

Well Workplace Award Executive Summary

Lab Safety Supply Platinum Award

Information in this publication is carefully reviewed for accuracy. Questions, comments, or ideas are welcome. Please direct to Dr. David Hunnicutt, Executive Editor, at the address below.

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WELLNESS COUNCILS OF AMERICA

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Contact Information

WELL WORKPLACE

Platinum Application

Basic Information

Name of Organization: Lab Safety Supply, Inc.

Address of Organization: Janesville, WI 53545

Contact Person: Jan M. Bruss, RN, C., BSN

Title: Supervisor – Wellness

Work Telephone:

Fax Number

E-Mail Address:

Alternate Contact: Tim Markus, HR Manager

Parent Organization: W.W. Grainger

Number of Sites: 1

Number of Employees: 770

Nature of Business: Direct Marketing

Name of President: Larry J. Loizzo

Date of Application: July 1, 2002

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER SIGN-OFF

This page is to be filled out and signed by the chief executive officer or the senior manager responsible for operations at the site applying for the award.

I hereby attest to the accuracy of the information provided in this application submitted by Lab Safety Supply, Inc in pursuit of the Platinum Well Workplace Award.

Name: Larry J. Loizzo

Title: President

Signature: 

Date: July 10, 2002

Biography



JAN MORONI BRUSS, RN,C., BSN
SUPERVISOR - WELLNESS, LAB SAFETY SUPPLY, INC.

Jan received her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from the University of Wisconsin--Oshkosh in 1987 with additional related course work in nutrition and weight control, adolescent health problems, drug use/abuse, and health care of the older adult.

She has been employed in a variety of hospital/clinic settings working with children, adolescents, adults and the geriatric population. Jan is also certified through the American Nurses Credentialing Center as an Adult Mental Health & Psychiatric Nurse. She has been an educator/instructor at the Southern WI EMS Paramedic Training Program and is a CPR/AED Instructor through the American Heart Association. Volunteer work includes the Rock County Tobacco-Free Coalition, Medical Staff for the WI Badger State Games and she is the State Director of the South Central WI Association of Occupational Health Nurses.

Jan is also currently serving on the National Health Advisory Board for the Wellness Councils of America. Lab Safety Supply, Inc. brought Ms. Bruss on board in 1994 where she is responsible for the Emergency Response/First Aid program, Benefits Administration, Co-chairs the Safety Team, and coordinates the health promotion and injury prevention efforts for the company.

General Information

WELL WORKPLACE

Platinum Application

Background Information

How long has your health promotion initiative been in place?

LSS began dabbling in Wellness in the mid 80's with biannual on-site blood pressure/cholesterol checks and rudimentary aerobics sessions led by co-workers in the recently built employee cafeteria. Efforts have expanded extensively in the nearly 20 years since.

How are your wellness programs paid for?

Wellness expenses are covered under the Human Resources Department budget as an individual account. The majority of wellness and health offerings (the fitness center, for example) are free to employees; the intent being we do not want to give employees reasons to not participate. Optional services such as massage therapy, on-site Weight Watchers classes and Jazzercise are available at a nominal fee.

What department is your wellness program located in?

Wellness is a work unit in the Human Resources Department. Wellness has its own supervisor with a staff of five – three LSS employee staff members, and an outsourced doctor and physician assistant.

What are the organization's annual health care costs?

LSS's health care costs for 2002 came to \$3.04 million.

What type of industry best classifies your organization?

Primary SIC 5099 – Wholesale Durable Goods

Overall, how have participation rates in your wellness program changed over the past two years?

While we've always enjoyed a high level of participation in our programs, the past two years have struck a particularly rewarding high watermark where we've begun to get through to the part of the population which needs our services the most – employees and family members who have not previously taken part in wellness, exercise or nutrition programs. A small yet telling example would be our most recent "LSS Survivor Challenge" fitness center promotion, which had nearly 200 participants compared to fitness challenges in past years involving anywhere from 100 to 125 participants. Participation rates continue to climb despite a drop in headcount of about 70 over the past two years.

What is the approximate annual budget of your current wellness initiative including salaries?

Current annual budget is approximately \$250,000

For what reason did your organization start a wellness initiative.

LSS strives to be a local employer of choice. Our Human Resources Mission has always been to remove the obstacles in people's work lives that keep them from reaching their potential. Our employee programs have been geared similarly around eliminating reasons to not regularly practice healthy lifestyles. Combined with our relatively young and predominantly female workforce, who tended to show a high level of interest early on in such programs, a wellness initiative became the perfect supplement to a proactive and employee-oriented work environment. Bottom line, it was simply the right thing to do.



