

The Tide has Turned

Successful leadership and Mentally Healthy Teams

Every business aspires to retain its top talent, establish itself as a strong brand, and stand out against the growing competition. Many leaders, however, are still held back by traditional ways of managing their human capital. They simply ignore warning signs of burnout in their teams and dangerous levels of stress evident in the organization. Even if they do take notice, they often do not understand how to manage this looming disruption effectively or, worse, do not see it as their job to respond.

By not taking immediate action on workplace mental wellbeing, leaders significantly miss out on growth opportunities and lose their key talent.

In this report, we will go through the synergies between successful leadership and promoting mental well-being by demonstrating 3 key trends and practical solutions to address each:

- 1) Modeling self-care
- 2) Fostering an inclusive culture
- 3) Investing in flexible and customizable well-being solutions





A global burnout crisis

Leadership post-Covid

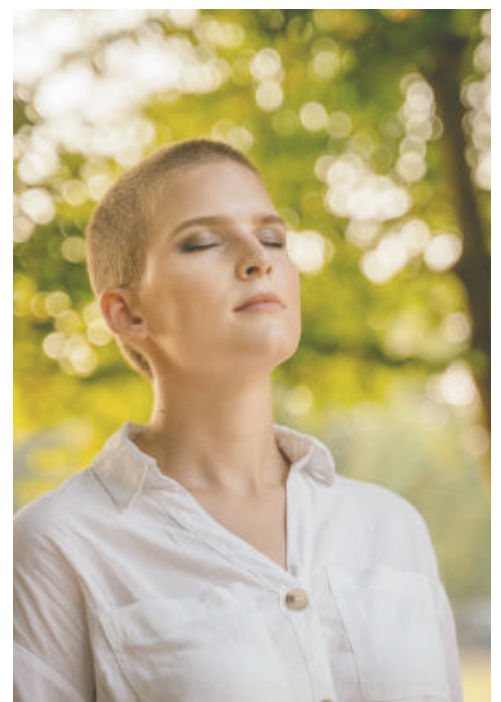
Our fast-paced world of today is exacerbated by crushing workload and increasing competition. This presents a huge challenge for leaders.

Burnout has been a pressing issue, and if left unchecked, it could lead to disaster for business and leaders.

Mounting evidence and data point to the strong correlation between investment in mental wellbeing of employees and increased levels of profitability and healthy growth. Taking concrete steps towards this direction is even more important during these difficult and unpredictable times.

In fact, one of the few silver-linings of the pandemic is evident progress with destigmatizing mental health. In the process of wreaking havoc on our personal and professional lives, COVID, for example, has catalyzed conversations about the importance of providing mental health initiatives at work. The pandemic has renewed many leaders' understanding and concern for mental health for reasons far beyond the bottom line. For a savvy leader today, creating space for the team in which everyone can feel safe and respected is a core responsibility that can drive performance, relationships, and brand.

A team's mental wellbeing plays a key role in this context. Leaders who aspire to remain competitive actively promote their employees' mental wellbeing.



Mental wellbeing in business

What many leaders get wrong

‘Mental health’ can mean a lot of things, depending on whom you ask. Many people confuse mental health – which is a positive state, like physical health – with mental ill-health. But mental well-being, according to the World Health Organization, is “the state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”.

Successful leadership and mental well-being

Most organizations now understand the fundamental link between a healthy workforce and increased productivity. And most of us understand that health and wellness include mental wellness. Leaders have a special role to play in today’s environment as they bear corporate responsibility for employees in their daily working lives and influence their health and well-being in various ways.

This is not only because one of the primary responsibilities of leaders is to create the conditions for people to do their best work, but also because failing to take care of employees' mental health and well-being can have a ripple effect throughout an entire organization. This results in weakening trust, engagement and psychological safety – which are generally considered to be key attributes of high performing teams. This moment calls for a new type of leadership: one in which leaders embrace mental health as a key component of growth and success.



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Effective and successful leaders protect and nurture their most valuable asset: their team. The best way to do this is by investing in the emotional and mental health of employees.
 ”
 Marjan Najafi, Qyro

Key trends - how does the future look like?

To be an effective and successful leader who ensures healthy growth in the business, we foresee 3 key leadership features.

