

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

# A Sustainable Employer Framework for Effective Global Health & Well-Being Strategies

By Abinue Fortingo, MPH, *Principal, Population Health and Well-Being Consultant* and Louise Short, MD, MSc, *National Clinical Leader*



Considering worldwide events and trends like a global pandemic, socio-economic volatility, geo-political conflict and rising rates of chronic health conditions, supporting the well-being of global employees has become a top priority for multi-national organizations. In a 2023 survey of global employers, 80% reported they have or are developing a globally consistent well-being strategy<sup>1</sup>, a significant upward trend and a shift compared to prior years.

Before developing such strategies, employers need to understand the macro challenges and trends influencing the need for effective global well-being plans and outcomes.

We believe the following **FIVE** macro challenges and trends are driving the increased need for employers to focus on global well-being as a top priority:

**1 COVID-19 disrupted global rates of well-being, particularly mental health:** the pandemic led to a 27.6% increase in depression and a 25.6% increase in anxiety globally.<sup>2</sup> In another global survey of employees in 2022, only 44% rated their well-being positively, while 73% reported moderate to high levels of stress<sup>3</sup>.

**2 Rising rates of obesity and metabolic disease:** worldwide obesity has tripled since 1975, and most of the world's population now lives in countries where being overweight kills more people than underweight.<sup>4</sup> This has contributed to a global increase in chronic conditions, including diabetes.

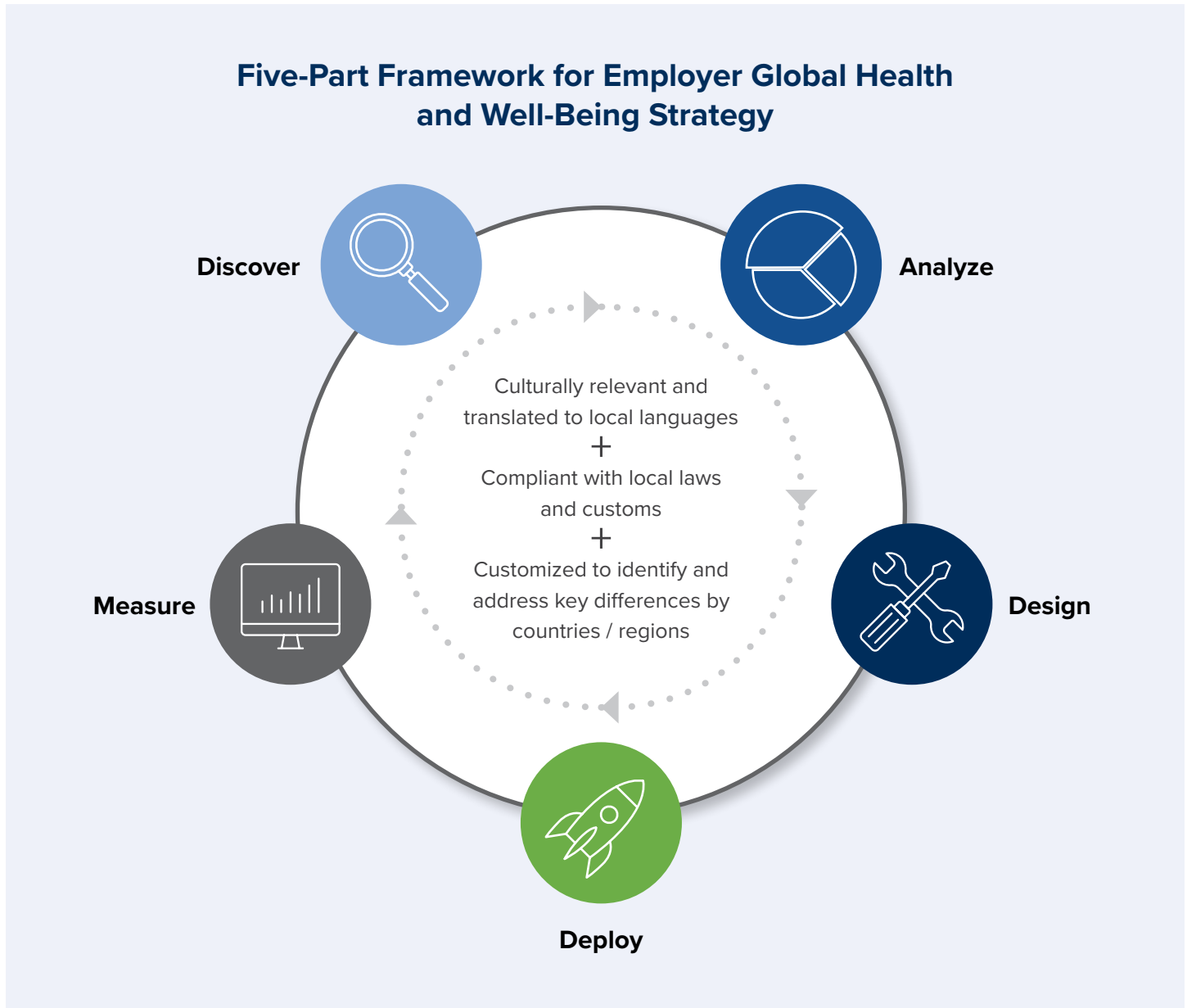
**3 A competitive talent landscape:** according to a 2023 study, 77% of global employers report difficulty filling open roles – a record 17-year high.<sup>5</sup> This reality also tracks with global employee sentiment, as 6 in 10 are considering leaving their current employer.<sup>3</sup>

