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2025 June

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**MARKETING
NEWSLETTER**



Thriving in Uncertainty: Leadership and Wellbeing in Turbulent Times – A Timely Summit

In today's fast-moving and ever-changing world, it can be hard for organizations to reconcile the demands of the present with the pursuit of long-term business goals.

In the face of ongoing technological disruption, social and political upheaval, and mounting uncertainty, envisioning a clear, sustainable path forward can feel nearly impossible.

And yet, while the challenges facing organizations today may vary widely from economic volatility and political instability to social change, environmental pressures, or internal transformations like restructuring, the symptoms they present and more importantly, the solutions they require remain unchanged:

- **Burnout** prevention
- Proactive **psychosocial risk** management
- Change-ready **leadership**
- **Psychological safety**

A four-day virtual summit

**THRIVING IN
UNCERTAINTY**

ON-DEMAND SESSIONS:

**Burnout and Stress
Psychosocial Risks
Resilient Leadership
Psychological Safety**

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ORGANIZATIONAL
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**#WPOCares
#2025COEWeek**

Together, these elements form the foundation of resilient organizations capable of navigating uncertainty and thriving through change. The key to success in today's VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world lies in leadership that chooses not to wait for disruption to arrive before taking action, but instead prepares for its eventuality with **future-minded strategies** and **wellbeing-first cultures**.

This was the guiding theme of the Workplace Options Center for Organizational Effectiveness' virtual summit, **Thriving in Uncertainty: Leadership and Wellbeing in Turbulent Times**. Over the course of the four-day event, global thought leaders, data-driven practitioners, and executive peers led **insightful, action-oriented discussions** on how leaders can foster trust, clarity, and purpose amid today's volatility.

Across eight engaging and forward-looking sessions, **attendees gained:**

- Future-proof strategies for reducing burnout and building sustainable, wellbeing-first workplaces
- Global leadership insights from experts navigating disruption in real time
- Proven frameworks for embedding psychological safety and trust into high-performing workplaces
- Case-driven guidance on transforming psychosocial risk into a source of competitive advantage

"As history proves, success isn't partial to periods of calm. It's in those moments of transition—when the ground shakes, rules are written, and reality is upended—that true creativity and innovation takes root, and transformative outcomes follow," says **Oliver Brecht**, Vice President and General Manager of Enterprise Solutions at Workplace Options (WPO), who kicked off the summit with a compelling presentation on *"Leadership's Role in Combatting Burnout and Building Sustainable Work Culture."*

*"**This summit was a reminder to leaders:** that uncertainty offers a powerful opportunity to amplify purpose, sharpen direction, and lead with intention. That a culture where the best idea wins—and where people feel safe to envision new ideas—is one that will not only endure but thrive. And that by leading from the heart—honoring the human at the center of work—organizations can build a more engaged and resilient workforce, determined to grow and succeed together."*

See below for more details about the **thought-provoking summit:**

Day 1 – Preventing and Responding to Burnout: Designing Wellbeing-First Workplaces

"Leadership's Role in Combatting Burnout and Building Sustainable Work Culture"

Oliver Brecht opened the summit with a powerful session on burnout—its causes, symptoms, and how leaders can take responsibility for change. He explored how sustainable leadership practices and a shift from pressure to purpose can help prevent burnout before it begins.

Notable insights from the session include:

- Burnout is a **strictly occupational phenomenon**—and must be addressed through organizational, not individual, change.
- WPO data from **135,000 global cases** reveals critical thresholds where burnout risk rises—such as high levels of work-related stress, conflict, and performance pressure.
- Burnout-proof leadership starts with the three C's: **competence, capability, and confidence**.

“From Reaction to Prevention: Designing Wellbeing-First Workplaces”

Building on the concept of sustainable and wellbeing-first workplaces, **Kurt Merriweather**, VP of Employee Engagement Solutions at WPO, and **Starr Guthrie**, LCSW and WPO Service Lead, led a thoughtful and solutions-focused discussion on how organizations can move from crisis response to true burnout prevention.

Questions explored during the session included:

- What leads organizations to take a **defensive** or **compliance-driven approach** to wellbeing—and how can leaders reframe EAPs and other supports as **strategic investments** rather than crisis tools?
- How can leaders recognize when burnout has become normalized—and what **day-to-day behaviors** signal a need to reset their own approach to mental health?
- What practical steps can organizations take to **build trust in wellbeing resources**, especially across global teams facing time zone pressures and increasing demands?

