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LEITZ WHITE PAPER  
2025



# THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

DRIVING CHANGE. FEELING GOOD



# INTRODUCTION

## A 10 YEAR PERSPECTIVE

**LEITZ, A PART OF ACCO BRANDS, HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL THINK-PIECES ON THE FUTURE OF WORK IN THE LAST 10 YEARS.**

While this time frame has seen rapid change, the broad principles behind most of the topics explored in our publications such as **'The Future of Work'**, **'Work is Where You Are'** and **'Work Smart, Work Mobile'** remain valid today.

- In these, we discussed the **decline of pure office work**, the rise of mobile, co-working offices, 'third' places and Working from Home (hereafter WFH).
- We looked at the **pressures created by long working hours**, the cult of presenteeism and the consequences of employee burn-out.

- We explored the **impact of changing demography** – the different values that young people bring to the workplace, the ageing profile of the workforce in most countries, the demand for greater gender equality, and the economic and societal benefits of more women in senior positions.

- We examined the **changing structure of careers**, the competition for talent, skills shortages and the opportunities and threats posed by technology.

Recently we have focused on **well-being**, a **mega-trend** particularly pertinent to the workplace – whether in offices, third places or working from home and embracing peoples' mental and physical health.

All the above continue to have relevance 10 years later and are likely to continue to do so. However, well-being is gaining traction, for a wide range of reasons and is now an area of focus for ACCO Brands and Leitz.



ORGANISATIONS NEED TO  
CHALLENGE THEIR EXISTING  
APPROACH TO WELL-BEING AND  
INVEST TIME IN EXPLORING THE  
ROOT CAUSE OF WELL-BEING  
ISSUES, AS WELL AS ASSESSING  
THE IMPACT OF EXISTING AND  
PROPOSED POLICIES.

Actions to Outcomes Employee  
Well-being in a Global Workforce  
Deloitte

This paper is an exploration of the changing workplace. Its title, **‘Driving Change. Feeling Good’** is a signal of the importance of mental and physical well-being within the workplace and that when harnessed, movement and momentum are key to thriving as people and as companies.

# **CHAPTER 1**

# **WELL-BEING IS TAKING CENTRE STAGE**

# WELL-BEING IS A GLOBAL MEGA-TREND

**AS A FOCUS FOR COUNTRIES, COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS, WELL-BEING IS A MEGA-TREND, INCREASINGLY INCLUDED ALONGSIDE HEALTH AND THE ECONOMY AS GOVERNMENTAL METRICS.**

The **WHO European Well-Being Economy Initiative** stresses how a country's economic performance is not always an indicator of individual well-being: '*A prospering economy does not necessarily lead to well-being and prosperity for everyone.*'

**THIS IS ECHOED BY A 2024 REPORT BY EUROHEALTHNET, THAT IDENTIFIES POLICY LED BY WELL-BEING AS ONE THAT MOVES THE FOCUS AWAY FROM GDP GROWTH TO ONE THAT VALUES HUMAN HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, SOCIAL EQUITY, AND WELL-BEING AS CORE INDICATORS OF SUCCESS.<sup>1</sup>**

The problem here is that while GDP goals can be easily measured and influenced and realised in the short term, these other metrics are less tangible and require an investment mindset. GDP is in the here and now – the others potentially take much longer to realise.

This is true of companies as well as nations, where quarterly results are too often the main drivers of strategy. 2025 marks the 20th anniversary of the business book, '*Built to Last*.'<sup>2</sup> One of its key tenets was that successful companies have an ideology based on their core values and purpose, and that success flows out of these.

Taking these principles and relating them to well-being, it can be argued that companies that recognise that the well-being of their people is a driver of performance and profitability, will prosper disproportionately to those that don't.

1. Improving health equity in Europe. Priorities for the 2024–2029 EU policy landscape. *EuroHealthNet, 2024*.

2. *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies.*  
*James Collins and Jerry Porras*

## VIRTUALLY EVERY 21ST CENTURY WESTERN ORGANISATION IS A 'PEOPLE BUSINESS' IN SOME WAY AND THIS WILL ONLY INCREASE WITH THE TRANSITION 'POWERED BY THE HEARTS, MINDS, AND ESSENTIAL HUMAN TRAITS OF PEOPLE'.<sup>3</sup>

Whether employees are working in traditional offices, from their homes, in co-worker spaces, as nomads always travelling from one digital oasis to the next, or adopting a hybrid work model, their well-being is essential for both personal and organisational success, from absenteeism to staff retention to individual and collective quality of output.

The more remote people are from offices, the greater the potential precarity of their well-being. Governments, trades unions, corporations and individual workers are becoming cognisant of the consequences of blurred lines between personal and professional life: in the UK, Labour government policy is to give home workers the '*right to switch off*' to protect home workers outside official business hours.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in France, employers are expected to respect the employees private life and time by contacting employees only during the fixed working hours agreed in advance.

3. When people thrive, business thrives: The case for human sustainability, *Deloitte Insights*, 2024.

4. Labour's right to switch off – how could the new plan work for employees? *The Independent*, August 22nd 2024



**IN 2019 NEW ZEALAND  
INITIATED A 'WELL-BEING  
BUDGET' WITH THE  
OBJECTIVE OF ENSURING  
THAT THE WELL-BEING OF  
ALL NEW ZEALANDERS  
IS AT THE HEART OF  
INVESTMENT DECISIONS.**

# WELL-BEING IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL

**WORKFORCES ARE NOW MORE DIVERSE THAN EVER, WITH EVERY COUNTRY EXPERIENCING MORE RICHLY VARIED WORKER PROFILES – WHETHER BY AGE, GENDER IDENTIFICATION, RACE, BODY TYPE, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CAPABILITIES, OR FAITH – RESULTING IN A MYRIAD OF EXPECTATIONS, PREFERENCES AND NEEDS.**

Consequently, companies should think of well-being as both a holistic concept, embedded in the way they behave and one that should be tailored and individualised for the people who work within them. Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, prioritise well-being and see a life beyond work. As the employers of the future, they are influencing workplace policies and design.

This is not new, and we should not be surprised by generational differences in the workplace. Over 10 years ago, Leitz's 2014 **Future of Work** report cited a global survey of Millennials, commissioned by the Chartered Management Institute, which found that 68% wanted to initiate most of their own learning and development and decide for themselves how to blend their home life and work life.

**10 YEARS LATER THE PRINCIPLES REMAIN – HOWEVER, THE REQUIREMENT HAS INTENSIFIED**

The key issue – and one that only time will answer, is whether a younger generation has emerged from the post economic crisis, post-pandemic period, which will continue to hold these values as they grow older, pioneering the way for future generations, following in their slipstream.

McKinsey's 2024 analysis of spend in well-being categories shows Gen Z and millennial consumers spend more on wellness products and services, across all individual sectors – general healthcare, appearance, fitness, nutrition, sleep and mindfulness, than older generations.<sup>5</sup>

In the workplace specifically, The European Strategy and Policy Analysis System's 2024 report, *Choosing Europe's Future: Global Trends to 2040*, also states how Gen Z and Millennials are challenging attitudes towards work, with strong demands related to work-life balance.


Encouragingly, Deloitte's *Global 2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey* reported positive signs from younger respondents that employers are becoming cognisant of the mental well-being of their employees.

Just over half of Gen Zs (54%) and Millennials (55%) agree their employers take the mental health of employees seriously, and about half of respondents have seen positive changes within their workplaces over the past year regarding mental health.

**55% OF GEN Z'S AND  
MILLENNIALS AGREE THEIR  
EMPLOYERS TAKE MENTAL  
HEALTH SERIOUSLY.**



5. The trends defining the \$1.8 trillion global wellness market in 2024, McKinsey, & Company, January 2024



**JUST OVER HALF OF GEN Z  
(54%) AND MILLENNIALS (55%)  
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TAKE THE MENTAL HEALTH OF  
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Deloitte's Global 2024 Gen Z  
and Millennial Survey

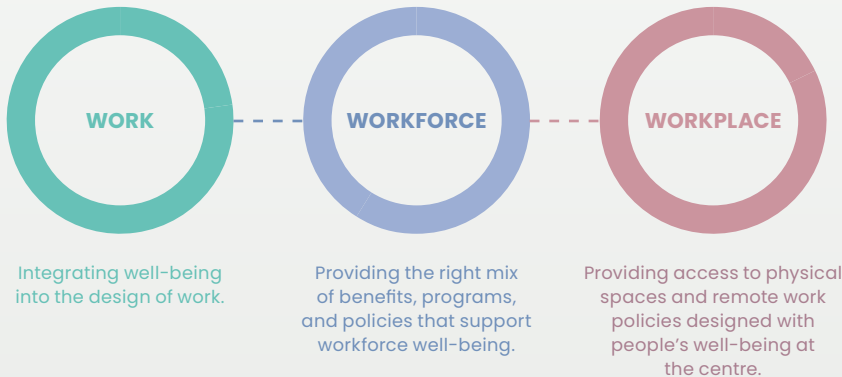
# WELL-BEING – WHAT IS IT?

**IN THEIR REPORT, WELL-BEING A NEW CORNERSTONE FOR ESG STRATEGY AND REPORTING, DELOITTE GRAPHICALLY ISOLATE THE THREE ELEMENTS OF WORK WELL-BEING.**

***WHILE THESE CAN APPEAR SEPARATE, THEY ARE IN FACT INTERLINKED. ALL THREE MUST BE ADDRESSED IF COMPANIES CAN TRULY ASPIRE TO DELIVERING WELL-BEING BENEFITS TO ITS EMPLOYEES AND INDIRECTLY TO THE WIDER WORLD.***

Well-being is a broad term, that we often use loosely. One definition is the combination of feeling good and functioning well. Problematically, these are subjective criteria and can be hard to measure, track and compare between individuals or far larger cohorts.

Well-being isn't just about happiness – you can be happy at a job that is taking a high physical and mental toll. Instead, it is a multi-faceted, holistic concept. Two people in identical circumstances may evaluate their well-being quite differently, because of their different outlooks on life, their past experiences, their future expectations, and their circumstances.



Source: Deloitte, Well-Being: a New Cornerstone for ESG Strategy and Reporting

Alternatively, well-being can be defined in ways that are so detailed and granular that weighing up different elements can be problematic – the UK government has defined 59 measures of well-being, grouped by 10 topic areas.<sup>6</sup> Tracking these for any organisation could be prohibitive in time and effort.

Gallup, meanwhile, has identified five core elements of well-being in peoples' lives.

## 1. CAREER

## 2. SOCIAL

## 3. FINANCIAL

## 4. PHYSICAL

## 5. COMMUNITY

For those in employment, work and the workplace experience have an important role to play in each of these.

- Individual career aspirations are fundamental to many peoples' personal identities and their sense of self-worth and accomplishment.
- Work plays a central role in our social lives. People with strong social connections tend to have lower rates of depression and anxiety and are more resilient to stress.<sup>7</sup> Many people find fulfilment in being in the office – 1 in 5 have a best friend at work.<sup>8</sup> Social connections can have a positive impact on our mental well-being, as well as our physical health, by improving cardiovascular health, boosting the immune system, boosting brain function and even increasing lifespan.<sup>9</sup>

- Jobs that are rewarding in every sense create not only financial security but also personal fulfilment.
- The workplace creates a sense of community – cohesive environments with shared goals have been shown to enhance quality of life on a number of metrics, from giving people the incentive to go to work to how they work as teams.

Consequently, positive mental and physical workplace experiences can influence not only how we feel at work, but how well we live in the wider world and how long we live to enjoy these benefits.

6. UK Measures of National Well-being Dashboard, *Office of National Statistics*, 2024  
7. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health in the General Population: A Systematic Review, *Journal of Effective Disorders*, 2020.

8. *Gallup* 2024

9. Why Social Relationships Are Important for Physical Health: A Systems Approach to Understanding and Modifying Risk and Protection, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 2018



**WELL-BEING ISN'T JUST ABOUT HAPPINESS –  
YOU CAN BE HAPPY AT A JOB THAT IS TAKING A  
HIGH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL TOLL. INSTEAD, IT  
IS A MULTI-FACETED, HOLISTIC CONCEPT.**

# WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE

**REGARDLESS OF LOCATION, PEOPLES' IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WORKING ENVIRONMENTS CONTINUE TO GROW IN IMPORTANCE, AS THIS PAPER EXPLORES.**

Gallup's 2024 *State of the Global Workplace* report showed that only 13% of employees in the European region were engaged in their role, representing the worst engagement level worldwide. An additional 72% of European employees were found to be lacking engagement, (essentially 'quiet, quitters' – defined as 'filling a seat, and watching the clock'). Meanwhile a further 16% were actively disengaged.

Unsurprisingly, engagement, stress and well-being are interlinked: while they are minimally productive, the disengaged 'Quiet Quitters' are ironically more likely to be stressed and burnt out than engaged colleagues, because they feel lost and disconnected from their workplace.

Regardless of location, stress has become embedded in the work experience of too many people. In Gallup's report, 41% of employees claim they experience "a lot of stress" in the workplace. Not surprisingly this reached a peak during the pandemic, yet reported stress is still above any year prior to 2020. While the picture in Europe is slightly more encouraging, 37% still experience a lot of stress and this is only 2 percentage points below 2020. What is clear is that without significant intervention – by government, by companies, these high levels are not going to suddenly disappear.

**41% OF EMPLOYEES CLAIM THEY EXPERIENCE  
"A LOT OF STRESS" IN THE WORKPLACE.**

*State of the Global Workplace, Gallup 2024*

Stress is symbiotically linked to burn-out, described by the WHO as an occupational phenomenon, ‘**A syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed**,’<sup>10</sup> characterised by three dimensions:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
- Increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism towards it.
- Reduced professional efficacy.

A 2024 survey in the UK by Deloitte, found 63% of respondents are experiencing at least one characteristic of burnout, a significant uplift from 51% in 2021.<sup>11</sup>

**SOME OF THIS GROWTH CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO INCREASED MEDIA FOCUS ON MENTAL WELL-BEING, WITH EMPLOYEES ABLE TO IDENTIFY SYMPTOMS THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE PREVIOUSLY NOT RECOGNISED.**

As we will explore later, although mental stress tends to be the focus of much commentary, physical well-being is also of huge importance in the workplace. Physical stresses are also significant in their effects on work performance. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) from prolonged sitting, poor posture and inadequate equipment are linked to longer term absenteeism – an average of 19 days per case. Additionally, mental stress often evinces itself in physical strain, as anyone who has ever had a headache brought on by tension will know.

**GIVEN THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF THE LINK BETWEEN WELL-BEING OF MIND AND BODY – THE BRITISH SAFETY COUNCIL STATE THAT ONE IN THREE MSD CASES RESULTS IN SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS – WELL-BEING NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AT AS AN HOLISTIC, INTERRELATED PHENOMENON.**<sup>12</sup>

Thus, there is strong evidence of the mutual reinforcement, or even cause and effect, of stress and engagement with well-being – physical and mental, with consequent effect on performance, absenteeism and innovation and creativity in the workforce.

