

# The wellbeing puzzle

**Dame Carol Black advises how to create a wellbeing culture in three new films produced by the British Safety Council**

Recent research by the British Safety Council identified significant levels of uncertainty in the UK about wellbeing at work. Its report: *Not Just Free Fruit: Wellbeing At Work*, found that employee wellbeing is often ignored or misunderstood, with employers unsure how to define it or how to improve staff wellbeing, what priority to give it and how to measure the effectiveness of wellbeing interventions and programmes.

Now, professor dame Carol Black, expert government advisor on health and work and a passionate campaigner for better mental health and wellbeing, not only explains how it can be done simply but also the reasons why it should be done: improved wellbeing in the workplace can improve productivity by up to 25%.

At a time of high job insecurity and the uncertainties of Brexit, she says that “there is no better time than now to say that we must support the staff we’ve got because we don’t know how many of them we are going to have in the future”.

Her views and advice were recorded by the British Safety Council in a series of film interviews about the nature of workplace wellbeing:

- *Wellbeing in the workplace*
- *Wellbeing and line managers*
- *Wellbeing and SMEs.*

Carol Black defines wellbeing as: “A sense of contentment which is made up of mental health, physical health and a feeling that where you are at any time is a good place to be. That good place can and should be the workplace.”

The role of line managers in promoting wellbeing: “You have to help them understand that supporting their staff is going to give them a more engaged and productive workforce. You must enable them to do this. It’s not just about putting managers on training courses, but also ensuring that they can maintain these skills and are supported by the top of the house.

“You could incentivise them through their appraisal, which in many companies is linked to promotion and remuneration. Some organisations’ appraisals expect managers to meet certain requirements relating to the health and wellbeing of their staff. You can also incentivise managers financially.”

Measuring wellbeing: “You can measure wellbeing through sickness absence levels. You can also do this by reviewing staff turnover figures, because if staff are not content with a workplace, they leave. Additionally, you can measure engagement scores. You can also measure productivity loss, by adding presenteeism and absence levels.”

SMEs’ requirements in relation to wellbeing: “Many SMEs are very small and have limited resources, no occupational health and no HR function. Anything you’re going to offer them with regard to wellbeing has to be easily and quickly accessible. You can’t give them a large,



**Professor Dame Carol Black**

however impressive, toolkit and expect them to read it. It has to be available online.”

Matthew Holder, head of campaigns at the British Safety Council, says: “We are delighted that Carol Black has agreed to share her expertise with us. She is an authoritative voice on workplace wellbeing, which, although high on the corporate agenda, it is still perceived as ‘fluffy’ and difficult to measure.

“Her suggestions are accessible, practical and instantly actionable. We hope that, together with the intelligence gathered in our *Wellbeing At Work* report, Professor Black’s videos will become a first point-of-call reference source for companies wishing to develop a culture of wellbeing.”

The British Safety Council’s report can be downloaded using the following link: [www.britsafe.org/campaigns-policy/not-just-free-fruit-wellbeing-at-work/](http://www.britsafe.org/campaigns-policy/not-just-free-fruit-wellbeing-at-work/) Professor Carol Black’s interview on workplace wellbeing, A place you trust, was published in *Safety Management* in December 2018. □

# Health & safety 4.0

**Industry 4.0 is a name given to the current trend of automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies. It includes cyber-physical systems, the Internet of Things, cloud computing and cognitive computing. Industry 4.0 is commonly referred to as the fourth industrial revolution**



**I**ncreased productivity is not the only benefit of Industry 4.0. The focus on real-time monitoring and connected technology has allowed plant managers to place greater emphasis on the health and safety of their staff. Jonathan Wilkins, director of obsolete parts supplier EU Automation, explains three ways that technology can improve industrial safety.

It's not uncommon for film stars to injure themselves at work. During the filming of *Die Hard*, Bruce Willis obtained partial hearing loss when he stood too close to a firing gun. Robert Downey Junior was knocked unconscious on the set of *Sherlock Holmes* when a fake punch turned real. Although engineers are at a low risk of workplace injury caused by a gunshot or punch-up, the nature of the job poses its own safety risks.

In 2016/2017, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) received over 70,000 reports from employers of non-fatal injuries. A new standard for health and safety at work, ISO 45001, was published in 2018 to reduce the yearly figure. It ensures that employers take appropriate preventative measures to keep themselves and their colleagues safe.

Thanks to Industry 4.0, there is now technology available that allows engineers to better monitor their health and avoid injuries and illnesses.

### The connected worker

Personal protective equipment (PPE) can connect with factory systems via the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) to automate safety management. For example, wearable sensors can detect abnormal worker behaviour such as entry into a restricted area and alert management and the employee.

As well as monitoring the environment, sensors in PPE

can measure the wearer's blood pressure, heart rate and breathing rate to directly monitor their health. This is important for engineers that work in confined spaces such as a semiconductor plant or the wing of a Boeing 747.

### Delegate to robots

Of the non-fatal injury reports that HSE received in 2016/2017, 22% were caused by lifting and handling objects. Thankfully, many lifting and handling tasks can now be delegated to robots. Robots are suited to tasks that require repetitive, physical actions because they can work for 24 hours a day without tiring and can lift heavier objects than humans, without injury being a concern.

### Bringing it all together

Cloud-based software allows manufacturers to integrate all safety technologies into one platform that can be easily managed and optimised.

Honeywell used the connected worker concept to develop its safety software. The platform incorporates headsets that deliver automated voice instructions so that workers can keep their hands free. It also has asset management functionalities to ensure that all safety-centred PPE is functioning correctly.

Bruce Willis and Robert Downey Junior were unlucky to be injured during filming, leading to damage that could perhaps have been avoided with health and safety procedures. Plant managers must make sure that their employees aren't subject to unnecessary risk. Technology such as digital PPE, robotics and cloud-based safety software can be implemented to keep staff safe.

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