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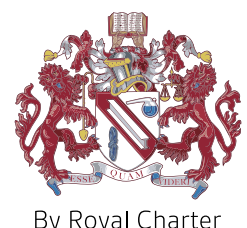● **Prioritizing People**

Creating a culture of trust
for long-term resilience

A BSI Whitepaper

By Royal Charter

Preface

Too often we use language like 'human resources', 'human capital', 'assets' when talking about employees.
We need to change both our language and our approach, recognizing that we need to talk about people, and to succeed we need to support and care for the individuals we work with.

As our 2021 Organizational Resilience Index report has shown, those organizations that have prioritized their people, have been the most resilient; organizations have seen how important their people are in creating agile and innovative responses in times of disruption. They now want to harness this power for the long-term, recognizing the competitive advantages it will bring.

This year, we are proud to launch our new "Prioritizing People" best practice model. The model sets out a pathway for organizations to unlock individual potential and in doing so, delivers a resilient organization. The model sets out 16 elements required to effectively prioritize people, from providing a decent, safe and healthy work environment, through to creating an engaged, committed and productive workforce which in turns creates a culture of trust and an organization that is ready for the world of today and tomorrow.

**Susan Taylor Martin,
Chief Executive, BSI**

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In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, something strange and unexpected happened in the corporate world – it has rediscovered the value of its humanity. This was a disruption that impacted everyone. Hierarchical barriers of 'them' and 'us' were replaced with 'we are all in this together' creating a culture of care that simply had not existed in many organizations before the pandemic.

Looking after people in these unprecedented times was of course the right and socially responsible thing to do but there was also an often-forgotten business benefit which was clearly highlighted in BSI's Organizational Resilience Index Report 2021 – organizations that prioritize their people are more resilient, not only surviving but were in a better position to start to build back better.

Sadly, this culture of care was not universal. Global news stories highlighted cases of workers having to work in unsafe environments and not being provided with suitable personal protective equipment. Data from the ongoing Gallup Social Series poll in the US showed the lowest score on feeling safe in the workplace from the last decade[1].

Figure 1:

Workers feeling less safe on the job: Percentage of U.S. adults who are completely satisfied with physical safety at work[2]

Survey from ongoing Gallup Poll Social Series
Source: Gallup
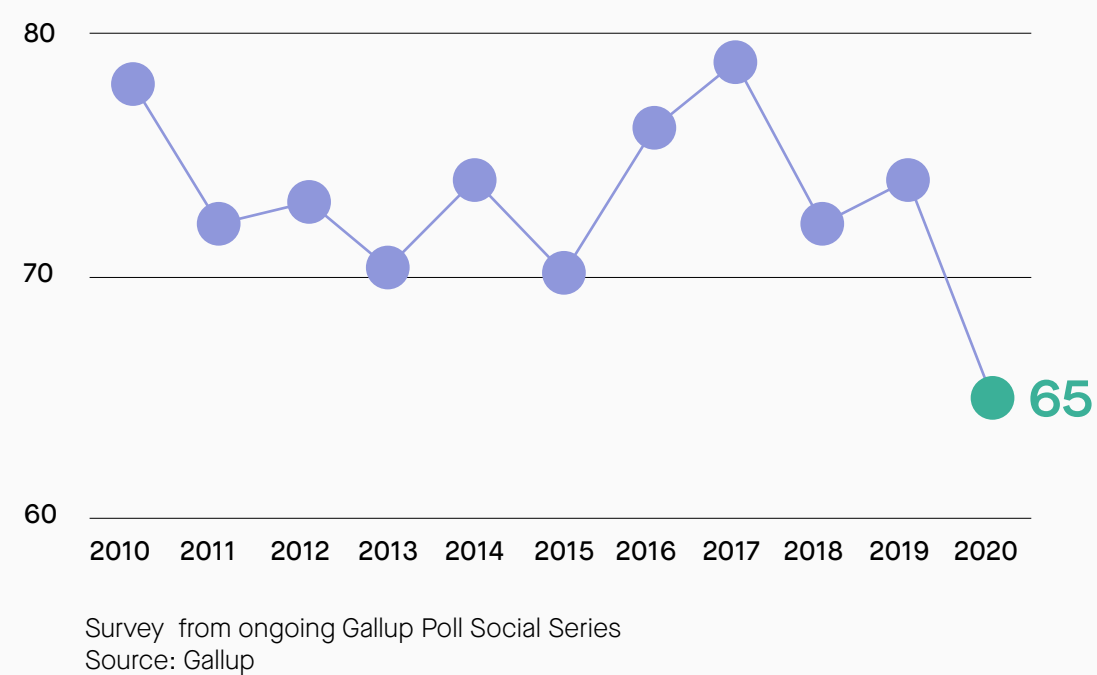
The pandemic is bringing about new and different workplace health and safety issues and highlighting poor practice. But global statistics demonstrate that the need to focus on ensuring good health, safety, and well-being at work is not new.

Each year more than 2.2 million people lose their lives at work and 374 million are disabled by or made ill from work, including 745 000 deaths from long working hours[3]. To put the humanity into these statistics, 2.2 million loved ones don't return to their families at the end of the working day; 374 million loved ones are disabled or made ill, some of whom will never be able to work again or will suffer tragic impacts on their quality of life; the available data shows that every workplace has the potential to make someone mentally or physically ill at some point through psychosocial risks such as shift work, long hours, bullying, harassment, lack of autonomy or poor career development. As corporate memory fades, or the lag between exposure and diagnosis stretches to decades, organizations and their leaders lose sight of the human cost and often don't see it as "their problem" or under their accountability – and may not be fully aware of the harm done and the resulting human and business cost.

Additional evidence for this can be found in the BSI sponsored, BCI Horizon Scan Reports. Each year, the report captures the biggest disrupters to organizations within the year and then asks what the biggest disrupters will be for the next 12 months. For the last three years, health and safety incidents have scored in the top three disrupters for the past year. Yet when the answers for *future* disrupters are reviewed; safety doesn't make the top ten. Until this year health incidents didn't make the top ten either (in the grip of a pandemic health was the only ranked 8th most recognised future disruptor in the 2021 report).

