



**EVOLVING SELF, TEAM & BRAND
IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC**
A TRANSFORMATIONAL WELLBEING
JOURNEY FOR BARILLA'S MULINO BIANCO

Barilla
The Italian Food Company. Since 1877.

“At Wisdom Works, we believe thriving is a new standard of leadership success. Why? When we focus on cultivating the innate capacity of all people to thrive, we are better able, individually and collectively, to use the complexities and demands we face as new possibilities for evolution and growth—in brand performance, workforce engagement, business results, and human and cultural development.”

—RENEE MOOREFIELD, CEO, WISDOM WORKS GROUP

ABOUT WISDOM WORKS GROUP

Wisdom Works was founded in 1999 with a clear mission to make thriving a standard of effective, sustainable leadership. The social enterprise works with companies worldwide, empowering brands, work cultures, and leaders to embrace and advance human thriving. To accelerate impact within organizations, Wisdom Works draws on its core brand Be Well Lead Well[®], a science-based platform of wellbeing leadership assessments, bespoke programs, and culture change resources, backed by a growing network of practitioners around the globe. Demonstrating the belief that every company, large and small, can be an engine of wellbeing, Wisdom Works donates 1% of its gross revenues to inspiring causes that address social challenges.

THE ORGANIZATION

MULINO BIANCO

Mulino Bianco is the leading bakery brand in Italy and owned by the parent company, Barilla Group. An Italian food producer founded in 1877, Barilla operates in more than 100 countries delivering quality pasta, sauces, meal solutions, and bakery products. Bakery accounts for just under half of the organization's volume and Italy continues to be its largest market.

Mulino Bianco is a beloved brand with consumers because it was founded on an inspiring mission to “nourish the trust that the world can be a better place.” The Mulino Bianco team brings that mission to life by connecting the brand with core values that Italians hold dear, such as wholesomeness and simplicity, and their heritage around breakfast as a sacred beginning of a new day.



THE CHALLENGE

COVID STRAINS TEAM CONNECTION AND BRAND INNOVATION

The head of Mulino Bianco, Vice President of Marketing Julia Schwoerer, believes that a brand is a mirror of the people who work on it. She has a history of leading off-sites to reenergize and renew the commitment of Mulino Bianco team members to the brand and to each other. But COVID turned the world upside down. Italy was critically impacted by the pandemic with strict and lengthy lockdowns that meant the team's conventional ways of working were no longer applicable. Everyone had to work remotely from home and the new employees Julia had hired hadn't yet built relationships with others on the team. As the pandemic intensified a mood of survival across the country, team members experienced isolation, anxiety, and stress to a degree that they hadn't before, negatively affecting their lives and teamwork.

Without opportunities for face-to-face meetings, Julia worried about the team's connection with each other and their alignment and innovation for the brand. She asked Wisdom Works to address:

- How would Mulino Bianco continue to be meaningful and relevant in this new context—a world in which consumers also increasingly expect brands to care for their wellbeing?
- How would Mulino Bianco team members, individually and collectively, bring high energy to activating the brand's mission, particularly during a protracted lockdown?

Using our Be Well Lead Well® platform of tools, content and services, Wisdom Works developed a bespoke wellbeing journey for Mulino Bianco to answer these questions.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL WELLBEING JOURNEY FOR MULINO BIANCO

Our bold mission at Wisdom Works is to make thriving a standard of leadership success by prioritizing wellbeing in work and life. Specifically, our relationship with Mulino Bianco revolved around Julia's objectives on three levels: ME, the TEAM, and the BRAND.

- 1. ME:** Every employee of the 28-person team would grow individually through applying the science and practices of wellbeing.
- 2. TEAM:** The team would build cohesion and effectiveness by integrating wellbeing principles and practices into teamwork.
- 3. BRAND:** A wellbeing manifesto for Mulino Bianco would guide the brand's strategy and activations with consumers.

To accomplish these objectives, Wisdom Works designed and delivered a bespoke, 5-month transformational journey which included six interdependent elements:

“Addressing wellbeing is not a separate conversation from work. It’s about people seeing each other as whole human beings. It means creating an environment that integrates work and life, plus supporting each other in our journey to thrive.”

—JULIA SCHWOERER, VICE
PRESIDENT, MARKETING,
BARILLA GROUP



BE WELL LEAD WELL PULSE® ASSESSMENT

Each team member completed Be Well Lead Well Pulse®, a pioneering leadership assessment measuring 19 psychometric factors that facilitate thriving and stress resilience. These are shared in a confidential feedback report as innovative, easy-to-use scores across six dimensions, or pathways to wellbeing. (See page 8 for more details.)



