

## Who Cares About Wellness?

By Joe Rosenlicht

There is a growing sentiment among the American workforce that employers just don't care about employees as people, but only as workers. The all too common perception is that employers' primary, and sometimes only focus is to squeeze as much work and productivity out of their employees as possible. While in many instances this is true, in many other cases, it's merely the perception, and not necessarily reality. Often, the problem is not that the organization is unmotivated, but instead uneducated about what resources are available to demonstrate to employees that they do in fact care about their well-being.

It's critical to show employees that they are considered people first, and workers second. When employees don't feel cared about, it sets off a chain of events that has a negative impact on both the employer and employee, including lower morale and productivity, higher absenteeism, turnover and health care costs, and potentially a decline in the employee's health and wellness.

The good news is that there are in fact a wide range of resources available that organizations can, and do use. Some traditional examples include health fairs and screenings, subsidized gym memberships and employee assistance programs, commonly referred to as EAP's. These are all useful tools, although they often don't address the specific needs of employees. There is a growing trend for organizations to use more progressive and targeted approaches such as online assessments that not only measure an employees' current state of well-being, but also provide tools to help them reach specific wellness goals that they set for themselves.

A good employee wellness program will also address stress management. A large majority of office workers cite on-the-job stress as a top concern, a problem that affects all levels within an organization. Stress management is especially important since stress from the workday often carries over to our personal relationships and life outside the office.

Many case studies have proven that organizations which incorporate one, or a combination of employee wellness initiatives experience:

- greater employee loyalty, engagement and productivity
- reduced health care costs
- lower turnover rates
- improved recruitment
- fewer injuries
- less human error
- more harmonious work environments
- healthier and happier employees with the knowledge that their organizations care about their health and well-being

From the organization's perspective, investing in some type of wellness program is just good business. Whatever the motivation, both the employer and employee come out ahead when wellness initiatives are integrated into the culture. What's critical for any organization to understand is that their employees' health and well-being is the main driver of *the organization's* health and well-being.

The formula is very simple: an employee that feels like the company takes in interest in

their wellness will take an interest in performing to the best of their ability, and thereby contribute to the organization's bottom line.

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