

Gartner Research

# **Well-Being Offerings That Matter Most to Employees**

## Well-Being Offerings That Matter Most to Employees

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Initiatives: [Total Rewards](#)

A competitive well-being program is essential to attract and retain employees. This research offers insights into the prevalence and impacts of popular well-being offerings, and ways to bolster program participation rates to help total rewards leaders craft an effective well-being strategy.

### Overview

#### Key Findings

- According to employee reports in the 2022 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey, the most common mental, physical, financial, career and family well-being benefits are employee assistance programs, healthy diet promotions, additional financial insurance, leadership development and family connection activities, respectively.
- Out of all program types, family benefits have the most positive impact on employee engagement, while career benefits have the most positive impact on employee well-being.
- A significant percentage of employees don't participate in any parts of their organizations' well-being programs (18%).

#### Recommendations

- Build on popular benefit programs by offering less prevalent benefits that have high impact on employee engagement like employee support groups, fitness devices and financial well-being apps.
- Invest in family well-being programs to bolster employee loyalty and commitment.
- Prioritize issues of low program relevance to boost well-being participation rates by organizing well-being benefits around key employee life moments.

## Build on Popular Benefits and Explore Untapped Opportunities

The most prevalent mental, physical, financial, career and family well-being benefits reported by employees are employee assistance programs, healthy diet promotions, additional financial insurance, leadership development and family connection activities, respectively (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Most Common Programs for Key Well-Being Categories**

Rank	Mental (n = 1,586)	Physical (n = 1,417)	Financial (n = 1,268)	Career (n = 1,563)	Family (n = 885)
1	Employee assistance programs (EAP) (49%)	Nutrition/healthy diet promotion (37%)	Additional financial insurance (e.g., life insurance) (46%)	Leadership development programs (66%)	Family connection activities (62%)
2	Counseling services (45%)	On-site gym (35%)	Financial planning tools (38%)	Education programs for specific skills (47%)	Recognition of family members (50%)
3	Mental health education or classes (38%)	Physical well-being apps (31%)	Financial education or classes (35%)	Mentorship program(s) (44%)	On-site day care (35%)
4	Mental health assessments (33%)	Health education or classes (30%)	Tuition reimbursement (31%)	Job-sharing/rotation programs (29%)	Emergency day care (26%)
5	Mental health self-care tools (e.g., step-by-step mediation guide) (30%)	Health risk assessments (HRAs) (30%)	Financial well-being apps (24%)	Project matching/stretch assignments (28%)	Domestic violence support (26%)

Source: 2022 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey

Many organizations focus on the three core pillars of physical, mental and financial benefits in their well-being strategy. In these categories, total rewards leaders should build on popular programs that have a strong impact on engagement and consider investments in less prevalent but effective programs.

- Physical Well-Being:** Total rewards leaders should continue to invest in health diet promotions, which have the largest impact on employee engagement (6.4%) out of all physical well-being programs. Additionally, leaders looking to expand offerings can consider offering fitness devices, which positively impact engagement by 4.1%, but are only available to 21% of employees. <sup>2</sup>

- **Mental Well-Being:** Organizations should continue providing mental health classes, which are associated with a 4.9% increase in engagement. To further support employees, total rewards leaders can increase access to support groups, which positively impact engagement by 5.7%, but are currently available to only 22% of employees. <sup>2</sup>
- **Financial Well-Being:** Total rewards leaders should continue to invest in additional financial insurance for employees, which positively impacts engagement by 2.9%. To expand offerings, organizations can consider providing access to financial well-being apps, which positively impact engagement by 6.6%, but are only available to 25% of employees. <sup>2</sup>

## Invest in Family and Career Benefits to Boost Employee Engagement and Well-Being

Family and career well-being programs consistently appear in the top programs for driving employee engagement and well-being (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Programs that Impact Employee Engagement and Well-Being the Most**

