

WHITE PAPER 2022

# Getting Under the Hood of **Employee Financial Wellbeing**

What really drives your belief system around money

In association with  
Umbrella Wellbeing





## Reader reviews

“Brilliant, love it, right on topic! Wellness needs to be more than about life insurance when you are dead and a fruit bowl – there’s nothing special about that.

I am looking at developing a wellness program that looks at Financial Health, Physical Health, Mental Health and Social Health, with one pillar per quarter to highlight these areas, but not in isolation as just a wellness program, but also ties into CSR/ESG, D&I, L&D, H&S. This is so that an employee can see that we are delivering a supportive work environment with tangible offerings (and not just cheap and cliched benefits) that enhance the employee experience and that they can carry into their personal lives as well. The grass is not always greener on the other side, we need to water our own grass to be more attractive to our current employee as well as potential.”

– **Andrea Hardy FRCSA**, HR Director ANZ, The HR Collective Limited

“Financial wellbeing can play a significant role in employees’ lives irrespective of their stage of life. There are some good insights here for the HR practitioner and practical tools on how to build a holistic wellness programme for their people which includes financial resilience.”

“Many people today, at all stages of life, experience some kind of money worries. This paper highlighted the importance of incorporating financial wellbeing into a work wellness programme - I liked the guidance and practical tools aimed at helping to build sustained improvement.”

– **Amanda MacDonald**, HR Professional

“For a long time now, I’ve been saying to anyone who will listen that we employ the whole person. Forget the “don’t bring work home” and “don’t bring home to work” philosophies.

Wellbeing programmes should be so much more than just staff discounts at the local hairdresser or gym and free flu shots. Financial insecurity can severely affect a person’s ability to concentrate, sleep, and maintain a level of normality- both at home and at work. Sure, many employers have been providing EAP services, which can include budgeting advice. Teaching someone how to budget is one thing, but coaching them towards a new attitude to their finances is another thing entirely, and ADAPT looks to be taking employee financial wellbeing a giant step further. This white paper shows that Footprint Connect understands HR principles and the reasons why employers need to take a much greater interest in their employees’ mental health and their lives outside the four walls of the workplace.”

– **Judy Chappell**, Senior HR Professional



The left side of the page features a vertical panel with a background of numerous thin, curved, light-colored lines that sweep from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth. The right side of the page is a solid dark teal color.

# Foreword

Are you an HR professional, business owner or executive looking for an innovative way to improve your team's engagement, productivity, financial resilience and wellbeing? Then this is for you.

In this white paper we cover:

- The psychology influencing our financial wellbeing;
- What the data says about financial wellbeing and the impact of financial stress on employees;
- Developing the business case – the link between financial wellbeing and productivity;
- Why Directors need to take note and the questions they should ask.

We also introduce a practical framework, ADAPT™, which is designed to help you and your employees better understand and adapt your beliefs around being financially prepared, as well as more holistic goals to enable improved resilience, productivity and overall wellbeing.

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# Introduction

Our goal in producing this white paper is to start a conversation about financial wellbeing that goes deeper than rainy day funds or back-up plans for a sudden loss of income. As good as those things are, for many Kiwis, financial knowledge and achievement can be a million miles apart. It's time for a step change in our thinking. Financial wellbeing is about more than outputs; it's about our relationship with money and, more than that, it's about our beliefs and the role they play in all aspects of our life, including wellbeing.

This white paper intends to discuss a different perspective on financial wellbeing and provide guidance and practical tools which can help HR professionals and employers support their staff to sustainably improve their financial

and general wellbeing. For the purposes of this paper we are using 'financial wellbeing' as a broad term to encompass belief systems about money, financial literacy, and general wellbeing as it pertains to personal finance – because money, as we know, affects all aspects of our lives.

There are subtle differences in definition, but financial wellbeing seems to be best described by financial institutions as the measure of how comfortably a person can meet their current financial commitments and continue to do so in the future. Financial wellbeing encompasses an understanding of how money works and how to manage it. It is intrinsically linked to what we believe and therefore how we think, feel and act.

# Oil and water – how work has changed forever. A word from Angela Vale, CEO, Footprint Connect

When I started work at 16, in a factory in rural New Zealand, I vividly remember being told to leave my personal life at the door. Work was work, home was home and, like oil and water, the two should never mix. Today, thankfully, this thinking is regarded as outdated and flawed.

Home life and work life are intertwined and cannot be fully prised apart. As we emerge into a pandemic-impacted work environment, the average workday has become a blend of work and life, where the boundaries are often ill-defined.

This new paradigm poses some problems for employers.

The link between wellbeing and productivity is well proven; an engaged and motivated team is a productive one. Wellbeing programmes started to appear in the New Zealand workforce in the 2010s and primarily focused on physical wellbeing – the ubiquitous fruit bowl and often a lunchtime yoga session. Today a holistic focus on wellbeing is largely understood to include physical, emotional, mental, social and, still to a lesser extent, financial wellbeing.

