

WORKPLACE WELLNESS

HEALTHIEST EMPLOYER



AWARD WINNERS' IDEAS FOR CREATIVE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Some of Atlanta Business Chronicle's Healthiest Employers 2012 winners, including Automobile Protection Corp., eyespeak, Fallon Benefits, the city of Fayetteville, McCarthy Building Cos. Inc., PBD Worldwide and Service Foods, along with Kaiser Permanente of Georgia, shared ideas for creating and maintaining a healthy workplace:



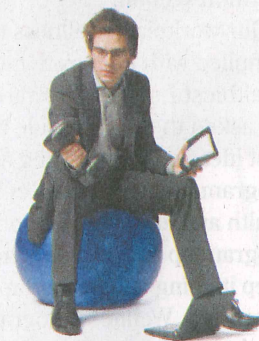
GET STARTED

- Identify the needs of your company and employees — employees are skeptical about why employers are putting wellness programs in place. Create a program that balances the needs of the company with the benefits to employees.
- Be original — be true to your culture and do what you think is right, not just what everyone else is doing.
- Make sure you offer a program alternative for employees who may have medical conditions that keep them from participating.
- Brand your program and come up with a wellness mission statement. Have a contest to get employees and their families involved in developing a catchy wellness logo and/or tagline for your program.
- Access: Make it easy for employees by having programs that are on site so there are no excuses not to participate.
- Get creative with your wellness communications. Order buttons to wear, put up table tents in break areas and post information where employees may least expect it, like directly on the vending machines or by the elevators.
- Include wellness in the performance review/goal-setting process. Have at least management level and above set a personal wellness goal for themselves every year.
- Employee testimonials can be very powerful motivators. If you have employees with wellness successes to share, ask to include their stories in a corporate communication or at the next company meeting.
- Enlist a wellness champion or team of champions to lead the effort.
- Evolve. Keep your wellness program current by changing and adding in new offerings to employees to keep things fresh.

ACTIVITIES

- Promote parties or catering around healthy foods. Look down on doughnuts/bagels and keep fresh fruit in a basket and filtered water available for employees instead.
- Create lunch hour walking groups or small group personal training by fitness level. This creates a social outlet for employees while making dramatic improvements on overall health through physical activity.
- Provide weekly yoga or Pilates classes during lunch time. These mind/body practices will reduce stress and improve health.
- Develop a corporate gym membership for employees. Offering a free or discounted gym membership to employees could increase their activity and overall health.
- Bring in a smoking cessation program. One of the top ways to reduce health risk is to cut out smoking.
- Create a "biggest loser" program with educational seminars from health professionals and accountability weigh-ins with winner incentives upon program completion.
- Clean out vending machines. Strip out the cookies and candy bars, and replace with healthier snacks such as trail mix and protein bars, etc.
- Invest in pedometers. For just a few dollars each, you can buy pedometers for your employees, pass them out and encourage staffers to keep track of the number of daily steps.
- Hydration — provide employees with large tumbler cups for drinking water. Most employees are dehydrated throughout the workday and adequate hydration (half your body weight in ounces of water per day) will decrease cravings and increase mental alertness.

- Bring your own healthy lunch contest: post healthy packed lunch pictures on social media sites; those who bring the most healthy and creative lunches win a prize.
- Reimburse fees for participation in local 5k runs, walks, marathons, etc.
- Consider creating a basic gym in vacant office space, hiring a fitness coach for rush-hour workout classes, or launching a companywide campaign to lose a collective 10,000 pounds in six months.



MOTIVATION

- Health and fitness in the workplace starts from the top down. If the leaders buy in and live it, everyone else will follow.
- Hold each other accountable. This looks different for every organization and size, but be transparent with each other about health and fitness goals and challenge each other. Team-based rewards systems help in this way.
- Acknowledge. Publicizing achievements that your employees have made is a great motivator and instills pride.

— *Tips compiled by Contributing Writer Giannina Smith Bedford.*

-Activities and Motivation Tips contributed by Dr Keith Kantor