Even where an organization directly experiences the negative impacts of poor health and safety, it can be seen as a 'one-off' and culpability is often laid at the feet of only one or two individuals (often including the poor individual who was harmed), with limited levels of accountability taken at leadership levels.

The cultural root cause of the incident is often not addressed, so nothing really changes. Corporate memory fades and the real business of business returns – succinctly stated by Milton Friedman "The Social Responsibility of business is to increase its profits". Profit is the priority; people are often seen as a begrudged commodity.

● Trust

Trust

So why has it taken a global pandemic to create this culture of care, when there has clearly been a need for it for decades? For the culture of care to emerge, a far more important cultural shift has had to happen which if embraced has far reaching, powerful and exciting benefits for organizations and the individuals that work for them. The challenge with acknowledging this shift though, is to admit a rather uncomfortable truth – the most crucial factor was missing before. What is it? The answer is trust.

Trust is the output of the culture of an organization. It is established and underpinned by leadership and their individual and group values, attitudes, managerial practices, perceptions, competencies and patterns of behaviours[4] – these establish and underpin the level of trust. Trust always exists but it can be misplaced, abused or of course strengthened. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted an uncomfortable truth – organizations do not trust their people.

This lack of trust and the culture that underpins it can be seen in many different aspects of an organization and its approach to its people; performance management is focussed on output KPIs, not input; weekly timesheets are required; flexible or home working is not allowed. The lack of trust is not always explicit, it can be dressed in plausible business parlance – reward and bonus packages; time and resource management; ICT infrastructure.

The erosion of trust is like the sea relentlessly hitting a cliff face – a steady, almost imperceptible erosion undermining the strength and resilience of the organization. The signs of this erosion of trust are clearly seen in business challenges reported by organizations:

- restricted growth
- troublesome quality and output issues
- poor productivity
- talent and skills shortages[5]
- lack of innovation and agility creating an unease about competitiveness and resilience
- plateaued (or reversed) health and safety incident reductions
- worker engagement metrics that stubbornly fail to improve (or even get worse)
- increased levels of complaints – internally and by clients/customers
- increasing reports of stress, burnout and mental-ill
- increasing absence and retention rates

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed this uncomfortable truth, it has also fanned a flickering ember of hope – trust has been tested, and previous fears that were based on unfounded assumptions have been challenged. The biggest shift has happened due to the enforced shift to home working. Organizations had simply not trusted their workers to work at home, fearing that they would abuse the freedom and not deliver the work. Yet with COVID-19 vast swathes of the working population went from working in an office one day, to working in their kitchen the next and productivity went up – not down.
The significant arguments against home working vanished overnight and organizations realized that workers could indeed be trusted.

"Being a Japanese company, we were quite conservative. We weren't set up for working from home, it was something that was frowned upon.
This forced us down the road to have to accept working from home and be more flexible and be more open. I think it surprised us just how well people have coped."
QA Manager, Automotive Manufacturing, Japan, BSI Organizational Resilience Index Report 2021

Of course, homeworking and flexible hours may not be the panacea for everyone but what COVID-19 has done is shattered the institutional barriers to a new, more people focussed approach – a new culture of care based on trust. Additional influences are fanning the embers of change. #Metoo and Black Lives Matter are driving the diversity, equality and inclusion agenda with renewed power. Shareholder capitalism often under fire for its perceived lack of moral and ethical conduct and response, is being replaced by a growing move toward stakeholder capitalism, seen through increased focus on ESG (environmental, social and governance) reporting. The UN Global Compact and Sustainable Development Goals are gaining traction as Generation Z demand action on climate change and a workplace that prioritizes their well-being. Governments are increasingly concerned about the social burden of mental illness, obesity, chronic illness and an ageing population and are looking to organizations to keep workers healthy and in work longer through sustainable employability.
And organizations are looking at digitization and technology and wondering how to survive and thrive.

So how can organizations fan these embers of change and seize the powerful and exciting opportunity arising from this new era of trust? One area that many organizations look to is well-being.

Well-being

Well-being

While there has been significant interest in the concept of well-being over the past few decades there is no *single* definition. What the various concepts of well-being reflect is that many populations, particularly those in high income countries, are moving up 'Maslow's hierarchy of needs'[6] . The basic physiological needs are met – food, water, shelter etc. State health, education and benefit systems and increased employment mean that Maslow's 'safety' needs are accessible to more people. According to Maslow, it is human nature to strive to move up the hierarchy:

"Human life will never be understood unless its highest aspirations are taken into account. Growth, self-actualization, the striving toward health, the quest for identity and autonomy, the yearning for excellence (and other ways of phrasing the striving "upward") must by now be accepted beyond question as a widespread and perhaps universal human tendency"

Maslow, 1954, Motivation and Personality, pp.xii-xiii

It is no surprise then that many of the definitions with regard to well-being reflect that it is about more than physical health – it's about how we feel; our expectations and sense of fulfilment. This is seen in the most recent definition of well-being at work from the new international standard on psychological health and safety at work, ISO 45003:

"fulfilment of the physical, mental and cognitive needs and expectations of a worker related to their work"

Whilst workplace well-being programmes vary from organization to organization, common themes appear:

- "Yogurt and yoga" initiatives to promote healthy eating and physical exercise
- Mental resilience training
- Mental health first aiders
- Diversity and inclusion committees
- Employee assistance programmes (EAP) offering lifestyle guidance on subjects such as sleep, debt and relationships
- Volunteering and other community engagement activities
- Learning hubs and coaching programmes

During the first year or two of workplace well-being programmes, positive effects can be seen; some workers lose weight or stop smoking; employee engagement scores improve; EAP take-up rates go up; maybe even retention and absence rates improve.

However, over time momentum is lost and there is growing evidence that many workplace well-being programmes do not deliver measurable benefits[7]. There are several reasons for this. Health initiatives such as smoking cessation need to be run over 3-5 years (not just "Stoptober"); resilience training and mental health first aiders focus on mitigation not prevention; the unconscious bias of white privilege undermines many diversity and inclusion initiatives; workers are not given time for learning and development; functional teams such as health and safety or human resources work in isolation rather than together, even though they are both looking after 'people'.

