

CASE STUDY:

LEADING THE WAY BY ELEVATING WELL-BEING

24% increase in employee well-being - despite the pandemic!



2500 EMPLOYEES, 10 OFFICES STATEWIDE

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) is a leading health insurance provider headquartered in Fargo, North Dakota.

Since the Great Depression, BCBSND has been dedicated to helping people get affordable healthcare solutions and transform the way healthcare is delivered. With a comprehensive, person-centered approach, they have been a leader in the wellness space, enhancing the health and well-being of North Dakotans.

CHALLENGES:

- High-levels of employee stress and burnout
- Underutilized wellness services; wellness programs often seen as “check the box”
- Gaps in reported levels of well-being between managers and employees
- Rising competition
- Desire to become a model for other organizations to follow

SOLUTION:

Internationally recognized thought leader in the field of well-being and workplace wellness, Laura Putnam, CEO and Founder of Motion Infusion, conducts **Managers on the Move**, a leadership-meets-wellness training program.

RESULTS:

- **24% increase** in overall well-being reported by employees (from 2020 to 2021)
- **32% increase** in overall well-being reported by managers (from 2020 to 2021)
- **78% of employees** reported that their work enables them to be the best version of themselves (up from 55% in 2020)
- **81% of managers** reported that their work enables them to be the best version of themselves (up from 53% in 2020)
- **81% of employees** reported that BCBSND cares about their well-being (up from 64% in 2020)
- **89% of managers** reported that BCBSND cares about their well-being (up from 79% in 2020)

By employing a manager-driven initiative over the past year and a half, BCBSND is addressing the organizational forces that inform behaviors, fostering an “all-in” cooperation across all departments, becoming a role model for other organizations to follow, and is **making well-being more holistic, meaningful and inclusive for all.**

Best in Class with Rising Competition

Before partnering with [Motion Infusion](#), BCBSND had already invested in wellness, however, there was room for growth as they were met with new challenges.

As measured in 2020, employees were reporting **high levels of stress and burnout** with a heavy workload which prevented them from taking full advantage of the company's well-being offerings. **The wellness programs the company did have in place were underutilized and seen as "check the box."**

There were also large gaps in reported levels of well-being between managers and employees, with uneven levels of managerial and organizational support for well-being. The wellness department at BCBSND recognized the need to deepen the relationship between leaders and their teams, and engage employees in a more profound way.

As the market became increasingly competitive, BCBSND recognized that wellness could serve as its differentiator. **By improving the well-being of their members, customers and their own people, BCBSND made the commitment to take their wellness strategies to a whole new level.**



I want you to know that a key priority for our organization in 2020 and beyond will be to ensure we are taking excellent care of ourselves, so that we can continue to take excellent care of our members. So, let's be sure we pause appropriately during 2020 to focus on ourselves and our own well-being.

**- DAN CONRAD
PRESIDENT & CEO, BCBSND**

According to [MetLife Employee Benefits Trends](#), rising rates of employee stress and burnout are having a detrimental effect on productivity, engagement, and a company's bottom line. The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted these factors. Today, 2 out of 3 employees say they feel more stressed than they did before the pandemic.

The Start of a Movement



We have worked closely with Laura over the last four years and she has really helped us guide and redefine and reinvent the way that we're doing well-being at Blue Cross.

- PETE SELJEVOLD, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, BCBSND

The relationship between Motion Infusion and BCBSND began when Laura Putnam was invited by BCBSND as a keynote speaker at their state-wide wellness summit.

Laura delivered her signature talk [Workplace Wellness That Works](#), based on her book, and it had an inspiring impact. Her approach matched up very closely with BCBSND's wellness strategy, and the team not only liked the content, but they appreciated the interactive format in which it was delivered.

This initial engagement set in motion what would later develop into a solid and long-lasting partnership between BCBSND and Motion Infusion. It was also the beginning of a vision to catalyze well-being across a broader platform through presentations, workshops, consulting and licensed content.

TIMELINE



To effectively lead through well-being, BCBSND realized that it needed to turn its focus inward. It was at this point that BCBSND asked Motion Infusion to deliver its proven leadership-meets-wellness training called **Managers on the Move** (MOTM).

Leveraging long-standing Gallup research, along with Motion Infusion published data, MOTM is built on the premise that the manager is uniquely poised to influence the well-being of their team members - for better or worse.

Managers hold the key to sparking a “middle-out” movement that can lead to lasting change. In other words, **by activating and empowering every single manager, BCBSND could foster a culture of well-being and influence employees to engage with well-being.**

“I see managers landing on a spectrum somewhere between ‘gatekeepers’ and ‘multipliers,’” Laura told [Forbes](#), in an interview on employee well-being.

