



Centre
for Systems
Solutions

EMPLOYEES' SENSE OF WELLBEING

AT THE CENTRE FOR SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS

SURVEY FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

AUGUST 2023



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INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the Centre for Systems Solutions (CRS) has been dedicated to creating a work environment that prioritizes the well-being of its employees. The organization employs individuals from various cultural backgrounds, speaking different languages, having distinct social statuses, experiences, skin colors, and representing different genders and age groups. Bearing that in mind, CRS is committed to promoting equality and equity. CRS is also continuously striving to improve its policies to support employees' well-being.

In 2022 the post-pandemic world had to face a lot of changes to how we live and work. We not only witnessed social, political, and military unrest around the globe but also were struggling with turmoil at home – from widespread strikes and rising living costs to changes in work culture. However, The Centre for Systems Solutions was able to find silver linings in this chaos. The organization found ways to offer a safe and supportive environment for their employees and effectively rose to internal and external challenges. During the latter half of 2023, the CRS Management Board established the role of Wellbeing Officer (WO). The Officer is responsible for structuring the existing well-being policy and ensuring its successful execution and potential improvements.

In July 2023, the Wellbeing Officer conducted an initial anonymous survey related to employees' well-being. The organization has 16 permanent employees, out of which 8 work full-time and the rest work part-time. The employees are of different nationalities, and 4 of them work off-site in their country of residence. One person did not participate in

the survey due to reasons beyond our control. Altogether 15 respondents took part in the survey. Because the team is small and its members are on close terms with each other, the analysis does not consider the typical breakdown of responses based on gender, age, seniority and work experience, or professional background. 6 women and 9 men took part in the study. Out of all respondents, 6 possess vast expertise with over 16 years of professional work, 3 have worked in their field for 11-15 years, while 4 have a professional experience of 6 to 10 years. 2 individuals have less than 5 years of professional experience.

The objective of the survey was to evaluate if the employees are aware of the fact that our organization has introduced a well-being policy and if they take advantage of the benefits offered. The goal was also to determine if employees have noticed any improvement in their well-being in the organization and to ensure that the existing (and future) policies match their needs. Additionally, the survey aimed to assess their work-life balance, stress management, and job satisfaction. The survey also collected employees' feedback that would be used to enhance the well-being policy.

The following report outlines the findings of the survey.

WHAT DO THE EMPLOYEES KNOW ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION'S WELL-BEING POLICY, AND ARE THEY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE BENEFITS PROVIDED?

According to the survey, 14 out of 15 CRS employees believe that the organization would be more effective and successful if employees were able to maintain an excellent work-life balance.

The majority of survey participants are familiar with the company's well-being policy, but 2 individuals either find it unclear or are unaware of its existence.

All the respondents highly appreciate that they are able to attend events (such as a child's school play or significant match) or arrange appointments (such as a doctor visit) during working hours¹. This flexibility is seen as a crucial factor in achieving a healthy work-life balance. It also indicates that long before the pandemic, CRS employees had access to such well-being policy elements as flexible working hours and a hybrid work model.

Other most commonly utilized benefits include lunch breaks, leave for family emergencies, job sharing, paid time off, and access to private healthcare. Additional benefits are also outlined in the graph below (Chart 01).

It appears that there is a need to structure the well-being policy, make it clear and transparent, enhance the onboarding process of the new employees, and intensify communication between the Well-being Officer and the team members.