However, the primary reason that the well-being flame flickers and eventually goes out is that organizations often approach them as "initiatives" - a sticking plaster over the deeper wounds of low trust. They are unwilling to commit to a significant cultural shift to build trust and take a strategic, long-term approach to prioritizing their people.

To create a true culture of trust, organizations need to focus on:
- Collaborative, communicative, emotionally intelligent leadership
- Diverse, inclusive and ethical workplace relationships based on respect and fairness
- Opportunities for lifelong learning and employability
- A balanced effort and reward ratio
- Work and workplaces that prevent physical and mental harm and promote good physical and psychological health
- Creating workplace and community social capital

Existing models on workplace well-being such as the WHO Healthy Workplace, ILO Solve and Total Worker Health[8] touch on elements of this, and studies and reports such as 'Thriving at Work'[9] and 'Is work good for health and well-being?'[10] draw out additional points, but each looks through a specific lens, not holistically and carries unconscious bias – and, most importantly, none consider the linkages between people and resilient organizations.
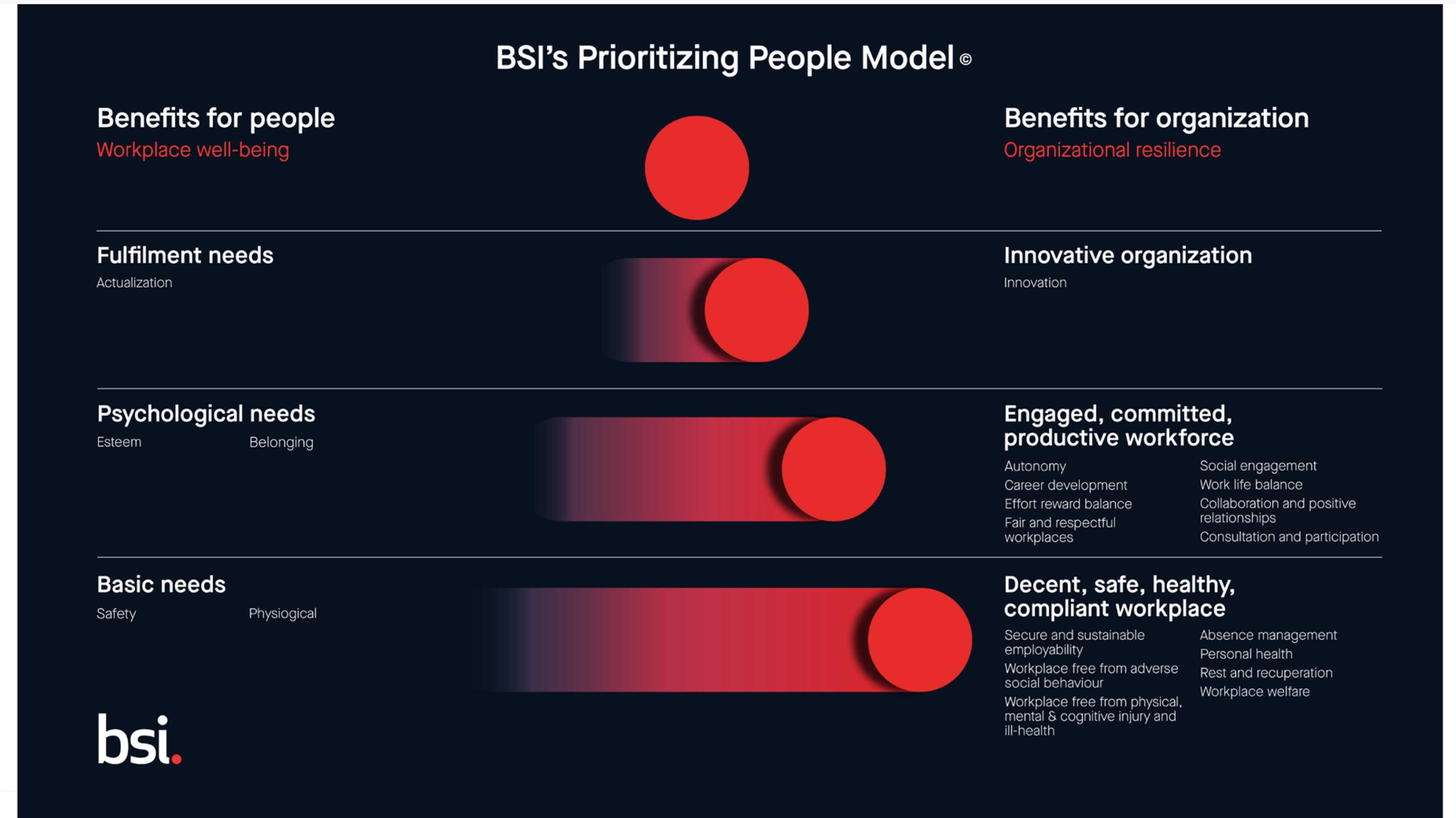
BSI's Prioritizing People Model©

BSI's Prioritizing People Model©

To address this gap and create a framework on well-being for organizations to follow, BSI has developed the Prioritizing People Model©. The model maps out what best practice in creating a culture of trust really looks likes, one that will create the right conditions for individual fulfilment (well-being) and organizational resilience.

Adapting the 'needs' framework from Maslow's hierarchy, the model sets out three stages, incorporating sixteen elements, required to demonstrate a human-centred approach. Importantly, whilst each stage identifies the people elements required, it also describes the organizational outcome, culminating in resilience - organizations that are agile and innovative, that don't simply survive but thrive.

