



Method 4: Collaboration

Method 4 of 5 Essential Building Methods to Grow Your Influence

WCWI Well Practice

Members-Only Resource





WCWI's Membership and Community:

As a professional development and consultation organization for wellness strategists and people leaders, WCWI will help your organization shift employee wellbeing to a foundational strategy that is valued and understood by all. Over 650 wellness professionals use WCWI's Membership and certified trainings to be empowered and equipped to create strategic change; while organizationally they're experiencing the power of a designed-culture where employees will feel a sense of community, purpose, and impact.

- [WCWI Membership](#)
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WCWI TECH GROUP

We see this resource being born out of concern and urgency for wellbeing strategists...

across the state of Wisconsin. What does it mean to practice the role of a wellbeing professional and how has it evolved? Over the course of these last 2 years, the collective brain power of 20 individuals from our TECH training program curated 5 building methods as being an ambitious reframing of the work of an employee wellbeing professional in hopes to enhance the influence and systemic impact of our work to connect people to wellbeing, people to people and people to culture. Throughout 2021, we will launch one building method per quarter as these methods align with our 2021 Learning Circle series training curriculum.

What are these 5 essential building methods that we are setting out to explore?

5 ESSENTIAL BUILDING METHODS TO GROW YOUR INFLUENCE

1. Contemplative Practice

A contemplative practice provides self-awareness to be objectively and mindfully aware of your thoughts and behaviors. Contemplative practice for a wellbeing leader is the daily thinking and actions that center you in your work – this can also be described as your habits. A dedication to contemplative practice ensures that you remain present, insightful, and concentrated on your purpose and your people.

2. Rhythms of Competencies & Skills

There is a unique rhythm of competencies and skills for the role of the wellbeing strategist. Rhythm is defined as an ordered recurrent alternation of strong and weak elements in the flow of sound. We are often asked to promote wellbeing systemically across the organization. In that endeavor, we encounter strengths and also weak elements such as obstacles in expanding the scope of wellbeing. As we counter these elements, we need to equip ourselves with a distinct blend of competencies, the knowledge and behaviors that our organization's culture exhibits in regards to wellbeing, and the correlating skills that will complement the strengths.

3. Vital Conversations

There is often significant emphasis placed on defining results and outcomes for your work in wellness. There is a priority placed on wellness to solve, or contribute to solving, complex problems such as reducing healthcare costs, improving employee morale, decreasing the health risks for individuals, improving the overall health of employees, and more. Empowering yourself to have vital conversations is the second method for growing your influence, redefining the impact of wellness, and co-establishing expectations for what wellness is, and is not, in your organization – all with the insight and support of your stakeholders.

4. Collaboration

Collaboration is an essential building method that provides the opportunity to organically bring people together under one shared purpose. We have an informal responsibility to remove siloes within our organization and collaborate to support employees in their wellbeing- all while managing the vision of building a high quality and effective team that is grounded in the foundational values of integrity and trust.

5. Building Community

Working in community with other wellbeing strategists allows you to gain additional perspective, find collective empowerment, and encourages peer mentorship. This session recognizes that we each have a unique and important perspective from our own work -- you may be solely responsible for the health and wellbeing initiative at your organization, or your job may require that a focus on wellbeing is only one of the many hats that you wear, or you may have a fantastic support network in place, or you may not yet have a network. To keep ourselves accountable to growing personally and professionally, we must work in community with other strategists to learn from others' strengths and expand our scope of thinking.

YOU ARE
HERE

BUILDING METHOD #4: COLLABORATION

The Rationale:

Collaboration is an essential building method that provides the opportunity to bring people, teams, and various business functions together under shared purpose and common goals. As a wellbeing leader, you have an informal responsibility to remove siloes within your organization and work toward supporting employees in their wellbeing through effective teamwork grounded in integrity and trust. The wellbeing industry has evolved over the last decade. This evolution has presented an expanded scope of wellbeing for organizations and it elevates the necessity to create alignment across all areas of the business in united effort to impact employee wellbeing. In order to lay the groundwork and journey towards a common understanding of wellbeing, it is important to collaborate with all stakeholders, areas of the business, and leaders in your organization.