10. 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), World Health Organisation

11. Mental health and employers, Deloitte, May 2024

12. Hybrid work – don’t let it become a pain in the neck, British Safety Council, 2024

# **CHAPTER 2**

# **THE CHANGING WORKPLACE**

# THE GROWTH OF FLEXIBLE AND HYBRID WORKING

## AS WITH 'WELL-BEING' THERE IS NO SINGLE DEFINITION OF HYBRIDITY.

Eurofound classify it as, *'A form of work organisation which results from the interplay of four main elements: physical, temporal, virtual and social.'*<sup>13</sup> According to their definition, working different hours, including a four-day week are forms of hybrid working. In 2023, the most recent year for which data is available, initiatives such as half-day Friday and early departures have chipped away at the conventional 5-day week. In 2023, the actual weekly working hours for people aged 20-64 in their main job, in the EU, averaged 36 hours.<sup>14</sup>

However, this masks differences by job function – 41 hours for managers and 34 for clerical workers.

This 'interplay' of number of days, working hours and locations can be complex, involving a mix of office, home and myriad third place environments (from co-working spaces to cafes), the relative proportions varying according to company policy, roles and functions, individual preferences, seasonality, type of work being carried out etc.

**IN OUR 2015 PUBLICATION, *WORK SMART, WORK MOBILE*, WE NOTED THAT AS CROSS-FUNCTIONAL AND COLLABORATIVE WORK INCREASED, WITH COMPANIES TEAMING UP ON PROJECTS, MORE WORK WOULD INEVITABLY TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE OF AN OFFICE 'ANCHOR.'**

Covid-19 was an accelerator of pre-existing evolution in where we work and how we work. Arguably we are now where we were always going to be one day, just faster and without the ease and comfort of gradual adaptation, and with the occasional step back.

# RETURNING TO THE OFFICE PREFERENCES & WHERE PEOPLE WORK BEST

**“HOW YA GONNA KEEP ‘EM DOWN ON THE FARM (AFTER THEY’VE SEEN PAREE?)” WAS A POPULAR SONG AFTER WWI, EXPRESSING THE CONCERN THAT AMERICAN SOLDIERS WOULD NOT WANT TO GO BACK TO FAMILY.**

Getting people to re-engage with working in traditional offices is one of the greatest challenges facing companies – often equated with ‘getting the toothpaste back into the tube’.

Mandates by large corporations to get people back into offices full-time continue to have variable success. The attempts to mandate a 5-day office-based week by companies from J.P Morgan in 2021 to Amazon in 2024, still cause controversy among employees.

The debate is re-exposing the differences between companies that display X or Y management traits – a theory dating from the MIT Sloan School of Management in the 1950s – which doesn’t mean that it doesn’t contain some universal and enduring truths.

- **Theory X** assumes that employees dislike work and will attempt to avoid it and thus require constant supervision and material incentivisation.
- **Theory Y** assumes a motivated workforce, for whom job satisfaction is an intrinsic reward and can be given responsibility and trusted to work to the best of their abilities.

# FULL TIME BACK TO THE OFFICE IS A HEADLINE GRABBER, BUT IT DOESN'T REFLECT REALITY FOR MOST DESK WORKERS AND MANY OCCUPATIONS CANNOT BE DONE EVEN PARTIALLY FROM HOME.

Data released by EuroStat in September 2024 showed that only 22% of all employed people worked from home all or some of the time compared to 14% in 2019, but they are just a small minority.

Nevertheless, only a few jobs require 5 days a week attendance – most will at some stage be doing some homeworking, visiting other premises, travelling on business, using third spaces from serviced premises to bars and coffee shops. In research by Leesman in 2024, 5% of respondents say they are never in the office while a near equivalent 9% say they are always there. The reality for the 85% in the middle is how hybrid they are, and the likelihood is that this will depend on several factors including types of projects worked on at any one time.<sup>15</sup>

**LEITZ'S 2023 SURVEY OF GERMAN DESK WORKERS THROUGH GFK SHOWED THAT CONTRARY TO A POPULAR STEREOTYPE, THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO WORK AT HOME FIVE DAYS A WEEK.**

Of the total sample, a virtually equal proportion wanted to work in the office all the time (26%) as wanted to be at home 5 days a week (23%) – the rest wanted a mixture.

There can be good reasons for all of this, from a desire for variety and the exercise of personal choice, to locations where people believe they perform best on specific tasks to well-being factors and the quality of their surroundings. And again, these can be interlinked.

Leitz's research also makes it clear that most people see different environments as positively associated with different tasks.

When people who work in the office and at home were asked which places are best for different types of work tasks, the home was rated significantly better on 'Any work that requires focus and concentration, by 65%'.

15. Power of Place: The Difference between Average and Outstanding, Leesman, 2024

16. Return to the Office 2024, Centre for Cities

Specifically, the home was preferred for:

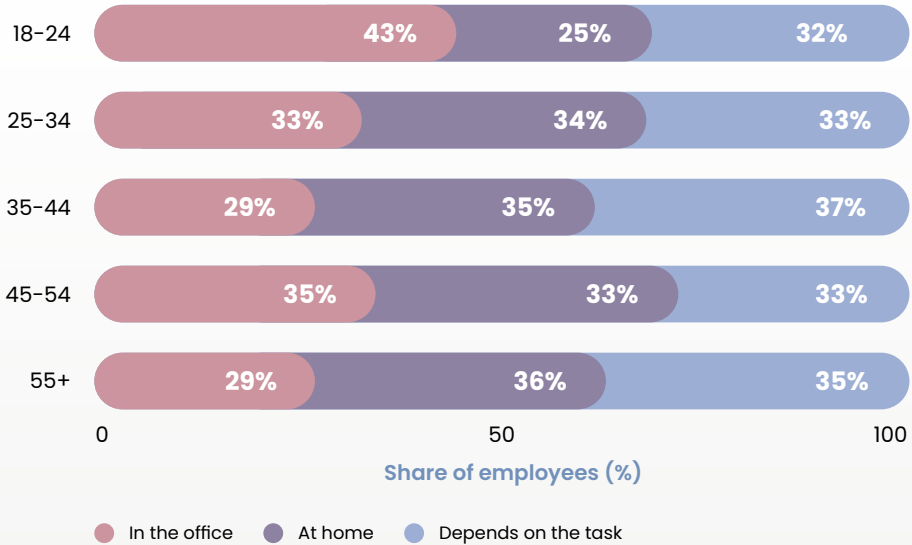


This may reflect their comfort with the home environment or the unsuitability of their office for focus, or alternatively a bit of both. Equally the 65% of those who see their home as preferable for focus and concentration should not over-ride the 35% who do not.

Contrary to popular opinion that young people more likely to want to work at home, **The Centre for Cities** have produced research that young people are more likely to feel they are more productive in the office. Part of this may be their drive for socialisation or the desire to learn from their managers face to face; but equally it may be attributable to the lack of space at home. We will explore space and equipment in homes later.

# YOUNGER LONDON WORKERS WORK BETTER IN THE OFFICE, OLDER WORKERS AT HOME.

Where London employees self-report working best, by age



Source: Return to the Office, How London Compares to Other Global Cities, Centre for Cities 2024

**WHAT THIS SUGGESTS IS THAT COMPANIES THAT INFLEXIBLY REQUIRE WORKER PRESENCE IN OFFICES MAY NOT BE GETTING THE BEST OUTPUT FROM THEIR PEOPLE IN WORK TASKS WHICH ARE PROBABLY THE MOST DEMANDING AND HIGH VALUE THAT THEY PERFORM. EQUALLY THOSE WHO WANT A FULLY REMOTE WORKFORCE ARE CREATING OTHER PROBLEMS.**

In this nuanced context, it is tempting to wonder what leaders who demand full time office attendance – dubbed ‘*Sun Kings*’ in reference to Louis XIV’s absolute monarchy – believe their employee’s

working lives are really like and what combination of environments is right, not just for their well-being, but for their effectiveness. What leaders may feel is an autocratic show of strength, can actually be the reverse.

A paper published in S&P Global in 2024 examined 137 different return-to-office announcements over the previous year. It concluded that managers use return-to-office mandates, “**to reassert control over employees and blame employees as a scapegoat for bad firm performance**”.<sup>17</sup>

While those demanding total return to work are a vocal and newsworthy minority, the reality is that in most cities there continues to be a gradual, but variable shift of the balance of activity back to offices – but the crucial term is balance. In London the most frequent number of office-mandated days has quietly moved up from two to three in one year – an average of 3.1 days a week, slightly behind Paris at 3.2 days.<sup>18</sup>

## FRIDAY, UNSURPRISINGLY, IS THE EMPTIEST DAY OF THE WEEK IN OFFICES.

A significant variable in addition to type of business (for example, a recent ZEW report contrasts IT and manufacturing, with 82% and 48% of employees working at home some of the time), is size of company.<sup>19</sup> Large companies are more likely to offer more home working than small or medium ones. Causes could include commuting time, with larger companies more likely to be centralised, also that smaller companies are more intimate in culture and thus more dependent on a higher level of presence.

Cultural factors are also important in different geographies. Remote and home working is more in demand in countries where there is a strong element of individualism – which fits the UK more than France, where there is a tradition of a more formalised authoritarian corporate style in the workplace. Typically, French companies have more layers of senior management than is the norm in the UK and also Germany.

In summary, most people respond best to and feel best in, a blend of working environments with only small minorities wanting to be only in the office or only at home. Rather than a binary 'either/or', the essence of hybrid is a more integrated way of working, that can flex by changing mood and need. An approach consistent with work/life balance, task type and the desire for socialisation, with the attendant benefits of company cohesion and personal connectivity, leading to increased well-being.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **HYBRID WORKING**

# WELL-BEING POSITIVES ASSOCIATED WITH HYBRID WORKING

**DURING COVID LOCKDOWNS, MANY PEOPLE WHO HAD NEVER WORKED AT HOME DISCOVERED POSITIVES IN WORKING REMOTELY, ESPECIALLY OPERATING TO THEIR OWN SCHEDULE RATHER THAN ONE IMPOSED BY THE COMPANY'S OFFICE HOURS AND BY SAVING BOTH TIME AND MONEY.**

IWG's 'Hybrid and Healthy 2023' identified the health benefits of hybrid working including:

- 71 hours more sleep/year
- 1.3 hours more exercise/week than pre-Covid
- Having the time to eat better – nearly 50% are eating more fruit and vegetables
- Combining these, over a quarter of the sample reported losing 2kg or more in weight with a shift to hybrid working.

We will explore physical well-being in detail later, but home frequently offers a higher degree of informal comfort than the office environment. Whether this apparent comfort translates into the prevention of musculoskeletal problems is another thing entirely, as we will see later.

# 85%

of women want autonomy to choose to work fully remotely or in the workplace, depending on what works best for them.



Different segments appear to have responded to the potential positives of hybrid working in different ways. Women, along with people living with children and longer distance commuters, welcomed the home working opportunity the most and recent analysis suggests that hybrid and WFH have increased the number of women working full-time.<sup>20</sup>

Women now comprise more than 50% of employees in Europe and their requirements are very clear – Manpower’s ‘*What Women Want (At Work)*’ research shows that 85% want to be able to choose what working environment works best for them. This type of choice will not simply be about convenience or meeting other demands on their time. It will come from the desire to maximise their mental and physical well-being at work.

Another report from Manpower, their 2024 Workforce Trends Report, ‘*The Age of Adaptability*,’ notes the new demands people (especially younger ones) are making of the world of work – looking to achieve additional well-being.

**CANDIDATES REPORT THE MOST DESIRABLE WORKPLACE BENEFITS AREN’T MATERIALLY TANGIBLE, BUT INSTEAD QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCERS, LIKE A FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK (64%), THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE THEIR START AND END TIMES (45%) AND FLEXIBILITY TO WORK FROM HOME IF NEEDED (35%).**

# WELL-BEING AT HOME vs THE OFFICE

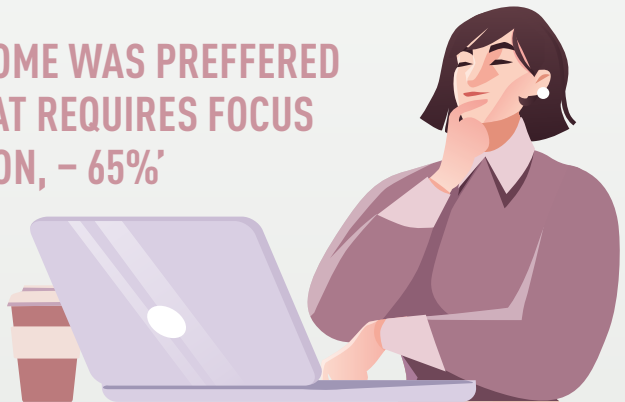
**HYBRID CAN BE THOUGHT OF IN TERMS OF 'WORKPLACE NEUTRALITY' – RECOGNISING THAT NO LOCATION WILL SUIT ALL OF THE PEOPLE, ALL OF THE TIME.**

Each option will have benefits and drawbacks for different tasks, for different people, for different purposes on different occasions.

Leitz's GfK research asked its sample of people working at home and in the office which environment was best for their physical and mental well-being.

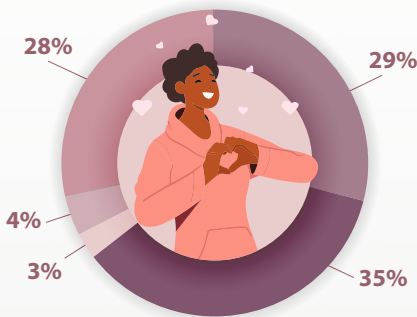
In both cases the home was preferred by 65% and 64% respectively, with a further 24% and 28% saying there was no difference between the two.

**'WORKING FROM HOME WAS PREFERRED FOR ANY WORK THAT REQUIRES FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION, – 65%'**



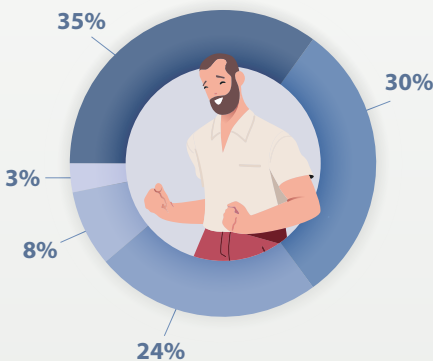
Fewer than 10% of those with everyday experience of home and office see greater well-being benefits in the office, clearly signalling the need for companies to make offices more appealing on a number of dimensions.

## MENTAL WELL-BEING



- 35% **working from home** is significantly better than working from the office
- 29% **working from home** is slightly better than working from the office
- 28% **working from home** is no different to working from the office
- 4% **working from home** is slightly worse than working from the office
- 3% **working from home** is significantly worse than working from the office

## PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



- 35% **working from home** is significantly better than working from the office
- 30% **working from home** is slightly better than working from the office
- 24% **working from home** is no different to working from the office
- 8% **working from home** is slightly worse than working from the office
- 3% **working from home** is significantly worse than working from the office

# DOWNSIDERS OF HYBRID AND REMOTE WORKING

CONVERSELY THERE ARE WELL-BEING DOWNSIDES THAT MANY HOME OR REMOTE WORKERS WILL RECOGNISE WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED: WORKING HOURS, MENTAL HEALTH AND STIMULATION, PRIVACY ISSUES, SPACE CONSTRAINTS, WORK UNCERTAINTIES AND INADEQUATE TOOLS.

Many hybrid or remote employees work longer hours: According to a Compass Group study, 60% of hybrid workers in the UK work longer hours when working from home.<sup>21</sup>

Also, off-setting positive well-being benefits of working when it suits, (having more flexible personal time, saving time and money on commuting), is the feeling of isolation and loneliness suffered by many remote workers.