Day 2 – Transforming Psychosocial Risk into a Catalyst for Growth

“Building Resilient Systems: Policies and Practices to Mitigate Psychosocial Harm”

Recognizing the demand for practical, people-centered strategies to mitigate psychosocial harm and foster healthier, resilient workplaces, **Christian Mainguy**, Senior Global Consultant at WPO, sat down with members of the WPO France Consulting team—**Vanessa Ezerzer**, **Noémie Leger**, and **Carole Da Silva**—to explore how organizations can not only comply with psychosocial risk legislation, but also strengthen their capacity to lead through change and foster long-term sustainability.

During the session, they discussed how WPO's consulting work helps organizations turn compliance into meaningful cultural transformation, sharing valuable insights gleaned from the team's experience:

- **Supporting companies through complex, high-impact changes**—such as restructurings, job cuts, and digital transitions—with tailored interventions grounded in labor law and psychosocial risk prevention.

- **Adapting each intervention to the company's unique context** to balance project demands, employee needs, and accessibility for onsite and remote workers.
- **Collaborating with HR, leadership, employee representatives, and occupational health via multidisciplinary committees**, using anonymized reports to identify concerns and guide preventive actions.
- **Prioritizing confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation** to build trust and provide strong referral pathways for at-risk employees.
- **Equipping managers and HR with group workshops and tools** to support both their teams and their own wellbeing during disruptions.

"Identifying and Managing Psychosocial Risks Before They Escalate"

In conversation with **Bianca Buie**, WPO Ambassador Program Manager, **Mary Ellen Gornick**, Consulting Managing Partner at WPO stressed the importance of moving beyond reactive responses to psychosocial harm by continuously monitoring risk and embedding this awareness into the daily operations, leadership practices, and lived culture of the organization.

"Addressing psychosocial risk in the workplace is often viewed through a wellbeing lens," Gornick explained. *"How does someone perform at peak?" "How do they bring their authentic self to work?" These are important questions, and they speak to the core of psychosocial risk. But its relevance extends beyond individual wellbeing. It also reaches into the long-term vitality and strategic advantage of the business itself."*

"A psychologically healthy work environment," she noted, *"directly impacts engagement, performance, and loyalty. By proactively managing psychosocial risks, organizations can retain skilled employees, reduce turnover, and build institutional knowledge and resilience over time—all key elements of long-term viability."*

Day 3 – Thriving in Disruption: Building Organizational and Personal Resilience

"Taking Care of People, Thriving in Uncertainty"

Rivkah Sherman, ICF-Certified Coach and WPO Project Development Coordinator, opened Day 3 with an impassioned presentation on leading through disruption. Drawing on Dee Hock's "chaordic organizations" concept, she encouraged leaders to strike a balance between chaos and order—offering a clear roadmap to help them lead with agility, foster team resilience, and drive innovation amid uncertainty.

Key takeaways from the session included:

- **Resistance to change** is natural, as is adaptability.
- Resilient leadership relies on **self-awareness, managing energy, flexibility,** and **psychological safety**.
- Leaders must accept that **creativity comes from chaos**, embrace **emergent strategies**, emphasize **clear vision**, and **empower experimentation**.
- To build team resilience, leaders must **help individuals manage emotions, encourage positive action** amid uncertainty, and foster **honest communication**.

- Finding order requires **sitting with discomfort, leading with vision, focusing on strengths**, and managing one's **own emotions first**.

"Leadership in Turbulent Times"

Recognizing the evolving demands of leadership during disruption—from rapid pivots to emotionally intelligent decision-making—**Donald Thompson**, CDE®, Managing Director at the COE, and **Marie Boon-Falleur**, Partner at Bain & Company, led a candid and insightful conversation on how to lead with clarity, courage, and credibility in today's unpredictable business landscape.

During their conversation—rich with real-world examples and grounded in first-hand experience—the two explored how leaders can shift from perfunctory to purposeful team engagement within fast-change environments, offering practical advice and actionable strategies leaders can use today to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Key questions answered included:

- How can leaders balance **crisis response** with long-term vision?
- What are effective ways to **build buy-in** and **reduce resistance** during change?
- What actionable steps can leaders take to **strengthen** trust and **communication**?
- How can team members **support struggling leaders** and **manage up**?
- Which **emerging trends** should leaders watch to prepare for **future disruptions**?