Section One:

Business Context and Background

Section one of this application addresses the historical context and organizational background of the Platinum applicant. The required elements of this section appear below. Please limit the discussion to no more than eight typewritten pages.

- ◆ Please outline the history and evolution of the organization
- ◆ Please articulate the corporate Vision/Mission statement(s)
- ◆ Please include an Organizational Chart
- ◆ Please describe the distinctive services and traits of your organization
- ◆ Please provide an overview of the present competitive position of your organization within your industry
- ◆ Please list the core values of your organization (e.g. What does the organization stand for? and What is the organization known for?)
- ◆ Please briefly discuss the types of challenges that your organization faces in its present business environment
- ◆ Please provide a demographic overview of your organization's workforce

History and Evolution of the Organization

Working out of their Evanston, Illinois, home in 1967, Don and Gerry Hedberg began designing and marketing molecular models to help schools simplify teaching methods and help students better understand science.

In 1969, they relocated their business to Janesville, choosing a relatively quiet rural town over other options based on their assessment of the high quality of life and a much-praised work ethic.

In 1973, with federal funding for school programs drying up and teaching budgets being slashed, the company modified its product line to include labware and lab safety products. This extension proved more successful than the original business plan. Safety supplies grew into a separate booming business, incorporated as Lab Safety Supply on April 1, 1974.

Catalogs and direct marketing became the catalyst for the company's future rapid growth. More product lines were added to the mix, targeting an increasingly wider cross section of business. The young company thrived at creating compliance products and getting them on the market as the government mandated a demand for them by proposing stringent safety regulations.

In the mid 80s, LSS introduced color photography into its business-to-business catalogs and implemented an upscale consumer approach to sales, much as in a Speigel or Sharper Image catalog—standard practice now, but unheard of back then. Sales soared, and the company has since become the B2B standard for catalog excellence.

Rapid early growth was marked by nearly annual building expansions. The current headquarters with nearly 1 million sq. feet of office and distribution space was customized to LSS's operations, representing a long-term commitment to both the city of Janesville and LSS employees.

In 1996, the last member of the Hedberg family left the organization. Larry Loizzo, an LSS veteran and familiar face to all employees, was selected as President to usher in the new era. Larry's signature so far has been forging head-on into the challenge of a changing and segmented marketplace, crowded with competitors who are far more focused and fierce than ever before.

Over the past 25 years, we've earned a proud reputation as a strong, service-oriented business dedicated to increasing the safety standards of the nation's workplaces. Locally, we've made a name for ourselves as an employer of choice, in recognition of our progressive employee culture and work environment, competitive pay and benefits and support of the local community. Our name has become synonymous with creative and technical expertise (both of which have been widely copied), as well as the highest levels of customer service available.

Virtually the only thing that remains unchanged about LSS from our early days is our commitment to exceptional service, strong company performance and our insistence that we never stop aiming higher. Our success has come from the special way we take care of people, as a natural outgrowth of who we are and what we think. When dealing with valued customers and valued employees alike, we treat people the same way we'd like to be treated ourselves.

It's the simple philosophy that took a basement business to an industry leader in only 25 years. And it's the same principle that will drive LSS's success through the next century and beyond.



Section Two:

Present Approach to Corporate Health

Section two of the Platinum Award addresses the organization's past and present approaches to corporate wellness. This section includes the detailed account of the history and evolution of the organization's wellness initiative as it relates to the core business functions. Please limit your discussion to no more than 12 typewritten pages.

- ◆ Please provide a brief overview of the factors that lead to the genesis of the wellness program
- ◆ Please identify how long the program has been in place
- ◆ Please outline the organization's corporate wellness vision and mission statements
- ◆ Please provide a brief overview of how wellness fits into the strategic priorities of the organization
- ◆ Please provide an overview of the operating model and theoretical underpinnings for your organization's wellness initiative
- ◆ Please list and briefly describe the health behaviors that are being addressed within your organization
- ◆ Please provide an overview of the organization's most novel/innovative approach that is currently being utilized within the organization
- ◆ Please list and briefly describe the sources of data that are being utilized to make strategic health decisions
- ◆ Please describe your organization's wellness efforts to address at-risk populations
- ◆ Please describe your organization's wellness efforts to keep low-risk populations at low-risk
- ◆ Please describe the steps that have been taken to ensure that the organization's wellness initiative will continue to function in the years ahead

Factors that Lead to Development of the Wellness Program

Lab Safety Supply was the first Rock County employer to pay serious attention to employee work/life issues, including health. The company's founders preferred from the start that everything about the organization be viewed as high quality and that LSS be known as the employer of choice in the area. More than anything else, that philosophy dictated the development of extensive employee programs, including wellness. It was simply viewed as "the right thing to do" for this particular organization.