Figure 2:

Prioritizing People Model©

BSI's Prioritizing People Model ©

Benefits for people
Workplace well-being

Benefits for organization
Organizational resilience

Fulfilment needs
Actualization

Innovative organization
Innovation

Psychological needs
Esteem   Belonging

Engaged, committed, productive workforce

Autonomy
Career development
Effort reward balance
Fair and respectful workplaces

Social engagement
Work life balance
Collaboration and positive relationships
Consultation and participation

Basic needs
Safety   Physiogical

Decent, safe, healthy, compliant workplace

Secure and sustainable employability
Workplace free from adverse social behaviour
Workplace free from physical, mental & cognitive injury and ill-health

Absence management
Personal health
Rest and recuperation
Workplace welfare

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● BSI's Prioritizing People Model© explained

BSI's Prioritizing People Model© Explained

Although visually represented as a linear model, organizations can start at any point, or address multiple aspects at one time. The critical point is that if the basic needs are not effectively addressed, then any progress made at higher stages will be short-lived. If the foundations are not robust the rest will crumble.

Whilst the model is primary focussed on your organization's people (employees), it is important to understand that many aspects can be influenced and apply to others. Contractors or clients may be at the receiving end, or the perpetrators of harassment or other physical or psychological health and safety risks; the quality of output of a service or product (affected by how engaged your employees are) may impact the safety of a customer or patient. This is why an integrated, holistic approach is needed.

This model is intended to be applied to achieve significant cultural change – it is not a set of "initiatives" to tick corporate social responsibility boxes and approached in that way, the trust being sought will be undermined from day one. The framework has to be embedded into the values of an organization. Applying the framework is not a one-off exercise – it is a restructuring of corporate DNA.

Developing cultural maturity takes time. To help organizations understand this journey the model identifies three levels of cultural maturity:

- Emerging: at this level, organizations are focussed on survival[11]. This is often seen in young or rapidly growing organizations, or where substantial M&A[12] has occurred, where the governance frameworks and process are not in place to provide consistency and long-term growth. Organizations at this stage are often reactive and compliance focussed, with transactional / hierarchical leadership styles the norm. Organizations at this level will be focussed on meeting the 'basic' needs within the model, with limited development of higher levels needs.

- Established: at this level of maturity, organizations have developed the governance and process frameworks to support 'stabilize and rebuild'. They aim for a more proactive approach with an increased focus on their reputation and broader 'sustainability' agendas. This is the level where the trust imbalance becomes most evident and where the most damage can be done. The expectations between employer and employee can become acutely disparate. Leaders at this stage of maturity build a vision to inspire and motivate, adopting transformational leadership styles, but this has limited success as the underlying culture does not change – the trust is not there. Many organizations stagnant at this level, or only briefly reach the next level, before slipping back down and becoming less resilient over time.[13]

- Accelerating: this is where an organization 'thrives'. Very few organizations reach this stage as few find the right balance between defensive and agile[14] and can then sustain this approach in the long-term. However, it is failure to invest in people that truly hampers an organization reaching accelerating level of maturity. To create a culture of trust, a more servant style of leadership is required and all the elements described in the Prioritizing People Model© need to be in place in order to create trust and unlock individual potential.

Individual – basic needs   Decent, safe, healthy, compliant workplace

Physiological

These include the most basic biological needs an individual needs for the maintenance and repair of the human body. Until these are met, little else is feasible – if we are thirsty then our basic biological need to hydrate kicks in. These physiological needs are also essential for other elements within the model; hydration is critical to thermal regulation which would be part of providing a workplace free from injury and ill-health; rest and sleep are vital for physiological health but also cognitive functions such as creativity, which is needed for innovation. Supportive processes following physical and mental ill-health or injury can speed recovery and return to work.

Workplace welfare

A healthy workplace should be clean, provide suitable lighting, have a reasonable working temperature, good ventilation, sufficient space, work stations and seating for the work and be well maintained. Within the workplace, the provision of adequate and appropriate welfare facilities for all workers including those with disabilities, is a basic need for workers health and welfare.
It includes, as a minimum:
· Toilets
· Washing facilities
· Drinking water for hydration
· Somewhere clean to eat and drink during breaks from work
· Somewhere to store personal property and change.
· Somewhere to store and keep clean personal protective equipment
· Suitable lighting to do the work (including natural where possible)
· Ventilation with sufficient rates of air exchange (including fresh air where possible)
· Means for meeting thermal comfort needs

Rest and recuperation

Fatigue can lead to a decline in mental and physical performance including slower reaction times, memory lapses and underestimation of risk. Fatigue can lead to errors which in turn can lead to accidents, poor quality and reduced productivity. Disruption to the circadian rhythm, that can arise in shift work or excessive hours, is associated with chronic mental and physical ill-health, including depression and diabetes, while there is growing evidence that reduced sleep increases morbidity.

Workers therefore need sufficient breaks during working hours to rest, use the toilet facilities, hydrate and eat; and sufficient time away from work to recuperate (and meet belonging needs around work/life balance – see later).

"With working long hours is now known to be responsible for about one-third of the total estimated work-related burden of disease, it is established as the risk factor with the largest occupational disease burden. This shifts thinking towards a relatively new and more psychosocial occupational risk factor to human health. The study concludes that working 55 or more hours per week is associated with an estimated 35% higher risk of a stroke and a 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week."[15]

Decent, safe, healthy, compliant workplace

Personal health

The health status of an individual has a direct link with their ability to perform to the best of their abilities. Therefore, creating an environment and mechanisms for enabling better physical and mental health is beneficial to both the workers and the employer.

This is often where traditional "well-being" initiatives focus, not realizing the need for a holistic approach. This type of intervention is also known as "workplace health promotion" or "wellness". As mentioned previously, such interventions have limited success if not approached the right way, however promoting and encouraging better physical and mental health is an important component in creating the right conditions for sustainable employability and ultimately fulfilment. Sustained programmes (not monthly initiatives) which encourage workers to adhere to *seven health practices*[16] can bring huge physical and mental benefits.

These seven practices have been shown to predict future mortality rates, morbidity and disability, they are :
- sleeping seven to eight hours daily
- eating breakfast almost every day
- never or rarely eating between meals
- currently being at or near prescribed health-adjusted weight
- regular physical activity
- never smoking cigarettes
- moderate or no use of alcohol [17]

Adding into this meaningful mental health programmes that educate workers on mental health and mental illness and provides tools for enhancing mental health, will create a well-rounded, wellness programme, that supports positive physical and mental health outcomes.

