

Good Health is Good Business

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Approximately 27% of payroll for U.S. employers is attributable to health and productivity costs.¹ Business owners and managers understand very well the rising cost of health care and the loss of productivity associated with absenteeism and employee disengagement.

Which is why 89% of employers surveyed by Optum, a health management consulting firm, believe that offering health and wellness programs plays an important role in increasing worker productivity.²

And, employer efforts are bearing fruit. According to one report, medical costs fell approximately \$3.27 for every dollar spent on wellness programs, while absenteeism costs fell about \$2.73 for every dollar spent.³

The Profile of a Successful Wellness Program

Tailored: An effective employee wellness program is multifaceted and must reflect the personal needs and interests of a diverse workforce.

Incentives: Incentives, such as rewards and recognition, communicate the employer's care and support for the program and help drive employee participation.

Measurable: To maintain ongoing support, there should be tracking of the program's impact.

Common Wellness Program Offerings

The most common employer wellness offerings include smoking cessation, physical activity, mental health, health club membership and weight management.

Yet while these offerings may be obvious "essentials," employers can misread the needs of their employees. For instance, according to a survey by Virgin Pulse (an affiliate of the Virgin Group), less than 10% of employees were interested in smoking cessation programs, while a top employee preference—healthy on-site food choices and nutrition programs—did not register as high with employers.⁴

A Bonus

Good health is as much a social endeavor as it is a personal journey. These programs can often create employee interactions unlikely to occur during the workday, prompting conversations and relations that catalyze new ideas and improve your work culture.

1. Towers Watson, 2012. "Pathway to Health and Productivity."
2. Optum, 2014. "Healthy Employees, Healthy Profits."
3. 3. Health Affairs, 2014
4. Virgin Pulse, 2014. "The Business of Healthy Employees."

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