

A 2020 WELCOA PREMIER PROVIDER NETWORK
INTERVIEW WITH



WELL-BEING.

Designed With You In Mind.

with
AUBREY OLSON



ABOUT AUBREY OLSON

Vice President, Product Management

As the Vice President of Product Management at Alyfe, Aubrey shares the Alyfe philosophy and the “how to” of harnessing a culture of health. Aubrey brings more than 15 years of experience with both program development for innovative coaching solutions and utilized apps, websites, and voice technologies to provide wellness programs that fit seamlessly into participant’s daily lives. Her passion for developing scalable solutions and delivering innovative products that help organizations achieve their well-being goals, drives her leadership role at Alyfe. She also works with Alyfe’s senior advisers and other industry experts to utilize the latest in science and technology that create experiences personalized for each individual and unique client cultures.



In a year defined by disruption, one thing remains clear – people still need connection. In fact, human interaction has taken on increased importance in a world of virtual meetings and happy hours. That’s why it’s more important than ever to provide choice for employees looking to make behavior change with flexible, easy-to-use tools – and real live support.

There’s more to behavior change than simply telling people to adopt healthier habits. Research suggests, not surprisingly, that true engagement in change processes means regular, daily involvement throughout the year. With that model of engagement in change, Alyfe thinks in terms of helping people begin doing things they are “ready” (i.e., motivated) to do, however small, and self-rewarding themselves every step of the way. Everyone will progress at different rates based on their level of motivation and abilities, as well as obstacles they need to overcome. This can’t be accomplished with digital tools alone. The combination of the right tools and real people make it happen.

At its heart, Alyfe is a people company.

As a founder-led organization, Alyfe understands the value behind being passionate about our work. We live our mission and vision everyday – creating life-changing solutions that inspire and engage everyone we touch. We understand that the real world isn’t always conducive to healthy living, however, with the recent focus on reducing health risks caused by the pandemic, now is an opportune time to affect behavior change. Alyfe is seeing the presence of a health coach can provide the final piece of employees’ self-improvement puzzle. Whether that means helping find ways to exercise more, providing the motivation to finally quit tobacco, offering resources to improve heart health, or encouraging better eating habits, a skilled coach can give your employees what’s right for them.

We intentionally spelled our company name Alyfe (pronounced a-life), because we believe that lasting change comes from deep within every person – their ‘y’ in life.

★ How do you support clients in helping their populations live life all in?

AUBREY Alyfe partners with employers to understand each unique organization’s goals. Then, in collaboration with the client, a strategic program plan is developed based on these four keys to support behavior change:

- Opportunity – access to support and a culture enabling healthy lifestyles
- Motivation – a personal driving force
- Confidence – belief that change is possible
- Skills – having the tools to navigate the process of making change

★ How is the opportunity for well-being created?

AUBREY Creating a culture of health has never been more essential to an employer's success.

The first element in the formula for success is making the opportunity to focus on personal health and well-being available. It is simply not enough to offer a wellness program. While the pandemic has presented an opportunity for individuals to make healthy changes, a workplace culture that embraces well-being can solidify that change.

Leadership. In order to build a culture that embraces well-being it is essential to gain leadership support. Having your organization's leaders engaged with the value and goals of the wellness program empowers employees to feel supported. It is important to take the time to share with the leadership team the value of well-being and how the wellness program connects with the company's mission and vision. As part of our strategic planning process, Alyfe collaborates with our clients to bring leadership on board with the wellness program goals. Leaders are role models for their staff and having them take advantage and participate encourages everyone to take an active role in their well-being.

Communication. Alyfe helps clients make the wellness program a visible part of the employee experience through the use of strategic communication. Our approach is to create a plan for utilizing modalities for messaging that fit each dynamic of a population. Alyfe's clients take advantage of physical documents, audio, and digital elements to promote the program. Having a strategic plan that is implemented and followed, ensures that the delivery provides the opportunities and resources, allowing everyone to engage and connect with what they need.

