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!

This Issue: Steps #1-#5 On Worksite Wellness For Small Businesses
Part 1 of 2

IN THIS ISSUE:
This issue of Absolute Advantage is dedicated to addressing the art of implementing a great worksite wellness program in a small business setting. By focusing on 10 specific activities, small companies from all industries can deliver a worksite wellness program that will set them apart as an employer of choice.
In this issue of Absolute Advantage, we focused our energies on addressing the art of implementing a great worksite wellness program in a small business setting. By embracing 10 specific activities, leaders of small businesses can develop and deliver a wellness program that will set them apart as an employer of choice.

In addition to providing an aerial view of the entire process, we’ll also shed light on five of the 10 activities. Specifically, we’ll discuss the importance of capturing CEO support, designating a company wellness leader, conducting an employee health interest survey, providing an opportunity for health screening, and administering an annual physical activity campaign.

Subsequently, in the next issue of Absolute Advantage, we will address the five remaining activities which include: conducting lunch ’n learns, establishing an in-house wellness library, disseminating a quarterly wellness newsletter, implementing health promoting policies, and promoting community health efforts.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of Absolute Advantage.

Yours in good health,

Dr. David Hunnicutt
President
The Art of Implementing A Great Worksite Wellness Program in A Small Business Setting

Small businesses matter to the American economy. In fact, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, a staggering 99.7% of all businesses in the U.S. are small businesses. In this article, we’ll discuss how worksite wellness programs can create healthier cultures.

10 Step 1: When It Comes From You...
Perhaps the single most important element in building and sustaining a wellness program in a small business setting is having CEO buy-in. Read on to learn more.

16 Step 2: There Is An “I” In Team
While wellness teams are the rule for larger businesses, they’re not the ideal fit for smaller ones. In this article we’ll discuss the importance of designating a company wellness leader.

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By accurately capturing how your employees feel about workplace wellness programs, leaders of small businesses can take significant steps toward keeping their populations healthy and well.

30 Step 4: You Can’t Change What You Can’t Measure
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38 Step 5: The Magic Bullet
It’s in the best interest of every small business employer—and their employees—to embrace physical activity initiatives at the worksite. One of the best ways to do it is by implementing a physical activity incentive campaign. Read on to learn more.
The Art of Implementing
A Great Worksite Wellness Program
In A Small Business Setting

Introducing WELCOA's Small Business Workplace Wellness Initiative

By David Hunnicutt, PhD
mall businesses matter to the American economy. In fact, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, a staggering 99.7% of all businesses in the U.S. are small businesses. What’s more, small businesses employ 50% of the entire working population in this country. Even for the most numerically challenged, it’s crystal clear that as small businesses go, so goes the fate of the rest of working America.

The simple fact of the matter is this: a LOT of people get up in the morning and go to work in small business settings. And for anyone who’s ever been part of a small company, it’s understood that—if you expect to make it—you better bring your “A” game every single day. Indeed, even though there are fewer people and, more often than not, fewer resources to go around in a small business setting, ironically, there are just as many priorities to accomplish as what you’d find in a big business.

Now here’s the kicker, despite the fact that small businesses comprise 99+ percent of all the businesses in the U.S., employees in these settings often have access to fewer benefits than do the employees who work in larger business settings. This means that a lot of people who work in small business settings don’t have legitimate access to healthcare—and with a rapidly aging population, that’s a precarious situation at best.

Thus, given the enormous number of people who work in small businesses and the relative lack of access to benefits and healthcare, health promotion programs are rapidly gaining momentum.
One Size Does Not Fit All!

When it comes to designing and delivering an employee wellness program in a small business setting it is important to understand that one size does not fit all—from experience, we know small businesses are unique and distinctly different than larger-sized companies. As a result, there are several significant and important differences in the way that wellness programs are set up and administered in small business settings as opposed to larger ones.

The information contained in this article—and in the rest of this issue of Absolute Advantage for that matter pertains primarily to small businesses. Certainly, there’s no argument that a lot of what is presented here could also easily apply to medium and, in some instances, even larger-sized companies. But to be truly effective, the workplace wellness approach presented here should be considered appropriate for small business settings only.

If you are a medium or larger-sized company and are interested in learning more about the art and science of implementing a results-oriented wellness program, be sure to check out WELCOA’s seven benchmark model at www.welcoa.org.

The Present Dilemma of Keeping Employees Who Work In Small Business Settings Healthy

There’s an old adage that says, “It doesn’t take a sharp ear to hear thunder”—and that’s definitely the case when it comes to the need for addressing the health and well-being of employees who work in small business settings. There’s just one catch. We really don’t know a lot about how health promotion programs should work in these settings. Sure, there have been a lot of articles published in recent years demonstrating the effectiveness of workplace wellness programs, but, unfortunately, the vast majority of them have been focused on larger and, more recently, medium-sized companies. Indeed, there have been very, very few studies conducted in organizations that employ fewer than 50 people.

Thus, despite the need for better understanding the art of developing and implementing health promoting programs in small business settings, business leaders are in the unenviable situation of having very little information to draw on.

And that’s why we’ve developed this initiative—there has to be a starting point whereby small business leaders can take what we currently know about the very best wellness programs currently being conducted in small business settings and implement it in their own unique settings. And, WELCOA’s initiative presents that starting point.
Introducing WELCOA’s Small Business Worksite Wellness Initiative

In an effort to help small employers successfully implement more health promoting activities, WELCOA is introducing an easy-to-understand blueprint to help small business leaders implement and sustain a solid wellness program that will keep their employees healthy and productive.

10 Essential Things Small Businesses Can Do To Promote Better Health

In this article, we’ll outline 10 important things that small business leaders can do to improve the overall health and well-being of their employees.

Issue a letter of support from the CEO

It seems like such an obvious thing to do but many organizations fail to let their employees know that workplace wellness is a priority to the CEO. By issuing a letter or communiqué, employees better understand that there is support from the very top—and that helps to set the tone for the entire initiative.

Designate a company wellness leader

Once wellness has been communicated as an important priority for the organization, it’s essential that a company-wide wellness leader be appointed. To be sure, the wellness leader can be identified from within your already-existing group of employees. Many times, it’s appropriate for your Human Resource coordinator to take on these responsibilities—but that’s not necessarily a hard and fast rule. Indeed, there are plenty of instances where the wellness leader is an administrative assistant or a passionate employee.

Conduct an employee health interest survey

Once the owners and managers have bought into the concept, and a company wellness leader has been designated, the next undertaking is to conduct an employee health interest survey. In addition to garnering buy-in, the health interest survey will provide your company’s wellness leader with important insight as to what specific programs employees are most interested in. By conducting an employee health interest survey, small businesses can learn a lot from their own people—and virtually guarantee that the wellness program will be embraced by all.

Provide an opportunity for health screening

This step is a critical one for small businesses because it provides employees with an important opportunity to assess and better understand their own personal health status. Without an opportunity to participate in an annual health screening, many employees will not adequately understand their “numbers” such as blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, etc. And if your employees don’t understand their own health status, they place themselves at greater risk for experiencing problems—many of which could have been prevented.

Administer an annual physical activity campaign

If you want to have healthier employees, it’s critical to get them up and moving—and an ideal way to do it in a small business setting is by administering an annual physical activity campaign. Specifically, incentive campaigns are designed to increase the amount of time your employees are physically active during the day by creating a series of mini-challenges. And, if employees complete these challenges, they receive certain incentives. Fun and easy to coordinate, incentive campaigns should be considered an essential part of any small business wellness program.

Hold lunch and learns

We believe that small businesses would benefit greatly by offering their employees healthy eating seminars. Not only are these seminars informative, but they can be a lot of fun as well. For example, imagine how your employees will respond when you bring in a healthy cooking chef that prepares a special meal right before their very eyes. Using healthy—but common—ingredients, the chef can educate your employees on how to prepare the dish, how to make it taste good, and how to make it nutritionally sound. Trust us on this one, this seminar will be a homerun.
...employees in small business settings often have access to fewer benefits than do the employees who work in larger business settings. This means that a lot of people who work in small business settings don’t have legitimate access to healthcare—and with a rapidly aging population, that’s a precarious situation at best.

