Why develop BE Well?

BE Well is a Wellness and Fitness program designed to be implemented in a fictitious company for the Administrative Communication course at Stephen F. Austin State University. A team of three employees from the organization, Biss Enterprises, was asked to develop this program by the CEO of the company. The team researched and explored different options to create a wellness and fitness program suitable for all the employees in the company.

What did we learn from our research?

Workplace wellness and fitness programs reap benefits for both the employee and the company. A study performed by ADP, Inc. reported that 79 percent of large companies and 44 percent of midsize companies offer some type of wellness program. These companies offer five or six different components in their program. However, companies of all sizes can implement a program to provide the necessary tools for their employees to start living a healthier lifestyle.

Companies are also discovering that established wellness programs are paying off in reduced health care costs. Research conducted by Johnson & Johnson Company concluded their wellness program has saved them $250 million over the past decade in health care costs. When they calculated the numbers from 2002 to 2008, their return was $2.71 for every dollar spent.

How does this benefit a company?

A benefit to companies with successful programs is a reduction in their turnover rate. SAS Institute reported their voluntary turnover to be 4% due to their implemented wellness program. Employees see wellness and fitness programs as valuable benefits and often stay longer with their current employers to keep those benefits. The younger generations are now looking for employers that offer these benefits and companies can use the programs to their advantage to attract top talent. Some companies such as MD Anderson Cancer Center, Biltmore, and Nelnet have all benefited from this unplanned advantage.

According to GENAIVX President and CEO Mike Benton, healthier employees contribute three things: lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and lower levels of job satisfaction. Involvement from the department heads and upper management will also play a key role in creating a supportive environment. Management must be actively involved to encourage their department employees to also get involved in the program.

What can be included in a wellness program?

Yoga classes, Zumba classes, free massages, annual health fairs, and providing fresh fruit in the break rooms are a few examples of what some businesses are already providing for their employees. Smaller companies that are unable to offer classes or a fitness center can form employee softball, volleyball, or flag football teams. Teams can play after work for 30 minutes to an hour.

How do we apply what we learned?

Companies of all sizes would benefit from a wellness and fitness program. By making available health risk assessments and on-site testing to employees, businesses can help their employees detect signs of preventable medical conditions. Employees are more likely to receive medical attention before their conditions worsen. If the screenings are made available during a workday, employees are more likely to participate. In addition, providing healthy eating and exercise options makes it easy for employees to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The company can also implement an intranet webpage to promote healthy eating and exercise and encourage healthy habits.

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