**25% OF GALLUP'S 2024 SAMPLE CITED EARLIER WHO WORK AT HOME ALL THE TIME, SAY THAT THEY FEEL LONELY, COMPARED WITH 16% OF THOSE WHO ONLY WORK IN THE OFFICE.**

**Younger people are more likely to claim they are lonely** – one of the unwanted consequences of hybrid or remote working has been that younger people are less likely to form the social ties that their full-time office working predecessors did. This is consistent with the preference younger people express for working in an office environment cited earlier.

**This remoteness can have career implications too** – infrequent office visitors can be at a disadvantage for career progression and reward because of lessened visibility, leading to “*proximity bias*” – the conscious or unconscious psychological tendency to favour people who are closer to us.


Confirming the adage, ‘*out of sight, out of mind*,’ research by the job change and human capital insights provider Live Data Technologies, cited in the Wall Street Journal in January 2024, reported people working from home got promoted 30% less frequently in the previous year than office-based workers; these workers are also less likely to receive mentorship, especially women.

**IN ADDITION TO LONELINESS AND LACK OF SOCIALISATION TOGETHER WITH PALPABLE EVIDENCE OF CAREER IMPACT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING CAN ALSO OFTEN SUFFER WHEN PEOPLE ARE WORKING REMOTELY.**

Available research confirms that poor ergonomic workstation design is, unsurprisingly, more common in home than office working.

The substitution of dining or kitchen tables and chairs is often routine. Homeworkers will also substitute work equipment setups desk computers, separate keyboard, mouse with laptops, tablets and phones, at variable heights, without ergonomic supports for equipment or person.<sup>22</sup>

We explore the incidence of various items of equipment for home workers later.



**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
IN JANUARY 2024, REPORTED  
PEOPLE WORKING FROM HOME  
GOT PROMOTED 30% LESS  
FREQUENTLY IN THE PREVIOUS  
YEAR THAN OFFICE-BASED  
WORKERS.**

# MAKING PEOPLE FEEL PRESENT – REGARDLESS OF LOCATION

## REMOTE MEETINGS HAVE BECOME A NORM FOR MANY COMPANIES BUT HAVE WELL-BEING IMPLICATIONS.

In Leitz's GfK survey, people who work remotely and in offices were asked where they prefer to be based to have online meetings either with other remote workers or those based in the office – **66% said at home to the former and 47% said at home to the latter.**

**NEVERTHELESS, 75% OF REMOTE ATTENDEES AT CONFERENCE MEETINGS CLAIM THEY REGULARLY EXPERIENCE SOUND AND AUDIO PROBLEMS – FOR A QUARTER IT'S A DAILY EVENT.<sup>23</sup>**

As a result, people can feel embarrassed at having to repeat themselves or asking others to and more importantly, become marginalized in their contributions.

**THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE FOR REMOTE PARTICIPANTS IN 'HYBRID MEETINGS' – CREATING STRESS AND EXACERBATING FEELINGS OF ISOLATION THAT PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE OFFICE FEEL.**

Kensington, like Leitz part of ACCO Brands, has addressed this problem with a suite of products designed to provide a 'unified conferencing experience', ensuring that remote participants – at home or on the go – are never at a disadvantage in how they are seen and heard.

# 69%

Of respondents believe the office is a better for creative brainstorming meetings than the home.



**THERE IS EVIDENCE OF INCREASED ANXIETIES AMONG HYBRID AND REMOTE WORKERS ABOUT THEIR VISIBILITY, ACCESS TO DECISION MAKERS AND PROSPECTS FOR PROMOTION.**

This may be good justification for this as we saw in the SHRM research cited earlier that stated remote workers can be seen as more expendable.

This calls for management to think about new meeting protocols and moderation skills, ensuring that the voices of the physically absent are properly heard.

## VIDEO MEETINGS AREN'T JUST FOR REMOTE WORKERS.

Where available meeting space is an issue or in multi-location physical offices, companies have become used to using virtual venues for formal or informal meetings for people who are physically on the premises.

**WHERE THERE USED TO BE COMPLAINTS ABOUT WORKERS EMAILING THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THE SAME WORKSPACE RATHER THAN TALKING TO THEM, THERE IS A RISK IN LARGE ORGANISATIONS THAT VIRTUAL MEETINGS REDUCE FACE TO FACE CONTACT OPPORTUNITIES.**

# IN A WORKING WORLD WHERE PEOPLE SPEND SO MUCH SOLITARY TIME WITH THEIR SCREEN, PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT CAN PROVIDE ENGAGING WAYS OF TEAMWORKING AND IDEA SHARING.

However, the office environment facilitates a different type of thinking, with the main benefits consistently cited as collaborative working, socialising and better meetings – all attributes lacking in WFH.<sup>24</sup>

**LEITZ'S GFK STUDY REVEALED THAT 69% OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THE OFFICE IS A BETTER PLACE FOR CREATIVE BRAINSTORMING MEETINGS THAN THE HOME.**

The effect of more widespread hybrid working on collaborative creativity will evolve in time. Many of the world's leading innovative companies operate across multiple locations, cities, and countries. So, macro workforce dispersal is not a barrier to innovation and productivity growth.

Stronger grounds for concern may lie in the potential loss of the innovation benefits that flow from gathering a critical mass of creative people in a single location or set of locations in close physical proximity.

**New ideas often emerge from free-flowing conversation, asides, and downtime. The moderation of idea generation or collaborative thinking in a virtual environment brings different challenges.**



Nobo, like Leitz, part of ACCO Brands, have created **Move and Meet**, a portable multi-functional flipchart/whiteboard system that allows collaborative teams to work flexibly and productively in spaces of any size and configuration. And gives everyone the opportunity to make their views visually captured.

**Move and Meet**, as the name suggests, encourages people to get up and move around – which is good for people physically as well as encouraging better collaboration.

# HOW PEOPLE CONTINUE TO EVALUATE THEIR WORKING LIVES

**AMIDST ALL THIS FLUX THERE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD AND LASTING RE-EVALUATION ABOUT WHAT PLACE WORK SHOULD OCCUPY IN PEOPLES' LIVES AND WHERE IT SHOULD HAPPEN.**

Every management book written in the last 50 years will have referred to unprecedented change in the workplace. However, a quarter of the way through the century, there is barely any part of the lives of desk or computer-based work that is not going through revolution at unprecedented pace.

The pandemic was a dramatic accelerant that we are still coming to terms with. Hybridity has required people to learn new communication skills, to manage time differently, to deal with bringing people together remotely to work on shared projects.

The good news is that research by PwC in 2024 suggests that despite the stress and levels of disengagement referenced earlier, on the whole people are positive about change.<sup>25</sup>

**WHILE 2/3 CONFIRMED THE PRESENCE OF ACCELERATING CHANGE, SAYING THEY HAD EXPERIENCED MORE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS THAN IN THE PRECEDING YEAR, 77% DECLARED THEMSELVES, 'OPEN TO NEW WAYS OF WORKING.'**<sup>25</sup>

This doesn't mean widespread contentment – witness the high proportion of disengaged employees in the Gallup Survey cited earlier. In our 2023 paper, *'The New World of Work: Moving Forward. Feeling Good'* we referenced several indicators of people re-evaluating their world of work post pandemic – record rises in resignations, growth in start-ups and people opting for freelance roles.

This was not a short-term phenomenon: 28% of employees in the PwC study still say they are likely to change employer in the coming year, more than the 19% during the 'Great Resignation' that immediately followed the pandemic.

**WELL-BEING (OR LACK OF IT), IS A SIGNIFICANT DRIVER OF MOBILITY OF EMPLOYMENT. 60% OF EMPLOYEES, 64% OF MANAGERS, AND 75% OF EXECUTIVES ARE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING QUITTING FOR A JOB THAT WOULD BETTER SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING, AN INCREASE FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.<sup>26</sup>**

There are clear benefits in moving job – assuming it is voluntary: analysis of data sources, published by the University of Sheffield in 2023 suggests that increases in well-being are associated with change of roles within companies and with changes of employer.<sup>27</sup>

There is no shortage of guidance for people who are re-evaluating their working lives: a 2024 article in Psychology Today encouraged employees to re-evaluate their careers every three years. The questions suggested aren't about salary or career progression prospects but more around the extent to which a current role is aligned with the employee's well-being and personal authenticity.<sup>28</sup>

1. Am I truly happy with my current situation?
2. Will my current situation get me to where I want to go in life?
3. Is my current situation aligned with my values and principles?
4. Does my current situation allow me to be who I really am?
5. Do I feel that my current situation is right? Does my gut tell me that this is right?

26. Well-Being at Work, Deloitte, 2023

27. Do all job changes increase well-being?, What Works Centre for Well-being, 2024

28. When Should You Re-Evaluate Your Career and Life?, Psychology Today, March 2024

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELL-BEING**



A SIGNIFICANT TREND IDENTIFIED BY THE GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE'S AI INITIATIVE TRENDS FOR 2024 IS THE WAY PEOPLE WILL INCREASINGLY WANT AND BE ABLE TO MONITOR THEIR WELL-BEING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.

# THE EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGY ON MENTAL & PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

## A LOT OF THE HEADLINES TODAY ARE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON WORK AND THE WORKPLACE.

In 2011, “**Race against the Machine**” predicted that, ‘*The AI revolution is doing to white collar jobs what robotics did to blue collar jobs.*’ While the past (and unfulfilled) paradigm was that technology would take jobs wholesale, forecasters now see its consequences primarily in the types of tasks that comprise a job.

Repetitive, unrewarding desk-based tasks will become ‘sub-contracted’ to a computer; meanwhile, tasks requiring creative thinking, analysis and informed judgement will become the human worker’s main area of focus. In many respects this is good news for well-being in the workplace, potentially making work more rewarding.

Many aspects of well-being will in future be aided and influenced by technological disruption, specifically Generative AI, which is changing job roles, creating new ones and placing demands on educational resources for companies. AI is transforming the ways in which new recruits are sourced and evaluated as well as how existing staff are monitored, including their well-being and engagement levels

**WE HAVE SEEN THE WILLINGNESS OF YOUNGER PEOPLE IN PARTICULAR TO INVEST IN THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. A SIGNIFICANT TREND IDENTIFIED BY THE GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE’S AI INITIATIVE TRENDS FOR 2024 IS THE WAY PEOPLE WILL INCREASINGLY WANT AND BE ABLE TO MONITOR THEIR WELL-BEING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.**

## AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, AI COULD ENABLE COMPANIES TO MONITOR EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING – IN THE OFFICE AND REMOTELY – BASED ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL BEHAVIOURS, FROM EYE MOVEMENT TO HEART RATE, LANGUAGE USE TO ACTIVITY LEVELS.

This data could be used with an organisation at a macro-level – for example comparing similar functions in different offices globally – or at a microlevel, where individual performance is tracked and analysed to identify how and where people do their best work. Thus, potentially becoming a negotiating tool for someone wanting to spend more time working from home.

AI-powered apps can detect mood and immediately provide techniques allowing people to reduce stress and improve focus, with a positive effect on well-being. Fitness wearables already allow the owner to monitor their health on metrics like sleep, heart rate, activity, calorie burn and 'Readiness.' Taking this a step further, individuals will be able to create a **'workplace well-being dashboard'**, and monitor situations where they experience, for example, undue stress and be able to interact with AI wellness-personalised coaches, to maximise their well-being in addition to their effectiveness.



Musculoskeletal problems are the most common work-related health problem in the European Union, accounting for individual pain and discomfort culminating in huge corporate costs from absenteeism and insurance claims. AI-enabled cameras on laptops, sensors and wearable technology will analyse posture, be able to detect early signs of injuries, which can lead to earlier treatment, reduce risk of chronic injuries and suggest corrections.



**TRAINING AT AN INDIVIDUAL, TARGETED LEVEL WOULD INCLUDE GUIDANCE ON PROPER POSTURE, PROMPTS NOT JUST TO MOVEMENT, BUT TYPES OF MOVEMENT, AND HOW TO SET UP A WORKSTATION THAT REDUCES THE RISK OF INJURY.**

The extent to which interventions like this are by consent or require compliance will be down to circumstances. Monitoring a hybrid worker's home space can be seen quite differently to using the same tools in the office workspace, resulting in enforced breaks dependent on mood or posture.

The key question is who is in charge; what is measured and to what end; who controls the data and who will benefit from these technologies. An autocratic, command and control company might envisage these tools very differently from one where empowerment and coaching are central to their culture.

**Some people may see this as an intrusion into their personal lives.**

Alternatively, as identified in Insead's 2022 *'Navigating the New World of Work'*, the engaged mindset may positively welcome monitoring as a way of having hard work acknowledged, their performance judged by impartial technology, creating greater material and intangible reward, contributing to well-being.

# HOW WORK SURROUNDINGS AND ENVIRONMENTS AFFECT WELL-BEING

**PEOPLE WHO WORK PRINCIPALLY IN THE OFFICE OFTEN SPEND AS MUCH TIME THERE AS THEY DO AT HOME, YET THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT MANY OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS UNDERMINE WELL-BEING.**



By the same token, many home working environments do not provide the right space or equipment for people to function effectively and without adverse impact on their well-being.

**ANALYSIS IN THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH, IN 2021, CONCLUDED THAT, 'MOST OFFICE WORKSPACES DO NOT ADEQUATELY SUPPORT OFFICE WORKER HEALTH, NOR DO THEY MAXIMISE WORK PERFORMANCE.'**

Inadequacies were identified across a range of criteria: temperature, lighting, noise – each of which can have a negative effect on well-being and performance and even more so in combination.

In many offices, most heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are centrally controlled within a narrow range. Having uniformity of temperature may be more energy efficient, especially where energy prices have increased in recent years more than any other costs, but lead to problems. Most office workers are women, but most heating and cooling systems are designed for men. A study by the University of Maastricht showed that an average woman feels comfortable in a temperature up to 3 degrees °C. higher than a man.

An experiment involving over 500 German students showed that female students' preference for warmer temperatures was reflected in their superior performance in maths and verbal tests, while men performed better at lower temperatures.<sup>29</sup> This is borne out by analysis reported in which found that, productivity is maximised in neutral to slightly cooler environments for men and in neutral to slightly warmer environments for women.<sup>30</sup>

These gender differences are also likely to be compounded by age. After noise, temperature is the greatest source of complaints from British office workers.<sup>31</sup> So having a 'one temperature warms all' approach to office heating doesn't make sense, in terms of comfort, productivity or associated well-being.

The findings are reinforced by a systematic review of empirical evidence relating to office design and mental health.

**RESEARCHERS FROM THE EINDHOVEN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN 2024, DEMONSTRATED HOW LIGHTING, OFFICE LAYOUT/DESIGN, TEMPERATURE AND THERMAL COMFORT IN THE OFFICE – OSTENSIBLY PHYSICAL FACTORS – HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO BE RELATED TO MANY MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS.<sup>32</sup>**

**MEANWHILE, A RESEARCH PAPER IN A 2024 EDITION OF 'THE JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY' FOUND THAT COMFORT SCORES FOR NOISE, TEMPERATURE, AND ADEQUATE SPACE/ PRIVACY WERE ALL SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER AT HOME.<sup>33</sup>**

29. Battle for the thermostat: Gender and the effect of temperature on cognitive performance, *PLOS ONE*, 2019 30. Office thermal environment that maximizes workers' thermal comfort and productivity, *Building and Environment*, 2023 31. Lessons learned from 20 years of CBE's occupant surveys, *Buildings and Cities*, 2021 32. The Business Case for a Healthy Office, *Ergonomics*, 2023 33. Impact of workplace design on perceived work performance and well-being: Home versus office, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, February 2024

Addressing the collective experience, designing the communal office environment around well-being has been shown to have a positive effect. Biophilic design, (a word first coined in the 1980s and derived from the Greek to denote design that reflects the love of nature), is based on evidence that the more a workplace is connected to nature, the higher the well-being benefits, with a positive impact on attitude, behaviours and achievement.

