality Of Life that HR leaders most relate to from a pre-COVID work environment.



TOP 3 ASPECTS

Work-Life Balance

Flexible Working

Holistic Wellness of Employees

The new work-from-home routine has changed employee needs and expectations. Here's how HR leaders looked at contributing towards a good Quality Of Life for their employees in a Pre-COVID world:



Work-Life Balance

Employees are likely to perform better when they are able to strike a balance between their work and personal lives. Having adequate time to pursue all their goals ensures that they are less stressed. This positively impacts their output, which in turn reduces the number of conflicts in the workplace and helps increase overall productivity.



Flexible Working

Businesses are recognising the benefits of flexible working programmes in the form of reduced costs, improved output and increased loyalty. Being mindful of employees' personal commitments and allowing them to work as per their schedule builds trust and improves employee productivity.



Holistic Wellness of Employees

Organisations are now designing and incorporating robust wellness programmes to help employees meet both their short-term and long-term health goals. Whether it's organising talks on eating right or conducting sessions for overall physical and mental well-being, organisations are finding ways to improve the health of their employees. Introducing even simple health & wellness benefit programmes can boost productivity company-wide, and help employees feel happy and satisfied at work.



Room for Creativity and Innovation

Creativity is essential for any organisation that wants to keep their business moving forward. To build on big ideas, employers need to encourage regular brainstorming sessions and host open platforms for employees to share ideas that are more likely to succeed.



Good Physical Environment at Work

Employees need to feel comfortable and calm in their physical work environment to deliver their best output. A healthy workplace environment also helps reduce costs related to absenteeism, workers' compensation, etc. Employees spend more than a third of their day at work, even in the current remote working scenario. Therefore, it is especially important to foster an environment that empowers individuals with the right space to work, think and collaborate effectively.



Personalised Employee Benefits

Organisations today comprise a multi-generational workforce, where each employee's needs are different from the other. The one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work anymore. Employees are used to personalisation as consumers and they're beginning to expect the same level of individualisation at work. Rather than just relying on market data, organisations can use insights about their employees to understand their needs and deliver customised benefit plans.



Social Interaction at Work

Strong social connections affect people positively, making them happier and healthier. This translates into better performance not just individually, but also as a workforce. Good social interactions also encourage team building and improve cross departmental collaboration. Organisations are introducing buddy programs and building mentor-mentee relationships to further foster a healthy remote working environment for employees.

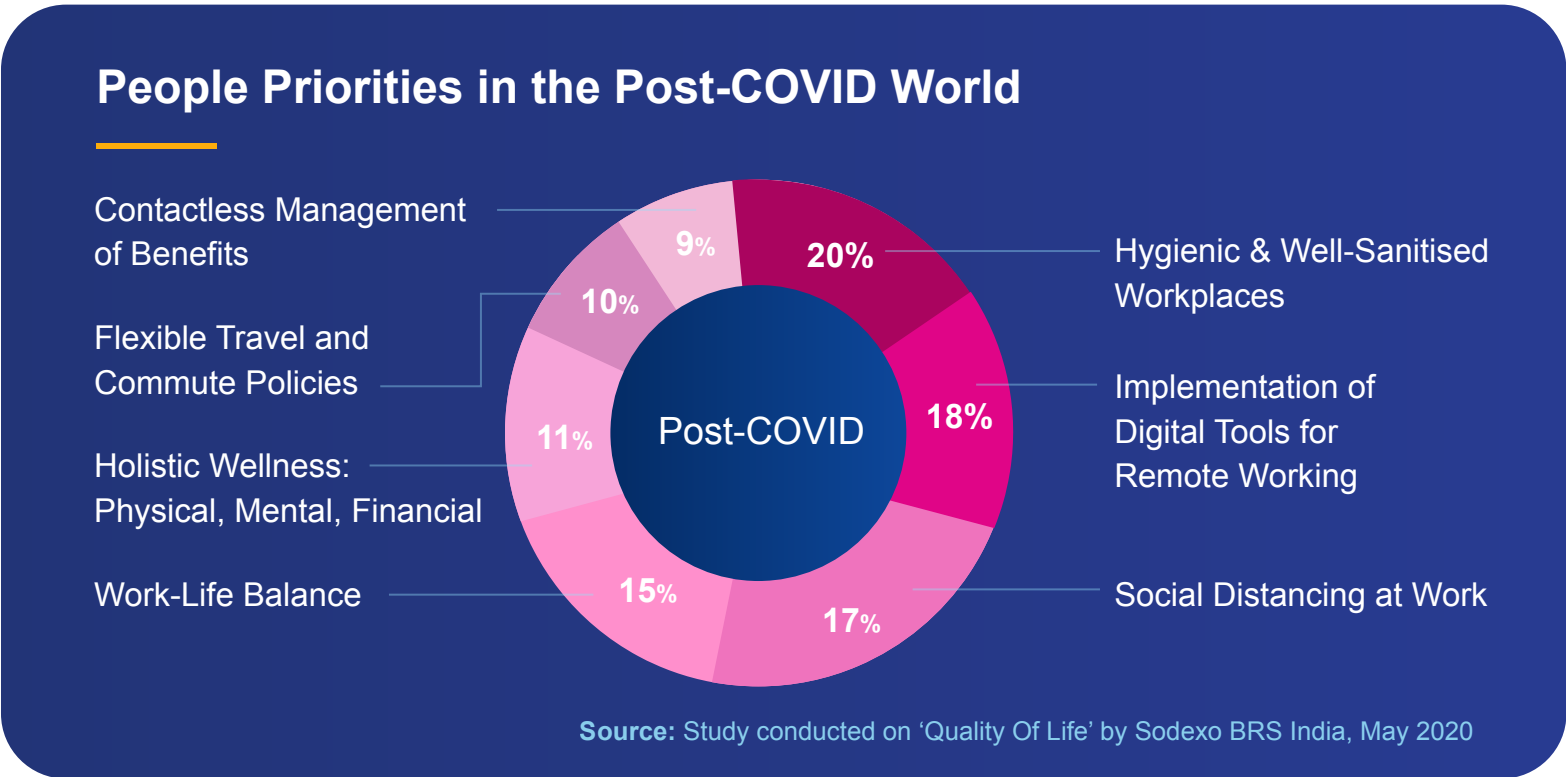
Adapting quickly to changing conditions & employee preferences, while keeping up with the latest trends will help organisations emerge successfully in the post-COVID world.