Day 4 – Psychological Safety and Building High-Trust Organizations

"Practical Techniques to Foster a Culture of Safety and Openness"

As Chief Knowledge Officer at WPO, **Gana Diagne** brought deep insight and practical wisdom to one of the most pressing topics in the workplace today: psychological safety. He emphasized that fostering a psychologically safe culture—where people feel empowered to speak up, take risks, and fully engage in their work—requires a fundamental shift in how organizations view mistakes.

"Mistakes offer valuable opportunities to improve a product, process, or even the organization as a whole," Diagne explained. *"The goal is not to dramatize errors or to encourage them, but to create a space where they can happen—and where people are enabled to learn from them."*

"Once a mistake is made, how can we learn from it?" *"How can we make sure it's not repeated? Can we change the process that led to that mistake, or study the system that's behind it? These are the questions that need to be acceptable to ask,"* he argued, **"and that openness starts at the top—with leaders who set the tone by acknowledging their own fallibility, encouraging dialogue, and making it safe to learn out loud."**

"Psychological Safety as the Cornerstone of High-Performing Teams"

To close out the summit, **Bob Batchelor**, VP of Global Marketing and Communications at WPO, and Oliver Brecht led a candid and insightful conversation on the foundational role of psychological safety in driving high-performing teams. Drawing on real-world examples of its absence, they offered practical, evidence-based strategies that leaders can implement immediately to build trust, foster inclusion, and enable people to thrive.

During the session, **Brecht shared insights from his work** with:

- **A tech start-up** where cutthroat competition and a culture of “yes-men” discouraged dissent and innovation, resulting in high attrition, client losses, and organizational failure.
- **A long-standing nonprofit** grappling with inflexibility and low autonomy, in which younger staff couldn’t challenge outdated practices, causing mission drift, internal conflict, and client disengagement.
- **A construction company** where a manager's challenges with inclusive leadership weakened morale and cohesion, risking turnover and disengagement.
- **A critical incident response team** following the Bondi Junction stabbing in Australia, where Brecht supported both affected clients and his team through emotional processing and recovery—an example of psychological safety in action.

Ready to Gain Critical Insights to Help Your Organization Thrive Amid Ongoing Uncertainty?

[Click here](#) to view the full library of session recordings from the #2025COEWeek.

Access the event [press release](#) for more insights?

Introducing AIR25: The Future of People Leadership

In a world defined by volatility, uncertainty, and accelerating change, leadership must evolve. Traditional models are no longer enough. Leaders today must navigate complexity while supporting teams with empathy, clarity, and resilience.

That’s why Workplace Options (WPO), through its Center for Organizational Effectiveness (COE), has developed **AIR25**, a **new leadership training framework** designed specifically for managers in today’s dynamic workplaces.

AIR stands for Adaptability, Inclusion, and Resilience.



AIR25

Building Psychological Safety
Through Inclusive Leadership

← SCAN NOW TO LEARN MORE
OR
VISIT

www.workplaceoptions.com/solutions/air-25

WHY IT MATTERS:

Between international conflict and increased financial stress, your employees' mental health is being challenged every day. **During this time leaders must be focused on creating a psychologically safe workplace which is essential for fostering employee wellbeing.**

When leaders are inclusive, they create an environment where all employees feel respected, valued, and safe to express themselves. This enhances overall team performance, creativity, and wellbeing. **By prioritizing inclusive leadership practices, organizations can cultivate a culture of psychological safety that empowers employees to perform at their best.** Ultimately, this leads to a more engaged workforce.



These are the three essential leadership traits that foster trust, improve performance, and empower teams to thrive under pressure.

Built on insights from the Leadership in Turbulent Times series, AIR25 is a **3-hour, interactive virtual workshop** designed for real-world impact.