By 2030, 60% of the global population will be living in cities. All indicators are that urban environments tend to involve negative well-being consequences. Studies have shown that the risk for mental illness is generally higher in urban environments compared to rural areas.

**URBAN POPULATIONS  
REPORT 40% MORE MOOD  
DISORDERS, 20% MORE  
ANXIETY DISORDERS  
WHEN COMPARED TO  
RURAL POPULATIONS.<sup>34</sup>**

Limited contact with nature is bad for us. Across Europe, younger people have less exposure to nature than previous generations – a 2012 report by the National Trust in the UK showed that less than one in ten children regularly play in wild spaces, compared with over 50% a generation previously. These young 2012 respondents will now be in the workforce. Perhaps more shockingly, another recent study has shown that ¼ of UK children spend less time outdoors than prison inmates, with one fifth not playing outdoors at all on an average day.<sup>35</sup>

Features within office environments can help to offset our disconnection with nature. There is clear evidence that the presence of plants in offices has positive effects on employee well-being, including mood, ability to concentrate and stress, exemplified by a pre-and post-study in a range of Dutch companies.<sup>36</sup> Plants can also help counteract the dryness of air, prevalent in workspaces, thanks to centralised heating and air conditioning.

When we think of air pollution, we tend to envisage the typical exterior city landscape, particularly traffic fumes. It is easy to overlook the negative effects of conditions inside. Computers and laptops are significant generators of fine particulate matter, so a key piece of equipment for everyone reading this is also something that has an adverse effect on well-being.

34. Well-being in the City, *Well-being, Space and Society*, 2023.

35. Natural Childhood, *The National Trust*, 2012. 36. Effects of Indoor Plants on Office Workers, *Frontiers in Psychology*, June 2023



**A STUDY BY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES FOUND THAT IMPROVED INDOOR AIR QUALITY – REDUCED VOC'S, INCREASED VENTILATION AND ENHANCED CARBON DIOXIDE LEVELS RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE (61%) IN COGNITIVE FUNCTION SCORES FOR USERS IN GREEN BUILDINGS COMPARED TO CONVENTIONAL ONES.<sup>37</sup>**

A more recent Harvard study across six countries, confirmed the negative effects of fine particulate matter on cognitive functions.<sup>38</sup> The macro-economic effects of improving workplace air quality are potentially significant. Estimates in a 2022 paper by Rand Europe calculated that only a marginal improvement in ventilation (1 litre of air per second per person) could increase GDP in the European Union by €25 billion annually.<sup>39</sup>

37. Associations of Cognitive Function Scores with Carbon Dioxide, Ventilation, and Volatile Organic Compound Exposures in Office Workers, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 2015.

38. Impacts of Indoor Air Quality on Cognitive Function, *Harvard T.H. Chan*, 2021

39. Poor Indoor Climate: Its impact on Health and Life Satisfaction, *Rand Europe*, 2022

# PHYSICAL WELL-BEING ISSUES FOR DESK WORKERS – SITTING, STANDING AND MOVEMENT

## Work Wellbeing Playbook



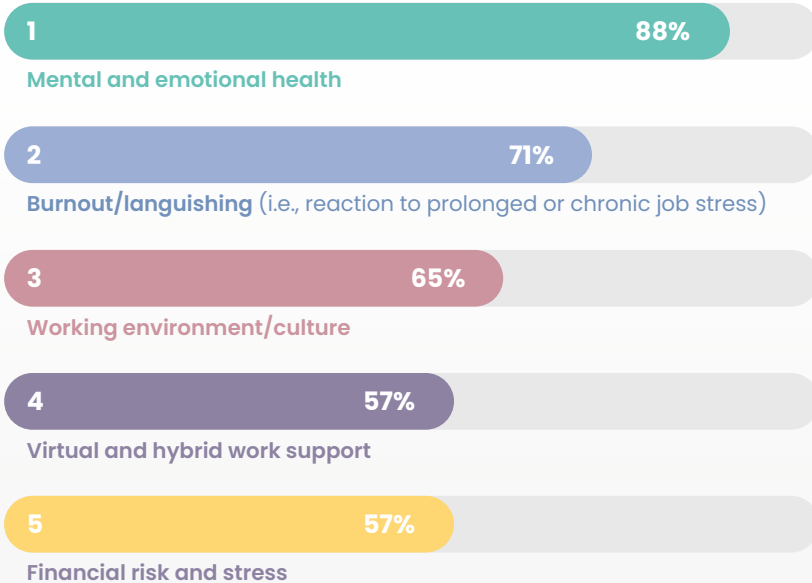
wwm

INTERESTINGLY, IN THE DRIVE TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING APPEARS TO BE A SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER PRIORITY THAN STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH.

A 2024 publication from the World Well-being Movement, **The Work Well-being Playbook: A Systematic Review of Evidence-Based Interventions to Improve Employee Well-being**, identifies twelve drivers of well-being in the workplace from an examination of over 3,000 sources. None of them are directly associated with physical comfort.

The term musculoskeletal does not appear at all in the Playbook. The same organisation's 144-page annual report contains the word 'physical' 5 times.

## TOP FIVE EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING ISSUES



Physical environments seem to be lower priority in companies' plans than stress and mental health. Aon's 2023 Global Well-being Report included asking employers what their main well-being priorities were. Physical matters were conspicuously absent.

**HOWEVER, NUMEROUS OTHER STUDIES INDICATE A CORRELATION BETWEEN HIGHER LEVELS OF SEDENTARY WORK AND SEVERAL MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS.<sup>40</sup>**

40. Musculoskeletal pain and sedentary behaviour in occupational and non-occupational settings: a systematic review with meta-analysis, *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 2021



Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common work-related health problem in the European Union. Office work is not always isolated from other activity in official statistics relating to the incidence of MSD, but a study in the Netherlands among office-based computer users gave indications of prevalence by showing that in one year, 54% of respondents reported at least one arm, neck and/or shoulder complaint.

For example, among office workers, prolonged sitting at a desk, poor ergonomic working conditions/body position, work stress and lack of regular exercise were associated with lower back, upper back, shoulder, neck, arm or foot pain.<sup>41</sup>

**REGARDLESS OF LOCATION – OFFICE, HOME, COWORKING SPACES, OR HYBRID COMBINATIONS – KNOWLEDGE WORKERS, ESPECIALLY HEAVIER USERS OF SCREENS, ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY SEDENTARY, WITH CONSEQUENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON WELL-BEING.**

The evidence that piles up in relation to sedentary or inactive working days is depressing.

**A STUDY OF MALE SWEDISH OFFICE WORKERS FOUND THAT 43% OF THEIR SITTING TIME IS PROLONGED.<sup>42</sup>**

41. Determination of pain in musculoskeletal system reported by office workers and the pain risk factors, *Int J Occup Med Environ Health*. 2018. 42. Sitting, standing and moving during work and leisure among male and female office workers of different ages, *BMC Public Health*, June 2020.

**GERMANS NOW SPEND 9.2 HOURS/DAY ON AVERAGE SITTING, UP FROM 8.7 IN 2021 – MORE THAN 10 HOURS FOR 18–29 YEAR-OLDS. SIMILARLY, A 2024 REPORT FOUND THAT 26% OF DUTCH PEOPLE AGED 15 AND ABOVE SPEND MORE THAN 8.5 HOURS A DAY SITTING.<sup>43</sup>**

Allow 8 hours in bed and there's not much room for anything else.

Sitting and standing combinations were evaluated in the 'Take a Stand' Project of 2011, which caused heightened interest in sit/stand desks. The findings suggested all round mental and physical benefits when sitting and standing while working. Simply providing sit/stand desks is, however not enough. People need reminders and incentives.

A six-month study on the sitting habits of people with sit/stand desks concluded that excessive sitting continued to predominate:

**'THE FINDING THAT MANY WORKERS WERE EXTENSIVELY SEDENTARY SUGGESTS THAT JUST ACCESS TO SIT-STAND WORKSTATIONS MAY NOT BE A SUFFICIENT REMEDY; ADDITIONAL PERSONALISED INTERVENTIONS REINFORCING USE MAY BE NEEDED'.<sup>44</sup>**

This has been given greater precision by a study among over 1,000 British local authority workers, published in 2022, which evaluated the effect of initiatives to encourage movement (Smart Work and Life), with and without the provision of a sit/stand desk. By the end of the study, those receiving SWAL interventions were sitting 20 minutes less a day on average, while those who also had sit/stand desks were sitting 64 minutes less at the end of 12 months.<sup>45</sup>

**RATHER THAN VALORISING THE RESPECTIVE BENEFITS OF SITTING OR STANDING, LEITZ'S CONCLUSION IS THAT TOO MUCH OF THE WORKING DAY LACKS VARIETY OF MOVEMENT.**



**ON AVERAGE, PEOPLE USING A SIT/STAND DESK WERE SITTING 64 MINUTES LESS A DAY**

43. 'Sitting While Working', TNO, February 2024. 44. Consistency of Sedentary Behavior Patterns among Office Workers with Long-Term Access to Sit-Stand Workstations, *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*, 2019. 45. Effectiveness of an intervention for reducing sitting time and improving health in office workers: three arm cluster randomised controlled trial, *BMJ*, 2022

**IN THE COURSE OF A YEAR, 60% OF WORKERS WERE REPORTED TO SUFFER FROM SOME MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS.**



**41%**  
Suffered pain in neck, shoulders, and upper limbs

**43%**  
Suffered back pain

**Regular physical movement** – even if it's just getting up and stretching or taking a walk around can alleviate musculoskeletal discomfort. The question is how to encourage or enable this?

According to their 2024 data, 31% of adults fail to meet the WHO's recommended levels of physical activity, and the figure is likely to be higher among office workers.<sup>46</sup>

Of even greater concern is that 80% of adolescents, representing the workforce of the future, fall below the WHO's recommended levels of physical activity.<sup>46</sup>

**IF INACTIVITY LEVELS REMAIN UNCHANGED OR GET WORSE, AT LEAST HALF A BILLION ADDITIONAL PEOPLE ARE PROJECTED TO SUFFER FROM ILL HEALTH, ATTRIBUTABLE TO INSUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY 2030.<sup>47</sup>**

The strain on our bodies from imperfect posture is alarming. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work references studies that show that when sitting upright with no back support, the low back intervertebral disc pressure is 40% higher than when standing.<sup>48</sup>

Leaning forward when sitting results in an increase of 90% of lower back intervertebral disc pressure compared with standing. The same study notes how an unfavourable working posture can lead to an increased muscle tension in the neck and shoulders. This results in increased pressure on blood vessels resulting in a pain in the neck, shoulder muscles and cold hands due to reduced blood flow, or even a combination of these.

46. Physical Activity: Key Facts, World Health Organisation, June 2024.

47. The cost of inaction on physical inactivity to public health-care system, *Lancet Global Health*, 2023. 48. Musculoskeletal disorders and prolonged static sitting, EU-OSHA, 2020

This is bad news in the long-term as well as the short-term, because in addition to musculoskeletal problems themselves, a wider range of health conditions, including obesity, and cardiovascular issues are particularly associated with lengthy periods of sitting.

For many, the consequences are fatal. Individuals who spend more than six hours per day sitting have a 19% increased risk of all-cause mortality compared to those who sit for less than three hours per day. People who sit more than 8 hours a day and exercise little are 74% more likely to have cardiovascular disease than people who are less than 4 hours a day and exercise a lot.

**SITTING FOR A LONG TIME IS ALSO ACCOMPANIED BY A HIGHER RISK EARLY MORTALITY: MORE THAN 8 HOURS A DAY LEADS TO 27% MORE CHANCE OF PREMATURE DEATH COMPARED TO LESS THAN 4 HOURS OF SITTING PER DAY.<sup>49</sup>**

Given all this, it is a wonder that working populations aren't actually less healthy than they currently are, and it is very likely that without change, we are creating even more severe problems for the future. There are many studies worldwide that show that the level of prevalence of MSDs increases with age.

While the ageing process itself plays a part, this prevalence is partly due to cumulative exposure to MSD hazards over the course of a desk-based working life. The digital desk-based worker is more inactive than a generation ago – more likely to look at a screen for long periods of time; more likely to send an internal email, than go and look for someone; more likely to have virtual meetings from their desk than to gather physically together. With European-wide increases in the official retirement age, young workers today will spend even more time sitting.

Just as we referenced light and air quality affecting mood and creative thinking, evidence suggests a negative association between prolonged sitting and cognition.<sup>50</sup>

Unsurprisingly physical discomfort affects our ability to concentrate and adversely impacts on decision-making.



Some organisations are actively addressing this issue. The High Tech Campus in Holland has introduced the **Work Walk**, a vitality concept that helps improve your quality of work and life. There are four Work Walk routes marked out in the locality, to give people variety as well as a break in the day.

The **Workplace Vitality Hub** is also working on a toolkit for standing meetings, offering concrete tools to support companies in tackling the “*sitting while working*” problem.

The **Well-being Project** in the UK recommends carrying out more meetings on the move, noting that there is additional evidence of improved ideation when walking and that the effects last for some time after sitting down again.<sup>51</sup>

**ONE SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IS THAT IT IS RARELY A SINGLE FACTOR THAT CAN BE ISOLATED FOR MSDs IN THE WORKPLACE.**

The relative heights of desk and seat can be an issue – hybrid or hot-desking workers might be at a different workstation every time they come into the office and not be able to easily make adjustments. For some it may also be a question of etiquette – interfering with ‘*someone else’s set up*’.

Additionally, screens can be at the wrong height – quite often because people don’t know where they should be sited, or because there isn’t a stand for their laptop, so they lean forward into the desk. Alternatively, their seat may be old and lack lumbar support, or they sit with their arms at the wrong angle, which strains shoulders and wrist muscles.

So, for many people we have a multiplier effect: poor body-wide posture, compounded by the amount of time spent sitting or inactive.

# **CHAPTER 5**

# **EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY FOR WELL-BEING**

# CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE SPACE AND EQUIPMENT – ESPECIALLY AT HOME

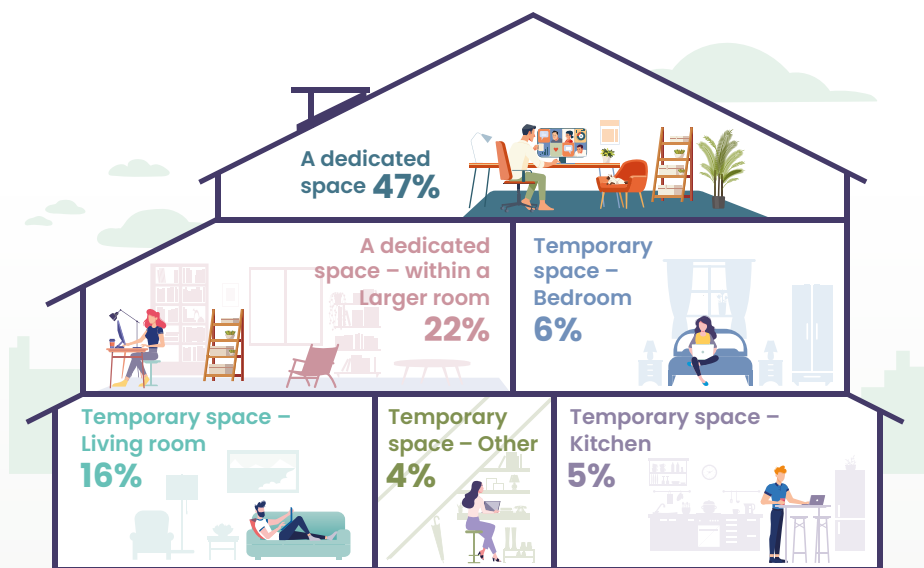
**WHILE WE HAVE SEEN SOME WELL-BEING BENEFITS FOR HYBRID AND HOME WORKING, THESE ARE OFTEN PRIMARILY RELATED TO WORK-LIFE-BALANCE AND IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH.**

All too often the home working environment is one of compromise and improvisation. Part of Leitz's GfK research among desk workers assessed where people are working, when they are at home.

