

A WELCOA CLASSIC

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

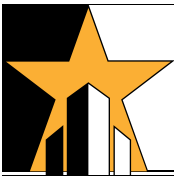
Absolute ADVANTAGE

THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS MAGAZINE



Capturing CEO Support

Developing Results-Oriented Wellness Programs
One Company At A Time



IN THIS ISSUE:

In this issue of *Absolute Advantage*, we've highlighted the first of the seven benchmarks of successful wellness programming—Capturing CEO Support. Specifically, we've illuminated the six tests of leading a healthy company and presented a new model for thinking about CEO support. In addition, we've presented in-depth CEO interviews with four of America's most recognized leaders.

Each month you can learn more about the articles in *Absolute Advantage*. Simply log on to WELCOA's members only website to get more in-depth coverage of the topics that matter most to you. Find full-length interviews, expert insight, and links to additional information that will help you do your job better!

THE WELLNESS COUNCILS OF AMERICA

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LETTER FROM THE **EXECUTIVE EDITOR** | DAVID HUNNICUTT, PhD

Capturing CEO Support

Developing Results-Oriented Wellness Programs One Company At A Time

We've dedicated this issue of *Absolute Advantage* to capturing CEO support.

The first of the seven benchmarks of success, capturing CEO support is crucial if you are looking to build a results-oriented wellness program. And to help you learn more about the art and science of this process, we've prepared a number of important articles.

First, we've highlighted the tests of leading a healthy company. In this article, we identify specific tests that leaders will need to pass if they are to contain costs and improve employee health.

Second, we present a new way of thinking about gaining leadership support for health promotion programs. With help from Dr. Judd Allen, I think you'll find this article of great interest in your pursuit to engage the corner office.

Having laid the groundwork, we then feature in-depth interviews from four nationally-recognized CEOs. Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco, shares his views and strategies on eliminating tobacco use within an organization. I have no question you will find this article controversial and it will definitely challenge your thinking on this topic.

We then provide the transcript from an interview with Peter Vigue, the CEO of Maine-based Cianbro. Peter is an exceptional leader and under his direction, Cianbro has built a remarkable workplace wellness program.

Up next is J. Barry Griswell, the Chairman and CEO of The Principal Financial Group. In this article Barry shares his story of losing weight and getting healthy.

Finally, we feature an article about Townsend Engineering—and how its former CEO made sure that wellness would continue to be a part of the company even after his departure.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of *Absolute Advantage*.

Yours in good health,

Dr. David Hunnicutt
President

“...capturing CEO support is crucial if you are looking to build a results-oriented wellness program.”



Absolute ADVANTAGE

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2

THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS MAGAZINE

Organizational Founder, William Kizer, Sr.

WELCOME

Absolute Advantage is the interactive workplace wellness magazine that helps large and small employers link health and well-being to business outcomes. *Absolute Advantage* arms business leaders and wellness practitioners with leading-edge workplace wellness information straight from the field's most respected business and health experts.

With its online component, *Absolute Advantage* provides the industry's most current and accurate information. By logging on to the magazine's interactive website, you can access a whole new world of health promotion—including in-depth interviews with national health promotion experts and insider's information about industry products.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

For information about subscribing to *Absolute Advantage*, contact the Wellness Councils of America at (402) 827-3590 or via e-mail at wellworkplace@welcoa.org.

Ab-sol-ute Ad-van-tage:

When a company can produce more than its competitors—even though they have the same amount of resources—it has an absolute advantage.

We believe wellness is that advantage.

EXECUTIVE EDITOR | David Hunnicutt, PhD

Dr. Hunnicutt is President of the Wellness Councils of America. As a leader in the field of health promotion, his vision has led to the creation of numerous publications designed to link health promotion objectives to business outcomes.

SENIOR EDITOR | Mike Perko, PhD

Dr. Perko has significant experience in worksite wellness. Currently the Chair of Health Education at the University of Alabama, Dr. Perko also serves on WELCOA's Medical Advisory Board and often speaks on behalf of the Wellness Councils of America.

MANAGING EDITOR | Brittanie Leffelman, MS

Brittanie is the Director of Operations and manages major writing projects at WELCOA. With a Master's Degree in Health Promotion, she regularly coordinates national health forums, major grants, and state and local wellness initiatives.

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING | William Kizer, Jr., MBA

As Director of Marketing, Bill is responsible for the design and oversight of WELCOA's marketing programs. With a Master's Degree in Business Administration, he communicates the value and benefits of WELCOA and its many products to organizations around the country.

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP | David Steurer, MEd

As WELCOA's Director of Membership, David is responsible for recruiting and servicing member organizations throughout the United States. David's background has been grounded in worksite wellness for the past 25 years.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS | Kelly Stobbe, MEd

As the Director of Community Affairs, Kelly is responsible for leading WELCOA's cadre of locally-affiliated wellness Councils. In this capacity, Kelly coordinates the *Well Workplace* awards initiative as well as the *Well City USA* community health project.

DIRECTOR OF DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY | Justin Eggspuehler

A 2001 graphic design graduate from Iowa State University, Justin studied design in Rome, Italy before joining the WELCOA design staff. He is responsible for the layout and design of many publications including *The Well Workplace* newsletter and *Absolute Advantage* magazine.

MULTIMEDIA DESIGNER | Adam Paige

Adam joined WELCOA in early 2005. With corporate experience in design and videography, He brings a wealth of talent to WELCOA's publication. In the capacity of a multimedia designer, Adam contributes to the publications of *The Well Workplace* newsletter and *Absolute Advantage* magazine.

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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The Tests of Leading a Healthy Company

There are six tests of leading a healthy company. CEOs must successfully pass each if they are to keep their employees healthy and well.

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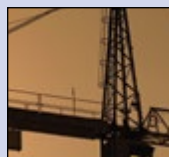
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Capturing CEO support is both an art and a science. In this article, you'll find a new model for engaging the corner office.



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Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco, provides commentary on how he created a tobacco-free company. Find out how he did it.



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Peter Vigue, CEO of Cianbro, speaks out on what it takes to build a best-in-class worksite wellness program. By setting a remarkable pace, Peter is blazing a new trail.



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The Principal Financial Group's Chairman and CEO, J. Barry Griswell, has taken the message of healthy living to heart—and to his employees. In this interview, Barry shares how he adopted a healthier lifestyle and what it meant for the employees at Principal.



42 Leaving A Legacy

Even though Ted Townsend, former CEO of Townsend Engineering, has stepped down, his health and wellness initiative lives on. This is an inspiring interview with a CEO who made sure that health would be a part of the Townsend equation even after he was gone.



WELCOA's Well Workplace Initiative

**The Seven Benchmarks
of Success**

For the past 20 years, the Wellness Councils of America has dedicated its efforts to studying and promoting the efforts of America's Healthiest Companies. During that period, WELCOA developed its patented Well Workplace process. At the core of the Well Workplace model, we have identified seven key benchmarks of success.

Specifically, these seven benchmarks are inherent in companies that have built results-oriented workplace wellness programs.



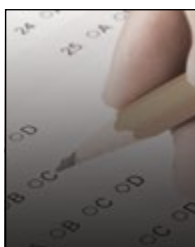
Benchmark #1: **Capturing CEO Support**

From our experience, CEO support is essential to the process of developing best-in-class programs. Indeed, we know of very few programs that have contained costs and improved employee health that don't have strong senior level support.



Benchmark #2: **Creating Cohesive Wellness Teams**

Once CEO support has been captured, the next task is to create a cohesive wellness team. Teams are essential to building great wellness programs because they help to distribute the responsibility for wellness throughout the organization.



Benchmark #3: **Collecting Data To Drive Health Efforts**

The team's first and primary responsibility is not to start offering programs, but rather to step back and gather important data. The data will be collected using corporate culture audits, health risk appraisals, and knowledge and interest surveys. This data is extremely important because it will reveal the specific areas of health needs and interests within the organization.



Benchmark #4: **Carefully Crafting An Operating Plan**

With essential forms of data having been collected, the task is now to develop an operating plan for health and wellness within the organization. This operating plan will serve as the roadmap and will guide the company's efforts and investments in workplace wellness.



Benchmark #5: **Choosing Appropriate Interventions**

With the first four benchmarks completed, it is now appropriate to begin choosing and implementing the appropriate health and productivity interventions. These interventions will most likely include tobacco cessation, physical activity, weight management, self-care, and stress management. But, they also may include things like fatigue management and ergonomics—depending on what the company's data reveals.



Benchmark #6: **Creating A Supportive Environment**

Once the appropriate health promoting interventions are up and running, it's time to create a supportive environment. Indeed, by having a supportive environment, organizations can be confident that employees will be supported in their efforts to lead healthier lives. Environmental interventions may take the form of policies, physical modifications, and rewards and incentives.

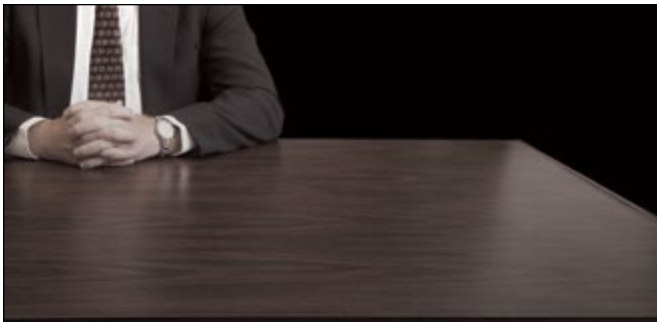




Benchmark #7: Carefully Evaluating Outcomes

The seventh and final benchmark in the Well Workplace model is carefully evaluating outcomes. It is within this benchmark that companies will religiously keep score when it comes to their wellness program. Evaluation targets include things like participation, participant satisfaction, behavior modification, and cost containment.

WELCOA's Well Workplace model has been adopted by more than 1,000 companies across the U.S.



In This Issue of *Absolute Advantage*

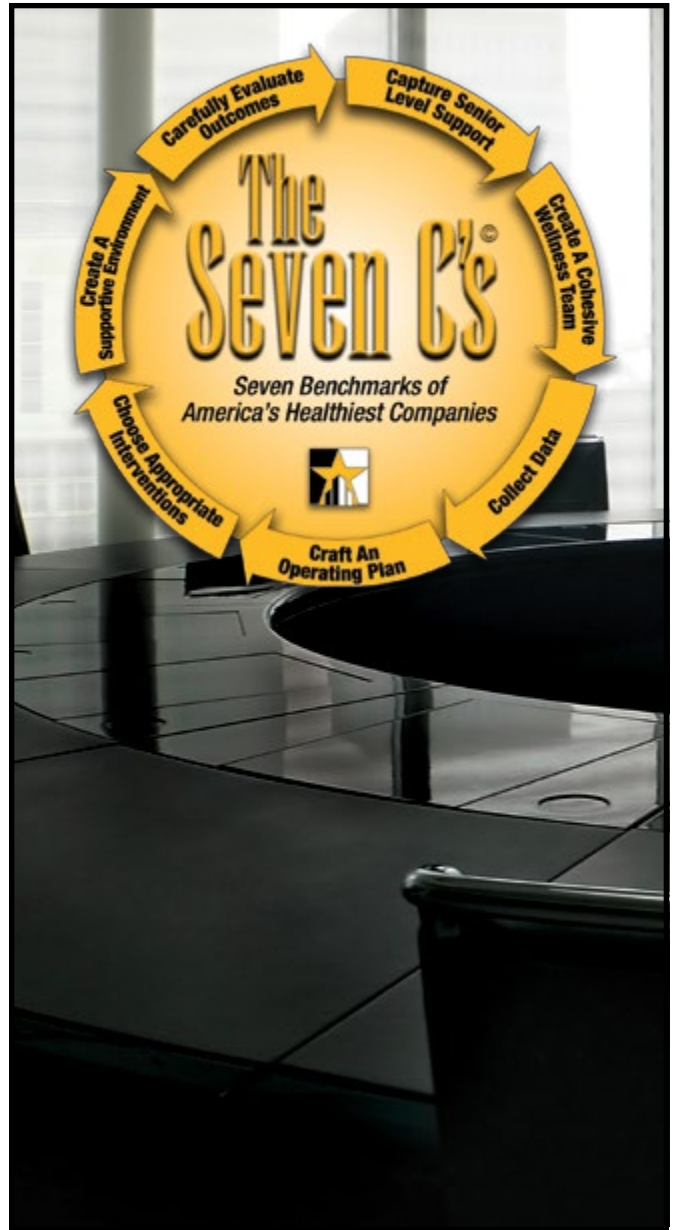
In this issue of *Absolute Advantage*, we concentrate our attention on Benchmark #1 – Capturing CEO Support. Within the pages of this magazine, you will discover the six tests of leading a healthy company, a new model for capturing support, and in-depth interviews with a number of CEOs who have built best-in-class workplace wellness programs.



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WELCOA's Seven Benchmarks

This article has outlined in detail our approach to creating results-oriented workplace wellness programs. The information has been adopted and embraced by scores of companies throughout North America. By using this information in an organization or with your clients, you can provide a credible framework which can be understood and operationalized. If you have questions concerning the use of this information or how you can put it to work in your organization, contact WELCOA at wellworkplace@welcoa.org.



About The Wellness Council of America [WELCOA]



Based in Omaha, Nebraska, WELCOA was founded in 1987 as a national non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting healthier life styles for all Americans, especially through health promotion initiatives at the worksite. Organizationally, WELCOA serves as an umbrella, linking communities and coalitions together into a supportive network that includes locally affiliated Wellness Councils, Well City initiatives, Well Workplaces, and individual and corporate members throughout the United States.

Working Well — Specifically, WELCOA focuses on building Well Workplaces—organizations that are dedicated to the health of their employees. The Well Workplace process provides business leaders and members with a structure or blue print to help their organizations build results-oriented wellness programs. Ultimately these programs help employees make better lifestyle choices, and positively impact the organization's bottom line. To date, over 700 companies have received the prestigious Well Workplace award. In addition, nine cities have been designated as Well Cities—Jacksonville, FL; Omaha, NE; Chattanooga, TN; Hobart, IN; Lincoln, NE; Kearney, NE; Kanawha Valley, WV; and Gainesville, FL and Bangor, ME—while several other cities have made the commitment to join this exclusive group.

Leading Edge Wellness Information — In addition to helping organizations build structurally sound wellness programs, WELCOA serves as a national clearinghouse and information center on worksite wellness. WELCOA responds to thousands of requests for information and materials by publishing a number of source books, a monthly newsletter read by approximately three million readers, an extensive line of brochures, as well as conducting numerous training seminars.

Wellness Council of America [WELCOA]

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Developing A Results-Oriented Wellness Program

The Tests Of A Healthy O

| By David Hunnicutt, PhD



Of Leading Company



From where we sit, the entire process of building a results-oriented worksite wellness program revolves around leadership. In fact, for more than 20 years, we have been consistently communicating the importance of CEO and Senior Executive support as the backbone of any healthy company.

To be sure, there are many people who have disagreed with our approach. Indeed, many still believe that worksite wellness programs function more efficiently when they are built at the grassroots level. In theory, this sounds good, but our experience tells us differently. In working with more than 1,000 companies in our Well Workplace Awards initiative, we have learned that grassroots programs don't have nearly the impact or longevity of those programs that are driven from the top-down.

So if you are committed to building a results-oriented workplace wellness program, we implore you to begin with capturing CEO and Senior Executive support.

But how is it done? What is required? How do you know if you truly have it?

Believe it or not, answering these questions 10 years ago was difficult. Worksite wellness programs were still in their infancy, and there just weren't a whole lot of case studies whereby you could begin examining what CEO and Senior Executive support actually looked like.

Today, this is a very different story. At WELCOA, we have been studying and highlighting the process and elements of capturing CEO commitment for the purpose of developing a "best-in-class" program.

In so doing, we have identified several tests of leadership. Each of these tests will be examined in more detail in this article.

Leadership Defined

Before we examine the six tests of leadership, it's important that we begin this discussion by presenting a definition of leadership. Specifically, we believe that leadership is the ability to translate vision into reality and to sustain it over time. It's a simple, yet elegant and powerful statement. And, in a time where there are literally hundreds and hundreds of definitions of leadership, this one has served us quite well in the worksite wellness arena.

When we breakdown the different components of this definition, we find that there are basically two things going on in the leadership process. First, there is the idea of developing a bold vision that becomes very real in terms of how it impacts the organization. But it's also important to note that there is a second part of this definition as well—and that has to do with sustaining the initiative over time. We've found in our experience that

too many programs just simply disappear without a trace.