Nearly 50% of the workforce is anxious, stressed, and concerned about their finances ([Umbrella Wellbeing Assessment](#)). When people are stressed about money, they are more likely to report health concerns, exhibit irritability, anger, and fatigue, and develop unhealthy coping mechanisms like smoking, drinking, drug abuse, and overeating. There is a strong link between financial stress, absenteeism and presenteeism, health issues, and reduced productivity.

Money worries do not necessarily abate with age. Younger employees might be concerned about student debt, buying a first home, savings, or managing the costs of a growing family. Older employees might struggle with credit card debt, mortgage or rental payments, or fears about retirement income.



Angela Vale, CEO, Footprint Connect

Of course, employers already play a significant role in employees' finances. They pay salaries (and sometimes bonuses) and often contribute to KiwiSaver or other retirement savings plans, and medical and other insurances. Helping employees to more effectively manage their finances to reduce that factor as a stressor is the next logical step. If an individual is empowered to better understand and address their financial concerns, and given additional knowledge to improve them, they can gain further insights and develop better lifelong financial management tools.

All of this improves employers' bottom line.

*'Knowledge is power.  
Information is liberating.'*

- Kofi Annan

*'Knowledge is power, and it  
can help you overcome any  
fear.'*

- Jay Shetty

## Plugging the gap: Motivation to create this resource for HR professionals

Human resources professionals are under enormous pressure. Our work paradigm has shifted, work life and home life have merged, and our HR teams are tasked with providing ever more expansive programmes and solutions to manage this change.

HR professionals expertly juggle the needs of the company with the needs of the team, to enable the business and its employees to achieve common goals. To do so, they need to understand what matters most to their people – which is why this white paper aims to provide HR professionals with insights and tools to improve the financial resilience and wellbeing of employees.

[A recent 2021 'wellness in the workplace'](#) report highlighted financial concerns as a major cause of non-work-related stress. Financial concerns ranked higher than fear of illness, health concerns, or COVID-19. This knowledge helps HR professionals to build the business case to design and develop initiatives that specifically address financial wellbeing as part of their overall wellbeing programme.

Providing solutions that offer an employee additional financial tools and resources not only builds confidence in their ability to manage their finances, it also helps to alleviate one of the major stressors in their lives. This in turn contributes to the reduction of absenteeism and presenteeism, which improves productivity.

HR plays a pivotal role in the employer-employee relationship, and practitioners are constantly sourcing new and relevant information and tools to work effectively and efficiently.

Our belief system about money is key

‘Money does not buy you happiness, but lack of money certainly buys you misery.’

- Daniel Kahneman

Financial wellbeing is not just about how much money we have but rather our belief system and relationship with money. Money is a pervasive cause of stress and distress, often affecting every aspect of our life.

The number one cause of conflict between partners  
– money

A common cause of depression and anxiety  
– money

Sleep problems  
– concern about money

Stress, feelings of guilt and shame  
– concern about money

Money worries can still be conversational taboos. Some parents ‘protect’ their children from their money troubles. Many people often lack the confidence to communicate and effectively manage the financial challenges they are faced with. This can be compounded by their inability to access the resources to find the help and assistance required.

Good financial wellbeing programmes seek to address all of this.

By examining our beliefs regarding financial matters, our relationship with money and its impact on our lives, it is possible to gain insights that inform our personal financial approach and redirect our efforts to achieve attainable financial goals.

But how do we do this? By applying a coaching methodology, it is possible to develop a holistic wellbeing framework that includes improving financial wellbeing alongside other employee wellbeing initiatives.

# Building an inclusive wellbeing programme that can provide life-changing benefits

## The problem: Why employers should care about financial wellbeing

There is a simple equation in business: profit equals revenue minus costs. Revenue is dependent on the product and services the company provides, the talent and productivity of its workforce, and the quality of its service delivery. Costs need to be monitored and controlled and processes made more efficient.

Both sides of the equation are dependent on people. The right people doing the right things at the right time.

Fortunately, most company leaders realise the importance of their team's contribution to business success and continually work to ensure the needs of their people are reasonably met. Wellbeing initiatives may range from a wellbeing allowance, gym memberships, standing desks, vaccination programmes, discounted health insurance, and EAP support, which may include a budgeting service.

All have significant benefit to an employee's wellbeing, but there is further opportunity to provide solutions that specifically respond to the stressors that impact financial wellbeing.

Financial stress can be experienced by anyone at any stage of life. It is omnipresent. It can lead to feelings of being out of control and can trigger anxiety, shame, and depression. It stands to reason that financial wellbeing should sit within all employer wellbeing programmes. A healthy workforce is not only more engaged but more productive.

On this basis, there is good reason for employers to consider financial health as a core part of employee wellbeing programmes, not least as a mitigating factor in absenteeism, which comes with a very real cost. As the latest Workplace Wellness Report shows, the cost to the New Zealand economy of people being away from work without good reason amounts to \$1.8 billion dollars annually. Harder to assess is the cost of presenteeism; employees not performing at their best, unable to concentrate and therefore unproductive or simply 'checked out'. Research in the UK suggests presenteeism costs four times more than absenteeism.

