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4 Ways Employers Can Show Employees They Care

By Isaac M. O'Bannon, Managing Editor

When an employer shows empathy – treating employees as human beings with feelings and not just workers who help produce profit – it can make a significant difference in the workplace, studies show.

How much of a difference?

A 2018 State of Workplace Empathy Study by Businessolver found that 96 percent of employees surveyed believed it was important for their employers to demonstrate empathy. On the other hand, 92 percent thought empathy remains undervalued.

And eight of 10 employees, HR professionals and CEOs agreed that an empathetic workplace has a positive impact on business performance, motivating workers and increasing productivity.

It's vital that company leaders show they care about their employees – especially when a life event, such as a family tragedy or a personal challenge, happens to the worker, says Kerry Alison Wekelo, a human resources expert at [Actualize Consulting](#) and author of [Culture Infusion: 9 Principles to Create and Maintain a Thriving Organizational Culture](#).

“We often don't know what another person might be going through,” says Wekelo. “Unfortunately, part of life is crisis, challenge, and the loss of loved ones. With a focus on people first and practicing empathy, it means so much to the employee both in the immediate and in the long-term. They'll want to work there because they feel truly cared about.” Wekelo is also a yoga teacher, life coach, award-winning author of children's books, and the founder of [Zendoway](#), a company that encourages holistic wellness.

Wekelo offers four ways business leaders can show their employees that they care:

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says. "Send a personalized card, too, but the proactive, frequent communication makes all the difference. And it should continue after they return to work, which may be when they struggle most."

- **Spend one-on-one time with them.** Even when things are normal in the employee's life, sit down with them and take interest in their life outside of work. "Ask your team members how they are doing personally so they know you care more than just about their work product," Wekelo says. "Connecting with specific examples of areas of interest aid in ensuring they know you care."
- **Listen to them about work issues – and give them a voice.** "As a leader," Wekelo says, "you send an important message by having an open-door policy. Make certain your employees know they can come to talk at anytime." That way, she says, issues will be identified and resolved, rather than building a culture that allows them to fester."

"Empathetic behavior shows people they are being heard and therefore appreciated," Wekelo says, "which in turn can boost morale and productivity."

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