To sum it up, we believe that leadership within healthy companies will manifest itself both in terms of making the vision a concrete reality and then making sure that this new reality is sustained over the long haul.

The Tests Of Leading A Healthy Company

To effectively implement this definition of leadership within an organization requires that the leader successfully pass six different tests. These tests of leadership have been drawn from case studies of some of America's most progressive worksite wellness programs. And, time and time again, when we examine the metrics of companies who are competing for Well Workplace Awards, we find that these six tests emerge as the gold standard for evaluating CEO and Senior Executive leadership.



The first way that the CEO can communicate the importance of wellness to the rest of the organization is through written correspondence.



1 Feeling The Burden

The first test of leading a healthy company has to do with the CEO's level of care and concern for the organization's employees. Plain and simple, if the CEO doesn't feel the burden of responsibility for making sure that they are addressing the health and wellness needs of their workforce, the worksite wellness initiative usually rings hollow. To be truly effective, the CEO—and the Senior Executives for that matter—must care about the organization's people. When care and concern from the very top of the organization are present, everything begins to change.

Believe it or not, employees know the difference between true caring and lip-service. From our experience, true care and concern manifests itself in action. And, when this action takes place, people feel the impact. And, when people feel the impact, the culture takes a turn for the better. And, when the culture improves, the organization begins to set itself apart as an employer of choice. It truly is a virtuous cycle.

But make no mistake, the process started with CEO leadership.

Take Peter Vigue for example. Peter is the CEO of Cianbro, a Maine-based company. Cianbro is an employer of choice and a highly-respected organization within its industry. When you talk with Peter, you can actually feel the level of his care and concern for the people at Cianbro. There's no mistaking the fact that he feels the burden of responsibility for making sure his employees are given opportunities to maintain and improve their health status while at the workplace. Because of Peter's care and concern, Cianbro has developed a world-class workplace wellness initiative.

However, when it comes to the first test of leadership—feeling the burden and demonstrating care and concern—some leaders tell us that it's a little too “touchy feely” for their tastes. In their mind, it conjures up images of group hugs.

This is definitely not the case. Within healthy companies, leaders feel the burden of taking care of their employees and, at the same time, realize that they have a job to do. And a significant portion of that job is about demonstrating bottom line outcomes. With this in mind, leaders within healthy companies are successfully able to embrace this creative tension between people and outcomes.

Along those same lines, it also is worth mentioning that, many times, in order to demonstrate care and concern, the CEO must exercise tough love. This occurs when the CEO can see that employee health behaviors are counterproductive to living a long, healthy, and productive life. Faced with this reality, and because of the burden they feel, the CEO is compelled to implement programs and policies that aren't necessarily the most popular. In fact, when you read the testimonials of CEOs within this issue of Absolute Advantage, many will openly talk

about the fact that their burden for their workforce moved them to take action—even though many employees were resistant.

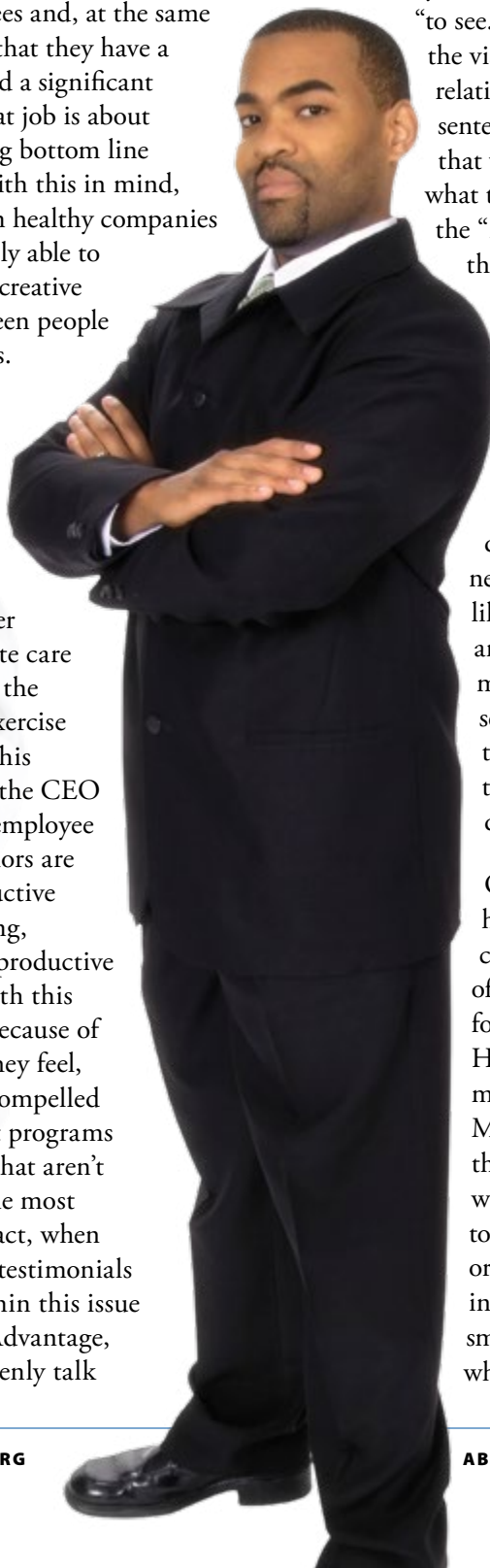
2 Developing The Vision

The second test of leading a healthy company is developing the vision.

Literally, the word vision means “to see.” In our experience, the vision statement is a relatively concise set of sentences or paragraphs that vividly describe what the CEO sees as the “health future” for the organization.

Many times people confuse vision and mission statements. The way we like to think of it is the vision statement describes what the new future will look like once everyone arrives, and the mission statement is a set of steps necessary to take when traveling to the new destination.

One CEO who has painted a very compelling picture of the “health future” for his organization is Howard Weyers. You may be familiar with Mr. Weyers as he is the CEO who went to work on eliminating tobacco use from his organization and, in the process, fired smoking employees who refused to quit.



While not everyone will agree with Mr. Weyers' approach for a healthier workforce, you have to admit that he definitely has a vision for what he wants his company to look like. When you talk with Mr. Weyers, it's evident that his vision is crystal clear. Again, even though you may not agree with his approach, he has successfully passed this test of leadership.

When it comes to leading a healthy company, it is the CEOs responsibility to develop the vision for the organization's new "health future." Indeed, without a clearly defined, desired destination, you can bet that employees will struggle with where they're going on this road to better health. And, if employees struggle because they can't see the leader's vision, you can bet that the overall health status of the organization will not improve.

3 Allocating The Resources

The third test of leading a healthy company is the allocation of resources. Even if the CEO passes the first two tests, but fails to allocate the resources necessary to make sure that the program can meet the health needs of the company's workforce, the wellness initiative is doomed to fail.

When it comes to allocating resources, there are several areas where the CEO should focus their concentration.

The first is making sure that the company's wellness program has the appropriate staff in place. This means creating a new position(s) which will require resources around recruitment, salary and benefits.

The next resource allocation decision involves establishing the appropriate budget. Nationally recognized expert, Dr. Ron Goetzel of Medstat and Cornell University, suggests that the organization set aside about \$100 per eligible employee. Obviously, this is the ideal scenario. But even if it is unreasonable to think of this type of investment, the CEO must determine what budget will be appropriate for achieving the vision.

In addition to staffing and program budgets, the CEO will also need to consider the physical space necessary to house the wellness initiative. For some smaller companies, it may only consist of a modest amount of square footage. For larger companies, this allocation decision may include building new structures that will be dedicated to improving employee health.

Finally, when it comes to resource allocation, the CEO will also have to determine how much time employees will need to successfully take advantage of the company's wellness offerings. And while CEOs often address the first three resource allocation decisions brilliantly, this is where many stumble. However, we have learned that employees will need to have release time in order to participate.

When it comes to leading a healthy company, it is the CEO's responsibility to develop the vision for the organization's new "health future."







The reason it's so important to empower other executives, managers, and front line employees is to ensure that wellness is embraced and adopted throughout all levels of the company.

4 Communicating The Importance

The fourth test of leading a healthy company is communication. This test of leadership is a critical component if the organization is truly to change the culture. To be effective, the CEO must communicate a lot. Luckily, there are a variety of channels that can be leveraged to create communications campaigns within any type of company.

The first and, perhaps most basic, way that the CEO can communicate the importance of wellness to the rest of the organization is through written correspondence. Specifically, these can take the form of emails, letters, memos, and other company publications. In our experience in

working with healthy companies, written communication from the CEO is very important. However, there are other more effective forms of communication that are at the CEO's disposal. If the CEO is a gifted communicator, one particularly powerful form of communication is the verbal presentation. Indeed, we have seen a number of CEOs shine using this tactic.

Although often overlooked, another particularly effective form of communication is integrated wellness into the company's strategic plan. By doing this, the CEO has made it clear to the rest of the organization that wellness is to be taken seriously by everyone. What's particularly powerful about using this tactic is that wellness will work its way into

meetings and gatherings within the organization at virtually every level.

Finally, wellness can be communicated within an organization by formally incorporating it into the vision/mission statement of the company. In our experience, this is the highest and most impressive form of communication that a CEO can take. This is true because it generally takes a lot of effort in order to position wellness within the strategic functioning of the company. When a CEO utilizes this form of communication, they are telling the world that wellness is part of the company's identity.

If the leader is looking to create a best-in-class workplace wellness program, communication is a critical part of the mix.



5 Setting The Example

The fifth test of leading a healthy company is role-modeling or setting a positive example. Without question, this is where the rubber meets the road. Over the last 10 years, we've seen CEOs pass the previously mentioned tests with flying colors, and yet, when it comes to role-modeling, they want nothing to do with it. This is the kiss of death.

In fact, by refusing to accept the responsibility for leading by example, many CEOs are branded as hypocrites in that they want their employees to engage in certain health promoting behaviors, but are unwilling to do it themselves.

What's particularly interesting about role-modeling is that we found, to be effective, the CEO doesn't have to be a tri-athlete, marathoner, or health Nazi—all they have to be is sincere. To be sure, we've seen CEOs who have been admired and respected for their efforts in quitting smoking, losing weight, and becoming physically active.

Take Barry Griswell for example. Barry is the President and CEO of The Principal, an Iowa-based insurance company. For years, Mr. Griswell found it difficult to make health a priority in his life. However, with the help of the company's wellness practitioner, Barry was able to embrace and ultimately adopt several important health promoting behaviors. As a result of his efforts, Barry was able to drop more than 50 pounds and reduce his cholesterol and triglycerides.

Time and time and time again, we've found that walking the talk is one of the hallmarks of leading a healthy company. Even though a CEO may choose to take on all of the other tests, they can't escape taking on this one.

6 Distributing The Responsibility

The final test of leading a healthy company is distributing the responsibility for wellness throughout the organization. The reason that it's so important to empower other executives, managers, and frontline employees is to ensure that wellness is embraced and adopted throughout all levels of the company. In so doing, the CEO is ensuring that wellness will continue to remain a part of the fabric of the company for years to come—even if the CEO leaves.

In our journey in helping companies to build best-in-class wellness programs, we have come across numerous CEOs who have taken this responsibility to heart. Perhaps one of the best jobs we've seen is that of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska's President and CEO, Steve Martin. Wanting to ensure that wellness remains a long-term priority at BCBSNE, Steve has appointed teams at multiple levels. From a strategic perspective, Mr. Martin has formally appointed the company's seven Vice Presidents and Chief Medical Officer to oversee all aspects of the company's wellness initiative. To further ensure that the notion of wellness is taken seriously, Steve has carved out metrics that have been incorporated into the company's Balanced Scorecard approach.

At the tactical level, Steve has also created a company-wide wellness committee. BCBSNE's wellness committee consists of many frontline employees. Wellness committee members have been charged with delivering and monitoring the success of the company's wellness program at the grassroots level.

If that's not enough, Steve has also hired a Wellness Administrator

as well as a Health Promotion Coordinator to serve under the Vice President of Wellness.

By taking this approach, Steve has left little doubt that wellness will remain an important part of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska for years to come.

The Six Tests Of Leading A Healthy Company

In this article, we've outlined the six tests associated with leading a healthy company. To be effective, the CEO—and Senior Executives for that matter—must embrace these responsibilities if they are to create a wellness program that will survive and thrive in many different business cycles. Most assuredly, it is unreasonable to expect that a CEO can meet the challenges of these tests in only a few weeks or months. Rather, it is more prudent to think that the CEO will work on increasing his/her capacity over a longer period of time. By taking this approach, the CEO will develop the skills and obtain the proven experience necessary to improve the health and well-being of the company's most valuable asset—its employees. ★



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A New Way of Thinking

**Examining Strategies
for Gaining Leadership
Support for Health
Promotion |**

By Judd Allen, PhD and David Hunnicutt, PhD

Ask the typical health promotion practitioner what their senior level leadership's attitude toward wellness is, and you'll likely get a variety of responses. While some practitioners may be fortunate enough to enjoy strong senior level support for their wellness efforts, many others may feel that senior level leadership is opposed to their efforts—maybe even a little bit suspicious of health promotion's role in the overall business plan.

Perhaps it's their relative lack of corporate power that has caused some health promotion professionals to feel that they are beggars at the banquet. An archival study of health promotion professionals and senior managers found that health promotion professionals consistently overestimated the importance of economic factors in management choices about health promotion programs. Many of us assume that management is unsympathetic and skeptical of our goals, that all they care about is the bottom line, and that we have to constantly prove that health promotion is good for business.

Of course there's often truth in that view. Some managers do lack enthusiasm for the full range of health promotion goals. Some managers do think only in terms of numbers, and fail to make the connection between the wellness of their employees and the health of the business. But, the fact is, most managers aren't against health promotion. They're supportive and aware that wellness is inherently valuable and important. But they aren't experts in our field—that's our job. Managers need our assistance to imagine the possibilities, to comprehend the value, to understand the research, and most of all, to

develop their roles as wellness leaders. Knowing this, we would be wise to embrace a new model for securing senior leadership support for health promotion programming. Instead of treating all leaders as unsympathetic to health promotion, wellness professionals need to tailor their approach to the attitudes of managers—ultimately moving leaders through their own “Stages of Change” toward a more supportive position on health promotion.

A New Model For Thinking About Leadership Support

In reality, leadership support for wellness spans a continuum ranging from those who are actively opposed, to those who openly champion the benefits of improved health and well-being (see *Figure 1*). Of course, the majority of our senior leadership falls somewhere in the middle of this continuum. Some are quietly opposed to organizational wellness efforts, many are neutral, and some leaders believe in the power of wellness but simply don't vocalize their views.

According to organizational culture change guru Dr. Judd Allen, the above-mentioned continuum is divided into the following five categories. Each category is outlined below, and strategies for interacting with leaders in each sector are identified.

Category #1: Active Opposition.

These managers speak out against wellness programs, challenging their worth and even sabotaging their implementation. While only 5% of leaders fit this profile, these individuals can be particularly devastating for health promotion programs.

Strategy for interacting with this type of leader. Don't antagonize these leaders by arguing with them. Not only can it be a waste of time, but it's also never wise to poke the bear with a stick. Listen carefully to leaders who are actively opposed to wellness, allowing them to voice their suspicions. Most importantly, don't take their comments personally. Using this approach may help the leader remember you as being sensible and straightforward if and when they change their attitude about wellness.

Category #2: Quiet Opposition.

Managers in this group may think that wellness activities are a waste of time. They may communicate their lack of support non-verbally by not participating in events or by only doing the absolute minimum that's required by senior management. This group likely makes up about 20% of managers.

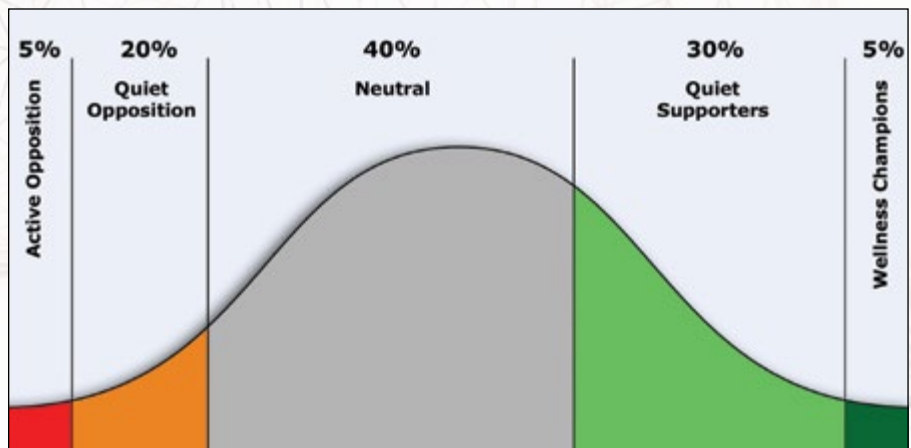


Figure 1: Continuum of senior level support for wellness initiatives.

