

Agency Wellness Champions Meeting
Tuesday, Apr 24, 2011
1:30 pm-3:00 pm
Transportation Building

Members Present:

Cori Huffman
Kim Engwer-Moylan
Sande O'Bryant
Debbie Lerdahl

Linda Feltes
Chris Barth
Bob Eder-Zdechlik
Amy Sanda

Jenny O'Brien
Sandy Stolt
Anna Kerr
Eric Davis

Presenter:

Jesse Pearson

Guests:

Alana Strickler
Trevor Dulka
Jerry Christensen

Welcome (Amy Sanda)

Mn/DOT's Healthy Vending Strategic Plan

Jesse shared Mn/DOT's Risk Assessment process and outcomes around healthy vending in all of their locations.

The top 3 risks for Healthy Snack Options were:

1. Healthy options are higher priced compared to the other snack items which could cause the item not to sell because they can purchase other items for a lesser price.
2. The operator has additional expenses for maintaining healthier vending options; therefore, it leads to less profit or income.
3. The perception of the customer with regard to freshness.

Mitigation strategies included:

- Monetary Strategies
 - Offer a subsidy to the vendor for a trial period
 - Carry out a pricing strategy in which the healthier items are priced lower and the other items are priced higher than usual.
- Education/Marketing
- Evaluation
- Other Strategies
 - Provide a new vending machine which would have a higher number of healthy options placed in it.
 - Set a rough percentage goal for healthy snack offerings and work with the vendors on meeting this.

The full report appears below, page 4.

Next steps:

1. Survey Mn/DOT employees by site to see if they want healthier choices, and which in particular they would buy. The survey will be sent via someone in each district rather than from the Central Office. *The survey used for Mn/DOT's Central Office appears below, page 8.*

2. Contact with each vending operator to begin building a relationship that must be a win-win.

Energy Break (Amy Sanda)

Thanks, Amy!

Discussion

Jesse's presentation led to a very informative conversation with three people from DEED, Alana, Trevor and Jerry, who support the vending operators.

The vending machines and snack shops on state property are owned operated by blind individuals who, having been trained through DEED's State Services for the Blind Business Enterprise Program, are sole proprietors of their businesses. This program was initiated by the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, a federal law which mandates a priority to blind persons to operate vending facilities on Federal property. These businesses provide economic opportunity for blind people. The state of Minnesota is strongly supportive of this opportunity.

Other comments:

- Don't use the operators as a tool to change behaviors.
- Healthy choice is a challenge: people have good ideas for what they want, but they don't buy it. Vending machines are impulse purchases. Add a balance of choices.
- By law, we cannot adversely affect the business of the blind vendor. They could file a grievance.
- Several counties (Ramsey and Olmstead) and schools have working relationships with their vending operators. Assessing the vending, they found more healthy items than they expected. (Many state agencies did this assessment last summer. Linda has results.)
- The vending operators are sole proprietors so cannot make them do something
- Be incremental
- Create awareness of changes
- Perhaps evaluate and subsidize any losses over a 6 month trial period? Would need to work directly with operators. Subsidy would have to be sustained if needed.
- Refrigerated vending machines-might require on-site storage. Sometimes can get 3rd party machines, but then usually have to use their product. Would do a business analysis with operator.
- Credit card machines are expensive and don't have good cellular access to accept card in many state locations.

Next Meeting

Tue May 31

12:00-2:00 CPR (for those who pre-register)

2:30-4:00 AWC meeting

Veterans Building

Topic: review of draft of Wellness Champion Resource packet, including job description.

Energy Break leader: Kim Engwer-Moylan

Healthy Snack Options

Mn/DOT Risk Assessment and Strategic Recommendation Report

March 2011

Background

One way in which Mn/DOT can become a Workplace of Choice is by providing healthy snack options to support healthy eating habits, provide good nutrition for its employees, provide energy for employees trying to make it through a long work day, and help prevent potential health risks such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. There has been interest indicated by employees to increase the number of healthy snack options provided in the Mn/DOT vending machines and/or snack areas. Having the option of healthy snacks in the vending machines at Mn/DOT will contribute to a work environment that fosters employee health, wellness and well-being.

