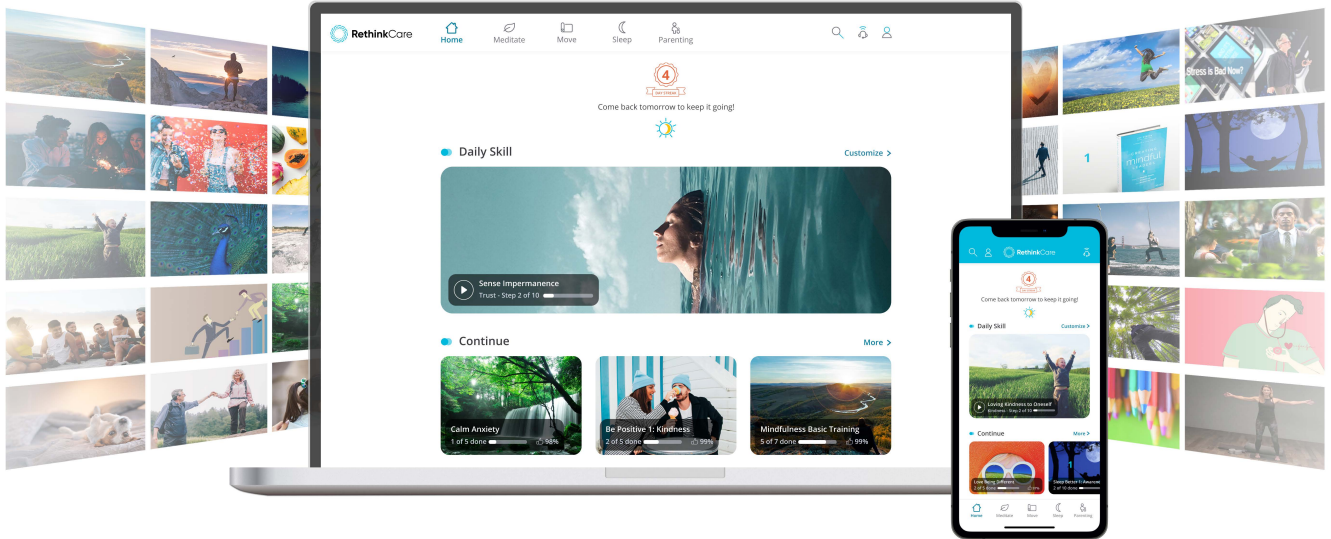


How to Implement Mindfulness Training Into Your Wellness Program





RethinkCare is the leading holistic care platform for working parents, caregivers, and their families. The platform's live, expert parenting support and evidence-based trainings empower your people to be better parents, better employees, and better versions of themselves.

This Best Practices Guide shares how to successfully add mindfulness training to your current wellness program to help employees be happier and more productive. Inside, you'll find insights from survey results compiled over 6 months in conversations with 56 companies, including 30 Fortune 500 brands.

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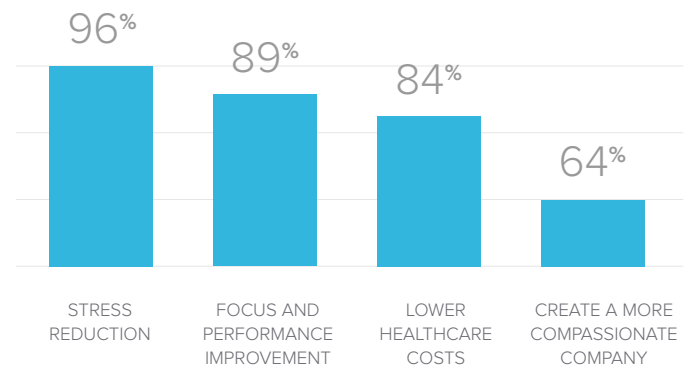
Executive Summary

Findings below are the results of conversations with professionals in Employee Benefits, Health & Wellness, Human Resources, Procurement and Leadership & Development.