Absence management and rehabilitation

Whilst work can give rise to physical and mental harm, evidence is clear that being in work is good for people's physical and mental health. Helping people to remain in, or quickly return to work is therefore an essential part of prioritizing people. Research also shows that long-term sickness absence can have devastating effects on the performance of organizations, as well as the health and well-being of the individual; for example, after six months' absence with back pain, there's only a 50 per cent chance of a worker coming back to work.

Safety

Whilst progress has been made in occupational health and safety, over 2.3 million people lose their lives at work and 340 million[18] are disabled by or made ill from work each year. Feeling safe and secure is a primal need that must be met in full. No worker should be harmed by work – physically, mentally or cognitively, therefore organizations must prevent work-related physical and mental injury and ill-health.

Workplace free from physical, mental and cognitive injury and ill-health

Organizations need to move beyond a simple compliance driven approach to occupational health and safety. Such an approach is generally reactive and driven by fear of fines, imprisonment or litigation (or the need to secure insurance against the latter). Organizations need to take a more proactive approach focussed on prevention first and mitigation second, which is not static and instead looks for continuous improvement. This is delivered by implementing an occupational health and safety management system that manages not only physical health and safety but also mental and cognitive risks (psychological health). Many of the other elements covered in this model under 'safety', 'belonging' and 'esteem' contribute directly or indirectly to effective psychological health management. This is why this model is not linear. Failure to implement a truly effective occupational health and safety management system will undermine any actions further up the model but many aspects are inter-related.

"Exposure to noise has been associated with cardiovascular disease. In particular, there seems to be 'scientific evidence that employees, both men and women, who report specific occupational exposures, such as low decision latitude, job strain or noise, have an increased incidence of ischemic heart disease (IHD), a form of cardiovascular disease' (Theorell et al, 2016)."[19]

In terms of psychological health "stress, burnout, depression and other psychosocial risks at work are costly for employers and workers, and for society in general, and are estimated to be exceeding 4% of EU GDP"[20]

Workplace free from adverse social behaviour

Adverse social behaviour includes bullying, harassment and violence (physical, verbal, sexual; threatened and actual).
Such adverse social behaviours are strongly associated with increased staff turnover and increased absenteeism. At an individual level, the impact can last years or even a lifetime.

Whilst many elements of violence are addressed as part of a health and safety management system, the mental and cognitive injury (psychological harm) are often overlooked, particularly the cumulative impact which can lead to mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress.
Bullying and harassment are often a reflection of the behaviours and attitudes of an organization – its culture. Many organizations will develop initial policies associated with behaviours, values and discrimination (reactive, compliance driven initiatives) at this level. It will be impossible to create trust without addressing and taking action to eliminate all forms of adverse behaviour – it is

the foundation for the proactive, cultural shift needed at the 'esteem' level for fair and respectful workplaces.
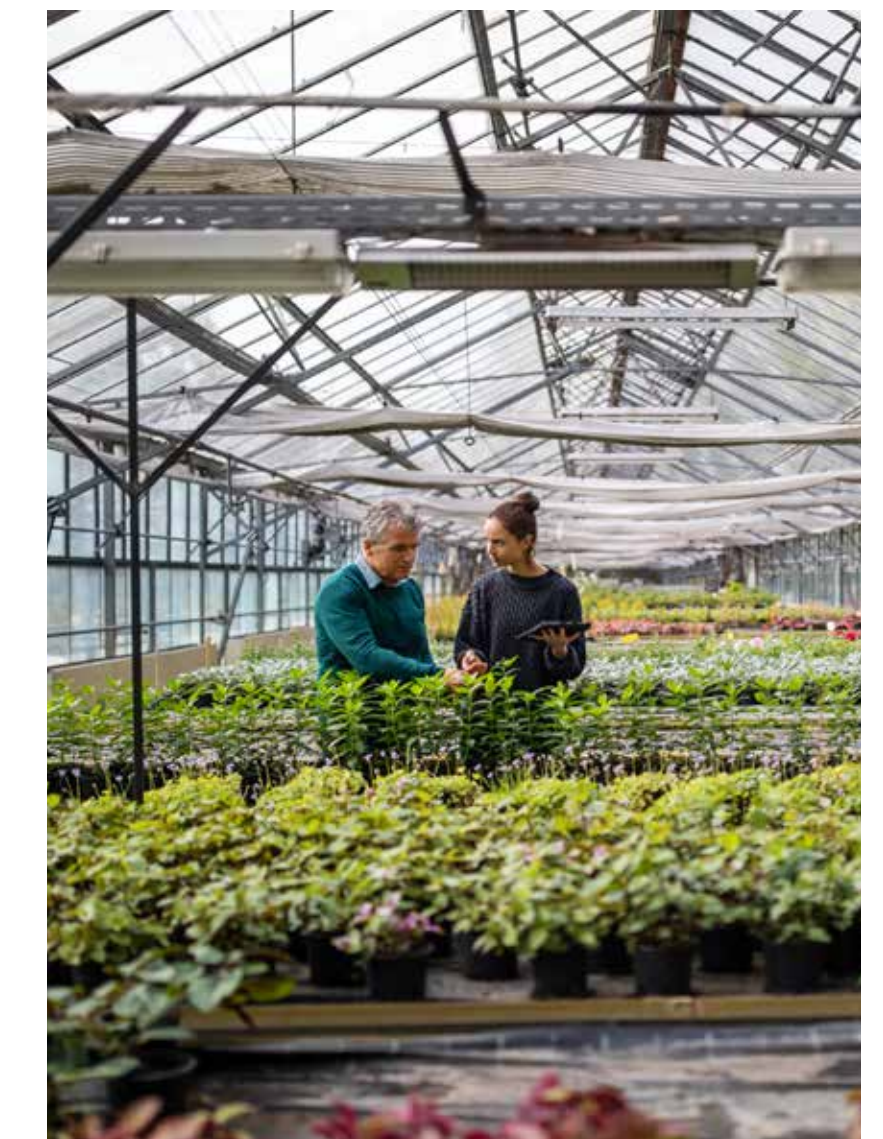
Decent, safe, healthy, compliant workplace

Secure and sustainable employability

Financial security is a basic need without which psychological and physical ill-health can arise. Forms of insecure employment such as zero hours or temporary contracts are the most direct forms of insecure employment but job insecurity also arises when there are company restructures/ acquisitions and mergers; economic downturns; and at key life/career stages such entering the workforce, maternity, latter years career. Job insecurity can lead to presenteeism which has a knock-on impact on productivity.