1:1 PERSONAL COACHING & EXPERIMENTATION

Every individual on the team had confidential sessions with a wellbeing leadership coach to interpret their individual scores from the Be Well Lead Well Pulse® assessment. They also identified 2-3 experiments, such as setting life/work boundaries for their new remote work situations or structuring nature into their work schedules, to enhance their mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing and resilience during the pandemic and beyond.



TEAM SESSIONS DEVOTED TO THE SCIENCE & PRACTICE OF WELLBEING

Seven 2-hour, highly experiential, online sessions allowed the team to dive into the latest wellbeing science and its application personally, as a team, and for the brand. During these sessions, team members connected as whole people—as individuals with unique, complex, and interesting perspectives and personalities that evolved into a thriving, supported, high-performing team. They each created a personal wellbeing manifesto to reset their priorities in life and work. They learned practical tools to manage their stress and boost their energy, productivity, and teamwork. Plus, they helped each other navigate barriers to progress on this wellbeing journey.

“The team built trust together across disciplines, across hierarchy, and across positions, and they are proud for the opportunity to discover each other and know each other as more complete human beings.”

—ANDREA DIPACE,
BRAND EQUITY &
COMMUNICATION SENIOR
MANAGER, MULINO BIANCO



EVOLVING THE BRAND

Three of the team sessions opened the aperture wide on Mulino Bianco as a brand. Through personal and shared experiences, the team gained a new appreciation of the wellbeing aspirations, demands, and barriers of their consumers. They created brand heat maps by examining brand elements (e.g., personality, attributes, and benefits) and potential impacts on consumers (e.g., behavior and relationships) against the six dimensions and 19 psychometrics of Be Well Lead Well Pulse®. This evaluation allowed the team to identify the wellbeing dimensions the brand could authentically own today, as well as the brand's focus for enhancing consumer wellbeing in the future. As they reinforced wellbeing elements in their brand manifesto, they also created and implemented innovative ideas to activate wellbeing in the marketplace.



WHOLE LEARNING & INTEGRATION

Throughout the wellbeing journey, team members participated in a discipline of science-based practices to deepen their learning and translate personal experiences about wellbeing into useful insights for themselves and their loved ones, the team, and the brand. Examples of practices included breathwork, somatic mindfulness, connections with nature, journaling, appreciative feedback, deep listening, and consumer wellbeing research.



MEASUREMENT

The Be Well Lead Well Pulse® assessment was used again seven months after the transformational journey to gauge sustained changes to team member's wellbeing and stress resilience.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR ME, TEAM & BRAND

According to results from the second use of Be Well Lead Well Pulse®, the Mulino Bianco team showed significant and positive impacts in life and work one year after their wellbeing journey began. It is important to note: *These wellbeing increases came at a time when team members also reported dealing with heightened change within the company and unrelenting challenges due to the pandemic.*

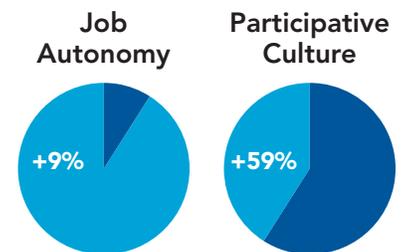
ME: ALL DIMENSIONS SHOW COMPELLING INCREASES IN EMPLOYEE WELLBEING



The wellbeing journey Wisdom Works designed and delivered for Mulino Bianco helped the team maintain stability and resilience during a very challenging time for people, the brand’s business, and the world. Through each of the Be Well Lead Well Pulse® dimensions (shown at left), individuals on this team reported increased focus, engagement, and wellbeing at work, along with greater internal resourcefulness to deal with their life-work demands. They also reported more actively using an inspiring personal vision and purpose to guide their decisions during the many upsets they faced due to the pandemic, along with key wellness behaviors (eating, moving, resting, and breathing) to positively manage their daily stresses and optimize their performance. Finally, team members reported a dramatic increase in taking deliberate actions to cultivate an environment of wellbeing and collaboration for the benefit of their colleagues. (See page 8 for a description of each dimension in the Be Well Lead Well Pulse® assessment system.)

TEAM: SHARED WELLBEING COMMITMENTS DRAMATICALLY BOOST TEAM CULTURE

The team’s wellbeing commitments to each other in daily interactions resulted in a stronger participative culture and increased personal autonomy (shown in the pie charts on the right). Actions to authentically reach out to one another more frequently, listen more deeply to all voices on the team, and create big and small moments of gratitude, positivity, and joy not only contributed to boosting team effectiveness; they also generated a more participative work culture, communication style, and management. These team practices helped to realize Barilla’s company vision of cultivating an inclusive, collaborative organization.