Local support. A wellness champion network is a group of employees who work to improve the workplace culture in conjunction with a wellness program, by connecting with and educating their peers about program offerings. The promotion and engagement from the champion network helps to bring the opportunities to all corners of the workforce. Establishing, managing and maintaining a wellness champion network can often feel like an overwhelming task. Partnering with your wellness program provider to hold monthly network calls can help to ensure that messages continue to reach the entire workforce. Providing easy-to-use tools for wellness promotion, and even an onsite coordinator or health coach to assist in onsite programming is where Alyfe excels with that human touch.

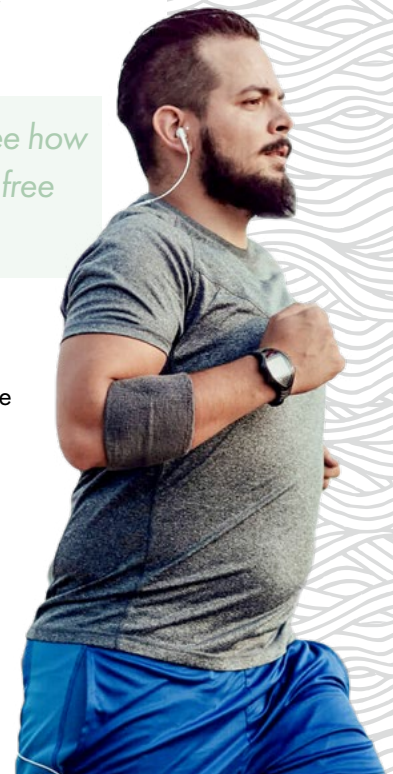


For an example of creating an opportunity within your culture, see how Alyfe can help with a tobacco-free policy. You can download a free copy of [Alyfe's Tobacco-free Policy Kit](#) to get started.

★ How do you harness the power of motivation?

AUBREY Our name says it all – supporting the 'y' for people to make an intrinsic change allowing them to live fuller lives – at home, at work, and in their community.

When trying to change a behavior to impact health and well-being, it is essential to understand the force that will activate change. Unlocking motivation allows the ability to harness the power that drives successful personal growth.



Motivation is a process that provides energy, direction, and persistence.

- Energy is a measure of intensity, drive, and vigor. A motivated person puts forth the effort and works hard to accomplish goals.
- Direction is the path followed to achieve the goal.
- Persistence is continuing along the path for change regardless of the obstacles, setbacks, and barriers to achieving the goal.

Behavior change is easy to start, but it's hard to sustain new behaviors until they become healthy habits. Discovering your own 'y' is a powerful tool for successful behavior change and well-being. Understanding the motivation focuses energy on that change, and when directed in a path, it can be achieved.

★ How are incentives connected to motivation?

AUBREY Many clients utilize incentives to motivate employees to gain participation in the wellness program. Alyfe supports clients with the implementation of outcomes and participation-based incentive designs; the difference is that our program strategies focus on creating individual motivation for change (intrinsic motivation). It is critical to ensure that you are not creating a compliance situation where employees are jumping through tasks just to gain the incentive.

Alyfe has seen first-hand how the tides may be shifting from purely compliance to creating a culture of change. One of Alyfe's clients recently launched a coaching program that focused on reducing tobacco use in a population that was very high risk and didn't have a strong history of engagement. While an incentive strategy helped to get 63% of identified tobacco users to sign up for coaching, 72% of those participants remained engaged with their coach for follow-up sessions.



Motivation is what gets you started; habit is what keeps you going.

★ How do we use motivation in well-being programs?

AUBREY Research shows that health coaching can help individuals make significant improvements to the quality of life that continues after coaching sessions end. Rather than focusing on what to fix, health coaching focuses on you, finding your motivation, and making small incremental steps toward what can and will work best to develop healthier habits that fit personal needs, interests, and desires. As a result, participants can better understand their health, overcome barriers, and achieve healthier behaviors and personal goals.

