



THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Work **Well**SM **HEALTHY MINNESOTA TOOLKIT**

A collection of strategies, suggestions and resources to help build your worksite health promotion program.



*Work*SM
Well





Table of Contents

Step 1: Build Your Case	4
A. Why take on wellness	4
B. Explore past and current worksite wellness initiatives	6
C. Gain management support	6
D. Worksite health promotion resources	6
Step 2: Build Your Program	8
A. Identify a wellness coordinator	8
B. Organize wellness committees	8
C. Gather workplace data	9
D. Define mission and goals	13
E. Identify partners	13
F. Develop a wellness plan	15
G. Use incentives	24
H. Determine a budget	26
I. Consider legal issues	28
J. Develop communication strategies	29
Step 3: Implement Your Program	35
Step 4: Evaluate Your Program	35
Appendix	37

For comments, questions or concerns, please contact: healthyworkplace@health.state.mn.us

Step 1: Build Your Case

A worksite wellness program is an organized approach to making the work environment, policies and programs support employee health and encourage positive lifestyle behaviors such as increased physical activity, improved healthy eating, reduced tobacco exposure, and reduced stress.

During the past decade, health promotion at the worksite has spread rapidly. About 80 percent of all employers with 50 or more employees now offer some form of health promotion program.

A. Why take on worksite wellness?

It's wise for employers to invest in worksite health promotion. A healthy, motivated employee is vitally important to a workplace as a whole and has a significant impact on an employer's bottom line. An investment in worksite health promotion:

- ◆ Improves employees' health, productivity and quality of life
- ◆ Assists in the management of the cost of health care, benefits and insurance
- ◆ Creates a desirable work environment

“A wake-up call for corporate America is that an employee health care cost crisis is here. If the employer assumes the responsibility to pay for the diagnosis and treatment of employee/dependent illness, then serious consideration must be given to the reallocation of existing investment in human capital funds. This redirection of funding should be toward health enhancement programs and services that optimize employee/dependent health, which can reduce health care use, moderate cost increases, reduce illness absence and improve work performance”.¹

Employee health is at risk

The current human and economic cost of poor health is devastating. Employees with modifiable risks accounted for 25% medical expenditures.² An example of the health status of Minnesota adults is shown in the table below.³ In fact, many of us fall within more than one risk category.

Risk Factor	Percentage of MN adults with Risk Factor
Told by a physician they have hypertension	22%
Current smokers	20%
Not exercising at least 30 minutes per day	49%
No leisure-time physical activity	16%
Not eating at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day	76%
Reporting a Body Mass Index (BMI) classified as overweight	38%
Reporting a BMI classified as obese	25%



Minnesota loses \$2.6 billion annually from health care expenditures and lost productivity caused by tobacco-related illnesses.⁴ In the year 2000, an estimated \$495 million were spent in Minnesota treating diseases and conditions that would be avoided if all Minnesotan adults were physically active.

Major health risks are modifiable.

The good news is many health risks—overweight, lack of physical activity, poor food choices, tobacco exposure and use, stress and alcohol—can be modified and improved. Unfortunately, as awareness has grown about the health risks of serious chronic disease, most Americans have not changed their lifestyles to reduce their risk of illness or prevent disease. Changing one's lifestyle is hard and therefore, many individuals would welcome outside support to modify their high-risk behaviors.

Forty-two to 55% of the State of Minnesota employees completing a health assessment in 2006 and reporting low levels of physical activity were seriously thinking of becoming more active, and 51-61% of employees reporting unhealthy stress were seriously thinking about making changes to manage their stress.

Worksite wellness programs are proving effective in improving employees' health and productivity.

In 11 literature reviews, health promotion programs have been found to be effective in improving employee health risks. These changes are typically seen within 6 to 12 months.⁵ A 2005 meta-analysis update provided a systematic look at the quality of the economic literature for multi-component worksite health promotion programs. The summary of evidence is very strong for average reduction in sick leave, health plan costs, workers compensation and disability costs of slightly more than 25%. Worksite health promotion represents one of the most significant strategies for enhancing productivity of American workers.⁶

A comprehensive health promotion program strives to reach all employees, from those who are healthy to those who are sick. While statistically, 5% of employees account for 80% of the health care costs, the individuals who populate this expensive bracket change over time. People will move in and out of this high risk group. While it's important to support those that are very ill, it is also especially important to keep your healthy individuals healthy.⁷

Worksite health promotion yields a positive return on investment (ROI).

A worksite wellness program can help employers manage the cost of health care, benefits and insurance by providing a positive ROI. The annual return on investment for worksite wellness programs has been \$3-\$6 saved for every \$1 spent or a ROI of 3-6:1. But an employer must be committed: it takes about 2 to 5 years after the initial program investment to realize these savings.^{8,9,10}



B. Explore past and current worksite wellness initiatives

Before building a worksite wellness program, it's important to explore what's been done in the past (good and bad), as well as what's currently happening at the worksite. Conduct an assessment of your workplace to begin to understand what has happened in the past, what is currently in place and what employees would like to see in the future to support health and wellness.

In your review, consider the workplace culture, leadership support, facilities, communication methods, current wellness programming, existing employee benefits and your ability to access data to evaluate your program.