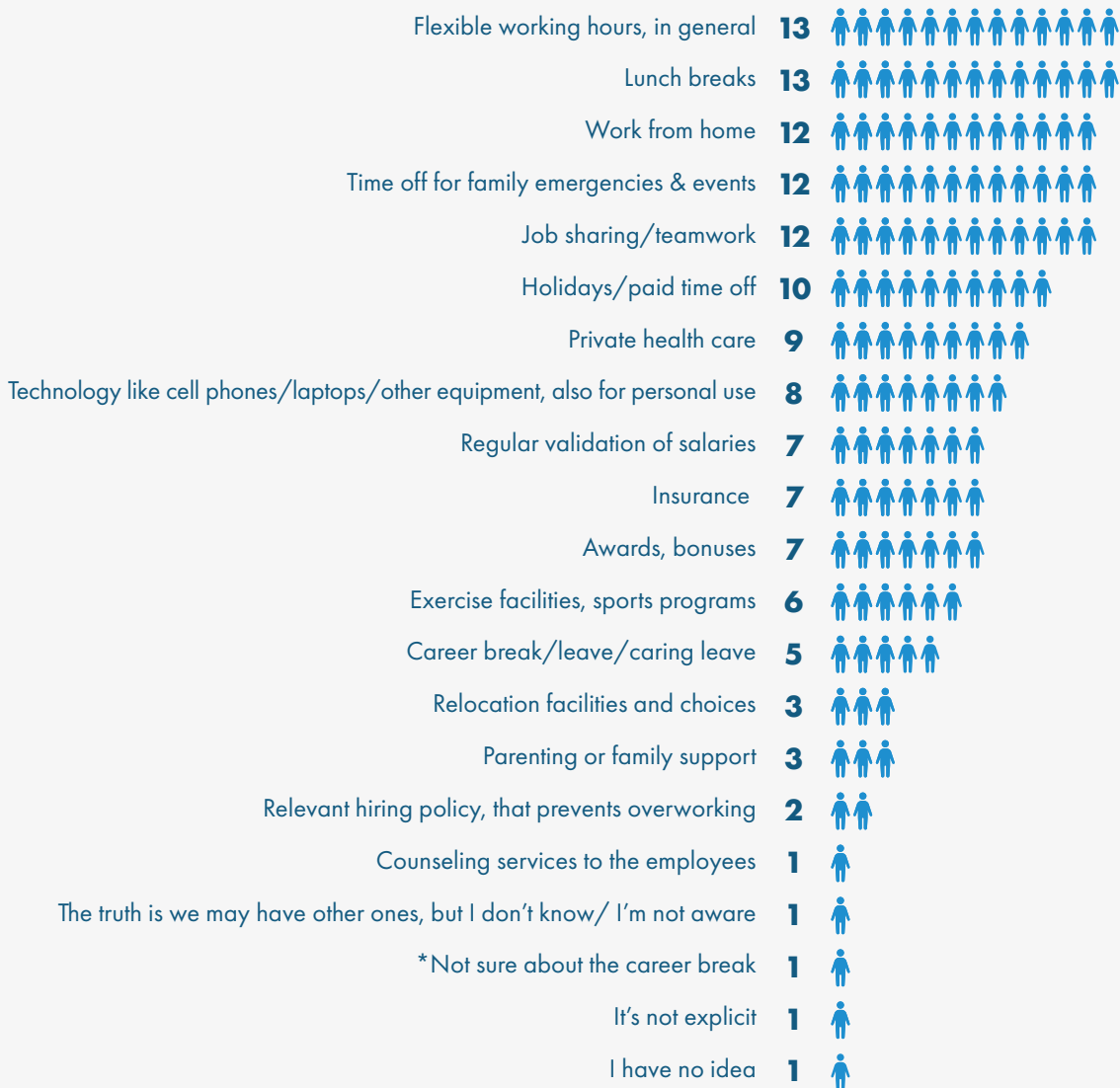
In green are directives for further development and implementation

¹ Q: Flexibility to attend events during the workday, such as a child's school play, a medical appointment of an elderly relative or a key sports event is important to many people to help them with work-life balance.

A: 14 Strongly agree, 1 Agree

Chart 01

Does your organization have a separate policy for work-life? If yes, please specify the policy factors by marking them.



HOW DO EMPLOYEES ASSESS THEIR WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS MANAGEMENT?

As previously stated, employees understand the importance of maintaining a balance between their personal and professional lives. They believe that it has a massive impact on the work quality and the development of the organization.

Chart 02

Do you think the organization will be more effective and successful if employees have a good work-life balance?

YES:
14



NO:
1

All respondents have expressed concern about their ability to achieve a desirable work-life balance (Chart 03). However, only 4 individuals out of 15 respondents stated that they are unable to experience this balance (Chart 04). To find the determining factor behind this situation, we will try to examine what these four individuals have in common.

Those 4 people include men and women of different levels of seniority (work experience in general). 2 of these people declare that they work an average of less than 7 hours a day, 1 person spends between 8 to 9 hours working, and only 1 works more than 10 hours. Only 1 person (out of 2 who works less than 7 hours a day) declares that (s)he is unhappy about the weekly amount of time spent with the loved ones. The remaining 3 people feel neutral about it.

2 out of 4 people being analyzed do not see the purpose of their job and do not find it fulfilling. 3 of them, however, are very likely (9, 10, 9 - on a scale of 1 to 10) to recommend working in the organization to others, while only 1 is unlikely to do it (3/10)². All 4 people appear to be satisfied with the salary and benefits provided.