Whilst change and restructures are part of corporate life, what is important to understand is the need for job security as far as possible, and where that is not possible that there is absolute clarity and really effective communication on what is happening and what it means for individuals. This is fundamentally about effective change management – something few organizations are good at.

Sustainable employability becomes increasingly important in later years.

People rarely have a single job for life. People frequently change jobs and even whole careers multiple times. Additionally, as we have an ever-growing ageing workforce, organizations need to ensure that work and working conditions are sustainable by implementing preventive and protective measures to keep workers healthy; and embed the capabilities and capacities necessary to deliver enduring or ongoing employment over the long term which allow people to remain in work longer. This means managing work over the whole life course to enable longer, good quality working lives. This is 'sustainable employability'.

"Workers who have experienced a substantial restructuring are more likely to report presenteeism, absenteeism, greater work intensity and being at the receiving end of adverse social behaviour. They are less likely to report feeling engaged, being treated fairly at the workplace and having enough time to do the job."[21]

Belonging

Good relationships – at work and at home – provide the 'social capital' which individuals need to maintain good mental health and engagement. This incorporates the promotion of effective communication and social cohesion within the workplace to support good work relationships and engagement, and outside the workplace with family, friends and community.

Consultation and participation

If an organization is truly committed to prioritizing its people, effective and ongoing consultation and participation of workers is essential. The elements of the 'psychological contract'[22] – the unwritten expectations that workers and employers have about each other, cannot be second guessed – organizations have to clearly set out their expectations and ask workers what 'good looks like' for them. This means actively listening and taking action on the answers and then checking-in regularly to see if it's working. If workers don't feel that their views are being represented or they contribute or provide feedback, but no action is taken (or no feedback on why action was not taken provided); then they will become frustrated and disengaged.

If workers feel that they are being actively engaged for genuine contribution (rather than forced to take part or consulted simply to tick a box), their commitment and motivation will be enhanced. If they see that their contribution is making a difference and their feedback is being, not only listened to,

but acted upon, they will engage more and feel more empowered. This will reinforce a culture of trust becoming a positive, perpetuating cycle.

"There are clear associations between direct employee participation and establishment performance and workplace well-being...Conversely, those establishments that use few tools for employee participation and give little direct influence to employees score worst in terms of performance and well-being."[23]

Collaboration and positive relationships

Supportive relationships by leadership, line management and between colleagues and contractors are essential to meeting psychological needs. These relationships need to encourage openness, honesty, responsiveness and commitment, providing consistent behaviours and communication. It also requires agreement, clarity and consistency on which behaviours are unacceptable (linking back to adverse social behaviour) and accountability when these standards are not met. It encapsulates the need to provide constructive feedback and to appreciate and respect differences and other barriers to belonging (linking up to esteem needs).

It is important that organizations provide opportunities for social interactions between workers, as well as line management, especially for those who may be isolated due to the nature of their work or working arrangements.

"The quality of the social environment at work is critical for personal growth and development but also facilitates workplace integration and the building of workers' self-esteem through receiving recognition from peers and superiors."[24]

The effectiveness of this element within the model requires high levels of emotional intelligence, particularly for those with line management responsibilities. Evidence suggests that those managers who positively influence workplace culture and keep employees informed through effective communication are perceived by their employees as trustworthy[25]

"In times of uncertainty or trouble people turn and look to their leaders, so you have to have some emotional intelligence, you have to be empathetic, you have to communicate, even if you don't know the answer, you need to acknowledge what's happening and communicate." BSI OR Index 2021 Senior Management, Food, USA

Engaged, committed, productive workforce

Work life balance

This is closely allied with rest and recuperation within basic needs, but here focusses on the importance of having time to spend with family and friends as part of an individual's psychological health. As well as the positive benefits that this social connection brings, any imbalance can create negative effects. As well as the physical and mental harms associated with fatigue, a worker who feels that they don't have a balance between their work and family life is likely to experience psychological harm. It can be broadly summarised into two areas:

· workload/pace - seen in aspects such as excessive workload, unrealistic, or constantly moving deadlines or lack of clarity on priorities, and;

· working hours – seen in excessive hours, working in 'own time' and inflexible work schedules.

This is one of the areas where trust can be most quickly eroded. As an example, many organizations have working hours, leave or even out of hours 'email' policies but the underlying culture, demonstrated by leadership, completely undermines this. Leaders who send or receive emails out of hours or during vacations set an expectation on what is required to succeed.

However, this also one of the areas with the greatest potential for creating trust. For example, flexible working hours through initiatives such as flexible start and finish times allows individual to better balance their work and care commitments; or hybrid working which allows home or alternative location working can reduce commuting time for the individual and bring savings for the organizations through reduced real estate charges, as less physical space is needed.

"Workers are more likely to say they can readily balance working hours with other commitments outside work if one or more of the following conditions are present: they work shorter working hours, can take an hour off for their own needs, have regular and predictable working hours, and can work from home. On the other hand, workers are more likely to say that the balance between their work and private life is poor if they work long hours (over 48 per week), work at home outside working hours to get work done, and perform night work, shift work (particularly daily split shifts) and weekend work"[26]

Social engagement

Social engagement, beyond family and friends is recognized as an important part of belonging and psychological well-being. It is often essential to workers at both ends of the age spectrum as a means for them to develop and maintain friendships and support networks. For older workers, it is also essential for healthy ageing[27] and several longitudinal studies have shown that social engagement was associated with a lower risk of heart disease, cancers and all-cause mortality[28] [29]. Community engagement initiatives, such as volunteering, mentoring or fund raising for 'good' causes therefore have an important bio-psychosocial contribution within the prioritizing people best practice model and are allied with personal health and well-being initiatives and sustainable employability.