This assessment may be done through:

- ❖ Focus groups
- ❖ Survey of total employee population or a representative sample, and/or
- ❖ Checklist

Sample checklist: www.the-hero.org/scorecard.htm

C. Gain management support

It is necessary to create a worksite health promotion program that has support from all levels within the organization. This support will help build a culture of wellness in the workplace, as well as support employee participation in programs and time infringements on the work day. Senior level executives control the budget, the organizational agenda and the communication channels.

To gain and keep support of management, practice the following:

- ❖ **Share data** – Worksite health promotion is a fast-growing field. Keep abreast of the current best practices and programs that are demonstrating a positive ROI. Share recent research developments with management.
- ❖ **Evaluate** – Continually evaluate your programs and initiatives. Share participation numbers, testimonials, absenteeism rates and claims data to keep management updated on successes.
- ❖ **Keep lines of communication open** – Stay attuned to the effects your health promotion initiatives have on work flow, productivity and employee morale. It is important to address any concern up-front.

D. Worksite health promotion resources

Art of Health Promotion newsletter

www.healthpromotionjournal.com/publications/art.htm

CDC's Healthier Worksite Initiative

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/index.htm

Health Enhancement Research Organization (Hero) ThinkTank

www.the-hero.org

Northland ACSM Worksite Health Promotion Group

<http://northlandacsm.org/>



Park Nicollet HealthSource
<http://www.parknicollet.com/healthsource/>

StayWell
www.staywell.com/

Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA)
www.welcoa.org/presskit/index.php

Your employees' health plan

References

1. Whitmer RW, Pelletier KR, Anderson DR, Baase CM, Frost GJ. A wake-up call for corporate America. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 2003; 45: 916-925.
2. Anderson D, Whitmer R, Goetzel R, et al. The relationship between modifiable risks and group-level health care expenditures. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 2000; 15: 45-52
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006.
4. The Human and Economic Costs of Tobacco in Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Health, 2002, accessed at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/tpc/reports/sammec.pdf>
5. A 2007 WELCOA expert interview with Larry Chapman @ www.welcoa.org
6. Chapman LS. Meta-evaluation of worksite health promotion economic return studies 2005 update. *Art of Health Promotion*. 2005: pp 1-14.
7. Serxner S et al. Best practices for an integrated population health management (PHM) program. *The Art of Health Promotion newsletter*. May/June 2006.
8. Goetzel RZ, Juday TR, Ozminkowski RJ. What's the ROI? A systematic review of the return on investment studies of corporate health and productivity management initiatives. *AWHP's Worksite Health*. 1999; Summer: 12-21.
9. Pelletier K. A review and analysis of the clinical and cost-effectiveness studies of comprehensive health promotion and disease management programs at the worksite: 1998-2000 update. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 2001; 16: 107-116.
10. Aldana S. Financial impact of health promotion programs: a comprehensive review of the literature. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 2001; 15:296-320.)



Step 2: Build Your Program

A. Identify a wellness coordinator

An individual must be responsible for following through on program design, implementation and communication. It is important to dedicate staff to support the effort. In looking for a coordinator, the most important attribute of this person should be enthusiasm for worksite wellness. Other desirable attributes could include interest and experience in health and fitness, solid communications skills, health behavior change experience, program design and implementation experience, and strong assessment and evaluation skills.

B. Organize wellness committees

To create a worksite wellness program that is integrated into the organization's culture, organize committees with representation from all levels of the corporation: upper management, mid-level management and grassroots employees. Obtaining upper management's buy-in is essential to launching and maintaining an effective program. The employees must understand that management is supportive of the wellness initiative. A steering committee with representatives from upper management can guide the program at a high-level by setting priorities and designating resources. Another committee can be created to oversee the actual design and delivery of the initiative. The size and enthusiasm of an organization will determine the number of committees necessary for the wellness initiatives.

Types of committees:

Steering Committee: This committee is made up of representatives from the CEO's or president's office, upper-level and middle-level management team and the human resources department, as well as the wellness coordinator. This committee is responsible for advising, making financial recommendations, ensuring health promotion activities are tied to the corporate mission and approving recommendations made by the Wellness Champions.

Wellness Committee: This committee is made up of representatives, "Wellness Champions", from all across the worksite. The Wellness Champions are the eyes, ears, arms and legs of the program. They represent their coworkers by sharing ideas and concerns about the program initiatives, while at the same time serving as "cheerleaders" to raise enthusiasm for program activities. This is a grassroots committee that assists the wellness coordinator in planning and implementation of activities. Most programmatic decisions will occur within this committee.

Tips to Use: Identifying Advocates for Employee Wellness within a School Setting

Individuals who can make valuable contributions to employee wellness within school settings include, but are not limited to: health educators; physical educators; school nurses; audiologists; certified personal trainers; school psychologists; social workers; counselors; and nutrition services staff.



