

February 2023

Wellness in the hospitality industry - Guests vs. employees

Natalia Levey

Hi Hospitality Group, nlevey@hihospitalitygroup.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jght>

 Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), [Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons](#), [Hospitality Administration and Management Commons](#), [Human Resources Management Commons](#), and the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

This View Point is brought to you for free and open access by the M3 Center at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Levey, N. (2023). Wellness in the hospitality industry - Guests vs. employees. *Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism*, 2(1), 7-9. <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/2771-5957.2.1.1017>

Corresponding Author

Natalia Levey, Hi Hospitality Group, Tampa, Florida, United States

Wellness in the Hospitality Industry - Guests vs. Employees

Natalia Levey¹

¹Hi Hospitality Group
nlevey@hihospitalitygroup.com

The Global Wellness Institute predicts that wellness tourism will grow beyond \$1.3 trillion by 2025, up from roughly \$800B this year (Mcgroarty, 2022). With this growth, more support personnel will be needed to take care of the guests. Employees will be busier than ever, serving more guests, and subject to pressures and challenges that have not been experienced before. The increased demand for wellness services can cause a human resources challenge and opportunity to address in 2023 and beyond.

Currently, most of the focus and resources are allocated to creating extraordinary, luxurious, and profitable guest experiences and nutritious menus and designing and building beautiful guest-facing spaces. That leaves us with the question: *Can everyone ultimately benefit from a thoughtfully created environment that not only takes care of guests, but where does this leave the employees providing the services?* The type of environment where the employees can thrive and be happy could result in better job satisfaction, better retention, and a more substantial community impact (Viseu et al., 2020)

The hospitality industry has very particular issues around long work hours; demand for perfection; time constraints; dealing with challenging personalities, both guests and co-workers; specific physical demands for back-of-house and front-of-house teams; variable sleep patterns due to work shifts; safely getting to and from work and much more (Ghani et al., 2022; Wee & Liow, 2021). According to the Royal Society of Public health, *"One in five hospitality workers suffer from work-related severe mental health issues, four out of five hospitality workers reported increased stress which was believed to be a direct consequence of their job."* ("Service With(out) a Smile", n.d.). In addition, a 2019 study by Paychex also found that four out of five employees in the hospitality and food service industries reported feeling burned out by their workload ("Feeling the Burn(out)", 2019).

A stressed and "unwell" workforce is inefficient at the best of times. However, we are mainly concerned with the mental and physical health of employees in an industry actively promoting physical and mental health and wellness (Irani & Kilic, 2021). We must counter these dangers by mitigating proactive measures (Arjona-Fuentes et al., 2019). Should wellness be the responsibility of the employee, the workplace, or the healthcare providers? Considering how much time people spend at work, the answer is undeniably not singular. Self-care is no longer thought of as getting a massage at a spa. It is much more multi-dimensional. The role of the workplace is becoming visibly significant.

The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness as the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to holistic health ("What is wellness", n.d.). Wellness encompasses eight mutually interdependent dimensions: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, vocational, financial, and environmental. Based on these dimensions, we realize there is a huge opportunity to do more for our valued and valuable employees, which will increase our guest wellness programs' effectiveness and commercial viability. Some hospitality organizations are starting to introduce wellness initiatives by collaborating with educational professionals and organizations, introducing health and meditation apps, and training management to recognize burnout signs. Marriott's TakeCare Program (Bethesda, 2019), Hyatt's Colleague Well-being Council (Hyatt, n.d.), and our company's Mindful Monday Minute are just a few examples.

More research is needed on how the hospitality industry can effectively bring wellness initiatives into the workplace, including:

1. **Affordability:** How can organizations identify and allocate resources toward educational programs and physical space improvements? (Such as renovating "not revenue producing" back-of-house areas.)
2. **Accessibility:** Do organizations have access to the correct information and tools? Do they have the ability to customize the wellness information to address specific job demands and distribute it to the employees effectively?
3. **Accountability:** Do organizations have the right human resources to track the programs' effectiveness and impact?

The hospitality industry needs access to affordable and safe materials that would improve the overall use of space and functionality of the back-of-house in a wellness-forward way. It can be done by implementing biophilic design elements and incorporating gym elements that allow for start and end—of-shift stretch, for example. In addition, we need all the support we can get to take care of our guests and deliver impeccable experiences. Collaboration between hospitality industry professionals, architects, interior designers, landscape architects, kitchen designers, wellness professionals, technology companies, and medical and mental health professionals would lead to better solutions for improving wellness for guests and employees. Collaboration and continuous support across global industries will create a thriving wellness ecosystem.

References

- "Feeling the Burn(out): Exploring How Employees Overcome Burnout". (2019, February 25). *Paychex*. <https://www.paychex.com/articles/human-resources/impact-of-employee-burnout#0Moststressful>
- "Service with(out) a smile?".(n.d.). *Royal Society of Public Health*. <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/wellbeing/service-with-out-a-smile.html>
- "What is wellness?". (n.d.). *Global Wellness Institute*. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/what-is-wellness/>.
- "World of care". (n.d.). *Hyatt*. <https://about.hyatt.com/en/world-of-care/caring-for-people/Wellbeing.html>
- Arjona-Fuentes, J. M., Ariza-Montes, A., Han, H., & Law, R. (2019). The silent threat of presenteeism in the hospitality industry: Examining individual, organizational and physical/mental health factors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 82, 191-198.
- Bethesda, M.D. (2019, September 18). Marriott International announces expanded well-being certification program. *Marriott International*. <https://news.marriott.com/news/2019/09/18/marriott-international-announces-expanded-wellbeing-certification-program>.
- Ghani, B., Zada, M., Memon, K. R., Ullah, R., Khattak, A., Han, H., ... & Araya-Castillo, L. (2022). Challenges and strategies for employee retention in the hospitality industry: A review. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 2885.
- Irani, F., & Kilic, H. (2022). An assessment of implementing green HRM practices on environmental performance: The moderating role of green process innovation. *Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism*, 1(1), 16-30.
- Mcgroarty, B. (2022, January 11). New data on wellness tourism: Projected to hit \$817 billion this year, \$1.3 trillion in 2025. *Global Wellness Institute*. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/global-wellness-institute-blog/2022/01/11/industry-research-new-data-on-wellness-tourism-projected-to-hit-817-billion-this-year-1-3-trillion-in-2025/>
- Viseu, J., Pinto, P., Borralha, S., & de Jesus, S. N. (2020). Role of individual and organizational variables as predictors of job satisfaction among hotel employees. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20(4), 466-480.
- Wee, T., & Liow, M. L. (2022). Short-term rental versus small hotel industry amid COVID-19 pandemic: What drives millennials' accommodation choices? *Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism*, 1(1), 69-84.