With an overwhelming amount of health information available, many individuals may find it hard to know where to start or who to trust when it comes to changing habits. A health coach is a trusted expert that is there to help develop personal roadmaps for success.

Health coaches add the personal connection that helps participants realize their motivation for change. Our goal is to help participants learn how to utilize that motivation to help them create a roadmap for behavior change. Alyfe's approach uses evidence-based behavior change techniques to empower the participant in developing and executing an action plan that aligns with their motivation, skills, and life circumstances.

With each ongoing interaction, coaches recalibrate where they have made progress and help them establish the next logical step in their path.

Looking beyond the heightened awareness of health concerns, employees may also need coaching simply because they miss in-person interactions. Alyfe has also seen growing interest recently in safely managed onsite coaching sessions. Employees, who are tired of isolating at home and facing burnout from endless virtual meetings, are embracing the opportunity to engage with another person face to face, even if those faces are covered with masks.

★ How do you build participants' confidence?

AUBREY With motivation established, programming needs to help employees strengthen their confidence in achieving goals. While digital programs can evaluate self-efficacy, a live health coach can help individuals establish small reasonable goals that build confidence. A health coach has the ability to uncover what has worked for individuals in the past and help them use that as a starting point. At Alyfe, we are seeing more users wanting to engage with a health coach as they look for a more personalized resource they can talk to and engage with in an ongoing fashion.

Having a health coach involved allows for the coach to utilize their motivational interviewing techniques to help promote "change talk," turning negatives into positives. The coach is able to provide guidance during their interactions that enable users to understand how to evaluate if their small steps can be achieved or if they need to be reevaluated. This could be increasing the level of physical activity for one, and for someone else, it could be merely to take the next scheduled call. This allows our coaches to meet participants where they are and truly craft a personalized plan that builds overtime with each small success.



Don't tell me what to do – ask me what I am capable of succeeding with.

★ How does emotional well-being play into confidence?

AUBREY When a negative mindset is present, it is hard to focus and believe change is possible. When confidence is low based on feeling down, it is crucial to start building emotional fitness and getting the right level of help and support. Coaches will also connect users with services that are beyond their abilities, like guiding users to seek additional services through an EAP or community support program. In other cases, they may work with the individual to build skills needed for stress management. Coaches can guide employees to take advantage of challenges or specific digital workshops offered as a component in the wellness program.

★ How are change skills utilized and learned through well-being programs?

AUBREY To achieve success in changing behaviors, participants need to develop or strengthen their behavior change skills. The key for Alyfe coaches is to guide individuals on the skills, creating ways for them to practice. Our ultimate goal is that individuals work with coaches on this process. Through the experience, they learn how they can establish lifelong abilities to apply learned skills to other habits or behaviors in the future.

Skills that are a focus for Health Coaches:

1. Identify barriers and create ways to overcome
2. Set realistic goals for short term and long term objectives
3. Identifying support needs – experts, cheerleaders, accountability and enablement
4. Stress management

Alyfe coaches receive hours of training to build their understanding of behavioral psychology before they complete their first coaching session. Ongoing training is a requirement to help keep their approach on target with each unique employee they encounter. This level of training ensures that our coaches are not only experts in health but also understand the best way to support individuals as they navigate the complex behavior change process.

Creating a culture of health has never been more essential to an employer's success. There is an opportunity to engage employees and help them address health factors that affect their personal and professional lives in the midst of chaos. Empowering that change is essential to your successful culture of health.



"Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."
— WINSTON CHURCHILL



Alyfe Wellbeing Strategies
PO Box 684
Columbus, Ohio 43035
866-483-4343
Email: hello@alyfewellbeing.com
Website: www.alyfewellbeing.com

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WELLNESS WORKS HERE

17002 MARCY STREET, SUITE 140 | OMAHA, NE 68118
402.827.3590 | WELCOA.ORG

