

Getting Support from Management

Gaining management support and involvement is essential to the success of a workplace wellness program. Management's commitment to organizational wellness facilitates participation from employees as well as ensuring program success.

Approaching Upper Management: Prepare Yourself

Clearly outline how the company will benefit from a workplace wellness program. List the features that will be most valuable to your organization based on the organizational health assessment you have done. Clearly define the overall outcomes you hope to achieve.

Here are some questions and answers to guide you:

- ★ **How will a wellness initiative improve our workplace?**

Research has found that productivity losses associated with poor employee health hit the bottom line harder than medical costs. When you invest in employee wellness you will likely increase productivity and morale, and likely decrease absenteeism and on-the-job injuries.

- ★ **How much will it cost to run this program or bring about this change?**

The cost of implementing a wellness program varies; however, there is still much you can do to improve the health of your employees with little to no direct costs. For some examples, visit our workplace wellness toolkit to see the many resources available that are free of charge.

- ★ **How can we positively persuade workers to take part?**

Raise employee awareness about health practices, lifestyle behaviors and their association with future health problems. Try motivating employees by providing health education, offering incentives

and developing a culture of health and wellness in which the healthier choices are the easiest options.

- ★ **How will we know whether or not this was a meaningful use of time and resources?**

Taking the steps to properly evaluate your wellness program is the best way to show its effectiveness. The overall goal of program evaluation is to show management the Return on Investment (ROI) and Value on Investment (VOI). Some common measurements that show ROI and VOI are participation rates, attitude surveys, behavior modification, cost containment, etc. Consider also evaluating for decreases in workers compensation/turnover/absenteeism and improvement in productivity. Lastly, develop a realistic timetable for collection of data and evaluation. A typical time frame is 12 months. Learn more about factors involved in successful workplace wellness evaluation.

Keep Management Involved

Ask management about the types of activities in which they are more likely to be involved. Use managers to lead teams in physical-activity and wellness challenges. Have management show their commitment to organizational wellness through communication efforts such as the wellness newsletters, through involvement in wellness activities and by offering financial support such as incentives, offering healthy food choices or even inexpensive exercise equipment.

After gaining management support, you need to continue to maintain it. Keep management informed of upcoming events and specific program activities. Keep them abreast of the progress of the workplace wellness program, including program evaluation data. Give management copies of employees' pre and post Health Risk Assessments. Giving management current information on health trends will help support the program, now and in the future.