Respondents include professionals from the following industries: aerospace, advertising, airlines, automotive, beverages, broadcasting, consulting, CPG, fast food, financial services, healthcare, oil & gas, retail, pharmaceuticals, technology, telecom, universities and utilities.

64% of respondents were interested in creating a more compassionate culture at work.

Primary Goals for Mindfulness Programs



Survey respondents shared their primary goals for launching mindfulness programs based on our research, when it comes to helping employees create sustainable mindfulness habits, we recommend the following **top 18 best practices**:

1. Keep It Relevant & Adopt Early
2. Enroll Leadership
3. Be Clear about Your Goals
4. Share the Science
5. Measure the ROI
6. Give It a Name
7. Make It Routine
8. Find Your Champions
9. Don't Assume Employees Will Just "Get It"
10. Keep It Secular

And the runners up are:

11. Mobile First
12. Personalization Is Key
13. Promote Continuous Learning
14. Community Matters
15. Variety Drives Engagement
16. Prepare for Compliance
17. No Cult of Personality
18. Rewards Work

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Best Practices and Survey Findings

As shared by fifty six companies that have experience in running mindfulness training programs.

01 Keep It Relevant & Adopt Early:

84% of respondents felt mindfulness programs that serve specific community needs are more impactful than generic compassion and mindful awareness courses. A modern workforce needs programs with intentions that serve the corporate world. This includes training in areas like forgiveness, multitasking and dealing with difficult people. Employees need coping and resilience tools in the moment. Relevant wellness training and cultural values support their professional growth. As with any program, the sooner you integrate something into your culture the more intrinsic it becomes to your employees.

02 Enroll Leadership:

Employees look to their leadership team's endorsement... and actions. If executives are openly committed to the health and happiness of employees (including themselves), then the team will participate and aspire to live up to that level of commitment. 80% of respondents felt leaders should be invited to participate in the design and delivery of mindfulness training programs and connected to the new ways of working.

Tip: **Create credible ambassadors. Lead by example.**

03 Be Clear about Your Goals:

Are you trying to reduce employee stress and anxiety? Change your organization's culture? Reduce absenteeism and healthcare costs? Be clear about your goals and understand how the training will help your employees. Then the wellness program will meet its goals. This will help you to focus the program, pick the right provider and measure results.

04 Share the Science:

70% of respondents wanted to understand the scientific, data-driven proof points of mindfulness. Before employees can master a new skill effectively, they must be convinced it will help them. Different people will be enticed by different proof points.

05 Measure the ROI:

100% of respondents indicated that proving ROI is important. But only 25% reported they track ROI in their other training programs. Don't think of corporate training as an expenditure. It's an investment that should prove top or bottom line impact. Companies want hard proof, but McKinsey research found that only 50% of organizations track even basic feedback (such as if employees "liked" the training... a fairly useless measure). Track the impact of your programs against the hard business metrics they are meant to improve like absenteeism, employee satisfaction surveys, turnover and the cost of healthcare.

Even modest swings can be game changers. Start with a 1-day decrease in absenteeism, a 1% increase in productivity and a 1% decrease in healthcare costs. Do the math. You'd drive tremendous financial impact with modest improvements.

Tip: **Choose a provider that leverages SSO, APIs or employee eligibility files to track current employees, filter out former employees and do so seamlessly.**

Tip: **Quantify modest goals to achieve ROI of 100%, then set out to get results that are 3-5X better.**

06 Give It a Name:

Mindfulness training has many names, including resilience training and brain training. Launch a program that fits with your culture. The famous Search Inside Yourself (SIY) program, born at Google, calls it "Emotional Intelligence" and "Attention Training." Utility companies call it "Safety Awareness Training." Insurance companies call it "Stress Resilience Training." Less than half of the survey respondents called it "Meditation." The practices are similar, but lingo that's right for your wellness program will make it easier for employees to understand your intentions.