The Opportunity:

Since collaboration requires teamwork across multiple disciplines, first you must determine the vision and common language across all key collaborative partners. Then, it will be important to connect your uniquely identified common language of wellbeing to business impact. Lastly, you will want to identify supporting factors and behaviors that will drive your team forward. Your ongoing personal practice of the key skills for collaboration from [WCWI's Well Practice: Inventory for Growth](#) will support you in gathering and fostering an active, resilient, and strong collaborative network within your organizational system. Together, you'll care for people and their wellbeing throughout the entire employee lifecycle.

WCWI Member, Kohler Co. is expanding the scope of wellbeing through collaboration and aligning areas of their business to sustain wellbeing as a strategic priority system-wide. Across this resource, Kohler Co.'s story is outlined and showcased to exemplify how one Wisconsin organization has successfully moved through each action domain of the collaboration circle.

The Practice:

Action-planning Across Four Domains of Collaboration

Work through the four action domains of collaboration with your team. Within each domain, ask yourself and/or your team the question. Then, identify the action you will take. Finally, use the identified skill from *WCWI's Well Practice: Inventory for Growth* to bring confidence to how you will execute your action step. These skills are essential to your development and impact as a wellbeing leader. Use the diagram below to support your notes and planning across each action domain as you pursue collaboration in your organization.

Collaboration Domain 1:

Identify Common Language in Support of Wellbeing

Question: What already-established areas within the business organically contribute to wellbeing?

Question: Who are the individuals within the areas of business identified above that you can connect with?

Action: Select the individuals to initiate a collaborative conversation and to begin to define your common language together. Use [WCWI's Well Practice: Vital Conversations](#) as a resource to facilitate discourse with these individuals in order to bring a common understanding of wellbeing system-wide.

Skill: Facilitator of Discourse (!) As a thought leader, you believe in the power of conversation and the opportunity that arises from every new conversation. Your leadership of this verbal interchange of ideas are a simple cooperative practice that helps determine and define common goals, values, and meaning behind collaborative strategies.



KOHLER's STORY

Kohler identified that their business areas of Stewardship, Sustainability, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Culture and Learning all organically contributed to wellbeing. They worked to align efforts across these divisions to further expand the care and support for employee wellbeing. Through collaborative conversations, they were able to expand the scope of employee wellbeing through a variety of initiatives that remained grounded in their wellbeing dimensions and mission statement. Kohler's Wellbeing Program has four main dimensions of wellbeing: Physical Health, Mental/Emotional Health, Meaning & Purpose and Financial Security. Their mission statement is to empower associates to flourish in all areas of their life. Meaning & Purpose was the identified common language that supported all of their collaborative efforts in these business areas. Kohler's wellbeing mentality supports the idea that wellbeing is unique to everyone. For example, if an associate is very passionate about volunteerism, that is a part of their wellbeing journey. The uniqueness of each associates' wellbeing aspirations needed to be recognized in order to fully support an aligned and holistic wellbeing approach.

Collaboration Domain 2: Co-create a Course of Action

Question: What is our vision for wellbeing at our organization? For additional support in visioning, use [WCWI's Well Practice: Defining Your Organization's Strategic Wellness Vision](#).

Question: We are collaborating in support of...(fill in the blank)...because (fill in the blank).

Action: Pick 1-2 strategies to co-create with your team to support a unified wellbeing approach.

Skill: Business partnering (!) You are a valued business partner for collaborating on strategic initiatives at your organization. You use your expertise, influence, and personal strengths to build two-way collaborative relationships to ensure that wellbeing is in the conversation. You use your expertise in conducting needs assessment, data analysis, and problem solving to partner strategically both internally and externally of your organization.



KOHLER'S STORY

Kohler implemented the following collaborative strategies:

- May #IWILLLISTEN Mental Health Awareness Walk/Run was offered in-person in 2020 and virtually in 2021 in collaboration with the HeadsUP Mental Health Business Resource Group (BRG) which falls under Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DE&I)
- Kohler became a StigmaFree Workplace in May 2021 in partnership with NAMI. It was announced to the entire population as a part of May Mental Health Awareness Month and spearheaded between the wellbeing team and HeadsUP Mental Health BRG.

- The business areas of Stewardship, Sustainability, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Culture and Learning all have a space and place within the Wellness Incentive Program. Examples include: Limiting paper usage, education and awareness around MLK Day, Volunteering, completing learning hours through the Kohler Learning Academy, joining a Business Resource Group.
- Wellbeing has a seat on the Culture Advisory team that meets bi-weekly to discuss ways our programs are making a positive difference for the culture of Kohler.
- Invitational Challenge was a collaboration with our Stewardship's "Run for Safe Water" program, which is also an annual global initiative to support safe water for all.
- Wellbeing has also been a part of a new committee focused on bringing healthier, better food options to the Kohler campus. This is a partnership project with Operations, Manufacturing, Facilities, Wellbeing and Sustainability.

