



## **Increase Participation in Your Wellness Program**

Participation in wellness programs is a two-way street- there are both short and long term benefits for both the employee and employer. The key reason to start a corporate wellness program is because the employer wants happy, healthy and productive workers. For the worker, the wellness program allows him or her to remain healthy both physically and emotionally, and be more connected with the company. For the employer, insurance costs will decrease over time while other factors like morale and productivity increase over time.

Many surveys have been done indicating that when employees participate in wellness programs they develop greater satisfaction in coming to work, the employees work harder, become more productive and perceive themselves to be healthier. More important, the corporate wellness program also creates a positive bond and better attitude towards the employer.

Other surveys reveal that employees who participate in wellness programs are more likely to remain with the company and in fact even refer their friends to come and work for the same company. The overall conclusion of most surveys reveals that employees who participate in wellness programs believe that it contributes to their wellness, fitness and health. The employees also state that companies who initiate wellness programs are concerned about their long-term welfare.

However, high participation in a wellness program is not achieved overnight, but does require planning and commitment. If the wellness program is to have health benefits, then everyone in the company has to be actively involved into the activity. The mission of a corporate wellness program is to motivate employees to participate in some form of activity that keeps them physically and emotionally healthy.

### **4 Principles for Creating a Wellness Program**

Engaging the employee is a major challenge for more employers. For wellness programs to be effective the majority of workers have to participate. Some of the ways to create a successful wellness program include the following:

1. The program should be free or low cost. The first thing all employers should do is try not to charge the employee for participation; charging a fee may discourage participation for some as the employee may feel that the employer is thinking only about the business. When the program is complementary, it tells the employee that the employer is interested in his or her welfare.
2. Secondly the wellness program should be convenient. Making a choice to remain healthy should be an easy. The majority of people do not want to come across more hassles at work. The wellness program should be easy with no long waits, easy to access and fun. Remote workers

should be able to participate with ease, utilizing technology created to engage everyone regardless of location. Offering different challenges throughout the year designed to capture diverse populations can be effective, ensuring all age groups, genders and health statuses are included.

3. Consider providing incentives for participation. This is one of the best ways to get people interested in the program and get them started. The incentive does not always have to be monetary but can be time rewards like offering 4 hours of PTO for winning a challenge for example. This can be taken one step further by offering bonuses, money, gift cards, and reduction in health premiums. Recognition alone is often a motivating reward for employees.

4. Continuous evaluation leads to continuous improvements. A great way to know if your wellness program is helping the employees is to get some type of feedback on a regular basis. Employees may even make suggestions to make the program better and volunteer to lead one or more aspects of the program. Continuous feedback from employees as well as aggregate claim data ensures that the program will consistently improve based on what the employees need and what they are asking for

Choosing to offer a wellness program is a great step in engaging employees in their day to day work duties. Happy and healthy employees lead to more productive employees which in turn improves morale, retention, and health care costs over time. Consider offering engaging activities like virtual or onsite cooking demonstrations, health fairs, fitness classes, webinars or challenges. Contact us at [thrive@milehighfitness.com](mailto:thrive@milehighfitness.com) for a complimentary demo.

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