Since that time a variety of factors have strongly supported the move toward expanding health and wellness. ~~After~~ After 10 years, it became clear the company was going to experience very little employee turnover annually, less than 3% avoidable per year.

Employees were viewing LSS as a workplace they wanted to be for the long term, so it only made sense, both from a good citizen and good business standpoint, to help them stay healthy and productive. The best way to do that was to ensure they had easy access to everything they needed to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles for themselves and their families. Keeping a low-risk population at low-risk for the long term became a business objective, and preventive care and disease management became a new focus.

Another factor was the workforce itself; the fact that they tended to be younger, predominantly female and interested in health was an equally big reason for expanding services. A slow start or a loss of interest early on may have caused a few folks to rethink the company's commitment, but there's never been anything but success since.

How Long Has the Program Been In Place?

The earliest origins of the LSS Wellness program began in 1986 with biannual on-site blood pressure/cholesterol checks and shortly after, aerobics sessions led by co-workers in the recently built employee cafeteria. The current HR Manager, who was a catalog copywriter at the time, took on the oddly prophetic role of organizing all the early wellness activities, and sought approval from the company owners to progressively add more components, resulting in regular Health Risk Appraisals, the County's first on-site corporate fitness center in 1992, and most importantly, the hiring of the current Wellness Supervisor and development of Wellness Services in 1996. A highly structured and popular employee wellness program has been in place since that point.

LSS' Corporate Wellness Vision and Mission Statements

MISSION STATEMENT: We believe our employees are our most important resource making their health and safety vital. The purpose of wellness services is to provide opportunities that will assist employees to identify their health risks and improve their quality of life by increasing their personal awareness in this area and motivate them to make healthy lifestyle and workplace changes.

PHILOSOPHY: Our goal is to create and maintain an environment that educates and continually supports positive health habits physically and mentally. We will provide opportunities for employees to learn skills for high level wellness, self-responsibility, nutritional awareness, physical fitness, stress management and environmental safety. Information gathered by Wellness Services based on evaluation, examination, intervention, observation and conversation will be safeguarded and kept confidential.

VISION: We will provide opportunities for employees to learn skills for high-level wellness, self-responsibility and personal safety. These services will be high-tech and convenient. The services must have a positive impact on employee relations, morale, self-worth and on the external perceptions of the company. The **Characteristics of Total Wellness** address each of the following employee needs in a creative and innovative way:

Physical – exercise, rest, nutrition, alcohol and tobacco use.

Mental – viewing life’s challenges as positive growth opportunities.

Emotional – enjoying a sense of well-being, even in times of adversity.

Spiritual – participating in activities that reflect inner values.

Social – creating and cultivating close relationships.

How Wellness Fits into the Strategic Priorities of LSS

One of LSS’s five critical success factors is Employee Development. All Human Resources and Wellness Center objectives fall within this particular factor – through the on-site services and support we offer, we contribute to the complete and unobstructed development of employees in both resolving both work and lifestyle issues.

Operating Model and Theoretical Underpinnings for LSS's Wellness Initiative

Fortunately, LSS had not had to go to the extent of some larger organizations to justify its wellness operations and spending, preferring the soft measure of knowing it's the right thing to do and noting the high level of employee satisfaction with the services above all other indicators.

As such, the company's operating model and the theoretical underpinnings for wellness are rather uncomplicated. The basis of the operating model is that wellness is an employee service tied to the critical success factor of Employee Commitment. Wellness is run as a work unit out of Human Resources, but with special considerations: 1) no direct tie or involvement in HR functions such as constructive discipline and separations to avoid the misconception of employees relating clinic visits or personal health discussions to performance issues, 2) autonomy and authority to go anywhere in the organization and deal with any level of management on any particular related work issue or trend which the wellness supervisor feels require attention, and 3) direct connection to development of internal safety policies and programs and co-chair of the company Safety Team.

Wellness and safety are company business strategies, treated the same as other HR disciplines such as compensation and employee relations, and all objectives related to it must tie into the employee development critical success factor.

