Implementing Wellness—Ingredients for Success

Success Strategies

- **Capturing Administrative and Board Support**

  As you build your program, it's important to understand that administrative support is critical to the success of any worksite health initiative. After all, it's the management who need to understand your business case. Because of these realities, succeeding without their support is virtually impossible. Use evidence to back up your arguments—here's our budget, here's how much we're going to spend and based on the following data, assumptions and literature, we believe we can achieve this kind of savings. Organize this information on a spreadsheet and present it to the administrative group.

- **Creating Cohesive Wellness and Safety Teams**

  To ensure that the health and productivity initiative is embraced by the entire staff, it is imperative to involve the key stake-holders. Teams add credibility and importance to your wellness and safety programs. A group that includes formal and informal leaders from all segments of the organization is going to earn the respect of the entire group and have a greater "reach" than you can alone.

- **Collecting Data to Drive Health Efforts**

  The third "C" of comprehensive programming is collecting data. While this may seem obvious, it is important to understand that this has been where the major disconnect occurs. We suggest you gather data before planning health interventions. First, look at your demographics and team's interests (Needs Assessment). Next, answer these two questions: (1.) What does the group need out of their health promotion efforts? And, (2.) What do the employees want? Ask employees what their health interests are. Perform employee health screenings and establish a baseline with a Personal Health Assessment (PHA). Additionally, assess the organizational culture and environment and whether it promotes health.

- **Crafting a Business Case and Operating Plan**

  In most organization settings, the annual plan is the vehicle that articulates the strategic direction. Moreover, it is this document against which all progress is ultimately measured. Creating a plan forces you to consider your employee group(s) needs and strategic priorities. Do some research on what specific health risks cost your employee group(s) the most money; use the data you've collected about your group and address the prevailing issues in your goals and objectives; it provides budget justification. A key element of your operating plan should include a strategic communication strategy. Providing a consistent and persistent campaign focusing on being healthier and using health care wisely is the foundation for program success.

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- **Choosing Appropriate Interventions**

  Before implementing your program it would be wise to ask this question, "When it comes to changing behavior, what works and what doesn't?" Health and safety promotion plans are increasingly tailored to reduce the health risk factors that cost the most in terms of medical claims and cost productivity. Align your wellness and safety activities based on these risks, along with providing programming that matches employee interests. Promoting programs that appeal to the entire population builds goodwill and establishes a caring image for your program and employee group(s).

- **Creating a Supportive Environment**

  Supportive environments significantly increase the likelihood that positive changes in health behavior will take place. This is an important benchmark that is frequently overlooked. Creating an environment that truly supports health and safety is a long-term project that requires real dedication to wellness values and a lot of sustained hard work. The support of the administrators/Board is essential. Your wellness team must understand and acknowledge the current environment and be able to envision a healthier one and have the patience to build that vision one step at a time. Ask yourself how it feels to walk into your workplace? The influence of the worksite environment on the health, wellness and safety of staff is profound. Work to create a friendly, safe facility with proactive policies. Administrators must openly support healthy behavior.

- **Consistently Evaluating Outcomes**

  Evaluation is determining the value of what you've accomplished. To get the money to repeat a program, you need to be able to show that it was effective enough to justify its expense. You'll need to demonstrate the cost benefit of the intervention—not necessarily that the intervention saved money, but that the benefit was worth the cost. Next, publicize the results of the evaluation; you can boost participation and show your interventions work. Participants can be motivated to continue by sharing positive testimonials and non-participants can be inspired to join in when they hear that a program works. Finally, administrators ought to be creating an atmosphere where it is clear that participation in health and safety program is valued and recognized.

Adapted from WELCOA'S Seven Benchmarks*

**Wellness Council of America*