



PEOPLE & HR **LIVE CONFERENCE RECAP**

Holistic and Inclusive Well-Being Strategies for a Multigenerational Workforce

BY JESSICA SWENSON | FEBRUARY 17, 2026

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With 47,000 associates across 25 states and ranging in age from 15 to 70-plus, Karen Wilkins, VP of benefits for [Waffle House](#), has experience supporting a diverse, multigenerational workforce. “The challenge is, how do we meet them?” she said.



As today's workforce continues to grow and diversify across generations, employers are faced with a new challenge: how to create benefits and well-being programs that can meet a variety of needs? The session among experts was moderated by Kelly Yamanouchi, business team lead at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Leaders Make Well-Being Work

Leadership participation in the benefits programs helps drive employee engagement as well, says Yasmin Meneses, dietitian and manager of consultant relations with [Nutrium](#). If upper management engages in the programs and clearly knows what is offered, they're more likely to communicate with their employees about them. Meneses suggests that clients get their leadership teams involved "because it's really going to drive the success of whatever well-being program you have in place today."

Anant Garg, global VP of HR at [BD](#), says that managers, not policies, are the number one driver of employee well-being. "We need to advocate for the principle that driving results and driving well-being are not mutually exclusive," he said. If you don't invest in good, effective managers who thrive at both, it doesn't matter how good your benefits plan is, you won't be able to drive holistic well-being for your employees.





The impact of engaged, empathetic leadership is something that Melanie Moore, [Honeywell's](#) inclusion and engagement director, is personally familiar with. After Moore's breast cancer diagnosis, her manager prioritized her health over her work and it completely changed the shape of her treatment and recovery. "Having a manager who is understanding and shows that care and concern for you makes a complete difference in how you even go through that journey," she said.

With these perspectives in mind, how can employers ensure that their company cultures and benefit programming are built to suit multigenerational teams?

Moore suggests tuning into employee workplace networks to help identify real day-to-day employee needs. This is how Honeywell learned that new parents were seeking a solution to ship breast milk after they returned to work and travel, and led to the recent launch of a new program designed to meet this need.

A Proactive Approach to Wellness

Meneses suggests a shift to a proactive approach, emphasizing the importance of reframing nutrition and fitness, which apply to everyone, as critical aspects of preventive care.

While weight loss is a critical piece of the puzzle, she cautions against making it the sole focus. "It's not just about that. It's about holistic well-being and making sure that we're inclusive of the entire population, and not just those who are looking to lose weight."



Keenan highlighted some of One Medical’s customized offerings: mental and sexual healthcare and family planning for millennials, perimenopause and menopause care for Gen X, and cognitive screenings and fall prevention education for older generations, all available via each age group’s preferred delivery methods, she says.

To address the unique challenges of its frontline workers, Waffle House has expanded security and safety training and worked to reduce out-of-pocket employee healthcare costs. “Anyone on the health plan can use the free telehealth visits and get their prescriptions—most are generic—at no cost to them,” said Wilkins. Her team is also known for assisting employees in locating housing, emergency shelter, or financial resources, she says.

The discussion underscored that there is no single blueprint for supporting a multigenerational workforce. What matters most is a willingness to listen, adapt, and lead with empathy, recognizing that well-being is not a static offering but an ongoing commitment. When organizations treat well-being as core to how work gets done, benefits programs become more than resources. They become a signal to employees that they are supported at every stage of their lives and careers.

Jessica Swenson is a freelance writer and editor based in the Midwest. Learn more about her at [jmswensonllc.com](https://www.jmswensonllc.com).

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