
CULTURE OF CARE:

HOW COMPANY VALUES SHAPE EMPLOYEES' RECOVERY & WELL-BEING

Corporate culture is not just a buzzword but a catalyst for growth and competitiveness in the dynamic business landscape. It is driven by the relationship between employers and their workforce along with several other factors. However, that relationship remains intricate, especially when it is also tied to employees' physical and mental wellness, injury prevention, recovery, and reintegration into work. Consequently, many employers fail to recognize how their support plays a pivotal role in shaping their organization's distinctiveness, inspiring its workforce, and delivering on its promises of creating a strong and healthy workforce. This article's exploration extends beyond the theoretical realm to the tangible impact of organizational culture on employees' injury and recovery. A robust culture, fortified by unwavering commitment, becomes the mainstay of fostering a healthier, more content, and ultimately, more productive workforce. From innovative incentive programs to comprehensive healthcare coverage, the article navigates through strategies that prioritize employee well-being and facilitate recovery, particularly for those affected by work-related injuries.

Why is Corporate Culture important?

This [Gallup](#) quote can potentially uncover the answer, which asserts, "Great cultures leverage their organization's unique mission, purpose, and values to strengthen their identity, inspire their employees, and deliver on their brand promise to customers. It is what sets you apart from the competition".

The statement discusses different aspects that shape an organization's culture, which align with the [5 drivers of corporate culture](#) outlined by Catherine Ray in her article featured in EHL Insights. These drivers include leadership, organizational values, company structure, performance management practices, and, equally, if not more importantly, the **"employees or human assets,"** which is also the subject of discussion in this article.

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

– Peter Drucker

The culture of a corporation, however big or small, is the essence of the organization. It directly impacts its financial performance and ability to sustain itself in the long run. Driven by strong leadership, robust mission, and values, a positive corporate culture promotes employees, helps retain them, attracts new talent, and enhances workforce engagement, productivity, and well-being. This ultimately results in a better client-customer experience. Yet, despite being an improvement from 2020 and the best performance since 2009, it is worth noting that only 23% of the global workforce was actively engaged in their work in 2022, as revealed by a [Gallup Poll](#). No wonder this topic has garnered a significant focus for the past decade, as employers and leaders recognize the profound impact of a happy and flourishing workforce and that they are failing to achieve it based on numbers.

Work Culture and Its Impact on Employees' Injury and Recovery

Workers evaluate management's commitment to their safety by assessing its efforts toward risk prevention and how it balances safety with productivity. In fact, research has found a strong correlation between management's level of commitment and workers' attitudes toward safety ([Garcia & Canosa, 2004](#)). A robust organizational culture is fundamentally defined by its unwavering dedication to safeguarding the well-being of its workforce. The depth of an employer's investment in its employees becomes unmistakably evident through the support and assistance extended to the mental, physical, and financial wellness of its active workforce and injured workers by its leadership. This commitment plays a pivotal role in nurturing a workforce that is not only healthier but also more content, resulting in heightened productivity. When safety is not given priority, it can result in "significant economic costs to the nation, employers, and workers." According to the [National Safety Council](#), these costs exceeded \$167 billion in 2021 alone, including \$47.4 billion in wage and productivity losses, \$36.6 billion in medical expenses, and \$57.5 billion in administrative expenses.

Within the realm of corporate wellness initiatives, there exists a variety of approaches. To begin with, employers can reaffirm their commitment by offering comprehensive healthcare insurance coverage. Another notable strategy is the utilization of incentive programs designed to inspire employees to prioritize their own well-being. These incentives are awarded to those who actively engage in and successfully complete specific health-focused endeavors. Such initiatives can span a wide spectrum, encompassing activities like pre-shift yoga or stretching sessions, regular health check-ups at on-site or partnered health clinics, educational programs to enhance back care and safety awareness, vaccination clinics, programs geared toward weight management and nutritional improvement, and company-sponsored gym memberships, as well as childcare, legal, and financial assistance. Additionally, offering

Employee Assistance Programs that include valuable financial, health, and legal counseling can aid employees in their recovery, especially those affected by work-related injuries, both during and after recovery.

Creating a Holistic Workplace Ecosystem: Collaboration with Commitment

A company's culture exerts a significant influence on its employees, particularly when they are going through the process of recuperating from an illness or injury. Culture can affect the company's financial performance, its [Happiness Quotient](#) (Index), and its long-term viability. Even though the company may have a robust workers' compensation program with policies and procedures in place for dealing with work-related injuries and managing claims, employees who have been injured still often face challenges during their recovery and when reintegrating into the workforce after completing their injury care plan. The obstacles confronting injured employees can encompass various issues, ranging from a lack of willingness on the part of lower and middle management to offer flexible work schedules to accommodate fatigue recovery and medical or therapy appointments, promoting compliance to healthcare appointments, adjusting workloads in consideration of the unique needs of individual employees, and establishing gradual and progressive programs (work conditioning, work hardening or trial of full duty) for employees to reach their maximum workload capacity safely.