"People have different roles in life – citizen, worker, member of a household, parent, carer, volunteer and so on. Ensuring that people can fulfil their various roles is important for social cohesion"[30]

Esteem

Esteem is a critical step in reaching fulfilment. One of the reasons so many organizational well-being initiatives don't bring long-term benefits, is that organizations fail to recognize this. Esteem needs are driven out of the human desire for social acceptance and status – this is driven by external factors (e.g. being treated fairly, renumeration which reflects effort) and internal factors (e.g. self-confidence, competence, autonomy)

Fair and respectful workplaces

It will be impossible for an individual to feel esteem with regard to social acceptance as long as there are real or perceived barriers to inclusion. Diversity, equity and inclusion are sometimes approached as the incorporation of 'others' into an embedded status quo. Within workplaces that is often based on the predominant ethnic group, male leadership and heteronormative values. This of course completely misses the point and immediately undermines equity[31] and trust as such values are laden with conscious and unconscious bias and discrimination which can sabotage the individual's sense of fairness and respect. To achieve real diversity, equity, and inclusion a complete deconstruction of human governance policies and process followed by step-by-step rebuilding with robust and meaningful representation from a truly diverse group is needed. This level of organizational cultural change is virtually unheard of – and so, diversity, equity, and inclusion issues persist.

Creating diverse and inclusive workplaces is also essential for resilience, particularly adaptive capacity and innovation. Diversity ensures that there are different perspectives which develop innovative behaviours creating a "working environment that promotes new insights and ideas through imagination and unconventional approaches"[32]

"The last thing you want as a leader is to have clones of yourself"[33]

Effort reward balance

Effort and reward imbalances are shown to be linked with negative physical and mental health outcomes[34]. High effort, low reward jobs are particularly associated with burnout. Reward is not simply financial. While financial security is a 'basic' need, at this level of the model, it is the esteem that comes with the right level of reward that is sought. Properly designed renumeration and reward schemes can be powerful motivational tools, stimulating extra effort, rewarding good performance and attracting high performing individuals.

Such schemes are important and added benefits such as paid leave (above minimum statutory requirements), health insurance and comprehensive employee assistance programmes (EAP) are important (particularly in highly competitive job markets), but what is essential here is 'recognition'. What is sought at this level is the recognition that comes from positive feedback and clear, accessible career progression opportunities. While aspects of this may be formalised in performance and development processes, recognition needs to be an intrinsic part of the culture of an organization – the simplicity of a thank you, or feedback on a job well done. Success here is therefore strongly linked to positive relationships in belonging – particularly the role of line managers.

"If the worker does not perceive that the level of rewards (including earnings) is in proportion to the effort they expend (this situation is termed an 'effort–reward imbalance'), stress and adverse health effects can result (Siegrist, 1996)."[35]

Engaged, committed, productive workforce

Career development

There is an overlap with effort/ reward and the career progression opportunities that are sought as part of recognition. Career development however is broader than simply enabling promotion. Of course, career development opportunities like leadership training programmes, fall in both recognition and career development, as do other important career development tools such as coaching. However to fully prioritize people, career development needs to include aspects such as continuous learning and the competency and capabilities needed for achieving sustainable employability. Innovation and skills development are also closely linked - organizations committed to skill development are more innovative.

Career development also includes ensuring that there is a clear alignment between recruitment and role competencies – often people are recruited or promoted into roles where these two aspects are misaligned. This is most clearly seen when individuals take on people management roles. They have often been recruited/ promoted for their 'technical' abilities and lack even basic people management skills. People managers need to understand and manage behavioural dynamics and have high levels of emotional intelligence. Line managers hold the key to many of the crucial elements required at the esteem level, from creating fair and respectful workplaces, to providing recognition, to empowering workers through autonomy.

It is also important to recognize that the people managers of today are the leaders of tomorrow; they're the ones that are setting the culture of the organization – creating (or eroding) trust. For organizations seeking the cultural step change that is needed to embed the Prioritizing People Model©, organizations need to equip people managers with the right skills to make sure that trust and the resultant culture of care is truly woven into the DNA of the organization.

"'Skills match' is viewed as a highly efficient way to use workers' potential, while 'skills mismatch' is linked to an ineffectual use of people's capabilities"[36]

Autonomy

This is perhaps *the* most overlooked aspect when prioritizing people, as the issue of trust is at the heart of it. What is sought at this level is the esteem that comes from independence and freedom. This means empowering workers to make decisions about the way they work. It includes aspects such as discretion over the way work is carried out (pace, deadlines and workload); ability to control work through participation in decision-making (so has an important link with consultation and participation) and the autonomy to decide when and where the work is delivered (such as flexible working, linking back to work life balance). Autonomy unlocks discretionary effort which has positive outcomes for the organization.

There are vast swathes of evidence going back many years which show that 'bad jobs', which have low levels of autonomy, control and discretion, make workers physically and mentally ill; and that 'good jobs' which allow autonomy, control and discretion give rise to considerable physical and mental health benefits. It has nevertheless taken the COVID-19 pandemic to highlight the trust imbalance. The autonomy needed for fulfilment (well-being) is impossible without trust. Without autonomy and the creative freedom that comes from it, organizations cannot unlock the final element of the model – innovation.

"There is a clear link between the degree of complexity and autonomy of the work organisation and the establishment's performance and well-being. Establishments belonging to the high complexity and autonomy type score best on both workplace well-being and establishment performance.

Those belonging to the command and control type score worst on both indicators."[37]

Individual – fulfilment needs   Innovative organization

Actualization

"work is an instrument through which individuals grow, develop and become themselves…the conditions of work are crucial for achieving self-fulfilment" 6th EU working conditions survey[38]

Innovation

Actualization for an individual is driven by the ability to continue to grow, be creative and adapt. For an organization, the benefits of unlocking this potential can be summarised into one word: innovation.

"Engaging in innovation activities is … a way for an organization to be future-focused and effectively deliver on its overall objectives of securing prosperity, sustainability and longer-term relevance and survival."[39], therefore innovation is a critical element of organizational resilience.

