

Mazda Canada puts wellness in the driver's seat

During one of its monthly town hall meetings, a **Mazda Canada Inc.** employee asked whether the company could enhance its benefits for mental health counselling. So the leadership team did some research, and promptly increased the company's coverage for mental health services.

To Krista Kelly-Gombocz, director, people and culture, this is an example of Mazda Canada's genuine care for its employees and its intentional approach to supporting them. "Employee well-being is of paramount importance to us, and with safety being our top quality standard, we want to ensure the safety of all of our employees, which includes promoting physical and mental health and well-being," Kelly-Gombocz says.

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— **David Klan**
President and CEO

The company also increased the amount of its annual Wellness Fund for each employee, which employees and their dependents can use toward activities that support their wellness, including physical activity costs, meditation or art classes or a mental health app subscription.

Through the CX-50 Minute Challenge, a partnership with ParticipACTION, Mazda Canada encouraged its employees and all Canadians to spend 50 minutes in

nature at least three times a week in August. Employees at the Mazda Canada head office logged 220,000 active minutes during the challenge, the most out of any group registered.

"This is an example of how our employees want to work together and be part of a team, and how they understand the importance of physical health and its direct impact on mental health," Kelly-Gombocz says. "People encouraged each other to get active and do something different to benefit their overall well-being."

To develop the company's flexible workplace policy, Kelly-Gombocz's team solicited direct feedback from and collaborated with employees and leaders through a series of surveys and discussions. The flexible workplace model launched in September and 90 per cent of employees are now classified as hybrid, with the flexibility to work from a Mazda office or from home. The company also provided employees with a one-time stipend toward the purchase of ergonomic equipment for their home office.

Another initiative aimed at supporting employee wellness is the inclusion of a Meeting Governance guideline, which includes strategies to reduce the quantity and increase the quality of virtual meetings to help give back employees' time. Among guidelines, agendas and content must be provided at least 48 hours in advance, so participants can review and come to meetings well prepared. Hour-long meetings end 10 minutes early so attendees have time to take a break in advance of their next meeting.

Mazda Canada also introduced summer Fridays this year, with all employees working only a half day every Friday from June to September. "We want to ensure the health and well-being of all of our staff, so this is



▲ Mazda Canada offers an annual fund for each employee and their dependents to use toward wellness activities.

a way to provide more time for work-life balance and self-care," Kelly-Gombocz says.

David Klan, president and CEO, says these initiatives help employees reach their full potential. "It allows them to have the conditions in place to flourish and to love their jobs and be productive and motivated and innovative and creative," he says.

"I am fiercely proud of these initiatives. I think these investments are substantial

and they mean a lot to our employees. They help everybody feel even more tightly connected to the company and to know they are supported by the full leadership team and each other. People have to feel safe and valued to realize their full potential." ■

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