## How to support robust wellbeing among employees

HR professionals sit at the fulcrum of a seesaw, giving equal attention to the needs of the employer and employee. Understanding both sides of the equation is important. An employer is looking for an engaged, loyal workforce which is efficient and productive, while most employees are looking to feel personally satisfied with their contribution and valued by their employer. This includes the provision of a range of benefits such as flexibility (to support work-life balance), competitive remuneration, and overall investment in their wellbeing.

An inclusive wellbeing programme should ideally align with and support an employee's needs and reasonable wants.

What makes a measurable difference in people's lives? What contributes to a real sense of wellbeing? Part of an employer's challenge is that this will look different for each individual – we all have specific needs and challenges. The most effective starting point can be to focus on delivering initiatives that empower, educate, and address the primary causes of employee stress within and outside the workplace.



# The Data

## THE HIDDEN COST OF EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM & THE ROI FOR WELLBEING INITIATIVES

The cost of a typical employee's absence

**\$600 - \$1000**  
/YEAR

*Southern Cross' Workplace Wellness Report 2021*

The direct cost of absence across the economy in 2020

**\$1.85**  
**BILLION**

The ROI for wellbeing initiatives is

**\$1 : \$12**

within a 12-month period

*Institute of Directors*

## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND FIRM PERFORMANCE

Average increased in productivity from a meaningful increase in well-being yields

**10%**

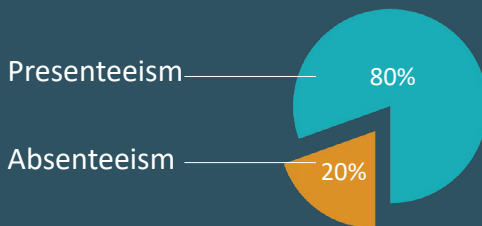
*Global Happiness Wellbeing Policy Report 2019*

## ABSENTEEISM, PRESENTEEISM AND PRODUCTIVITY

**4.2**

The average number of absentee days per year

Presenteeism accounts for 80 percent and absenteeism for 20 percent of productivity loss in an organisation



*Southern Cross*

*The NZIER Wellbeing and Productivity report 2021*

## STAFF WELLNESS' IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY

Employees' wellness significantly affects an organisation's productivity



On a scale of 1-5 where 5 = significant impact, the median result across all company sizes was 4

*Southern Cross' Workplace Wellness Report 2021*

## THE MAIN CAUSES OF NON-WORK-RELATED STRESS



1- Relationships outside of work



2- Financial concerns



3- Personal illness/health



4- Covid-19

*Southern Cross' Workplace Wellness Report 2021*

## KIWIS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

**1/4**

of working New Zealanders show signs of psychological distress

When it comes to wellbeing:



20% are struggling, and report not doing so well on multiple aspects of life



More than 50% are doing OK, but not feeling on top of all aspects of their life

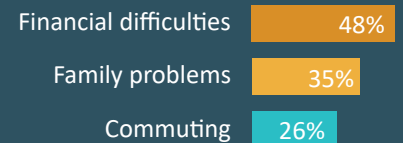


25% of employees are happy, focused, and 'in the flow' at work

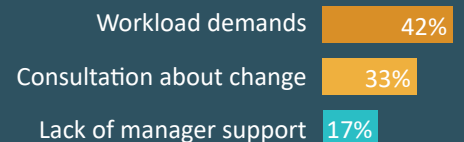
*Umbrella Wellbeing Assessment*

## TOP 3 MOST COMMON CHALLENGES FOR KIWI EMPLOYEES

### Life challenges



### Work challenges



*Global Happiness Wellbeing Policy Report 2019*

# Aligning financial wellbeing, mental health, and organisational productivity as a strategic business opportunity

Written by Dr Amanda Wallis at Umbrella Wellbeing Ltd

[!\[\]\(99f58673407353e96a019fbca558fd72\_img.jpg\) Click here to watch Dr Amanda Wallis talk about Umbrella's contribution to this white paper.](#)



## Financial stress and its influence on wellbeing

When we have deeply-embedded habits – of any kind – they become a part of who we are. We don't question why we brush our teeth twice a day, and it usually doesn't take much cognitive energy to remember to pay the bills each week. These behaviours are like well-worn neural pathways in our brains. We walk them often.

On the flipside, we are also constantly trying to embed new behaviours. We are testing new habits out, trying them on for size and – sometimes – new challenges come along that challenge our behavioural repertoire completely. Let's say you've got your weekly budget down pat – the neural pathways are well-paved, and you can walk them with your eyes closed. But unexpectedly, a big cost blows out your budget. You haven't walked this path before, it's overgrown with weeds and obstacles, and your cognitive energy is absorbed in tackling the challenge.

Irrespective of how sophisticated or unsophisticated your employees' financial habits may be, we are all vulnerable to financial shocks. And, by virtue of their novelty, they zap our energy and our attention as we navigate them – whether at work or at home.

Data collected from our Umbrella Wellbeing Assessment shows that at least half of all working New Zealanders have experienced some form of financial stress in the last month – the most commonly reported non-work stressor in our dataset. The source of this stress may vary – redundancy or unemployment, unexpected costs, business setbacks, supporting spouses or dependents etc. – but, whether we like it or not, these challenges come with us to work, and may cause us distress.

