



Top 10 Corporate Wellness Mistakes

Corporate wellness programs can be incredibly beneficial to workplaces, driving down health insurance costs, engaging your workforce, and ultimately creating healthier employees. Keep in mind, however, that just a few mistakes can potentially prevent a wellness program from generating the results you want and need for your business.

Corporate wellness programs are usually introduced with the best of intentions: to improve employee health and productivity, foster teamwork, and save on health insurance costs. Often loosely pulled together through a number of vendors and initiatives, they can be difficult to manage and track, and therefore lack staying power. While the necessity for corporate wellness is undeniable, building a sustainable program remains a difficult task in many organizations.

If you're grappling with low participation and minimal results in your organization's wellness program or aren't sure how to make your initiative more successful, you may be making some critical oversights. Here are the top 10 corporate wellness program mistakes.

1. No budget

Many organizations plan to create a wellness program without allocating the resources they need, especially a budget. A wellness initiative can be a major undertaking and adequate funding, staffing, and resources are all critical to a successful program. It's unlikely that you will be able to see any meaningful results without investing any money or resources into a wellness initiative.

2. Limited interest

Many wellness programs fail because employees have limited interest in the activities or wellness in general. Thus, it's important to identify the activities in which employees have interest to determine those that may generate better participation, as well as find creative ways to generate interest in wellness (incentives, social activities, contests, etc.). Without participation, you likely won't achieve any significant behavior change.

3. Assuming that one-size-fits-all

No two employees have the same body, strength, or motivation and likewise not all employees need the same type of help with wellness. Some may need assistance with nutrition and others with fitness. Even within these buckets, employees will vary in terms of their level of fitness/wellness (i.e. beginner, intermediate, advanced). Offer a variety of options and resources so that you can meet the needs of your employees' many interests, needs, and levels of health.

4. Offering just a few wellness activities

A wellness program is more than just offering an on-site fitness class, annual fair, flu shots, and an occasional seminar. These are wellness activities rather than a comprehensive wellness program. While activities are critical to a wellness initiative, activities alone will rarely create the behavior and lifestyle changes that you are probably seeking. The activities you choose should be connected to the behaviors you want to change in your workforce and the needs of your employees.

5. No connection to your benefits strategy

Wellness programs with no strategy or goals lack direction. Too often, they may not be linked or connected to benefits plans or business strategies, or may be perceived as an extraneous benefit by employees. It's important to consider the reasons why you are creating the wellness program in the first place and the purpose it serves your business in order to measure whether or not you are meeting its goals. It's equally as important to make sure that employees see the connection between the wellness program and these strategies.

6. Limited support from senior management

We don't just mean support for the program's budget. Senior management needs to buy into your wellness program and participate regularly. They must visibly be "walking the talk" when it comes to wellness, and most of all, they need to care about employee well-being and recognize how it affects the business. It tends to undermine the success of the program when employees don't see that their leaders care about wellness.

7. Failing to target high-risk employees

While it's important to try to engage all of your employees in your company's wellness efforts, be especially concerned with those that are high-risk. Every organization has some employees who are driving their claims more than average employees. Without engaging these employees to participate, you may not see the results you want. Be prepared to provide targeted resources and support to these employees to help them make critical lifestyle changes.

8. Not changing the little things

By "little things," we mean the nuances of your culture. If you want employees to take wellness seriously, you'll need to impact the "little things" in your organization that impede your efforts to create a healthy place to work. These could include replacing soda vending machines with healthy drink options; changing food choices at meetings and staff functions; allowing flexible schedules to work out; and getting rid of traditional morning donuts. If wellness is truly a priority, you have to exemplify that throughout your entire workplace.

9. Lack of change and reinforcement

Over time, employees' enthusiasm for your wellness program will fluctuate if you don't keep the program fresh. If new activities and components are not constantly being integrated into the program to maintain employees' interest, it may be difficult to motivate continued participation. Similar to other workplace initiatives, continue to change and adapt the program over time.

10. Doing it alone

Many organizations try to launch a wellness program with just their own internal staff and the assistance of their health insurance carrier and neglect to use outside experts and vendors. The reality is that designing a wellness program usually requires expertise and experience beyond the traditional HR function. As a result, it's a good practice to select outside resources and support that can help a wellness program succeed. This is why HealthCheck360 exists as we provide expert consultation on program design. Our program's flexible incentive models can be customized to impact the entire employee population or more specifically focusing on the high health risk groups. This enables us to assist you in developing a strategic plan with an evolving incentive strategy to match the changing needs and outcomes of your wellness program. We know you, your CEO, CAO and/or CFO need an effective dashboard to manage your wellness and overall risk management plan. In addition to having a fun program HealthCheck360 knows that management requires quantifiable results that lead to employee accountability, goal achievement, teamwork & more predictable outcomes.

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