—Dr. David Hunnicutt, WELCOA President
Establish an in-house wellness library
Because good health is predicated on sound information, small businesses can take a significant step toward promoting better health by providing their employees with opportunities to learn more about prevention right at the workplace. A good library will include things like medical self-care books, health magazines, instructional DVD’s, audio books, and a variety of newsletters, pamphlets, and behavior change guides. To ensure that the information gets read, it’s a good idea to put the lending library in a commonly traveled spot. Comfortable chairs and good lighting are also highly recommended. Remember, the key is to get people comfortable and reading and/or watching and listening.

Disseminate a quarterly health newsletter
Regular health information can greatly assist employees in their quest to become healthier. A good health newsletter will cover a variety of topics like physical activity, weight management, stress reduction, tobacco cessation, and medical self-care. It helps if the newsletter is available in full-color and is easy-to-read—preferably a 6th or 7th grade reading level. To make sure that the newsletter gets absorbed, you may want to consider offering a brief quiz that asks a variety of questions about the information contained in the actual newsletter itself. The participant can put their name on the quiz and submit it to be registered as part of a drawing for something special. For example, if you have 45 employees, you could very well get an 80% response rate to your health quiz and the winner could walk away with something like dinner for two at a healthy eatery.
Implement health promoting policies
Because company policies can have an enormous impact on employee health status, we would recommend implementing healthy policies and procedures into the actual policy manual. By incorporating healthy policies and procedures into your business operations, your company further demonstrates its commitment to the concept of providing a safe and healthy workplace for all.

Specifically, every small business should consider four basic policies at a minimum. These policies include: mandating a tobacco-free workplace, promoting an alcohol/drug-free environment, requiring seatbelt use by all, and formulating safety/emergency procedures in the event of a disaster.

Although not traditionally thought of as important, healthy policies should not be overlooked by small business leaders who are attempting to improve the health and well-being of their company.

Promote community health efforts
A final way that small businesses can promote healthier behaviors is by supporting community events. Needless to say, there are numerous events like fun-runs, health fairs, and educational seminars (just to mention a few) that can be promoted and communicated to your employees. This is very important just due to the simple fact that most community health events are usually best kept secrets. By establishing a listing of health promoting events each month, small businesses can take important steps toward increasing the health and well-being of their most valuable asset—their employees.

The Time Is Now
In the next two issues of Absolute Advantage, we’ll dedicate our energy to expanding and providing more in-depth information related to the 10 things small business leaders can do to promote healthier lifestyles within their organizations. And because health and well-being is an important driver of organizational success, we encourage every small business leader to warmly embrace the information presented here and begin—in any way appropriate—establishing a culture of wellness.

About David Hunnicutt, PhD
Dr. David Hunnicutt is the President of the Wellness Council 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.

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n It Comes From You...

The Power of CEO Support In Advancing A Small Business Wellness Initiative

By David Hunnicutt, PhD
Perhaps the single most important element in building and sustaining a wellness program in a small business setting is having CEO buy-in. Indeed, time and time again, it has been our experience that the organizations that successfully garner senior-level support are the ones that have healthier employees and better working environments.

But the question for most wellness advocates in a small business setting is, “How can I get my CEO to get behind this concept?” Or, if they are already bought in, “How can I get them to be the organization’s best advocate for personal health and well-being.”

These are great questions and they deserve a closer look.

In fact, in the remainder of this article, we’ll divide our discussion into two parts. The first part will focus on strategies that you can employ to get your CEO to buy-in to the concept. The second part will put forth ideas that you can leverage to get your CEO to be the best wellness advocate possible.
Part I: CEO’s Who Need To Get Religion

Let’s cut to the chase—there are still a lot of small business leaders who have yet to fully discover the power of a wellness program. But that’s O.K.—they deserve to be given the benefit of the doubt. Believe it or not, worksite wellness programs are still a relatively new phenomenon—especially in small business settings. And although it’s not ideal, it is completely understandable that not everyone buys in to this concept. To be sure, we’ve still got a ways to go before every small business leader completely comprehends the benefits of putting such a program into place.

But even though your CEO doesn’t completely connect, it doesn’t mean you’re doomed. Here are five powerful strategies for getting them to buy-in.

1. Make The Business Case For Workplace Wellness Programs.

Perhaps the most logical place to start in getting your CEO to buy into the concept is by presenting the business case for implementing a workplace wellness program. Fortunately, this is a relatively easy thing to do as there are presently a number of good articles, expert interviews and PowerPoint presentations already in circulation that address this topic. One particularly good resource that we encourage you to utilize is WELCOA’s Members-Only website, InfoPoint. In it, you’ll find numerous articles discussing the ROI of wellness programs as well as easy-to-understand podcasts and PowerPoint presentations.

When used effectively, this material can go a long way toward making a believer out of your CEO.

2. Enroll Your CEO In An Executive Health Program.

If you are one of the lucky ones, all it will take is for your CEO to see the literature supporting the efficacy of workplace wellness programs and they’ll jump on board. However, be warned—that’s not always the way it goes; sometimes it takes more. And that’s where Executive Health Programs come into play.

In a nutshell, Executive Health Programs are medically-based encounters designed specifically for company leaders. Logistically, your CEO will need to sign-up in advance to take part in the program. Having expressed interest and reserved a spot in the program, they’ll be sent forms that will need to be completed in advance. These forms will include information about payment (breathe easy, usually these programs are covered by insurance) as well as present health practices including a personal medical history.

Having completed the necessary paperwork, your CEO will then spend a day participating in an extensive battery of tests which will, in turn, provide them with a detailed snapshot of their personal health status. And, when done right, this experience is a very powerful one that has a lasting impact. To be sure, I know a lot of small company leaders who pooh-poohed this idea until they went through such a program.

If you are interested in such an experience, you can contact a local hospital and inquire about executive physicals—even small town healthcare facilities are now offering them. Or if your CEO is interested in a more profound experience, you should check out the Mayo Clinic’s Executive Health Program—it’s an unbelievably meaningful experience.

3. Present Your CEO With Employee Testimonials.

Another excellent strategy for getting your CEO to buy into the concept of worksite wellness is to provide them with employee testimonials. Like the Executive Health Program encounter, a well-prepared employee testimonial can leave an indelible mark in the mind and on the heart of your company leader.

For example, imagine the impact that will be felt when your CEO better understands how specific employees, who make their living within the four walls of your own company, struggled with personal health issues and how these struggles impacted their lives and work performance. Also, imagine the satisfaction that your CEO will feel when they learn about how better health practices made the difference in the life of that particular employee.

If you haven’t used this strategy before (and most haven’t) you should strongly consider it. The best way to do it is to have a series of personal
conversations with those employees who have made dramatic health improvements and ask them if they’d be willing to share their stories with the CEO and other company leaders. It can be done over a lunch time or in a special meeting that can be convened pretty easily.

4. Connect Your CEO With Other CEO’s Who Get It.

The concept is known as elephant bumping—and it’s powerful. Here’s why. There’s no question that, 99 times out of 100, CEO’s get to the top because they are willing to work very hard and put up with a lot of stuff that others just aren’t willing to tolerate. As a result of learning from the school of hard knocks, CEO’s know things that other people don’t. And that’s why CEO’s love to talk with other CEO’s. Not only is it good for their egos, it’s a great opportunity for them to rub shoulders with other apex predators that have followed the same path as themselves.

For many, the question becomes, “So how exactly do I get my CEO in touch with other CEO’s who have built great wellness programs?”

Here’s what we would suggest. First and foremost, contact your local Chamber of Commerce and inquire in no uncertain terms that you are looking to identify any companies that have bona fide wellness programs. Moreover, you should also inquire if there are any opportunities for your CEO to attend a roundtable of other business leaders who would be willing to share their insights on developing and sustaining a workplace wellness program. With healthcare cost containment such a large issue, most Chambers are conducting these programs regularly.