BRAND: REAWAKENING “CAREGIVING” IN THE BRAND AMPLIFIES CONSUMER WELLBEING

As the Mulino Bianco team rediscovered the brand’s purpose and personality, they deepened their appreciation of the brand’s relevance. They came to understand that the turbulent and uncertain state of the world offered opportunity for new interpretations about how the brand acts and speaks to its consumers—and wellbeing became a new lens for communicating and strategizing about the brand.

For the brand, perhaps the greatest impact of the wellbeing journey arose from the reawakening the Mulino Bianco's power for *caregiving*. Caregiving was always in the brand's DNA, yet now moved to the foreground as a powerful beacon for activation in the marketplace. As an example, the devastating effects of COVID-19 inspired Mulino Bianco's product brand, ABBRACCI (English translation, HUGS), to recognize and honor Italy's frontline nurses as special heroes in the pandemic through a promotion that donated profits from sales.

Through a deeper understanding of wellbeing, the Mulino Bianco team decided that the ABBRACCI brand would adopt the mantle of hugs for other worthy heroes, too, such as firefighters, schoolteachers, grandparents, and children battling any number of challenges like homelessness, illness, or hunger. Instead of a one-off pandemic campaign (the common strategy of many companies), ABBRACCI took ownership of the healing power of HUGS on a bigger and longer-term scale.



A TRANSFORMATIONAL WELLBEING JOURNEY

KEY LESSONS TO SUPPORT YOU

Engaging authentically in wellbeing is transformational. It is a path for consciously evolving how we live and lead. Mulino Bianco is on a journey of leadership to create the conditions for the team to bring their best selves to work, to leave work more capable, wise and well, and to use the power of the brand to nurture consumer wellbeing.

Are you ready to integrate wellbeing into your leadership, team, brand or organization? Consider these key lessons from the Mulino Bianco Wellbeing Journey:

- Be flexible with the design of the journey, while using its desired objectives as your guide. Because Wisdom Works paid attention to the uniqueness and rhythms of Mulino Bianco team members, the team, and the brand—and listened to what was emerging at all three of these levels throughout the journey—the design of this journey shifted and expanded in multiple ways that could not have been predicted at the onset.
- Ask leaders to apply the science and practices of wellbeing personally first, before deploying them elsewhere. At the heart of our work, we believe in the principle of BE ► DO ► SAY so that the behaviors and communications of a leader, team, organization, or brand come from a foundation of wellbeing.
- Expose the entire team to integrated thinking about the brand and its connection to wellbeing. This will be new and challenging to some members of the team who are not accustomed to working with brand strategy, yet you'll also access unexpected creative insights.
- Trust that people turn on the lightbulbs of wellbeing inside of themselves at different rates and stages of the journey. People are fundamentally creative, resourceful, and whole; make this belief the starting place for every interaction and experience you design in your wellbeing journey.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BE WELL LEAD WELL PULSE®



The Wisdom Works team believes creating a culture where wellbeing is valued is a mark of effective leadership. Be Well Lead Well Pulse® is the only instrument that provides you, as leader, the opportunity to explore 19 psychometrics of wellbeing in one setting and reported as 6 dimensions.

THRIVING: Evaluate your overall wellbeing today and in the future, as well as your ability to restore your wellbeing when you face difficulties or get off track.

FUEL: Proactively use your diet, physical movement, breath, and rest as tools for a sustained, balanced source of physical, emotional, and mental energy.

FLOW: Be in the zone—those times when you bring mindfulness and your full presence to the activities of life and work. You are intrinsically rewarded with energy, enjoyment, and a richer sense of how life unfolds with effortlessness and ease.

WONDER: Evolve worldviews through engaging in new experiences and challenges, embracing differences, and perceiving the beauty around you.

WISDOM: Tap into your inner greatness—the worthwhile purpose, higher vision, and innate genius you can use to guide yourself and others toward inspired impact.

THRIVING AMPLIFIED™: Bring forth more of your leadership potential to energize people, maximize their growth and capabilities, and cultivate a work environment of care.

FEATURES OF BE WELL LEAD WELL PULSE®

- Designed for all levels of formal and informal leadership. It may also be used with teams, professional networks, plus organization-wide.
- Adaptable for augmenting your strategy to build a culture of thriving, as well as approaches, such as development and onboarding, to elevate your organization's leadership capability.
- Backed by a growing database of leaders worldwide.
- Part of a global movement for conscious leadership.

READY TO THRIVE?

For more information or to find a Be Well Lead Well Pulse® Certified Guide in your region, contact us at info@wisdom-works.com.

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