The Healthy Snack Options risk assessment was initialized by the Workplace of Choice Core team who were tasked with moving forward ideas presented during Mn/DOT's 2009 E-magination Jam (E-Jam). Of the ideas brought forward through the E-Jam, several related to the idea of providing healthier snack options in the vending machines and/or snack areas throughout Mn/DOT facilities across the organization

In February 2011, a risk assessment was conducted with a select group of individuals in order to document the risks that may arise if Mn/DOT were to move forward with providing more options for healthy snacks. The group also discussed mitigation strategies to minimize the risks.

Methodology and Process

Risk Management processes provide structure and result in building mutual understanding of high-risk areas. Additionally, the formal structure supplements subject matter experts' ability to identify, prioritize, manage, and communicate opportunities, threats, and associated concerns. The Risk Management process and the identification of potential risk events occur in an open and transparent manner to ensure awareness. Risk Management teams make assumptions to create a common goal for the future.

Staff from the Office of Policy Analysis, Research, and Innovation (PARI) assists in facilitating the Risk Management process as a neutral party. The PARI Office assists subject matter experts to think outside of personal control and to focus on what can be done together as an organization. After risks are identified and prioritized, the group focuses on the "High Risk Areas" and develops strategies to manage them. Finally, the group judges the effectiveness of strategies for each option.

The outcome of the risk assessment process is the Risk Management Plan which becomes a dynamic and "living" document. The key is to continuously review the risks and update the status, at least annually, and to put into place accountability as far as roles and responsibilities for execution of the mitigation plan. In many cases, these action steps can be incorporated into the Project Management Plan, which is tracked by the Project Manager.

Risk Assessment Team

The risk assessment team included the following participants. Also noted is the stakeholder group and/or office represented:

Facilitators: Sulmaan Khan – WPOC Core Team, Sue Hall – PARI Office

Trevor Dulka – DEED

Alana Strickler – DEED

Linda Feltes – MMB

Bob Vang – Central Office Facility
Manager

Jesse Pearson – Central Office Health &
Wellness Committee

Beth Blomquist – District 6, Rochester

Al Peterson – District 7, Windom

Amy Sanda – Central Office Health &
Wellness Committee

John Cavanaugh – District 1, Duluth

Christine Johnson – District 2, Bemidji

Tina Warwick – District 3, St. Cloud

Jenny Seelen – District 3, Baxter

Risk Assessment Goal

The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify and assess the risks to reaching the goal, determined by the participants, assuming no change in business practices and within a two year timeline. For successful resolution of the issue, the team determined the picture of success or the goal as: ***Healthy snack options will be expanded and/or highlighted within the Mn/DOT vending machines/snack areas; therefore, increasing healthy food options for employees and visitors throughout agency facilities.***

Risk Assessment Findings

When coming up with the goal for the risk assessment, there was discussion over whether the group should define what a healthy snack option is in the goal statement since what is recommended as a healthy option by the group may not be considered healthy by others who are looking to purchase the items. The group did not have enough information on hand in order to support a tangible definition that everybody could agree on so it was decided to look into this at a later time. A participant recommended the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 be used as a basis for figuring out what is healthy. These guidelines are based on the most current studies so the information that is presented could become outdated as science evolves and new information is found. The link to these guidelines is <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>.

The risk assessment process identified some critical issues that must be mitigated to enable providing additional healthy snack options in the Mn/DOT vending machines. The risks mentioned below are the top risks which will have the greatest impact on the success of this project.

Top Risks for Healthy Snack Options

The top risk for Healthy Snack Options was that the healthy options are higher priced compared to the other snack items which could cause the item not to sell because they can purchase other items for a lesser price. In general, healthier food choices usually cost more in the market which is typically the reason why it would be priced higher than other items in vending machines. Reducing the cost of the healthy snack options could potentially be a loss of revenue for the vendor who provides the items for the machines.

Another top risk the team had documented was the operator has additional expenses for maintaining healthier vending options; therefore, it leads to less profit or income. In addition, it can mean higher

prices for the items which can deter purchases of the healthy items. For example, the additional expenses could potentially be costs to refrigerate items and costs to replace items that have a shorter shelf life.

