

Breast cancer awareness month sparks vital conversations on corporate mental health and wellness

By Ntombizane Mangumba

October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to highlight the importance of health, resilience, and support - not just in the fight against cancer, but in nurturing overall mental wellbeing, especially in corporate environments. As organisations across Zimbabwe focus on productivity and growth, there's a growing recognition that employee mental health is a critical component of a thriving workplace.

The Intersection of Physical and Mental Health

While Breast Cancer Awareness Month shines a spotlight on physical health, it also underscores the emotional and psychological resilience required to navigate health challenges. Mental wellness is not separate from physical health; they are intertwined. Employees facing stress, burnout, or personal health battles - like breast cancer diagnosis and treatment - need supportive work environments to maintain their wellbeing.

Corporate Wellness: A Pathway to Resilience

Companies in Zimbabwe, such as those listed on the Zimbabwe Stock



Exchange, are increasingly integrating wellness programs to boost employee morale and productivity. Initiatives like:

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs): Offering counseling

and stress management. Flexible Work Arrangements: Helping employees balance work and personal health needs.

Wellness Workshops: Focusing on stress reduction, mindfulness, and self-care.

Breaking Stigmas Around Mental Health
Just as Breast Cancer Awareness encourages open conversations about a often-stigmatised topic, corporate Zimbabwe can benefit from breaking down barriers around mental health discussions.

By fostering a culture of openness: Reducing Stigma:

Encouraging employees to speak about mental health without fear.

Promoting access to resources and support networks. Enhancing Productivity: Healthy employees are often more engaged and productive.

Practical Steps for Corporate Wellness

1. Create Supportive Environments: Encourage open discussions about health and wellbeing.
2. Offer Resources: Provide access to counseling and mental health resources.
3. Promote Balance: Support work-life balance to reduce stress.

Local Initiatives and Success Stories
In Zimbabwe, organisations like the Zimbabwe National Cancer Registry are working to improve cancer care and support. Similarly, corporate initiatives, such as wellness days and health screenings, can extend beyond physical health to nurture mental wellbeing. As we observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month, let's extend the conversation to encompass mental health in the workplace. By doing so, we can build more resilient, supportive, and productive work environments that care for the whole person - mind, body, and spirit.

The role of AI tools and robotics in building climate-resilient SMEs

By Stephen Mashingaidze

Artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics can play a significant role in building climate-resilient Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe and Africa. By leveraging these technologies, SMEs can enhance their performance, sustainability, and adaptability to changing climate conditions.

AI-Powered Climate Resilience

• Predictive Analytics: AI analyses climate-related data to predict potential disruptions, enabling SMEs to take proactive measures and minimize losses.

• Supply Chain Optimization: AI optimizes supply chains, reducing the risk of disruptions and improving resilience.

• Sustainable Practices: AI helps SMEs adopt sustainable practices, such as energy-efficient operations and waste reduction, promoting environmentally friendly business models.

Robotics in Sustainability

• Energy Efficiency: Robots optimize energy consumption in manufacturing processes, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable production.

• Waste Reduction: Robots assist in recycling and waste management, minimizing environmental impact and supporting sustainable development.

• Sustainable Production: Robots improve production efficiency, reducing resource consumption and promoting sustainable practices.

Performance

- Data-Driven Decision Making: AI provides insights on climate-related risks and opportunities, enabling SMEs to make informed decisions and drive business growth.
- Risk Management: AI helps SMEs identify and mitigate climate-related risks, improving their resilience and performance.
- Innovation and Competitiveness: AI and robotics drive innovation and competitiveness in SMEs, enabling them to adapt to changing climate conditions and stay ahead in the market.

Enhancement

Carbon Finance and Credits
Carbon credits are tradable instruments that convey a claim to avoided greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or enhanced GHG removals. According to Harvard Business Review, high-quality carbon credits can play a crucial role in supporting climate change mitigation¹.

Benefits of Carbon Credits

- Environmental Benefits: Carbon credits promote sustainable practices, reduce GHG emissions, and support climate change mitigation.
- Economic Incentives: Carbon credits provide financial incentives for companies to adopt sustainable practices and reduce emissions.
- Flexibility for Businesses: Carbon credits allow



companies to offset emissions while transitioning to cleaner operations.

Upcoming Presentation
I will present on the nuts and bolts of AI tools and robotics process automation as interventions for sustainable development at the SMEs International Expo conference on the 9th and 10th of October 2025, where I will explore the potential of these technologies to drive climate

resilience, improve performance, and promote sustainable practices in SMEs.

Climate-related disruptions can impact SME operations, including supply chain interruptions, equipment damage, and employee safety concerns.

- Reputation and Brand: SMEs may face reputational damage if they are perceived as not being climate-resilient or sustainable.