

# ACTIVATING WELLNESS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

What we need to do differently to generate enthusiasm and increase participation.

There is definitely an art to creating enthusiasm and generating participation in your company's worksite wellness initiative. From our perspective, based on practices of Well Workplace Award winning companies, we suggest organizing your participation with the following ideas in mind:

## **FIRST LEVEL** // Just getting started developing and delivering your wellness initiative.

- » Promote the participation targets of your wellness initiative within the organization
- » Share information about the program at least one month in advance ensuring that messaging considers Stages of Change approaches
- » Ensure that the communication that is sent out is done so in as many ways as possible to ensure maximum reach. Remember that different roles and generations of workers receive information in different ways
- » Make sure your programs have fun elements included in them and specifically how to get involved
- » Determine how you will use incentives at this level to encourage participation
- » Participate yourself

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## **SECOND LEVEL** // You've been offering wellness initiatives for a while.

- » Have senior leadership provide at least one communication in support of the initiative and encourage participation
- » Communicate the purpose and goals of the wellness program to all employees at least quarterly
- » Tap employees and leadership for stories of achievement toward living their best life. There are generational motivations for participation
- » Utilize wellness committee members as champions for all initiatives
- » Represent the wellness program with pride and enthusiasm
- » Determine how you will use incentives at this level to encourage participation

**+ FIRST LEVEL**

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## **THIRD LEVEL** // You've been offering initiatives for as long as you can remember.

- » Ensure that company leadership is actively participating in wellness initiatives
- » Survey employees for ideas and feedback on wellness initiatives that are meaningful to them and plan to incorporate the suggestions into planning phases
- » Create a program focused on what your employees need and want most so that they feel like they are being taken care of and are personally saving money
- » Summarize all data received to create the success story of the initiative and learn how to create even a better experience
- » Be transparent with all program elements
- » Create a policy or understanding within the organization that wellness programs are available during work time
- » Consider how to include extended family in wellness initiatives (as appropriate)
- » Determine how you will use incentives at this level to encourage participation
- » Coach all leadership and wellness committee members as ambassadors for wellness programs and provide constant support for employee participants

**+ FIRST & SECOND LEVEL**

## 5 WAYS TO INCREASE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

1. Pick a program that fits the needs of your employees
2. Use gradual implementation to ease the transition for employees
3. Set personalized, attainable goals and measure them
4. Keep communications consistent
5. Lead by example and create a culture of wellness

SOURCE: <https://www.benefitnews.com/list/5-ways-to-increase-employee-wellness-program-participation> Accessed 6-25-2019.

### Greatest Barriers for Non-Participants are:

- » Insufficient incentive
- » Inconvenient location
- » Time restrictions
- » Lack of interest
- » Messages don't reach them (marketing awareness)
- » Personal health beliefs
- » Unsupportive company culture
- » Trust and privacy concerns

## INTRINSIC VS. EXTRINSIC REWARD AND RECOGNITION

If you want action, consider extrinsic awards, but if you want good health maintenance, consider intrinsic awards.

### Valued Incentives

1. Gifts/Prizes
2. Fitness Center discounts
3. Reduced Premiums
4. Contributions to medical benefits
5. Access to health professionals for personalized and customized assistance
6. Offset time to participate in programs or health behaviors (like exercising) on the clock
7. Onsite access to healthy food choices
8. Social activities and ways to learn new skills

SOURCE: *Reducing Corporate Health Care Costs, 2013; Deloitte Consulting, LLP, January 2014*

What has your employee survey found are valuable incentives:

## GOOD USE OF INCENTIVES

1. Start with extrinsic awards to get involved, but move toward intrinsic reward
2. It's okay to use incentives, but don't highlight them as the draw. Draw attention to benefits.
3. Answer the question of WIIFM (What's In It For Me).
4. Avoid using negative incentives or penalties associated with the wellness initiatives
5. Ensure legal compliance related to incentive offering and participation requirements

What has been your experience with the use of incentives in your wellness program?

## HOW YOUR WELLNESS COMMITTEE IMPROVES ENGAGEMENT

- » Employee ownership of the program
- » Shared responsibility for success
- » Control over programming ideas
- » Intrinsically motivated representatives
- » Not top down
- » Communication is better

How can your wellness committee provide additional support of active employee participation?