Surprisingly, only 1 person in this group is dissatisfied with the amount of time spent at work. The rest, even those who work over 10 hours a day on average, do not view it as a problem. It is challenging to definitively conclude whether it is the standard working hours or excessive overtime that contributes to the sense of imbalance between personal and professional life.

i In pink are observations, conclusions

Satisfaction, a sense of belonging, and a sense of purpose in their work seem not to be the factors that unify these 4 people. Nevertheless, all the employees, including these 4, are proud to work at CRS (Chart 05).

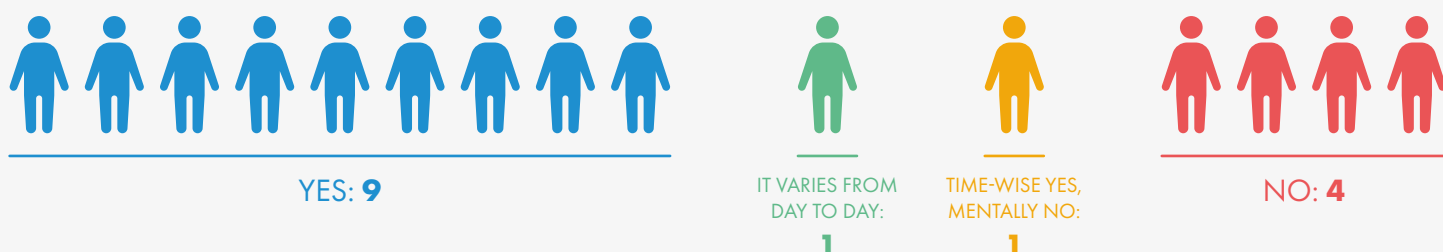
Chart 03

Is your ability to achieve your desired balance between work and life ever a source of personal stress, worry, or ill health?



Chart 04

Do you generally feel you can balance your work life?



² Q: Considering your experience with our organization so far, how likely are you to recommend someone you respect for employment here?
A: Scale: 0 Very Unlikely to 10 Very Likely

Chart 05

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I feel proud to work here?*

AGREE:

9



RATHER
AGREE:

6

3 out of 4 individuals who have difficulties experiencing a work-life balance are unable to find time to exercise daily. Only 1 person manages to allot 30 minutes every day for physical activity. Only 1 individual has hobbies and interests which are not connected with their job and is able to pursue them. Sadly, 2 out of these 4 people are struggling with stress-related illnesses. At the same time, these 2 people do not unequivocally agree with the statement: *I feel like the level of stress of my job is manageable*³.

All of these 4 people often, or too often, think or worry about work, even when they are not actually at work. They also declare that they often feel guilty about not working enough or taking time off. At the same time, they declare that they rarely take vacations and do not rest properly.

Overall, 11 out of 15 respondents believe they are able to find a proper balance between their work and private life. 2 out of the 11 respondents answered: *it varies from day to day, time-wisely yes, mentally no* (Chart 04). 5 out of 15 said they work more than 8 hours a day on average. 3 of them said that they are able to balance their life and work, 2 that they are not. These 2 respondents are unhappy about the amount of time they spend at work, but at the same time, they believe their work is not done at the expense of their relationships with their loved ones. When asked: *How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend each week with your loved ones (family, partner, friends)?* They replied: *Indifferent*.

Only 1 out of the 15 people interviewed is unhappy about spending too little time with their loved ones (Chart 06). Out of all the respondents, only 2 claimed that work pressure has no adverse effects on their time spent with family or friends (Chart 07).

Those individuals are willing to give up their hobbies and neglect their physical and mental health for the sake of their job-related duties. Let us try to find out why.

We can assume that from among several factors that were examined by the survey, pride, deep commitment to, and engagement in work affect these 4 employees' work-life balance most seriously.

One potential solution that could improve the situation is implementing a stricter vacation policy. In the survey, there was a suggestion to make it mandatory for employees to use their accrued four weeks of leave. It is crucial to develop additional solutions for ensuring sufficient rest from work-related tasks, which should be done in consultation with the team.

³ Q: How much do you agree with the following statements:
I feel like the level of stress of my job is manageable

Chart 06

How satisfied are you with the weekly amount of time you spend with your loved ones (family, partner, friends)?