**4 Exponential growth in global health venture funding and innovation:** the ten years from 2012 to 2021 delivered exponential growth in funding for digital and virtual health solutions (\$1.6B compared to \$29.3B for 2012 and 2021, respectively). Although funding decreased in 2022 to \$15.3B, employer interest in the sustainable deployment of innovative health solutions remains high<sup>6</sup>.

**5 Vocal employee sentiment and greater expectations around well-being support:** only one in three (34%) of employees say their employers care about their well-being, and a similarly small percentage (35%) say their company's well-being programs are attractive to new employees<sup>3</sup>. Employee sentiment around well-being support is also closely linked to perspectives around the organization's support for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB).

Given these challenges, employers should adopt a sustainable framework that can be iterative and refreshed to deliver an effective and adaptable global health and well-being strategy.

Brown & Brown has developed a five-part framework for employers and their global health and well-being strategy. The framework relies on the following employer actions:



## I. Discover

- Understand the current state of governance infrastructure supporting the administration and delivery of global health benefits and well-being programs
- Conduct inventory of programs, resources and benefits
- Utilize stakeholder interviews to document challenges and priorities

## II. Analyze

- Examine data on employee sentiment, preferences, lifestyle and clinical risks
- Capture snapshot of financial investment and budgets related to health spend

### III. Design

- Develop a conceptual framework, guiding principles and strategic roadmap of priorities
- Outline communications and measurement plans

### IV. Deploy

- Establish or reassess global minimum standards
- Develop or re-energize a well-being champions network
- Engage with high-performing vendor solutions with global capabilities
- Accommodate local limitations (health care delivery systems, data availability, etc.)
- Connect with local welfare and social programs