Strategy for interacting with this type of leader. Like the strategy for approaching those leaders who are actively opposed to wellness, approach quiet opposition with a listening ear. The main difference in your approach between quiet and active opposition is that it may be worth your time to begin selling this second group on the power of health promotion. Don't oversell, but find out if this group views anything in health promotion as being positive, and then build your comments around this knowledge. Patience is key with this group.

Category #3: Neutral.

Other priorities preoccupy this group. They don't feel strongly about wellness one way or the other, or they're not sure that programs can really make a difference. These managers simply go through the motions, concentrating all the while on moving on to other things. About 40% of managers fall into this group.

Strategy for interacting with this type of leader. Oftentimes, leaders in this group simply need a little push. These leaders are ready to be exposed to the benefits of wellness. Try using statistics and case studies to demonstrate how wellness can benefit the organization. The largest group along the wellness continuum, a slight positive shift among these individuals can make a big difference.

Category #4: Quiet Supporters.

These leaders understand the value of increased health and well-being, but often don't know how they can contribute to growing the health promotion program. These leaders support worksite wellness in theory and show up for events, but fall short of actively campaigning for wellness. Approximately 30% of senior leaders fall into this category.

Strategy for interacting with this type of leader. It's usually not necessary to try to convince this group about the value of wellness. Instead, show them how they can get involved. Let this group know they don't have to be "health nuts" to help the program succeed. Also, try pairing them up with wellness champions at events in hopes that the champion's attitude with rub off on them.

Category #5: Wellness Champions.

These leaders are your core supporters. They understand the human and financial benefits of health promotion and educate other managers and employees about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. These leaders even adopt healthier lifestyles for themselves and encourage others by recognizing their successes. 5% of leaders fall into this category.

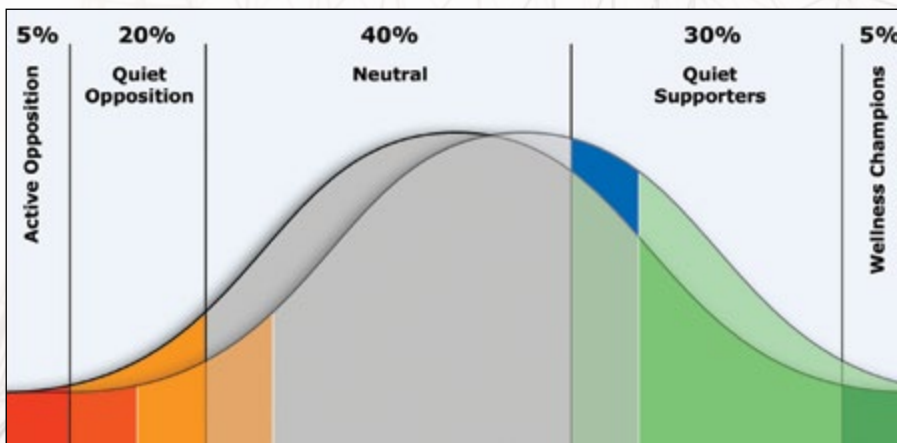
Strategy for interacting with this type of leader. Above all, protect these leaders—they're vital to the success of your health promotion program. Recognize them, celebrate them, and encourage them. Let them know that you appreciate them, and that they are part of a movement within the company. Ask them to help you spread the word on wellness, and keep them informed on new developments in the field—they'll appreciate it.

Understanding and embracing the model presented in this article can go a long way towards gaining senior leadership support for your wellness program. Remember, like employees attempting to change negative health behaviors, senior leadership can be moved through the "Stages of Change" towards a more positive view of health promotion efforts. It's up to you to identify where your leaders falls, and give them a gentle nudge. ★

About Judd Allen, PhD



Judd Allen, Ph.D., President of the Burlington, Vermont's Human Resources Institute (HRI), focuses on how private and public sector organizations can create wellness cultures. These efforts employ a systematic approach to shaping values, norms, peer support systems, organizational support systems, and climate. This culture change process has been successful in bringing about long term change in more than a 1,000 settings worldwide. Dr. Allen's organization is dedicated to empowering people to create healthier and more productive cultural environments at work, at home, and in the community. For more information, visit www.healthyculture.com or email info@healthyculture.com.



Key Idea: A 5% shift across the values continuum towards support of wellness (represented in blue) could cause a wellness revolution.

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Suggested Citation: Allen, J.; Hunnicutt, D. (2006). *A New Way Of Thinking*. WELCOA's **Absolute Advantage** Magazine, 6(2), 14-17

Wellness Leadership Survey

1. What position best describes your attitude toward health promotion?

- ☛ I am enthusiastic about health promotion and actively promote it at the workplace.
- ☛ I am enthusiastic about health promotion, but do not actively contribute to our workplace health promotion effort.
- ☛ I am neutral about whether or not we should have a health promotion program here.
- ☛ I am opposed to health promotion, but I am not actively working to stop health promotion programs.
- ☛ I am opposed to health promotion and I am doing what I can to stop health promotion programs at the workplace.

The following questions ask your opinion about management culture at your workplace. In “The Current Situation” column, fill in the circle that represents your level of agreement that the behavior is currently normal practice among managers and supervisors you work with. In “The Way You Would Like It To Be” column, fill in the circle that indicates your level of agreement that the behavior is desirable.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please select the answer that seems most accurate to you. Use the following scale.

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Undecided/Don't Know** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

It is normal practice among managers and supervisors to...	The Current Situation	The Way You Would Like it to Be
2. Be able to explain the overall vision and functions of the health promotion program.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
3. Recognize how supporting employee health supports the mission and purpose of the organization.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
4. Recognize both financial and human benefits of health promotion at the workplace.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
5. See to it that employees are kept informed about health promotion programs.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
6. Explain to new employees, to customers and to the public that the wellness program is an important benefit of the organizational culture.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
7. Suggest new wellness initiatives that would enhance the health promotion program.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
8. Model healthy lifestyle choices.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
9. Tell about past and current personal efforts to adopt healthier lifestyle practices.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
10. Participate in health promotion activities.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
11. Support participation in health promotion activities by allowing flexible work schedules.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
12. Participate in health promotion planning efforts.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
13. See to it that health promotion programs are of high quality.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
14. Set organizational health promotion goals.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
15. See to it that there is adequate financial and logistical support for wellness programs.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
16. Follow through on commitments made to the wellness initiative.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
17. Be open to discussing employee lifestyle improvement goals and plans.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
18. Stay informed about employee lifestyle improvement efforts.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
19. Recognize employees' attempts to adopt healthier lifestyles.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
20. Track the benefits of health promotion programs.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
21. Celebrate employees' lifestyle change successes.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
22. Celebrate the achievement of organizational health goals (such as reduced absenteeism, disability claims, and accident rates).	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Online data entry, statistical analysis and recommendations based on Wellness Leadership Survey findings are available at www.healthyculture.com. For further information call (802) 862-8855.



Where There's Smoke

A CEO Implements An Aggressive Tobacco



Smoke, You're FIRED

No Free Policy With Remarkable Outcomes

Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco (now a Meritain Health Company) has taken a unique and aggressive stance on tobacco use in the workplace. By implementing one of the most aggressive approaches to eradicating a significant public health concern, Mr. Weyers has set the bar for addressing tobacco use within American business.

In this interview, Mr. Weyers visited with WELCOA President, Dr. David Hunnicutt, and shared his views on tobacco use, workplace wellness, and the moral responsibility of leadership. What you will read in this interview will inspire you and, at the same time, make you question what you really believe about tobacco use at the workplace.

Through it all, one thing is for sure, Howard Weyers knows exactly what he believes in and where he stands relative to this issue.



Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco, is a very interesting man. He has a heart-felt passion for the health and well-being of his employees. And, he's also got a rock-hard conviction on ensuring that Weyco employees abstain from tobacco use. In this interview with WELCOA's President, Dr. David Hunnicutt, Howard reveals himself as a leader who cares deeply about his employees—and he's willing to promote health within his company with both backbone and heart.

When did you get the notion that going smoke-free at Weyco—and more specifically, not employing smokers in that equation—was the way to go?

Weyers: To answer that question, I need to share with you my professional background. Prior to getting into the insurance business, I spent 20 years coaching high school and college football. Smoking was the one thing that I was very tough on when I look back over the years. I really came down hard on athletes and other people who smoked. I've never been involved with it personally and it wasn't in my family. But I can tell you right now, I don't like it and it's certainly not good for people.

I guess I carried that view into the workplace when I started Weyco. But I never really acted on it because I didn't feel like it was my place to do so. Then, in 2003, everything changed—simply by accident.

By chance I found out that there was no law in Michigan that prohibits an employer from making employment decisions based on a person's use of tobacco. When I had that piece of information confirmed by my labor attorney, that's when I really went to work on this issue.

In fact, I immediately determined in my mind that Weyco would not hire tobacco users from this point forward.

I put questions on all of our employment applications. Indeed, that's one of the first questions we ask people, "do you use illegal drugs or tobacco?" It lets people know right up front that tobacco users are not welcome at Weyco.

We put this hiring policy into place in April of 2003.

We then told our employees that they couldn't smoke on our campuses or our property. Moreover, we wouldn't allow our employees to take breaks away from Weyco. Our goal was to make it very difficult for tobacco users to engage in this nasty habit during the workday.

The third step we took was in January of 2004. We told our employees that we were going to implement an organization-wide testing program for tobacco use. We shared with them that if they didn't take the test—or were positive on the test—it would cost them an additional \$50 per month in 2004. But we gave them an option. If they were positive on the test and they would sign a letter of intent to quit, we would waive the \$50 penalty and pay for any treatment program for them. That's what we did in 2004. My intention in making this part of our culture was to find out how many of my employees were tobacco users and isolate them so that we could go to work on developing policies and interventions that would help them.

In 2005, we then told our employees that the same test would be mandatory—and if you did not take the test or were positive on the test—then your employment at Weyco was officially done.

So you can see that not only were we very tough on our tobacco stance, but we also spent a lot of time encouraging people to quit and to get into programs that would help them.

Did you get a lot of employee resistance?

Weyers: You bet. The interesting part is that we received resistance not only from tobacco users but from non-

2002

Weyco prepares to go smokefree

2003

Weyco modifies its hiring policies

2004

Weyco implements an organizational testing program

tobacco users as well. I think that happened because it was a new policy. I can tell you from my heart that it was all part of the prevention equation and I have no malice toward tobacco users. You have to understand that we are trying to create a “best fit” environment for the type of employee that we want to represent our organization.

As we moved closer to the mandatory test in 2005, we did have four people say that they wouldn't take the test and they left the company. That's what created the media storm that most people are familiar with. Nevertheless, we went through with the test in January of 2005 and we had everybody pass. But we weren't finished yet.

In 2005, we announced that we would be doing random testing. We informed our employees that if they tested positive in a random test, we'd send them home for a month without pay, so that they would have time to think about everything. Then, when they'd come back, we'd test them again before they could reenter our workforce. If they tested positive again, we wouldn't let them reenter. If they were negative, they could return but they would have to sign a “last chance” agreement that we could test them daily.

Since January 2005, to date, we've lost four people to the random test. Three out of the four resigned during that 30-day unpaid period. One person did return, but tested positive again two weeks later—so we sent them home. So that's the way it's gone—we random test about six times per year.

This is a pretty aggressive program.

Weyers: Well, we're not finished yet. In January of 2006, we extended the non-tobacco use guidelines to spouses. We started with the spouses who are on our medical plan first and that's gone well. And I want you to know that we test the spouses. In fact, if you're on our medical plan, you have to test. If a spouse tested positive in 2006,

About Howard Weyers



Howard Weyers' approach to improving employee health and reducing health-related costs for business has received international attention, particularly for its innovative lifestyle and tobacco-free workforce programs.

Howard is President of Weyco, a Meritain Health Company. Meritain Health is the largest independent provider of services for self-funded health plans in the United States. Meritain Health serves over 1,400 self-funded clients and over a million members nationally. The company provides plan administration, innovative wellness, medical management, disease management, network management, and cost management services. Meritain Health is also a pioneer and now the leading independent provider of Consumer Directed Health Plans. Meritain Health employs over 1,350 people with headquarters in Amherst, NY, and regional offices in 28 cities across the country.

He has been featured on *20/20* with John Stossel, *60 Minutes* with Morley Safer, and virtually every major morning TV and radio talk show in the U.S. He has also been sought out for interviews and commentary by such prominent publications as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *The Economist*.

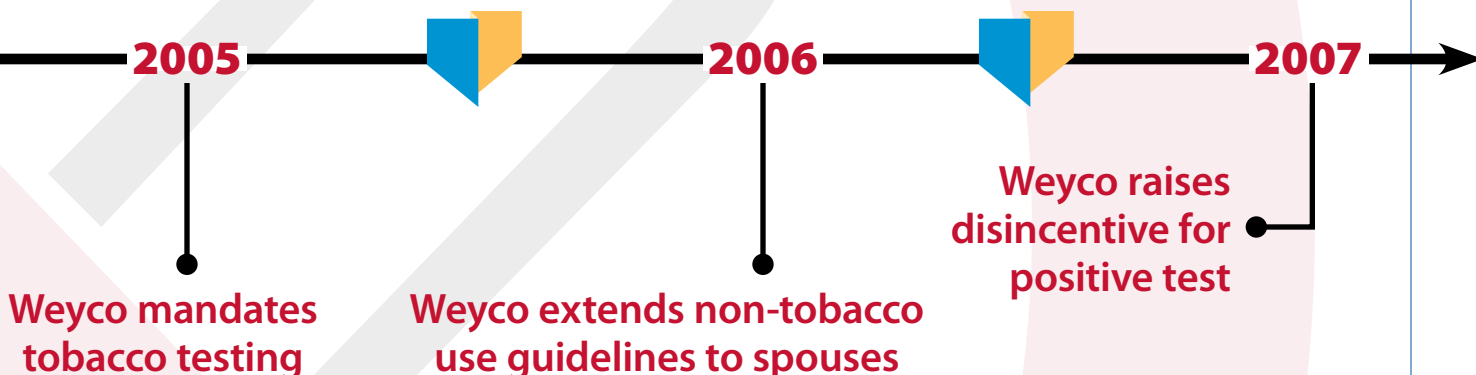
For 20 years prior to founding Weyco, Howard coached high school and college football. He is a graduate of Thiel College in Pennsylvania with a bachelor's degree in education.

it resulted in increased costs for the employee of about \$80 per month.

If the spouse would sign a letter of intent to quit, we'd waive the fee and pay for any treatment plan they'd choose to go to.

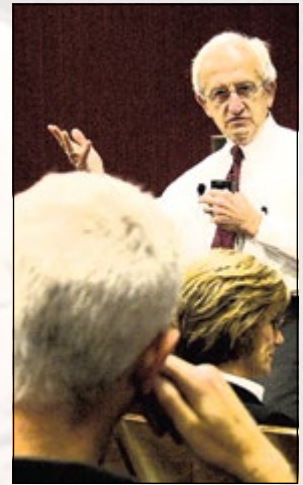
For 2007, we just raised the ante. If a Weyco employee smokes it will be an additional \$50 per pay period or \$1,200 per year. The penalty is an additional \$1,300 if the employee's spouse tests positive.

By the way, this is the last year that we'll pay for tobacco treatment programs. And, our program is working because we're down to one or two spouses that haven't quit yet.





Howard Weyers Speaks Out On...



Tobacco Use

"...Smoking was the one thing that I was very tough on when I look back over the years. I really came down hard on athletes and other people who smoked. I've never been involved with it personally and it wasn't in my family. But I can tell you right now, I don't like it and it's certainly not good for people...I guess I carried that view into the workplace when I started Weyco."

Tobacco Users

"...I don't believe that tobacco users are bad or deviant people. Again, I'm just trying to find the right fit for our organization. Tobacco users do not figure into the Weyco equation."