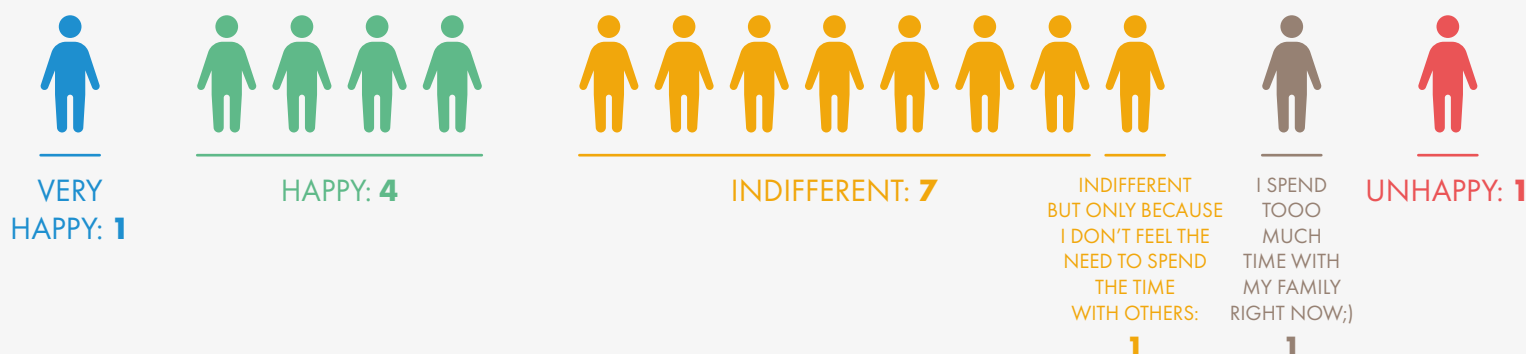


Chart 07

Do you ever miss out on any quality time with your family or your friends because of the pressure of work?



Chart 08

How often do you think or worry about work (when you are not actually at work or traveling to work)?



The reason behind this situation may be related to the specific character of the organization. As an NGO, CRS has to rely on external sources of finance, such as grants and international partnerships. Such work is often very demanding, requiring engagement (looking for project opportunities, writing and submitting proposals, networking, etc.) and flexible working hours (due to e.g. participating in meetings with partners from various time zones). As a result, the employees frequently find themselves thinking about work even during their leisure time. (Chart 08). Out of all the respondents, 13 find their work fulfilling (Chart 09) and 12 believe it serves a meaningful purpose (Chart 10).

This sense of mission may further strengthen this excessive engagement in work and encourage them to prioritize their professional life over private one.

Chart 09

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I find my work fulfilling?*



Chart 10

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I see the purpose of the job I do?*



Only 1 out of 15 respondents has difficulties managing their stress (Chart 11). The same person belongs to the group of 4 people who have difficulties finding a proper work-life balance and state that they often feel tired or depressed because of work (Chart 12). However, the good news is that the remaining 3 people are able to deal with work-related stress in a cost-effective way⁴. It is also worth mentioning that in general, 10 out of 15 respondents often (6) or sometimes (4) feel tired or depressed because of work (Chart 12).

When it comes to stress management, the overall picture is optimistic.

Chart 11

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I feel the level of stress of my job is manageable?*



⁴ Q: How much do you agree with the following statements:
I feel like the level of stress of my job is manageable
A: 2 of them answered - Rather Agree, 1 - Neutral.

Chart 12

Do you ever feel tired or depressed because of work?



CRS staff generally search for ways to relieve their stress via various activities. Even in the group of 4 most stressed employees, 1 was able to exercise regularly. The remaining 3 are unable to find enough time during a day to do so.

The rest of the employees occasionally relieve stress via various activities (Chart 13). Unfortunately, as Chart 14 reveals, it is difficult for them to find time for a regular daily exercise routine.

Chart 13

How do you manage stress arising from your work?



Chart 14

Do you get enough time for daily working out, yoga, or other exercise?



The organization provides exercise facilities, and sports programs, among other services (Chart 01). 6 people said they use them (Chart 15). However, there are those who are unaware of the benefits.

Out of all the respondents, only 3 could not recall losing their temper at work, while 7 were able to recall such an incident taking place in the current month⁵ (Chart 16).

It is important that the wellbeing policy and benefits offered are clear, transparent and that every employee feels they have equal access to them.

This highlights the need to find ways to minimize stress and tension in the team. In the survey some team members suggested that it would be beneficial to have more face-to-face meetings, possibly even holding a retreat more than twice a year. Perhaps experimenting with different arrangements and frequencies of these meetings would help us find an optimal formula for a more friendly and less stressful work environment.

Chart 15

Does your organization provide you with the following additional work provision?

