

Inspiring Workplace Wellness: A top down approach

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Incredible workplace wellness programs are only as good as the support they receive from upper level management. If the leadership of an organization does not support a healthy workplace culture that encourages workforce wellness in theory *and* in action, the program – regardless of how incredible it may be – may not achieve the desired results. As leaders in their organizations, managers are responsible for the bottom line. As a result, when deadlines loom and deliverables are pressing, support of time off for fitness or wellness initiatives often take the backseat. Unfortunately, because workplace culture is developed from the top down, this often means that without the support of management, workplace wellness programs fall flat.

What needs to be considered is how a workforce that is unhealthy and unengaged negatively affects the bottom line of the organization, and conversely how one that is healthy and engaged positively affects it. The research is clear – a workforce that is engaged is a productive workforce, and a productive workforce creates results. While managers generally buy into this concept in theory, what would it take to help them buy into it in action? What would it take to help managers promote a healthy workplace culture? What are the steps you can take as managers of Human Resource to support upper level management buy in for your programs?

Step 1: Inform

- Provide management with the research – give them the hard facts about why they should encourage and participate in wellness programming
- Show them how wellness programming will positively affect the bottom line

Step 2: Educate

- Managers should be the first to participate – not the last!
- Do a managers retreat to get them inspired about taking their own steps to personal health and wellness

Step 3: Walk the Talk

- Managers need to be seen participating – and showing the workforce that it's ok and encouraged to participate

Step 4: Celebrate Success

- Recognition of those taking healthy steps – newsletters, columns
- *Recognition* programs – wellness points programs – points can be used for recognition or for purchase programs

Step 5: Measure program success

- Show management how your specific program is achieving results in your organization
- Nothing shows success like the numbers....but be patient, results take time (read our article on Measuring Workplace Wellness Program Success for more on this topic)

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