Healthcare providers frequently identify such discord between leadership and employees in the workplace and gauge how much an employer values its workforce's well-being. This understanding is critical for healthcare providers since the level of employer support and offerings, directly and indirectly, impacts the quality and extent of an employee's recovery process and their successful reintegration into the workforce. Consequently, healthcare providers should pay attention to a company's culture and collaborate with the employer when feasible to overcome barriers hindering care delivery to injured employees.

Strategies for Workplace Injury Prevention and Employee Well-being:

The overarching objectives for any organization should be to cultivate a workplace that promotes injury prevention and recovery, encourages a swift return to work, and fosters an inclusive and supportive environment. Here are some recommended steps that a company's leadership can take in partnership with healthcare providers to achieve these goals:

1. **Effective communication and regular reporting** are crucial to building a positive and transparent workplace culture. When employees feel at ease and trusted when expressing themselves and communicating, it creates a sense of trust. It encourages them to report any injuries or setbacks during the recovery process without fearing any negative consequences from their employers. As a result, stress levels are reduced, and a healthy and safe work environment is promoted.
2. Injured workers' active participation in their recovery is influenced by the **support and empathy** they receive from their leaders and coworkers. Effective communication and a people-centric culture, where leaders genuinely care about their employees' needs, goals, and objectives, are indicative of such support and empathy. Conversely, a lack of empathy may result in workers prolonging their recovery by interfering with their own care.
3. Employee **safety and preventative measures** have become integral to contemporary workplace culture. The advent of technologies like AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Machine Learning has not merely introduced a new dimension but has revolutionized preventive and recovery solutions. Termed Digital MSK or Health, the new approaches integrate new workplace wearables and other preventative musculoskeletal technologies to promote movement health and safety from the initial hiring stage throughout an employee's tenure with the organization, empowering employees to be involved in the movement health with the employer while providing diverse options for employers. Furthermore, the cost of these offerings has significantly decreased, making it more accessible for small and mid-size employers to prioritize injury prevention, enabling enhanced productivity and effective management of costs associated with workers' compensation.
4. Having a positive corporate culture means prioritizing **work-life balance** not only for active employees but also for those returning from injuries. This is crucial in promoting a smooth reintegration of injured workers into the workforce. Good company culture involves adjusting responsibilities to promote residual recovery, accommodating physical limitations and healthcare appointments, and expediting appropriate remuneration and compensation post-injuries. These measures go beyond the legal scope of compensation required and help injured workers recover faster while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
5. A corporation with a strong **legal and ethical framework** integrated into its culture is well-equipped to manage the health and wellness of its employees at the highest standard. Such organizations prioritize prompt injury reporting and claim initiation, select the best providers to

manage their workers' health and ensure accountability when disbursing benefits, compensation, and payouts.

6. A well-designed **return-to-work program** plays a crucial role in ensuring a seamless transition of an injured worker back to work after recovery. The employer has the option to progressively increase the workload on-site or carry out a trial of full duty (at a therapy clinic) with the help of treating medical and therapy providers. This approach helps employees return to work confidently and helps employers reduce absenteeism and workers' compensation costs associated with reinjuries or complexities.

Conclusion:

In the collaborative synchrony between employers, employees, and healthcare providers, the spotlight turns to the challenges injured workers face during recovery and reintegration. The call for a holistic workplace ecosystem resonates, emphasizing the need for a supportive environment that transcends policy frameworks. Practical steps are what organizations are seeking to not only navigate the complexities of injury prevention and recovery but to champion a culture that promotes inclusivity, support, and genuine care. This article highlights the critical impact corporate culture plays in shaping employees' recovery and overall well-being and the role of employers and their occupational health partners. Great cultures leverage an organization's mission, purpose, and values to inspire employees and set themselves apart from the competition while dedicating themselves to safeguarding the well-being of its workforce, as evidenced by the support for injured workers. Whether it is open communication, empathy, safety measures, and technology all contribute to a positive culture that fosters injury prevention, recovery, and a prompt return to work. As we conclude, the next question is:

How can organizations further commit to and invest in cultivating a culture of care that benefits employees and ensures growth and competitiveness in today's dynamic business landscape?

Meet the Authors



As the Chief Clinical Officer (CCO) at Bardavon Health Innovations, Inc., **Dorothy Riviere, PT, TPS, FAFS, CertMDT**, draws upon her 20 years of experience helping to innovate the Workers' Compensation and physical rehabilitation industry. She oversees Bardavon clinical consulting, clinical quality management, and client customer experience. Dorothy also leads Bardavon's new Value Creation Team, which is focused on exploring the benefits of injury prevention and management solutions.



Melanie Franklin is Bardavon's Senior Director of Human Resources, overseeing the People function for the organization. She brings 20+ years of experience in Human Resources, Talent Acquisition and Retention, Health & Wellness, Total Rewards, DEI, and Learning & Development. She has expertise in and a passion for developing strategies and programs that support business initiatives, aligning company vision and values to organizational goals, and fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture where employees can bring their "whole self" to work.



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