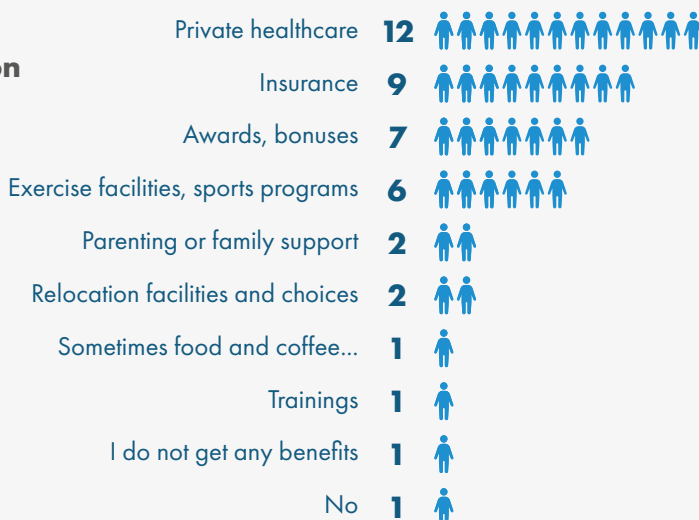
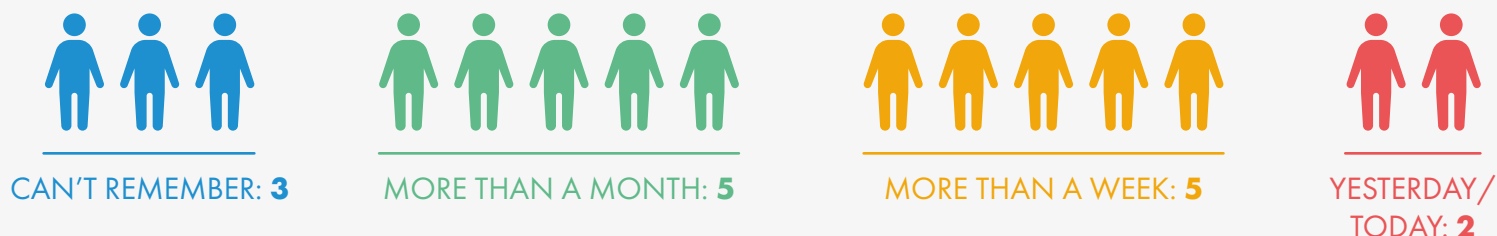


Chart 16

What was the last time you lost your temper (get angry, get emotional in a bad sense) at work?



⁵ Q: What was the last time you lost your temper (get angry, get emotional in a bad sense) at work?
A: 2 of them answered - Yesterday/today, 5 - More than a week

HAVE THE EMPLOYEES NOTICED ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR WELL-BEING IN THE ORGANIZATION AND WHAT OTHER IMPROVEMENTS WOULD THEY LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED?

Out of 15 respondents, 10 have reported improvement in their sense of work-life balance in comparison to what they felt like when joining the organization (Chart 17). Among people whose answer to the question was *Rather not* (3) or *Hard to say* (2) there are both men and women of different levels of seniority (work experience in general). However, it is interesting to note that 3 out of these 5 individuals feel confident to maintain a work-life balance.

Respondents listed additional factors/suggestions/improvements that would increase their well-being in the following areas:

Communication and feedback between employees and management.

- Conduct regular feedback sessions with employees to help them improve their work, and gather their thoughts and opinions.
- It would be beneficial to conduct surveys more often, like the one provided, and share the results, along with a strategy to tackle any identified areas that need improvement.
- Feedback culture.
- Monthly feedback surveys, clear communication, and identity.
- Management that has more time to take care of its employees. Maybe a COO? I know it's been on the table forever, but COO or some sort of HR function would certainly help! good relationship among each other.

At this point, it is worth noting that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement: *I receive feedback and use it to improve my work.* (10 - *Rather agree*, 3 - *Agree*, 1 - *Neutral*, 1 - *Disagree*)

More clear and transparent procedures and policies.

- Guidebook with all possible benefits, trainings, bonuses, raises, and professional advancements.
- Offer individual development programs, such as training and competency improvement, and establish clear guidelines for their implementation.

Need for more frequent face-to-face meetings.

- More retreats - 4 times a year.
- (...) naturally emerging small events after work (impossible to achieve:).
- (...) some events outside work from time to time (would need to be a bottom-up need).

More personalized approach to well-being care.