While 47% say they have a room set aside for working in, the rest are fitting in with other needs:

- 22% of the sample are working in a dedicated space that is part of a larger room, presumably visible to all
- 17% work in a temporary place in their main living room
- 5% in the kitchen
- 6% in the bedroom





This is broadly in line with other research in other parts of the world. In the USA, Stamford University showed that 49% of people work in a dedicated space with the rest doing so from other areas in the home.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, a 2023 global study of 3,000 home workers found that 37% have a dedicated office space, 21% work from their bedroom, 20% use their living room, (consistent with the 22% above working in a larger space) and 14% are nomadic, moving from room to room.<sup>53</sup>

**SPACE TO WORK ALSO HAS AN IMPACT OF WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO LIVE. RESEARCH IN 2023 IN THE UNITED STATES BY ONEPOLL SHOWED THAT 55% OF PEOPLE WHO HAD RECENTLY MOVED HOME HAD DONE AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE THEY REQUIRED MORE SPACE TO WORK IN.**

There are certain to be socio-demographic issues here – quite simply, older, more senior, affluent people are more likely to be able to reproduce the discrete space that they enjoy in the office; parents with younger children are having to share studying space – whether rooms or surfaces; younger people may also be fighting for space with their housemates at the kitchen table.

As well as career progression, this space issue may influence the disproportionate desires of younger people to work in the office noted earlier.

52. How Working from Home Works Out, Stamford Institute for Economic Policy Research, 2021  
53. The State of Remote Work, Buffer, 2023

Leitz's GfK German desk worker study looked at the prevalence of ergonomic equipment for remote and hybrid workers. We have already seen how a third have no dedicated space to work in, yet the proportion with an ergonomic workspace or equipment is also suboptimum.

**OVER A QUARTER (28%) HAVE NO ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT AT ALL AND A FURTHER THIRD (36%) HAVE ONLY A COUPLE OF ITEMS.**

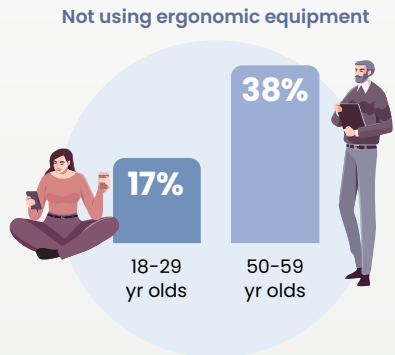
Surprisingly, those working at home for five days a week are no better equipped than the average home worker, so are at high risk from musculoskeletal problems by virtue of the volume of time spent working using inadequate furnishing and accessories.

While younger people might be space poor, they are relatively well-equipped.

**Only 17% of 18–29 year-olds have no ergonomic equipment, compared with 38% of 50–59 year-olds**, – echoing the data cited earlier about the willingness of younger people to invest in their health.

That c.40% of these older workers have no ergonomic equipment at home is particularly concerning. Since the prevalence of Musculoskeletal Disorders increases with age, so the most at risk are the least well protected.<sup>54</sup>

Predicting the future about MSDs is problematic. The overall trend in working hours is down, but sedentary behaviour within those hours is increasing. One positive is that exercise can (at least in part), act as an antidote. A 2024 analysis of a large cohort of German office workers suggested that leisure time and physical activity outside the workplace can offset the damage caused by prolonged sitting and inactivity.<sup>55</sup>



**THE LACK OF PROVISION OF SUITABLE, ERGONOMICALLY DESIGNED FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT IN OFFICES IS HARD TO JUSTIFY GIVEN THE EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING.**

54. Ageing, Musculoskeletal Health and Work,

Best Practice Research Clinical Rheumatology, 2015

55. Impact of sitting at work on musculoskeletal complaints of German workers, *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology*, March 2024



**OVER A QUARTER (28%) OF  
GERMAN DESK WORKERS  
HAVE NO ERGONOMIC  
EQUIPMENT AT ALL AND A  
FURTHER THIRD (36%) HAVE  
ONLY A COUPLE OF ITEMS.**

Leitz GfK Survey 2023

# EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY FOR WELL-BEING

## WORKER WELL-BEING MAY BECOME A MANDATE, NOT A CHOICE, WITH CONSEQUENCES FOR EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY.

On April 24, 2024, the European Parliament adopted the Regulation on the Transparency and Integrity of ESG Rating Activities (ESGR), making the EU the first jurisdiction in the world to formally regulate the growing ESG ratings market.<sup>56</sup>

Among many reporting requirements, companies are to give disclosures on their own workforce, including working conditions and access to equal opportunities – and consider other workers in the company's value chain.

Thus, in addition to sustainability, and corporate governance, how workers are treated, and their well-being, will be a topic of record, with accompanying metrics and goals.

In the section under Occupational Health Concerns, companies are required to consider information on work-related health complications, such as occupational diseases or musculoskeletal disorders.

While employers are unlikely to be held accountable for their employees' sedentary lifestyles outside the workplace, (although arguably this could be mitigated by offering employee benefits such as health club membership), the provision of ergonomic equipment, both at work and home could signal that well-being is a priority for them and doing this is in many countries is simply catching up with regulatory change, post-Covid.

**BY THE END OF 2023, TWELVE COUNTRIES HAD IMPLEMENTED PERMANENT LEGAL CHANGES IN THE STATUTORY LEGISLATION OF TELEWORK INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO REQUEST TELEWORK, THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT AND COMPENSATION FOR THE COST OF TELEWORK – INCLUDING EQUIPMENT AND OSH PROVISIONS.**



It can be confidently predicted that information around well-being will be of interest to stakeholders, including investors, lenders, regulators, customers, lobbying groups and, crucially, current and prospective employees.

There will be an increased trend to the integration of human factors, including well-being policies and standards of partner or linked companies into supply chain management, just as there is with sustainability.

**DELOITTE HAVE PREDICTED THAT, 'CREATING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY AROUND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IS NO LONGER A NICE-TO-HAVE. IT'S A VITAL PART OF DOING BUSINESS IN THE MODERN WORLD'.<sup>57</sup>**

The evidence around good practice is clear: company value is often a reflection of workplace well-being. Research has shown that robust investment in the health and well-being of the workforce (as reported on corporate health and wellness assessments) led to stock value appreciation of 235% over a six-year period as compared to 159% for the S&P 500 Index.<sup>58</sup>


Clearly, accountability and transparency require metrics, and few companies are set up to deliver this. The Corporate Governance Institute recommend that transparency around employee well-being has become a must-have, but this also creates a need to collect relevant data to demonstrate the effectiveness of such initiatives.<sup>59</sup> How these challenging requirements are addressed will itself be an indicator of how seriously a company takes the policy. We predict that ethically-minded investor organisations, such as pension associations, will be looking closely at the companies they invest in, to assess how worker well-being is measured and reported.

As an example of an organisation responding to this, the pharmaceutical company, MSD publishes an annual well-being report, which states, ***'Our company is committed to helping employees and their families improve their health and well-being. We .... hold ourselves accountable to measure our progress, celebrate successes, raise the bar, and share best practices with all our employees, their families and stakeholders.'***

57. Well-being: A new cornerstone for ESG strategy and reporting, Deloitte, 2022

58. IWBIGlobal Research Agenda

59. Employee well-being as an ESG strategy, Corporate Governance Institute, 2024



**AS THE WORKPLACE  
BECOMES MORE AWARE  
ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS,  
THE NEED FOR EMPLOYERS  
TO BE PRO-ACTIVE IN THE  
DOMAIN OF WELL-BEING  
WILL ONLY INCREASE.**

# WELL-BEING IS AN INVESTMENT NOT A COST

**THE WTW 2024 GLOBAL MEDICAL TRENDS SURVEY IDENTIFIES MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS AS THE MAIN CONDITION, NUMERICALLY, ON WHICH INSURANCE CLAIMS ARE MADE IN EUROPE AND THE THIRD HIGHEST FOR COST, BEHIND CANCER AND CARDIOVASCULAR.**

Meanwhile mental health ranks among the fastest-growing conditions resulting in claims by both incidence and cost.

**THE REPORT GOES ON TO STATE HOW, 'POOR ERGONOMICS IN EMPLOYEES' HOME WORKING ENVIRONMENTS AND A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE ARE KEY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS'.**

Every company is different and so are individual employee needs – but as the workplace becomes more diverse and people become more aware and vocal about their rights, the need for employers to be pro-active in the domain of well-being will only increase.

The growing recognition of the need to take neurodiversity into account in well-being planning is just one relatively recent example of additional factors coming into play.

As with any health-related topic, prevention is better than cure. Research consistently demonstrates a strong correlation and causality between employee well-being and productivity. Given that each day of absence for a desk working employee will cost a company around €500-1,000 a day, the fiscal case for well-being should be obvious – whether addressing stress or musculoskeletal complaints.



While it is easy to blame Covid-19 for many changes, there is evidence of a long-term decay that predates the pandemic.

**RAND EUROPE IDENTIFIED A NEAR DOUBLING IN HEALTH-RELATED PRODUCTIVITY LOSS FROM 16 DAYS PER YEAR IN 2014 TO 33 IN 2019 AND MANY INDICATORS SUGGEST THAT THE SITUATION HAS WORSENEO SINCE THEN.<sup>60</sup>**

Well-being has a demonstrable effect on both absenteeism and unnecessary presenteeism, saving money by minimizing lost productivity. Different data sources will always give different figures, but there is consistency of findings across analysts.

McKinsey Health Institute believe that in the UK, the economic value of improved employee well-being could be between £130–370 billion per year or 6–17% of the UK's Gross Domestic Product. This is the equivalent of a staggering £4,000–£12,000 per UK employee.<sup>61</sup>

Most businesses involving desk or knowledge work are, at their heart, people businesses and despite AI, automation, remote workforces and increased digital communication, possibly more so than ever.

It is an often-cited maxim that a company's most precious assets go down in the lift every night – or if they're remote, turn off their laptops. And unlike inanimate assets, they can choose whether to return.

If the office is competing with home, then it needs to offer things – tangible and intangible – that the home or other third spaces can't. Investment in workplace well-being can have intangible benefits that simply make sense. And yet, with so many things that companies routinely do without looking for a ROI, it is curious that investing in this area can be a lower priority.

There is strong evidence, especially from the insurance perspective, that addressing shortcomings pays back – and more. The 2011 International Social Security Association (ISSA) research report '**The Return on Prevention**' estimates an average ROI of 2.2. This is endorsed by a report from VBG, the German Employers' Liability Insurance Association, which calculates a return of 2.3.

**IN THE UK, THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF IMPROVED EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING COULD BE BETWEEN £130-370 BILLION PER YEAR OR 6-17% OF THE UK'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT. THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF A STAGGERING £4,000-£12,000 PER UK EMPLOYEE.<sup>59</sup>**

McKinsey Health Institute

**MORE RECENTLY, ANALYSIS BY DELOITTE, PUBLISHED IN 2024 CLAIMS THAT IN THE UK, EVERY £1 SPENT ON SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THEIR WORKFORCE, EMPLOYERS GET (ON AVERAGE) ABOUT £4.70 BACK IN INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY.<sup>62</sup>**

Well-being initiatives don't always involve additional costs – they can simply involve doing things differently. For example, if a metric for procurement departments when considering office equipment is well-being, then that can lead to the prioritisation of equipment that has a proven ergonomic benefit over that which doesn't. Quality isn't just about materials, it should include the extent to which materials are designed and chosen, with a purpose beyond, say aesthetics or simply base costs.

In addition, there are intangible benefits to taking well-being initiatives, including embodying company culture – so companies can turn their offices into strategic assets.<sup>63</sup> The ISSA study showed that the major positive impacts of well-being strategies were perceived by companies to lie in improved employee motivation and satisfaction and better corporate image.

The concept of a 'well-being allowance' is beginning to gain traction in many companies. This is a financial benefit that enables employees to invest in their health whether through gym memberships, exercise equipment, therapy sessions, mindfulness app.

EY for example, provide an account preloaded with £500 for employees to invest in their health and wellbeing. By offering this type of allowance, employers demonstrate a genuine commitment to their team's well-being and show that they understand that health at work is important and more so because work is so central to our lives.

In conclusion, well-being has a demonstrable effect on both absenteeism and unnecessary presenteeism, saving money by minimizing lost productivity. Employees who feel physically and mentally well are more engaged and perform better in their roles. Although pay will always be the over-riding factor, for most people, as we saw earlier, other factors are increasingly coming into play when people evaluate their jobs and careers.

Commitment to employee well-being enhances a company's appeal to prospective talent as well as acting as an anchor to keep people committed to their current place of employment.

**THIS IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT FOR YOUNGER GENERATIONS, WHO IN PARTICULAR, WILL FAVOUR COMPANIES WHOSE EMPLOYERS VALUE THEIR WELL-BEING AND OFFER HOLISTIC WELLNESS PROGRAMS – AND STAY LONGER WITH THEM.**

# HOW WELL-BEING INITIATIVES CAN ENHANCE THE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

**WE HAVE NOTED HOW SOME COMPANIES ARE STILL MANDATING RETURN TO THE OFFICE, AND THIS CONTINUES TO BE MET WITH RESISTANCE.**

Rather than orders and threats, organisations could think in terms of encouraging 'positive presenteeism,' so that people feel and experience benefits from being in the collective workplace.

Wellness remains one of the most important building amenities for occupiers, and as we have seen, increased attention on fitness facilities and access to outdoor space can reap dividends.<sup>64</sup>

**WELL-BEING  
IS ESSENTIAL  
FOR SUCCESS**



## A SURVEY BY STEELCASE IN 2022 INDICATED THAT PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO RETURN TO THE OFFICE IF THEY WERE OFFERED A RANGE OF NON-FINANCIAL BENEFITS. IN PARTICULAR,

- **They want more individual privacy**
  - people have got used to the well-being factor of not being overheard on business or personal matters that they can usually enjoy from home.
- **They want more individual space**
  - a characteristic of office design is that personal space has declined – by as much as 50% since the millennium. Employee aspirations go contrary to the standardisation approach driven by economics and corporate uniformity of provision of office equipment.
- **They prefer assigned workstations**
  - hotdesking goes against the instinct of people to have personalised areas. As people come into the office less frequently, the economics of dedicating space to people who may be there less often than not becomes an issue.
- **They prefer ergonomic furniture**
  - an understanding of the importance of desks, seating and desktop equipment personalised to their physicality.

It is noteworthy that all these attributes are about tailoring space, equipment and the working experience around *individual needs* – with a strong emphasis on well-being.



## BY NOW, WE HAVE SEEN THAT WELL-BEING

- Is a **global trend**
- Has a become a **focus of legislation**
- Is **increasingly prioritised** by employees
- Has a **direct impact on productivity**, both negatively and positively
- **Starts at the top** – management well or ill-being filters down through organisations.

**WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS CAN SOMEONE READING THIS TAKE?  
ONE WAY TO ANSWER THIS IS FOR LEITZ TO SHARE WHAT IT MEANS  
TO THEM, ORGANISATIONALLY – AND HOW BY RECOGNISING THE  
GROWING WELLNESS TREND AND THE OPPORTUNITY IT PRESENTS  
TO MAKE A POSITIVE, TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE TO ITS CUSTOMERS,  
IT IS RE-ORIENTING THE PRODUCTS IT MARKETS.**

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **HOW LEITZ IS ADDRESSING WELL-BEING**

# HOW LEITZ IS RE-EVALUATING WHAT IT DOES AND HOW IT DOES IT

**WE HAVE ONE, SIMPLE GOAL  
– TO HELP PEOPLE FEEL GOOD.  
AND WE ARE GOING TO ACHIEVE  
THIS BY PROMPTING AND  
ENCOURAGING MOVEMENT.**

*LIKE MANY BRANDS, LEITZ HAS  
REFLECTED ON CHANGES IN THE  
WORLD OF WORK IN THE LAST FEW  
YEARS. OUR RECENT BRAND PAPERS  
HAVE EXPLORED CHANGES IN OFFICE  
DESIGN AND CONFIGURATION, MOBILE  
WORKING AND THIRD SPACES AND  
THE IMPORTANCE OF DESIGN – IN TERMS  
OF IMPROVED FUNCTIONALITY, NOT  
SIMPLY AESTHETICS.*



Innovations and brand positioning need to cohere, and we are changing what we stand for and how we express this – not just in words but in the products that we make and the challenges they address.



# WHAT LEITZ OFFERS

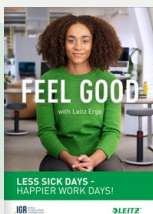
If you don't know Leitz very well, this is what the brand stands for.

**LEITZ IS A FACILITATOR, MAKING LIFE EASIER – NOT JUST IN THE WORKPLACE, BUT AT HOME AND ON THE MOVE, WITH THE OUTCOME OF HELPING PEOPLE FEEL GOOD.**

The pandemic made many people feel that their lives were out of control. As a result, as noted earlier, they are now thinking deeply about the work they do and how and why they do it.

With Leitz's organisational and ergonomic products, the goal is to contribute towards helping people take control of their workplaces and their bodies.

As we have seen, desk-based work can damage your health and **Leitz wants to help people Feel Good** by living fitter, more enjoyable and satisfying lives at home, in the workplace and beyond.



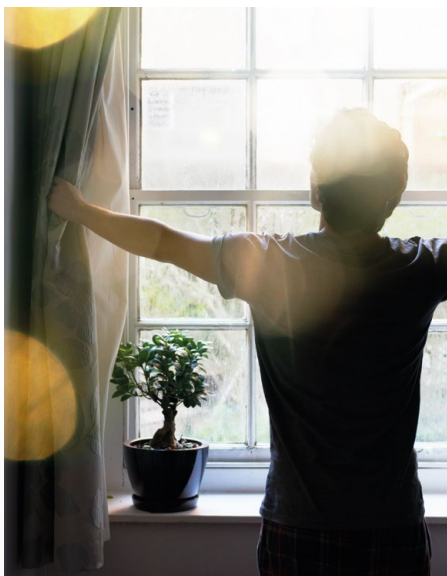
For further information, look at the **'Healthy Workplace, Happier Workdays'** brochure that Leitz has produced with the IGR Institute for Health and Ergonomics.



# WHAT LEITZ STANDS FOR

**THE LEITZ BRAND IS SUPPORTED BY FOUR PILLARS.  
EACH IS RELEVANT TO THE NEW WORLD OF WORK  
AND WELL-BEING.**

- **Good design is at the heart of each product.**  
They are designed to do a job, but also to look beautiful and appealing, so there is real satisfaction in ownership.
- **Leitz tends to cost a little bit more than the market norm,**  
but there is a good reason for this. Leitz invests in superior quality materials, greater care in production, and its research confirms that consumers consider the premium is well worth paying.
- **Leitz products are designed to be sustainably produced and long-lasting,** in line with the well-established sustainability goals and achievements of ACCO Brands, its parent company.
- **Finally, Leitz has a proud German heritage.**  
The Leitz brand was established in 1871 and since then Leitz products have been consistently focused on precision engineering.



## IN THE MINDS OF MANY PEOPLE, LEITZ IS ASSOCIATED WITH PAPER-BASED PRODUCTS AND FILING – ESPECIALLY LEVER ARCH FILES, INVENTED BY ITS FOUNDER, LOUIS LEITZ IN 1896.

The business has been fast evolving over the last fifteen years, as the Leitz brand has moved into new categories which are often peripheral or distanced from its original core business – for the office, for home offices and for domestic use: shredders and laminators; storage materials for items beyond paper, travel accessories (from bags to drinks containers), and above all, ergonomic products and accessories.

The result is that the Leitz of today is unrecognisable from that of yesterday.

At the forefront of change has been the move into ergonomic equipment, driven by the well-being movement and growing unmet consumer needs. Removing pain from people's everyday working lives is the ultimate task? in helping them **Feel Good**.



**'Ergonomics' is derived from the Greek 'ergon', denoting work and 'nomos', or laws, to define the science of work.**

Like well-being, the term 'ergonomic' has gained a lot of generalised use without reference back to what it really stands for. Too often it can simply be assumed to denote a product that is simple or easier to use. Leitz has been determined to raise the bar and as a result has actively sought official certification for its **Ergo Range** to ensure that we meet the most rigorous standards.



In some respects, this is making life harder for us. But we believe that by holding what we do and how we do it up to the highest standards, we will be a better, more successful company with more satisfied customers.

Most of our products already have the IGR seal (Institute for Health and Ergonomics) and this will continue to be our objective with future launches.

Design is about performance as well as aesthetics and products in **the Leitz Ergo range have received the German Design Award in 2022, 2024 and again in 2025** with the range praised by the jury for how harmoniously it fits with both living and office environments and keeping its promise to Feel Good while working.



# EVERYTHING IS CHANGING

**WE HAVE SEEN HOW THE WORLD OF WORK IS BEING TRANSFORMED. AGAINST THAT BACKDROP, TO STAND STILL IS TO GO BACKWARDS. CONSEQUENTLY, WE ARE LOOKING AT NEW CUSTOMERS, NEW CHANNELS, NEW PRODUCTS, NEW PROPOSITIONS AND BENEFITS.**

With the growth in home-working, Leitz is also tailoring the designs and capabilities of its products to suit home use, although as has been seen in this paper, the home/office working environments are not always distinct entities.

Leitz's past strategy has been based on achievement in the workplace, appealing to the outer-directed mindset that wants to not only accomplish but signal superior performance in the use of premium quality tools and materials.

However, an emergent reflective, values-based approach to work, characterised by the growing important role of well-being, has encouraged Leitz to evolve its brand positioning accordingly.



**LEITZ IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING SOLUTIONS FOR NEW WORK CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, MAKING SURE THE BRAND REMAINS RELEVANT IN HOW IT SERVES ITS BUSINESS PARTNERS, USERS AND IMPORTANTLY, ITS EMPLOYEES, DOING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR THEIR WELL-BEING.**

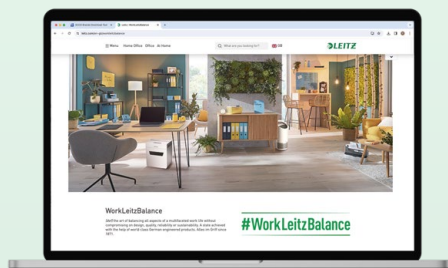
## **TONALLY WE ARE CHANGING AS WELL.**

Well-being is not a loud, 'look at me' concept. It is more restrained and inner directed. It is about empowerment, in the same way as hybrid working gives people the flexibility to do things the way that suits them best and allows them to produce the best results. Most of us know what this is, without being told – and crucially, as we have identified growing individualism, what works best for one person does not necessarily fit another.

# MAKING WORKPLACES BETTER PLACES

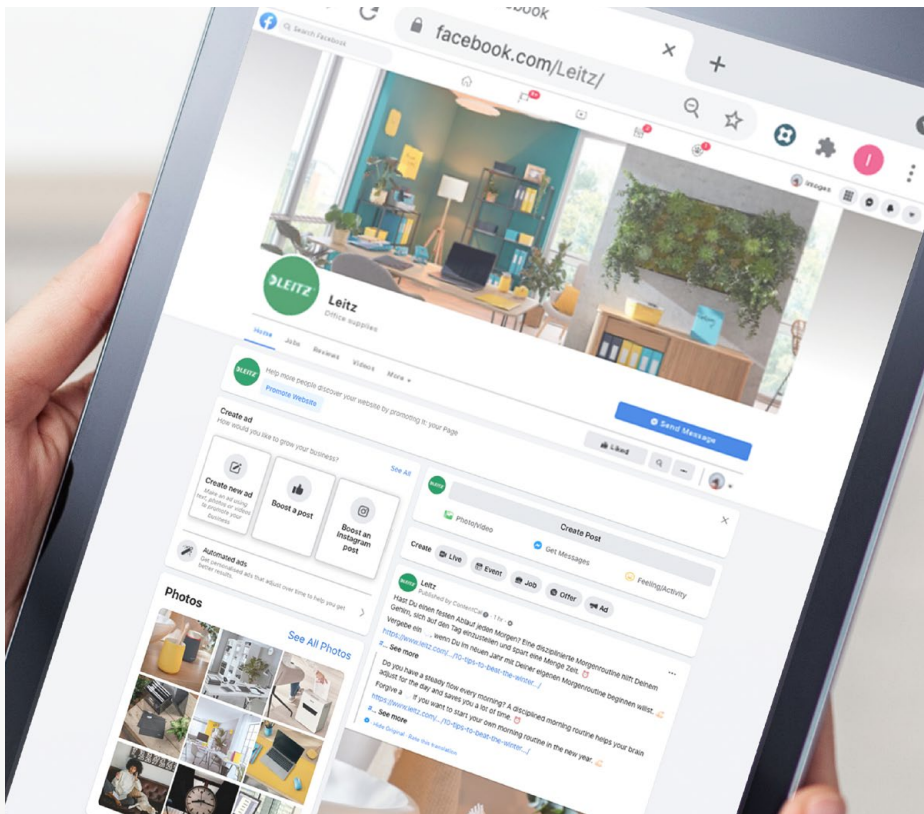
**LEITZ BELIEVES THAT OUR PLACES OF WORK, WHETHER A DESK AT HOME OR A CITY CENTRE OFFICE, SHOULD BE PLACES THAT PEOPLE WANT TO GO TO, NOT BE FORCED TO GO TO.**

And when they get there, the equipment and the materials that they work with should be of the highest quality, affordable and positively enhance their well-being, so they feel good about their lives. This is true of company workplaces and where people choose to work in their homes and other third places.



We have seen how the provision of equipment to enhance well-being should be a priority for companies that want to put their people first and the positive consequences of doing so in terms of individual performance, Return on Investment, company reputation and all of the positive spin-offs that these bring. With changing legislation, this whole area will also increasingly become one of compliance, not choice.





While mental health tends to be a contemporary focus, physical well-being tends to be less high profile, less newsworthy. But it is something that companies and individuals, with the right knowledge and equipment can do positively influence.

In response to this, it is important for Leitz to be a consumer focused and service-led brand. To this end we have invested heavily in understanding needs in the domain of well-being and communicating with people in an expert and accessible way. For several years, the **'Work/Leitz Balance'** sector of the Leitz website has been offering commentary and advice in a growing library of 131 live articles by the end of 2024.

<https://www.leitz.com/en-gb/workleitzbalance>.

# LEITZ ERGO AND WHOLE-BODY WELL-BEING

## WHEN TALKING ABOUT MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs), IT IS EASY TO THINK ABOUT BACK PAIN OR SHOULDER PAIN OR WRIST PAIN AS SEPARATE ENTITIES.

The reality of course, as we have noted earlier in this paper, is that we are a mass of interconnected muscles, bones, sinews and tissue.

The mental stresses that we feel can lead to physical symptoms – from headaches to tension which in turn leads to muscular traumas. And then things multiply. Anyone who has had an injury or a sprain will be familiar with our tendency to compensate by holding ourselves differently, favouring another part of the body – they're called compensatory mechanisms.

The problem is that not only do they rarely address the original problem, but they also create additional problems elsewhere. It's no surprise then, that many MSDs are cumulative.

What has become clear to us is that we need to think in terms of **'Whole Body Well-being'**. Offering a sit/stand desk or a footrest in isolation is not enough. We need to encourage people to address their entire physical well-being in their place of work by providing a full range of solutions.

**“I THINK IN TERMS OF  
360-DEGREE WELL-BEING.  
I COMPLETELY AGREE WITH  
LEITZ’S APPROACH THAT  
THINKS IN TERMS OF THE  
WHOLE BODY”.**

*Anisha Joshi, Award winning osteopath.*



## IT'S NOT JUST US SAYING THIS, OUR PRODUCTS HAVE IMPORTANT SUPPORT, ENDORSEMENTS AND ACCREDITATIONS.

To ensure that our ergonomic products can be supported by medical and clinical evidence, Leitz has partnered with award-winning osteopath Anisha Joshi to assess and develop the brand's range of ergonomic workplace solutions.

Known as @osteonisha on Instagram, Anisha is a graduate of the British School of Osteopathic Medicine, has practised for 15 years with a client base that embraces well-known sports players and public figures and has also been the recipient of the prestigious **Principal Osteopath of the Year Award**.



She is a regular contributor to TV programmes on physical well-being and frequently consulted as an expert in the field by mainstream media in the UK and internationally. We have worked with Anisha to create a **systematised range of ergonomically designed and proven products**. As Anisha explains, 'My professional approach is holistic I think in terms of 360-degree well-being. I completely agree with Leitz's approach that thinks in terms of the whole body'.

**THE ENDORSEMENT OF PRODUCTS IN OUR RANGE BY THE IGR IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR US TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE BASED ON CLINICAL EVIDENCE AND HAVE BEEN ASSESSED BY A RANGE OF OBJECTIVE EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELDS.**



The German Institut für Gesundheit und Ergonomie GmbH, otherwise known as “IGR” or The Institute for Health and Ergonomics, supports companies, public authorities and consumers to optimise and advance workplace ergonomic standards.

Like Leitz, the IGR encourages a holistic approach to workplace ergonomics, to not only help individuals to manage health complaints, but to help organisations and individuals to avoid them developing in the first instance. The IGR is part of a strong network of doctors, therapists, scientists, company health management staff and representatives of government authorities and draws upon this expertise when awarding products with its coveted IGR seal of approval, its IGR Tested & Recommended accreditation.

Both the IGR and TÜV (Technischer Überwachungsverein, or in English, Technical Inspection Association) have given our range their accreditation.

We have also succeeded in obtaining Anisha’s endorsement, both in terms of individual products and the complete range. She uses them herself and gives them her professional recommendation to her clients as part of their therapy, and to her thousands of followers on her social media platforms.

Well-being isn’t something that can be turned on and off. It is a long-term state, and our futures depend on what we do in the here and now. What has become apparent to Leitz in working in the ergonomics field is that the brand can make a long-term difference, not just to peoples’ working lives, but to their lives outside work and beyond.

As a result, the work that Leitz does and the products it markets have never been more important in terms of their significance.