What should be clear from the preceding elements of the model is that innovation is only possible when all of those elements are in place, as these elements are what create the right culture of trust. Innovation is impossible without trust. The reason for this is that innovation involves risk – risk for the individual and risk for the organization. For example, if an individual 'risks' sharing an innovative idea which is then implemented but they do not

receive recognition for their innovation or worse still, higher level managers take the credit, then trust is undone. Alternatively, if the innovation, fails, there may be significant costs to the organization and the individual is blamed for the failure. Trust is therefore critical for innovation – trust to try and fail as well as try and succeed.

An innovation survey published by PwC[40] in the early 2000s, identified trust as a key characteristic of innovative companies.

"Many job quality features that are beneficial for workers are also positively associated with company performance, productivity and innovation…job quality contributes to developing organisational commitment and motivation among workers, as well as shaping a climate that is supportive of creativity and innovation."[41]

Conclusion

BSI's Prioritizing People Model© is focussed on creating trust to unlock an individual's full potential – to provide the right elements for fulfilment (well-being). The benefit for the organization is enhanced resilience, but what exactly is organizational resilience? It is defined as the "ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper"[42].

In order to help organizations better understand organizational resilience, BSI developed a best practice framework which guides organizations through the key elements required to enable improved resilience. There are four categories to the model; leadership, people, process and product. Whilst all categories need to be effectively addressed, it is the leadership category that drives Organizational Resilience, but it must be supported by the people category to achieve the organization's goals, as this is where the culture of trust created.

As mentioned at the start of this whitepaper, this linkage between resilience and people is very clearly seen in the results BSI's Organizational Resilience Index Report 2021. The organizations where leaders prioritized their people were seen to be the most resilient. The key is for organizations to harness this resilience for the long-term. Mastering organizational resilience means adopting best practice to deliver ongoing business improvement by building competence and capability across all parts of an organization.

BSI's Prioritizing People Model© is the best practice approach to unlocking and fulfilling an individual's potential by creating a culture of trust. With this culture of trust, organizations will not only survive, but will thrive and accelerate their culture of trust to remain resilient.

Standards
– Prioritizing people

The following standards provide global guidance to help your organization on it's journey to prioritize people

Workplace welfare
ISO 16813
Building environment design
– indoor environment
– general principles
ISO 19454
Building environment design
– indoor environment
– daylight
ISO 16814
Building environment design
– indoor air quality
BS EN 806
Part 1 to 5 – Specifications for installations inside buildings conveying water for human consumption
BS 6465
Sanitary installations
(parts 1 to 4)
ISO 15265
Ergonomics of the thermal environment
BS 4680
Specification for clothes lockers
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems

ISO/PAS 45005
General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Rest and recuperation
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Workplace free from physical, mental & cognitive injury and ill-health
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems

ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO/PAS 45005
General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic
PAS 3000
Smart Working – Code of Practice

Workplace free from adverse social behaviour
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO/PAS 45005
General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Secure and sustainable employability
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO (DIS) 23617
Guidelines for age-inclusive workforce
ISO 30409
Human resource management – workforce planning
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Absence management and rehabilitation
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO/PAS 45005
General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic

Personal health & well-being
ISO (DIS) 23617
Guidelines for age-inclusive workforce
BS 8950
Social value – Understanding and enhancing – Guide

Consultation and participation
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO/PAS 45005
General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Collaboration and positive relationships
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
PAS 3000
Smart Working – Code of Practice
ISO 44001
Collaborative Business Relationships

Work life balance
ISO 45001
Occupational health and safety management systems
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
PAS 3000
Smart Working – Code of Practice
ISO (DIS) 23889
Guidelines for carer-inclusive organizations

Social engagement
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility
BS 8950
Social value – Understanding and enhancing – Guide
ISO (DIS) 23617
Guidelines for age-inclusive workforce

Fair and respectful workplaces
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
BS 76005
Valuing people through diversity and inclusion (ISO 30415 diversity and inclusion)
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Effort reward balance
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks

Career development
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks
ISO 10015
Guidelines for competence management and people development
ISO 30422
Human Resource Management – Learning and development
ISO 26000
Guidance on social responsibility

Autonomy
ISO 45003
Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks

Innovation
ISO 56002
Innovation management system
BS 65000
Guidance on organizational resilience

● About the author

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Kate Field is BSI's Global Head, Health, Safety and Wellbeing. With over 20 years' health, safety and well-being experience, spanning all sectors, Kate uses her expertise to drive BSI's global strategy to prioritize people and unlock the innovation and organization resilience that brings. An ambassador for cultural change, that puts well-being, equality, safety and health at the forefront, Kate inspires colleagues and stakeholders globally to make a difference.

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About BSI

Our Products and Services

Prioritizing people via BSI comes with the confidence of partnering with a trusted, international thought leader with more than 100 years' experience in pioneering new approaches for a resilient future.

Innovation is in our DNA. BSI helped initiate the world's most widely used management systems standards, including ISO 9001 (quality management), ISO 14001 (environmental management) and ISO 27001 (information security).

BSI has been at the forefront of developing best practice for health, safety and well-being since the creation of OHSAS 18001, the world-renowned health and safety management system, which was developed by BSI in 1999. More recently, BSI proposed the development of ISO 45001 and has run the international secretariat supporting the project committee that developed the standard.

Working with over 86,000 clients across 193 countries, BSI is a truly international business with skills and experience across a number of sectors including automotive, aerospace, built environment, food, and healthcare. Through its expertise in Standards Development and Knowledge Solutions, Assurance and Consultancy Services, BSI improves business performance to help clients grow sustainably, manage risk and ultimately be more resilient.

Our history
The core of our business centres on the knowledge that we create and impart to our clients. In the standards arena we continue to build our reputation as an expert body, bringing together experts from industry to shape standards at local, regional and international levels. In fact, BSI originally created eight of the world's top 10 management system standards

Our people
Independent assessment of the conformity of a process or product to a particular standard ensures that our clients perform to a high level of excellence. We train our clients in world-class implementation and auditing techniques to ensure they maximize the benefits of standards.

Our client
To experience real, long-term benefits, our clients need to ensure ongoing compliance to a regulation, market need or standard so that it becomes an embedded habit. We provide a range of services and differentiated management tools which help facilitate this process.

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