- I think it would be good to have such meetings to know a bit more about the personal life of the employees and how events from their personal life affect their work and if perhaps they need a break due to them. Do we have a well-being officer already?
- Yes, a frank conversation every 4 or 6 months.
- The well-being sessions sound very interesting and might be helpful.

MORE ON THE NEXT PAGE ►

- One-on-one chats with the officer would be helpful to understand emerging problems. Zarzad should be informed; however, about some of the problems (not personal) in such a way that can take action to resolve the problem. The officer, without entering into personal details, should prepare some guidelines for Zarzad. A separate- direct line employee-officer-Zarzad should be reserved for situations in which security is at risk.

Need for open discussion on work mode, and related issues.

- I would love to have elements of a Results-only work environment approach. It would be better to get paid for delivering tasks instead of work hours.

- Unlimited holidays - obligatory 4 weeks holidays for regeneration.
- More assistant support, more engagement, and responsibility of the team about the CRS future.
- Less overtime through being OK with good enough and not always perfection and over-promising.
- Growth of all of our salaries by charging more money and making higher margins.
- It would be cool to have obligatory updates from different projects (so that everyone knows what are the projects/proposals), and it would be cool to engage more young staff in face-to-face events so that they know why we are doing it.

Chart 17

Have you noticed any improvement in work-life balance and well-being since joining the organization?



DEFINITELY YES: 4



YES, BUT IT TOOK SOME TIME
TO BALANCE EVERYTHING: 6



IT IS HARD
TO SAY: 2



RATHER NOT: 3

Chart 18

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I receive feedback and use it to improve my work?*



AGREE: 3



RATHER AGREE: 10



NEUTRAL: 1



DISAGREE: 1

Chart 19

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *My colleagues take my feedback seriously?*



AGREE: 6



RATHER AGREE: 8



DISAGREE: 1

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG CRS EMPLOYEES? WHAT THINGS WOULD THEY LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED IN THE ORGANIZATION?

When analyzing job satisfaction it is worth recalling that all 15 people surveyed claim to be proud to work for this organization (Chart 05). According to the survey, 13 out of 15 respondents find their work fulfilling and 12 see the purpose behind their job (Chart 09, 10). Additionally, 14 of them are likely to continue working here for the next 2 years and 13 would recommend someone they respect for the position in this organization (Chart 21). Also, the Management Board was rated high (Chart 22). People feel secure in

their job (Chart 23), and they believe they receive recognition for their work (Chart 24). The flexibility offered at work is one of the most valued aspects (Chart 25). The employees find their tasks engaging (Chart 26) and have access to the resources required to complete their work (Chart 27). It can be inferred that they can freely express their concerns, suggestions, and ideas (Chart 28) as they feel secure (Chart 23) and content (Chart 29). In general, they evaluate their experience as an employee positively.

Chart 20

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I am likely to still be working here in 2 years?*



AGREE: 6



RATHER AGREE: 8



NEUTRAL: 1

Chart 21

Considering your experience with our organization so far, how likely are you to recommend someone you respect for employment here (0 - very unlikely to 10 - very likely)?

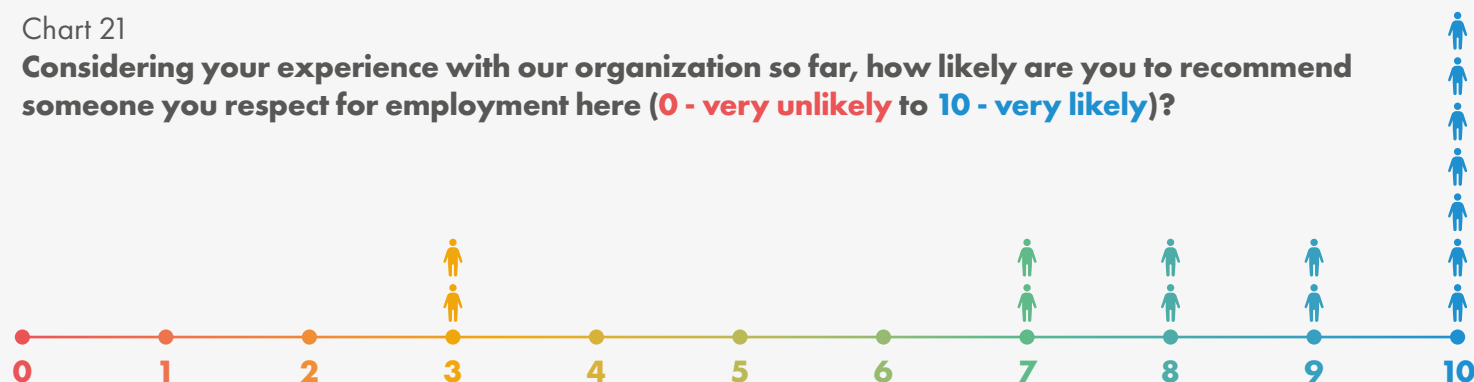


Chart 22

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *The management takes good care of the problems of the employees and tries to solve or redress them with proper counseling as soon as possible?*