Health Behaviors Being Addressed Within LSS

“All of them” would be the short answer, but we’ll hone in on a few majors. While LSS enjoys a larger-than-usual number of motivated employees constantly practicing healthy lifestyles and spreading the wellness gospel to friends and family, we also have our share of Wisconsin stereotypes – beer, brats and cheese, you know the image. Data compiled from the most recent Health Risks Appraisals, Convenient Care Clinic visits and medical claims show problem areas to reflect the Wisconsin population’s overall health risks in general: high cholesterol, high blood pressure, poor nutritional habits, sedentary lifestyles, factors generally leading to heart disease, cancers and other diseases if not brought under control. LSS has programs in place to address all of these concerns, some of which will show up in the later discussion of at-risk efforts.

Most Novel/Innovative Approach Currently Being Utilized Within LSS

The Convenient Care Clinic is LSS’s monument to employee health/wellness and long-term preventive care, giving employees a one-stop shop for anything they need to adapt and maintain healthy lifestyles for themselves and their families. Its success has been demonstrated by an astronomical 4.9 customer satisfaction on a 5 scale, the highest rating of any work unit in the organization, and capacity bookings for nearly every available day. Some brief highlights of the CCC and its interconnections between various LSS wellness offerings include:

Staffing – The CCC is staffed two days weekly, one by a Board Certified Occupational Health MD and another by a PA-C. A Bachelor’s prepared registered nurse with extensive background experience oversees the entire operation and is available daily.

Referrals to On-Site Services —The clinic allows us to make on-site referrals to our Fitness Center Coordinator, a certified personal trainer who assists with physical therapy efforts and our on-site massage therapists to help alleviate age- and work-related aches and pains. The staff is extremely knowledgeable about external specialists, all having extensive backgrounds in local health care providers, and can make helpful recommendations in cases of more serious conditions.

Benefits On Board – Our Benefits Specialist is housed right in the Wellness Center, giving visiting employees immediate access and follow up on any medical claims guidance or questions on providers.

Data Sources Being Used to Make Strategic Health Decisions

We review a wide variety of records and other resources to set budgets and justify proposing expanded services. For example, a survey conducted by our benefits consultant Willis comparing Wisconsin companies shows that we provide some of the more progressive employee programs in the state, and we are among the lowest quartile (25% of companies) in per-employee medical claims spending. Other data includes:

- Medical claims and notable trends
- Health Risk Appraisal and employee feedback (surveys, CCC evaluation forms)
- Employer’s Health Cooperative member company comparison
- Willis (benefits consultant) critical factors analysis, local and national comparisons
- Wellness Councils of America resources and articles

LSS Wellness Efforts to Address At-Risk Populations

LSS is fortunate to not have a high percentage of at-risk employees, and as such our focus is predominantly on prevention, keeping healthy people from falling into at-risk categories. A \$300 preventive wellness benefit is available annually as incentive to undergo physicals or participate in more specific health checks; i.e. cardio-mapping.

Instead of returning to a doctor after years away and facing the scrutiny of having done little to address previously noted and ongoing health conditions, the CCC provides a non-threatening and confidential opportunity for at-risk and all employees to drop by and have any level of health check conducted. See the covered expenses tab at the end of section two. The clinic staff can also refer the employee to the most practical resource for assistance, whether it be our fitness center coordinator who can develop a nutrition and workout plan for free or a specialist well known within the community for success with at-risk patients.

Other efforts include a variety of communications materials displayed prominently in the Wellness Center and on-site wellness and safety seminars to identify and address specific high risks and symptoms. Employees wanting to take the next step can start a workout plan with assistance from our on-site trainer and go at their own pace, bring a family member or friend along if they prefer. Subsidized "wise choices" are always available in the LSS Café and nutritional values are calculated for each entrée. To demonstrate how easy it is to eat well, catered company socials and snacks provided for recognition events feature a variety of healthy fare vs. the traditional cakes and cookies.

LSS's Wellness Efforts to Keep Low-Risk Populations at Low-Risk

The same benefits noted previously, the \$300 preventive care benefit and others, are also encouraged for use by lower risk populations, who may tend to ignore these advantages because they are currently healthy.

From the beginning of Wellness efforts, LSS has recognized the value of keeping low-risk populations at low risk. In addition to the efforts mentioned previously and the always available health checks, a variety of on-site resources have been dedicated to keeping the low risk population, which tends to be highly athletic overall, healthy and meeting their need for increasingly complex physical challenges. These include our fitness center, sports team sponsorships, company sponsorships of major local events including tournaments, triathlons and marathons, and subsidized healthy nutritional choices in the LSS Café at half the price of the regular menu. Training programs for major endurance events, martial arts classes and yoga are a few more of the activities available that appeal to our employee athletes.