100% of respondents wanted data-driven training programs. Also important: APIs to export and analyze data against the KPIs respondents care most about.

07 Make It Routine:

Mindfulness is about creating a healthy habit for the individual. But creating routines are just as helpful at work as they are at home. They create reliability and consistency and give employees something to look forward to. 39% went beyond basic training to incorporate some element of mindfulness into their work routines. Here are some of our favorites:

A Start meetings with 1-minute mindfulness practice. Settle the room. Meetings across Google begin this way to clarify intention for the meeting so it stays on track.

B Encourage employees to take an afternoon break. Even a 5-10 minute mindfulness session can energize and refocus the team for the afternoon.

C #rocketfuel

Set aside a “quiet room” to encourage employees to train. Think of it as a “mental training gym.” Adobe has a daily mindfulness sit at 3 p.m. to help create community. So does Whil. Even Salesforce has purposely built rooms for mental breaks.

D Make it a part of your customer experience. British Airways offers nervous flyers short mindfulness practices. Westin does the same in their hotel rooms.

08 Find Your Champions:

80% reported their programs started with an internal champion(s), a key player(s) that had enough experience to help mindfulness take root. SAP’s internal champion actually ended up in a newly created role, Director of Mindfulness Programs.

Conversely, also ask who are those most likely to ignore or be cynical of the program. It’s worth spending the time (mindful even) to allow potential cynics to air their concerns... it may actually help get them on board.



09

Don't Assume Employees Will Just "Get It":

Only 18% reported any ongoing support for employees to remain in a mindfulness practice. Adults learn in predictable steps. If they can recognize that their own performance is weak in a particular area, they actually choose to learn to improve. Live corporate training programs often overlook these prerequisites and just assume that employees will "get it." This approach allows normal patterns of skepticism to become barriers to learning. Instead of being active learners, many employees will end up behaving like prisoners ("I'm doing it because I have to"), vacationers ("It's a nice break from doing real work"), or professors ("Everybody else is here to learn; I can just share my wisdom"). Whil's digital training was created to enable ongoing practice whether employees have a live training experience or not.



Now that mindfulness meditation has become scientific, it has been demystified. It's going to be seen as fitness for the mind."

Chade-Meng Tan,
former Google Engineer & Search Inside Yourself Pioneer



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Keep It Secular:

Meditation and other contemplative practices (prayer, sitting in silence, etc.) have been around for thousands of years. They are shown to quiet and focus the mind consistently in science. However, there's nothing inherently spiritual about mindfulness. It's attention training, plain and simple.

100% of respondents said they would avoid spiritual or religious approaches. Avoid any providers that appear "new-age-y" or spiritual. Your employees aren't looking for sandals, gongs or incense at work.

If you're into hipster monks, that's great. But a large percentage of your employees are not. Mindfulness and awareness training in the workplace should NOT have spiritual or religious connotations.

Tip: **Avoid Webex training featuring woo-woo teachers in their pajamas and you'll also avoid the "what were you thinking?" conversation.**

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And the runners up are...

11 Mobile First:

Live mindfulness sessions are great (and we recommend them), but respondents shared that most on-site programs draw only 1-3% of employees in a particular location. 91% shared that mobile training is a priority. Modern training should be mobile, go at your own pace, accessible to all employees and “always-on”, just like your organization. Anytime. Anywhere.

12 Personalization Is Key:

Look for the right partner to provide personalization to give individual employees what they need in the moment, allow them to track their progress, and provide recommendations for future training based on their specific needs.

13 Promote Continuous Learning:

Participants rarely leave a training program entirely prepared to put new skills into practice. They generally have to figure out how to incorporate what they've learned into their lives. Never cram everything into a single, long session. McKinsey recommends dividing training into smaller sessions to help ease the learning process and help employees build a strong skill base that promotes continuous learning.

