

★WELCOA

# Member Spotlight

INSPIRATION AND BEST PRACTICES  
FROM ACCOMPLISHED WELCOA MEMBERS

Rachel Druckenmiller



**ABOUT**

## RACHEL DRUCKENMILLER

**TITLE:** Wellness Director

**COMPANY NAME:** Silberstein Insurance Group

**INDUSTRY:** Benefits Consulting/Insurance

**YEARS IN HEALTH PROMOTION:** 8 years

**EDUCATION:** B.A. Psychology, M.S. Health Science, Certified WELCOA Faculty, Integrative Nutrition Health Coach (Institute for Integrative Nutrition), Certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies, Certified Wellness Culture Coach through the Human Resources Institute, Culinary Nutrition Expert in training through the Academy of Culinary Nutrition.

**WELCOA MEMBER SINCE:** 2008

**PROGRAM AWARDS WON:** WELCOA Well Workplace Small Business 2014; Best Places to Work

(#2) Business Insurance, 2014; Healthiest Employer 2013 – Second Place (2-99 Market), BBJ, 2013; Healthiest Employer 2012 – First Place (2-99 Market), BBJ, 2012; Gold-Level Fit Friendly Company 2014, 2013, 2012 - American Heart Association

**WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST DREAM FOR THE INDUSTRY?** My vision is that we make a shift from looking at the obvious *symptoms* of the health problems (like weight, lack of exercise, stress, poor eating) to focusing on the *system* or the *root causes* of WHY people do what they do. I really believe most people want to be well but are in environments that make it really tough— at home and at work. We need to get to the underlying reasons why people aren't doing what they know is best for them and why organizations aren't either. If we start to shift our thinking, we can start to focus less on "wellness" for the sake of checking the wellness box and more on what being well allows us to *do* and who it allows us to *be*." My dream is to help people understand that when we're healthy and when we're really truly well, we're focused, we're happier, we're more effective, we're more productive as people and as workers. It isn't just about having high output like you're a machine. It's about creating cultures where employees want to be well so that they will have energy and do things they enjoy after their workday ends. The generation of workers who are actively building their careers right now want more out of work. They want flexible schedules and a balanced life, and they are looking for work environments that will help them achieve balance, fulfillment and wellbeing. If we as professionals operate within a broader definition of "wellness", our industry can foster true wellbeing by improving the overall quality of life of employees.

Read on to learn more about Rachel, and how you can be featured in a WELCOA Member Spotlight.



Rachel Druckenmiller, Wellness Director at Silberstein Insurance Group (SIG), provides an exciting new perspective on the wellness industry. Read on for tips for implementing a wildly successful leadership training program, what you can do differently to elicit leadership buy-in, and for low-cost initiatives that have high-impact on employee health, organizational culture, and performance.

## RACHEL, WHAT PATH DID YOU TAKE TO YOUR CURRENT ROLE AS WELLNESS DIRECTOR FOR SILBERSTEIN?

**RACHEL:** I started at Silberstein as an intern after I finished a bachelor's degree in psychology. Our HR manager connected me with a woman who was coordinating onsite walking challenges and fitness programs and we became friends. Her work fascinated me because it combined all of my interests in health behavior that had dominated my research in school with my current position in a corporate environment. I had no idea that it was going to evolve into a career. As I began spending more time working with her and digging into corporate wellness, we started our own program here at SIG and within a year, I had established a position as Wellness Coordinator. Over the next three years, I continued pursuing any wellness training I could, earned my Master's degree, spent more time working with clients and was promoted to Corporate Health and Wellness Specialist. Over the next two years, I built up my knowledge and confidence by pursuing health coach and

wellness culture training and was most recently promoted to Wellness Director. It has been quite a journey with lots of learning experiences along the way. It hasn't been an easy road, but I really feel like what I'm doing now is making a difference and I'm excited to see what's to come.

## WHAT DOES SILBERSTEIN OFFER TO CLIENTS THAT YOU THINK IS NEW AND DIFFERENT IN THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY?

**RACHEL:** It's been quite a journey for us with lots of lessons learned along the way. What makes us unique is that we take a process-driven approach and we "seek first to understand." We ask a lot of questions and don't make assumptions. We want to know WHY organizations want to focus on health at work. What are the underlying reasons? What are leadership's perceptions? What's important to them? We start with an assessment process to understand what's important to the organization AND their employees. We want to know what concerns employees have, what interests them and what skills and tools they want to learn to make it easier for them to be healthy. We dig deeper into that information with surveys



We want to know what concerns employees have, what interests them and what skills and tools they want to learn to make it easier for them to be healthy.



and focus groups and offer leadership training. The leadership training encourages leaders to focus on WHY health matters rather than only spending time planning programs or vetting vendors. Beyond that, we offer interactive workshops and plan initiatives for employees based on what they want to learn. Too often in our industry, we hear that companies want to "do wellness." This is often well intentioned but often misses the mark on "why" along with what they're hoping to accomplish. We help them figure that out.