C. Gather workplace data

The goal of health promotion is to develop and implement initiatives that support healthy behaviors for employees and, in-turn, reduce costs for the workplace. Data will help create a baseline of information to better understand the demographics, health status, health behaviors and healthcare expenses of employees. The information gathered will also give you baseline information to measure the success of your initiative(s) against, as well as determine your programming priorities. Gather as much data as is reasonable for your workplace. Some types of data to collect include:

- ❖ **Demographic data** (may include dependents):
Gather data of your employees by gender, age, educational level and job role for each of the past five years. This will assist you in choosing health promotion programs that are well-suited for your employees. Take into consideration other factors that may affect the health of your employees and their use of the healthcare system. In addition to demographics, these other factors may include employee layoffs, workplace trauma, and/or early retirement. See “[Resources that Work](#)” at the end of this section for an example.
- ❖ **Absenteeism rates:**
Work with your human resources department to collect data on employee personal sick time. This is sick time used by the employee for their own illness or medical appointments rather than sick time used to attend to family member illnesses or medical appointments. The amount of personal sick time used by employees is a good indicator of their overall health.
- ❖ **Employee behaviors and preferences:**
Collect information on the nutrition, physical activity, smoking, sleep and/or stress patterns of your employees. This will assist you in determining which health components employees will be most interested in and which are most pertinent to their health. It will also be helpful to know how employees want to receive information (electronically, strategically placed bulletin boards, memos, information mailed to home, etc.) and how employees prefer to learn (group classes, online courses, self studies, books, brochures, etc.) so you can design your communications and education opportunities to best meet their preferences. You can collect this information by using an employee survey. See “[Resources that Work](#)” at the end of this section for examples.
- ❖ **Employee health risk:**
A health risk assessment (HRA) is a survey of employee health risks and often includes an aggregate summary of the overall health of your employees. HRAs assist employees and employers in knowing their health risks and positions them to make changes that will improve their health. If your workplace has not conducted a HRA recently, think about implementing one as you begin your worksite health promotion program. The information will not only be valuable to employees, but will assist in planning health promotion activities at the workplace. Many health insurance companies offer HRAs to workplaces as part of the package of health services they provide. See “[Resources that Work](#)” at the end of this section for examples and HRA vendors.



❖ **Healthcare costs (claims review):**

Work with your human resources department and health plans to collect the data listed below. By gathering this data, you will identify the most critical health issues for your workplace by category of disease and cost of medications.

- ◆ What have been the 10 most costly major disease categories of your employees in each of the past five years? What are the number of claims and dollars paid for each category?
- ◆ What have been the 10 most costly therapeutic classes of drugs your employees have used in each of the past five years? What are the number of claims and dollars paid for each class?
- ◆ What have been the 10 most frequently prescribed and filled therapeutic classes of drugs your employees have used in each of the last five years? What are the number of claims and dollars paid for each class?

Use your costs to estimate your potential financial savings as a result of offering health promotion activities at your worksite. Several calculators and worksheets have been developed to help you do this. See [“Resources that Work”](#) at the end of this section for links to calculators and worksheets.

❖ **Previous wellness initiatives:**

List and describe all wellness initiatives that have been implemented in the past, including participation rates, what worked and didn’t, and documented health behavior changes.

❖ **Wellness environment and culture:**

Your company’s existing wellness culture and environment can be crucial to the success of your worksite wellness program. This includes the employees’, managers’ and executives’ attitudes toward healthy lifestyle behaviors such as physical activity, proper nutrition, and smoking. It also includes manager/supervisors’ attitude towards employees taking time to participate in initiatives (stretch breaks, smoking cessation programs, stress management classes, etc.) that promote good health. Also, how does your worksite environment support or hinder the efforts of your employees to improve their health? For example, can employees find healthy food choices in the cafeteria? Is it easy to take time during the work day to exercise? Knowing your company’s wellness culture and workplace environment can help an employer develop more effective messages and policies around health. See [“Resources that Work”](#) at the end of this section for examples of environmental assessments.

Tips to Use: Worksite Wellness in Industrial Settings

One of the greatest challenges to developing and implementing health promotion programs for the industrial workplace is the nature of the work itself; production-line work does not allow for schedule flexibility. Workers respond best to respectful communications and programs that address their specific health needs and work setting.

Employers may be interested in additional employee behavior data beyond what is collected in a typical HRA. This level of data will assist to better target the health promotion interventions. Samples of the surveys that were used to collect this information in the Work Well pilot project at the Minnesota Department of Health are provided in “Resources that Work”(below).

Resources that work

Wellness Coordinator Sample Job Description

- ◆ [Minnesota Department of Health](#)

Demographic Information

- ◆ **Minnesota Department of Health**
[Demographics.grid.doc](#) [MSWord/1page/29Kb]

Interest Surveys

- ◆ **Employee Interest Survey**
Healthy Workplace 2010: An Essential Health Promotion Sourcebook for Employers Large and Small (Appendix 2, pp. 58-60)
http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/Healthy_Workforce_2010.pdf
- ◆ **Needs and Interest Survey**
WELCOA
http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/ni_survey.pdf?PHPSESSID=4ee090fbd6d6de30778bff94efbdef50
- ◆ **Employee Survey**
Minnesota Department of Health Work Well
[WorkWellPre-Survey.doc](#) [MSWord/5 pages/69Kb]
- ◆ **Employee Interest Survey**
Worksite Wellness for Tompkins County
<http://www.tompkins-co.org/wellness/worksite/survey/>