Rank	Top Programs for Employee Engagement (% Increase in Employee Engagement)	Top Programs for Employee Well-Being (% Increase in Employee Well-Being)
1	Family well-being programs (6.8%)	Career well-being programs (6.0%)
2	Financial well-being programs (6.2%)	Family well-being programs (4.6%)
3	Career well-being programs (5.2%)	Physical well-being programs (4.0%)

Source: 2022 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey

While 50% of employees report their organization offers a career well-being program, less than 29% of employees report having a family well-being program, revealing an opportunity for further investment in such programs. <sup>2</sup> Family well-being programs are effective in demonstrating long-term commitment to employees and their loved ones, bolstering employee loyalty and dedication. Organizations can strengthen the appeal of these programs by exploring ways to include single employees into family benefits like allowing employees to utilize sick days to care for a significant other.

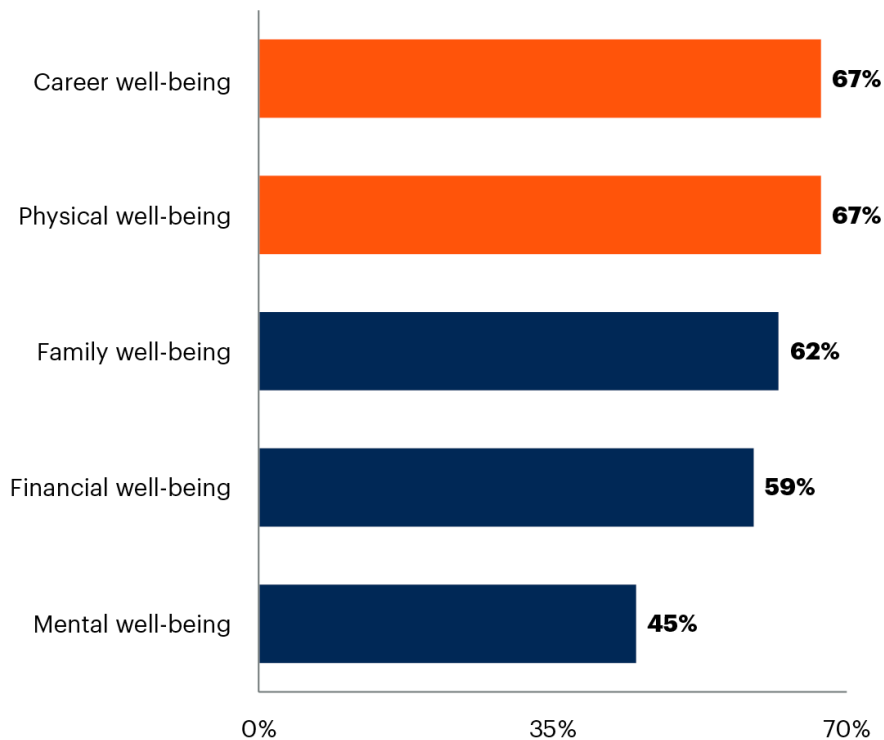
## Prioritize Opportunity to Improve Well-Being Participation Rates

Total rewards leaders should continue to promote employee participation in well-being programs. Even for the most popular type of well-being programs (physical and career), about one-third of employees are not fully utilizing their benefits (see Figure 1). <sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1: Employee Participation Rates in Well-Being Programs**

### Employee Participation Rates in Well-Being Programs

Percentage of employees



n = varies from 898 to 1,579

Source: 2022 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey

Note: Percentage is out of employees who indicated their organization offers such a program

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A significant number of employees (18%) reported that they have not used any physical, career, family, financial or mental well-being programs. <sup>2</sup> To ensure these programs deliver their intended outcomes, total rewards leaders must examine benefits participation behaviors of their employees and address any roadblocks to participation (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Top Reasons Employee Cite for Not Participating in Well-Being Programs**