Secondly, get a hold of the publication, “Leading By Example” published by Washington-based policy group, Partnership for Prevention. In this excellent publication you’ll find numerous testimonials from CEO’s of large, medium, and small-sized companies. You can access a copy of this publication by visiting Partnership’s website at www.prevent.org.

Thirdly, download the CEO interviews from WELCOA’s InfoPoint. These in-depth interviews are packed with key insights of what motivated other CEO’s to get into the game.

5. Show Your CEO How Other Small Businesses Have Done It.

There’s an old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. We’ll, when it comes to starting a workplace wellness program, a good case study is worth a thousand pictures! Indeed, a good comprehensive case study that specifically outlines the various components of the program—

including the goals and objectives, the budget and personnel, as well as the exact intervention and approaches—

can be just the thing that grabs your CEO’s attention and finally gets them on board.

In fact, it’s been our experience that when a CEO reads a case study like the one done by WELCOA featuring Des Moines-base Townsend Engineering, things begin to change. Starting their program back in the late 1970’s, then CEO Ted Townsend had the desire to build a company culture that ensured that when people came to work for Townsend they would thrive. Beginning with small steps, Townsend implemented things like health screenings and personal health assessments. Then adding things like a fitness center and walking trails, Townsend Engineering began changing the way it conducted its business.

To the delight of everyone, Townsend became a world-class organization whose turnover levels are some of the lowest of any business in the country.

If you have a CEO that hasn’t warmed up to the idea of implementing a worksite wellness program, we would suggest that you begin by snuggling up to these five ideas right from the get-go. If delivered thoughtfully, you’ll be surprised how well they can work.

“...by openly role modeling good health habits, your CEO is telling the rest of the organization that making wellness a personal priority is a good idea...”
Part 2: Turning Your CEO Into A Wellness Champion

Once your CEO has bought into the notion that worksite wellness needs to be a part of your organization’s small business strategy, it’s time to prepare your leader for becoming the group’s wellness champion.

And, similar to the tactics used to get CEO’s to buy into the concept in the first place, there are proven strategies that can take your organization’s leader to the coveted wellness champion level.

So if you are looking for ways to strengthen your CEO’s commitment to wellness, here are two important items to consider.

1. Your CEO Must “Talk the Talk”

Plain and simple, if you want your CEO to be the organization’s wellness champion it’s essential that they “talk the talk.” And, while it may seem obvious, it bears repeating. If you want to build a healthier culture, your CEO has to publicly communicate its importance. In fact, it’s been our experience that this is perhaps the most important thing any small business leader can do to advance wellness within the organization.

By talking the talk, the CEO is personally communicating that wellness and healthier lifestyles are important priorities and that the expectation is that everyone takes the message seriously. And make no mistake about it—this overt form of communication is powerful.

But there is a catch.

In order for the message to be heard from top to bottom, it has to be well-crafted and heart-felt. Certainly, this need not be an intimidating proposition but it will require some careful thought and attention.

In essence, in order to be effective, your CEO really needs to develop a brief vision statement that addresses the health and well-being of each and every employee within the organization. And that message needs to be delivered with kindness, care, and concern.

2. Your CEO Must “Walk the Walk”

The second way that you can help to build your CEO’s credibility as the organization’s wellness champion is make sure that they “walk the talk.” In fact, positive role modeling is going to be a very important part of the leadership process if you are going to build a culture centered on health and well-being.

A couple of points are worth illuminating here.

First, positive role modeling doesn’t mean that your CEO has to be a tri-athlete or some kind of super-human physical specimen. In fact, there are a lot of CEO’s who are great role models but are less than perfect in their overall health habits. What good role modeling does mean in this instance is that your CEO is sincere, genuine, and transparent in their desire to lead a healthier lifestyle.

For example, I’m familiar with a lot of CEO’s who get winded just licking a postage stamp. But that hasn’t kept them from publicly taking part in a modest routine of physical activity every day. Indeed, more often than not, it’s these kinds of CEO’s who have the greatest impact—not the super jocks. I’m guessing that it has to do with the perception that they’re viewed by the rest of the world not as some kind of crazed health Nazi who’s looking to change the world but rather a normal person who struggles with the same kind of issues that everyone else is wrestling with. 

Another issue that should be taken into account when it comes to role modeling is that by openly role modeling good health habits, your CEO is telling the rest of the organization that making wellness a personal priority is a good idea—and that personal touch is the one thing that’s going to set the tone for the magnificent changes that are about to occur within the organization as a whole.

Summary

In this article, we’ve made note of the fact that CEO support is essential if you are looking to implement a wellness program in your small business setting. In addition, a series of proven strategies have been presented with regard to getting your CEO to buy into the concept of workplace wellness—and once they’ve made the commitment, how to become the organization’s wellness champion.

Tips For Crafting A CEO Vision Statement For Wellness

| It should be no more than one double-spaced type-written page. |
| It should be easy to articulate and even easier to understand. |
| It should paint a visual picture setting forth the tangible ways that the organization will change for the better. |
| It should be written with both backbone and heart—firm but fair. |
| It should be written with the best interests of the individual in mind. |
| It should establish an expectation that you are looking for everyone to get behind it. |

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Designating A Company Wellness

By David Hunnicutt, PhD
Whoever said, “There’s no I in team” obviously didn’t run a wellness program in a small business setting. In truth, when you look at some of the best small business wellness initiatives in the country, you’ll find that the CEO has formally appointed a wellness leader—not a team of people—to oversee the day-to-day management of the program. And while this may not be the preferred mode of operation for larger companies (in these settings teams are essential), appointing a company wellness leader is the ideal approach for operating a wellness initiative in a small business setting.
The Myth of A Wellness Team In A Small Business Setting

It’s been my experience that most wellness practitioners in larger-company settings love the idea of establishing a wellness team. And for good reason—a wellness team can get more people involved in the process of delivering health promoting activities at the worksite. And, from where I sit, that’s a good thing because where there are lots of people involved in wellness activities, there’s usually a lot of energy and enthusiasm—and that can help to sustain the momentum of a wellness program for a long time to come.

Moreover, I think most wellness practitioners in larger business settings like to create wellness teams because having a larger group involved in the overall process helps to distribute the general workload more evenly so that one person is not buried by the avalanche of work that’s involved in running a wellness program in a larger company.

But perhaps the most important reason for establishing a wellness team in a larger business setting is that, in so doing, the organization protects itself from the instability that can be created when the position turns over. Over the years, I’ve seen this happen more than once and the impact has been catastrophic. I can tell you firsthand, it’s tough to watch a company go through the pain of losing a wellness practitioner because all of the expertise that has been developed over the years walks right out of the building when the position turns over. Thus, establishing a wellness team in a larger-company setting can help to maintain continuity in the unfortunate event of turnover and organizational change.

As you can see, there are a lot of great reasons for creating cohesive wellness teams—\textit{in larger company settings}. But—and don’t miss this—\textit{in smaller business settings}, wellness teams can be cumbersome and impractical.

Think about it. Let’s say you are a company of 24 people who’s looking to start a wellness program for all of the associates. If you choose to operate your program under the management of a wellness team, it means that you are most likely going to have five to seven people who are taken away from the primary purpose of being at work in the first place—doing their jobs—to help to orchestrate the company’s wellness program. Given the resource realities that exist in most small business settings, this is simply unacceptable. What’s more, in light of the small size of the organization, its overkill. You simply don’t need that many people involved in the wellness process to get the job done.

One very important point is worth mentioning here before we move on.

Some people will argue that a wellness team is indeed the right approach for their small business. My response? Have at it! If your company wants to commit the resources to supporting a wellness team, I think that’s wonderful. Without question, it demonstrates serious commitment on behalf of the CEO. My only caution is that you have to be careful not to go on record with the commitment of resources and then have to withdraw the support if (translated when) the business environment changes. In the wellness biz, this is known as a false start and it can seriously suck the very life out of your program. So if you want to assemble a wellness team, more power to you. Just remember, it’s not necessary in order to do a good job—and if you do, don’t pull the plug when times get tough.