Chapter 3

People Priorities for Business Leaders in a Post-COVID World

Conventional wisdom has been that physical office spaces are critical to productivity and achieving success. That was true in the pre-COVID scenario. However, people have adapted to the work-from-home routines and learnt the art of collaboration through digital means.

Similarly, the factors affecting employee Quality Of Life are also changing. While it was largely driven by good physical workspaces, social interactions and other previously discussed factors, the pandemic has impacted employee priorities. The study highlights some of the areas that HR leaders will now focus more on, in addition to their people priorities before COVID-19:



In the post-pandemic world, the emphasis is more on hygienic and well-sanitised workplaces. Organisations are also looking to implement more digital tools to enable seamless remote working and ensure continued productivity.



Hygienic & Well-Sanitised Workplaces

With the opening up of the economy, organisations are planning to resume working out of office spaces. To build confidence amongst employees to return to workplaces, HR leaders are looking to keep up with all necessary precautions and hygiene. Apart from regular cleaning and sanitising the working environment, contactless serving of food and safe distancing in the cafeteria will be the new norm.



20%

Hygienic, well-sanitised environment is the leading priority among HR professionals when it comes to anticipating reopening of offices, followed by implementation of digital tools and practicing social distancing at work.



Implementation of Digital Tools for Remote Working

The study also highlights the increased emphasis on enabling employees to effectively work in a remote environment. The focus is now on implementation of effective digital tools to help employees collaborate better and deliver their best in a virtual set up. Organisations can offer a work-from-home allowance to help employees work efficiently. From ergonomic seating for their home-offices, to better wi-fi & mobile connections, and even medical aid - this allowance could be used to improve their personal well-being and productivity.



Social Distancing at Work

With workspaces expected to reopen, HR leaders are planning new strategies to ensure social distancing in the office. For example, distance seating can be ensured by allowing employees to take turns to use the office space on alternate days. To make workplaces as contactless as possible, administration can include automatic tea/coffee dispensers, foot-pedal sanitiser dispensers, printers with remote printing options and more.

Uncertainty and change are not easy to cope with, especially when the workforce is functioning remotely. Now is a good time for organisations to introduce strong recognition programmes to significantly improve employee performance and overall motivation. Frequently rewarding employees reinforces positive behaviour, which is crucial in the current remote working setup.

The change brought about by the pandemic is an opportunity for companies to reassess and recalibrate their employee experience strategies.

Chapter 4

Quality Of Life: An Indispensable Priority for Business Leaders

The impact of this pandemic is evident amongst individuals and businesses around the world. People are experiencing unexpected levels of disruption in their homes, communities, as well as in their jobs. With such uncertainties looming in the background, it is difficult for employees to stay motivated and focussed on delivering their best.

Ensuring a good Quality Of Life for employees thus becomes imperative for employers. There's a need to reassess employee engagement and experience to positively impact the productivity of the workforce. Fortunately, most of the organisations that participated in the study recognise this and are looking to implement policies to further keep their employees motivated.



To enable and enhance employee productivity around

54%

of the organisations are setting up dedicated budgets focussed on improving their Quality Of Life.

It is often experienced that; happy & satisfied employees are better positioned to deliver results and support their companies in times of need. When organisations prioritise the overall well-being of their employees and focus of improving their Quality Of Life, there will be a significant difference in the progress of the business.

Investing in superior employee experience practices, while looking out for their personal and professional well-being, will help keep their spirits up in these unprecedented times. Thus, a people-first approach to organisational strategy based on a high sense of purpose will serve businesses well, today and in the long run.

To reimagine 'Quality Of Life' at work with
new-age employee benefits, write to:
Client@India.Sodexo.com

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