Another key effort that has kept all of our risk groups motivated and on board has been LSS *LifeStyleS*, the company's long-term wellness incentive plan, in which employees who regularly participate in fitness center or company health activities are awarded points for use toward exclusive *LifeStyleS* program incentive items. Nearly 400 employees, more than half the workforce, participate at some level.

Steps Taken to Ensure the LSS Wellness Initiative Will Continue to Function in the Years Ahead

With the strong top management support enjoyed every step of the way and the phenomenal success of every major wellness initiative, there's little doubt about the longevity of wellness at LSS. It has become an integral part of the company culture, embedded as a central component of the one of the company's Critical Success Factors. Every wellness offering has been developed with the intent of expanding it, and so far LSS is batting 1000 in that regard. Some other steps taken to ensure continued success:

- Hiring dedicated core staff as LSS employees instead of outsourcing, ensuring rapport with workforce and an understanding of company culture, business directives, etc.
- On-site facilities with easy use guidelines, future expansion at the same location.
- LSS *LifeStyleS* incentive program, rewarding long-term participation in wellness programs and practicing healthy lifestyles.
- Tapping Wellness as a key component of benefits cost containment; already shows an extensive direct cost offset from employees using on-site services compared to outside doctor's visits.

And we'll wrap up with the key passages of our primary wellness drivers:

MISSION: We believe our employees are our most important resource making their health and safety vital. **PHILOSOPHY:** Our goal is to create and maintain an environment that educates and continually supports positive health habits physically and mentally. **VISION:** We will provide opportunities for employees to learn skills for high-level wellness, self-responsibility and personal safety.

Covered Expenses Provided by LSS Wellness Services

The following laboratory tests are funded by the company and can be performed in the Convenient Care Clinic upon recommendation of the provider.

Quick Strep Screen

Mono Spot

Urine Pregnancy Testing

Free T4 and TSH

Throat Culture

Basic Chemistry Profile

Fecal Occult Blood

Prostate Serum Antigen

Urinalysis (UA Dip)

Complete Blood Count

Urine Culture

Gonorrhea and Chlamydia

The following laboratory tests are funded by the company and can be performed in the Wellness Center at any time upon the request of the employee.

Total Cholesterol

Lipid Profile

High Density Lipoprotein (HDL)

Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL)

Triglycerides

Glucose



Section Three:

Outcomes

Section three of the Platinum Award addresses the outcomes that have been demonstrated because of your organization's wellness efforts. To attain Platinum, particular attention to detail must be provided in this section. Specificity with respect to outcomes and R.O.I is essential. Please limit your discussion to no more than six typewritten pages.

- ◆ How has your organization's health promotion programs impacted health risks?
- ◆ What financial outcomes have been demonstrated because of your organization's wellness efforts?
- ◆ How has your company's wellness initiative advanced your organization's business objectives?

How has your organization's health promotion programs impacted health risks?

A younger, predominantly female demographic and an ongoing focus on wellness from the early days of the organization have insulated LSS from a high level of health risks. In addition to being in that favorable position, the impact of more recent wellness initiatives, especially the introduction of the Convenient Care Clinic, show promising returns both in improving employee health and from a benefits cost-containment standpoint. It is important to mention that there was a conscious decision to make sure the mission of the LSS Safety Team tied directly into the wellness mission and initiatives. The team provides consultation and coordination of company safety and health programs and thereby enhances employee health/wellness and safety through reduced accidents and injury. Some highlights:

- Medical claims for 2002 are down 11% on an annualized basis over 2001. LSS is the only company in the Employer's Health Cooperative of Janesville to show any level of claims reduction so far this year; in fact, most companies are experiencing a 15 to 20% increase in medical claims.
- A greater percentage of the workforce, over 50%, participates in the LSS *LifeStyleS* wellness incentive program than ever before. This keeps a large portion of our workforce readily involved in the wellness program overall and active, with peer involvement and incentive awards as motivation.