Selecting A Wellness Leader In A Small Business Setting

So now that we’ve established the fact that you really don’t need a wellness team to run your initiative in a small business setting, it’s time to think about selecting a company wellness leader. If your small business is like most, you won’t need to hire a new full-time person to fill this role. Nine times out of ten, that person already exists within your organization—it’s just a matter of finding them.

Here are some qualities to consider when looking for a company wellness leader from the ranks of your existing employees.

Enthusiasm

One of the most important attributes of a potential wellness leader is enthusiasm. In fact, enthusiasm can make up for a variety of shortcomings in other areas. When we refer to enthusiasm, we’re really talking about a special inner quality whereby an individual exudes eagerness, excitement, and energy. And, as you’ll soon discover, enthusiasm is a very important quality when it comes to generating interest and motivating others.

Task-Orientation

A second characteristic to consider when looking for a potential company wellness leader is task-orientation. If you are not familiar with identifying task-orientation as a primary skill set of an individual, it’s a relatively easy
thing to spot—task-oriented individuals are those people who walk around all day carrying their yellow notepads checking off items on their daily to-do list. Undeniably, task-orientation is a very important quality as there are specific and concrete things that have to be accomplished within certain time frames if you expect to have a good wellness program in your small business setting. And if you want to generate momentum, you’ve got to have someone who can keep people on task.

Attention To Detail
Thirdly, we believe attention to detail is another essential characteristic to be considered in the company wellness leader’s skill set. If you ask anybody who has held a wellness leader position before, you’ll hear them obsess about details, details, and more details. Thus, it’s nice if you can find someone who already possesses that quality rather than hoping they’ll pick it up while they are on the job.

Likeability
Another essential quality of a company wellness leader is likeability. Trust me on this one, the last person you want to have in this important position is someone who is surrounded by drama and acrimony. If you put such a person in this position, people will run from your program—and they’ll likely never come back. Likeability is essential—and if you put a likeable person in the role of company wellness leader, your people will be drawn to living healthier lifestyles because they’ll like talking about it and they’ll love interacting with company wellness leader.

A Willingness To Help Others
This is one personal quality that you’ll want to consider non-negotiable. If you want your people to lead healthier lifestyles, they are going to need help and support. By appointing a company wellness leader that has the sincere desire to help others, you’ll be ensuring that your employees will have access to someone who can—and will—help them when they need it. And if your company’s collective health status mirrors the rest of America, they’ll need a friendly face when the going gets tough.

Commitment To A Healthy Lifestyle
Last but certainly not least, the person you appoint as your company wellness leader should have a personal commitment to leading a healthier lifestyle. As we’ve said many times before, this person doesn’t need to be a health Nazi—in fact, it’s probably better if they are not. Moderation is the key here. And even if you do select someone who might be a little over the top when it comes to leading a healthier lifestyle, it’s important (translated essential) that they not impose those standards on others. Remember, the vast majority of Americans are just beginning to warm up to the notion of getting healthy—small and supportive steps can make an enormous impact. And having a supportive mentor will go a long way toward building good will and keeping people energized over the long haul.

By appointing a company wellness leader that has the sincere desire to help others, you’ll be ensuring that your employees will have access to someone who can—and will—help them when they need it.
The Company Wellness Leader’s Job Description

So what should the job description look like for the company wellness leader? While there is no precise formula, we believe that there are some essential tasks that need to be accomplished, and it’s the role of the company wellness leader to get them done. Although not all-encompassing, here is a sample job description that can be modified and tweaked as you like.

Responsibility #1: Distributing The Wellness Vision Statement From The CEO
The first primary responsibility of the company’s wellness leader should be distributing the CEO’s wellness vision statement. In so doing, the company’s wellness leader is opening the door to workplace health and letting the rest of the organization know that health and well-being has now become a priority for the group. Moreover, by distributing the CEO’s vision for wellness, people will begin to associate the newly appointed wellness leader as the key contact within the organization.

Responsibility #2: Conducting A Healthy Lifestyles Interest Survey
The second primary responsibility of the company wellness leader is to conduct a Healthy Lifestyles Interest Survey. Because of its importance, this responsibility should be considered non-negotiable. Indeed, by conducting a Healthy Lifestyles Survey, the Company wellness leader will have at their disposal important information concerning the specific interests of the organization’s employees. This exercise not only provides important information that will help the Company Wellness Leader to better position the wellness activities in the organization, it also helps to get employees to buy into the overall process since their opinions will be used to formulate future programs.

Responsibility #3: Providing An Opportunity For Health Screening
Having distributed the CEO’s vision statement for wellness and conducted a Healthy Lifestyles Interest Survey, it’s a good idea for the Company Wellness Leader to arrange an opportunity for employees to go through a health screening process.

This step is a critical one because it provides employees with an important assessment of their own personal health status. Without an opportunity to participate in an annual health screening, many employees will not adequately understand their “numbers” such as blood pressure, cholesterol, etc. and this places them at greater risk for experiencing problems which potentially could have been prevented in the first place.

Company Wellness Leader’s Job Description

| 1 | Distributing The Wellness Vision Statement From The CEO |
| 2 | Conducting A Healthy Lifestyles Interest Survey |
| 3 | Providing An Opportunity For Health Screening |
| 4 | Administering An Annual Physical Activity Campaign |
| 5 | Hosting A Healthy Eating Lunch n’ Learn |
| 6 | Establishing An In-House Wellness Library |
| 7 | Disseminating A Quarterly Health Newsletter |
| 8 | Implementing Healthy Policies And Procedures |
| 9 | Supporting Community Health Efforts |
Because overweight and obesity have become two of the nation’s most significant health problems, it should be part of the Wellness Leader’s job to offer a healthy eating lunch and learn session.
Responsibility #4: Administering An Annual Physical Activity Campaign
The next responsibility of the Company Wellness Leader is administering an annual physical activity campaign. By offering a program on physical activity, small businesses are providing their employees with an important motivation to exercise. Although it may sound like a daunting task, it’s really pretty straightforward. Using a prepackaged incentive-based campaign, the Company Wellness Leader can easily lead and administer this important activity.

Responsibility #5: Hosting A Healthy Eating Lunch n’ Learn
Because overweight and obesity have become two of the nation’s most significant health problems, it should be part of the Wellness Leader’s job to offer a healthy eating lunch and learn session. Very straightforward, it is the task of the Company Wellness Leader to identify and secure a guest presenter and promote the seminar to all of the organization’s employees. If done right, this will be one of the most fun and energizing programs of the year.

Responsibility #6: Establishing An In-House Wellness Library
A sixth responsibility of the company Wellness Leader should be to establish an in-house wellness library. This is important because good health is predicated on sound health information—and small businesses can take significant steps toward improving the health and well-being of their employees by providing them with opportunities to learn more about their own health habits right at the workplace. The Company Wellness Leader can and should be the one who identifies and selects the materials for the in-house library.

Responsibility #7: Disseminating A Quarterly Health Newsletter
In addition to establishing an in-house library of wellness materials, it’s also important for the Company Wellness Leader to disseminate a quarterly health newsletter. In fact, by providing each employee with a health newsletter, the Company Wellness Leader is insuring that each and every person within the organization is receiving timely tips on the best ways to manage and protect their individual health status.

Responsibility #8: Implementing Healthy Policies And Procedures
Another major responsibility of the Company Wellness Leader is implementing healthy policies and procedures into the daily operations of the organization. Specifically, the policies that should be considered essential include:

- A tobacco-free workplace policy
- A zero-tolerance alcohol and drug policy
- A mandatory seat-belt use policy
- A safety/emergencies policy that includes responding to acts of terrorism

And while it’s best to implement new policies slowly and only after much communication, it should be a central focus of the Company Wellness Leader’s primary job description to get these policies implemented within a 12 to 24 month time frame.