Behavioral Assessment

- ◆ **Report from the Focus Groups for EveryBuddy Moves**
Example Physical Activity Focus Group Report
Minnesota Department of Health
[EveryBody_moves-focus_groups_report\[1\].pdf](#)

Health Risk Assessment

- ◆ **Checklist for Planning Employee Health Risk Assessment Implementation**
Center for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/program_design/HRA_checklist.pdf

- ◆ **Online Stress Symptoms Input Form**
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
<http://wellness.uwsp.edu/Other/stress/symptoms.asp>

Health Risk Assessments

- ◆ **Advantage Health**
<http://www.advantagehealth.com/preventative.htm>
- ◆ **BlueCross BlueShield**
<http://www.bluecrossmn.com>
- ◆ **HealthPartners**
<http://www.healthpartners.com/portal/e1628.html>
- ◆ **Mayo Clinic Health Risk Assessment**
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hra-help/HR00001>
- ◆ **Medica**
<http://www.medica.com/>
- ◆ **Park Nicollet HealthSource**
<http://www.parknicollet.com/healthSource/worksiteServices/HealthRiskAssessment.cfm>
- ◆ **StayWell Health Management**
<http://www.staywell.com/>
- ◆ **Wellsource**
<http://www.wellsource.com/>

Cost Calculators

- ◆ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpha/hwi/program_design/cost_calculators.htm.)
- ◆ [Estimated Cost Worksheet](#)

Workplace Environment

- ◆ **Environmental Audits**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpha/hwi/program_design/environmental_audits.htm
- ◆ **Organizational Characteristics Survey**
Center for Advanced Studies in Nutrition and Social Marketing
http://socialmarketing-nutrition.ucdavis.edu/Tools/SomarkToolsList.php?key_m=7
- ◆ **Heart Check: Assessing Worksite Support for a Heart Healthy Lifestyle**
New York Department of Health
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/heart/healthy/heartcheck.pdf>
- ◆ **Cafeteria Audit**
Issue Brief for the National Business Group on Health, July 2004
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/files/cafeteria-audit.pdf>

- ◆ **Workplace Environmental Audit-Check for Health**
California's 5 A Day - Be Active! Worksite Program
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/download/DHSWorksiteaudittool.pdf>
- ◆ **Walkability Checklist**
Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
<http://drusilla.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/walkabilitychecklist.pdf>

Free Sites to Create Online Survey Tools

- ◆ **Survey Solutions Express**
<http://express.perseus.com>
- ◆ **SurveyMonkey.com**
<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

Other

- ◆ **Survey Design and Implementation Course**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/prc/training/trainings/survey-design-implementation.htm>
- ◆ **Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion: Recommended and Promising Practices for Situational Assessment Tools (29)**
University of Toronto
http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/sat/pubs/sat_tools_v102.pdf
- ◆ **Assessment and Consulting Services**
American Cancer Society
<http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/>

D. Define your mission and set goals

Develop a mission statement for the employee health promotion program that will be actively supported by management. A mission statement is a brief statement of the purpose of health promotion within the company. Now set long term goals (what successes the organization wants to see in the next three to five years) and short term goals (the desired successes in the next six months to one year).

E. Identify your partners

- ◆ Determine if you need to investigate taking on a partner(s) to assist you in your health promotion programming efforts. Reasons organizations take on a partner vary, but a few are listed below:
- ◆ Current employees do not have health program planning and/or behavior change expertise needed for designing effective health promotion programs
- ◆ Potential financial savings by purchasing a pre-existing program that has the evaluation data behind it to back-up effectiveness, as well as staff to implement and/or complete evaluation for your workplace
- ◆ Opportunity to share resources by working with a partner to design, deliver and evaluate an initiative



Potential Partners

❖ **Health Plans:**

Health plans are a good partner to consider since healthcare costs directly affect their revenue. Many health plans have staff to support worksite health initiatives, pre-existing behavior change programs, developed health risk assessments, and/or guidelines for rolling out effective initiatives. Your health plan can also help you obtain aggregate health outcome data to help in the evaluation of your initiatives.

❖ **Unions:**

Many employers have one or more officially recognized bargaining units. Regardless of the type of union (craft, industrial, general labor, independent, affiliated, international, local or national) or the type of shop (closed, union, agency or open), it is important to establish an early working relationship with key bargaining groups. Usually, the business representative for the bargaining unit is the key person to work with in developing an employee wellness program. However, it is important to first seek management approval to work closely with union officials before proceeding too far. To work effectively with unions:

✓ **Start early**

Get management support and start working with union representatives early in the planning process. Union leadership is often concerned about equal representation in the planning and operation of the program.

✓ **Get them involved**

Involve key union staff in the planning and implementation of surveys and programs.

✓ **Be aware**

Union employees and union leadership may have a different focus and expectations. To balance these differences share aggregate survey data frequently, so that leadership is well-informed of employee interests, participation and outcomes.

✓ **Ensure confidentiality**

Stress confidentiality of program participation and data. Explain uses of data. When union and labor have common goals wellness program initiatives can achieve a lot.