- Of LSS's top ten medical claims for 2001, only one was due to a chronic condition. The remainders were typically one-time (knee replacement, etc.) surgeries that will reach an end of healing without further complications. Again, top ten claims throughout the EHC tend to be predominantly chronic and life-threatening diseases, including heart disease, organ transplants, cancers, etc. LSS has for years preached the importance of preventive care and made it openly available to all employees, allowing frequent health checks for at-risk employees that may otherwise not pick up on particular warning signs and allow symptoms to develop into something more serious and long-term.
- More employees are using the Convenient Care Clinic than ever before, with as many as 50 employee visits weekly. Even more visit our on-site RN in the Wellness Center, available on a daily basis. We are seeing direct and significant cost savings in employees using these resources as opposed to doctor's office visits (detailed in the upcoming question). In addition, employees are finding out about health risks and potential problems far earlier than they would have prior to these resources being available, and are taking appropriate measures to ensure health concerns are addressed promptly.
- In the past six months, on-site weight loss programs have resulted in more than 60 employees losing over 1000 lbs. The biggest success story yet is an at-risk woman who's lost 92 lbs. Many more of these success stories are in the works, and the more people see it working at such a high level, the more they want to join in themselves.

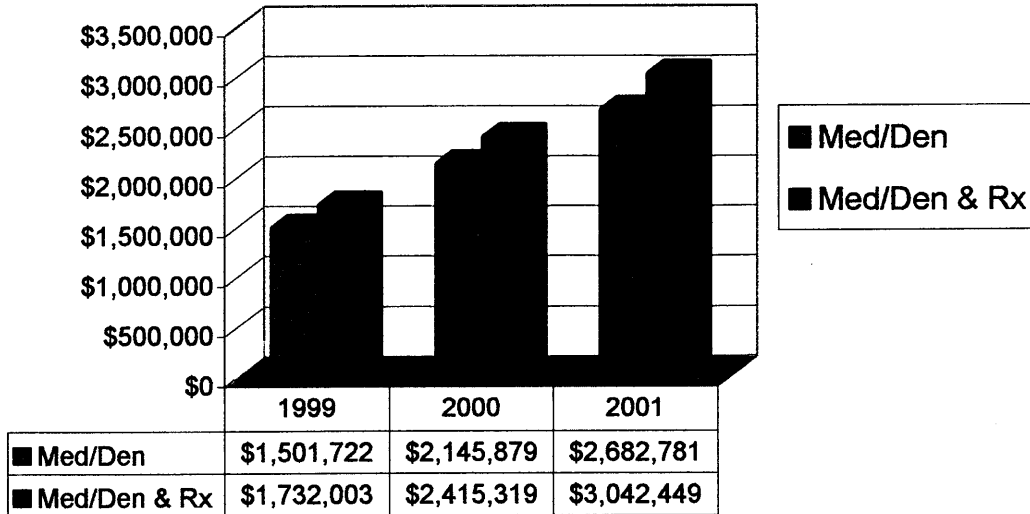
What financial outcomes have been demonstrated because of your organization's wellness efforts?

While a satisfied, productive and well-adjusted workforce is always our primary measurement of the success of an employee program, we have seen some exciting and surprising initial financial outcomes of recent wellness efforts. These include:

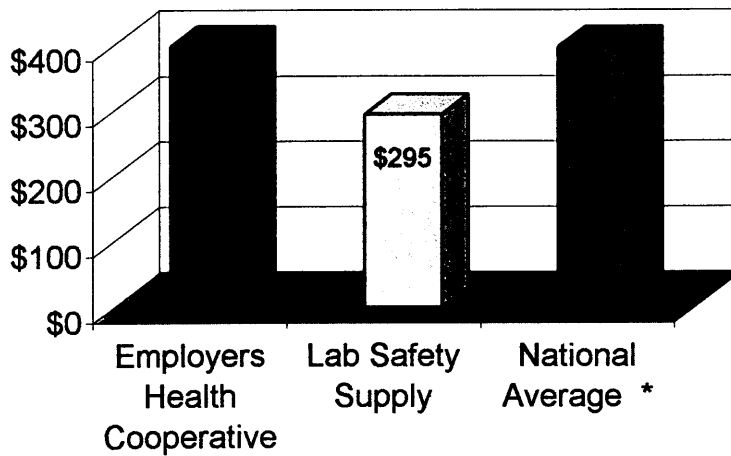
- The Convenient Care Clinic can treat an employee for roughly 1/5 the cost of an outside visit. This has added up to direct costs savings of almost \$400,000 in the past year. This savings does not recognize indirect measures such as productivity gains from employees remaining on-site and spending little or no time as opposed to hours waiting for a doctor, and the hard-to-measure yet critical impact of employees getting prompt treatment for health conditions they otherwise may have disregarded because of the perceived hassle of visiting a doctor or outside clinic. We have witnessed a direct inverse correlation to the increased number of people visiting the on-site clinic and the lower medical claims filed for external clinic visits. We plan to expand the clinic and related services in the coming years to result in even greater efficiencies, allowing people to seek physical therapy, chiropractic treatment, etc., more conveniently and inexpensively on-site. The chart on the following page details LSS annual health care costs and the comparison of LSS to local (Employer's Health Cooperative) and national (Hewitt) averages. This clearly shows the undeniable impact LSS' wellness efforts have had on our per employee costs being far lower than both local and national averages.
- Simply stated, in 2001 LSS experienced a notable \$300,000 decrease in worker's comp premium costs alone due to reduced lost work days and attentive case management.

