



Workplace Wellness: Creating a Successful Wellness Team

Wellness issues important to you – brought to you by the insurance specialists at Denman Consulting Services, Inc..

When constructing a wellness program within your organization, creating a solid wellness team is critical to its success. In fact, teams are a crucial part of the longevity of any wellness program, as they lead the way for other employees to transform their lives and to make positive, healthy choices. Consider the following suggestions for developing a wellness team and getting your wellness initiative off to a good start:

- ✓ **Formally Appoint Team Members**
 - Upper-level management should formally appoint several employees to the team. This sets the precedent that the wellness program and the team's roles are important within the organization.
 - Volunteers often brush responsibilities to the wayside, but appointed members tend to take their duties more seriously, and do not neglect them for other issues.
- ✓ **Include the Wellness Initiative Roles in the Team Members' Job Description**
 - Combined with being formally appointed, team members should have a formal responsibility to the team within their job descriptions.
 - This clears up any confusion regarding what the team's roles are, and emphasizes that team members must allocate some of their resources and time during work hours to the company's wellness initiatives.
- ✓ **Promote the Wellness Team within the Organization**
 - Promote the workplace wellness team and program within the organization to show other employees that wellness is a high priority.
 - As the team's efforts are showcased, other employees will recognize who the team is and how the wellness program can help them.
 - Highlighting the team will also make others want to join and establish their roles as highly sought after.
- ✓ **Establish a Strong Team Leader**
 - Appointing a strong leader is the cornerstone of a good wellness team. This person should be able to establish a solid agenda, manage different types of people, define team priorities, meet goals and deadlines, motivate other team members and communicate effectively.
- ✓ **Include Employees from Various Hierarchies into the Team**

- To demonstrate that the wellness initiative is constructed for the benefit of all employees and to gain “buy-in,” include individuals from various areas of the company and of different power levels. In addition to having representation from core strategic departments that are designed to assist with wellness (such as human resources, benefits and occupational safety), include individuals from other departments as well.
 - Within the team, executives and frontline employees will be equal.
 - Consider appointing members in varying degrees of health. In other words, not everyone on the team must be a star athlete or extremely fit. This shows the entire organization that the wellness team and upper-level management embrace all of the employees and want them to make health a topic priority.
 - Teams should be large enough to represent the organization, while also being manageable in size.
- ✓ **Team Should Meet on a Regular Schedule with a Formal Agenda**
- The wellness team should meet at least monthly, if not twice a month, to further the wellness program. If teams do not meet on a regular basis, the priorities of the initiative may be sidelined by other tasks.
 - The team should create an agenda for their meetings to clarify the focus of their initiatives and to drive the meetings.
 - All members should have a hand in creating the agendas and should all be given a finished copy prior to the meetings. This will give team members the opportunity to prepare for the meetings so they are more productive.
 - In addition to a formal agenda, someone should keep the minutes to track the team’s activity and progress.
- ✓ **Communication Must Remain a Staple within the Team**
- To successfully educate and inform other employees, the team members should constantly be communicating about their initiatives.
- ✓ **Incorporate Continuing Wellness Education into the Program**
- To assure that all team members remain up-to-date on health and wellness, provide continuing education in the form of in-services, attending conferences and bringing in expert speakers.
 - Provide subscriptions to wellness newsletters, magazines and websites for team members.

An effective workplace wellness team can dramatically improve the health initiatives within your organization. Not only will these individuals work to rally others, their efforts will also hopefully lead to reduced health care costs while bettering the physical and emotional state of all your employees.

This article is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as legal advice. Readers should contact legal counsel for legal advice.

© 2008-2010 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.