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

Rank	Mental Well-Being	Physical Well-Being	Financial Well-Being	Career Well-Being	Family Well-Being
1	My mental health is not something I need to actively try to improve. (47%)	I am too busy. (39%)	I am too busy. (26%)	I am too busy. (33%)	My family health is not something I need to actively try to improve. (32%)
2	I'm too busy. (19%)	It's too inconvenient. (28%)	My financial health is not something I need to actively try to improve. (23%)	My career development is not something I need to actively try to improve. (25%)	My organization's well-being programs are not relevant to my needs. (25%)
3	My organization's well-being programs are not relevant to my needs. (17%)	My organization's well-being programs are not interesting to me. (19%)	My organization's well-being programs are not relevant to my needs. (20%)	My organization's well-being programs are not relevant to me. (20%)	I am too busy. (20%)

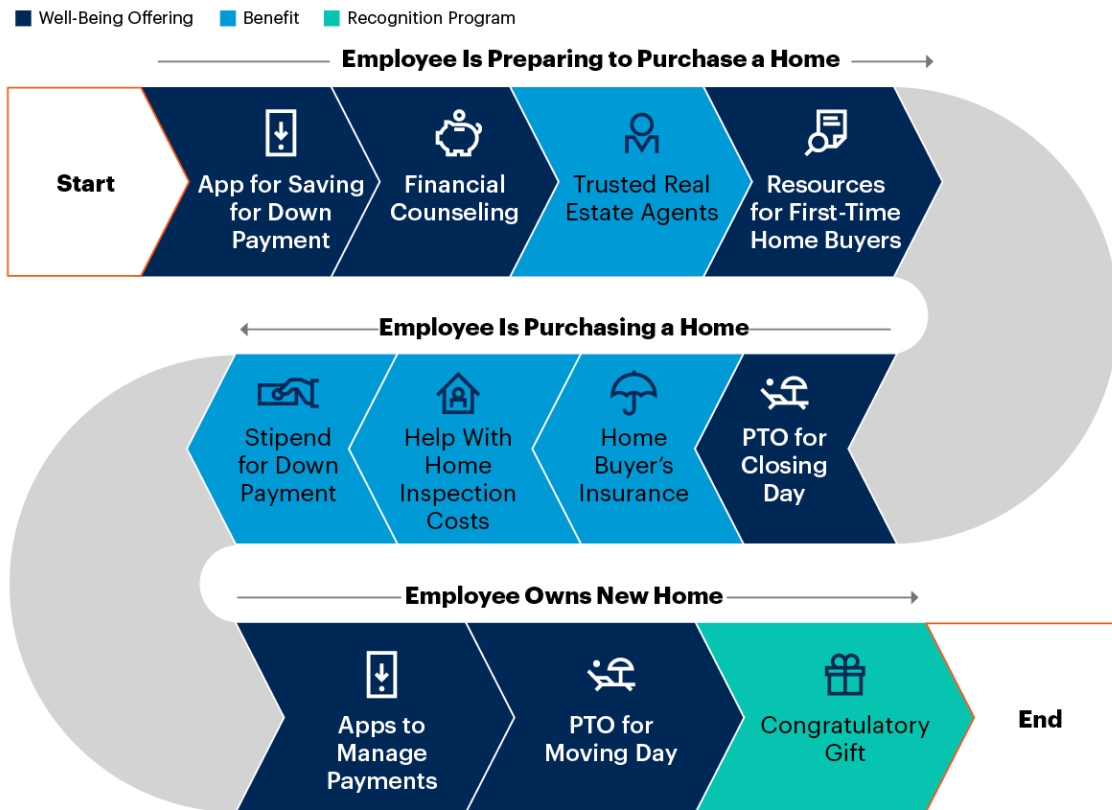
Source: 2022 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey

**Increase Overall Program Relevance by Presenting Benefits Around Key Employee Life Moments**

To boost participation in well-being programs, total rewards leaders should address low perceptions of program relevance, which is a top barrier across all types of programs. One way to increase the relevance is by taking an integrative approach to communicate the portfolio of well-being offerings. Currently, well-being programs are often organized and presented as mental, physical and financial offerings, reflecting how leaders think about portfolios, not how employees actually experience them. Instead of presenting the organization's well-being support based on the type of services offered, organizations can more effectively communicate benefits by structuring offerings around employee needs before, during and after a major life moment, like purchasing a home (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Communicating the End-to-End Support of Employees' Critical Life Moments

**Communicating the End-to-End Support of Employees' Critical Life Moments**  
Illustrative



Source: Gartner  
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**Address Stigma and Hybrid Work Trends to Boost Participation in Mental and Physical Well-Being Programs**

Given record levels of employee burnout and stress, total rewards leaders have a unique opportunity to boost participation rates in mental well-being programs. The top reason that employees cite for not participating in these programs is that they are not trying to improve their mental health. This perception may be due to the stigma around mental health, as a significant portion of employees (30%) feel uncomfortable seeking assistance for their well-being.<sup>3</sup>

To reduce stigma around mental health, organizations can adopt Genentech's approach of identifying trusted communicators to drive workplace discussions of mental health issues and employee participation in mental health offerings.



**Genentech**  
A Member of the Roche Group

Genentech demonstrates its commitment to mental health by recruiting high-visibility leaders to share their experiences with mental health issues in organizationwide townhalls. In addition, Genentech identifies and trains employee champions across its business to facilitate peer discussions around mental health and foster a sense of togetherness in dealing with mental health issues. Genentech also builds in frequent mental health discussion primers in its newsletters, videos and “R U OK” t-shirts, which are worn every Wednesday to encourage employees to ask peers of their well-being.

With the rise of hybrid work, total rewards leaders can improve physical well-being participation rates by rethinking how they deliver benefits. Many employees cite being too busy or finding it inconvenient as the top reasons for not participating in physical well-being programs. This may be due to a disconnect between where employees spend their time and how these offerings are traditionally delivered in the office, like having on-site gyms or classes. Beyond traditional benefits, total rewards leaders can invest in ways to deliver physical well-being directly in employees’ homes by expanding access to fitness apps and offering vouchers or discounts for employees to use at nearby gyms.

## Data Insights

Total rewards leaders are under pressure to offer effective well-being programs to attract and retain competitive talent. Since its recent peak of 35.6% in 3Q22, employee well-being dropped to 32.1% in 1Q24. <sup>1</sup> Choosing the right well-being benefits is important for improving employees’ well-being, engagement and business outcomes. This research will equip organizations to craft an effective and competitive mix of well-being offerings by examining the prevalence, impact and participation rates of common well-being programs.

## Evidence

<sup>1</sup> **2024 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey:** This panel survey is carried out once every month. Every quarter, approximately 18,000 employees globally participate. The 1Q24 survey is based on 17,999 responses globally. Responses were collected across 40 different countries in 15 languages and were then aggregated to generate quarterly findings.



<sup>2</sup> **2022 Gartner Employee Well-Being Survey:** This survey was conducted to understand employee preferences for well-being programs and the impact they have on their overall well-being and engagement. The survey was conducted online from 29 November 2022 through 26 December 2022 and contains 3,097 employees with representation from various regions, industries and functions. The survey was designed and developed by Gartner's HR Practice research team.

<sup>3</sup> **2023 Gartner Achieving High Performance Employee Survey:** This survey was conducted to understand employee experiences with organizations' performance approaches and drivers of performance in today's work environment. The research was conducted online from 1 February through 25 February 2023 among 3,507 respondents from various geographies, industries and functions. The survey was designed and developed by Gartner's HR Practice research team.

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## Gartner Client Resources Recommended by the Author

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

[3 Steps to Demonstrate the Value of Employee Well-Being Programs](#)

[Top Metrics to Quantify Well-Being Program Effectiveness](#)

[Organize Your Rewards Package Around Employees' Critical Life Moments](#)

[Innovation Insight: Employee Well-Being Solutions](#)

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