✓ **Stress equality**

Guarantee all shifts and individuals (union and non-union) have equal access to programs and personnel.

❖ **Other Potential Partners**

- ◆ Health clubs
- ◆ Restaurants featuring healthier options
- ◆ Local parks/recreation services
- ◆ Exercise equipment retail stores
- ◆ Outdoor activity retail stores

Resources that work

- ◆ [Sample Union Contract](#)
Minnesota Department of Health

F. Develop a wellness plan

A critical benchmark of a first-class worksite wellness program is a detailed, focused, outcome-oriented plan. A wellness program should have an integrated, strategic approach specific to the needs, goals, and culture of your organization, designed throughout the annual cycle. The data you've collected will guide you in creating your plan. Make sure your plan answers one very important question – How will your program benefit employees and the organization?

Steps to putting together a wellness plan

1. **Review data** from your population assessments, claims data and surveys.
2. **Establish a clear vision** for the future you are trying to achieve.
3. **Revisit program goals** to outline when you will declare victory landmarks toward which you direct all programming efforts. Answer the questions, “Where are we going?” and “How will we know when we get there?”
4. **Write objectives** for your overall wellness strategy to keep the worksite wellness program focused toward its desired outcomes. Make your objectives specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific.
5. **Identify your target audience.** Based on your data review, identify who your target audience is and what type of behavior you'll be addressing. For example, if hypertension is the largest driver for your medical claims, a disease management approach for those with hypertension might include a weight management class to address a major risk factor or might start simple with a series of newsletter articles. Get to know what appeals to your target audience. Ask their opinions through formal or informal focus groups, intercept interviews (exit interviews) or a quick question in the hall. The more you know about your audience, the more effective your intervention will be.
6. **Determine your approach.** There are many different ways to positively influence behavior change. A comprehensive wellness program will include a variety of offerings because no one approach is a “perfect” fit for everyone. Consider:
 - **Individual:** Create motivation and change in an employee by increasing knowledge, influencing attitudes and changing beliefs. Examples include: one-on-one counseling, classes, interactive web-based approaches, self studies, etc.
 - Versus**
 - **Group:** Recognize that groups provide support and social identity, and therefore can enhance motivation, adherence and self efficacy. Examples include: buddy systems, clubs, support groups, etc.

- 
- **Health enhancement:** The focus here is on promoting healthy lifestyles such as physical activity, healthy eating, tobacco cessation, and stress management.

Versus

- **Disease management:** Managing disease includes providing support and resources to assist employees manage diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. Examples could include support groups, one-on-one counseling or on-site blood sugar or blood pressure monitoring. These services may be provided by the company through disease management vendors, health plans, or public health organizations.

And/or systems-level change

- **Supportive environment initiatives:** Increase access to healthy foods (in vending machines/cafeteria, at meetings or in break rooms) or to places for physical activity (trails, walking paths, fitness space, stairwells).
 - **Policy Options:** Policy changes that support behavior change: workplace policies will reinforce the goals of your wellness program. Policies tend to enforce healthy behaviors in the workplace by setting boundaries. For policy options, see [“Resources that Work”](#). Policy options to consider include:
 - **Breastfeeding** has been shown to benefit the immune system of infants and therefore reduce illness. Infants who are sick less incur lower medical costs. Also, when an infant is sick less, working mothers are more productive at work and have lower absenteeism rates.
 - **Flexible work time** or “flex time” allows for work schedules to be flexible as needed. Allowing employees to come in early or to work late provides them time to incorporate physical activity into their day or lower their stress levels by avoiding traffic. Flexible work time often leads to more satisfied and productive employees.
 - **Healthy eating policies** provide not only an opportunity for employees to eat well, but also make it easier to do. Companies can benefit from policies regarding catered foods for meetings and retreats, food and drinks provided by vending machines, and more. Employees who adhere to healthy diets are often more productive, focused and engaged while at work.
 - **Smoking** has been shown to cause cancer and has been linked to higher absenteeism rates from work. Implementing tobacco-free workplace policies or programs to assist employees in quitting their tobacco use will not only lead to a healthier work environment, but lower healthcare costs for employers as well.
 - **Physical activity policies** provide opportunities for employees to incorporate activity into their daily work routines. Policies that encourage stretch breaks during meetings or time allowed to participate in physical activity opportunities during the work day are sure to lead to healthier, more productive and satisfied employees.
7. **Explore programming options.** Once you’ve decided on your preferred approach(es) to target/prevent risk behaviors, needs and interests of employees, you can determine your program options. Programs can



take many forms from group education, self studies, computer-based, personal coaching to support groups. Several examples are listed below.