### CAN YOU PROVIDE DETAILS ABOUT THE SPECIFIC CURRICULUM FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP TRAINING PRODUCT?

**RACHEL:** It is hard to provide exact curriculum details because I try to use examples relevant to each organization to help leaders reframe the concept of wellness. For example, it seems like the solution for stress at work is always chair massages; someone always suggests, "Let's *do* chair massages!" I love chair massages; we offer them to our employees at Silberstein, but what I try to do in leadership training is ask questions like, "what is the driver of stress in your organization? Why are people stressed? Is it poor communication? Inadequate training?" So rather than offering a one-off wellness challenge to help educate about stress, maybe employees need training, maybe they need better communication from leadership. What can we do to actually help employees be less stressed? What's at the root? It's not just a ten minute chair massage once a month. That's not going to do it.

Other than that, training is about helping leaders understand their role and what it means to lead by example. We talk about what it looks like to be a leader, their role in fostering a healthy culture, their responsibility as a leader in the organization to prioritize wellness, and the gravity of helping their employees be healthy. David Hunnicutt said in WELCOA's 7 Benchmarks Advanced course that when you lose your health, nothing else matters. When somebody gets a cancer diagnosis, everything changes. It is important for leaders to understand that.

### WALK ME THROUGH BEST PRACTICES FOR BRINGING A SERVICE LIKE LEADERSHIP TRAINING INTO AN ORGANIZATION.

**RACHEL:** After meeting with the leaders and HR team, I recommend doing a culture audit and interest survey right out of the gate. I always compile those results into a concise reporting package and present them to leadership. A best practice after reviewing the packet is to form focus groups within the organization that can help you clarify some of the content that you got from the survey. Typically very clear action items and program goals arise from that exercise. The best part of this process is that when you get to the leadership training, you actually know something about the client's company! You can tell the HR Director that 92% of her employees said that being healthy is a major priority for them. The spin is that I'm there providing leadership training because the client asked for it, and the client is providing wellness

“Rather than offering a one-off wellness challenge to help educate about stress, maybe employees need training, maybe they need better communication from leadership.”

programming because their employees asked for it. They are doing this *for* employees, not *to* them.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A CONSULTANT WHO WANTED TO OFFER SUCH ROBUST ONSITE OFFERINGS TO CLIENTS?

**RACHEL:** Just to realize that what you are bringing to the table is only part of what your audience is doing every day. It may be *your* passion. It may be *your* life. It may be *your* drive. For me, it is; I feel like this is my mission. But sometimes I have found that the topic of health can turn people off. They have their own insecurities about their health that they are not open to addressing. So, it is worth taking time to really get to know your audience and understand their mindset and perspective on worksite wellness. You talk to a skeptic differently than you talk to a believer. Get to know people as people, not as numbers or clusters of risks.

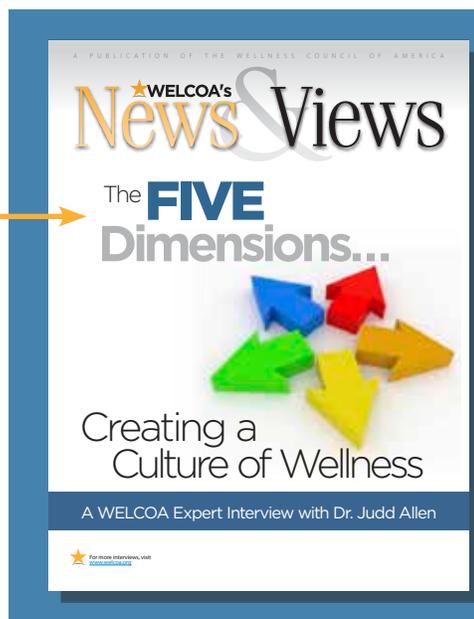
### IF SOMEONE READING THIS WANTED TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN LEADERSHIP TRAINING SERVICES FOR CLIENTS, WHAT RESOURCE WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THEM USING?