MOTM became the marquee well-being initiative at BCBSND throughout 2020 and 2021. The goal? Empower leaders on all levels to move to the multiplier side of the spectrum to become **Multipliers of Well-Being**.

Through a multi-step and collaborative process of pre and post-assessments, aggregate reports and recommendations, three-part workshop series, inspiration coupled with actionable steps, smaller cohort discussions between workshops and ongoing individual feedback, the *Managers on the Move* program resonated well with everyone. **It was exactly what was needed in navigating a tumultuous and uncertain time.**

According to [Gallup](#), the manager alone likely accounts for up to 70% of the variance of their team members’ engagement with both their work and well-being.

When employees trust their managers, they are 14x more likely to be highly engaged in their work, compared with those who don’t trust their managers, according to a 2020 study by [ADP Research Institute](#).

As measured by a third party, companies that implement MOTM can expect to **experience higher workforce engagement, increased productivity, and stronger managerial and leadership influence.**

Overall Well-Being Jumped



After Managers on the Move, wellness became more holistic, more thoughtful and more meaningful.

- DAN KLUG, DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND DELIVERY BCBSND

In March of 2020, before beginning MOTM, BCBSND conducted a baseline survey to assess current levels of well-being within its workforce across 6 domains: **Physical, Emotional, Social, Financial, Career and Community Well-Being.**

In July of 2021, after delivery of the 3-part MOTM workshop series, they conducted the survey again to compare the results to the year prior. The results were astounding.

There was a **24% increase in overall well-being reported by employees**, and a **36% increase in well-being reported by managers.**

Impact on Well-Being

24%↑

increase in overall well-being for employees

36%↑

increase in well-being for managers

When asked if employees and managers believed work enabled them to be the best version of themselves, there was a drastic change before MOTM to after, even while they navigated the challenges of the pandemic.

When I come to work, I am able to do things that enable me to be the best version of myself.

2020



2021



One of the core objectives of MOTM is to empower managers to create team-based activities, rituals, and systems that support the well-being of their teams. The sentiment on this particular objective **went up a staggering 30% from 2020 to 2021.**

My manager creates team-based activities, rituals and systems that support the well-being of my team

2020 → 2021
32% → 62%



To be honest, I have not really ever thought about incorporating wellness into my leadership style and now that I've been involved with MOTM I can't imagine not doing so.

- TRACY FARAHMAND, DIRECTOR OF NETWORK MANAGEMENT AT BCBSND

The statistic that would gauge how much employees believe BCBSND cares about their well-being **increased 17% for employees from 2020 to 2021, and up 10% for managers.**

When asked if **they felt their managers made an extra effort to support their well-being during the pandemic, 80% of employees said yes.**

Meanwhile, 81% of managers reported that their manager made the extra effort.

Overall, I feel that BCBSND cares about my well-being.

2020 → 2021
64% → 81%
79% → 89%

New, raw conversations between team members began to emerge, **which opened the lines of communication.** Team members saw vulnerability from their leaders and felt that they were cared for, forging deeper connections between leaders and their teams.

“ For managers it was an eye-opener. They started to make that connection between well-being and leadership, and what well-being means to the organization in its entirety. The conversations that occurred within the teams between supervisors and individuals would not have happened without this training.

- PETE SELJEVOLD, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, BCBSND-WORKSITE WELLNESS

Managers paved the way for employees to be more proactive in their self-care and mitigate against the effect of burnout, helping them thrive through the pandemic.

Since their partnership with Motion Infusion, **BCBSND now includes well-being in their corporate scorecard metrics.** Well-Being is now an explicit part of BCBSND's newly crafted mission and vision statement.

VISION: A new level of health and well-being in North Dakota and beyond.

MISSION: Simplify healthcare. Ensure affordability. Elevate well-being.

By putting well-being front and center in its vision and mission statements, and by deeply embedding well-being into its company culture, BCBSND is sending the powerful signal to their employees that people are their top priority.

Today, they have a robust wellness offering for their employees, and **Managers on the Move** was the perfect vehicle for this. **With a huge focus on leaders and managers, they were able to put attention around well-being and truly walk the talk from the inside-out.**

Countless managers say Laura helped turn this idea of wellness into something tangible and approachable. **Well-being has become a way of life, rather than a program.** Furthermore, managers and leaders have a deeper understanding of what modeling well-being means. You don't have to run a marathon to be well. You can walk around the block and take your team with you.



Laura joins with Amy Benedict and Tracy Farahmand, two "Master Multipliers of Well-Being."

A Role Model for Others to Follow

BCBSND has placed well-being front and center, positioning themselves as a model for other Blue Cross Blue Shield's across the nation. Motion Infusion has helped them **achieve greater recognition for their well-being efforts** through co-speaking engagements, co-authored published pieces and media placements.