- **Point-of-decision prompts:** signs to increase stair use or fruit and vegetable consumption
- **Screenings or wellness assessments:** Blood pressure, blood cholesterol, bone density, body fat percentage and resting metabolic rate are examples. Work with your health plan, local vendor or health department to set up.
- **Community events:** Encourage and reward participation in events like the Heart Walk, Breast Cancer Run or Multiple Sclerosis Bike Ride. Form a worksite team to encourage support and create energy around the event.
- **Sponsorship:** Arrange and pay the entry fee for a worksite softball team. Encourage employees to train for a local 5K walk or run by paying their entry fee once they've completed the event. Reduce out-of-pocket costs through reduced gym membership dues or subsidize the cost of fresh fruits and vegetable in the employee cafeteria or vending machines.
- **Awareness building initiatives:** posters, bulletin boards, newsletter articles, public health campaign (i.e. Fruit & Veggies: More Matters™), paycheck stuffers, brochures
- **Individual behavior change programs:** phone counseling services, one-on-one counseling, self-study programs
- **Group-based/support programs:** walking clubs, classes, one-time seminars
- **Incentive-based programs:** reimbursements for health club memberships, discounts on community education classes, co-pay reimbursements for managed health risks

Review the literature for interventions that are already designed, evaluated and ready to use; determine the most effective successful strategies to reach your target audience; and/or to understand what outcomes would be considered successful. If you don't have time to do a complete literature search, see the ["Resources that Work"](#) at the end of this section or contact your local public health organization or health plan for assistance in identifying resources.

To help build awareness and increase exposure to fruits during the work day, Work Well hosted a one-hour apple tasting event.

Ask several questions when exploring program options, such as:

- **What risk factors are prevalent in the population I am trying to reach?**
- **What are the expectations of senior management?**
- **What do employees want?**
- **How much money and staff time is available?**
- **What does the latest research suggest?**

- 
8. **Decide on activities** based on your program goals and specific needs of your employees. Focus on programs that are of greatest interest to your employees and your organization. Keep activities simple and reasonable to implement for the staff time you have available. Think about integrating a combination of activities to include awareness building, educational and behavior elements. Keep in mind employees prefer learning in different ways. Some will prefer groups while others will prefer doing things on their own. Decide whether you will be purchasing products, using existing programs or developing your own interventions. Decide on activities that all employees can participate in. Look at the National Health Observances calendars for ideas of when to offer specific types of programs. See the [“Resources that Work”](#) at the end of this section for links to calendars.

One of Work Well’s most successful interventions has been the creation of the Fitness and Wellness Spaces. Thirty percent of the staff attended a personal training session led by a recent exercise physiology graduate who volunteered her time for the work experience. In 15 minutes, each participant was guided through how to use the equipment in the room and provided with appropriate exercises to get started. Virtually all participants proclaimed the room to be “a great idea”. Slipping in 10-15 minutes of exercise on breaks, over lunch or before/after work was perceived as a realistic way to add activity to their busy days. The room activity is tracked. Over the first 8 months of the fitness space being open, the rate of use has continued to rise – with an average of 63 uses per month and a high of 104 uses for the month of September 2006.

Tips for choosing appropriate interventions:

- **Talk to other wellness professionals about their experiences with different interventions, good and bad. Ask for advice on how to choose a program, structure initiatives, and how much time is involved in implementation and promotion ideas.**
- **Ask senior management or wellness champions to participate in a pilot of potential activities.**
- **Build on successes by making them annual events.**

9. **Talk to your target audience** again and again. Determine the ideal approach to reach your target audience with the advice of your steering committee, executive committee and wellness champions. Ask members of your target audience to review ideas, program materials, implementation strategy, etc. Make changes based on the feedback of the target audience.
10. **Determine what resources are available** to effectively conduct the program. Clarify the resources available (human and monetary) and how this influences the scale and scope of the intervention planned. How many staff are needed to conduct the program or intervention? What skills do they require? How much money is required for the intervention? Is this funding available? If not, what are the alternatives? What resources may be available in the community to support the intervention?
11. **Ensure the intervention is realistic and achievable**, that it fits into with the overall mission and vision for the worksite wellness initiative, and that the proposed approach is acceptable within the context of other organizational activities.

- 
12. **Write implementation procedures and timeline.** Provide detailed information highlighting the months, dates and times of various program components. Outline information on individual responsibilities and methods of accountability.
 13. **Prepare an itemized budget.** After planning incentive and communication strategies prepare a very specific budget. Get budget approval prior to beginning program. See [Section H](#) information on how to set up a budget.

Be creative in how you build awareness. During National Nutrition Month, the Work Well program encouraged employees to post their favorite fruits and vegetables on a designated bulletin board. Employees had fun checking out the favorites of their colleagues.

The top seven diseases driving healthcare costs among Minnesota state employees are hypertension, high cholesterol, severe heart conditions, mental health including depression, lower back pain, diabetes, and asthma. State employees who have one or more of these conditions accounted for 73% of healthcare claims cost in 2004.