The relationship can go both ways too. When we struggle because of other, unrelated stress or uncertainty in our lives, our brain's executive centre (responsible for planning and big-picture thinking) gets put on standby while we deal with the immediate threat. From a financial perspective, that means that when we are stressed – for whatever reason – we are less able to use our money wisely. Maybe we splurge on an extravagant purchase, or we put off the financial planning session we needed to do. All this feeds into the vicious cycle where stress breeds more stress.

## Our psychological connection to money and financial preparedness

Just as financial behaviour can become habitual, our beliefs about money are often so ingrained that we don't realise they are there. One prominent psychological framework of motivation, called Self-Determination Theory, suggests that there are three key psychological needs that influence our behaviour:

1. A need for autonomy and control
2. A need for competence and mastery
3. A need for connection and relatedness

Depending on the individual – and our unique history, experiences, and beliefs - our relationship with money might be motivated to a varying degree by these needs. Some of us may be more motivated financially by providing for our family and giving opportunities to our children (relatedness), while others may be motivated by money as a means to learn, grow and be effective in the goals we set our minds to (competence).

It's also common to plan for financial freedom as a way of regaining control and autonomy over our lives in a society where we commonly sell our most precious asset – time – for money. Financial preparedness – otherwise known as the state of having control over your finances – ties directly into this innate psychological need for autonomy. When we feel in control over our financial behaviour and our goals, we feel a sense of self-determination and, ultimately, we are better able to grow and thrive in life and work.

The extent to which these needs motivate our financial behaviour also depends on the value system we hold around money – often influenced by key role models in our lives (e.g., parents and spouses). Perhaps we value an early retirement because that's what we saw our parents do and that represents ultimate autonomy to us. Or perhaps we value experiences with family (e.g., spending extra cash on trips and getaways), because we grew up bonding with our own family in a similar way.

Irrespective of the unique role money plays in fulfilling your psychological needs, and the values you carry with you, we all experience hurdles along the road to achieving financial preparedness.

“Financial preparedness – otherwise known as the state of having control over your finances – ties directly into this innate psychological need for autonomy. When we feel in control over our financial behaviour and our goals, we feel a sense of self-determination and, ultimately, we are better able to grow and thrive in life and work.”

## The impact of personal finance stress on a business' bottom line

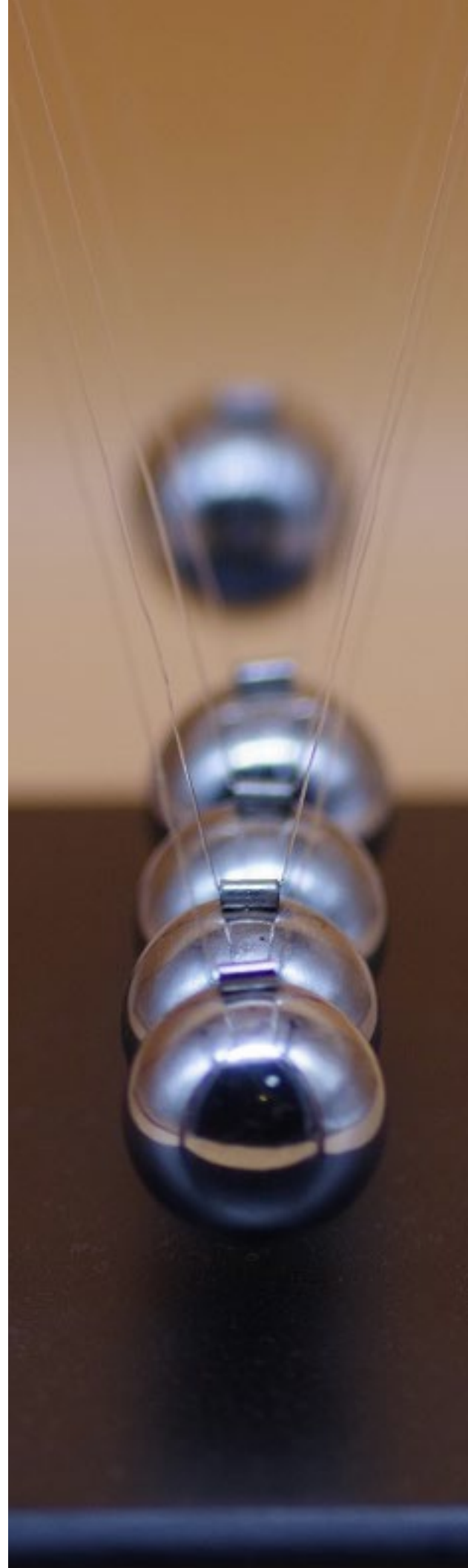
Among the more than 5,000 employees that we surveyed in our Umbrella Wellbeing Assessment, greater financial stress was associated with greater psychological distress, poorer life satisfaction, a greater likelihood of leaving one's job, and poorer self-reported work performance – meaning that when we are struggling with financial stress, we feel worse (and our work suffers too).