Tough Love

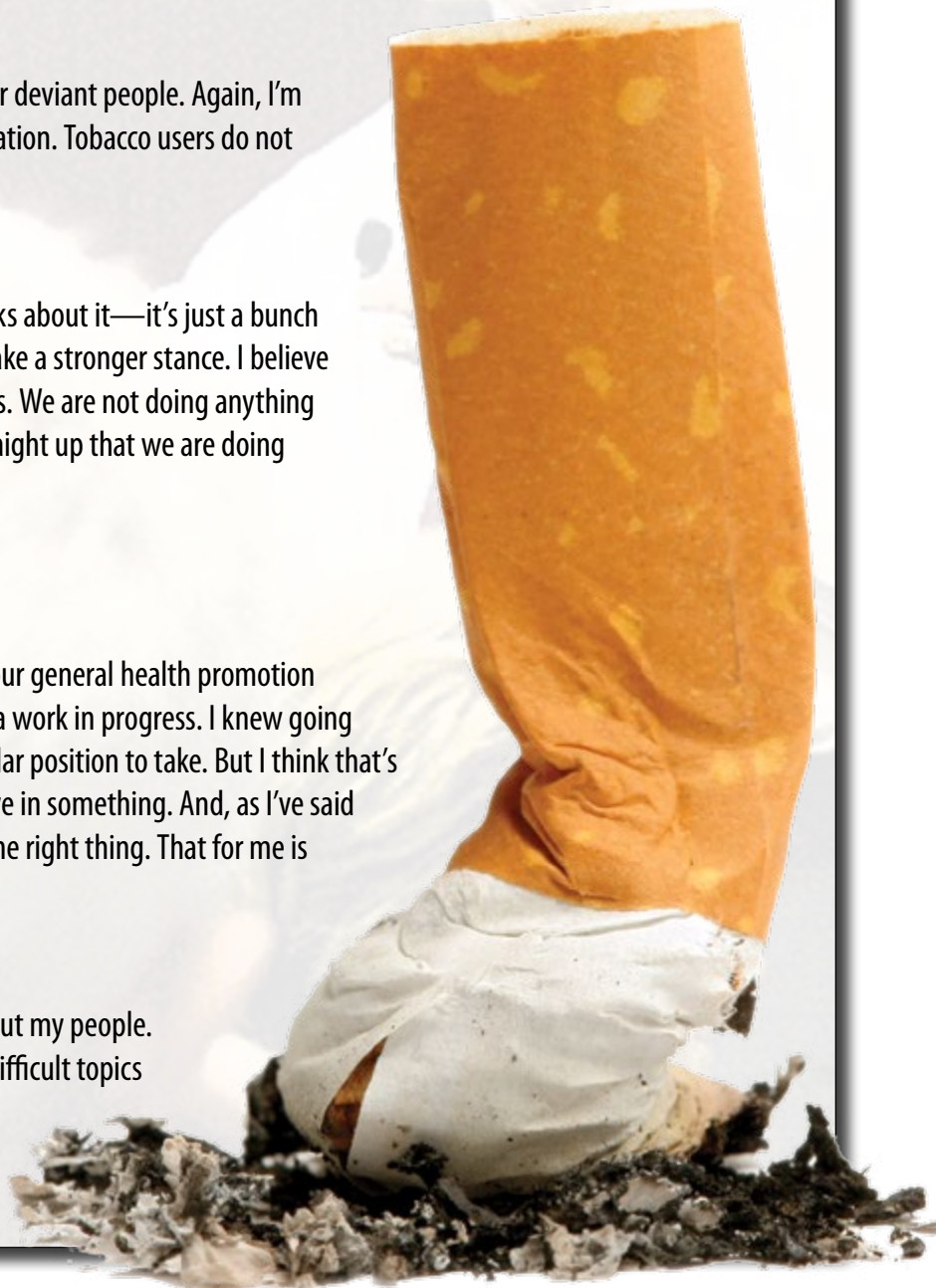
"...From where I sit, I think everybody just talks about it—it's just a bunch of lip service. I feel personally compelled to take a stronger stance. I believe in my heart that we are doing the right things. We are not doing anything wrong or outside of the law. I can tell you straight up that we are doing this for our employees..."

Employee Resistance To Tobacco Policy Changes

"...We had a few employees complain about our general health promotion requirements, but I view this whole thing as a work in progress. I knew going into this that this was not going to be a popular position to take. But I think that's what you need to do if, as a leader, you believe in something. And, as I've said before, I believe in my heart that I'm doing the right thing. That for me is my compass."

His Legacy At Weyco

"...I would hope that they say that I cared about my people. And, I cared enough to take on some pretty difficult topics which caused some discomfort in the short term, but over the long term, paid big dividends."



From a leadership perspective, you obviously feel a strong moral responsibility to help your employees live a longer life by being healthy. Is my observation correct?

Weyers: Absolutely. I think a healthy lifestyle is vitally important to living a complete life. And, as a CEO, I want what everybody else wants—healthy and productive employees. From where I sit, I think everybody just talks about it—it's just a bunch of lip service. I feel personally compelled to take a stronger stance. I believe in my heart that we are doing the right things. We are not doing anything wrong or outside of the law. I can tell you straight up that we are doing this for our employees. We're trying to engage our total population—employees and spouses—in our health improvement program. And, it's a very good program. So, the bottom line is that I feel a moral and personal responsibility to help my employees lead healthier lives? The answer is yes.

Are you seeing a shift in the overall culture at Weyco?

Weyers: We are. In fact, we have about 97% of our employees and spouses involved in our total health promotion program which includes health risk appraisals, biometric evaluations, activity programs, preventive exams, and onsite coaching among other things. So, from my perspective, health is becoming a way of life at Weyco.

Are you getting any residual negative feedback on your tobacco use stance?

Weyers: No. I don't think that we are. We had a few employees complain about our general health promotion requirements, but I view this whole thing as a work in progress. I knew going into this that this was not going to be a popular position to take. But I think that's what you need to do if, as a leader, you believe in something. And, as I've said before, I believe in my heart that I'm doing the right thing. That for me is my compass.

In looking back, would you have done anything differently?

Weyers: No. I don't think that I would have changed much. Really, I guess when I think about it, the only thing I would have changed would have been that I wouldn't have told our employees when the mandatory testing would occur because it is possible to game the tests. But that's about all I would have changed.

Reducing Tobacco Use At Weyco

STEP 1: Modify Your Employment Application

"...I put questions on all of our employment applications. Indeed, that's one of the first questions we ask people, "do you use illegal drugs or tobacco?" It lets people know right up front that tobacco users are not welcome at Weyco."

STEP 2: Prohibit Smoking On Company Property

"We then told our employees that they couldn't smoke on our campuses or our property. Moreover, we wouldn't allow our employees to take breaks away from Weyco. Our goal was to make it very difficult for tobacco users to engage in this nasty habit during the workday."

STEP 3: Implement Testing With Incentives

"...We told our employees that we were going to implement an organization-wide testing program for tobacco use. We shared with them that if they didn't take the test—or were positive on the test—it would cost them an additional \$50 per month in 2004."

STEP 4: Mandate Testing

"...we then told our employees that the same test would be mandatory—and if you did not take the test or were positive on the test—then your employment at Weyco was officially done."

STEP 5: Test Randomly

"...we announced that we would be doing random testing. We informed our employees that if they tested positive in a random test, we'd send them home for a month without pay, so that they would have time to think about everything. Then, when they'd come back, we'd test them again before they could reenter our workforce."

STEP 6: Widen The Circle To Include Spouses

"...we extended the non-tobacco use guidelines to spouses. We started with the spouses who are on our medical plan first... And I want you to know that we test the spouses. In fact, if you're on our medical plan, you have to test. If a spouse tested positive in 2006, it resulted in increased costs for the employee of about \$80 per month."



I don't believe that tobacco users are bad or deviant people...I'm just trying to find the right fit for our organization.

As a TPA, you have a lot of clients you provide services for. How have they responded to all of this?

Weyers: In most cases, it's been a very positive thing. I think I've lost one client that I know was opposed to my stance. But that's the way it goes. I'm telling you we are doing the right thing. We are in the middle of changing our culture, and that can be a long, arduous, and sometimes painful process. But I'm not calling off the dogs. This is something that we need to do as a company and I believe that if we're going to solve the healthcare crisis in the U.S., other companies are going to have to do it as well.

Do you ever wonder whether you're missing out on talented employees who are x'd out of the equation because they use tobacco?

Weyers: If that's the case, I'm willing to pay the price. Do I believe that there are tobacco users who are extremely talented? I do. They're just not welcome here. I don't believe that tobacco users are bad or deviant people. Again, I'm just trying to find the right fit for our organization. Tobacco users do not figure into the Weyco equation.



What advice would you give to other CEOs about starting and delivering a health promotion program?

Weyers: The first thing that I would tell them is that you've got to figure out your position on the matter right from the beginning. Do you believe in healthy employees? If the answer is yes, then you've got to get up in front of your people and tell them that change is coming. Then you've got to empower other leaders within your company to share the vision. After you've done that, the heavy lifting is done.

But for CEOs, I don't think it's reasonable to expect significant change if you're not willing to take a strong and definitive personal stance.

Do you think other CEOs will follow your lead?

Weyers: Without question. I know that I picked up on other CEOs' views on health promotion, and I have no doubt that others will take similarly strong stances. The reason I believe this is that I truly am convinced that our country is in the middle of a healthcare crisis. If we don't take a strong stance now, we are going to have a lot of water in the boat in the next decade.

When it's all said and done, what do you hope employees will say about Howard Weyers?

Weyers: I would hope that they say that I cared about my people. And, I cared enough to take on some pretty difficult topics which caused some discomfort in the short term, but over the long term, paid big dividends. I guess, come to think of it, that's what tough love is all about. ★

About Weyco, Inc.



WEYCO, INC was founded in 1979, and is located in Okemos, MI. In 1983, we became a licensed Michigan Third Party Administrator (TPA) to administer self-funded Medical, Dental, Vision, and Short-term Disability Plans.

WEYCO, INC is a service company specializing in Employee Benefit Plans and Benefit Management.

WEYCO, INC is also an agent for Insured Plans such as Life, Long Term Disability, Medical, Dental, Vision, and Flexible Spending Accounts.

WEYCO, INC Mission Statement

To promise and provide our clients the highest quality services in order to continually prove ourselves to be the premiere benefit and healthcare information management organization.

WEYCO, INC Creed

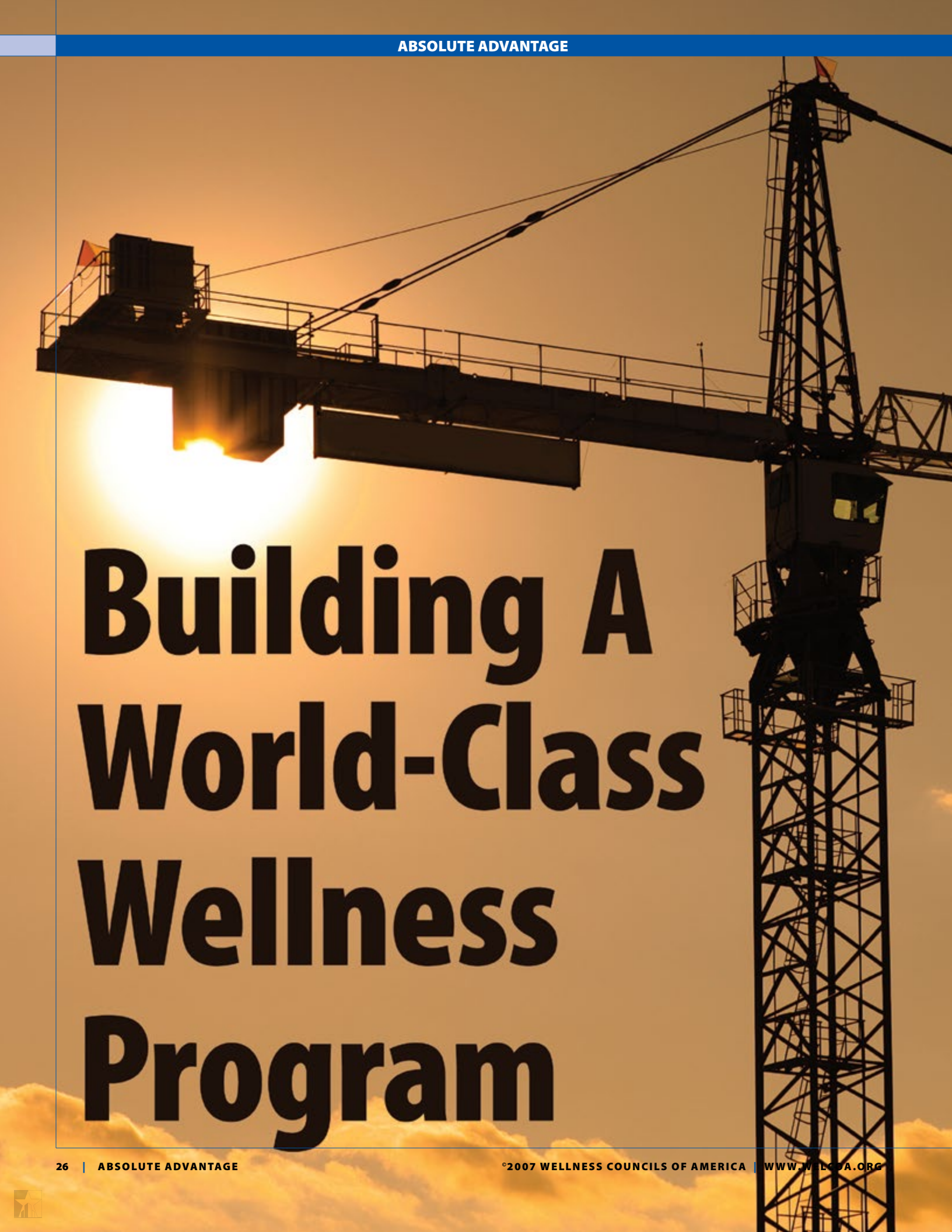
- ♦ *We recognize we must work together to thrive.*
- ♦ *We understand another's point of view.*
- ♦ *We treat others as we would want to be treated, with courtesy, respect and dignity.*
- ♦ *We acknowledge and respond to fellow workers' requests with regard to each other's time and priorities.*
- ♦ *We are responsible for our own positive attitude.*
- ♦ *We treat problems as learning opportunities while working together toward resolution.*
- ♦ *We provide an atmosphere for open, honest and objective communication without fear.*
- ♦ *We strive for individual excellence that enables others to perform their jobs.*
- ♦ *We encourage initiative, new ideas and decisive problem solving.*
- ♦ *We acknowledge the equal importance of all fellow workers.*



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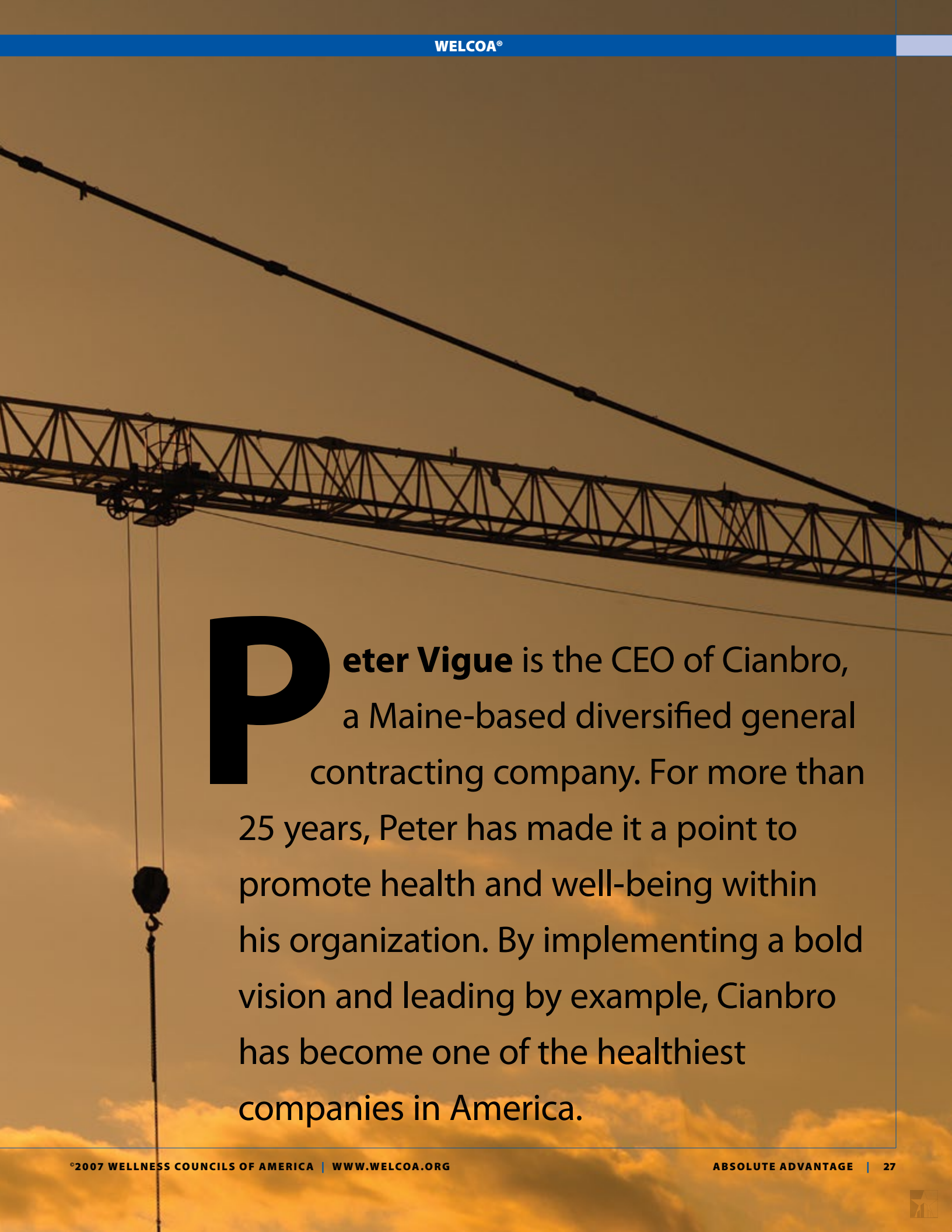
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Building A World-Class Wellness Program



A large construction crane is silhouetted against a warm, golden sunset sky. The crane's lattice structure and cables are clearly visible, extending across the upper half of the frame. The background is filled with soft, glowing clouds in shades of orange and yellow.