AGREE: 4



RATHER AGREE: 9



NEUTRAL: 2

Chart 23

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I feel totally secure in this job (do not feel the threat of losing your job for independent reasons)?*



AGREE: 4



RATHER AGREE: 9



NEUTRAL: 2

Chart 24

How satisfied are you with the below?

Recognition you receive for your work



VERY SATISFIED: 7



SATISFIED: 7



NEUTRAL: 1

Chart 25

How satisfied are you with the below?

Flexibility offered at work

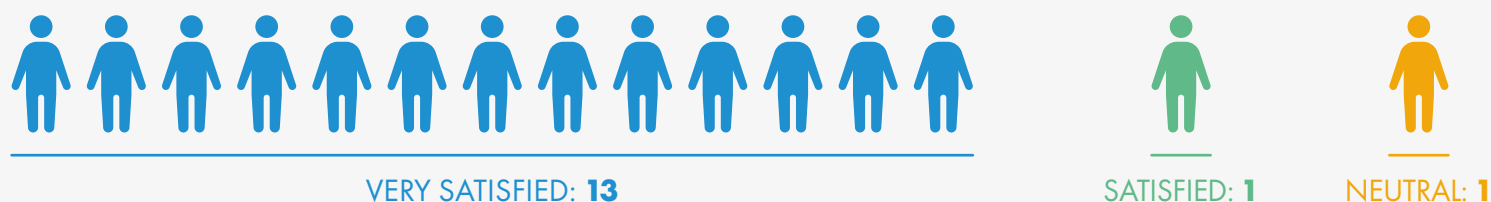


Chart 26

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I like the level of challenge my job provides?*



Chart 27

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: *I have the resources I need to effectively perform my job?*

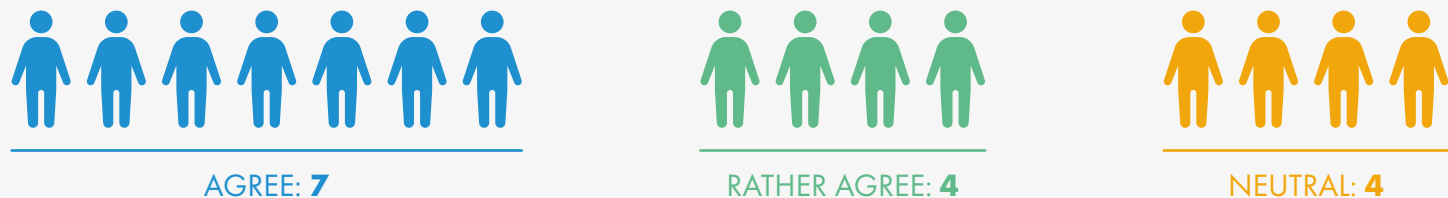


Chart 28

How satisfied are you with the below?

Ability to freely communicate your concerns, suggestions, and ideas



Chart 29

How satisfied are you with the below?

Your overall experience as an employee

VERY SATISFIED: **3**SATISFIED: **10**NEUTRAL: **2**

It is time to examine what can cause a decrease in or lack of job satisfaction. There were some statements in the survey (not mentioned before) with which the respondents disagreed or were not satisfied at least once. Based on them, we identified potential areas for improvement:

- **a chance to attend workshops and training programs**
- **professional development**
- **overall organizational culture**
- **level of transparency**
- **feedback**
- **realistic and tangible work goals**
- **benefits offered by the organization**
- **pay**
- **overall compensation**

In light of this data, we can say that CRS is a good place to work. However, the employees have indicated some challenges that, if properly addressed by the Management Board, can be resolved and turned to leverages that would make it an excellent place to work.

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Centre for Systems Solutions introduced a number of benefits and well-being policies in the workplace, and the survey conducted in July 2023 proves that the employees notice and appreciate them. However, the analysis of the results, especially with respect to work-life balance, stress management, and job satisfaction, indicated areas that need further improvement or support.

