

Wellness programs provide a host of benefits for both employers and employees. Despite these benefits, some employers are hesitant to implement wellness programs at their organization. Use this script to share the value of wellness programs with current or prospective clients.

The Wellness Elevator Pitch

To attract and retain top talent and mitigate your rising health care costs, you need to focus on wellness at your organization. When employees focus on their health, they tend to lead healthier lives, are happier, and are more engaged and productive at work. By working with us, we can help you implement an ROI-positive wellness program at your organization. Moreover, we can help you distribute meaningful and multichannel wellness communications to your employees at no additional charge. Take the step toward a healthier and happier workforce today by starting a wellness initiative.

Prevalence of Wellness

Wellness programs help employees improve their lifestyles and avoid unhealthy habits. According to the 2018 Employer Health Benefit Survey, conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research & Educational trust, 53% of small employers and 82% of large employers offer at least one type of health and wellness program. Of these large employers, 35% offer participation incentives like gift cards or merchandise. Programs vary in topics and include subjects like smoking cessation, weight management and lifestyle coaching.

Moreover, 89% of employers believe it's important for their employee benefits broker to provide workplace wellness resources, according to the Zywave's annual Broker Services Survey. When you consider just under half of employers use wellness programs as a cost-mitigation strategy, it becomes clear why implementing a workplace wellness program has become so popular. If you aren't already offering workplace wellness initiatives or programs, you're falling behind on market trends.

Why Wellness?

Wellness programs have the potential to lower health care costs, increase productivity, decrease absenteeism and raise employee morale. Because employees spend a large portion of their waking hours at work, the workplace is an ideal setting to address health and wellness issues, benefiting your employees' personal lives as well as their professional lives.

Wellness programs positively affect productivity and finances in several ways, all leading to a more efficient, cost-effective workforce. Here's how:

Mitigate Costs

Health care costs are a significant portion of a company's budget, and many employers are taking a close look at those rising expenses. Strategically targeting health-related expenses can significantly benefit an employer's budget. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that treating chronic conditions like heart disease and Type 2 diabetes accounts for 86% of the nation's overall health

spending. In some cases, workplace wellness programs can help intervene and prevent the onset of such costly conditions, which helps mitigate total health care costs. Employees with more health risk factors, including being overweight, smoking and having diabetes, cost more to insure and pay more for health care than people with fewer risk factors. A wellness program can help employees with high risk factors make lifestyle changes to improve their quality of life and lower costs, while also helping employees with fewer risk factors remain healthy.

Improve Productivity

The CDC supports research that demonstrates that workplace wellness programs can lead to more efficiency in the workplace because healthier employees are more productive. Even when sick or unhealthy employees show up to work, they're likely not operating at their true potential.

Improved health—fueled by workplace wellness programs and incentives—can reduce the problem of *presenteeism*, which is a condition where workers show up but produce inefficient or substandard work due to the adverse effects of their ill health.

Reduce Absenteeism

Healthier employees means fewer sick days and less time away from work for doctor visits. For example, the CDC reports a 56% increase in missed days for overweight and obese men, and a 15% to 141% increase in missed days for women who are overweight and obese.

Additionally, employees' healthier behavior may translate into better health care and lifestyle choices for their families, potentially leading to less work missed due to caring for ill family members. Reduced absenteeism can yield significant cost savings and return on your wellness investment.

Improve Recruiting and Retention Efforts

Expressing a commitment to your employees' health can improve employee morale and strengthen retention. A company that cares about its employees' health is often viewed as a better place to work, and wellness programs can also help attract top talent in a competitive market.

Employees can experience many potential benefits after joining a wellness program, including improved well-being, better coping skills for stress, reduced risk for developing or worsening diseases and illnesses, lower health care costs and fewer doctor visits, access to social support through co-workers and a healthier work environment.

Overall, employees who experience positive changes and benefits from a wellness program will often feel more loyalty to the company and demonstrate increased productivity, leading to a stronger, less expensive workforce.

Are You Keeping Up With Competitors?

Employers across the nation are turning to wellness programs as a means to mitigate health care costs and increase their employee recruiting and retention efforts. As previously mentioned, 53% of small employers and 82% of large employers offer at least one type of health and wellness program. Workplace wellness programs can have implications on an employee's overall quality of life, health and happiness. From an organizational standpoint, an employee's wellness is directly related to the quality of their work,

as well as their engagement, performance and productivity. According to a Gallup poll, organizations with highly engaged employees outperform their competition in earnings per share by 147%.

In a tightened labor market, where it's imperative to retain your top-performing employees as well as recruit the best and brightest candidates, taking strides to incorporate a holistic approach to wellness is a step you must take. Wellness initiatives vary widely between organizations, but the premise is the same: promoting better employee health. This might mean offering healthy snacks in the breakroom, providing fitness trackers or hosting a fitness area. It could even be something more imaginative, like building in time during the day when employees are encouraged to walk around outside. Whatever shape your wellness initiatives take, they can help retain employees—even if they don't use them.