Peter **Vigue** is the CEO of Cianbro, a Maine-based diversified general contracting company. For more than 25 years, Peter has made it a point to promote health and well-being within his organization. By implementing a bold vision and leading by example, Cianbro has become one of the healthiest companies in America.



In this interview, Peter Vigue, the CEO of Cianbro, sat down with WELCOA President, Dr. David Hunnicutt, to discuss his passion and convictions for health in the workplace. In an introspective look back, Peter reveals the secrets of how he captured his employees' attention and created a best-in-class workplace wellness program. A rare breed, you'll find that Peter has a genuine care and concern for his employees, and he'll do just about anything to help them protect their health and well-being.

As CEO of Cianbro, what prompted you to implement a health and wellness initiative?

Vigue: Several things. I think my commitment initially started back in the early '80s with a long-time employee who was struggling with alcoholism. With a history of alcohol abuse in my family, as well as my wife's, I knew the devastating toll that this could take—and I was watching the havoc it was wreaking on this person each and every day.

If I was going to be of help, the first thing I had to do was to get myself up to speed on this topic. I actually took my vacation and enrolled in an educational drug and alcohol awareness program to learn more about the dynamics and health consequences of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. During this time, I became better informed, and I really came to grips with my previous family background. It was at this time that I knew that I was going to have to change something.

When I returned to my company, I confronted the employee I mentioned earlier—one of the most talented people I had ever met. I actually carried him into a 28-day program and worked through many hard times with him side-by-side. The good news is that he finally got sober and entered into a recovery period in his life. He also went on to become a star project Superintendent for our company. Believe it or not, I also did this with a number of other individuals at Cianbro. And, as a result of this kind of "tough love," I could see the impact it was having on people as well as our company.

This is where the story gets interesting. The individual whom I helped with his alcohol problem became a very, very heavy smoker. I never said anything about it to him. Then, in later years, I started bringing up the issue—but I never really did anything. I'd say, "Carl, you've got to stop smoking. This is going to kill

you." To make a sad story short, he did indeed contract lung cancer and died a grueling death after a four-year struggle. It was a terrible thing to see, but my friend and colleague died—it will be three years ago this summer. This was a turning point for me.

When he became ill, I said to myself, "You know what? It doesn't have to be this way. I'm going to do some things differently." That's when we came up with the idea of a "no-tobacco" business. On the surface, it really looks like a wellness intervention. But I can tell you this; the whole issue is about leadership. It's about saying the difficult and challenging things that no one wants to hear.

Funny thing is we do it for our children and the ones that we love—holding them accountable for their own personal well-being and trying to coach them and educate them to make the right decisions. But very seldom do we ever do this at work, and that's where I said to myself, "There's got to be a better way."

For me, it's a moral responsibility. I feel that I am responsible for the health and well-being of Cianbro's employees. And, I guess this means that I have to deal with the important issues regardless of how popular they are.

What were the obstacles in getting your program started?

Vigue: Everybody thought that we were crazy, absolutely nuts. Having said this, I guess the number one obstacle was that most people just didn't believe that we could

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actually make a difference in people's lives. Coming to the understanding that this was something that could help our people to make positive changes was a big, big deal in our company.

The second major obstacle was that people felt that we had no right to enter into the private lives and matters of our employees, and we had no right to talk about these issues with them. Again, I had to spend a lot of time educating and convincing our people that we could, in fact, make a positive difference. And, that we would be negligent if we didn't bring these things up.

You know what? We have made a big difference in many of our employees' lives. What's more, people now believe that we do, indeed, have the right—and responsibility—to have these dialogues with our people.

I can't imagine given the industry that you're in that this was an easy sell.

Vigue: It wasn't. I had to repeat myself over and over and over again. In addition, we really spent a lot of time educating our key stakeholders about the facts and statistics regarding healthy behaviors at the worksite. I

think you should know that it really was an educational process that was repeated time and time again.

The other part of the selling equation was the plain and simple fact that I had to lead by example if I was to be taken seriously. This put a fair amount of pressure on me and my key leaders to really walk the talk.

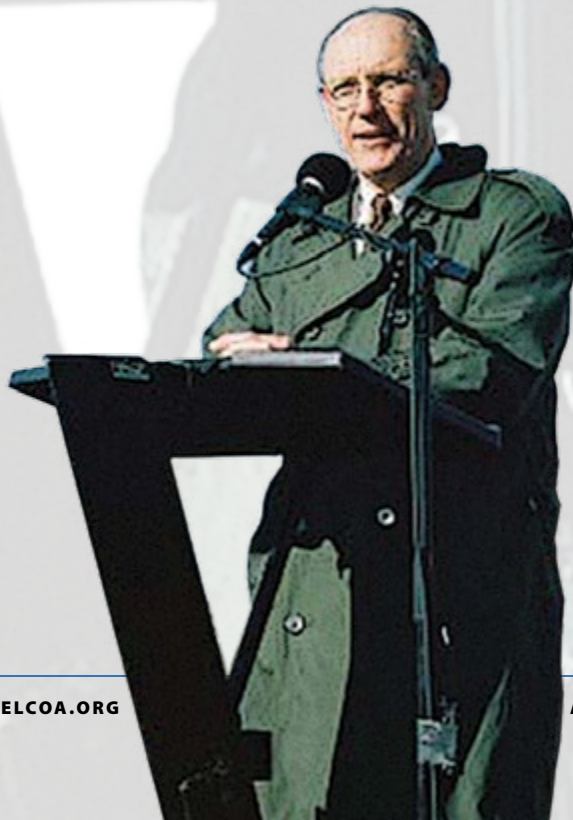
The more I thought about it though, the more it was just like implementing safety initiatives into our company years before. We believed in our hearts that having safe worksites was a key component of our business. We had to sell this notion to everyone else, and then we had to walk the talk.

What role do you personally play in supporting your company's wellness program?

Vigue: Each and every day, I lead by example. I've been told by others that I am the cheerleader and the goal setter. I've not ever let that die. To be successful, I knew, and still know, that I have to take a very participative role in the process. In the years since we started our wellness

I lead by example. That I am the goal setter. I've not been successful, I knew, I had to take a very participative role in the process.

— Peter Vigue, CEO, Cianbro



About Peter Vigue



Peter Vigue joined Cianbro in 1970 as a laborer. Since then, his experiences in project management and eventually senior management have made him and Cianbro pioneers in the construction industry.

With a strong commitment to workplace safety, Pete rallied behind the concept of safety as the impetus to Cianbro's total quality management plan and has been the driving force behind Cianbro becoming a national leader in safety.

Recently, Pete made the same strong commitment to healthcare and wellness, with a goal of making Cianbro one of the healthiest companies in America. Pete believes that this goal will be achieved by innovative programs such as providing a tobacco-free work environment at all Cianbro job sites as well as the Cianbro Wellness Program, which provides educational services to assist employees and their families in achieving specific goals to improve their health and help control medical costs.

Pete's considerable contributions to Cianbro's success have brought a 54-year old company strongly into the 21st century. Based in central Maine and serving eastern United States, Cianbro is one of the largest and most diversified general contractors.

program, I have felt even more compelled to lead outside of our company and to share our wellness approach and successes with other businesses in private industry.

We've won a lot of awards for our wellness program. But I can tell you this; we're not even close to where we need to be. And, I'm in this wellness thing for the long haul. In fact, I know in my heart that we're doing the right thing as a company because we're looking out after the personal well-being of our people. Some have warned me about lawsuits. My attitude about this? Bring it on. Interestingly, no one ever has.

Did you ever second guess yourself and think maybe you shouldn't be doing wellness at the workplace?

Vigue: It's human nature to second guess and ask yourself if what you're doing is right. Anytime you have to confront someone with an issue about health and well-being, things

get a little uncomfortable. For me, I just had to step back and, once again, ask myself, "Is this the right thing to do?" Every time I asked myself this question, I always came up with the same answer, so I just kept going.

How long did it take for the culture at Cianbro to change where people weren't complaining, but rather embracing your efforts?

Vigue: Longer than you might think. I can tell you that a shift in culture doesn't happen overnight. But over time, things really began to change. In fact, I've had people come up to me and thank me for saving their life or saving the life of their spouse. For me, this is a very powerful moment, and it really reinforces my convictions and my beliefs.

Let me give you an example. A while ago, a gentleman came up to me and told me that he was very much offended when Cianbro emphasized the notion of measuring and monitoring health status. He told me that he thought I didn't have any business dabbling in this area. Then, in the next breath, he told me because of Cianbro's health promotion program, he caught his prostate cancer early—which probably saved his life. He told me what an impact that had on his family and his future, and he thanked me.

This is a big deal for our company. Anytime we can do something that makes this much of a difference in an employee's life, I know that it's all worth it.

That's really something special, and it has to make you feel good.

Vigue: You know David, it's not about me. It's about them. I'm very passionate about the people who work for this company. I care for them deeply—like they're my own family. For anyone who knows me—and believe me, my people know me—I tell it like it is, and I don't hold back. And, if I believe in it, and I think it's the right thing to do, then I'm going to act. There won't be anything that gets in my way.

I know that sounds very direct and, for some, it may sound harsh. But, my responsibility is to get things done. And, at the same time, make sure that our people are taken care of. Again, I care so much about these people, it's like they're my own family. For this reason, we're going to keep doing health promotion at Cianbro.





Peter Vigue Speaks Out On...



Leading By Example:

"Be prepared to lead by example. . . This is something that can't be delegated, and it's a lot of hard work. However, if you really care about your people, it's a small price to pay because the payoff is enormous."

Tough Love:

"Funny thing is we do it for our children and the ones that we love—holding them accountable for their own personal well-being and trying to coach them and educate them to make the right decisions. But very seldom do we ever do this at work, and that's where I said to myself, 'There's got to be a better way.'"

The Responsibility of Leadership

"For me, it's a moral responsibility. I feel that I am responsible for the health and well-being of Cianbro's employees."

The Importance of Communication:

"I had to repeat myself over and over and over again. In addition, we really spent a lot of time educating our key stakeholders about the facts and statistics regarding healthy behaviors at the worksite. I think you should know that it really was an educational process that was repeated time and time again."

Setting a Good Example

"Each and every day, I lead by example. I've been told by others that I am the cheerleader and the goal setter. I've not ever let that die. To be successful, I knew, and still know, that I have to take a very participative role in the process."

Lawsuits

"I'm in this wellness thing for the long haul. In fact, I know in my heart that we're doing the right thing as a company because we're looking out after the personal well-being of our people. Some have warned me about lawsuits. My attitude about this? Bring it on."



How do you know the program at Cianbro is actually working, and it's not all about feeling good?

Vigue: First of all, and it's amazing, we hear about the power of our program from our employees, spouses, and even their kids. In addition, we see concrete outcomes in terms of financial results. I think our average increases in healthcare cost over the last 10 years is about 32% of the national average for cost increases. We also see it in terms of the number of people that access our programs, call our health hotlines, and work with our healthcare educators.

There are a lot of CEOs who are looking to get into the idea of workplace wellness. What would you tell them?

Vigue: First, be prepared to lead by example. I would tell them to get out in front and make it their number one priority. This is something that can't be delegated, and it's a lot of hard work. However, if you really care about your people, it's a small price to pay because the payoff is enormous.

The second thing I would tell them is to be prepared for some negative pushback—especially if you're just getting started. But that's the moral responsibility that leaders bear. I can tell you from experience that you're not always going to be popular on this issue, but at least you'll be able to sleep at night.

When it's all said and done, what do you hope the employees at Cianbro will say about you with respect to wellness?

Vigue: "He cared. He cared about us." And, if they said those words, all my time here has been worth it. ★

➔ **Cianbro is a member of WELCOA Affiliate, Bangor Region Wellness Council: Katrin Teel, Director**



About Cianbro

CIANBRO

Forty years after 11-year-old Raphael Cianchette boarded a passenger ship alone in Naples, Italy, bound for America, four of his sons—Carl, Ken, Bud, and Chuck—locked arms to build a construction empire.

With Ken and Bud's Army savings for seed money and Chuck's 1934 pickup truck as the company vehicle, Carl launched the family enterprise. Incorporated in 1949, **Cianbro**, now an employee-owned company, is one of the East Coast's largest civil and heavy industrial construction and construction services companies.

Carl, Ken, Bud, and Chuck Cianchette were raised to be hardworking, self-reliant entrepreneurs. Instilled with their parents' philosophy – treat people with dignity and respect, your word is your bond, and give back from which you take – the boys delivered newspapers, worked odd jobs, and learned early the value of a positive, can-do attitude and the rewards of an honest day's work.

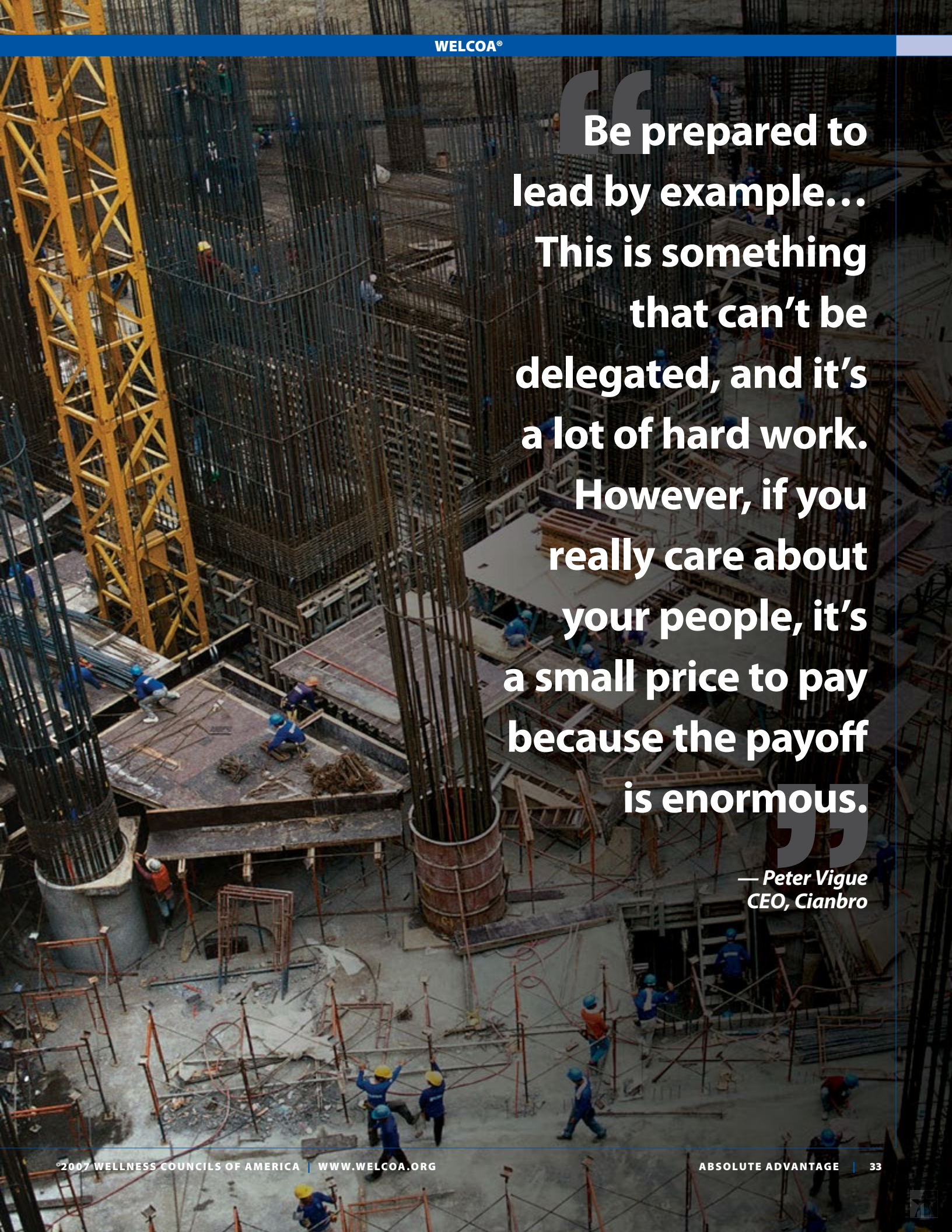
They believed in themselves and they believed they could succeed by working together. They also believed they could achieve the impossible regardless of the obstacles. This same confidence and can-do spirit lives on in our people today. It is what allows Cianbro to successfully complete some of the most complex projects in the construction industry.