Longitudinal data indicates that well-being in childhood goes on to predict future well-being in adulthood,<sup>65</sup> so the principles of ergonomic design are for everyone and not just relevant to the short-term, but also to quality of later life. Anisha is a fervent believer in the long-term benefits of proper posture and physical alignment and echoes the need for companies and individuals to take an investment approach to well-being: **‘Investing in your health is investing in the rest of your life.’**

65. Well-being is More than Happiness and Life Satisfaction: a Multidimensional Analysis of 21 Countries, Health and Quality of Life Outcomes, 2020

# **CHAPTER 8**

# **THE LEITZ ERGO WORKSTATION**



# DRIVING CHANGE. FEELING GOOD

**THIS PAPER IS ENTITLED  
'DRIVING CHANGE. FEELING GOOD'.  
IT ENCAPSULATES OUR BELIEF  
THAT PEOPLE AND COMPANIES  
NEED TO KEEP MOVING TO THRIVE.**

At the heart of our offer is the Leitz Ergo Compact Workstation. It is not just a single product but rather a modular core, leading to a full ergonomic solution for any workplace.

**The Workstation exemplifies and symbolises our goals, values and way of thinking as a company.**

- Aligned with market trends
- Leading the category
- Innovative
- Meeting genuine consumer needs
- Personalised and tailored
- Systematised and joined up
- Encouraging movement and fluidity

Its role is relevant for for home workers, for full time office or hybrid workers alike. We have seen earlier how responsible companies should be prioritising their employees' mental and physical well-being. We have also flagged the future importance of ESGR, how companies will be required to report on this metric and how they will be increasingly judge and be judged according to this metric throughout supply chains.

We have also seen how worker well-being should be seen by companies as an investment, not a cost. Well-being is an investment that gives payback in both tangible and intangible measures – retention, recruitment, absenteeism, performance with all their attendant financial benefits, as well as being staffed by people who enjoy a happier, more fulfilling work experience.

**MOREOVER, IT IS THE  
SYNTHESIS OF OUR  
BRAND GOAL – FEEL GOOD.**

*Anisha Joshi, Award winning osteopath.*

And we have also seen how younger people especially are taking an investment approach to their health and well-being, seeing it as a long-term commitment to improved, more fulfilling lives.

As a concept, The **Leitz Ergonomic Compact Workstation** addresses the problems identified in our research earlier, specifically that despite the epidemic of MSDs and the problems that are being created for the future, over a quarter (28%) of desk workers have **no ergonomic equipment** working at home; 38% of over 50's have no equipment – yet are highest risk of suffering from MSDs; a further third (36%) have only a couple of items.

Additionally, the equipment that people do already have is often outdated. Most of us are aware of the rapid change in sports equipment and apparel, from protective outdoor clothing to footwear. Progress in the domain of well-being has been similarly rapid; new design concepts and more modern materials mean that old concepts can be dramatically improved upon.

**Flexibility is a characteristic of the modern mode of working and where work happens. It is also central to the concept and the delivery of well-being. It embraces both time and place.**

We have already noted how workforces are becoming more diversified, and together with greater variety in workspaces there is a requirement for products and equipment that meet individual well-being needs.

One of the perennial problems with the design of offices and the materials that go in them is that they are based on averages – as in so many things, one size doesn't fit all and an average can represent only a small proportion, especially when age is taken into consideration.

**OVER A QUARTER (28%) OF DESK WORKERS HAVE NO ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT WORKING AT HOME; 38% OF OVER 50'S HAVE NO EQUIPMENT.**




Additionally, with the home increasingly becoming a multi-functional space, used in different ways by different family members, products for use outside the office need to be similarly flexible and adjustable. So, the aim for the Workstation is that it fits you and your environment perfectly.

As we said earlier, Ergo is a service – oriented brand. We aim to inspire and inform, especially in areas where people have an understanding of their needs but are actively looking for guidance in how to achieve them. Thus, in line with our goal of providing consumers with services, not simply products, we offer online information, suggestions and advice so that people are able to easily select the configuration that best suits how they work, where they work.

By providing three predefined set-up configurations, with a fourth option to create a fully personalised set-up, **the Workstation is adaptable to all physiques and body types.** And because it is easily adjustable, it can be quickly adapted to the needs of more than one person – for shared use in the office or for different family members doing work or school projects at home.

Anisha's response to the concept was highly affirmative.

**'WE KNOW THAT ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF PAIN IS LACK OF MOVEMENT. WHICH IS WHY I WAS POSITIVE AND ENTHUSED WHEN I SAW THE LEITZ ERGO RANGE OF PRODUCTS WHICH ENCOURAGE THE ONE THING I TELL ALL MY PATIENTS TO TRY AND DO IN THEIR WORKPLACE – KEEP MOVING'**



**RESEARCH CONFIRMS  
THAT POOR ERGONOMIC  
WORKSTATION DESIGN IS,  
UNSURPRISINGLY,  
MORE COMMON IN HOME  
THAN OFFICE WORKING.”**

Telework-related risk factors for  
musculoskeletal disorders, *Frontiers  
in Public Health*, 2023

# WORKSTATION SET-UP GUIDE AND INSPIRATION

## THE SIT-STAND-MOVE DESIGN OF THE LEITZ ERGO COMPACT WORKSTATION DOES MORE THAN ENCOURAGE GOOD POSTURE – IT ALSO ALLOWS THE FLEXIBLE MOVEMENT THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO HELP DIMINISH THE EFFECT OF MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS.

The IGR recommends, ‘**A balanced ratio of 60% sitting, 30% standing and 10% movement for a healthy working day.**’ Keeping moving improves blood flow and cognitive function, leading to enhanced creative thinking and decision-making.<sup>66</sup>

Not settling for too long in one position is important: we referenced earlier how prolonged standing can be as damaging as extended sitting.

A report by the British Safety Council in 2024, while addressing the problems associated with prolonged sitting, noted that, ‘Prolonged static standing, may be as harmful as prolonged sitting’.<sup>67</sup>

A study published in a 2024 issue of *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* shows that over time, standing more, compared with sitting, does not improve cardiovascular health (coronary heart disease, stroke and heart failure), and could actually increase the risk of circulatory issues related to standing, such as varicose veins and deep vein thrombosis.<sup>68</sup>

A report by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work warned that **prolonged standing can become problematic for workers with chronic conditions such as arthritis.**

66. Active workstations may improve cognitive performance, *Science Daily*, April 2024. 67. Sedentary working and how to combat the ‘sitting disease’, *British Safety Council*, April 2024. 68. Device-measured sedentary time and intensity specific physical activity in relation to all-cause and cardiovascular disease mortality, *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, July 2024.



It also noted that this prevalence will increase as the population and the workforce ages. As the workforce becomes older, there will be more workers with such conditions and the report recommended that to ensure the sustainability of work over the work-life course, prolonged static standing needs to be reduced for all age groups. Any shop worker whose job involves protracted standing can also attest to the musculoskeletal strain on the lower limbs, but it makes no sense for desk workers to simply exchange one static position for another.

One innovative new product designed to build additional movement into the working day is the new **Leitz Ergo Balance Board**, a multi-functional piece of equipment that facilitates a gentle, low-impact rocking motion when standing. By keeping your core and legs constantly engaged it improves blood flow, strengthens lower body muscles and alleviates discomfort by reducing static pressure on the spine and joints.

When sitting it doubles up as a foot rest, its nubs providing a comfortable feeling in socks or barefoot, or a soothing foot massage when standing again.

In addition, the **Leitz Anti-fatigue Mat\*** helps create a comfortable and active workspace, by providing healthy posture, improved circulation and providing strong sole support.



Discomfort and pain can come from being in the same seat for extended periods, not matter how well designed. Leitz Ergo seating can be as varied as the user wants. And by using a range of options – stool, ball, cushions and foot and arm rests, sitting can be dynamic, rather than fixed and inert – again prompting movement.

In a market where so many products make empty claims and online communication lacks regulation, Anisha was impressed that our products are based on best practice and empirical evidence:

***'REALLY GOOD QUALITY SOLUTIONS THAT ARE EVIDENCE BASED, TO ENSURE THAT YOU'RE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE FOCUS TO MEET YOUR WORK DEADLINES BUT ALSO KEEP MOVING. WE KNOW THAT LACK OF MOVEMENT IS ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF BACK AND NECK PAIN.'***

\*Coming in September 2025



Ergonomics embraces efficiency and comfort in the working environment, and space management is an important part of this. Within offices, CBRE data shows that as a result of lean office space allocation, increased efficiency and flexibility of design and the post-Covid effect, space per employee is at a 20-year low.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, flexibility and compactness of workspace design are more important than ever.

We have referenced where people work at home, with the split between dedicated and ad hoc workspaces, the need for the latter to be multi-functional. We have also noted the space pressure for younger home workers, who are likely to have smaller homes and move location more frequently.

All these factors favour the design principles of the **Leitz Ergo Compact Workstation**, whose 80x60cm worktop, light weight, manoeuvrability and modular set-up are all in tune with the practicalities of integrating work into the home environment. Work is increasingly project and task based, and this is reflected in the modularity of the Workstation.

**THE WORKSTATION ITSELF IS DESIGNED TO FIT SEAMLESSLY WITH OTHER LEITZ ERGO PRODUCTS THAT ENSURE THAT POSTURE AND COMFORT ARE OPTIMIZED. THE END-USER CAN BUILD HIS/HER WORKSTATION BASED ON ALL AVAILABLE LEITZ ERGO PRODUCTS TO PERSONALISE IT TO FULFIL ALL THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS.**

The design language and feel is consistent across products, so the seating fits naturally with the pegboard; the arm and foot rests enhance the sitting experience; desk top accessories are where they should be – easily to hand.

Design also embraces colour and materials. We noted earlier the problems with outdated equipment in terms of performance. Aesthetics and colours are part of ergonomics – in our 2017 paper, *'Better by Design'* we referenced how wide choice and contemporaneity are important in breaking the tyranny of monochrome and metallics. So, the colourful accessories we offer give individuality but also allow the Workstation to harmonise with its setting.

## THESE AREN'T JUST ACCESSORIES, OR PERIPHERALS, THEY ARE ESSENTIALS.



With a growing range of around twenty products that integrate into the Workstation, **Leitz is unique in being able to offer a complete solution across all category segments.**

**THESE AREN'T JUST ACCESSORIES, OR PERIPHERALS,  
THEY ARE ESSENTIALS.**

Whichever pre-set configuration cited earlier that people choose to take, or if they decide to create their own, the Ergo range works in a modular way to help people achieve a holistic physical well-being.

# COMPUTER USE IS VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL IN DESK-BASED OCCUPATIONS, BRINGING NUMEROUS CHALLENGES TO PHYSICAL WELL-BEING.

We have already seen how much remote work happens in unsuitable surroundings and offices can also be problem areas, especially with the prevalence of hot desking for hybrid workers.

Laptop screens need to be (but rarely are), level with the eyeline to prevent leaning and hunching, with consequent neck, back and shoulder discomfort and the risk of long-term damage. **Leitz Laptop Stands for Desks** are height and angle adjustable, to adapt to different physiques, allowing everyone to sit in their optimum position for posture and comfort. including screens.

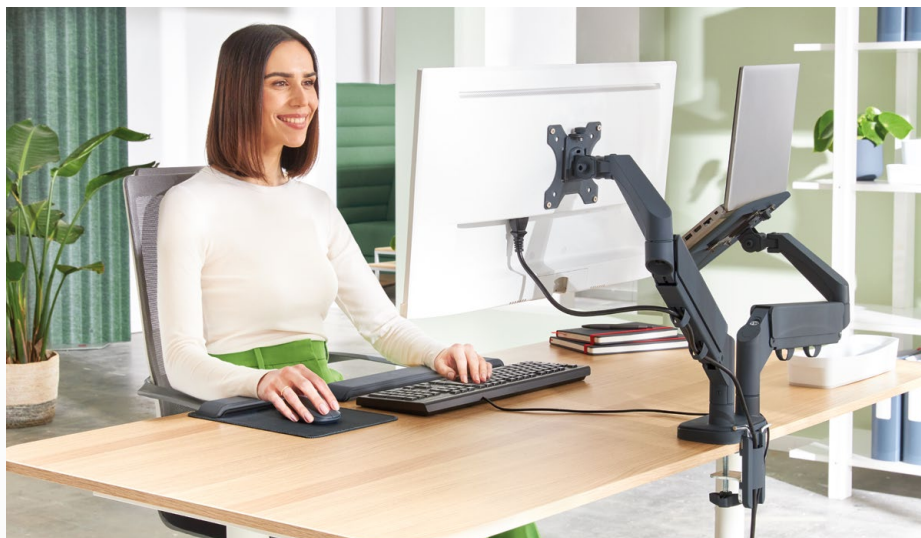
**FREQUENTLY QUOTED RESEARCH CLAIMS THAT DUAL SCREEN USAGE HAS INCREASED BY 70% IN THE LAST 20 YEARS, BUT FROM AN UNSPECIFIED BASE.<sup>70</sup>**

Adoption is likely to vary by industry – IT, design, architecture and finance with higher concentration of work in offices are likely to be in excess of 60%; home and mobile workers significantly lower.



However, there is broad consensus on the benefits, with experiments in productivity indicating gains of around 40% from being able to look at two screens simultaneously and switch between the two – for example doing general multi-tasking, data comparison, sharing information during remote meetings.<sup>71</sup> But managing space and getting the right configuration can be problematic.

Poorly aligned screens cause physical strain – tired eyes and headaches, neck strain and poor posture from switching between different levels.



A 2023 experiment evaluating neck biomechanics concluded that, **‘Dual displays should be used with a monitor arm to switch between centred and secondary configurations.’<sup>72</sup>**

Responding to this need for screens to be capable of being aligned but also flexibly configured for efficiency and good posture, **Leitz’s Monitor and Laptop Arms** are designed to keep screens and keyboards at optimum adjustable heights and angles, especially when more than one person uses a workstation.

**“I HAVE 2 SCREENS IN MY OFFICE. SINCE I OFTEN WORK FROM HOME, I’VE MISSED MY 2ND SCREEN A LOT. THANKS TO THIS GREAT STAND, I CAN USE MY LAPTOP AS A SECOND SCREEN AND CAN DO ALL MY TASKS AGAIN AS COMFORTABLY AS IN THE OFFICE.”**

**Amazon user: Germany**

*Reviewing the Leitz Ergo Monitor and Laptop Arms*



Leitz offers a range of ergonomic stools designed to enhance comfort, posture, and work efficiency.

The **Leitz Ergo Sitting Stools with Wheels**<sup>\*</sup> are ideal for home and office use. They come in two versions: one with an active Wobble Comfort Seat covered with 100% recycled fabric, promoting dynamic movement and better posture, and the other with a stable Comfort Seat and a wipe-clean cover, perfect for artists, hair stylists, and workshop environments. Both versions feature high-quality 360° wheels for easy mobility.

The **Leitz Ergo Active Stools with Comfort Seat** are available in standing and sitting versions. They have a rounded wobble base that encourages active movement by swivelling and rocking, which helps strengthen your back and core, preventing aches and pains. These stools also feature a triangular Dual Density Foam (DDF) comfort seat for hours of comfortable use.

<sup>\*</sup>Coming in September 2025

The **Leitz Cosy Active Sit Stand Stool 2 in 1** offers the flexibility to switch between sitting and standing throughout your workday. This innovative wobble stool allows you to adjust the height for a comfortable seated position or extend it to a higher position for standing tasks. It promotes natural movement and muscle engagement, improving posture, boosting energy levels, and increasing productivity.

