

ENCOURAGING ANSWERS TO 3 BIG QUESTIONS AT THE MAD WORLD SUMMIT

By Claire Farrow

As the dust settles on the inaugural Mad World Summit, we are taking some time to reflect on the key insights and action points that emerged from across the day.

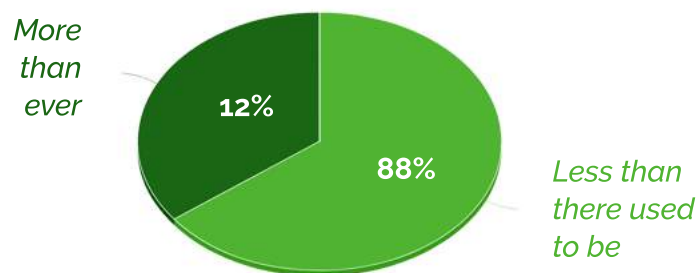
Already many people have shared their summaries on LinkedIn, including these perceptive posts from Kendelle Tekstar, Jane Fordham and Myrthe Heijnen. More will follow over the next editions of Mad World News.

Some of the most crucial insights, from my perspective, came from the results to the live Slido polls we conducted with the plenary audience during the keynote sessions.

We asked these questions to stimulate conversation and help the speakers get a better sense of the information needs of the audience. The answers also provide a useful snapshot of where the business community is up to on its journey to supporting and promoting the positive mental health and wellbeing of employees.

Is there still stigma surrounding mental health in your workplace?

The response to this question was very encouraging indeed, with a resounding 88% responding "less than there used to be".



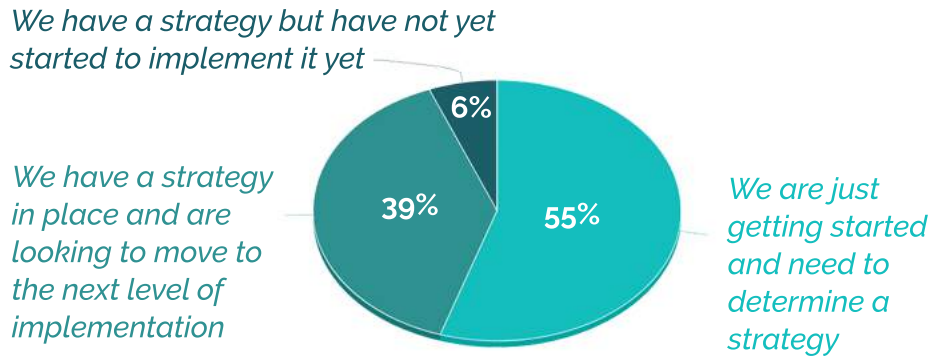
While this can't be taken as wholly representative of employers (attendees at Mad World are clearly already highly engaged with the issue), it does back up our firm belief that UK plc is primed to move from the "why" to the "how" on this crucial topic.

In his fantastic opening keynote address, Sir Ian Cheshire stressed the positive role employers have to play in improving the nation's mental health, stating "The workplace is a force for good in mental wellbeing" and "Business has to play its part and be confident about playing its part".

He also pointed out that while making it easier for employees to talk about mental health is a vital first step, this has to be backed up with the right support mechanisms. The key role workplace cultures and management approaches can play in preventing the development of mental ill-health was also emphasised.

Where is your organisation on its journey to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of employees?

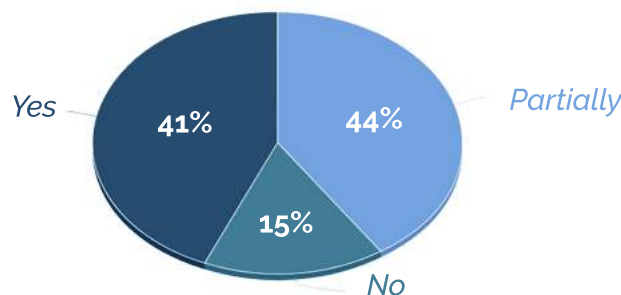
This second question received a more divided response. While the majority, 55% responded that they are just getting started and need to determine a strategy, it was interesting to see that a significant proportion - 39% - already have a strategy in place and are looking to move to the next level of implementation.



This again is encouraging and reflects employers' desire to not only implement but also build and maintain momentum behind strategies. As Prof Sir Cary Cooper warned in his keynote, quick fixes will not improve employees' mental ill-health, stating "We're looking for quick fixes. A lot of companies are. They say "let's do sushi at the desk". I don't think it's the solution. The solution is the culture of your workplace".

Has your CEO or the Senior Management Team bought into the need to support and promote the mental health and wellbeing of your workforce?

Our final big question honed in on a recurring theme of the day – the need for CEOs and the wider C-Suite to see mental health as a strategic priority. As one participant of the Think Tank session pointed out "If they don't, very little will happen," adding that "if they do, they might embed health into the performance and management of the business, which would create significant cultural changes and a much more attractive business."



So again, it was encouraging to see that 41% responded "yes" to this question and 44% responded "partially".

As Matthew Shaw, the Chair of the session which featured this poll pointed out though, the key point is what is meant by "partially" and how do we convince these partial supporters to fully embrace the need to make mental health a boardroom priority?

We're gathering answers to this question that were mentioned across the day for our next follow-up piece. If you have suggestions to share that have worked in your organisation, I'd love to hear about them. Please email me at claire@madworldforum.com