Responsibility #9: Supporting Community Health Efforts
The final responsibility of your Company Wellness Leader should be supporting and communicating existing community health efforts. This is particularly important because there are already a lot of health and wellness events and opportunities being offered within the community as a whole. By simply identifying and communicating the what, where, and when, your company can greatly increase the likelihood that your employees take part in the health enhancing opportunities that are already being offered in your community on a regular basis.

Summary
In this article, we’ve discussed the importance of identifying and appointing a company wellness leader. To help you select the right person, we’ve identified several important personality characteristics that should be considered when interviewing a potential candidate. Finally, to help you get your initiative off to a fast start, we’ve outlined nine potential tasks that can and should be carried out by the individual who is ultimately charged with leading the organization’s wellness initiative.
ssing Employee Interest
How To Conduct A Health Interest Survey

By David Hunnicutt, PhD
One of the most important components of any small business workplace wellness program is the assessment of your employees’ interests. By accurately capturing how your employees feel about workplace wellness programs and the specific activities that they have an interest in, leaders of small businesses can take significant steps toward keeping their populations healthy and well.

In order to be effective, there are some basic tasks that will need to be attended to if you are going to successfully capture the specific wellness interests of your employees.
Task #1: Select the survey instrument.

The first important task that you’ll have to attend to is selecting the survey instrument itself. This need not be a complicated and time-consuming endeavor as there are already a number of short and useful surveys that are available to help you get the job done. In fact, we’ve included a sample survey in this article.

But, if the survey that we’ve developed is not what you’re looking for, here are a few suggestions to help you be successful as you develop your own.

First, keep it short. If you really want your employees to embrace the survey process and give you the feedback you need to develop popular programs, it’s essential that the survey not be a burden on those who are completing it. Indeed, responder fatigue can be a major reason why surveys get tossed in the trash. We would suggest including no more than 25 questions in the entire survey. If you really want to be successful, make sure that all of the questions fit neatly on one page—front and back.

Second, make sure you address the major areas that are associated with health and productivity. These include things like physical activity, weight management, nutrition, stress management, medical self-care, and tobacco cessation. You may also want to include things like financial wellness and building healthier relationships. By addressing these major health issues, you can effectively find how interested your employees are in each one of these areas. If you’re just getting started, we would discourage you from taking on topics like better parenting, ecology, alternative medicines, and spiritual healing. While important, they can significantly distract you from keeping the main thing the main thing.

Third, use Likert scale-type questions. Specifically, avoid yes/no questions as they won’t give you as much information as you need to successfully assess the level of interest and seriousness on behalf of your employees. Instead, use scales that span from 1 to 5 with 1 being least interested and 5 being most interested.

Remember, when you develop your survey instrument the goal is to collect the most amount of information by asking the fewest number of questions.

Task #2: Develop your cover letter.

Having already formatted your core interest survey, it’s now time to develop the cover letter. Specifically, we would recommend having the cover letter come directly from your CEO or company Director. In so doing, you’ll demonstrate to all of your people that completing the survey is a very high priority—indeed, your top dog is asking for participation. And, make no mistake about it; if you have the letter come directly from your CEO, you stand a much better chance of having the whole thing taken seriously with the results being significantly increased participation.

Now here’s an important point to be considered. Even though your CEO will be signing the letter, they don’t necessarily have to write it. In fact, in many instances survey cover letters have been written by some other person in the organization and then presented to the CEO or Director for their signature. Of course, it’s ideal if your CEO feels strongly enough to actually draft a letter, but it’s also extremely effective if they approve of the content and sign-off on it directly.

Task #3: Set a timeframe in which the survey is to be completed.

The good news is once you’ve developed the survey and the cover letter, most of the work is done. But there are still a few items left for your consideration. Logistically, it’s in your best interest to put a time period during which the survey is to be completed. Believe it or not, some well-intentioned, small business health advocates have put together wonderful surveys and stellar cover letters, only to have low response rates because they didn’t create a sense of urgency. If you establish a timeframe in which the survey is to be completed, you can greatly increase your chances of having a high percentage of your employees actually complete it.

Specifically, we would recommend a period of no less than 5 working days and no greater than two weeks. By using this timeframe, it should allow enough time for people to complete the survey without feeling rushed and also be a short enough period where people feel the tension to get it done.

Once individuals complete the survey within the appropriate time period, you may also want to consider the option of having the employee place the survey in a sealed envelope and allowing them to drop it in a box or enclosed container. This will allow your employees to turn the survey in without feeling like their responses are going to be openly judged. Also,
just as a reminder, we would suggest that your survey is anonymous and that no names or identifiable information be required.

Oh, and by the way, incentives to complete the survey are not usually necessary in small companies. There’s no question that they can help to increase your response rates, but usually it’s just not a big deal to get people to complete this exercise without providing any sort of incentive.

**Task #4: Develop your report.**

The next task is to tabulate the results and develop a report which highlights the specific findings. If you want the results to be taken seriously, it’s essential that you tabulate the findings and develop the report as quickly as possible. One of the most significant mistakes small business health advocates make is waiting too long to finalize the results and develop the report. Again, it’s important that we reiterate the fact that it is a huge mistake to procrastinate on this task. If you delay the results, people will lose interest in the outcomes and that’s the kiss of death to any program—large or small.

Interestingly when we delve a little bit deeper to try to figure out why people put off tabulating results and formatting the report, it’s usually because they are intimidated by creating the document itself. Here’s a newsflash: the report need not be more than five typewritten pages—maximum. If your report is longer than four to five pages, you run the risk that no one is going to read your results. While it sounds counterintuitive, the most successful small business health advocates practice the “3 B’s”—Be Brief, Be Bright, and Be Gone.

**Task #5: Communicate your results.**

You’re now on the homestretch. Having come this far, you want to make sure that you communicate the findings of the survey to your CEO, supervisors, and employees. Believe it or not, the employees who completed the survey will be curious as to what the results actually are. Too many times, small business health advocates underestimate the importance of sharing the findings with the group as a whole.

There are several ways to share the results with your company’s various constituents. First, we would recommend communicating the results in a face-to-face meeting with your CEO and supervisors. This will allow you to establish a direct connection with your company’s decision makers. It also allows them the opportunity to ask questions and obtain additional information.

Believe it or not, the employees who completed the survey will be curious as to what the results actually are.

When sharing the survey results with your employee population as a whole, it’s acceptable to do so in company meetings or employee forums. It’s also perfectly acceptable to disseminate the results using email or interoffice snail mail.

Remember, it’s essential to turn the results around in a timely manner. In so doing, you’ll be sure to engage everyone in this important undertaking.

**Summary**

Assessing the health and wellness interests of your small business population is critical to developing an effective health promotion program for your organization. By following the five tasks that we’ve outlined in this article, you are assured of doing a solid job—especially if you’re going through the process for the first time.

We also encourage you to use the survey provided in this article as a starting point. It can save you a lot of time and effort in getting moving on this important undertaking.
Employee Health Interest Survey

1. Overall, my health and well-being are very important to me.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - I’m Neutral
   - Not really
   - I haven’t really thought about it

2. At this moment in time, I feel like my present health status is:
   - Excellent
   - Pretty Good
   - Needs some attention
   - Not what I would like it to be

3. In terms of my overall interest in being a part of a company-wide wellness program, I am:
   - Very interested
   - Somewhat interested
   - Not very interested
   - I’d need more information before I could say with any certainty

4. If I were to take part in a company wellness initiative, I would be most interested in the following topics and activities:
   - Walking
   - Stretching
   - Strength training
   - Managing my weight
   - Eating better
   - Quitting smoking
   - Managing stress
   - Sleeping better
   - Managing health issues like diabetes, arthritis, etc.