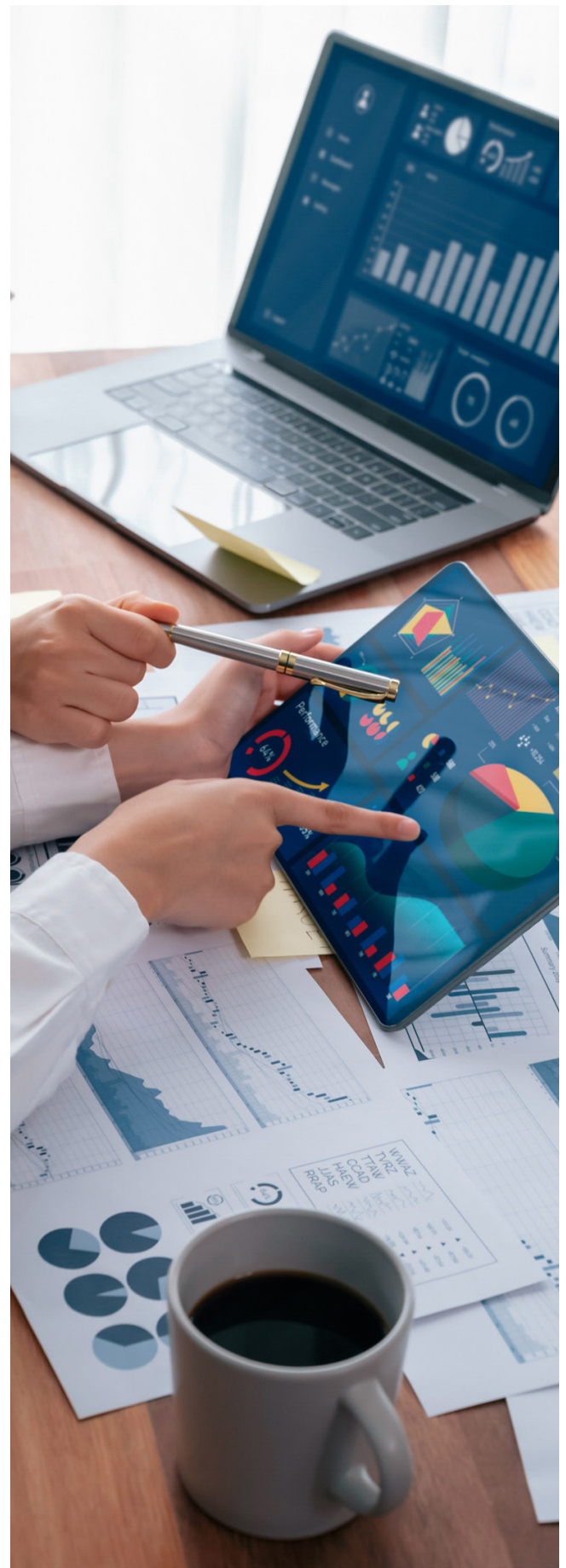
### V. Measure

- Determine the impact of interventions on employee sentiment, lifestyle and clinical risk
- Track financial investment and value of return
- Monitor vendor delivery and performance guarantees

No matter where employers are in their global health and well-being journey, the approach above will assist in refreshing or developing a sustainable and iterative roadmap to help lead to the success of global health and well-being strategies and business. This iterative approach could help yield better health outcomes and improved business metrics, including productivity, engagement, talent attraction, retention and employee satisfaction.

#### Sources:

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# About the Authors



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Abinue Fortingo is a Population Health and Well-Being Thought Leader, Strategist, and Consultant. He has worked with leading employers across various industries to develop effective population health & well-being strategies, including award-winning programs for Fortune-listed organizations. Prior to joining Brown & Brown in 2021, he spent 10 years at a global consulting firm as a leader in the health and well-being practice. Abinue holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Georgia.



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Dr. Short is the National Clinical Leader for Brown & Brown. She has a passion for improving health outcomes, medical costs, the member experience and engagement and productivity. Her background includes 25 years providing clinical leadership and innovation in designing, implementing and measuring population health programs and strategies for employers, vendors, and carriers. Dr. Short has also worked as a medical epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She earned her undergraduate degree at Harvard, her MD from Tufts University School of Medicine, did her internal medicine residency at Yale-New Haven Hospital, and trained in occupational and preventive medicine at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City where she also received a Master's degree in Community Medicine.



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