

Wellbeing

Strengthen your workforce through the power of resilience

By [Jack Campbell](#) | August 22, 2023 | 6 minute read

[SHARE THIS ARTICLE](#) 



The workforce has been through some stressful times over the last few years. The pandemic was a major hurdle that caught everyone off guard, and now economic uncertainty and rising inflation are compounding that stress.

Focusing on resilience in the workplace and working to strengthen it can make dealing with these issues that little bit easier.

“People that are well, do well. But we are doing a lot of doing, and not enough well. We know this because we are experiencing increasing numbers of people experiencing chronic stress, burnout, and mental health problems not just in Australia and New Zealand, but around the globe,” said Fleur Heazlewood, author of *Leading Wellbeing* and founder of the Blueberry Institute.

“People are still under pressure. Exhaustion from the stress of the pandemic, trauma from natural disasters like flooding, bushfires and cyclones, and now financial stress and economic uncertainty is continuing to put pressure on our mental health and wellbeing.”

If these problems aren’t acknowledged and if employees aren’t supported, it can lead to burnout, significantly damaging the productivity within a business. This is where building resilience becomes so important.

“There is an urgent need to provide psychological safety, supportive mental health conversations and build the resilience skills of people to be able to manage challenge and change healthily and well,” Ms Heazlewood explained.

“At the simplest level, think of resilience as an organisation’s ability to positively adapt to change and adversity. When people are stressed, exhausted, burnt out, or unwell, their capability and capacity to adapt, problems solve, innovate, and perform well is compromised. So, an organisation needs a foundation of wellbeing and resilience to retain top talent and to create, maintain and sustain high performance.”

As with many challenges that affect the workforce, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to building resilience. It means different things to different people, and this must be acknowledged and celebrated when implementing policy.

Ms Heazlewood outlined a solid starting point for organisations: “There are three components to resilience [that] are useful for organisations building their resilience capability. I define resilience as your internal resource for adapting positively to stress, supporting mental wellbeing during adversity, and maintaining health and energy during prolonged uncertainty and change.”

“Many of us have grown up with the myth that resilience is something you were either born with or you weren’t, that you are either resilient or you aren’t. This isn’t true. Research shows that resilience skills training can be effective in improving our health, wellbeing, and performance.”

She continued: “We just need to choose the right resilience strategies for our goals. Fruit bowls don’t alleviate stress. Fitness facilities don’t support overwhelm. Mindfulness doesn’t address excessive hours.”

Reducing stress and prioritising psychological safety are great ways to promote resilience, said Ms Heazlewood.

“To build organisational resilience, we need to address the pillars for safe and well ways of working. This includes developing the psychological safety and mental health conversation skill sets of our leaders,” she said.

“As well as training our people in the resilient skills to healthily manage stress, perform well under pressure, and support their everyday healthy and wellbeing practices.”

As for individuals, building personal resilience can be a great way to perform to your best capability at work.

“As individuals, it helps to audit and develop our resilience skill sets in three areas. A helpful resilience skill for managing stress in healthy ways is emotional agility. Mental adaptability can help us switch off. Optimising energy practices helps us prioritise improvements to our physical wellbeing,” Ms Heazlewood commented.

“Understanding your emotional triggers and the skills you can use to regulate your emotions will enable you to act rather than react under pressure. Being able to create mental space and clarity for your thoughts will give you more flexibility for options and behaviour when under stress.”

She added: “When you increase your overall resilience, it’s easier to continue doing your best under pressure and maintain a balanced approach to life. Ultimately, resilience skills support your overall health and wellbeing, which increases your capacity for perspective-taking, problem-solving and ability to perform under pressure.”