5. Are there any other wellness topics you in which you would have potential interest?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6. What advice and/or guidance would you provide in terms of setting up a wellness program for the employees of our company?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
YOU CAN'T CHANGE WHAT YOU CAN'T

The Importance
nge
AN’T Measure
of Providing an Opportunity for Health Screening

By David Hunnicutt, PhD and Ann Sabbag, MS
Isn’t it interesting that when people enter the workforce, they are—for the most part—young, energetic, healthy, vibrant, and optimistic. But after having spent 30 or 40 years involved in the daily push and shove that the world of work demands, most people slowly begin to wear out. Having neglected the importance of protecting personal health status, their well-being and vitality slowly begin to deteriorate—and, as this happens, it takes a noticeable and serious toll on both organizational productivity and personal happiness.

Unfortunately, when this sequence of events is initiated, we know from experience that the spiral downward has begun and stopping this vicious descent is difficult—even for the most well-intentioned.

Tragically, by the time most people realize how valuable their health status really is, they have lost it.

Undeniably, this is exactly what has been happening in businesses throughout the U.S. for decades. And it’s especially true in small business settings where benefits are far less generous and access to healthcare is much harder to come by.
To some small business leaders, all this blatant sharing of care and concern seems a bit hokey. But to the astute and successful, this opening move is gospel.

**Internal, External or Outsourced?**

Having established and clearly articulated the motivation and rationale for conducting an annual health screening, it’s time to get down to the basics. First, let’s start by examining whether you should attempt to conduct a health screening internally, externally, or by contracting with an outside partner.

First, we need to share with you right up front that we think each of these options have merit. But we also need to let you know that we believe that one option in particular is far better than the others.

**Internal**

One potential option for delivering health screening to your employees is to allocate and dedicate internal staff time to get the job done. In this scenario, a small team of individuals within the organization take on the responsibility of researching how health screenings function and then set up an internally-driven process that works for the organization. In this approach, team members take on tasks like writing the communication pieces, developing and disseminating invitations, creating registration protocols, setting up the screening area, contracting with nurses to do the blood draws, establishing the incentives, etc., etc.

Certainly the most significant advantage to conducting a health screening in this manner is that you have total control over all of the details—which, by the way, is also the biggest drawback. To be sure, taking on a task such as this using internal staff is a lot of work—much of which will be new and, thus, require significant research and examination in order to do it successfully. As a result of all the obstacles that come with this approach, taking this task on internally is a potential option but it’s obviously not the best one.

**External**

Another option in making health screening available for your employees is to do it externally. By external we mean rather than holding the health screening onsite, you’ll contract with an outside entity (most often a local hospital) and arrange for your employees to get screened at that particular location. For many small businesses this

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**The Importance of Conducting An Annual Health Screening**

At the core of any exemplary small business wellness initiative is the notion of providing each and every employee with the opportunity to take part in a personal health screening. In fact, a personal health screening opportunity is such an important component that it is virtually impossible to establish any type of effective wellness program without it.

Indeed, over the last two decades, we’ve learned that if people (1) don’t understand their present personal health status and (2) aren’t able to objectively quantify it, it’s highly unlikely that improvements will occur just due to the simple fact that employees have no idea if, when, and how much they need to change.

In this article, we’ll further discuss the importance of providing regular health screenings for all employees and we’ll reveal important information that will help you to design, deliver, and evaluate a screening initiative that will set your small business apart as an employer of choice.

**“We Care About You”**

As you begin to think about the importance of providing an annual health screening for all of your employees, it’s critical that you examine your motivation for doing it in the first place.

And this is where things get interesting.

Having worked with numerous employers on this topic, we can tell you that the motivations range from increasing productivity to reducing healthcare costs to creating a healthier organizational culture in order to attract better and more qualified talent. And, as important and valid as all of these motivations are, they will all ring hollow in the ears of your employees unless you preface the entire undertaking with four words—“we care about you.”

Indeed, if you want health screening to take hold in your organization, the number one message that has to be overtly and sincerely communicated to each and every employee is a simple yet powerful one—“we care about you.”

When you communicate this message in truth and in fact, your employees will begin to understand that you, as their employer, recognize that health is truly the pearl of great price and serious and important steps have to be taken in order to protect it.
is a viable option and we believe that it is far superior to conducting a health screening event using internal staff. Not only is there a group of trained professionals who take charge of the entire process but doing it this way can also insulate you from potential liability. Still, there are several drawbacks to this method, the most significant being that your employees now need to travel to an offsite facility to get the tests they need. Not only is this inconvenient to both employers and employees, but for small businesses it is particularly expensive as having employees away from the job for several hours is quite costly.

Outsourcing
The third potential option for conducting an employee health screening is outsourcing. When we refer to outsourcing, we mean contracting with an outside firm that specializes in delivering high-quality health screening services for businesses and then letting them work their magic. In our experience, this is by far the best choice as you will have the luxury of being able to hold the health screening onsite and, at the same time, having skilled and competent professionals leading the charge.

Before proceeding, it’s important that we let you know that we understand the realities and constraints of small businesses. Therefore, we believe that it’s always prudent to think “good, better, best.” In this case, using internal staff to put on a health screening is good; contracting to do it externally at an off-site location is better, and outsourcing it to a qualified and competent vendor is best.

For the rest of this article, we are going to proceed with information related to outsourcing it to a qualified and competent partner because we believe that this is by far the most superior approach to conducting health screenings in a small business setting.

What To Look For In A Health Screening Partner
Because health screening is one of the most important things your organization will ever do as it pertains to maintaining and/or enhancing the health status of your employees, we would recommend that you only use qualified and competent vendors. Here are some things to look for.

Core Competencies
One key qualification in finding a good health screening partner is whether or not health screening is a core competency of the organization. Specifically, we recommend that you assertively dig deep to find out if, indeed, health screening is a core competency of the organization you are considering or if it’s just one of a number of services that the vendor provides. Also, be sure to ask if the organization you will be contracting with is the one who is actually providing the services or if they will be sub-contracting with another “hidden” partner. For obvious reasons, we recommend that you select a partner that has developed health screening as a core competency of their organization.

Staff Qualifications
A second element that should be considered when choosing a health screening partner is how well-qualified the potential prospect is. In most circumstances, you will find that vendors fall into two basic “camps.” The first is the healthcare and/or RN (registered nurse) camp. You’ll be able to identify them easily because the provider will tout credentials and certifications that relate to the soundness of their screening techniques like blood draws and assessment of body composition—largely from a healthcare perspective. This is a very important qualification and should be taken seriously—the last thing that you want is someone who is not qualified in this area to be entrusted with the health and well-being of your employees. But—and here’s the newsflash—it’s not the only qualification that should be considered when choosing a partner and this leads us to the second camp of vendors.

Currently, there is an entirely new group of health screening partners that have recently emerged and—in keeping with the spirit of practicing radical honesty—contracting with them is highly-preferable to just working with a healthcare provider. Specifically, in this second camp, you’ll find not only professionals who are qualified to conduct blood draws and assessments of body composition (just to mention a few), but you’ll find a group of health educators who can assist you in a variety of other ways. First, they can help you plan your health screening event—including things like building set-up, employee recruitment, registration, and development of incentives right up front so that everything is taken care of ahead of time. In addition, they’ll not only conduct your biometric tests like blood draws etc., but they’ll also provide an individualized coaching opportunity for each participant—which is critical to the behavior change process.

In an ideal world, we recommend that you identify and select a partner that falls into the second camp of health screening companies.
Because health screening is one of the most important things your organization will ever do as it pertains to maintaining and/or enhancing the health status of your employees, we would recommend that you only use qualified and competent vendors.
Longevity and Experience
Obviously, the longer the company has been in business, the more reputable they’ll be. Be sure to ask questions of potential partners concerning how long the organization has been in business and what the credentials and experience of the principals are. I would also be sure to inquire if there is any pending litigation against the firm.

Testimonials
Perhaps the best tests of potential partners are satisfied customers. Be sure to get the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other organizations who have used the services offered by the firm. And once you get the numbers, pick up the phone and make the call. Too many times, people get the names of references but fail to follow through in contacting them—do not make this mistake.

