



Workplace Wellness Programs: A Smart Investment

For well over a decade, research has been showing the effectiveness of Employee Wellness Programs. Workplace wellness means investing in your most important asset – your employees. There are a number of reasons why corporations should invest in workplace wellness.

A healthy lifestyle impacts every part of your day-to-day work environment. Corporate Wellness Programs translate into fewer injuries, less human error, reduced employee stress, and overall a more positive work environment.

Preventable illnesses make up 70% of health care claims. Many of these claims are linked to unhealthy lifestyle habits; inactivity, poor eating habits, weight gain, obesity, smoking, stress, high blood pressure and cholesterol. Healthy employees spend fewer days away from work, saving your corporation thousands of dollars each year due to reduced down time and temp costs. Employees participating in Wellness Programs take 70% fewer sick days than those opting out of wellness. The average cost of an unhealthy employee per year is \$1,387.

Employee Wellness Programs that encourage positive Lifestyle behaviour changes can result in a savings of between \$2.30 and \$10.10 for every dollar spent in the areas of decreased absenteeism, fewer sick days, reduced WSIB/WCB claims, lowered health and insurance costs, and improvements to employee performance and productivity. The programs also let your employees know that your organization is concerned about their general health and well-being.

While financial returns through reducing or avoiding costs are vital, Workplace Wellness Programs have a positive impact on other factors within your workforce such as increased employee morale and satisfaction, the impact on customers through improved customer service, the impact on the corporation's infrastructure through increased productivity and the impact on employee's families and society as a whole.

Many employers identify on-site Wellness Programs with initiatives such as wellness fairs, and perhaps having a nurse come onsite to do Health Risk Assessments and blood cholesterol checks. But there are a wide variety of other services you can bring into your workplace environment such as; lunch & learns, stretch breaks, yoga or other fitness classes, wellness services (such as massage therapy, Dietitian services, etc.), online wellness tools & fitness challenges, and much more.

By offering programs onsite at your workplace you are making it convenient for employees to participate and take preventive health measures. It also shows that you are committed to making the program work for your employees. Employees will value these programs and taking advantage of the offerings will not only help them succeed more during work, but it will give them more energy for their home/personal life.

For more information on Workplace Wellness Programs visit www.lwhs.com

Lisa Williams is a Human Resources Specialist and the Director of Operations for LifeWorks Health Solutions. LifeWorks provides outsourced fitness wellness solutions to corporations of all sizes. Visit us online at www.lwhs.com for more information. To read our blog including our weekly wellness challenge visit <http://lwhs.com/wordpress/>.