**RACHEL:** The backbone of my talk is always Judd Allen’s perspective on culture creation. I use WELCOA’s *Five Dimensions of Culture* expert interview. I hone in on

each of those components—the shared values, creating new norms, touch points, peer support, work climate.

### SPEAKING OF RESOURCES, WHAT OTHER PERSPECTIVES AND INFORMATION HAVE YOU HISTORICALLY RELIED ON IN YOUR CAREER?

**RACHEL:** One thing that I did not do a very good job of at the beginning of my career was positioning the wellness program in the organization. We did not have a strong program brand, logo, or vision set by leadership. It took going to the WELCOA Summit in 2013 and hearing David talk about the importance of leadership. I went straight home and gave our president the list of questions that I had been given at the Summit—questions like “The one thing we must do in our program this year is...” or “If you overheard two coworkers talking about the program, you’d want to hear them say...” The WELCOA Training Summit was the light bulb for me because our president, who is a very social and fun person, said if he overheard two employees talking about the wellness program, he would want them to say that it had changed their health and that it was fun. That made it click for me. I was being an academic who was hyper focused on content, and WELCOA reminded me to source the vision from leadership. We turned that direction from the president into a vision statement and a logo, and the whole wellness committee was refreshed!



Download the *Five Dimensions of Culture* for FREE on the WELCOA Member Portal, [AbsoluteAdvantage.org](http://AbsoluteAdvantage.org).

[CLICK HERE](http://AbsoluteAdvantage.org)  
 > [absoluteadvantage.org/article/?article=620](http://absoluteadvantage.org/article/?article=620)

Not a member? Join today and enjoy a secret saving. Use discount code: **JOINFR**

[CLICK HERE](http://welcoa.org/joinfr)  
 > [welcoa.org/joinfr](http://welcoa.org/joinfr)

\* DISCOUNT APPLIES TO NEW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

## I'M SURE YOU HAVE MORE FREEDOM TO CREATE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING IN YOUR INTERNAL ROLE AT SILBERSTEIN. WHAT HAVE YOU ORGANIZED FOR YOUR OWN EMPLOYEES THAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL FOR PROMOTING HEALTH?

**RACHEL:** We're always trying to come up with new ideas that make healthy choices something people *want* to do instead of something they feel like they *have* to do. We have everything from healthy cooking demonstrations and potlucks like an "It's 5:00 Somewhere Smoothie Happy Hour" using our in-house Vitamix to team fitness challenges, healthy catered meals, onsite fitness classes and a wellness lending library. I would say one of the most innovative programs we offer focuses on gratitude. The first year we did it, employees wrote up on a white board in our employee lounge something they were grateful for. Each day we took a picture of the board and posted it on our website and social media pages. This year we upgraded the campaign and each person is expressing appreciations to the person of their choosing for 21 days in a row. It's been pretty amazing to see and hear the buzz around that. We also have kept a basket of thank you notes in the break room for the last 2 and a half years. The thank you notes have become such a part of our culture that you'd be hard pressed to find someone in our office who doesn't have a thank you note on their desk or office. All we did to institute the initiative was put out a basket of thank-you notes and ink pens and announced their availability at a quarterly staff meeting. The program value for us (besides it being a very inexpensive initiative) has been that it has created a culture of gratitude that helps us operate at top performance at Silberstein. That's what is lacking at so many work places. Everybody is entitled to everything. Somebody is not getting this, that, or the other. We live in a state of efficiency. Sometimes employees just need a little nudge from a colleague telling them that they are doing something well, then maybe they'll do more of it.

## IF A COLLEAGUE HAD NEVER HEARD OF WELCOA, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM IS THE VALUE OF BEING A PART OF THE WELCOA COMMUNITY?

**RACHEL:** Initially when I first started doing this, I turned to WELCOA because they had very affordable products for employee education. We bought a ton of Fast Food Guides and gave them away at health fairs and employees loved them. I'd ultimately say for me now, the value of WELCOA is the information that I've been able to glean from webinars, trainings, case studies, and other resources and how I've been able to integrate that information into a message that resonates with people. ★

Want to Be  
Featured in a  
Member Spotlight?

Submit Your Inquiry To:  
[questions@welcoa.org](mailto:questions@welcoa.org)



17002 Marcy Street, Suite 140 | Omaha, NE 68118

402.827.3590 | [welcoa.org](http://welcoa.org)

For more great resources like this,  
become a WELCOA Member today.  
Visit [welcoa.org/joinfr](http://welcoa.org/joinfr)

\* DISCOUNT APPLIES TO NEW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Enjoy a secret  
saving by using  
discount code:

**JOINFR**