An Aerial View of The Health Screening Process
Having provided some essential information related to identifying and selecting a reputable health vendor, it’s now time to turn our attention to reviewing how the health screening process actually works.

Initial Meeting
Indeed, the entire process begins with an initial meeting between representatives from your small business and the potential health screening vendor. In this meeting, you should share some basic information about your company including the number of employees and potential time frames for delivering the actual event. But the vast majority of this meeting should be spent trying to get a better understanding of the services, approaches and philosophy of the potential partner.

Formal Proposal
Having completed the initial meeting, you should request a formal proposal from the vendor. In this proposal you should expect to receive the scope of services, personnel responsible for overseeing the initiative, timeframes, and costs. This proposal should be received in written format.

Planning Meeting
If you choose to accept the vendor’s proposal, the next step is to meet with the provider for the purposes of developing the plan that will guide the actual delivery of the health screening event itself. This planning process should have been included in the proposal received by the vendor so there shouldn’t be any additional fees associated with this component. At the completion of the planning meeting you should have in hand the document that will serve as the blueprint for the entire event—from beginning to end.

Communication and Recruitment
Once the plan is completed, it’s time to begin executing the communications campaign. Again, this should be done with your vendor partner as they should be able to provide you with all of the communication forms/letters that you’ll need to effectively communicate, recruit, and enroll your company’s employees.

Event Day
By contracting with a partner who can guide you through all of the upfront strategy formulation, the day of the event should be fun and informative. On the day of the event you can expect that your vendor partner will orchestrate the action and professionally and successfully deliver your health screening with class and style.

Follow Up
Once the event has been completed, a reputable vendor should be able to provide you with some concrete follow up information—not least of which includes basic evaluations that capture employee’s reactions and overall satisfaction levels. In addition to basic process evaluation information, a good vendor should also be able to provide your company’s executives with aggregate information concerning the overall findings—this would include information like total critical values and perhaps even aggregate health statistics.

What Tests Should Be Performed?
If you are going to conduct health screening for your employees, it’s essential that you make sure that you offer the right tests. At a minimum, you should offer your employees the opportunity to assess total cholesterol (good and bad both), blood pressure, blood sugar and body mass index. Using the latest technologies and tests, your vendor can easily and straightforwardly conduct these tests for your employees. What’s more, as a benefit associated with breathtaking technological advancements, your employees will receive their results immediately.

Once the testing has been completed and your employees have their results in hand, it’s highly recommended that your employees are given the opportunity to sit down and discuss the findings with a qualified and/or certified health coach. In this important encounter, the health coach will walk the individual through the results and make sure that there is a clear understanding as to what the results mean—and what steps need to be taken in order to maintain or improve individual health status.
What About A Health Risk Appraisal (HRA)?

Perhaps one of the biggest questions you’ll have to face is whether or not you should offer your employees the opportunity to complete a health risk appraisal at the same time they are going through the screening process. Our advice is that if you can afford to do it, you should. A health risk appraisal is going to provide the health coach with just that much more information and, when all is said and done, the employee will have a very good snapshot of their total health profile.

Before closing out this section, it’s again important to remind you that the key to this whole exercise is the coaching encounter that is inserted on the tail end of this experience. Specifically, after the employee has completed the appropriate biometric tests, and taken the HRA—if one is offered—it is critical to provide the employee the opportunity to sit down and discuss the results with a health coach. In this encounter orchestrated by your vendor, the health coach will sit shoulder-to-shoulder with the individual and walk them through their results line-by-line. This is of the utmost importance because, if you’re like most organizations, you will have at least one employee who will present with a significant health issue—and the health coach will point them in the right direction.

How Much Does Health Screening Cost?

Although it depends on the region of the country in which you live, health screening will generally cost about $25-$70 per employee. The lower end of the scale applies if you are only doing the biometric testing and the higher end of the scale applies to the biometric testing, the HRA, and the personal lifestyle counseling experience.

Given the relatively low cost for such an important test, we encourage small business leaders to provide health screening opportunities annually or at least every two years.

How To Find a Health Screening Partner

There are several ways that you can find the perfect partner to help you deliver an exceptional health screening experience for your employees. First, it’s always wise to check out the WELCOA website as we make it a point to promote and highlight premier providers. In addition, you can check with your local Chamber of Commerce or community healthcare coalition to find out who’s providing these services within your community. It’s also a good idea to contact your HR broker—they’ll be connected with firms who can provide these services. Finally, be sure to contact your local hospital or healthcare providers to find out if they make these services available to small businesses in your community.

Summary

Health screening is an essential undertaking if you want to build a quality wellness program within a small business setting. In this article, we’ve outlined the process and highlighted many of the details associated with providing health screening opportunities for your employees. As you move forward, remember that it’s always a good idea to think “good, better, best.” Remember, you don’t have to be perfect right out of the gate, but it is essential that you get started and, over time, work toward building a program that sets you apart as an employer of choice in the small business community.

About David Hunnicutt, PhD

Dr. David Hunnicutt is the President of the Wellness Council 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.

About Ann Sabbag, MS

Ann Sabbag is the founder and President of Health Designs, a leader in worksite wellness specializing in health risk assessments, corporate health screenings and lifestyle coaching.

Ann and her team of enthusiastic health professionals work with diverse companies, in every major industry, throughout the country including Fortune 500 companies such as JPMorgan Chase, Duncan Aviation, Anheuser Busch, Hewitt and JM Family Toyota. Last year alone, her company provided wellness services at more than 200 different worksites.

Ann earned her Masters degree from the University of North Florida in Health Administration and her undergraduate degree in Health Education from Florida State University. She is a Health Educator certified in Intrinsic Coaching with extended studies in nutrition and behavior change. She is also an Advisory Member of the Wellness Council of America.

Her company is Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida’s wellness partner, providing health promotion services to Blue Cross’s large corporate clients throughout Florida. In the Year 2000, Health Designs was awarded Business of the Year in Health Education by the American Association of Health Education.

Visit www.healthdesigns.net for more information.
Magic Bullet
Annual Physical Activity Campaign

By David Hunnicutt, PhD
If there’s one thing we’ve learned about keeping people healthy in a worksite setting, it’s that physical activity may very well be the magic bullet. Indeed, for the last two decades some of the best scientists in the world have been telling us about the benefits of exercise—and that being physically active can not only keep us healthier but it may also allow us to actually live longer.

And isn’t that what it’s all about—living better and living longer?

Because of the benefits to both the individual and the organization, we believe that helping employees to live longer and healthier lives should be a fundamental pursuit of every small business employer. And that’s what this article is all about.
The Need For Physical Activity
Plain and simple, human beings have a fundamental need to be physically active. In fact, marvelous things happen when people exercise 30 to 60 minutes on most days of the week. Not only do people feel better, they actually are better—physically, mentally, and emotionally. However, it’s when people don’t get enough physical activity during the day that things start to fall apart. Weight gain, musculoskeletal problems, stress, heart disease, diabetes and some cancers are direct consequences of not getting enough exercise during the day.

And for small business employers and their employees, that spells disaster. In fact, U.S. employers will spend billions on unnecessary health care costs and lost productivity related to poor diet and sedentary lifestyles alone.

With this in mind, it is in the best interest of every small business employer—and their employees—to embrace physical activity initiatives at the worksite. And perhaps one of the most expedient ways to get your people up and moving is to implement a physical activity incentive campaign in your small business setting.

Here’s what you need to know.

An Introduction To Worksite Physical Activity Campaigns
Now that we’ve made the case for physical activity, it’s time to turn our attention to selecting and implementing a physical activity campaign that’s right for your small business setting.

How A Physical Activity Campaign Works
In essence, a physical activity campaign is a prepackaged program that takes you by the hand and walks you through the process of incorporating an actual physical activity program into your workplace. Although there are numerous campaigns to choose from, they all do pretty much do the same thing. Specifically, when you select a campaign, you’ll receive three sets of materials.

