

Episode #2 Transcript: How to Incorporate Wellness Into Your Training Curriculum

Note: This transcript has been edited from the original audio for increased accuracy and readability.

Introduction

Encompass Communications and Learning is a full-service training and communications agency dedicated to helping life sciences teams enhance their skills and knowledge.

The thoughts expressed in this podcast are those of the speakers and not necessarily views of Encompass.

Jenn Lalli:

Welcome to Encompass Insider. I'm Jenn Lalli, Encompass's senior director of business development and marketing. And if you're curious about some practical steps to enhance your employees' well-being and engagement through training, you'll be interested in today's discussion. Today, I have two special guests, Hollace Masino, senior instructional designer at Encompass and yoga wellness coach, and Chapin Brinegar, Encompass's senior director of instructional design. Hollace and Chapin, thank you so much for joining us today!

Hollace Masino:

Thank you for having us.

Chapin Brinegar:

Thank you, Jenn.

Jenn Lalli:

I'm excited to get started. So Hollace, in addition to practicing and also teaching yoga, which is super fascinating to me, can you tell us more about you and your role at Encompass?

Hollace Masino:

Absolutely. First, I have to say that I love what I do at Encompass. I have a lot of admiration and respect for the people that I work with here. I have a Master of Science in Instructional Technology, and I work with Chapin on Encompass's instructional design team to develop training projects for life sciences companies. One of my favorite aspects of this job is helping clients design and build trainings and soft skills—that's one of my strengths. I also train others how to teach various aspects of yoga, mindfulness, and well-being.

Jenn Lalli:

Fantastic! Chapin, if you wouldn't mind, tell us about you and your role at Encompass.

Chapin Brinegar:

Sure thing, Jenn. I also hold a Master of Science in Instructional Technology and I have more than 16 years of experience in education, corporate training and instructional design, which includes nine years in the life sciences industry. I lead the instructional design team at Encompass. My team partners with clients on the front-end of a project to conduct a needs analysis and then we support the design development and deployment of a variety of training solutions. A big part of what we do revolves around building workshops and training deliverables in the professional development space, which includes wellness related topics.

Jenn Lalli:

Thank you both for letting our audience know more about you. I'm going to start with you Hollace. I have heard a lot of references out there, especially over the last few months, about wellness and well-being. Can you talk to us about what the differences are?

Hollace Masino:

That's a great question, Jenn. It has a complex answer, but I will try to simplify it. Both well-being and wellness refer to a positive and life-affirming endeavor to be well and as the state of being well. Most wellness and well-being leaders agree that they are multifaceted and holistic in nature. The endeavor and the state involve making a conscious self-directed choice to behave in a way that ultimately fulfills our potential.

The terms wellness and well-being are often used interchangeably, but I've also heard them described with subtle differences depending on the context, the interpretation and the model. Wellness is often emphasized as physical health, but it's certainly not limited to just that. There are more aspects of our wellness than exercising and what we eat. For example, mental and emotional wellness have become a hot topic in training initiatives, especially in the current time of COVID with its economic and social upheaval. Well-being is often thought of as one's contentment in life and being healthy, but also happy. It implicates an interdependency of all the facets that make us humans. And when we cultivate wellness and well-being, we grow, we thrive, we overcome challenges, we feel grounded and have a sense that we and the way we experience life are or will be okay, no matter what life stage that we're in.

Jenn Lalli:

That was helpful because many of us are challenged to understand wellness versus well-being, we included, and use them interchangeably, which I think is important to be mindful of. I imagine there are different aspects of well-being. Can you share more about that with us?

Hollace Masino:

There are several aspects to well-being. Some of the most commonly studied and practiced are physical, mental and emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social, occupational, and environmental. Each of these is interrelated and connected to the others. So, when one aspect of our well-being is overlooked or fragmented, the other aspects are negatively impacted. If there are gaps in our holistic well-being that aren't addressed with commitment and action to heal and rejuvenate, eventually strength and vitality turn to dullness and weakness. It becomes difficult and depleting to perform well for any length of time.

Let me give you an analogy. Think of optimal well-being as your favorite cashmere sweater that's woven together with care and quality. When life happens or we don't take care of it, it gets snagged. And worn out. Maybe a part of it has a hole. Then the entire sweater is affected. The other fibers feel the tension and show the tension. It unravels. And if not intentionally mended, the hole just gets bigger. So the endeavor to be well is that intentional mending process.

Jenn Lalli:

I imagine now it is harder than ever to keep teams engaged. How does well-being translate into employee motivation and engagement?

Hollace Masino:

They are highly reciprocal. Under the right internal and external conditions, people are naturally curious, energetic, and self-motivated because they have a solid sense of well-being. Our engagement is a function of the conditions in which we live, work, think, and grow and the conditions are a function of the way that we engage. So people can either be actively engaged in their work and professional development, or they can be passive and detached from their work, their growth and their co-workers.

Let me give you some data as evidence of this; a Gallup poll showed burnout is nearly zero among highly engaged employees with a strong sense of well-being.¹ These employees worked in a culture that honored their strengths. Strengths usage is an influential factor to well-being and engagement, meaning workers whose strengths are being utilized and developed are more likely to have a high level of well-being—which explains why I love what I do here at Encompass. The opposite is also true: workers whose managers ignore or underutilized strengths are 40 times more likely to be actively disengaged. What's more, those who feel fully optimized outperform their peers. The ironic thing is that only 7% of United States workers feel fully optimized.² So there's obviously room to improve there.