Put in other words, our presenteeism is higher when we bring personal financial stress with us to work. After all, when we are stressed at work – even for a non-work reason – our brains are motivated to find a solution to relieve discomfort. This might look like being on hold with your bank to sort out an unexpected fee, researching mortgage options online while you're meant to be working, or trying desperately to concentrate on a project but feeling like your mind is somewhere else altogether. The ultimate outcome of this financial stress is that it pulls our energy and attention away from the work we are meant to be doing, resulting in productivity loss.

Given how common financial stress is, its effect on presenteeism, and therefore your business' bottom line, is significant. Taken altogether, reduced productivity due to your people not being able to perform as usual is one of the greatest costs to an organisation – somewhere between four and ten times higher than total absenteeism costs. Research from the RAND Corporation finds that presenteeism is caused primarily by stress, poor mental health, lack of sleep, and financial challenges – making up at least 50% of all presenteeism cases. The same research report suggests that the average employee loses at least 30 working days per year due to presenteeism.

50% of all presenteeism cases are caused primarily by stress, poor mental health, lack of sleep and financial challenges

If employers can proactively support the financial wellbeing of their people, therefore reducing financial strain and supporting mental health, they also stand to win back some of those 30 working days lost to presenteeism – leading to greater health of the business' bottom line, and greater health of its people.



## Adding value to the employer | employee relationship

To achieve these aspirational goals of greater financial wellbeing, mental health, and organisational productivity, we need to check back in with our organisational approach towards health and wellbeing.

Do we support the varied dimensions of wellbeing beyond just physical health? The risk here is that we adopt a short-sighted view of wellbeing, leading to an unbalanced employee who may have access to fruit bowls and yoga classes through their workplace, for example, but are not supported with the financial skills to budget for healthy groceries or the resilience to cope through life stress.

Even more risky is that organisations may invest in one dimension of wellbeing – whether that be physical, emotional, or otherwise – without measuring whether their investment is successful, or whether employees

even needed support with it in the first place. Key to the “strategic” part of supporting financial wellbeing, mental health and organisational productivity is identifying what help employees really need, choosing interventions that will make a difference, and measuring their impact so that you can evaluate, iterate, and repeat.

From a financial wellbeing perspective, we can best support our people (and therefore our business) by checking in with what they really need, ensuring that financial wellbeing is not left behind in any wellbeing strategy, and choosing interventions that have a demonstrable return on your investment. When we get financial wellbeing right, alongside the other wellbeing dimensions, we reduce presenteeism, bolster mental health, and create healthier businesses and employees. Everybody wins.



# Elevating employee wellbeing on the boardroom agenda

Written by the Institute of Directors

*Employee wellbeing is no longer just a compliance issue for directors. With a talent crisis exacerbated by covid-19 border restrictions, staff retention has become key to business sustainability and productivity. The Institute of Directors tells us why boards are now leading from the front on wellbeing issues, tackling everything from mental health through to financial wellbeing.*

## Demand for talent is escalating

This year we have started seeing the snowball effect of covid-19 on workforces, with an increasingly volatile labour force, increasing salary expectations and a gap for some of the key skills needed.

In our 2021 [Director Sentiment survey](#) 30% of directors said that labour quality and capability is now the single biggest risk facing their organisation, up from 14% in 2020. In order to remain sustainable in this competitive environment, it's clear that organisations need to review their approaches to staff work-life balance, improving work culture and increasing rewards and recognition in a bid to attract and retain key talent in the year ahead.

30% of directors said that labour quality and capability is now the single biggest risk facing their organisation, up from 14% in 2020.

*Director Sentiment survey*

## A spotlight on mental health and wellbeing

The Centre for Informed Futures estimates up to [20 percent of New Zealand's population is affected by mental health challenges](#). These challenges have been compounded by the pandemic with 66% of businesses reporting an increase in stress levels amongst their staff and 91% of these citing covid-19 as a contributor.

Our *Director Sentiment Survey* revealed a lift in the proportion of boards regularly discussing workplace mental health and wellbeing – now at an all-time high with 85% indicating it is a key issue on their board agendas.

The culture of organisations also have a significant impact on the wellbeing of employees. Boards play a critical leadership role in setting the tone for a healthy organisational culture. Eighty per cent of respondents to this year's survey said their boards regularly discuss and monitor the culture of the organisations.

Directors are also turning boardroom talk into action, with 72% of boards approving initiatives to help address workplace mental health issues, largely in recognition of the ongoing impacts of covid-19.

Boards are ultimately responsible for the health and safety of their organisations, but it is crucial that all levels of leadership across the organisation are on board.

## Change the work, not the worker

Protecting workers from mental harm is a legal requirement under the [Health and Safety at Work Act](#) and should be seen as a core responsibility of boards and senior leadership.

Business leaders may have no control of many of the drivers of mental health and wellbeing of their staff but they can influence work conditions. This includes identifying wellbeing risks created by or at work, and eliminating or controlling them. The Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum has recently [released a useful guide](#) for CEOs and senior leaders which includes a framework that outlines how various work-related factors affect mental wellbeing.

