

Welding wellbeing into your organisational DNA.

How a Melbourne manufacturing business successfully embedded wellbeing into its culture and now enjoys a workforce that feels and functions better than ever before.

METALTEX
AUSTRALIA PTY LTD



readiness

Readiness Case Study

How Metaltex embedded wellbeing into its culture and now enjoys a workforce that feels and functions better than ever before.

Background.

Whether your staff are on the factory floor or in the office, your business has a legal [obligation to ensure the physical and psychological health of all employees](#). But, prioritising staff wellbeing is much more than a box-ticking exercise at Metaltex.

The Dandenong South based business, which provides precision manufacturing and engineering solutions to major industries across the world, is taking a proactive approach to workplace wellbeing.

Sean Pieterse, a Director at Metaltex, says prioritising staff wellbeing is about providing a safe, engaging and challenging work environment – one which his dynamic team choose to be part of and influence the strong company culture.

“We do not forget the importance of people,” he says. “People are the success both inside and outside of our business. Through teamwork, respect and a mutual vision, everyone is responsible for delivering high level service and quality.”

However, changes to the nature of work in the manufacturing industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has proved challenging. Employees are being called upon to be more flexible than ever before. Workloads, job security and work environments continue to shift with every COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown.



“The current unpredictable work environment in our industry – and many others – can negatively impact our team members mental health and physical wellbeing,” says Sean. “However, two things we have been consistent with this year are regularly checking in with our staff and providing the relevant support and guidance when required.”

In July 2020, Metaltex partnered with Readiness – an Australian-owned platform that helps businesses monitor staff wellbeing, including early risk signs, and provide personalised solutions for those who need it. The result? A 14 per cent improvement in staff wellbeing – and that’s just the beginning.

The Challenge.

Since launching in 1979, Metaltex has become one of Australia's leading multi-faceted, bespoke engineering and manufacturing companies.

The original equipment manufacturer (OEM) uses state-of-the-art technology to deliver a suite of products, services and projects that specialise in sheet metal, fabrication, manufacturing and engineering.

To achieve this, shift work is required with 80 per cent of the workforce on the tools and 20 per cent in the office. This meant, Metaltex required a mental health and wellbeing solution that was accessible to staff anywhere, at any time – regardless of their role in the business.

Lana Utatao, Metaltex HR manager, explains: "We also needed a holistic approach that didn't just address mental health – although this is paramount given the impact of the global pandemic on our industry. A large proportion of our staff also undertake manual labour, so we wanted to consider their physical health as well."

Finally, manufacturing in Australia is a competitive and diverse employment market, so Sean and Lana were determined to apply a hands-on management style and show staff genuine care for their mental and physical wellbeing. This has been a major contributing factor to a successful staff retention strategy. During uncertain and difficult times.

The real cost of mental health issues in the workplace.

In a normal year, WorkSafe Australia research indicates stress costs Australian businesses more than \$10 billion per year, while the direct financial impact of mental health issues is around \$11 billion due to absenteeism and reduced productivity from unwell workers.

Simon Kearney, the co-founder of Readiness and a former Sports Scientist, says during a pandemic, the impacts are expected to be far greater and more far-reaching.

"The need for prioritising employee health and wellbeing is more important than ever. We know businesses which put wellbeing front and centre have reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and better staff morale."



The Solution.

Metaltex introduced the Readiness complete wellbeing platform mid 2020. Since then, more than 100 employees have used the platform and completed online self-assessments each week, answering a short series of questions about their mental health, physical wellbeing and sleep.

Metaltex recognised not all staff had access to mobile phones or computers during their shift, so desktop computers were set up around the office for staff to complete their self-assessment and view recommended resources available on the platform.



Based on individual results, Readiness provides tailored wellbeing educational resources via an extensive library of mental health and wellbeing courses and learning resources. This means employees can immediately access information relevant to their current state of physical and mental health.

Simon Kearney, Readiness co-founder and former Sports Scientist says: "Providing instant feedback and strategies means people receive critical information when they need it most. Stepping in at the right time can make a big difference between helping someone overcome early risk signs, and a potential mental health issue escalating."

If employees are recognised as needing further support, a referral to a qualified practitioner is made via the Readiness Employee Assistance Program.

Each Metaltex employee has also been paired with an advocate or buddy from their own department, who regularly checks in with them.

Kearney explains: "This strategy provides employees with someone to talk to, who understands the unique challenges of each area of the business. The buddy monitors the employee's self-assessment results and regularly checks in to make sure they're ok."

The Results.

After the first six months of using Readiness – from January to July 2021 – Metaltex studied the scores generated from the staff self-assessments. The results were all positive, including an overall increase in employee wellbeing scores of 14% over the period:



Overall Wellbeing

14% increase in overall
employee wellbeing
scores



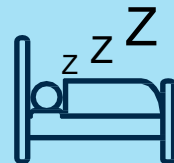
Mental Health

15% increase in
employee mental
health scores



Physical Wellbeing

12% increase in
employee physical
health scores



Sleep

17% increase in
employee sleep
scores

“Wellbeing starts at the top and Sean is 100 per cent pro-wellbeing,” says Simon. “He and Lana have supported the roll out of Readiness right from the beginning and successfully embedded wellbeing into the culture of the business.”

Metaltex understands the importance of regular monitoring to help pick up subtle changes in employees’ behaviour that might indicate when proactive action around mental health and wellbeing issues is needed. This also helps uncover any trends within certain cohorts of the business, which might benefit from tailored educational resources or programs.

Staff have the chance to be rewarded with gift vouchers to encourage the completion of their Readiness self-assessments, and wellbeing is now a regular topic of discussion at the Metaltex monthly employee barbeque.

The Future.

Metaltex is committed to continuing with Readiness as an affordable and results-driven solution to improving staff wellbeing.

"Before we introduced Readiness, I would describe the overall mental health and wellbeing of our staff as fair," concludes Sean. "Now, I have the confidence – and data to show – that employee wellbeing has improved at Metaltex.

"We also know that, thanks to this collaboration, we can take informed steps towards building on staff mental health and physical wellbeing, which will continue to benefit our employees' professional – and personal lives."

The leading manufacturer is also partnering with Readiness to help develop a range of new features to further enhance the platform's functionality, including how Readiness can also better support other aspects of the people and culture function within a business.

For manufacturing, hospitality and education industries, which are working hard to overcome impacts of the pandemic, this is an important time to take a preventative approach to health issues and prove to employees that you care 365 days a year.

Readiness is a scientifically-backed platform to help businesses and schools support the mental health and physical wellbeing of their employees and students.

To find out more visit readiness.org.au.



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-Sean Pieteron,
Director, Metaltex



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