Tip: **We recommend a digital tiered learning system, where employees train at their own pace and each experience builds on the last.**

14 Community Matters:

Entering into any new habit is difficult. It's like going to the gym. If a friend or community is involved, you're more likely to do it. They'll support you to do it consistently. Find providers that understand the power of community, and build it into the digital training. When you launch, invite your mindfulness power users in early to help spread the word. Share tips and shortcuts with others, and inspire new employees to get into a practice.

Tip: **Consider a mix of live and digital approaches to cover both community building and the mobile convenience required by employees.**



“

I came back to mindfulness to sustain high performance—my own and my employees!”

Evan Williams,

Twitter Co-Founder

15 Variety Drives Engagement:

Variety is a key ingredient in maintaining ongoing employee engagement levels, especially in digital training. 77% felt it important to have a mixture of male and female trainers. 61% also desired ethnic diversity so that trainers were relatable and representative of their own work force. Not every trainer will resonate with every employee. But if they find one they like, they'll be more likely to be open to others. They tend to get bored with just one.

Tip: **Maintain variety in trainer backgrounds, teaching approaches and corporate experience.**

16 Prepare for Compliance:

Although mindfulness is not currently required to be compliant with major data privacy laws, this is of growing interest. There's an increasing trend of medical providers "prescribing" meditation as part of a modern health regiment. Insurance companies like Aetna and Kaiser Permanente are increasingly recommending mindfulness training to their insured members. 89% felt that "data privacy" was an important issue.

Individuals must be in charge of their personal data at all times. Providers track and share data at the appropriate level. For example, it might be appropriate for an employer to know an employee did 20 sessions of mindfulness training last month (for example, as part of an employer rewards program). It would not be appropriate for an employer to know the training was related to stress, anxiety and sleep issues.

Tip: **When you're trying to relieve your employees' stress, be sure not to create data-stress for your HR team.**

17 No Cult of Personality:

A number of respondents started mindfulness programs with well intentioned employees leading the training, only to abandon the programs later. When you're dealing with the emotional resilience and wellbeing of employees, asking other employees to manage their training builds the foundation on shaky ground.

Tip: **The part-time employee that's into yoga and took a weekend mindfulness seminar is not qualified to train your employees.**

Happiness begins at home. When choosing a program, consider options that help employees improve their health, performance and relationships at home (like with their teenaged children), as well as in the office. **Because stress also begins at home.**



18 Rewards Work:

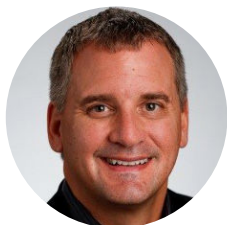
25% reported offering rewards to employees for taking better care of themselves (lower healthcare premiums, days off, prizes, etc.). A mountain of evidence shows that good health results in lower absenteeism and healthcare costs. Many companies find out later that they don't have the right systems to track actual usage. Ensure that you have automated access to the data you'll need for employee points and rewards.

Mindfulness solutions should be compliant with data privacy requirements including The Health Insurance and Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA), Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (for university students).

About the Authors



Mark Coleman has a master's degree in clinical psychology. He's an author, mindfulness consultant, and executive coach working with Fortune 500 companies including Google, Facebook, Gucci, Prana, Procter & Gamble, and British Airways. He's a senior meditation teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and a master teacher of compassionate leadership and emotional intelligence at the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute. He supports the nonprofit sector, working with Trust for Public Land, Center for Whole Communities, Vallecitos Mountain Refuge, and healthcare providers.



Dr. Paul Friga is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Kenan-Flagler School of Business at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He teaches courses in management consulting and strategy and serves as Director of the S.T.A.R. Program – overseeing 25 semester long consulting projects with MBA students. Dr. Friga researches strategic decision-making, knowledge transfer, intuition, management consulting processes and entrepreneurship. He presents and consults around the world and is the author of *The McKinsey Mind* and *The McKinsey Engagement*.