The Cianchette brothers—each unique and different individuals—provided our company with tremendous depth in its early years. Their mutual respect and trust in one another allowed them to focus on growing the company. They initiated the teamwork that Cianbro thrives on today. And, they believed that the people who worked beside them should be the future owners of the company. Their legacy lives on.



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Suggested Citation: Vigue, P. (2007). *Where There's Smoke, You're Fired*. WELCOA's *Absolute Advantage* Magazine, 6(2), 26-33.

An aerial view of a construction site showing a complex network of steel rebar structures for a building. Several workers in blue uniforms and yellow hard hats are visible on different levels of the structure. A large yellow crane is on the left side. The scene is filled with scaffolding and construction materials.

**Be prepared to
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*— Peter Vigue
CEO, Cianbro*

Leading By Ex



Example

As Chairman and CEO of The Principal Financial Group, **J. Barry Griswell** has taken the message of healthy living to heart—and to his employees. Improved health and well-being means employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential, and that The Principal returns value to its shareholders.



J Barry Griswell, the Chairman and CEO of The Principal Financial Group, is walking the talk. In fact, Barry has undergone a remarkable transformation by following a sensible diet and increasing physical activity. In this 2004 interview with WELCOA President, Dr. David Hunnicutt, Barry shares his personal story of coming to grips with personal health status. Remarkably, Barry's journey has led to health and well-being as a core value for all of Principal's employees.

Barry, as Chief Executive Officer of The Principal Financial Group, how important are healthy and productive employees to The Principal?

Griswell: They're absolutely critical. In my view, employee health and productivity is one of the most important issues corporations face. Let me tell you why. I have a philosophy that if you want to lead a successful company and satisfy shareholders, you must start by making sure your employees are treated well. Give them the tools and resources they need to stay happy, healthy, and productive. When you do that, employees in turn treat customers well. When customers are treated well, it creates shareholder value. So, to me, healthy, motivated, and productive employees are a very fundamental part of doing good business and building a great company.

What are you hoping to gain from the health and wellness programs at The Principal?

Griswell: We're trying to help employees take a holistic approach to their overall development. I think all of us have the responsibility to be good stewards—both personally, in regard to our own bodies, and also professionally, in taking care of organizational resources. So, with our wellness program, we take a more holistic approach that allows employees to not only improve their skills and competencies at work, but also to reach their full potential as human beings through work/life balance, exercise, eating right, and so forth. If we can do this effectively, we'll have employees who are physically healthy and also productive and engaged while on the job.

What are you looking for in addition to employee engagement? Do you have specific indicators—a “dashboard” if you will—that helps to determine success in wellness endeavors?

Griswell: Well, from the standpoint of actually running the business, there are lots of productivity measures we use including number of transactions per employee, absenteeism rates, etc. We also have a great Wellness Manager in Kaye Halvorson (now retired), and she does a lot of surveys in regard to the effectiveness of our wellness program. In fact, we just participated in a national employee survey that measured—among other things—employee productivity, stress levels, and absenteeism. The Principal compared very well against national norms in our industry.

So we try to keep our fingers on the pulse of what's going on with our employees in a number of different dimensions. Those surveys are probably the most direct in terms of the effect of our wellness program on individual productivity and other related factors.

What are your views on rising healthcare costs?

Griswell: At The Principal, we have two perspectives on that. We look at rising healthcare costs through the lens of being a large employer (we have about 15,000 employees), and from that perspective, we're very concerned about rising costs. We're getting hit just like everybody else.

But we're also a provider of healthcare—a major insurance company—and that brings a second perspective. As an insurance provider it's evident that, in the US, we really don't have a consumer-oriented healthcare system. Unfortunately, as consumers, we tend to forget the role we play in healthcare. The best recipe for a well-functioning healthcare system is for each of us to take responsibility for our own health and well-being, incorporating prevention and healthy choices into our lives.

What we need in this country is a “preventive” healthcare system. We need to emphasize wellness, prevention, and disease management on the front end, before people get sick. We've got to get individuals to take more responsibility for their health and for their healthcare. On a positive note, I do see this attitude starting to emerge in certain areas across the US. Of course it will take a while for a system like



this to become a reality, but I do see evidence of it in pockets here and there. Some enlightened legislators are beginning to see the value in this type of model, and some forward-thinking insurance companies are starting to work in this direction, too.

Even still, I think ultimately employers will be the key. Employers will install health plans that force the employees to take an active role in their health and their healthcare decisions. It's not going to be an easy transition, but consumer-oriented healthcare is coming, and it won't be long before we begin to see more of it.

Are you cautiously optimistic about what will happen in the next ten years?

Griswell: Yes, I am. That's not to say I'm euphoric, thinking we've got the answer, but I'm not pessimistic, either. Eventually something has to give. You can't have everybody getting as much healthcare as they want—not to mention healthcare that's backed by the very best

research—and not paying for it. And while it's true that something has to give, I am confident that the answer is not a national healthcare model. We were an advocate long ago of mandatory health coverage in this country that would require everyone to be insured through the private sector. We never quite got there. Unfortunately we got into a debate about national healthcare as opposed to mandatory healthcare which are two very different things. But in our view, mandatory coverage could be part of the solution to rising costs.

Barry, you've really "walked the talk" in terms of leading a healthy lifestyle. Can you tell me a little bit about your own health routines, and what it took to incorporate these changes into your life?

Griswell: At The Principal, we have a longstanding history of CEOs living healthy lifestyles. In fact, when I joined the company in 1988, our CEO jogged to work, and another

The best recipe for a well-functioning healthcare system is for each of us to take responsibility for our own health and well-being, incorporating prevention and healthy choices into our lives.

— J. Barry Griswell, Chairman and CEO
Principal Financial Group





J. Barry Griswell: By The Numbers



Leading By Example:

By following a sensible diet and increasing physical activity, J. Barry Griswell, Chairman and CEO of The Principal Financial Group, lost 50 pounds in just one year. His cholesterol levels also improved dramatically (see the “Before and After” numbers listed below). Says Griswell, “Exercise is one of the most important things you can do each day, and you can’t let it slip through the cracks, no matter how busy you are.”

BEFORE	AFTER
Weight: 297	Weight: 246
Total Cholesterol: 204	Total Cholesterol: 182
Triglycerides: 130	Triglycerides: 61
LDL (Bad Cholesterol): 131	LDL (Bad Cholesterol): 104
HDL (Good Cholesterol): 47	HDL (Good Cholesterol): 66



Principal Financial Group CEO J. Barry Griswell holds up 50 pounds of fat at a recent company-wide wellness event. The bag of fat was given to Griswell as a reward after he lost 50 pounds, demonstrating his commitment to staying healthy and improving organizational health and well-being.



high-level executive swam each morning. I'd be walking down the hall and I'd see them coming through to change from their workout attire into their suits. So we've had a pretty long history of CEOs being active at The Principal, and I'm happy to carry on that tradition.

I've been very active all my life. I've played basketball, tennis and other sports. But over the course of time, I somehow let myself get out of shape. In fact, I got up to as high as 297 pounds. I'm 6'9" so I can carry a lot of weight, but weighing 297 pounds is not a good thing for anybody—no matter what your height.

This weight gain coincided with a conversation I had a couple of years ago with our Wellness Manager, Kaye Halvorson (now retired). At that time, she reminded me that you really can't be an advocate for something (in this case health and wellness) if you're not doing it yourself. It was at that point that I made the personal commitment to get back into shape. I got into a more deliberate exercise routine, and bought some equipment that enabled me to jog and cycle on a regular basis.

I also went on a diet. I'm not one to pick a brand name diet like Atkins or South Beach, or whatever is popular at the time. Rather, I picked a diet that would suit me—one that is low in carbohydrates and high in protein, but also allows for fruits and vegetables.

What were the results of your new diet and commitment to regular exercise?

Griswell: By sticking with a sensible diet and exercising regularly I went from 297 pounds down to 246 pounds in one year. So I lost over 50 pounds. I tracked my cholesterol numbers throughout the process, too, and the reduction was very striking. My total cholesterol went from 204 down to 182, my triglycerides went from 130 down to 61, my LDL (the bad cholesterol) went from 131 to 104, and my HDL (the good cholesterol) went from 47 up to 66. The nurses tell me it was a remarkable turnaround. Before I lost the weight, my doctor had mentioned that we should consider cholesterol drug therapy. I told the doctor I didn't want to do that yet because I thought I could get things turned around without drugs. I was able to do that, and I'm very proud of it.

That being said, this is not something I did just to get some numbers in order, it's something I did to change my life for the better. Exercise is now more of a routine, not just something I do as an afterthought. Certainly my eating habits have become much different now. Changing my lifestyle and getting back into shape has improved my life

in countless ways. It relates to what we were talking about before—being able to reach one's full potential.

Barry, how did others react to this major turnaround in your health?

Griswell: This past summer, we had a wellness promotion. My senior executives and I were all out in the plaza doing exercises to promote the event among employees. The wellness team had set up games so employees could see us being active. At the end of the event our Wellness Manager, Kaye Halvorson (now retired), was giving out awards to the winning teams, and unbeknownst to me, had gone by the butcher shop and purchased fifty pounds of pure fat. She had it wrapped in a cellophane bag in a box and presented it to me to make a point of how much weight I had lost. She really made an impact by saying, "This is what Barry was carrying around. His heart was needlessly pumping blood to this much fat prior to his weight loss." I've had many people tell me that visual was instrumental in their own weight loss.

About J. Barry Griswell



J. Barry Griswell is chairman and chief executive officer of The Principal Financial Group®. Griswell is responsible for overall management of the company, including capital markets activities, U.S. asset management and accumulation, international asset management and accumulation, life and health, banking, government relations and industry relations, the company's growing merger and acquisition activities and corporate support functions.

Griswell joined the company in 1988 as an officer and agency vice president. He became senior vice president in 1991 and executive vice president in 1996. He was named president in 1998, became CEO in 2000 and chairman of the board in 2002. Prior to his association with the Principal Financial Group, he served as president and CEO of MetLife Marketing Corporation, a brokerage and supplementary distribution marketing subsidiary of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Griswell is active in various industry and community organizations, including a board member of the American Council for Capital Formation and a member of the board of trustees of the S.S. Huebner Foundation for Insurance Education. He is the immediate past chair of the American Council of Life Insurers. He is a current trustee of Central College in Pella, Iowa and Berry College in Rome, Georgia. He is director of Herman Miller, Inc. and the Business Committee for the Arts. Griswell is also a board member of The Business Roundtable and a member of United Way of America's Board of Trustees. He received his Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) designation in 1976, Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) designation in 1985 and became LIMRA Leadership Institute Fellow (LLIF) in 1992. Griswell is a 2003 Horatio Alger Association Distinguished American Award winner.



With such a hectic schedule, how do you make time for exercise?

Griswell: To be honest, finding time to exercise is one of the most difficult parts of staying in shape—as it would be for any CEO with a hectic schedule. I try lots of different things to stay active. I play tennis two or three times a week, and I supplement that with three or four sessions of aerobic exercise weekly. In my situation, it's difficult to use the company fitness center during the day, so I use a home treadmill, exercise bicycle, and small Nautilus.

I usually make use of this equipment when I get home from work at about 6:30 each evening. Having this equipment makes exercising easier, especially during the winter months. During the summer months, I walk a beautiful lake path near our home. It's exactly three miles around, and I like to use that as my afternoon exercise.

So, while it's always a challenge to find time to exercise with such a busy schedule, it simply has to be a priority. It's one of the most important things you can do each day, and you can't let it slip through the cracks, no matter how busy you are.

There are a lot of mid-level managers and Wellness Directors out there trying to convince their CEOs that investing in employee health and wellness is the right thing to do. What advice would you give them to help them make the case?

Griswell: I think tenacity and persistence can go a long way. When I sat down with Kaye (now retired) one-on-one a couple of years ago to talk about my health issues, she really challenged me. I would suggest that other Wellness Directors and mid-level managers do the same thing. Take a chance. Go out on a limb and be assertive, calling to the attention of senior management the need for a health promotion program. Of course it would help to know a little about the CEO, so you can be sure there's receptivity to the idea. And hopefully, all CEOs are willing to listen to a good idea.

So my advice is to be tenacious and persistent. Keep at it. We know that the message of health and wellness resonates with people at different times in their lives, so the key is to be there when the time is right. You never know when that time is going to be, so you have to be persistent. For me, the message wouldn't have resonated ten years ago, but at this particular point in time it did resonate, and I decided to do something about it. It's not an easy answer, but persistence is key. Keep the faith.

One day you're going to make the pitch and it's going to be bought, and when it is bought, it's going to be a powerful motivator in the organization.

Barry, is there anything we've missed? Anything you'd like to add?

Griswell: You've got to continue to grow your health promotion initiative. We have experienced great success with our health and wellness initiative, but we're looking to grow the program even further. We're looking to use population health management to take the wellness initiative and the organization to the next level. I think it has enormous potential to reduce healthcare costs.

Other organizations may choose to go another way, and that's great. The idea is to continue to grow and expand, reaching more and more employees with the message of health and wellness. If you can do that, employees will be healthier and the organization will benefit as a result. ★

➔ **Principal Financial Group is a member of WELCOA Affiliate, Wellness Council of Iowa: Kerry Juhl, Director**

About The Principal Financial Group



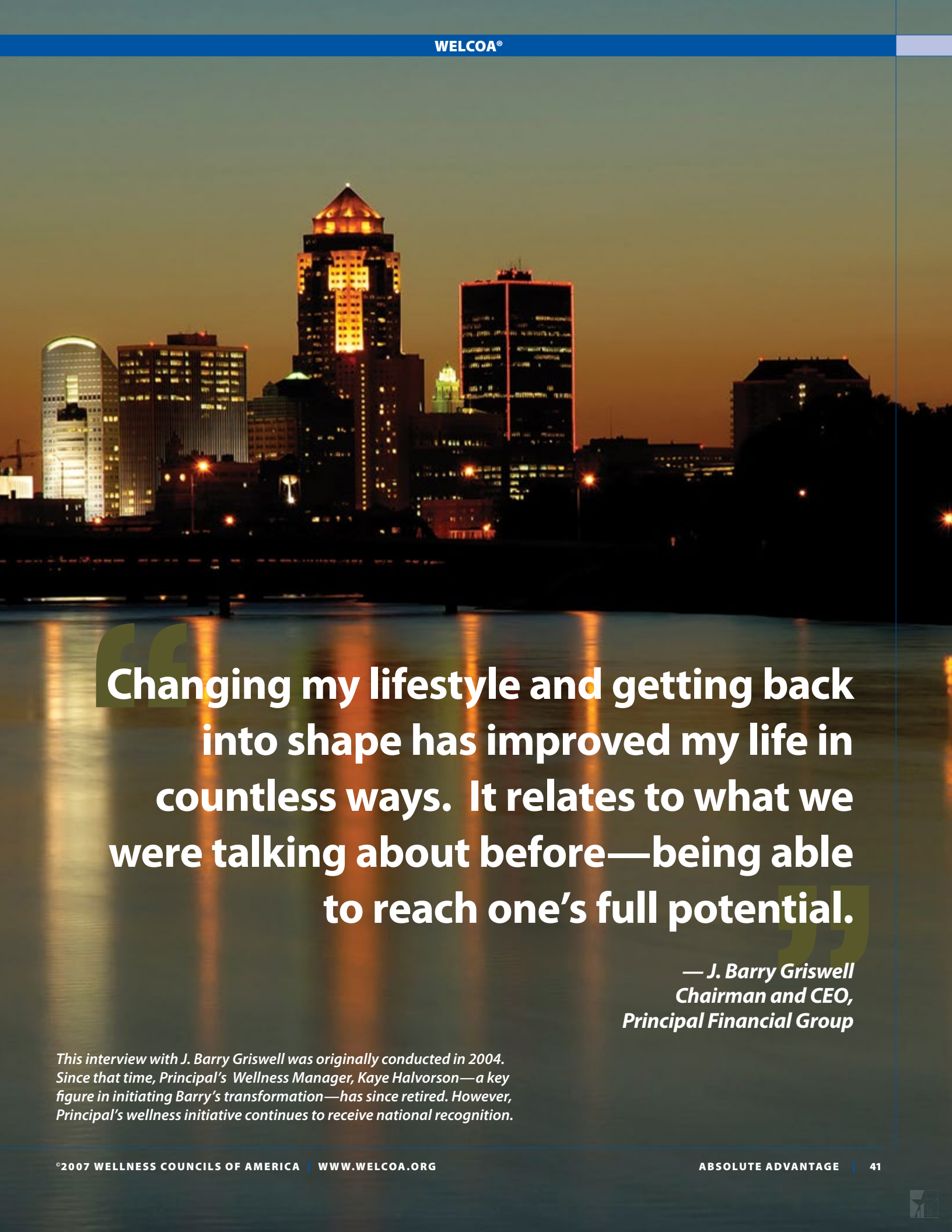
The Principal Financial Group (www.principal.com) is a leader in offering businesses, individuals and institutional clients a wide range of financial products and services including

retirement and investment services, life and health insurance, and mortgage banking through its diverse family of financial services companies. More employers choose The Principal Financial Group for their 401(k) plans than any other bank, mutual fund, or insurance company in the United States. Its flagship and largest member, Principal Life Insurance Company (The Principal), was founded in 1879. A member of the Fortune 500, the Principal Financial Group has \$134.8 billion in assets under management and serves some 14.9 million customers worldwide from offices in Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States. The Principal Financial Group, Inc. is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol PFG.