The guide is aligned to the new [ISO 45003 guidelines](#), offering guidance to organisations as to how well they might be performing against the new ISO standards.

## Wellbeing is an issue of business sustainability

Protecting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of workers is not just a legal compliance obligation, it also has positive impacts on business performance and productivity.

Resilient workplaces prioritise mental health and wellbeing. Apart from poor outcomes for individuals, poor mental health policies and practices often result in increased presenteeism, sick leave, and on-site injuries. Conversely, good wellbeing policies and practices will lead to improved productivity, financial performance, risk management, and will improve the retention of staff.

A [recent report from Xero and New Zealand Institute of Economic Research \(NZIER\) study](#) showed that for every dollar spent in organisational wellbeing initiatives for staff, they can expect to see a twelve-fold return within a year.



## What can boards and senior management do to protect their staff

### Review your wellbeing policies and practices

A lot has changed in the past 18 months. Have your health and safety practices changed during the pandemic, and if so, are your policies still fit-for-purpose?

A good example is the shift to working from home during the pandemic. Working from home has brought benefits in terms of worker flexibility but in some cases, it has compounded mental health issues amongst already vulnerable workers.

In fact, according to the [Workplace Wellness Report 2021](#) over 73% of employees felt a degree of isolation working from home. Additionally, staff may be less inclined to take a sick day in a work-from-home culture.

### *Financial wellbeing*

The pandemic has created an environment of uncertainty and this includes job security and individual's financial resilience. It is crucial that leadership communicate regularly with staff especially during any periods of organisational change and endeavour to provide as much certainty as possible.

Also, consider investing in an Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and training for staff to take control of their finances and build financial resilience.

### *Diversity and inclusion*

Organisations are at their best when they are inclusive and distinguished by diversity of thought and experience. Leaders should embody, inspire and promote organisational values and ethical behaviours. Often, the scope and success of integrity and diversity initiatives in organisations depend on leaders' personal commitments.

And, organisations should [mind the gap](#). Employers will increasingly be held to account in the public eye on pay equity. In the drive to retain and recruit top talent, employers will need to be transparent about their remuneration practices.



### *Other support for your staff*

- Lead on raising awareness of mental health in your workplace and involve staff in developing ways to improve it. Consider the benefits offered to your staff. Are these matched with the needs of your workforce?
- Understand the non-work commitments (eg childcare) of your staff and build flexibility into work arrangements.
- Invest in Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP).
- Review your sick leave policies. Do they allow for mental health leave?
- Ensure management provide adequate reporting on their response to staff wellbeing and that there is adequate and ongoing tracking of initiatives across the organisation.



# Case studies

*The following case studies are testimonials from existing Footprint Connect clients who, through My Financial Footprint, offer Wills and financial literacy tools to their employees. ADAPT™ is a new framework which sits within My Financial Footprint and takes financial wellbeing a step further.*

## “ Sudima

Partnering with Footprint Connect helped Sudima Hotels to unlock important conversations with our people, which has since opened doors for us to expand our focus on financial wellness within our holistic employee wellbeing programme.

At Sudima Hotels, we pride ourselves on emphasising our employees' overall wellbeing, which encompasses everything from mental health and nutritional wellbeing to financial literacy. Through the process with Footprint Connect, we now have a better sense of our employees' financial wellbeing and understand the key role we play as an employer to support and upskill our teams.

We know people can be stressed about money and worry how they'll be able to afford everything they want for their whānau, so being able to offer them the tools, resources and education that support them inside and out has been key.

From an employer brand perspective, providing a wrap-around employee benefit programme that includes everything from Christmas wish list initiatives, life insurance and Wills to educational tools for financial literacy has helped set us apart from others in the industry. Not only have we engaged with our team who may otherwise not have thought about or taken the time to make their Wills, but we know we have helped protect them and their families for years to come.

## “ Chorus

In the words of Chorus: “We have a fantastic life, trauma and income protection insurance package for permanent employees, and the addition of Wills felt like the missing piece of the puzzle, broadening and heightening that value even further. Our wellbeing programme's objective is to create a healthier and more resilient workforce by influencing and supporting our people to build healthy habits.

We hope to empower our people to make informed financial choices and we want to destigmatise the conversation around financial management and planning. Supporting financial wellbeing holistically improves employee retention, productivity, and company performance, and has a positive impact on culture.

We were really pleased with the 79 percent rate of opt-in to the benefit. While insurance packages are fairly common these days, the addition of Wills ties a nice bow around the two here at Chorus. We now have a really strong suite of financial benefits that covers everything from the birth of a child to the passing of an employee.

## “ Aon

Financial wellbeing goes hand in hand with mental stress. According to Aon’s Global Wellbeing Survey, a strategy focused on improving individual and organisational wellbeing has a real impact on improving business outcomes. The survey also found that employee wellbeing was a top three business priority.

Aon’s experience with Footprint Connect is two-fold. As an employer, rolling out the employee benefits package to our own team allowed us to build awareness about the importance of estate planning. We had more than a 40% uptake amongst our staff, which is a great engagement benchmark. Our team, including senior members, benefitted greatly from Footprint’s information sessions where gaps in protection and knowledge were highlighted, which is important to us in our work as risk advisers. We have also successfully rolled this out through many of our clients who are large employers.