According to a survey by Optum, the health services company, employees find wellness programs essential to their job satisfaction, even if they don't use them. Of the survey respondents, 53% said they'd recommend their company as a great place to work if it offered seven to eight wellness initiatives. When a company offered one to four initiatives, respondents' likelihood of recommending it was cut in half—to just 24%. These figures illustrate how critical a well-rounded benefits package can be for retention. Offering quality benefits is a start, but you can go a step further by providing a suite of wellness initiatives. At best, employees will be healthier and more satisfied with their jobs. At worst, they will appreciate the effort and still recommend your company as a great place to work.

Don't Have the Time for Custom-built Resources? We Can Help.

Creating a unique and well-rounded wellness initiative can be time-consuming and difficult. That's where we can help. When you partner with us, you gain access to nearly 1,000 different pieces of wellness resources. These resources cover a wide breadth of wellness topics, including nutrition, stress management and chronic conditions. Moreover, there is a vast array of types of wellness resources, including full wellness programs, newsletters, videos and posters for both employers and employees. Here's more details on what we can offer:

- **Stand-alone wellness programs**—Choose from four sample wellness programs that focus on losing weight, walking more, quitting smoking and getting in shape. These programs include guides for both the employer and the employee, and can be customized to fit any employer's needs.
- **Employer education**—Learn more about wellness topics, like health risk assessments and incentive rules, with attorney-reviewed workplace wellness articles and guides.
- **Employee communications**—No workplace program will be successful without employee engagement. And to increase employee engagement, employers need to have a well-rounded and multichannel employee communications strategy. With a monthly newsletter and video, quarterly newsletter, hundreds of health and wellness flyers, and posters and infographics to choose from, employers can easily create a targeted wellness communications strategy.
- **Video**—With the average audience attention span dwindling, sending videos to employees is a great way to get a message across. With over 150 videos to choose from, employers can be confident that they'll find the videos they want to send to their employees. These videos vary from two minutes in length to as short as 30 seconds.

- **Long-form employee content**—Making lifestyle changes to lead a healthier life can be difficult. The Live Well Planner, which features wellness articles, healthy recipes and space for weekly agendas, meal ideas or workout plans, is updated annually and is designed to make healthy living easier for employees. Another long-form piece of content that's updated annually is the Eat Well, Live Well: Recipe Book, which features government-sponsored recipes and includes the per-serving nutritional facts.

Overcoming Objections

Use this section to prepare yourself for common objections to wellness programs.

Objection #1: Wellness programs aren't ROI-positive.

Many employers focus solely on the bottom line when it comes to evaluating if a wellness program is yielding results. While a monetary return on investment (ROI) in the form of reduced health care costs is important, there are other factors to consider as well when evaluating a wellness program. These include:

- **Participation**—Tallying participation for the various activities in your wellness program will show you what is of interest to your employees.
- **Employee satisfaction with the program**—This information shows how much people enjoyed or appreciated your wellness initiatives. Use this opportunity to allow people to provide suggestions for improvement and share their favorite program features.
- **Productivity changes**—Productivity changes may include missed days of work or time away from work tasks. Gauging an improvement in productivity will yield information regarding your program's impact on your employees' well-being.
- **Retention and attraction rates**—A successful wellness program can be a useful retention and recruiting tool. Evaluate these numbers to gauge if your program has helped improve your organization's efforts.

Additionally, a successful wellness program is one that is a long-term project. Employers shouldn't expect to see an immediate ROI. It can take at least a few months to see any significant changes or potential ROI. Managing those expectations will be beneficial to a wellness program's success. Moreover, we can provide wellness materials for you and your employees at no additional cost. While other vendors charge you for supplemental employee wellness communications and resources, we can provide you with a robust suite of customizable content at no additional charge. Our content also helps you check the box of employee engagement through multichannel communications as you can choose from print, email and video messaging.

**Objection #2:
Employees
don't engage
with wellness
programs.**

It's true that employee engagement with a wellness program is crucial for the long-term success of the program. But, in order to increase employee engagement, employers need to commit to a multichannel employee communications strategy. Typical employee communications can be bland and difficult to understand, but they don't have to be. The key messages for a wide variety of wellness topics are available in a multitude of content formats that employers can use to communicate through multiple channels.

Employers can choose what formats (like a video, for example) that they want to use based on the communication needs and preferences of their employee population. Each content format has its own advantage, and the best results come from communicating about the topic using a variety of formats.

By presenting wellness information in many different formats, employers are able to reach more employees. This increased communication can encourage employees to get involved with their employer's wellness initiatives and take strides toward living a healthier life.

**Objection #3:
Implementing
and building out
a wellness
program is
expensive.**

If you were going to use a third-party vendor to build out or implement a wellness program at your organization, it would be very expensive. However, when your partner with us, you gain access to a free massive content library of customizable wellness resources. These resources are regularly updated and reviewed by industry experts. What's more, these resources are designed to be easy for employers to customize and send out to their employees.

This means that implementing a wellness program or initiative at your organization has never been easier or more cost-effective. We want to help you give your employees the tools they need to become healthier and happier.