Jenn Lalli:

I imagine there are a lot of challenges when it comes to well-being. What are some of the key well-being challenges that you're seeing?

Hollace Masino:

What I see most often is a resistance to change either consciously or subconsciously, and also a lack of knowledge and skill. Achieving lasting well-being requires change for most people and changing behavior takes time and commitment, and it also takes training and discipline. Awareness and action are key. Without the right knowledge, skills and attitudes, it's difficult to take the right actions for yourself or for your employees, or for an organization to move toward improved well-being.

Jenn Lalli:

Thank you for your perspective, Hollace. Chapin, from a training perspective, what are some of the challenges you're hearing about building wellness and well-being into training?

Chapin Brinegar:

The biggest thing is the lack of awareness of the long-term benefits of such a program, as well as the lack of understanding of how much wellness really plays into and impacts our work-life. There's been debate over whether health and wellness programs in the corporate environment are beneficial. So leadership and organizations are sometimes hesitant to commit to such a program. We've seen so many of these band aid fixes recently as a result of the pandemic; organizations are scrambling to put something into place. For example, some companies granted their employees access to a meditation mobile app, others allowed for reimbursement of home gym equipment. And while I'm sure we'd all be thankful for something like this, these programs fail as they're not offering a holistic approach that includes the various facets Hollace mentioned earlier.

We've seen that, unfortunately, training in general is one of the first items to get reduced or cut from corporate budgets. The training that is conducted tends to be focused on those topics that maybe sales leaders feel would more immediately move the needle for sales, as opposed to those underlying essential or soft skills or professional development topics such as wellness, which in reality have a very positive long-term effect on employees.

Typically, when wellness programs are deployed, it takes time to see that return on investment, which is happy employees who are motivated and thriving in their roles. In addition, many wellness programs are short-lived—they're one and done, right? It's critical to support employee well-being in the long-term so it becomes a dynamic way of life and work, and really our new normal. So for any organization we recommend starting small. Leverage publicly available resources, such as articles, TED talks, or blogs to start. This creates an appetite for additional, more customized wellness program materials.

Jenn Lalli:

You mentioned quite a bit of the one and done might occur, especially in this environment, Chapin. In your opinion, how can organizations adapt and overcome these very real challenges and build well-being into training curriculum?

Chapin Brinegar:

As I mentioned, it starts with the awareness of the relationship between well-being, employee engagement and optimal performance. Training professionals must build a business case and get leadership support for wellness-related programs, just as we do for any new initiative. I always say consider building a wellness committee to champion the program, but it ultimately comes down to the planning and the execution. So, start by assessing the current culture, look at the employees' attitudes and perceptions. This is like a needs analysis that we'd conduct for any training program: you're seeking to understand the employee's baseline when it comes to wellness, knowledge and practices.

From there, once you have aligned on the purpose of the program, objectives, desired outcomes, and of course your budget, you begin building the program, prioritizing areas of wellness based on those survey results. For instance, right now, as we've talked about, stress management and managing a work-life balance are hot topics because many of us have shifted to working from home and are dealing with the overall pandemic. So, consider first beta testing your program with a small group who can later turn into advocates for it. And to align with adult learning principles and current industry trends, we recommend a blended curriculum with a lot of quick hit, on-demand resources like short videos and reference cards.

Ultimately, it's important for all stakeholders to recognize that well-being is a lifelong endeavor. It's something to work toward daily. It's a process much like tending a garden.

Jenn Lalli:

Chapin, from a training perspective, what are some of the challenges you're hearing about building wellness and well-being into training and are organizations prioritizing this type of training?

Chapin Brinegar:

As we meet with our clients to discuss upcoming training needs or events, our team continually recommends they consider elements of wellness at work and employee well-being. In the past, we've rolled out training on stress management or enhancing emotional intelligence. We've done stress reduction through better time management. We've created deliverables on effective coping skills when receiving feedback or engaging in difficult conversations. We even recently designed materials around how



to just stretch while you're at your desk all day. We're also actively deploying ongoing activity calendars for one team that we work with. These include short, themed activities by day, such as Motivational Monday, Wellness Wednesday, and Thinking Thursday. They're designed to improve team morale, personal wellness and motivation.

The great news is that at Encompass, we're seeing a bigger push for professional development training in general within our client organizations. We're also seeing more of that essential and soft skills training becoming a focus, which includes wellness components. Our team at Encompass stays knowledgeable on current trends, so we understand the various facets of wellness and well-being training and are able to recommend solutions that fit our individual clients' needs.

Jenn Lalli:

Chapin and Hollace, I can't thank you enough for sharing your perspectives with us pertaining to steps that can enhance employees' well-being and engagement through training. And thank you to our listeners for joining us. Be sure to visit us at encompasscnl.com/podcast to listen to recent episodes and subscribe using your favorite podcast platform. You can also access the Encompass blog on our site.

Conclusion:

Encompass Communications and Learning helps life sciences colleagues advance their skills and knowledge. Our team includes experts who've worked in pharmaceutical and medical device sales and marketing, health insurance, medicine, and instructional design. We partner with those in life sciences to create customized communications and learning experiences that support medical advances for patients.

References

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