LAB SAFETY SUPPLY

Lab Safety Supply Annual Health Care Costs



2001 Average Monthly Health Care Costs (per employee)



* Hewitt Health Value Initiative

How has your company's wellness initiative advanced your organization's business objectives?

In Sections 1 and 2, we discussed the inclusion of Employee Development as one of LSS' five critical success factors. Employee Development is viewed as essential to the business as is the focus on customer care, product management and media development. The wellness initiative plays a major role in this particular success factor by providing on-site services and support that contributes to the complete and unobstructed development of employees in resolving both work and lifestyle issues. Some of high-level yet far-reaching business impacts of the wellness initiative:

- **Employee Retention:** LSS has an annual avoidable turnover rate of 3%. This saves in recruiting and training (training for a new Customer Services Rep costs about \$12,000, with other jobs considerably more) and generally provides for a more stable and satisfactory work environment – a place people want to be.
- **Recruiting:** The wellness program, fitness center and Convenient Care Clinic figure prominently in reasons why new hires say they selected LSS over another employer.
- **Community Image:** LSS is viewed as the employer of choice locally, in part because of the rewards available to employees in the way of pay/benefits, employee programs and wellness efforts. LSS' wellness program and clinic has been featured extensively in business publications. This level of community goodwill and positive publicity is something that simply cannot be obtained any other way than earning it, and contributes exponentially to our recruiting efforts and our image as an industry leader.

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Section Four:

Lessons Learned

The fourth section of the Platinum Award application should provide the reviewer with the practical, real life lessons learned in the trenches of worksite wellness. Specifically, the most important learning opportunities should be articulated in this section. In addition, your recommendations for other practitioners in the field of health promotion should also be presented. Please limit your discussion to approximately four typewritten pages.

Key Lessons Learned

Lesson 1 – Eliminate All Excuses

Analyze your programs for anything at all that gives people an excuse to not use them, and remove it.

- Bring services on-site, make attendance as convenient and easy as possible.
Customize programs to individuals.
- Make the services free whenever practical, or charge at most a nominal fee – nothing that would allow someone to use the top excuse of “too expensive” yet creates commitment.
- Allow family members or friends to attend offerings as support.
- Educate management members on programs and offerings, get their buy in, support and promise that they will encourage employees to participate on company time and never discourage participation. Have the company president reinforce this, which leads to...

Lesson 2 – Top Management Must Support Initiatives

In today’s short-term-gains obsessed business culture, it’s far easier to justify not doing a wellness initiative than doing one. A true forward thinking CEO or executive understands these are long-term strategic investments – it’s amazing to see businesses that go to great lengths to maintain machinery but balk when it comes to doing the same for their people. A visionary executive understands these are investments that will pay off 10, 20, 30 years from now and is not concerned about demanding immediate hard measures or nickel and diming the programs.

A program is doomed from the start if it is not supported and participation not regularly encouraged at the highest levels of the company. Better yet, encourage top management to visibly participate, make sure they are seen as regular supporters and use the services available. Few things give such a ringing endorsement and provide an air of exclusivity to the ranks than upper management being actively involved in programs. It's an added bonus if they make an effort to stay fit as a good example to direct reports.

Lesson 3 – If You Build It, They Will Come – The Case for On-Site Facilities

There are a lot of views on whether companies need go to the extent of providing expensive on-site facilities such as a fitness center, wellness center or clinic around which to focus a successful wellness initiative. While this is debatable to no end, generally between the facility “haves” and “have-not” companies, we’ve found it relies mainly on the company culture itself.

For LSS, building the on-site facilities, staffing them with quality, personable staff and running frequent and consistently quality programs have made all the difference in the world. Being in a predominantly rural area, when we opened our fitness center we had many employees who had never (never!) used a piece of exercise equipment, much less set foot in an athletic club. They made it clear they would not be trying it out were it not at work (convenient) and free. LSS expects high quality customer service from our employees in all they do. They in return expect the same level of quality in their employee programs and benefits. Noble attempts such as cafeteria aerobics or parking lot walking classes simply would not work at LSS.