Today they are a noted leader on improving the health of citizens across the nation, even having others take notice such as Forbes in a recent article, [Employee Well-Being: The Role Of Front-Line Managers' mentions Blue Cross Blue Shield North Dakota.](#)



BCBSND is LEADING THE WAY in best practice adoption, and has a strong and comprehensive set of programs and cultural support practices that demonstrate substantial investment in employee health and well-being.

- JESSICA GROSSMEIER, PHD, MPH CO-DEVELOPER OF HERO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BEST PRACTICES SCORECARD

The partnership with [Motion Infusion](#) is helping to solidify BCBSND's position within the North Dakota market as a top healthcare provider and employer, also elevating them as a global leader, leveraging wellness as their key differentiator.

Leaders shape well-being. Every manager has the opportunity to serve as a multiplier of "well-being" for all the employees they lead.

Activate your leadership and invigorate your workforce.

[LEARN MORE »](#)

85% of US organizations offer wellness, but 80% of eligible employees opt out. The challenge isn't to add more wellness programs, but instead, to engage, model, and permit employees to connect with all levels of well-being.

About Motion Infusion

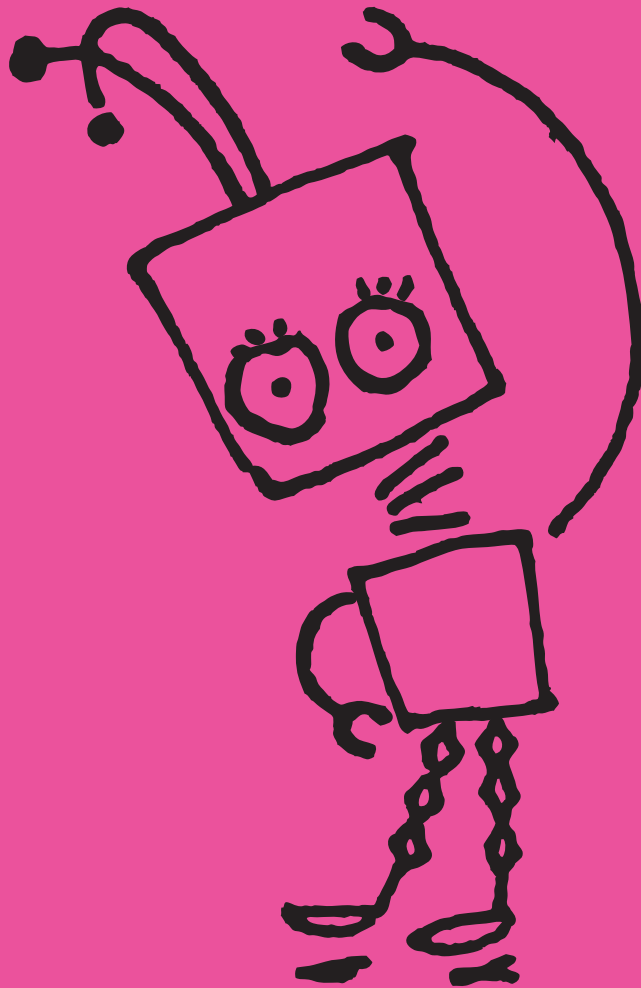
Motion Infusion, a well-being training firm based in San Francisco, helps organizations “get in motion.” Merging evidence-based methods from the field of wellness with best practices from the field of learning and development, Motion Infusion offers creative solutions in the areas of engagement, behavior change, and human performance improvement. Services include keynote speaking, leadership development, management training, team development, and train-the-trainer programs. Motion Infusion’s clients range from Fortune 500 companies to nonprofits, schools, and government entities.

About Laura Putnam

Laura Putnam, MA, author of [*Workplace Wellness That Works*](#), is CEO and founder of [*Motion Infusion*](#), a leading well-being provider. Her work has been covered by *MSNBC*, *The New York Times*, *FOX News*, *US News & World Report*, *Entrepreneur*, *Business Insider*, and *NPR*. She is a former urban public high school teacher, international community organizer, dancer, gymnast and now a movement-builder in the world of health and well-being. With a mission to get people and organizations “in motion,” Laura is a frequent keynote speaker and has worked with a range of organizations from Fortune 500s to government agencies to academic institutes and nonprofits. She is a member of the Google Vitality Lab and also serves on the Healthstat Strategic Advisory Committee. In addition, she teaches at Stanford University, is the recipient of the American Heart Association’s “2020 Impact” award as well as the National Wellness Institute’s “Circle of Leadership” award. A graduate of Brown University and Stanford University, Laura lives in San Francisco with her fiancé.



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