A third top risk identified was the perception of the customer purchasing from a counter is that the item is fresher there than in the vending machine which could result in products not selling in the machines. This risk is more applicable to the Central Office since there is a cafeteria in the building which sells fresh fruit, vegetables, yogurt, milk, etc. where employees and visitors can go during specific time hours of operation during the day. The perception of fresher items at the counter is typically because of the customer cannot pick up and examine the item before purchasing from a machine; there is a more uncertainty compared to being able to inspect the item up close, making sure of the quality before purchasing as one could in a cafeteria or at a counter.

Although these three risks ranked highest during the risk assessment process, they ended up as a moderate level of concern following brainstorming of mitigation strategies, as outlined below. Other risks identified during the risk assessment process were ranked at a low to very low level of concern. Below are the lower level risks identified:

- There isn't enough refrigeration storage for the vendor to store fresh foods that need refrigeration which limits product options.
- By not having healthier options in the vending machines, Mn/DOT employees and visitors to Mn/DOT buildings may view the organization as not supporting their health.
- Healthy products don't sell due to marketing and/or popularity then the vendors see a loss in profit and revert back to the old buying/selling habits.
- There are divergent viewpoints about nutrition and what sells, etc. which makes it hard to define a commonality and goal when there are such differing viewpoints.
- The healthy option isn't clearly identified as healthy so then the item(s) doesn't sell.
- There is not equipment to accommodate healthy snacks which means we cannot offer all the healthy/nutritious snacks possible (no refrigerator, so can't have fresh fruits/veggies) that people may want.--we are limited to what we can put into the machines now.
- Employee doesn't perceive the "healthy choice option" in the vending machine as healthy in their view, resulting in not purchasing what is called "healthy choice" item. (i.e. nuts).
- Assuming low fat or less sugar means healthy, leads to a bias stereotype, which results in an inaccurate portrayal of the perception of healthy. Without a clear definition of what is a healthy food will make our selection more difficult of selecting product for the vending machine.
- Eating a high sugared product can cause a "sugar crash" which results in not being as productive at work.
- The vendor is restricted to selling one brand (i.e. Coke products) and so we are restricted on healthy options.
- Different Mn/DOT locations have different percent of healthy product mix and so the machines across Mn/DOT are not consistent.
- The healthy option isn't front and center so then the item(s) doesn't sell.

- The failure to offer healthy options will lead to greater healthcare costs in the future.

Mitigation Strategies for Healthy Snack Options

The team developed a list of mitigation strategies for the identified risks. The strategies were grouped together by theme, which are as follows:

- 1. Monetary Strategies** – Among the top risks that were identified, there was a great deal of concern for how healthy snack items would sell and how this would affect profits for the vendor who is providing and selling the items in the vending machines. In order to mitigate the loss of profit for the vendor, the group came up with some strategies that could possibly be used, which are listed below:
 - Offer a subsidy to the vendor for a trial period if there is a loss of profit from the healthy options that are provided.
 - Carry out a pricing strategy in which the healthier items are priced lower and the other items are priced higher than usual. This strategy can potentially attract more people to the lower priced items and the net profit for the vendor will end being the same.
- 2. Education/Marketing** – The group felt that in order for people to feel the need to purchase healthy snack options, they must be educated on the importance of eating healthy and understand the benefits that it can have.
 - Educate employees using guidelines for what is “healthy” such as the “Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010” put out by USDA. Compare products to highlight the differences (i.e. Kit Kat vs. craisins).
 - Work with Wellness Committee, the Commissioner, Workplace of Choice team, Communications and Marketing offices, and others to explain what has been done such as the healthy options that are being offered, pricing, and labeling of the healthy options.
 - Communicate the changes for healthy options to the workplace through e-mails, posters, newsletters, signage to the vending areas, etc.
 - Communicate change to external visitors.
 - Label or mark healthy items in vending machines.
- 3. Evaluation** – In order to come up with solutions for providing healthier snack options that will be beneficial for both the supplier and the end-user, proper evaluation must be done to ensure this.
 - Survey employees to get a sense of what they are looking for and how much interest there really is for healthy snack options. Also, get some better sense about what options employees would like to see specifically.