Seen as an investment, the facilities pay for themselves many times over in more ways than most companies consider besides the obvious impact on employee health: productivity, recruiting, employee morale, public relations, and many more.

Lesson 4 -- Quality People in Charge are Essential

LSS' wellness programs caught on immediately because the supervisor in charge of them and her staff are personable, enthusiastic, flexible, helpful and go out of their way to ensure people get the individualized attention they need to stay interested. It's surprising to meet so many people in the corporate wellness field who do not share those characteristics – we always hear stories about people not using their corporate health facilities because the staff is negative, acts like you're bothering them and gossips to boot. No amount of money or facilities can save a program that has the wrong people running it – it's equivalent to handing people a top excuse not to participate. From our experience, it's also essential to have at the least the primary person in charge a company employee, not an outsourced coordinator. There's an invaluable level of accountability and continuity to having a dedicated employee in charge.

Lesson 5 – Accept Soft Measures and Employee Satisfaction as Indicators of Success

We constantly have business peers contacting us and asking how we justified starting a fitness center, wellness center, on-site clinic, etc. The answer for us is easy – it always seemed like the right thing to do.

Now we're able to throw out volumes of data demonstrating cost savings and offsets of having the on-site services, but that was never the key intent of providing these programs.

Now we're able to throw out volumes of data demonstrating cost savings and offsets of having the on-site services, but that was never the key intent of providing these programs. It has always been because it fits the culture we want, and it fits in how we want to treat employees over the long-term – sharing in the company's success. Our best measure of success is employee feedback – if employees love the services, use them regularly and say they've improved their lives, we don't need anything further to justify spending money on wellness.



Section Five:

Vision for Health in The New Millennium

The fifth and final section of this application requires that the developers provide and articulate the vision for health in the new millennium. Specifically, this vision must incorporate the following elements:

- ◆ A short statement that accurately captures the organization's intent for protecting employee health and well-being and at the same time advancing business objectives.
- ◆ The BHAGS (big, hairy, audacious goals) that will drive your company's efforts. The BHAGS should figuratively reach out and engage employees, managers, executives, and shareholders. The BHAGS must be tangible, energizing, and highly focused. Above all the organization's BHAGS must be bold in distinguishing the company as one of America's Healthiest.
- ◆ The resources that will be allocated to systematically accomplish the proposed objectives.

The outcomes that will be achieved and how the company will declare victory in this next phase of their worksite wellness initiative.

LSS Vision for Health in the New Millennium

Lab Safety Supply is merely at the beginning of a wellness initiative that has and will become even more of a critical success factor in the business's long-term strategies.

Employee health and wellness is viewed as essential to the business as focus on customer care, product management and media development. The wellness initiative plays a major role currently by providing on-site services and support that contributes to employee development, productivity and overall satisfaction with the work environment.

Recognizing the value of maintaining and enhancing these positive indicators, wellness will only become more deeply embedded in company business plans and strategies in the years ahead.

Some goals that will drive these efforts include:

- Expansion – Expand internal clinic services to cover as many practices as possible with greater efficiency than what's available externally.
- Management Involvement – Managers are currently responsible for performance in their respective areas, they need to also be responsible for ensuring they are doing all they can to allow and encourage their direct reports to participate in wellness programs, helping direct reports become even more productive.
- Employee Health Indicators – A three-year goal of having 90% of employees participating in wellness programs, health checks and HRA on a regular basis. Track key risk indicators and show a decline annually as workforce demographic ages.
- Benefits – Reward employees actively practicing healthy lifestyles to remain in low risk categories with lower medical insurance premiums or other financial incentives.

Allocation of resources to ensure these goals are met will include outsourced medical professionals as needed to expand services and continued dedication to an in-house staff to coordinate activities and remain “the face” of wellness.

Outcomes that will be achieved will be a noticeably healthier workforce, based on medical claims per employee and tracking of risk factors, over both local and national company comparisons. LSS will continue to spend far less in medical claims, worker’s compensation and related costs as compared to peer companies.

Finally, we will have 90% of employees involved in regular wellness programs in some capacity and a 90% employee satisfaction rating on wellness services provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to let us share our story with you. We definitely feel we are front-runners in demonstrating that there can be a significant financial return on our investment in health and wellness efforts, in addition to the incalculable long-term benefits and cultural aspects of a healthier workforce overall. We are honored to have been asked to submit a Platinum application and look forward to hearing your thoughts.