It helps people leaders:

- Recognize signs of employee stress and disengagement
- Communicate clearly and confidently in high-pressure moments
- Apply practical strategies to build resilient, collaborative teams
- Use tools like the Manager Energy Audit and the Stress Scale to support wellbeing

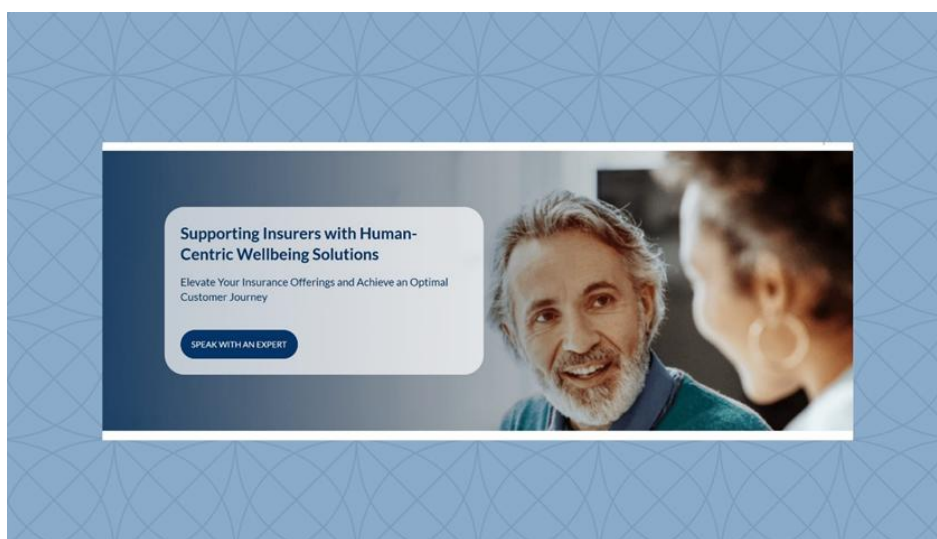
Whether your organization is rethinking leadership development or preparing new managers for the future, Workplace Options' COE delivers a practical, research-driven solution that scales across teams and regions.

Discover how **AIR25** from Workplace Options and COE can drive lasting impact.

Supporting Insurers with Human-Centric Wellbeing Solutions: Elevate Your Insurance Offerings and Achieve an Optimal Customer Journey

In today's competitive insurance landscape, offering more than financial protection is becoming a key differentiator. That's why insurers around the world are partnering with [Workplace Options](#) to deliver holistic support services that strengthen policyholder relationships, reduce risk and enhance overall well-being.

Whether you're offering individual policies or corporate coverage, WPO's integrated wellbeing solutions help you go beyond traditional support.



Whole-Person Support for Individual Policyholders

Life and Health Insurance

When individuals face critical health moments, whether coping with a new diagnosis, chronic illness, or grief, WPO provides **practical and emotional support**. From **counseling and coaching to health system navigation**, services are designed to increase resilience, reduce stress, and empower policyholders.

Property and Casualty Insurance

After a traumatic incident such as an accident, theft, or natural disaster, policyholders not only need financial support but also guidance and reassurance. WPO offers access to **grief and trauma counseling, daily living assistance**, and other services that **accelerate recovery** and build long-term loyalty.

Tailored Support for Group and Corporate Policies

Group Life and Health Insurance

Through integrated **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)**, health coaching, and **digital wellbeing platforms**, WPO helps group insurers offer services that support productivity and well-being in the workplace. These programs reduce absenteeism, promote employee engagement, and boost the value of group plans.

Corporate Risk Insurance

For businesses facing crises, WPO's **Critical Incident Response (CIR)** services are essential. These support tools ensure companies, and their employees receive immediate help, while also strengthening clients' business continuity and risk mitigation strategies.

Why It Matters

Across all insurance types, **WPO's services are proven to:**

- Reduce the cost and frequency of claims
- Improve customer satisfaction and retention
- Position insurers as partners in well-being—not just protection

By integrating these value-added services, insurers can transform how they support their policyholders, offering meaningful help when it matters most.

Want to Learn More? Explore our full overview of [how we support insurers](#) or reach out to discuss how we can tailor these services to your portfolio.

Latest Resources for Pride Month



PRIDE WITH PURPOSE

WORKPLACE **OPTIONS**

BUILDING TRUE LGBTQ+ INCLUSION AT WORK

As attacks against the community intensify, now is the time for employers to distinguish themselves as true champions of diversity, inclusion, and belonging by creating a safe, empowering workplace for LGBTQ+ workers.

Leading with Empathy: Supporting LGBTQ+ Employees in Challenging Times

In today's climate, where hostility toward the LGBTQ+ community continues to rise, mere gestures of support no longer suffice. True inclusion demands meaningful, ongoing action rooted in psychological safety, empathetic leadership, and daily practices that foster trust and belonging. At Workplace Options (WPO), we believe every employee deserves to bring their full, authentic self to work without fear.

