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A week ago, the [International SOS Foundation](#) hosted its inaugural Europe Health Conference in London. Over the two-day event, 40+ occupational health and safety, and medical professionals engaged in stimulating discussions about the emerging practices of nurturing employee health and wellbeing, and how these practices form a key part of sustainability strategies and help manage risk more effectively. With growing interest from investors, businesses, experts and all of us that work, this will be an area to watch closely. Sancroft Consultant, Ivaylo Dimov shares his highlights from the event.

1. Risk is the only language the whole Board is fluent in

While showing the positive aspects of health services is important in cultivating the right mindset in the long-term, convincing the board requires a solid, well-evidenced conversation about risk exposure, hazards and impacts on the bottom line. Prevention programmes are designed to save lives, but they can also save money.

2. Health benefits - a necessity not a luxury

There still appears to be a serious misconception in the boardroom about the nature of health benefits - often seen as nice-to-have items in the budget. In reality, corporate health benefits address systemic inefficiencies in access to, and affordability of, basic healthcare.

3. Culture eats strategy for lunch

Our behaviour and lifestyle choices are triggered by 'nudges' in our surrounding environment, with workplaces being a dominant one. Those nudges can often affect our long-term mental and physical health. That's why health programmes at work may not generate the desired results if there is no culture that encourages or incentivises the right behaviours and choices.

4. Employment models are changing

Work is increasingly dis-associated with a specific place or period of the day. A 9-to-5 office activity requiring a direct relationship between an employer and an employee is soon to be something of the past. The 'gig' economy is growing rapidly and revolutionising entire sectors and cities. Wellbeing and

health programmes should be designed with that shift in mind. Yet standards are not catching up quick enough to provide business professionals with the frameworks and tools to respond proactively.

5. The “F” factors: Finances and Family

As demonstrated by GSK’s flagship [Partnership for Prevention](#), a global preventive healthcare services programme for employees, there are two key factors to be considered at the centre of any health programme: the finances and cost to employees, and the inclusion of family members at risk.

6. New GRI 403 OHS standard coming into force in 2021

The Global Reporting Initiative has revised the GRI 403 [standard](#) for occupational health and safety. This new and improved standard:

- Takes a holistic approach with a focus on prevention & worker’s health
- Targets impact on workers and moves beyond lost-time injuries to capture recovery time
- Expands scope of workers based on extent of control
- Improves calculation methodologies and guidance.