

HELP THEM THRIVE: THE SURPRISING BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY WORKFORCE

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There is widespread agreement on the benefits of having a healthy workforce. In addition to helping control rapidly escalating healthcare costs, companies who offer wellness programs can expect to see productivity gains, reduced absenteeism, increased retention and enhanced recruitment results.

The financial benefits of employee wellness are best measured by both short-term and long-term payoffs. The major, preventable chronic conditions – obesity, heart disease, hypertension and Type 2 diabetes – are impacted by improvements in physical exercise, better nutrition and smoking cessation, but the true return-on-investment occurs over years, rather than shareholder-driven fiscal quarters.

That's why it is just as important to look at the effect on overall vitality, well-being and engagement as an integral factor of your program. Increased stamina, lower levels of stress, higher levels of well-being and an overall enhanced quality of life are just a few benefits that stem from workplace wellness programs. **BI WORLDWIDE's New Rules of Engagement** study indicates the strong correlation between employee wellness and overall engagement in their job, family and community. Wellness as a part of workplace culture and environment is a powerful driver of employee engagement. Our **New Rule #4 "Help them thrive,"** encourages companies to view wellness holistically.

Here are **ten** recommendations to help you incorporate wellness into your employee recognition program.

#1

Mix it up

In the past, wellness programs and practices included short-term activities and one-time, deterministic "do this, get that" incentives such as cash payouts for completion of health assessments. Emerging trends show a preference for behavior change initiatives, mixing both deterministic and probabilistic (high promotional value and a chance to win) awards to encourage assessment completions, initial change efforts and sustainment. Long-term success can be achieved if incentives are provided for progress toward a goal and maintenance of an outcome.

#2

Make it for everyone

In keeping with a holistic wellness approach, it makes sense to offer wellness programs to all employees, regardless of participation in your health insurance plan. It makes things simpler. After all, even participation in an insurance plan can be considered Private Health Information (PHI), subject to HIPAA regulations. If wellness is for everyone, you avoid revealing who participates in insurance plans. Plus, it is not just about the cost savings for the company but also a more engaged workplace. A healthy, engaged employee:

- Is three times more productive
- Makes 60% fewer errors
- Is more alert during the work day

Caring for your employees, making their well-being a priority and ingraining wellness into your culture will create a more productive workplace that benefits everyone.

#3

Focus on behavior change

In many programs, employers put a significant amount of budget into rewarding employees who complete health assessments and screenings. While assessments and screenings are a MUST and they provide a snapshot of an employee's current health status, they don't necessarily change behavior.

Emphasize the importance of assessments and screenings through awareness, education, frequent communication and probabilistic rewards. A chance to win a weekend spa getaway or exercise equipment can motivate employees to complete these steps, while also preserving your budget. Then, use the rewards budget to drive behavior change – increases in physical activity, nutrition programs and more.

#4

Something for everyone

With workforces becoming more and more diverse, you need to be conscious of your employees' willingness to change as well as their motivational styles, and adjust your approach accordingly.

For the intrinsically motivated employee, an intuitive style of thinking drives their behaviors. Inspire them through program messaging and imagery up front. Provide resources and support, such as workshops, exercise facilities, and healthy nutrition choices in the cafeteria. Give them a foundation that will aid them in making changes, sustain new behaviors and encourage them to help others.

For the extrinsically motivated employee, provide a positive rationale for change and motivate with incentives. Then through a more intuitive approach, utilize easy to use resources and eliminate their behavior change barriers by continuously supporting their needs. After they have taken action, foster an environment that helps them create new social norms in the workplace.

The disengaged portion of your audience needs a very straightforward, rational line of thinking. Intervene early to capture their attention about the long-term consequences of unhealthy behaviors. Make healthy behaviors an easier choice by using choice architecture, offering a limited number of carefully chosen options. As employees start to take action, reinforce their gains while emphasizing the lost opportunities. Reward change and continue to reward sustainment of healthy behaviors.

#5

The right rewards for the right activities

Put the focus on healthy behavior changes and activities. With your various audiences in mind, offer environmentally appropriate wellness challenges through participatory programs that can impact preventable chronic conditions – get people moving, help them make healthy nutrition choices and motivate them to take advantage of health coaching resources. This is an appropriate way to use deterministic rewards. Make the incentives easy to understand and participate in, and use tangible rewards to get the most trophy value or sociability out of the rewards.



#6

Generate healthy competition

Individual and team step goals are an easy way to get the competition going. Leaderboards serve as great motivators for any environment. Badging can reinforce the social element, which gives employees public recognition for their achievements.

To drive initial engagement, fast start programs and team challenges are effective ways to gain participation. In one example, a company offered double award points during a fast start competition for their individual step program and saw engagement increase by 20% as compared to the same time the previous year. In another case, a company's team step challenge produced a 32% increase in total steps while driving 8% more engagement with their employees.

#7

Work together, win together

Make wellness events and healthy activities a fun part of your company culture. A collaborative team approach keeps employees feeling like they aren't in it alone. Company sponsored 5K runs, team sponsorships for events such as Walk for the Cure and healthy potluck style cook-offs can help bring everyone together.

#8

Drive awareness of additional resources

Many employers offer great resources for wellness but don't promote them enough. Offering fitness discounts, health coaching, weight loss program discounts and reduced health insurance premiums for non-smokers are all tools to increase engagement in your other wellness initiatives. Use continuous awareness campaigns to make sure your employees are in the know.

#9

Consider the environment

Understanding and overcoming work environment obstacles is another key to wellness engagement and success. For office workers, find ways to get them standing, moving and eating nutritiously – adjustable desks, walking meetings and treadmill work stations that can be checked out for use during the day can all be used to combat the ills of sitting for long periods.

For road warriors, discounts on healthy foods and restaurants coupled with availability and incentives to stay at hotels featuring a fitness facility would be more fitting. In manufacturing, find ways to build in fitness breaks, offer healthy food at a reasonable cost and promote education programs and incentives aimed at prevention. Keeping the work environment in mind will allow employees to more readily adapt to changes and keep progress steady and sustainable.

#10

Integrate with recognition

Recognition is a powerful tool for driving employee engagement and it makes a company's recognition system a natural fit for driving wellness activities. BIW's G5 social recognition system allows companies to effectively communicate, educate and reward for wellness program initiatives. G5 has the ability to segment communications, banners, news stories and other content to specific audiences in order to ensure a targeted approach



for specific roles, functions or geographies. Leaderboards can be used to encourage competition. Badging showcases the achievements of participants. Employees can earn reward points that can be redeemed for an extensive selection of tangible rewards or BIW can build a tiered collection of healthy rewards designed specifically for your program.

Help your employees thrive! BIW can collaborate with you and your wellness provider to design an integrated approach that will drive higher engagement with your wellness initiatives.

To learn more about BIWORLDWIDE and how we can help integrate wellness into your current employee recognition strategy, visit: www.BIWORLDWIDE.com/wellness or email info@BIWORLDWIDE.com.