1) Leaders who model self-care

Self-care has become a buzzword nowadays, which has increased awareness of how essential it is to practice. However, even though corporate leaders may recognize it as important, it's not always considered a top priority, but merely given lip service. Unlike conventional belief, self-care isn't just something we do to recover from illness but is also preventive and proactive. It is a way to demonstrate that you prioritize your well-being and want to be at your best, both personally and professionally. Practicing sports or meditation and relaxation techniques are probably the most important and accessible ways to care for your physical and mental wellbeing. Consistent self-care is what sustains our energy and motivation to keep moving through life successfully, and

it is a tool of resilience to help us through the hard times. It is a tool that can contribute greatly to a company's success.

When leaders authentically role model self-care, they are encouraging healthy work environments where their team members can truly thrive.

Self-care is integral to how you lead because it helps you function at your best. If we optimize how we lead ourselves, then we can drastically improve our ability to lead others.

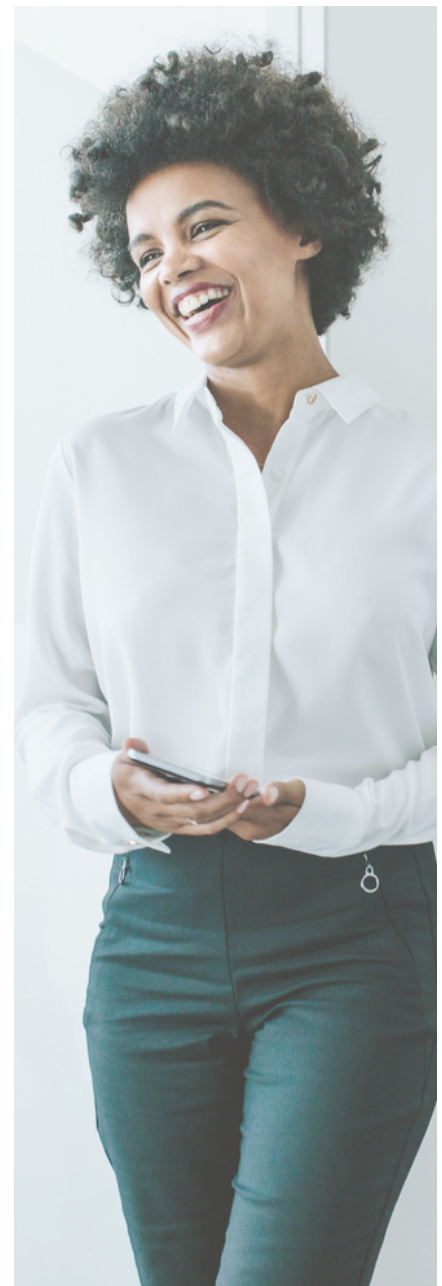
By role modeling self-care, we are enabling others to see that they have permission to take care of themselves too.

Here are how leaders can model self-care:

Make your own version of it. Self-care is as individual as the person practicing it, and it can come in many shapes and forms. For example, you may not be a meditation person, but it helps you when you take a short walk around the block outside your office (or vice versa).

A successful leader will be enabled to define what is most suitable for her or him.

Make it micro. Taking care of your mind does not need to take hours.





Short diversions can provide a powerful boost, and there is a myriad of options. For example, you can try an online mindfulness meditation to help with your emotional regulation during the day. If you enjoy writing, maybe you can consider journaling for a few minutes each day to understand your mind better. If you like talking on the phone, you can reach out to the people you have not spoken with in a while and increase your social connectedness. A simple walk is always a good way to clear your mind. In fact, numerous studies point to how taking short but regular breaks or “micro-breaks” help prevent decision fatigue, strengthen motivation, increase productivity and creativity, and boost memory and learning.

Make it official. Once you’ve come up with a list of what works on you, make sure to put it in your calendar and make it official.

Experiment with different variations. You will never get it exactly perfect on the first day. Once you have started, reflect on what’s working for you, and what you might want to change or add to your routine.

You can also look to your peers and colleagues for new ideas. There’s no need to reinvent the wheel — if something they’re doing seems appealing to you, use it or make your own version of it.

Finally - share it with your team. As a leader, you set the tone for the rest of your team. So, make sure you share what’s worked for you and make it clear through both words and actions that you know the importance of self-care. If you’re open about your investments in your well-being, your team and your entire organization will follow your lead.