Collaboration Domain 3: Connect to Business Impact

Question: How can our collaborative course of action create impact for the business?

Question: What are the guiding principles/values/key results of our business? How can we work to align?

Action: Identify your unique business success metrics and identify areas that your wellbeing strategy can align and create impact.

Skill: Seeking impact (!) You collect data and information relevant to business goals and strategies that have inherent connection to wellbeing. You utilize data collection and evaluation methods that measure wider scales of impact to the people and the organization.



KOHLER'S STORY

Kohler combined the efforts of the Wellbeing & DE&I People Strategy. Kohler's key business results include the following: delight customers, inspire people, boldly innovate, own it and prioritize. The key results are what Kohler strives to achieve and the key beliefs are how Kohler will be successful. Kohler believes in a safe and welcoming environment where hate and discrimination have no place—ever.

Kohler's key beliefs include:

- nurturing an environment where associates are accepted, thrive and grow,
- fostering creative collaboration between people of different cultures, races, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientation, religions, and subject matter disciplines,
- sharing passion for the quality work of associates and their positive contributions to the communities they serve.

The 2021 Kohler DE&I People Strategy revolves around "Diversity First" in our hiring practices and "Engaging and retaining" associates by fostering a culture of inclusion. Together, all Kohler associates have ownership of fostering a workplace where everyone feels a greater sense of belonging and wellbeing. The development of Kohler's Business Resource Groups was imperative in continuing to provide ways that associates find meaning and purpose within their role as a Kohler associate. Research shows that greater personal investment in one's job creates higher retention, greater wellbeing and higher engagement. A Business Resource Group (BRG) network supports the unique perspectives of associates and empowers the contributions to create success for Kohler's Key Results and the DE&I People Strategy.

Collaboration Domain 4: Identify Supportive Qualities & Behaviors for Longevity

Question: What are the key qualities & behaviors within your team that will foster positive and long-term collaboration?

Action: Identify 1-2 unique qualities or behaviors to implement or continuously improve to ensure accountability to your collaborative work (Examples Include: Define & Discuss Goals, Identify Strengths, Define Roles & Responsibilities, encourage a safe Environment, Celebrate Success)

Skill: Take WCWI's *Well Practice: Inventory for Growth* to identify your unique skills & competencies you are strongest in and use them to help you build a collaborative environment.