Not only has it given us a competitive edge, but the positive feedback on the impact of a more connected, holistic wellbeing package that includes financial wellbeing has been fantastic.

A lot of people, either don’t have the time for the “life-admin” tasks like setting up a Will or insurance, or don’t have the extra money or education to understand the risks of not having insurance and a Will in place. Being able to provide this kind of protection and education at no cost to the employee has created a great experience for both our team and clients which is rewarding for us at Aon.

For employers that want to create a fantastic culture and retain top talent in times of the Great Resignation, emphasising holistic employee wellbeing will be a key strategic priority in 2022.

# A solution: ADAPT™

2020 - 2021 has without a doubt been very challenging, requiring many businesses to pivot their focus and, where possible, explore the opportunities within the challenges they faced. This revealed where a lot of the breaking points are for businesses. It has given way to The Great Resignation; severe, widespread burnout; and highlighted the overall importance of the mental health and wellbeing of teams. Where this becomes unbalanced, the data shows a direct impact on a business' bottom line.

As such, there is significant scope for applying a coaching methodology to employee wellbeing programmes, and a role to play for organisational psychologists who can help improve the wellbeing and mental health and capability of teams. Creating sustainable business change and a culture of wellbeing within your workplace not only makes a difference to an individual employee, but can improve retention, productivity and profitability of the business as a whole.

At the top level, this also means the role of your Board of Directors exceeds and evolves from Governance in the traditional sense. For a business to remain relevant,

sustainable and successful in the long-term, its directors and leadership need to understand and acknowledge the importance of your workforce's holistic wellbeing, and what the right questions are to ask to ensure the correct processes and systems are in place.

Recognising that financial wellbeing is intrinsically linked to what we believe and therefore how we think, feel and behave, along with the data highlighted in this white paper, Footprint Connect has developed a unique, self-directed coaching model, ADAPT™, which is accessible to employees through Footprint's proprietary My Financial Footprint digital financial wellbeing platform.



[Click here to watch Angela Vale introduce the ADAPT™ framework and how it works.](#)

ADAPT was developed on proven life coaching practices and the premise that sustainable change is achieved through creating awareness, increasing knowledge, and enabling action-based exploration to deliver results.



## AWARENESS

How well do you understand yourself?  
What is stopping you from achieving your goals?

## DEFINE

Where are you now & where do you want to be? What goals will help you get there?

## ASPIRE

What do your aspirations look like?  
How would you recognise them if you achieved them? What can you do right now to help bring them to life?

## PLAY

How adaptable are you? What situations would take you outside of your comfort zone?

## TUNE IN

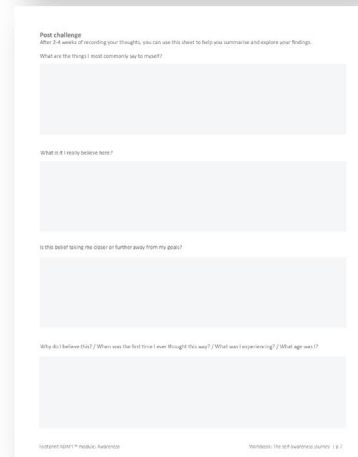
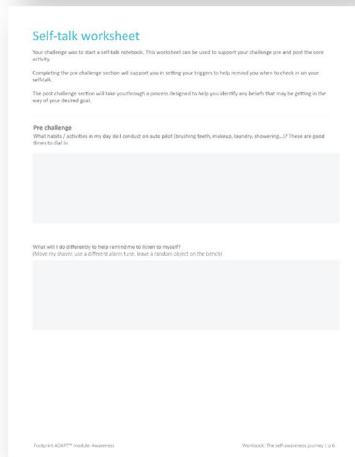
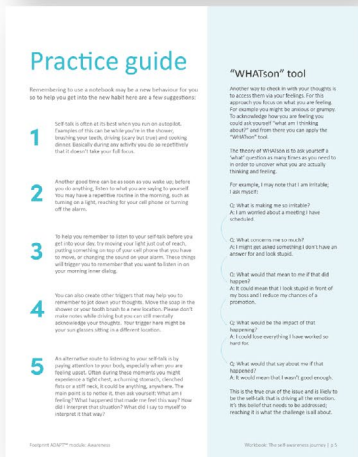
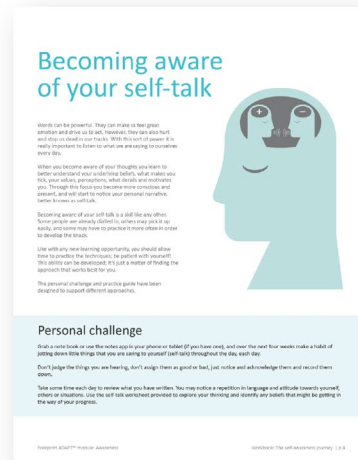
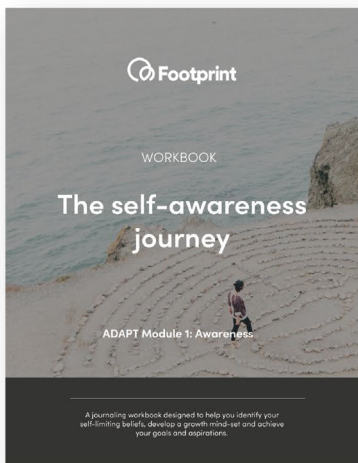
What ignites your curiosity? What energises and recharges you?