Resources that work

Sample worksite policies

Breastfeeding

- ◆ **Developing a Breast Feeding Workplace Policy**
California WIC Program
<http://www.wicworks.ca.gov/breastfeeding/EmployerResources/BFWorkPolicy.pdf>
- ◆ **Lactation Support Program**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/policies/Lactation%20Support%20Program.pdf>
- ◆ **Sample Mother-Friendly Worksite Program**
Texas Department of State Health Services
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/lactate/mother.shtm>
- ◆ **Lactation Friendly Worksite Policy**
Washington State Department of Health
http://www.doh.wa.gov/msd/Policy/lactation_friendly_policy.htm

Flexible Work Time

- ◆ **Alternative Work Schedules**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/policies/Alternative%20Work%20Schedules.pdf>

Healthy Eating

- ◆ **Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Policy**
North Carolina Division of Public Health
http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/PhysicalActivityAndHealthyEatingPolicy/Texts/061012_proclamation.pdf
- ◆ **Sample Healthy Foods Policy**
Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina
http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/NCHHealthSmartTlkt/Texts/ES_AppB%20SamplePolicy.pdf
- ◆ **Food and Physical Activity Worksite Policies**
San Bernardino-Riverside Counties Health Collaborative Netcom III
<http://www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/eatwell/NetCompoliciesA.htm>
- ◆ **Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars and Catered Events**
University of Minnesota School of Public Health
http://www.sph.umn.edu/img/assets/9103/Nutrition_Guide.pdf
- ◆ **Choosing Foods and Beverages for Healthy Meetings, Conferences and Events**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/pdf/healthy_Worksite_Food.pdf
- ◆ **Healthy Vending: Recommended Beverages and Snacks**
The Alabama Department of Health Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit
http://www.wbgh.org/pdfs/healthy_vending.pdf
- ◆ **LAUSD Healthy Beverage Resolution-Approved Beverage List**
No Junk Food Organization
http://www.nojunkfood.org/vendors/healthy_bev_list.html

Physical Activity

- ◆ **Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Policy**
North Carolina Division of Public Health
http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/hot_topics/061012_proclamation.pdf
- ◆ **Food and Physical Activity Worksite Policies**
San Bernardino-Riverside Counties Health Collaborative Netcom III
<http://www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/eatwell/NetCompoliciesA.htm>

Tobacco-Free Workplace

- ◆ **Making Your Worksite Smoke Free A Decision Makers Guide**
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
American Cancer Society

Wellness Councils of America

<http://www.cancer.org/downloads/COM/Making%20your%20workplace%20Smokefree%20Guide.pdf>

- ◆ **CDC Tobacco-Free Campus Policy**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpha/hwi/policies/CDC%20Tobacco-Free%20Campus.pdf>

- ◆ **Tobacco Section**

Healthy Work Environments

<http://www.mihealthtools.org/work/Default.asp?tab=Resources#section2>

Sample Calendars

- ◆ **Fruit and Vegetables of the Month Calendar**

Fruits & Veggies More Matters™ Campaign

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/index.html>

- ◆ **Thrive Anoka County**

[ThriveCalendar.pdf](#) [PDF/4 pages/122Kb]

- ◆ **2008 National Health Observance Calendar**

National Health Information Center

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp>

Programs

General

- ◆ **Work/Life Program**

University of Minnesota

The WorkLife Program helps faculty and staff balance their work and personal responsibilities.

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/worklife/index.html>

- ◆ **Healthy Living Incentives Program**

Bauerly Brothers, Inc

Insurance premium credits based on meeting cut-off points on health parameters

[BAUERLYBROTHERSINC.DOC](#)

- ◆ **Take Charge Challenge**

Hennepin County Department of Health

A six-week wellness campaign that helps promote healthy choices among employees. The goal of the Take Charge Challenge is to increase daily physical activity, improve nutrition, and make healthy emotional choices all year long.

<http://wwwa.co.hennepin.mn.us/portal/site/HCIInternet/menuitem.3f94db53874f9b6f68ce1e10b1466498/?vgnnextoid=d252c95fa29fc010VgnVCM1000000f094689RCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

- ◆ **Healthy U**

Northwestern Health Sciences University, Bloomington

Online resources

<http://www.nwhealth.edu/healthyU/index.cfm>

- ◆ **The Great American Health Challenge**

American Cancer Society

An online resource offering assessments, virtual trainer, virtual dietitian, a quit line and challenges.

<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/index.asp>

- ◆ **Design, Development and Evaluation of Drivers Wellness Programs**

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association

A guide to design, develop and evaluate driver wellness programs.

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/WELLNESS-2.pdf>

Physical Activity-Behavior Change

- ◆ **10,000 Steps® Program**

HealthPartners

An 8-week pedometer program.

<http://www.10k-steps.com/default.aspx>

- ◆ **Let the Games Begin!**

Minnesota Department of Health

A worksite-based, team-oriented, physical activity contest.

LETTHEGAMESBEGIN.DOC

- ◆ **Active for Life Online**

American Cancer Society

Is a free 10-week flexible online physical activity program

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_1_5X_Active_For_Life.asp

- ◆ **Anoka County Battle of the Steps**

A fun and easy way to get more active! All participants are encouraged to take 10,000 steps each day, the minimum amount recommended for your health.

- ◆ **Trek to Texas**

Washington County

An employee program which converted minutes to miles as they made their way from Stillwater to San Antonio, making stops along the way in Des Moines, IA; Kansas City, MO; Wichita, KS; Oklahoma City, OK; and Dallas, TX.

TrekToTexasSummary.doc

- ◆ **Survivor Challenge**

Scott County

The Survivor Challenge is a four week healthy living challenge that builds on itself every week. The goal of the program is to make it successfully through all four weeks and find yourself a spot on the Island of Optimal Fitness.