To support leaders in this vital mission, WPO has released two insightful articles offering practical steps to create safer, more empowering workplaces. From trust-based communication to impactful inclusive policies, these resources provide a clear roadmap for lasting cultural change.

On June 17, WPO's The Diversity Movement (TDM) hosted a timely, **free webinar** titled "***Pride Under Pressure: How to Create a Safe Workplace for LGBTQ+ Employees.***" Led by LGBTQ+ inclusion expert **Susie Silver**, CDE®, Director of Client Success at TDM, the session explored how organizations can **authentically support LGBTQ+ employees** amid shrinking external protections and increasing societal pressures.

The **webinar** featured thought leaders including **Susie Silver, Greg Morley, and Dr. Yanica F. Faustin**. They shared actionable strategies and answered live questions on creating psychologically safe and inclusive workplaces.

You can still access the insightful resources and join the ongoing conversation on how empathetic leadership can transform workplace wellbeing.

[Learn more](#)

[Follow our conversation on LinkedIn](#)

Press release:

TELUS Health combines digital-first innovation with Workplace Options' Employee and Family Assistance Program to transform employee wellbeing solutions

TELUS Corporation announced a strategic partnership with GTCR, a leading private equity investor with extensive expertise across the healthcare landscape, supporting TELUS Health's recently announced acquisition of Workplace Options.

Last week, **TELUS Health announced the acquisition of Workplace Options for cash of approximately \$500 million (US\$350 million), net of assumed debt of approximately \$100 million (US\$70 million).** Workplace Options, a leading global provider of integrated employee wellbeing solutions across 200 countries and territories, further solidifies TELUS Health as an unparalleled force in the global wellbeing solutions market. Today, TELUS Health is one of the largest companies providing digital-first health and wellbeing services and solutions globally to empower individuals to live their healthiest lives.

TELUS Health is now positioned to support clients across all channels and global verticals covering **more than 150 million lives and growing.**

"Today marks a transformative milestone in our global health technology journey," said Darren Entwistle, President and CEO of TELUS. "By uniting TELUS Health and Workplace Options, we are creating an unprecedented breadth of experience and expertise that will drive global consistency in Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAP) and Wellbeing Solutions in a way that is unmatched in our industry. This acquisition furthers TELUS Health's practice of partnering with providers, digital health organizations, health plans and employers to create a more robust and localized offering executed at a global scale. This powerful combination, underpinned by TELUS' extensive AI expertise, ability to draw on common technologies, trends and advancements will unlock high-quality health outcomes for all constituents in a way previously unrealized. With more than 40-years of investment experience within the healthcare vertical, we look forward to GTCR's investment on this acquisition, who will be a value-added partner, supporting our efforts to accelerate growth."

"This is more than an acquisition, it's an extension of our vision to build one of the most comprehensive suites of health and wellbeing solutions globally," said Navin Arora, Executive Vice-president, TELUS and President, TELUS Business Solutions, TELUS Health, TELUS Agriculture & Consumer Goods, and TELUS Partner Solutions. "With our differentiated and complementary products and services and a strong base of local and multinational clients worldwide, we're excited about unlocking significant growth opportunities, new revenue streams and powerful economies of scale."

Benefits of the transaction:

- Establishes a global network of more than **180,000 providers across more than 200 countries** and territories, positioning TELUS Health as a leader in the global employer health and wellbeing space.

- Delivers a **standardized model** for providing customers with robust EFAP and wellbeing services, backed by industry-leading customer experience support, global scale and reach.
- Brings together **TELUS' robust infrastructure** and leading networks with **Workplace Options' strong digital capabilities**, as well as TELUS Digital's AI expertise, providing TELUS Health with a unique competitive advantage in the global market.

"By joining forces with TELUS Health, we are aligning with an organization that shares our deep commitment to innovation in EFAP solutions and our focus on delivering exceptional value to the reseller community," said Alan King, CEO, Workplace Options. "This acquisition by TELUS Health marks an exciting new chapter, uniting us in our mission to scaling what matters most: care, connection and trust in the workplace. TELUS Health's leading digital innovation will enable us to deliver unparalleled wellbeing services, ultimately transforming the health and productivity landscape."

For more information please visit

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