Feedback from employees is essential to enhance the well-being policy as it allows the organization to gather opinions and suggestions directly from the people it aims to support. This collaborative approach can lead to more tailored and effective well-being initiatives that meet the specific needs of and challenges faced by the employees.

It is great to learn that CRS employees are highly motivated, proud, and committed to their work and that they find their work fulfilling and purposeful.

Understanding the importance of a proper work-life balance is crucial to both the employer and the employees, and we are happy to see that the majority of survey participants are familiar with the company's well-being policy. However, we have also learned that the organization has not effectively communicated its initiatives and resources and not all the team members are aware of them.

The possibility to attend events and make private appointments during work hours is highly valued by the employees.

Flexible work hours and the employer's acceptance for self-organization of work can indeed contribute to achieving a healthy work-life balance, which, in turn, can lead to better overall job satisfaction and performance.

While most respondents feel that they are able to balance work and personal life, it is essential to consider the factors that affect some employees negatively. Pride, deep commitment to, and intense engagement in work are generally positive attributes, but they can sometimes cause challenges to a healthy life-work balance. Encouraging employees to take breaks, disconnect from work during leisure time, and promoting self-care can help address this issue.

Regarding stress management, the overall optimistic picture is encouraging. However, it's important to continue monitoring stress levels and provide resources to support employees in managing stress effectively.

Interestingly enough, a significant number of respondents have reported improvement in their work-life balance since joining CRS. This suggests that the organization's efforts in promoting employee well-being have been effective and are positively impacting the lives of its employees.

The survey indicates that the Centre for Systems Solutions is making strides in prioritizing employee well-being and fostering a positive work environment. Continued efforts in these areas can lead to greater employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. The organization's commitment to evaluating and enhancing well-being policies is essential for creating a supportive workplace culture where employees feel valued and cared for, contributing to long-term success.

Recommendations for future improvements

Based on the survey findings and the current state of the Centre for Systems Solutions, here are some recommendations of the Well-being Officer to the Management Board for future improvements:

Clear and Transparent Well-being Policy:

Structure the well-being policy in a clear and transparent manner, ensuring that all employees understand what resources and support are provided. This can be achieved through regular communication and making the policy easily accessible to all team members.

Enhanced Communication with Well-being Officer:

Plan and intensify communication between the Well-being Officer and the team members. Regular check-ins and open channels of communication can help employees feel supported and address their well-being concerns effectively.

Personalized Approach to Well-being:

Recognize that each employee's well-being needs are unique and implement a personalized approach to well-being. Offer individualized support and resources based on employees' preferences and requirements.

Improved Onboarding Process:

Enhance the onboarding process for new employees to include an introduction to the well-being policy, resources, and support available within the organization. This can help newcomers feel valued and supported from the beginning of their employment.

Stricter Vacation Policy:

Consider implementing a stricter vacation policy that requires employees to take the accrued leave. This ensures that employees take necessary breaks and have sufficient time to recharge and maintain work-life balance.

Solutions for Rest from Work-related Tasks:

Develop additional solutions to ensure sufficient rest from work-related tasks. This could include encouraging breaks, implementing policies for disconnecting after work hours, and fostering a culture that values work-life balance.

Clear and Transparent Procedures and Policies:

Ensure that all procedures and policies, including well-being, training, benefits, and development policies, are clear, transparent, and accessible to every employee. Equal access to equipment and resources should be emphasized.

Frequent Live Meetings:

Consider organizing more frequent live meetings, especially face-to-face interactions, to strengthen team communication and minimize stress and tension among team members. Retreats could be held more often to foster team bonding and open discussions.

Feedback Policy and Communication:

Develop and conduct a comprehensive feedback policy that encourages open communication between employees and management. Regular feedback loops can help address concerns and identify areas for improvement.

Professional Development Opportunities:

Provide more opportunities for employees to attend workshops and training programs that promote their professional development. This investment in employee growth can enhance job satisfaction and motivation.

Team Discussions on Organizational Culture:

Encourage team discussions on crucial topics such as overall organizational culture, transparency, and work modes. Involving employees in shaping the organization's values can foster a sense of ownership and inclusivity.

Review of Compensation and Benefits:

Conduct a thorough review of the compensation and benefits offered by the organization. Ensure that pay ranges and overall compensation are fair and competitive to attract and retain talent.

The Management Board in cooperation with the Well-being Officer will do their best to implement these recommendations and foster a positive and supportive work environment, and strengthen employee engagement and satisfaction.

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