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A nighttime photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, with several skyscrapers illuminated against a dark sky. The lights from the buildings are reflected in the water in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

“Changing my lifestyle and getting back into shape has improved my life in countless ways. It relates to what we were talking about before—being able to reach one’s full potential.”

*— J. Barry Griswell
Chairman and CEO,
Principal Financial Group*

This interview with J. Barry Griswell was originally conducted in 2004. Since that time, Principal’s Wellness Manager, Kaye Halvorson—a key figure in initiating Barry’s transformation—has since retired. However, Principal’s wellness initiative continues to receive national recognition.



Leaving a Legacy...

Ted Townsend But His Health Initiative Lives On...

Even though **Ted Townsend**, former CEO of Townsend Engineering, has stepped down, his health and wellness initiative lives on. This is an inspiring interview with a CEO who made sure that health would be a part of the Townsend equation even after he was gone.



and Steps Aside Health & Wellness



This interview with Ted Townsend is considered a WELCOA classic. In it, you will find an inspiring story of a man who loved his company and cared deeply for his employees. Thinking chess, and not checkers, Ted Townsend was always two moves ahead—even when it came to the wellness program. Because of his efforts, Townsend employees continue to remain healthy and well...long after he's left the company.

Because of its impact, we chose to leave this interview—originally conducted in 2003 by WELCOA President, Dr. David Hunnicutt—untouched and in its original format. It is important to note that Townsend Engineering was recently acquired by Stork Food Systems. Together, the two companies formed the world's largest provider of innovative and reliable meat processing systems for their customers.

Tell me a little bit about the history of Townsend. I understand your father started the company and was quite a unique individual.

Townsend: I am very proud of my father and how we got to where we are today. He certainly did not start off as what other people would describe as a successful individual. At age 35, he worked three jobs a day—one of those in my grandfather's blacksmith shop known as Star Machinery and Blacksmith Company. My father tells the story that the original shop exists on what is currently the site of the men's room of the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Des Moines. Originally, the shop was sort of a fix-it shop. Local businesses would call to have broken widgets fixed. One day, my grandfather sent my father out on a job at the local meatpacking plant. I have no idea what was broken, but it was my father's first introduction to the food processing industry. He came away from that job saying to those around him that he had seen an operation on which he could improve—he could find a better way. And over the course of time, finding a better way became the company's motto.

He worked long hours at night, very Horatio Alger in nature, and developed a machine that would take the skin off of pork cuts. Unbeknownst to him, the entire industry had been working unsuccessfully for decades, trying to accomplish such a goal. My father created a device that he thought would get the job done. He put it in the back of the family pickup truck and drove to Chicago. There, he literally went through the phone book, picking the first name on the list—Armour—and took his machine to them, asking if they would try it out. He came back to Des Moines and waited for their call. It never came.

Eventually, he got tired of waiting and drove back to find his machine, which Armour had left in a salt seller, rusting. He loaded his machine back in his pickup truck, went back to the same phone booth, and this time starting at the end of the alphabet—Wilson. The Wilson folks worked with him. He made a number of trips back and forth, cutting through a long process. A year or two later, they gave my father an award for the best technological advancement of the decade. And that's how Townsend Engineering got its start. We now have customers in over 100 countries.

Dad, who's now 90, is here everyday working with his own engineering design team. Out of necessity, we have expanded rather dramatically the engineering department and the number of people working on new products over the last 15 years or so, but in his heart and soul my father is a machinist on our shop floor.

Innovation appears to be integral to your company. Tell me a little bit about the patents your father holds.

Townsend: The first one is the one we just talked about, and was developed in 1946. In 1963, he developed the machine that the world uses to make sausage. And in 1974, it was the machine that the world uses to inject a range of meat products to extend shelf life and provide flavor. All three of his inventions are still being used today.

About Ted Townsend



Ted Townsend, former CEO, Townsend Engineering.

Ted Townsend, was the president and former owner of Townsend Engineering Co. During his tenure, Townsend was a privately held Des Moines-based multimillion-dollar company, which made food-processing equipment and distributed it in over 100 countries.

Ted's father, Ray Townsend, a former repairman, founded the company in 1956.

The only son of Ray and Cleda Townsend, Ted spent his childhood traveling the world. According to Ted, it was likely he was the first person from Iowa to plant the state flag at the North Pole.

After graduating from Lincoln High School in Des Moines, Ted studied at Texas Christian University and Drake University before graduating in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Iowa. While at the University of Iowa, Townsend worked three days a week at the family company as he prepared to be the future owner.

During his time at Townsend, Ted built a reputation of being compassionate, honest, and goal-oriented. Ted Townsend recently stepped aside from Townsend Engineering when the company was sold. His employee wellness initiative still lives on.

Tell me a little bit about the unique culture at Townsend.

Townsend: Our employment contract is paperless and consists of two statements. First, we promise to make decisions at every level of the company based on what's good for the entire company—not just one individual or one department. Second, we promise that if the company succeeds, we all share in that success. And that's it; that's the deal. If you come to work at Townsend, that's what we promise.

Describe how Townsend's unique culture has affected employee turnover.

Townsend: In my time with the company, we've had only three people leave us. Of course, you have people move on—they move to a new state, or they change industries, or something like that. But we've had only three of those in my life with this company, and all three of them were back to us within six weeks.

Because of Townsend's unique history, it must go without saying that the company is in your blood?

Townsend: Yes. The company officially opened in 1946. I was born in '48 and have grown up at my father's elbow learning everything he knew. I was the kid who held the light as my father did the work around the house. We've taken that approach through the entire firm. Everybody here knows their jobs much better than I'll ever understand. But what we've created is an atmosphere where employees have the freedom and motivation to do their very best. That's the heart of our corporate culture. People here know that when they apply themselves, they'll collectively be rewarded, and you can't buy an attitude like that.

What types of incentives does Townsend offer its employees in terms of nurturing the organization's culture?

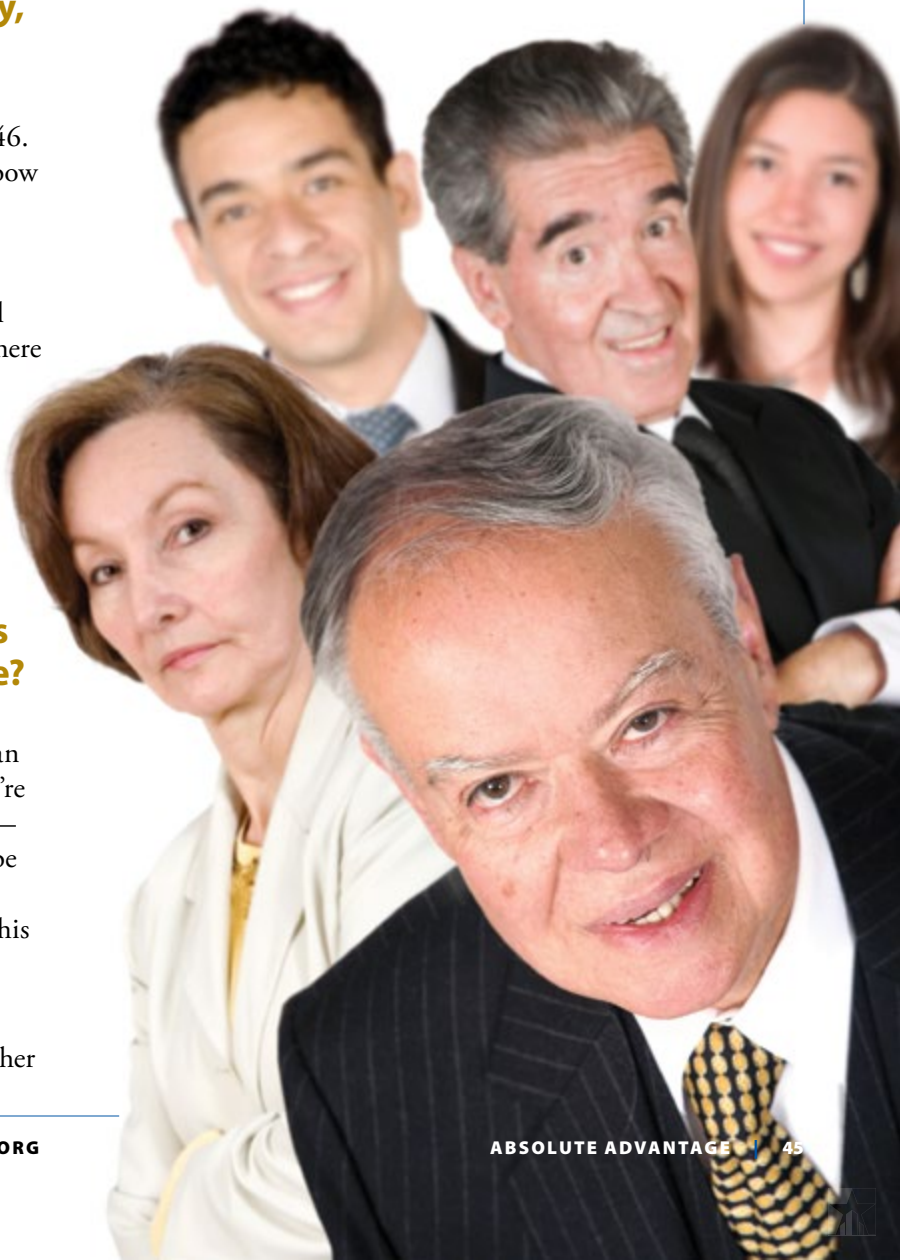
Townsend: We start with an attitude that the professional environment is much more important than most people will recognize. It's very important—if we're going to lead comfortable, productive, fulfilling lives—that we have a work environment which allows us to be creative. So on large and small scales, we try to find a range of things that make people thrilled to work in this environment and with their fellow employees.

We have what we call, "The Company Trip." Our so-called company trips began with my father and the other

two employees driving to Minnesota for a weekend of fishing. As the company continued to grow, spouses were included, and we've been to Hawaii three times; the Bahamas; Florida; Las Vegas a couple of times; as well as Palm Springs, California. Most recently, we took 610 people to Puerto Rico. That was a real milestone for the company trip because, for the first time, we took everybody we employ from around the world.

Tell me how you see Townsend's culture affecting the decision-making process within the company.

Townsend: Our basic approach to decision-making involves the entire firm. You can't hide at Townsend Engineering. People here pull their weight, and if they don't, the folks around them discuss it with them. Ninety-nine percent of the time, when everybody around the table has added their two cents, the right decision is obvious. Not always, but generally, our employees' two cents impacts the decision makers and great things happen.



Townsend Quick Facts

Townsend Engineering was founded by Ray Townsend in 1946. Since that time, Townsend has grown from four employees to over 170, and employs another 50 at a plant in Holland. Through exceptional leadership, Townsend Engineering has a burden for its employees, and strives to be one of the best workplaces in the country. For their efforts, Townsend has received the prestigious Platinum Well Workplace award from the Wellness Councils of America.

Here are Just Some of Townsend's Wellness Features:

Townsend Recreational Athletic Center (TRAC)

In 1978 Ray Townsend built a 30,000 square foot wellness facility which includes an aerobic studio, weight room, a gym with two basketball courts, a fitness testing room, two racquetball courts, space for childcare, a 4-lane bowling alley, a pool table, a game room, and a running trail. Locker rooms are equipped with toiletries and towels. Men's and women's saunas are also available. The facility is open to employees and all their family members. Children 14 and older can come without their parents, and they can even bring a friend.

Attitude Bonus Bag

Every time a product is shipped successfully, money is added to the "Attitude Bonus Bag." An electronic board posts the dollar amount of the bonus, which is split evenly among all employees every six months. In recent years, bonuses have ranged from \$400 to \$1000 per person.

Compressed Work Week

Plant workers work four 10-hour days and take Fridays off. Office workers work a regular five-day week.

Diplomat Exchange Program

Each year there's a drawing for a one-week trip to Holland for a Des Moines employee and spouse. At the plant in Holland, someone wins a trip to the US. Winners often take additional vacation time to take full advantage of the free flights.

Flowers Galore

Employees receive flowers on the anniversary of their employment at Townsend. In addition, each employee has \$80 to use for flowers each year—a benefit which gets a lot of use on Valentine's Day.

Aloha!

Townsend employees and their spouses have been on many company trips to places like Hawaii and the Bahamas. Ted recently took his employees to Puerto Rico where they stayed at a plush resort called the "El Conquistador." Employees from Holland joined them.

Corporate Fitness Program

Bill Tamasi, TRAC Director, works closely with Kim Miller, Fitness Director. Newly-hired employees receive a free complete physical exam, including extensive lab tests at a local hospital done on company time. Regular screening tests for cholesterol, skin, hearing, eye, foot and ankle, prostate, and blood pressure are offered to employees on site. They also provide flu and tetanus shots, and sponsor blood drives. Volleyball, basketball, golf, racquetball, walleyball, and bowling leagues are sponsored by TRAC.

Lunch-n-Learns

Topics like parenting, nutrition, safety, living wills, cooking, stress management, and cholesterol are covered during these lunch-n-learns. Attendance ranges from 5 to 25 employees.

Summer Activities For Employees & Families

Each summer, TRAC sponsors a canoe, a bike, and a camping trip that usually attracts 40 to 50 participants.

(Continued on next page)



I understand that your company has a unique bonus program. Tell me about the program.

Townsend: Our view of life is that every individual is more valuable to Townsend than to any other employer in the world. So we do everything we can think of to be certain that our people have the most comfortable lifestyles imaginable. Our program is called the Attitude Bonus Bag (I am not all that proud of its name, but it functions pretty well). It's been around for 25 years, maybe 30—although we've had a number of different programs. The way it works is that every time we ship a machine—when everybody in the firm has done their job—from design to engineering to manufacturing to shipping—and depending on the cost and the price of that machine, a certain bounty goes into the kitty—the bonus bag. Every six months we take the total amount of money in the bag and divide it equally by the total number of employees and we have a little celebration where everybody gets a check.

How would you say Townsend's unique culture has permeated the entire organization—top to bottom?

Townsend: Everybody gets the same thing with exception of yours truly. Ownership precludes participation. If I may, let me share just some of the little ones. Everybody in the firm, once a year, has the opportunity to send flowers to anyone of their choice. They put their name on the card, and all we do is pay for it. It's a little thing, but it's powerful in terms of their daily lifestyle.