KOHLER'S STORY

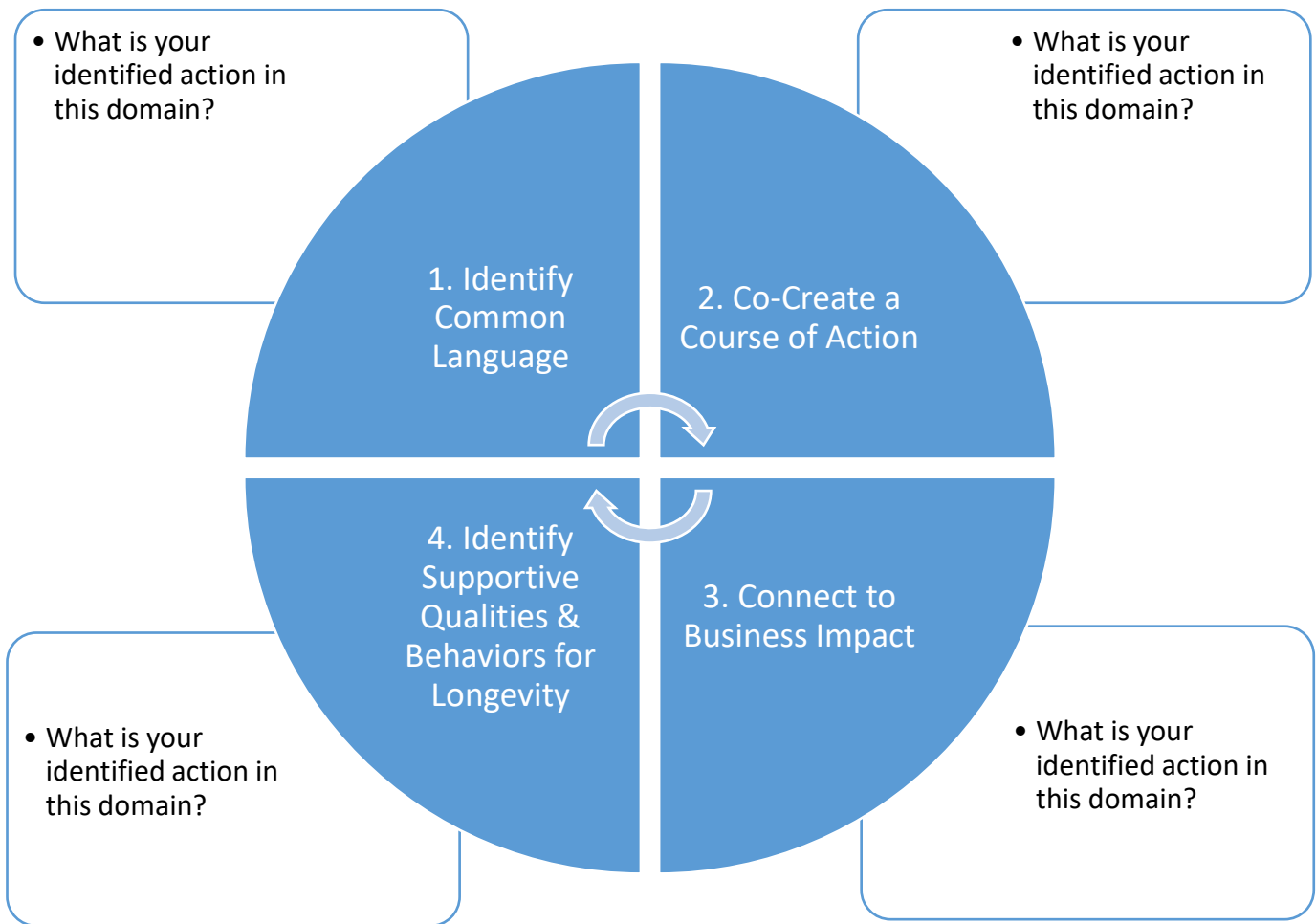
The following are unique qualities, commitments, and behaviors of Kohler's collaborative initiatives:

- **Define Roles & Responsibilities | Kohler BRG**

Leadership Committee: The BRG network created a Leadership Committee where leaders from each BRG meet on a monthly basis to discuss upcoming initiatives, collaboration opportunities and connect strategies. Recently, the Wellbeing Program presented a new Wellbeing Series that will kick-off in 2022. It will consist of monthly presentations focusing on all areas of wellbeing. The Wellbeing team welcomed the BRG network to reach out if they'd like to collaborate on any of the monthly

presentations and create a BRG panel to close the presentation.

- **Celebrate Success | Kohler Recognition Platform:** Kohler created its own BOLD Recognition platform within Microsoft Teams. It allows associates to recognize fellow associates, individually or as a group. Associates align their recognition with one of Kohler's Key Beliefs. This associate or team recognition is then posted on the BOLD Recognition app for all to see. An email is also automatically sent to the associate's leader for additional recognition.
- **Encourage a Safe Environment | Kohler Peer Support Group:** HeadsUP, Mental Health BRG created a Peer Support Group that meets monthly. This is open to all Kohler associates as a place to talk about issues they are experiencing with their own mental health or those around them. It's a safe place where they can find support, social connection and resources.
- **Identify Strengths | Kohler Peer Mentoring Strategy:** A Business Resource Group Mentoring Program was started in January 2021. It is a mentoring program across the entire Business Resource Group (BRG) network with a goal to expand the pool of mentors and foster stronger connections and community for the associates across Kohler Co.



The Outcome:

Committing to continuous action-planning with each domain of the collaboration circle, you and your team will be positioned to elevate employee wellbeing as a factor of business impact and as a cohesive and caring strategy for people across their work experiences and throughout their entire employment lifecycle. WCWI's TECH Training participants leave you with these pieces of advice as you embark on your collaborative action-planning:

- Have a clear vision or end goal
- Connect with your colleagues on personal level
- Understand your business so you can have sound judgement and connected ideas
- Understand the overall goals of the business in the short- and long-term
- Explore the elements of the business goals and strategy that you can align to wellbeing
- Gain insight on the informal networks at your organization and seek to unite with them
- Ask yourself how your unique knowledge, skills, and abilities will contribute to the company goals – you have strength and impact