These ergonomic solutions from Leitz are designed to keep you comfortable and productive all day long.

The triangular **Dual Density Foam (DDF)** comfort seat with firm ergonomic support core, surrounded by soft foam cushioning reduces pressure on thighs and legs and provides exceptional comfort for those sitting on it.



I was struggling to do anything in the kitchen from cooking to washing up. This stool has changed my life, I can now do any standing chore without pain. It may seem pricey, however, it is solidly made, easy to use and requires no assembly at all. My pain will never go but I have now found something to help."

**Amazon user: UK**

*Reviewing the Leitz Ergo Active Sit Stand Stool*



HOW INCREDIBLE! This stool has a dual density foam comfort cushion and it really makes a difference. Strangely this stool also makes my back feel comfortable while I am sitting on it despite not having a back support."

**Amazon user: Germany**

*Reviewing the Leitz Ergo Active Standing Stool with Comfort Seat*



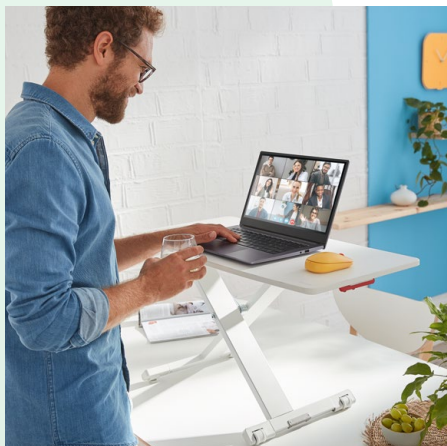


The stylish and ergonomically designed **Leitz Active Sitting Ball** keeps you active throughout the day using back and abdomen muscles to maintain or improve posture, no matter your working set-up.

The ball is made from durable materials and features a carry handle for easy movement between rooms.

Based on the designs for yoga or the gym, the Leitz sitting ball has been redesigned to integrate into an everyday office or home, a weighted element incorporated into the ball ensures a 'no slip' mechanism so the ball will remain still until it is purposefully moved, ensuring stability for the user.

**AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE STANDARD OFFICE CHAIR, THE ACTIVE SITTING BALL PROVIDES COMFORT, FUNCTIONALITY, AND ENCOURAGES IMPROVEMENT IN OVERALL HEALTH, WHETHER AT WORK OR HOME, BY INCORPORATING ACTIVITY INTO EVERYDAY LIFE.**



Within the world of therapy and preventative medicine, Anisha stated that ‘*The **Leitz Cosy Ergo Sit Stand Desk Converter** allows the flexibility to move between sitting and standing while you work, encouraging muscle movement and increasing energy levels.*’

While musculoskeletal disorder literature tends to focus on back, neck and shoulder problems, repetitive, static and intensive activity associated with screen use is also linked to hand and wrist complaints. Poor shoulder posture can accentuate pain by pushing wrists into an unnatural position that becomes normal for you and puts strain on joints and tendons.

***WOMEN ARE MORE OFTEN EXPOSED TO REPETITIVE BIOMECHANICAL STRESSES OF THE UPPER LIMB THAN MEN. OLDER PEOPLE ARE ALSO MORE AT RISK AS A RESULT OF AGEING OF THE JOINTS AND DETERIORATING EYESIGHT.***

**“I SAW THIS LEITZ VERSION ... EVERYTHING, AND I MEAN EVERYTHING, ABOUT IT IS FAR SUPERIOR THAN THE ONE I HAD. THIS ONE IS WHITE, WHICH IS SO MUCH MORE PLEASING AND LIGHTER ON THE EYE. IT IS NOT ANYMORE BULKY THAN IT ABSOLUTELY NEEDS TO BE. IT IS EASY TO GRASP/HOLD FOR MOVING TO ANOTHER PLACE.”**

**Amazon user: UK**

*Reviewing the Leitz Cosy Ergo Sit Stand Desk Converter*



Desktop products like **Leitz's range of Adjustable Keyboard Wrist Rests** and **Mouse Rests** provide support and align the chest, elbows and wrists. Too often the focus is just on upper body comfort, when in reality lower body comfort is not just important in its own right, it also transfers upwards, hence the role of the **Leitz Ergo Foot Rest** and **Anti-Fatigue Mats**\*. Anisha highlights how,

**'STIFFNESS IN YOUR ANKLES FROM LACK OF MOVEMENT CAN PREDISPOSE YOU TO GETTING CONDITIONS LIKE PLANTAR FASCIITIS, AND ACHILLIES TENDINOPATHY. THE LEITZ COSY ERGO ROCKING FOOTREST PROMOTES MOVEMENT THROUGH YOUR ANKLES, KNEES, AND CALVES WHILST YOU'RE WORKING.'**

\*Coming in September 2025

... it's really super effective ...  
Suffering from Carpal Tunnel,  
I have to say it's very comfortable.  
I guess my arm and shoulder  
muscles will quickly thank me  
too. The product is also of good  
quality, with beautiful materials  
and a nice colour ... I recommend  
to those who spend their time  
at their screens."

**Amazon user: France**

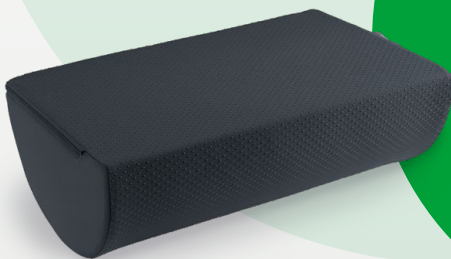
*Reviewing the Leitz Ergo Mouse Wrist Rest*



The brand product  
from Leitz is a completely  
different quality, nice  
and solid, so that you can  
comfortably place your  
feet on it, both on the flat or  
rounded side. It gives me  
noticeable relief on long  
working days on the PC."

**Amazon user: Germany**

*Reviewing the Leitz Ergo Foot Rest*





These are just some of the additional products in the Leitz Ergo range. What they have in common is that they deliver important physical benefits of averting pain and cramp from holding unnatural positions and preventing circulatory problems that result from unavoidable prolonged desk work.

They're not just optional extras to ergonomic desks and seating, they are essentials that help provide through the body protection.



## ERGONOMICS IS ALSO ABOUT EASE OF PORTABILITY AND STORAGE.

Throughout this paper we reference the importance of the economic use of space, in offices with the trend from permanent individual desks to more flexible spaces, and at home with spatial constraint and multipurpose living areas.

The **Leitz Ergo Foldable Sit Standing Desk\*** borrows a design concept from centuries ago, when a card table that went flat against the wall was a common sight in European drawing rooms.

Weighing only 11kg, with precision pneumatic height adjustment, it is laptop sized, completely foldable and ultra space saving.

Similarly, the **Leitz Ergo Laptop Stands** fold flat for simple storage and are easily portable – so you can make your home, co-working space or temporary hybrid office desk, equally ergonomically correct.

\*Coming in September 2025

# **CHAPTER 9**

# **STORAGE & ORGANISATION**

# HOW LEITZ HELPS CREATE WELL-BEING THROUGH ORGANISATION

**THE SIT-STAND-MOVE DESIGN OF THE LEITZ ERGO COMPACT WORKSTATION DOES MORE THAN ENCOURAGE GOOD POSTURE – IT ALSO ALLOWS THE FLEXIBLE MOVEMENT THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO HELP DIMINISH THE EFFECT OF MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS.**

Order is not just an aesthetic, it saves space, time and reduces our cortisol levels, which is a hormone related to stress.

This is true of offices, home offices and the rooms where we live. The physical intrusion of work into the home is one of the most difficult space problems people face – especially younger hybrid and home workers with smaller, often shared accommodation.

**ORGANISATION IS ESSENTIAL TO WELL-BEING, GIVING PEOPLE CONFIDENCE AS WELL AS SAVING TIME. AS WORK BECOMES MORE FRAGMENTED AND MULTI-LOCATIONAL, ORGANISATION IS THE GLUE THAT KEEPS IT ALL TOGETHER.**

Indeed, research proves that clutter adversely affects our brains, reduces our ability to concentrate and function cognitively and can add to stress.<sup>73</sup>

A lack of physical organisation can be a nagging reminder of unfinished tasks. Conversely and positively, research in occupational health demonstrates that the more control that you perceive you have in your work, the more job satisfaction and less stress you experience.<sup>74</sup>

73. Interactions of top-down and bottom-up mechanisms in human visual cortex, *Journal of Neuroscience*, 2011.

74. The Psychological Consequences of Clutter, *PsychologyToday*, 2021



Work paper scattered around the home can be a messy intrusion into domestic life. As seen earlier, Leitz's proprietary GfK research shows that:

- **22%** of the sample are working in a dedicated space that is part of a larger room, so presumably visible to all
- **17%** work in a temporary place in their main living room
- **5%** in the kitchen
- **6%** in the bedroom

In these situations, a lack of decent paper filing and the ability to put work and other materials out of sight has been shown in academic research to adversely affect peace of mind and create stress and arguments in the home.<sup>75</sup>

The 'paperless office' was first mooted in 1975. A much-quoted piece of research from 2010 estimated that **the average UK worker handled 10,000 sheets of paper per year**. The 10,000 figure can be found unattributed on virtually every paper company's website. The origin was a piece of research by Loudhouse on behalf of Kyocera, a printing company, and can only be seen as the roughest of guides.

However, since then, print and writing paper production has fallen steadily, and industry estimates suggest a 50% decline in the UK since 2015, which is likely to be similar in other countries. Causes of this include sustainability, preference for screen over print, COVID and the continued growth of WFH, where printing is less prevalent.



Nevertheless, many office workers almost certainly still handle thousands of sheets of paper a year, continuing to create a need for attractive, robust and durable storage, especially in home offices. The position is especially acute in new builds and city apartments, which provide less storage space – perhaps another reason why, as we have seen, younger people are more disposed to a central office work base.

So, Leitz offers a range of storage products – both traditional and innovative, allowing people to organise things their way with the dual benefits of peace of mind and visual attractiveness, by providing long-lasting protection for essential documentation.

The **Leitz Fabric Hot Desking Work Bag** has been created to make life easy for office, home or third place work and solve some of the issues affecting hybrid workers featured in this paper.

With three separate compartments and space to hold a laptop, keyboard, mouse, charging cable, headset, notebooks and a water bottle it is a portable office and, when not in use, is fully collapsible so it can be easily stored away, physically separating the owner from work reminders.

Lack of clutter, convenient storage and also aesthetics can all work together to enhance well-being, especially for home workers, where as we have seen, space is under pressure and rooms have to be multi-functional and accommodate the needs of several people.

William Morris, the nineteenth century poet, designer and founder of the British Arts and Craft movement wrote:

***'HAVE NOTHING IN YOUR HOUSES THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW TO BE BEAUTIFUL OR BELIEVE TO BE USEFUL.'***

A century later, the German designer, Dieter Rams claimed, *'The Design must contribute to the use of a product.'*

This blend of functionality and aesthetics is something in which Leitz strongly believes and 'design finesse' is one of their four brand pillars. Ergonomic principles mean that all our products are designed around the end user. Ensuring that they are intuitive and simple to use, contribute to the reduction of stress and the enhancement of well-being.

Writing of his newly invented lever arch file, Louis Leitz said it was, *'Designed according to the principle of showing the simplest construction, which is nevertheless so stable it meets all requirements'*. These enduring principles have guided all facets of Leitz's new product development, including the move into business machines.

The first of these business machines is the iconic **Leitz iLam Laminator** range which is being relaunched in 2025 with a sleek new design that makes them ideal for a home office or a corporate reception area where business machines are on display every day. All Leitz products aim to be both useful and beautiful, something William Morris would hopefully appreciate.





The revolutionary (in all senses of the word), **Leitz OptiMax Shredder** addresses the functional issues associated with traditional shredding. Traditional shredders create a 'pyramid' of paper in the bin, and only process a proportion of the paper of which they are capable, resulting in unnecessarily frequent emptying, mess and resentment in the workplace.

Our research shows that many people actively delay a shredding task, to avoid having to be the one that must empty it or clear up afterwards. In contrast, Optimax has a unique rotating turntable, causing the micro cut paper shreds to settle and spread evenly and as a result, processes 33% more paper than a conventional shredder of equivalent size.

The final business machine in the 2025 line up is the newly designed **Leitz Trimmers and Cutters**. Like the earlier machines they have been developed to follow the idea of both form and function, and like the Ergo range discussed earlier they are also German design award winners.

The machines and other organisational products from Leitz are designed to follow the Feel Good philosophy by appealing to the sense of wellbeing and mental health you achieve when you have removed your clutter and are surrounded by beautifully designed equipment.

# **SUMMARY & CONCLUSION**

# IN SUMMARY

MORE THAN EVER THERE IS A NEED FOR COMPANIES TO DEVELOP A CLOSE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEIR PEOPLE NOT ONLY WANT, BUT NEED, AND TO ENSURE THAT THEIR WELL-BEING IS FACTORED INTO HOW THE ORGANISATION IS MANAGED AND HOW THEIR WORKERS ARE TREATED AND EQUIPPED – REGARDLESS OF THEIR LOCATION.

# CONCLUSION



## 1. WELL-BEING IS A FAR-REACHING MEGA-TREND

- A mega-trend signifies global change
- It is long-lasting and generally irreversible
- It is often linked to other pre-existing trends – e.g. sustainability
- It disrupts markets and creates new ones
- Well-being is becoming a focus for individuals, companies and governments

**Now is the time for companies to take the initiative in their markets – with retailers, resellers, and with end-users.**



## 2. WELL-BEING IS AN ISSUE, REGARDLESS OF LOCATION

- Most people favour the home over the office for mental and physical well-being
- However, offices still predominate: 82% of our GfK sample work in an office for at least part of a week with 42% only working in the office
- Meanwhile many of them are unhappy – a quarter at most are ‘engaged’ and many suffer physical well-being challenges at work
- Legislation on equipment in offices and at home will only become tougher, not looser

**Leitz have already built expertise in the ‘work from anywhere field’ and will continue to increase that expertise and our ranges.**

3.



### HOME AND “OFFICES” EACH HAVE STRENGTHS AS WORKPLACES TO BE BUILT ON

- People work in different ways, on different tasks, in different locations
- 65% see home as better for any work that requires focus and concentration
- Conversely, 70% favour the office for collaborative idea generation, informal catch-ups and social interaction
- 69% for collaborative idea generation
- Office designers are recognising this and are shifting the focus of design/layout to collective areas

**There is a significant opportunity for brands like Leitz to help companies ‘earn the commute’ by making the office a better place to be and somewhere to comfortably connect.**

4.



### MANY HYBRID AND HOMEWORERS LACK DEDICATED SPACE AND ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT

- A third of home and hybrid workers have no dedicated space to work
- A further fifth work within a larger room at home – or occupy temporary locations in kitchens, bedrooms and ad hoc space
- Over a quarter (28%), have no ergonomic equipment at all, while a further third (36%) have only a couple of items – as a result risking long-term damage
- These people don’t just need equipment that supports them physically and mentally
- They require flexible solutions designed to blend in and capable of being packed away quickly and easily at the end of the day

5.



### THE WORLD IS CHANGING – AND LEITZ IS CHANGING POSITIVELY WITH IT

- We’ve seen a snapshot of how the world has changed in recent years
- Importantly, it continues to change – expect more volatility in the office/ hybrid/home dynamic
- Leitz, like other ACCO Brands’ products and people, is moving forward faster than ever before
- While we are not abandoning our traditional areas of expertise, heritage and distinction, the shift of emphasis to the products outlined in this paper is a notice of our intent – current and future