For years, overwork and being perpetually “busy” have been seen as a badge of honor. However, what is often missed out on is how self-care facilitates the capacity for peak performance. The new badge of honor is in investment in our well-being and taking care of ourselves. After all, it’s a leader’s job to care for others and develop them to be their best. It’s time to take that seriously.

At Qyro, we have made life easy for leaders who like to model self-care.

For example, we help them develop incredibly simple yet effective relaxation skills through which they can inspire their team members and create a healthier future for themselves and their company.

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I think human-centered leadership is about trying to be emotionally generous to yourself, and even more so to your team. Sometimes the hardest parts of human development begin at home.

Matthew Guilford

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2) Leaders who foster an inclusive culture where dialogue on mental wellbeing is the norm

Open conversations about mental health help break the taboo that often characterizes the topic of mental well-being. It is also an incredible tool to encourage your people to feel included in the team. Traditionally, many leaders promoted a “hush-hush”

culture when it came to mental well-being conversations. Many employees would feel ashamed to say they need to leave early to go see their therapist or life coach, for example. We see instances such as these becoming more and more normalized. Savvy leaders of the future will foster an inclusive environment, a safe space where employees can feel comfortable discussing the subject.

So how can this be done?

As a first step, we recommend encouraging employees to openly use the term “mental well-being” during the day. This can be done by investing in mindfulness and other mental well-being training for employees across the organization.

At Qyro, for example, we have created 5 mental well-being programs that employees can do without any disruption to the business schedule:

- Mindfulness
- Affirmations
- Visualization
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Autogenic Relaxation

Another effective way would be to embed mental well-being into existing training sessions, company newsletters, and meeting agendas to help break the stigma. Incorporating it into day-to-day conversations further reassures employees that the company acknowledges the importance of mental health in the workplace, and this goes together with role modeling behaviors which we discussed in the previous section.

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Calm minds perform. Stressed out minds react.

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3) Leaders who invest in flexible and customizable well-being solutions

The rule is very simple: there is no one solution that fits all. Expect your team’s status and their needs, as well as your own, to change over time. That’s why it is imperative to check in with yourself and your people on a regular basis.



The outcome of these “simple” check-ins will be golden for successful leadership and will eventually help problem-solve any issues that may come up in the future. Those conversations will also give an opportunity to reiterate norms and practices that support mental health or make changes as necessary.

Invest in customizable relaxation techniques.

There is no doubt that a calm and well-rested mind has much better focus, makes better decisions, and leads to enhanced productivity. Now more than ever, a savvy leader will prioritize proactive and preventive workplace mental health training for leaders and their teams. This way, they can be equipped with the right skills to weather any storm in their personal and professional lives.

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Give your employees a day off, they will rest for one day. Teach them a relaxation technique, they will be well-rested and sharp every day!

Marjan Najafi, Qyro

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The techniques we offer at Qyro are highly customizable where each person is empowered to create his or her own journey with it.

A savvy leader does not make assumptions about what their direct reports need. Therefore, it is imperative to take a customized approach to address stressors and foster a healthy work environment.

Provide different options to your team and let them decide what works best for them.

Final thoughts

Today, business leaders face a new set of pressures and complexities which require a new set of solutions and perspectives. Investing in people's mental well-being is not just a nice-to-have attribute. It is a must. The only way to ensure continued success and growth, savvy leaders will have to create a mentally healthy work environment for themselves and their teams.

Meet the authors



MARJAN NAJAFI

With over 14 years of international experience in private banking, financial services, and wealth management catering to high and ultra-high net worth clients in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, Marjan has merged her lifelong passion for mental well-being and business success by co-founding Qyro.

CEO & Co-Founder



DR. JOHANNES LE BLANC

As a seasoned leadership consultant and executive coach with over 20 years of international experience in the private and public sectors, Johannes has in-depth knowledge of relaxation techniques and transformational growth processes for senior executives and their teams.

Co-Founder

About Qyro

Qyro is an award-winning Swiss company based in Zurich. Our mission is to equip professionals with world-class solutions that give them more control over their life and growth.

By partnering with leaders and businesses around the world, we provide 360-degree integration of mental wellness and stress resilience solutions. We help with the full spectrum of services - from setting up tailored solutions, analysis, and strategy development to executing customized transformation.

No matter where you are in your employee well-being journey, Qyro will be the right partner for you. Contact us today to speak with one of our experts: contact@qyro.io or visit us at **Qyro.io**