Additionally, everybody here has their own parking space with their name on it. Is it a big deal? In the overall scheme of things it ought to be nothing, but it's enormous.

I would also bet we were the first company in America to provide free confidential AIDS testing. You simply go to the local hospital, identify yourself as a Townsend employee, and everything is taken care of.

Next, we have what we call our Personal Fitness Profile where everybody in the company, every two or three years, gets a five-hour physical at company expense, and on company time.

We also have a deal where if employees, on their own time, have had a bit too much to drink, they can call a taxi cab to get home safely. All employees need to do is present the receipt and we reimburse them—no questions asked.

Townsend Quick Facts

(Continued)

Financial Planning Seminars

These are offered in the evening so that spouses of employees can attend. Babysitting is provided.

Social Events

Family movie nights and card game tournaments after work are regular events. The bowling alley can be reserved for kids' birthday parties.

Aerobics Classes

These are offered three to four days per week over the noon hour. They last for 30 minutes, giving participants just enough time to shower, change, and grab a quick lunch. TRAC also has classes in the evening and one class on Saturday mornings. Childcare is provided.

Communication

A calendar listing all wellness events is mailed to employees every month. Events are also promoted via bulletin boards, flyers, sign line, e-mail, and the company newsletter.

Data Collection

The TRAC staff conducts employee interest surveys, evaluations of programs before and after implementation, and keeps attendance data. The company gets aggregate results from the screening tests they offer.

80% Participation

That's right—80% of the employees come to the TRAC facility at one time or another for something, from an occasional lunch-n-learn to daily use of a treadmill.


So Is This Heaven Or What?

Even with the tremendous programs and support at Townsend, Bill Tamasi still faces the same fundamental problems any wellness coordinator does. He says, "Lack of time is the major obstacle individuals list for not continuing exercise programs, and I feel that's the biggest frustration."

His advice to other wellness professionals? "Don't be afraid to be creative. Having a wide variety of programs is essential in order to fulfill the many dimensions of wellness."

Feeling a little discouraged about your wellness program after reading about Townsend? Don't. Remember that they've been dedicated to employee wellness for all of their 50 years, with full management backing the whole time. Use their outstanding example for inspiration, programming, and policy ideas. Companies with a vision in health promotion will live long and prosper in the new millennium, as the value of employee wellness becomes crystal clear in the corporate world.





“One of our mottos
around here is,
“Truth Rules,”
meaning,
sometimes the
greatest challenge
in life is deciding
what we believe
to be the truth.”

— *Ted Townsend*
Former CEO
Townsend Engineering

Finally, we ensure that employees with babies get the highest quality car seat on the market.

We've got a long list of little things like these. Collectively, they've created an environment that says we (meaning all the people in this company) care about each other. And when things go wrong, people stand up for one another.

Tell me about the wellness facility at Townsend Engineering. I understand it's a 30,000 square foot building for 170 employees.

Townsend: We intended to build a racquetball court, but it just continued to grow. Our facility now has two racquetball courts, two indoor tennis courts, six basketball courts, a heavy duty weight room, an aerobic dance area, showers with towels and toiletries provided, saunas, a roller skating rink, and four bowling lanes.

As an individual who's charged with leading this company, and considering the history behind you and the opportunities ahead, what burden do you feel in leading the company?

Townsend: First of all, our management team is much better prepared than I am to do the job you've just described, and that's what gives me the chance to sleep at night. I've spent the last 10 or 15 years of my life preparing this firm to work without me. I have absolute confidence that the management team understands how I would handle the personnel issues that arrive daily, if I weren't around.

The second part of your question, what am I doing today to seize the future? Well, frankly, it's one of the biggest challenges I have to face, because the culture here is rock solid. I don't know exactly when, but eventually our whole team here has to find a way to transition the firm into the next generation of ownership and maintain the corporate culture. That's a challenge, because there aren't many companies out there that do these sorts of things. As we all know, you can talk about interviews and you can talk about culture, and you can plead and do everything you can to find the right people to embrace the ideas, but there's going to come a time someday when I sign my name on a line and from that moment forward I will have no influence whatsoever. I'm not comfortable with that fact; I just know it is one, and we're doing our best to find a way that the day after I sign my name, Townsend stays what Townsend has become.

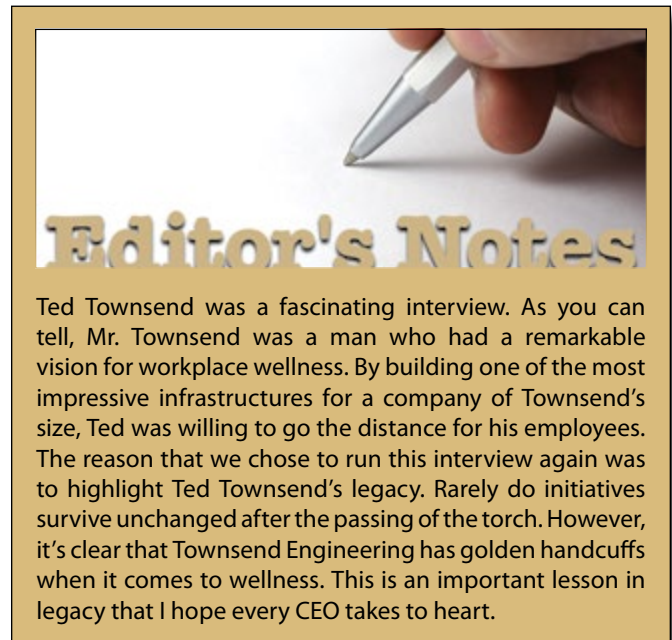
What would you say is at the very heart of Townsend's unique corporate culture?

Townsend: One of our mottos around here is, "Truth Rules," meaning, sometimes the greatest challenge in life is deciding what we believe to be the truth. Our first obligation is to define the truth. Our second obligation is to share it with everybody around here. We've said from the beginning you cannot get in trouble at Townsend for speaking the truth, no matter how unpopular it may be. With that in mind, we get to the core of decision making faster than many people might.

Would you say that Townsend's "Truth Rules" philosophy helps maintain the group dynamic there?

Townsend: Absolutely. We're still a group of human beings, so we all develop emotions. We all feel jealousy and anger and fear and all those things that drive mankind. But if truth rules, we collectively have the guts to put those issues on the table and deal with them eye to eye as individual human beings. ★

➔ Townsend Engineering is a member of WELCOA Affiliate, Wellness Council of Iowa: Kerry Juhl, Director



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The Well Workplace Checklist

Senior Level Support

To assess your company's level of CEO support, we encourage you to answer the following 10 questions. If you're interested in getting a score and a response to these questions, be sure to log on to InfoPoint—WELCOA's members only website—and take the Well Workplace Checklist in its entirety. In so doing, you will receive a set of scores for each of the seven benchmarks as well as a customized, in-depth report on your company's overall wellness efforts.

← Our CEO has communicated the importance of wellness through:

- Written Communiques
- Written Communiques and Verbal Presentations
- Written Communiques, Verbal Presentations, and Integrating Wellness Into the Company's Strategic Plan
- Written Communiques, Verbal Presentations, Integrating Wellness Into the Company's Strategic Plan, and Incorporating into the Mission/Vision Statement of the Company
- Our CEO does not currently communicate the importance of wellness to our organization.

← Our CEO allocates the necessary staffing for wellness programming.

- Our organization has one staff member who has part time responsibilities for wellness.
- Our organization has multiple staff members who have part time responsibilities for wellness.
- Our organization has one staff member who has full time responsibilities for wellness.
- Our organization has multiple staff members who have full time responsibilities for wellness.
- Our organization does not currently have full or part time staff responsible for wellness.

↑ Our CEO allocates the budget necessary to effectively deliver our wellness program.

- Our organization sets aside \$1-\$14 per eligible participant per year.
- Our organization sets aside \$15 - \$30 per eligible participant per year.
- Our organization sets aside \$31 - \$100 per eligible participant per year.
- Our organization sets aside \$100 + per eligible participant per year.
- Our organization currently does not have a budget allocated for wellness activities.

➔ Our CEO allocates the space necessary to effectively deliver our wellness program.

- Our organization supports employee wellness participation at offsite locations
- Our organization reimburses employees for participating in offsite wellness activities.
- Our organization has dedicated company space for employees to participate in wellness activities onsite.
- Our organization has dedicated space toward a comprehensive physical activity facility.
- Our organization currently does not make space on or offsite for wellness activities.

⬇ Our CEO allocates employees' time necessary to take part in our company's wellness activities.

- Our organization allows participation in wellness activities before work, after work, and/or during lunch breaks.
- Our organization allows participation in wellness activities throughout the workday as their schedule permits.
- Our organization encourages participation in wellness activities on work time.
- Our organization formally incents participation in wellness activities on work time.
- Our organization does not currently allocate time to allow employees to participate in wellness programs.

↖ Our CEO delegates wellness responsibilities to people throughout our organization by:

- Encouraging the formation of a volunteer wellness committee
- Formally appointing a wellness team comprised of senior level executives
- Formally appointing a wellness team comprised of senior level executives and mid-level managers
- Formally appointing a wellness team comprised of senior level executives, mid-level managers, and front line employees
- Our CEO does not currently delegate wellness responsibilities.

↙ Our CEO has taken a Health Risk Appraisal in the last:

- 6 months
- 12 months
- 24 months
- 36 months
- I don't know if our CEO has taken an HRA.

➔ Our CEO participates regularly in our company's wellness program offerings.

- 1 Program in the last 12 months
- 2-3 Programs in the last 12 months
- 4-5 Programs in the last 12 months
- 6 + Programs in the last 12 months
- Our CEO is not presently participating.

➔ Our CEO has received an annual physical exam in the last:

- 6 months
- 12 months
- 24 months
- 36 months
- I don't know if our CEO has received an annual physical exam.

↖ Our CEO participates in and supports community wellness activities.

- 1 Program in the last 12 months
- 2-3 Programs in the last 12 months
- 4-5 Programs in the last 12 months
- 6 + Programs in the last 12 months
- Our CEO is not presently participating in community wellness activities.

For more information, log on to WELCOA's InfoPoint website:



The Well Workplace Checklist—a copyrighted and trademarked tool of WELCOA—is an interactive assessment that will help you determine how your organization is doing with respect to worksite wellness. To complete the online assessment, you'll

need to log on to *InfoPoint*—WELCOA's members only website. Once there, the Checklist should take you about 20 minutes to finalize. Once you are finished, you will be able to download a short report outlining your overall scores. Shortly thereafter, a full report will be emailed directly to you.





WELCOA's Seven Benchmarks of Success

For the past 20 years, the Wellness Councils of America has dedicated its efforts to studying and promoting the efforts of America's Healthiest Companies. During that period, WELCOA developed its patented Well Workplace process. At the core of the Well Workplace model, we have identified seven key benchmarks of success.

Specifically, these seven benchmarks are inherent in companies that have built results-oriented workplace wellness programs.

Benchmark #1: Capturing CEO Support

From our experience, CEO support is essential to the process of developing best-in-class programs. Indeed, we know of very few programs that have contained costs and improved employee health that don't have strong senior level support.

Benchmark #2: Creating Cohesive Wellness Teams

Once CEO support has been captured, the next task is to create a cohesive wellness team. Teams are essential to building great wellness programs because they help to distribute the responsibility for wellness throughout the organization.

Benchmark #3: Collecting Data To Drive Health Efforts

The team's first and primary responsibility is not to start offering programs, but rather to step back and gather important data. The data will be collected using corporate culture audits, health risk appraisals, and knowledge and interest surveys. This data is extremely important because it will reveal the specific areas of health needs and interests within the organization.

Benchmark #4: Carefully Crafting An Operating Plan

With essential forms of data having been collected, the task is now to develop an operating plan for health and wellness within the organization. This operating plan will serve as the roadmap and will guide the company's efforts and investments in workplace wellness.

Benchmark #5: Choosing Appropriate Interventions

With the first four benchmarks completed, it is now appropriate to begin choosing and implementing the appropriate health and productivity interventions. These interventions will most likely include tobacco cessation, physical activity, weight management, self-care, and stress management. But, they also may include things like fatigue management and ergonomics—depending on what the company's data reveals.

Benchmark #6: Creating A Supportive Environment

Once the appropriate health promoting interventions are up and running, it's time to create a supportive environment. Indeed, by having a supportive environment, organizations can be confident that employees will be supported in their efforts to lead healthier lives. Environmental interventions may take the form of policies, physical modifications, and rewards and incentives.

Benchmark #7: Carefully Evaluating Outcomes

The seventh and final benchmark in the Well Workplace model is carefully evaluating outcomes. It is within this benchmark that companies will religiously keep score when it comes to their wellness program. Evaluation targets include things like participation, participant satisfaction, behavior modification, and cost containment.

Wellstream

Health Risk Assessment

WELCOA's Online Health Risk Assessment

The Wellness Councils of America, one of the nation's premier resources for workplace health promotion, is proud to introduce *Wellstream*. *Wellstream* is an innovative, user-friendly health risk assessment. This powerful online tool will help your employees to assess and monitor their personal health status. More importantly, *Wellstream*—through its aggregate reporting function—will allow you as an employer to decipher important organizational health trends and introduce the appropriate health management interventions.

Wellstream Is More Than Just An HRA

With more than two decades in the business of worksite wellness, WELCOA can help you set up an aggressive and effective communication campaign and incentives to drive up participation. So when you purchase *Wellstream*, you'll get much more than just an online assessment...you'll get a partner who is committed to helping you succeed.

Wellstream Can Be Customized

If you're looking for a custom tool, we can help you create a look and feel that's uniquely your own. From adding your logo to complete customization, *Wellstream* can fit any desire.

Wellstream Is Affordable And Cost Effective

When choosing a health risk assessment, cost is always a factor. That's why we've chosen to price *Wellstream* competitively. In fact, you'll find that *Wellstream* is perhaps the most cost effective HRA in the industry. Please contact a *Wellstream* representative at **402.827.3590** or send an email to info@wellstreamonline.com to inquire about custom pricing.

Contact WELCOA Today
for Your Price Quote

Phone: 402.827.3590

Email: info@wellstreamonline.com



Capturing CEO Support

Developing Results-Oriented Wellness Programs One Company At A Time



We've dedicated this issue of *Absolute Advantage* to capturing CEO support.

The first of the seven benchmarks of success, capturing CEO support is crucial if you are looking to build a results-oriented wellness program. And to help you learn more about the art and science of this process, we've prepared a number of important articles.

First, we've highlighted the tests of leading a healthy company. In this article, we identify specific tests that leaders will need to pass if they are to contain costs and improve employee health.

Second, we present a new way of thinking about gaining leadership support for health promotion programs. With help from Dr. Judd Allen, I think you'll find this article of great interest in your pursuit to engage the corner office.

Having laid the groundwork, we then feature in-depth interviews from four nationally-recognized CEOs. Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco, shares his views and strategies on eliminating tobacco use within an organization. I have no question you will find this article controversial and it will definitely challenge your thinking on this topic.

We then provide the transcript from an interview with Peter Vigue, the CEO of Maine-based Cianbro. Peter is an exceptional leader and under his direction, Cianbro has built a remarkable workplace wellness program.

Up next is J. Barry Griswell, the Chairman and CEO of The Principal Financial Group. In this article Barry shares his story of losing weight and getting healthy.

Finally, we feature an article about Townsend Engineering—and how its former CEO made sure that wellness would continue to be a part of the company even after his departure.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of *Absolute Advantage*.

Yours in good health,

Dr. David Hunnicutt
President

The Tests of Leading a Healthy Company

There are six tests of leading a healthy company. CEOs must successfully pass each if they are to keep their employees healthy and well.

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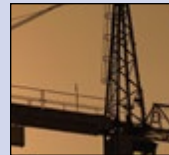
14 A New Way of Thinking

Capturing CEO support is both an art and a science. In this article, you'll find a new model for engaging the corner office.



18 Where There's Smoke, You're Fired

Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco, provides commentary on how he created a tobacco-free company. Find out how he did it.



26 Building a World-Class Wellness Program

Peter Vigue, CEO of Cianbro, speaks out on what it takes to build a best-in-class worksite wellness program. By setting a remarkable pace, Peter is blazing a new trail.



34 Leading By Example

The Principal Financial Group's Chairman and CEO, J. Barry Griswell, has taken the message of healthy living to heart—and to his employees. In this interview, Barry shares how he adopted a healthier lifestyle and what it meant for the employees at Principal.



42 Leaving A Legacy

Even though Ted Townsend, former CEO of Townsend Engineering, has stepped down, his health and wellness initiative lives on. This is an inspiring interview with a CEO who made sure that health would be a part of the Townsend equation even after he was gone.