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CORPORATE WELL-BEING PROGRAMS: WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

“On what high-performing companies should be striving to create: A great place for great people to do great work.”

– Marilyn Carlson, former CEO of Carlson Companies

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A PRIMER ON CORPORATE WELL-BEING

Workplace and corporate wellness programs have been around for decades. According to the Corporate Wellness Magazine, programs for workplace wellness were first introduced post World War II and gained popularity through the 1970's. Some organizations in the US introduced such programs even before the turn of the century.

When these programs were first introduced, their focus was largely on physical health and wellness, nevertheless, by the 1980's, workplace wellness programs incorporated other aspects of wellness as well, such as occupational health and safety and a range of health and support programs.

Implementing a corporate wellness program is important, especially in this day and age, and investing in such programs is much simpler than you might think. The key is to start small, take feedback from employees and take a look into different programs that are already happening in your industry.

In this booklet, we will drill into the basics of the concept and learn some brilliant strategies and tools for successful implementation of well-being programs.



“Your number one customers' are your people. Look after employees first and then customers last.”

Ian Hutchinson



CORPORATE WELL-BEING – AN INTRODUCTION

Corporate well-being is a term that's being thrown around a lot lately and for good reason.

As organizations begin to discover that attracting and retaining star performers require more than just a handsome pay, corporate well-being programs are quickly becoming popular as the ultimate employer differentiator.

Corporate wellness programs are designed to support and encourage a holistic approach to employee wellbeing by creating an organizational culture of health and wellness. Offering a corporate wellness solution that extends beyond traditional wellness programs cultivates healthy habits among employees and improves health outcomes, all while increasing productivity, optimizing human resource investments and boosting employee engagement.

It may seem like these programs are meant only for bigger organizations or forward-thinking companies, like Amazon and Google, however, this is not true. Investing in a well-being program offers far-reaching benefits for any organization, regardless of its size and industry.

As the line between life and work diminishes, offering a well-rounded, end-to-end suite of well-being programs that focus on different aspects of well-being including financial, mental, physical, career, social and community well-being is becoming a corporate responsibility and a strategy to drive employee engagement, productivity and retention.

Employees spend a lot of time in the workplace, and correlating wellness goals with work life balance is becoming critical to driving business outcomes. Having a corporate wellness program is imperative to the foundation of any business. One thing that needs to be kept in mind is that building a successful corporate wellness program takes time and includes a wellness solution that is embedded in the culture of the organization.



This generation is all about 'feel good, look good' vibes. They look for things that could motivate them.

Caffeine fixes, Monday motivation quotes, energy boosters, and powerful playlists that inspire them to feel good every day. Efficiency is key for them and having access to a well-rounded and productive well-being program is right up their alley.



WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE

– THE DIMENSIONS

Traditionally, corporate well-being programs only recognized the physical aspect of wellness. While this approach is better than not having an approach at all, employers that focus only on this aspect of well-being are missing out on a significant opportunity to positively impact their organization. That's because this approach misses on the different elements of employee well-being.

The trick to a successful employee wellness program is learning how to connect the different components in a unique way. These components include physical, social, mental, community, career and financial well-being. It is essential for employers and employees to understand how the different aspects of well-being are connected. For example: if an employee is mentally disturbed, they will most likely be feeling the physical and emotional impact of that as well. When one aspect of well-being is lacking, it is difficult for employees to feel and perform their best at work.

THE SIX DIMENSIONS OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING



The definition of well-being has expanded dramatically over the past few decades. Today, workplace well-being programs focus on physical, mental, career, social, and financial health, as well as changes to culture and leadership behaviors to support these efforts.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

The physical component of well-being is what we typically think of first when we hear the words wellness or health. This element of well-being refers to the general health of the body, including health habits, exercise, and nutrition. Helping employees achieve positive physical health means helping them lower their risk for chronic illnesses, maintain a healthy weight, and prevent other health issues like chronic fatigue.

Some ways employers can incorporate the physical component of well-being into their corporate wellness programs include:

- Yoga classes on alternate days
- Annual biometric screenings
- Nutrition education
- Healthy lifestyle education

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

The financial side of well-being often gets ignored, which is quite unfortunate because it can have a huge impact on other areas of well-being if left unattended. Financial well-being is exactly what it sounds like; it is the process of learning how to manage one's finances intelligently. Financial concerns can lead to emotional and physical distress as well, which can have a negative impact on employee performance and productivity.