The framework has been designed using a life-coaching psychology approach, helping individuals to understand their relationship and beliefs regarding money or any other goal. It includes practical videos, workbooks and tools which enable individuals to develop awareness, increase knowledge and empower them to tackle what they deem as most important in their life.

ADAPT™ puts the individual in the driving seat through activities and challenges, which help define their goals and

develop a plan that takes them from where they are now to where they want to be.

Enabling employees through tools and resources that help improve their personal, financial wellbeing can in turn benefit employers with increased productivity and a reduction of absenteeism and presenteeism.





## Next steps – what now?

While the evidence, and this white paper, is clearly there to support that financial wellbeing should be a key pillar in all employee wellbeing programmes, there are a number of recognised challenges for employers including managing a diverse range of needs and expectations, finite budgets, tangible ROI and the view that solutions need to be tailored and individualised.

These practical questions can help self-audit your organisation's existing employee wellbeing initiatives and assess whether it is time to look at how you can improve your employees' financial wellbeing:

- Review your existing employee benefits programme and see if it is still fit for purpose in the context of your industry and rising rates of employees suffering from burnout and being impacted by financial stress. Is it delivering an acceptable ROI?
- What is the present state of your workforce's financial confidence, resilience and preparedness and what does success look like?
- Financial wellness is twofold, the relationship with money and the outputs, does your approach to financial wellness capture both?

- What you don't know can hurt you, does your wellness programme address wants or needs of your employees or both? If so, where are the lines of separation and why?
- How much does your employee benefits programme give vs. enable and empower? (i.e. does it simply cover things like gym memberships, insurance, wills, etc., or could it offer courses on money management instead?)
- Are your leaders expected to manage performance or coach it? Are they clear on their expectations and do they have the time to do this well?
- How would you describe the level of confidence and capability that your leaders have to coach for performance and development?

As the Institute of Directors pointed out, the return on investment for wellbeing initiatives is significant (\$1:\$12 within a 12-month period). Additionally, while yoga classes and fruit bowls are great, they may not apply to everyone, whereas offering the education and resources to improve financial wellbeing is something everyone can benefit from.

If you decide that you want to learn more and organise a demonstration about how the ADAPT™ framework could work within your business, contact the Footprint Connect team.

## About the authors



### Angela Vale

Angela Vale is well qualified to discuss financial wellbeing, having successfully combined careers in finance and life coaching. As the CEO of Footprint Connect she led the creation of a digital solution that provides education, tools and resources including a bite-size learning lab video series designed to improve financial literacy and adaptability and enhance overall wellbeing.

With over 20 years of experience leading teams through business change and transformation, Angela recognises and understands the links between financial stressors and poor work performance, ill health, and absenteeism. Her solution is unique and geared towards how Kiwis live and work now and to the nuances of their workplaces.

She believes that financial wellbeing should be a key player in all employer wellbeing programmes. By applying the principles learned as a life coach, she has developed the ADAPT™ framework to deliver this. She is on a mission to increase the financial literacy of all New Zealanders to help us be informed, knowledgeable, confident and in control.

### Sharon Weymouth

Sharon Weymouth is a senior HR professional with a commercial focus and expertise in business partnerships, organisational strategy, and achieving competitive advantage through people. Sharon has a special interest in enhancing employee wellbeing and building current and future talent.

Across senior HR, people and performance, learning and development (including digital learning), and relationship management roles over more than two decades, Sharon has worked for some of the country's major public entities (Auckland District Health Board) and large private financial institutions.

Most recently, with digital company Footprint Connect, Sharon has helped develop bespoke financial services and employee benefits programmes that empower employers to enable the financial wellbeing of their people through the protection of what's important, enhancing financial literacy and employee wellbeing.



# Postface – A word from our contributors

## Footprint Connect

Footprint Connect is a New Zealand organisation providing digital financial wellness solutions. Their mission is to lift the financial preparedness of Kiwis and protect more whānau from unnecessary hardship by building awareness, increasing knowledge and enabling action. Its digital tools help increase financial literacy, improve ADAPtability and enhance overall wellbeing. Find out more and connect with the team at Footprint at [www.footprintconnect.co.nz](http://www.footprintconnect.co.nz).

## Umbrella

Umbrella Wellbeing – a team of psychologists who provide end-to-end workplace wellbeing support. We partner with organisations to consult on strategic wellbeing, build leadership skills and competence in managing wellbeing and mental health, and help develop high performing and resilient teams. Website: <https://umbrella.org.nz/>, [office@umbrella.org.nz](mailto:office@umbrella.org.nz)

Learn more by getting in  
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