- Provide healthy options for a defined trial period to gauge the success or failure of the offerings.

4. Other Strategies

- Provide a new vending machine which would have a higher number of healthy options placed in it.
- Set a rough percentage goal for healthy snack offerings and work with the vendors on meeting this.

Business Case for Healthy Snack Options

During the risk assessment process, the team considered the following objectives. This will help lead to the development of a business case for these options at Mn/DOT.

- Provide more options for healthy snacks;
- Increase employee health and well-being;
- Provide healthy snack products that will sell consistently and be worthwhile for our vendors to stock; and
- Survey what healthy options people are looking for in vending machines/snack areas and evaluate which ones make the most sense to provide.

Recommendation

Based on the results obtained from the risk assessment process, providing healthier food options in the Mn/DOT vending/snack areas is achievable if the proper steps are taken to determine how much interest there really is for healthy options, determine what healthy items people really want, educate and market the benefits of healthy snacking, and discuss/work with vendors so they are on board and do not experience a loss in profit because of the healthy options that are provided.

The risks identified were at most moderate risk levels meaning that they are at an acceptable risk level, generally with some level of uncertainty pertaining either to likelihood and/or impact. It is essential to monitor these risks over time and reassess.

In order to see success with this project, research and evaluation must be thoroughly done so that all sides feel comfortable with the changes that will possibly be made. The risk mitigation strategies identified through this risk assessment process provide a strong approach to how this can be done.

Healthy Snack Options at Mn/DOT

Background

One way Mn/DOT can become a Workplace of Choice is by providing healthy snack options to support healthy eating habits, provide good nutrition for its employees, provide energy for employees trying to make it through a long work day, and help prevent potential health risks such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

There has been interest indicated by some employees to increase the awareness of healthy snack options provided in the Mn/DOT vending machines and/or snack areas. Your input is appreciated for the survey below for healthy snack/beverage options at Mn/DOT.

0. Are you interested in Healthy Snack/Beverage options?

Yes

No

1. How many times do you buy something out of the vending machine each week?

0

1

2

3

4+

2. What do you typically purchase from the vending machine?

Food

Beverage

Both

3. Would you purchase items more frequently if you were more aware that there were healthy options available?

Yes

No

4. Being that healthy options could be more expensive than other snack items would you pay more for the healthy options?

Yes

No

5. If a standard candy bar is \$1.00 how much more would you be willing to pay for a healthier option?

I would not be willing to pay more for healthier options

.25

.50

.75

1.00

>\$1.00

6. Is healthy food encouraged by managers in your workplace?

Yes

No

7. If yes, How do your managers/supervisors promote this?

8. Would you more likely buy a healthy snack option if you could see the nutrition details for **all** the choices available?

Yes

No

9. What types of healthy options would you purchase in the vending machines (food ONLY)?

Gluten-free choices

Dried Fruit w/o sweeteners

Fresh Fruit/Vegetables

Low or No-fat Cheese

Low or No-fat Yogurt

Low-fat/low sugar granola bars

Low or non-fat frozen dairy items

Baked chips

Unsalted nuts/seeds

Other healthy choices (Please answer in next question)

10. What other healthy food related choices would you purchase in the vending machines?

11. What types of healthy beverage items would you like to purchase?

Teas

Low-fat or non-fat milk

Bottled or low calorie flavored water

100% fruit or vegetable juices

Other healthy beverage choices

12. What other healthy beverage choices would you purchase in the vending machines?

13. (This question is for those that work at Central Office.) Would you purchase food and beverages from the cafeteria more frequently if you were more aware that there were healthy options available?

Yes

No

14. Do social celebrations at work usually include healthy food and beverage options?

Yes

No

15. Are candy dishes and snacks (doughnuts, cookies, bars, chips, etc.) brought from home set out on a regular basis?

Yes

No

16. Any additional comments you would like to add regarding healthy snack options are welcome.

17. Which District/Office do you work in?

Thank you for completing the survey!
WPOC - Healthy Snack Options Committee