Incorporating financial well-being programs into a workplace well-being program helps employees learn about managing their personal finances, which in turn relieves stress associated with finances. Employees will be also be able to fully concentrate on their job when they are not worried about their personal finances.

Employers can incorporate the financial component of wellness into their employee well-being programs by offering:

- Financial resources to employees
- Options for saving and investing money
- Financial Wellness awareness sessions

MENTAL WELL-BEING

Mental wellbeing means feeling good – both about yourself and about the world around you. It means being able to get on with life in the way you want. This aspect of well-being is a bit trickier to discuss in a workplace setting, however, it is crucial that employers do.

Mental or emotional wellness is all about being in touch with one's emotions, feelings and thoughts. Positive emotional well-being helps support a healthy mental state and well-being. This includes healthy mental health habits, emotional intelligence and stress management.

Without positive mental health, employees are not able to perform or feel their best at work. Some ways employers can incorporate the mental component of well-being into their wellness programs include:

- Tailor benefits to support mental well-being
- Mental Health Days
- Mental/Emotional Health Awareness Workshops and Programs
- Onsite Counseling

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Social well-being is another aspect of well-being that is overlooked all too often. However, as the awareness of employee well-being spreads in organizations, they are increasingly becoming aware of the negative consequences of loneliness in the workplace.

Strong workplace relationships offer opportunities for social connection and are essential to boosting employee job satisfaction, happiness and overall well-being. Employees that feel isolated are much more likely to feel disconnected from their jobs, which may eventually lead to compromised work performance.

Some ways organizations can incorporate social well-being aspect into their employee well-being programs include:

- Retreats
- Work Celebrations
- Wellness Challenges
- Team Activities

CAREER WELL-BEING

Career wellbeing was determined to be the most critical of the five elements by Gallup. The physical and emotional wellbeing of workers have been front-of-mind for responsible employers for years. But far fewer are looking at employees' 'career wellbeing.

Career well-being can be easily gauged by asking one simple question from your employees: 'Do you like what you do?' Yet not many employers really think about asking this question.

Career advancement, career conversations, and self-awareness are some of the most important drivers of employee well-being. Research suggests that employees with lower career well-being are less productive, less satisfied with their work and are not committed to the organization.

Few ways employers can include career well-being initiatives in their corporate well-being programs include:

- Assisting employees in identifying their weaknesses and strengths
- Encourage employees to apply for internal opportunities
- Work with employees to develop a career action plan
- Offer opportunities for learning and development

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfill their potential.

Few ways employers can add the community well-being component into their well-being strategy include:

- Social work campaigns
- Social gatherings to raise awareness on different issues
- Volunteer activities

TOP 5 REASONS WHY ORGANIZATIONS MAY FAIL TO DELIVER SUCCESSFUL WELL-BEING PROGRAMS

With millions of dollars of global spending on programs targeting the mental, physical, mental, social, financial and career well-being in workplaces, it is heartbreaking to witness the general rise in unhappiness and stress levels at workplace.

Let's have a look at top 5 reasons why organizations may fail to deliver successful well-being programs.

Employee well-being is not part of corporate strategy:

Just like companies have maintenance programs in place for their equipment and other assets, they should also have a human-maintenance program for their employees.

Top leaders 'don't walk the talk' on wellness:

Business leaders should be the ones setting the pace for such programs. If leaders don't explicitly show their interest in such programs, they are bound to fail.

Ambiguous Communication:

This is one of the biggest reasons why wellness programs fail. To ensure successful execution of well-being programs, the message and meaning around well-being programs should be absolutely clear.

Poor Program Design:

It is important to customize well-being programs as per the nature of your company. Make sure the programs are customized so that they are relevant, fun and easy to understand for everyone in the organization.

Impatience for Results:

Don't be impatient for results. You should at least wait for a year or so to see true results of your well-being programs. It is important to understand that these programs are aimed at modifying behavior and patterns of people, which is not an easy task.



Despite putting in dedicated efforts and having best intentions at heart, why well-being programs in most organizations fall short of the long-term outcomes that organizations hope to achieve?



BOTTOM-LINE

Employees spend a lot of time in the workplace and blending wellness goals with work life balance is critical to driving business outcomes. Having healthier and happier employees not only help cut rising healthcare costs to give your bottom line a real boost. Providing a robust corporate wellness program gives your organization the competitive edge that it's looking for to attract and retain top talent and this is something you want for your organization, don't you?



“To win in the marketplace you must first win in the workplace.”

**Doug Conant,
CEO of Campbell's Soup**



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