



**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

- **Wellness Programs**
- **Benefits of Wellness**
- **Set Goals and Objectives**
- **Create a Healthy Work Environment**
- **Rewards**
- **Choosing Focus Areas**

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Hats ON for Safety

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Working Well



HealthyWorkplaces

Wellness Programs

The basic idea behind wellness programs is to improve the overall health of your employees and assist individuals in overcoming specific health-related concerns. Wellness programs can be either activity-centered or results-oriented. Activity-centered programs often have an assortment of health promotion activities, which may get employees thinking about wellness. On the other hand, results-oriented programs deliver what the name implies—measurable outcomes. It is these measurable re-

sults that have the power to impact your company's bottom line in a positive way.

Benefits of Wellness

According to Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The first wealth is health". This is true not only for individuals, but for companies, too. Companies gain in several tangible ways, even saving money

- Lower absenteeism rates.
- Increased employee productivity
- Reduced Healthcare Costs. Preventable illness makes up 90 percent of all health-care costs.

- Decreased Worker's Compensation and Disability Claims. Studies show these went down an average of 30 percent at places with health promotion activities.
- Higher employee retention. Employees who feel they are in a healthier work environment report higher morale. And they are less likely to quit. This can also be a good recruiting tool.

(This article is not about the flu or H1N1. You hear enough about that. This is about plain and simply being healthy)

Set Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives give you a means to measure the effectiveness of your program.



Reaching a goal, shows you

have succeeded. Objectives are steps along the way to goals. Objectives must be realistic and measurable. You need a time frame, too. When do you hope to have this accomplished. ie. Losing

20 pounds, running a marathon or 10 k.



Create a Healthy Work Environment

- If you have vending machines, do they offer healthy choices?
- Do you have a refrigerator for employees to keep their food in?
- Is there an area in your facility for preparing meals?
- If you have a cafeteria, does it feature healthy selections?
- Do employees have a pleasant place to eat their meals away from their work areas?
- If your building has stairs, are they clean, well-lit and safe to climb?
- Does workstation furniture meet ergonomic standards?
- Have safety hazards been eliminated?
- Is lighting adequate?
- Is there a safe place to take a walk, onsite or nearby?

Rewards

Incentives may help to get your program off the ground. They can increase participation levels, keep employees coming back to multi-session programs and get people to change behaviors. Here are some worthwhile incentives:

- Cash
- Special Parking Spaces
- Paid Time Off
- Gift Certificates
- Relief From Shared Office Tasks
- Imprinted Incentives

Non-monetary incentives play an important part in wellness programs. Water bottles, backpacks, pedometers—give you free advertising. They can generate interest for non-participating employees. Holding drawings for items adds excitement.

Let us know if you have any ideas for our safety newsletter. E-mail kathy@southernbuilder.org.

Choosing Focus Areas

Employee surveys can guide your decisions about your wellness program's focus. Five areas are common to most programs.

- **Nutrition:** Diet effects an employees energy level. Proper nutrition can ward off disease. Food intake is half the battle in weight management.
- **Physical activity:** Exercise is the other half of weight management. Activity is necessary for healthy living.
- **Smoking Cessation:** Assistance with quitting



smoking has to go beyond a one-day event. You need a multi-pronged approach, support,

counseling , behavior modification, nicotine replacement.

- **Stress Management:** Workplace stress is a significant contributor to low morale, absenteeism. Stress is linked to diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease. Programs that help alleviate stress improve not only psychological health but physical health, too.
- **Weight Management:** Obesity is a major



threat to health. It's not surprising that weight control is a popular wellness program component. But losing weight and keeping it off is difficult; long-term follow-up becomes crucial.



Some information for this newsletter was taken from Positive Promotions