First, you will receive a coordinator’s guide which will provide you with all of the important details surrounding
the implementation and delivery of the campaign itself. For example, a good coordinator’s guide will outline important information like the tasks that need to be completed, the timeframes in which they need to be accomplished, and the communication materials that need to be disseminated in order to get things off to a fast start. By reading through the coordinator’s guide from cover-to-cover, you should have a better grasp on how the entire process works from end-to-end.

In addition to the coordinator’s guide, you will also receive registration and promotion materials. This information will help you promote the upcoming campaign and then you will use the forms provided to actually register and enroll each participant who will be taking part in the initiative.

Last but not least, you will receive the participant’s materials and handouts. This information is usually presented in the form of a “handout master” that is ultimately reproduced on your copy machine and disseminated directly to those who are participating in the campaign.

In its entirety, the physical activity incentive campaign is approximately 40 to 100 pages in length—and they’re designed to be extremely user-friendly. In terms of costs, you can expect to pay anywhere from $50 to $200 for such a campaign—although as a WELCOA member, your incentive campaigns are included with your annual dues.

Each year, it’s not uncommon for thousands of companies to implement such a campaign, but they are still relatively new in small business settings—we hope that you’ll move forward post-haste.

Electronic or Hard Copy

Perhaps the most significant decision you’ll need to make concerning offering a physical activity campaign in your small business setting is whether to offer it in an electronic version or hard-copy format. Obviously the electronic on-line version will be a whole lot easier to administer since you won’t have to worry about handling any paper—but it also comes with a completely different set of issues. Indeed, if you are going to offer an online version you’ll need to be sure to offer a thorough orientation to all of your employees to make sure that they are savvy enough to take full advantage of the program.

Here’s my advice to those who are in charge of coordinating wellness programs in small business settings—offer the hard copy version the first time through. For some reason, the hard copy version is a lot more straightforward the first time you do it—maybe that’s because it gives both the coordinator and their employees something tangible to take part in. Whatever the reason, I strongly suggest using a hard copy version the first time through. Once you have successfully completed a campaign, it will make much more sense to you and you’ll better understand all the little details and nuances that need to be attended to. Armed with this knowledge, you’ll be ready for the online version.
THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Regular physical activity can improve health and reduce the risk of premature death in the following ways:

- Reduces the risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD) and the risk of dying from CHD
- Reduces the risk of stroke
- Reduces the risk of having a second heart attack in people who have already had one heart attack
- Lowers both total blood cholesterol and triglycerides; increases high-density lipoproteins (HDL or the "good" cholesterol)
- Lowers the risk of developing high blood pressure
- Helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have hypertension
- Lowers the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent (type 2) diabetes mellitus
- Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer
- Helps people achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety
- Promotes psychological well-being and reduces feelings of stress
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling or becoming excessively fatigued

THE CONSEQUENCES OF INACTIVITY
Physical inactivity can have devastating costs on both employees and employers—especially in small business settings.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health estimate direct and indirect costs associated with obesity at $117 billion per year nationwide.
- Physical inactivity contributes to numerous physical and mental health problems and is responsible for an estimated 200,000 deaths per year.
- Being overweight increases yearly per person health care costs by $125, while obesity increases yearly per person health care costs by $395.
- The incidence of overweight or obesity among adults increased steadily from 47 percent in 1976 to 56 percent in 1994, and 64 percent in 2000.
- In 2000, 15.3 percent of children aged 6 to 11 years and 15.5 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years in the United States were overweight, tripling the numbers from two decades ago.
- Nearly 80 percent of obese adults have diabetes, high blood cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease or other ailments.
- A study of individuals aged 15 and older without physical limitations found that the average annual direct medical costs were $1,019 for those who are regularly physically active and $1,349 for those who reported being inactive.
The Importance of Incorporating Incentives

Along with utilizing a prepackaged physical activity campaign, you’ll also want to strongly consider incorporating some sort of incentive into the process to ensure that people will actually enroll and take part in the program. Here’s a general rule of thumb to remember when choosing your campaign incentives—you want to be sure to find the right type of incentive that gets people excited but, at the same time, doesn’t break the bank.

Make no mistake about it, the incentive you ultimately decide to go with is a very, very important decision as it will, in large part, determine who’ll take part in the program.

Logistically, if you offer a lame incentive—like free stalks of celery to those who finish—no one will register. On the other hand, if you offer too rich of an incentive—like a month off—your employees will be taking part for something other than getting physically active—and it will cost you dearly.

From experience, we can tell you that offering merchandise like two movie tickets for those who complete the experience is usually a pretty good incentive and will get people’s attention. In addition, cash is always a winner. A $25-$50 dollar gift certificate for those who complete the campaign can also get people to buy into the process.

And, there is always the option of incorporating the suggested incentives supplied by the vendor of the campaign. For example, many vendors have already developed a bevy of incentives that can be easily incorporated into any campaign—like customized water bottles, hats, t-shirts, etc. They will add some additional cost to the overall implementation of the campaign, but it does save you some legwork due to the fact that you don’t have to come up with your own incentives.

While it’s beyond the scope of this article to discuss incentives in detail, it is sufficient to say that you should look for an incentive that people perceive to be valuable and, at the same time, is cost efficient to the organization.

Where Can I Get Prepackaged Incentive Campaign?

Fortunately, there are several organizations that have developed physical activity campaigns specifically for worksites.

Health Enhancement Systems

Health Enhancement Systems is a health promotion product and services provider located in Midland, Mi. As the creator of numerous incentive campaigns including Walktober, Turkey Trot and 12 Days of Fitness, this organization has made available a series of exceptional campaigns that have been implemented by organizations of all kinds. Be sure to check out their excellent website at www.hesonline.com.

Summary

This article has presented the need for incorporating physical activity into small business settings. To accomplish this, we recommended implementing a physical activity campaign to generate some excitement and energy. Available in both electronic and hard-copy versions, it is strongly suggested that small business wellness practitioners utilize a hard copy version the first time through the process. When coupled with a thoughtful incentive, physical activity campaigns have generated remarkable results which have contributed to an overall change in the company’s health culture.

The incentive you ultimately decide to go with is a very, very important decision as it will, in large part, determine who’ll take part in the program.

WELCOA

WELCOA is also another excellent resource to access physical activity incentive campaigns. As one of the nation’s premier resources for workplace wellness, WELCOA has developed a variety of incentive campaigns over the years. Specifically, you can access the campaigns in one of three ways. There are campaigns that are available to members on WELCOA’s members-only website Infopoint. In addition, there are campaigns that are available through the e-store at www.welcoa.org. The cost for an incentive campaign is extremely affordable—$19.95—and there are a variety of titles available. Also, from time to time, WELCOA will make available incentive campaigns free of charge—be sure to check out the free resources section at www.welcoa.org.

WELCOA’s Online Health Risk Assessment

The Wellness Council 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 Wellstream Today for Your Price Quote

Phone: 402.827.3590
Email: info@wellstreamonline.com
Web: www.getwellstream.com
Big Steps For Small Businesses

The Art of Implementing A Great Wellness Program In A Small Business Setting

In this issue of Absolute Advantage, we focused our energies on addressing the art of implementing a great worksite wellness program in a small business setting. By embracing 10 specific activities, leaders of small businesses can develop and deliver a wellness program that will set them apart as an employer of choice.

In addition to providing an aerial view of the entire process, we’ll also shed light on five of the 10 activities. Specifically, we’ll discuss the importance of capturing CEO support, designating a company wellness leader, conducting an employee health interest survey, providing an opportunity for health screening, and administering an annual physical activity campaign.

Subsequently, in the next issue of Absolute Advantage, we will address the five remaining activities which include: conducting lunch ‘n learns, establishing an in-house wellness library, disseminating a quarterly wellness newsletter, implementing health promoting policies, and promoting community health efforts.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of Absolute Advantage.

Yours in good health,

Dr. David Hunnicutt
President