SurvivorBrief.doc

- ◆ **Winona County Walking Challenge**

Winona County Community Health Services

Between 10 and 15 worksites across Winona are participating in this program.

Winonacochallenge.doc

- ◆ **UCansm**
UCare Minnesota, Minneapolis
An Activity network which offers three great fitness options: club savings, classes and a kit.
<http://www.ucare.org/healthplans/Pages/UCanUCareActivityNetwork.aspx>
- ◆ **America On the Move**
A national online physical activity program encouraging everyone to take steps towards a healthier way of life.
www.americaonthemove.org
- ◆ **Start!**
American Heart Association
Online physical activity program for individuals or employers.
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3053031>
- ◆ **The Personal Energy Plan (PEP)**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The PEP is a 12-week self-directed, worksite program to promote healthy eating and moderate physical activity.
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpp/pep.htm
- ◆ **StairWELL to Better Health Project**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
A worksite stairwell campaign.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpp/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm>

Physical Activity-Awareness Building

- ◆ **do Campaign**
BlueCross and BlueShield of Minnesota
<http://www.do-groove.com/>
- ◆ **Fear Factor**
Food tasting activity to expose employees to a variety of foods featuring Minnesota Department of Agriculture Minnesota Grown products and farmers' markets.
Minnesota Department of Health
[FEARFACTORDESCRIPTION.DOC](#) (MSWord/1 page/25Kb)

Physical Activity-Incentive

- ◆ **Fit ChoicesSM**
Medica
<http://member.medica.com/C9/FitHealth/default.aspx>

Weight Management-Behavior Change

- ◆ **Eat Better AmericaTM**
General Mills
Online Weight Management Program
<http://www.eatbetteramerica.com/>

- ◆ **Frosty Challenge**

- Hennepin County Department of Health**

- A six-week weight maintenance program offered during the winter months.

- <http://wwwa.co.hennepin.mn.us/portal/site/HCIInternet/menuitem.3f94db53874f9b6f68ce1e10b1466498/?vgnnextoid=d781c95fa29fc010VgnVCM1000000f094689RCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

Healthy Eating-Behavior Change

- ◆ **Healthy Lunch Bunch**

- Minnesota Department of Health

- Each participant will be responsible for preparing a healthy lunch for 10 during a two-week period.

- [HEALTHYLUNCHBUNCHBRIEF.DOC](#)

- ◆ **Strive for Five**

- Hennepin County Department of Health

- A promotional campaign encouraging the consumption of five servings of fruit and vegetables daily.

- <http://wwwa.co.hennepin.mn.us/portal/site/HCIInternet/menuitem.3f94db53874f9b6f68ce1e10b1466498/?vgnnextoid=2b71c95fa29fc010VgnVCM1000000f094689RCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

Healthy Eating-Awareness

- ◆ **Minnesota Phantom Diner**

- Minnesota Department of Health

- Featuring a healthy eating restaurant contest and award program.

- <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/nutrition/strategies/pdf/phantomdner.pdf>

- ◆ **Living Well**

- North Memorial Center

- A community health publication providing useful information about medical topics, healthy lifestyles and food and nutrition.

- <http://www.northmemorial.com/livingwell/>

- ◆ **Fruits & Veggies More Matters™**

- A national campaign, which replaces the 5 A Day campaign, to encourage the consumption of fruits and vegetables

- <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/>

G. Use incentives

In order to induce voluntary health behavior change, the worksite wellness program must answer for employees “What’s in it for me?” Incentives can help tip the balance in favor of a healthy change. Incentives are useful to reward: learning about wellness, participation in program activities and improvement in health status. Incentives can be both tangible and intangible.

Examples of tangible incentives include:

- ◆ Recognition in company communications
- ◆ Team or individual trophy
- ◆ Cash awards or gift cards
- ◆ Merchandise awards

- ◆ Reduction in health insurance costs, such as co-payment
- ◆ Paid time off
- ◆ Contribution to a flexible spending account
- ◆ Exchange of earned time off for payment of wellness-related expenses
- ◆ Discounts to fitness center

Examples of intangible incentives include:

- ◆ Opportunities for fun activities with managers and other co-workers
- ◆ A sense of belonging
- ◆ Increased self-confidence
- ◆ A feeling of accomplishment
- ◆ Being more productive at work
- ◆ Ability to lead by example

Level of Incentives

Little financial commitment (less than \$25)

- Handmade “traveling” trophies or plaques
- Paid time off or extra days off
- Special privilege or service (special parking spot, purchases at a company store, waiver of a company program fee or extended lunch hour)

Moderate financial commitment (\$25 - \$499)

- Plaques awarded to units or departments reaching a certain participation goal
- Materials or merchandise (pedometers, t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, gym bags, towels, fruit or vegetables, etc.)
- Free lunch in the cafeteria

High financial commitment (\$500 or more):

- Travel opportunities (free airline flight, cruise, a weekend stay at a local Bed and Breakfast or spa)
- Home fitness equipment
- Health club memberships

Steps for designing a successful incentive strategy:

- ❖ **Target behaviors:** Determine what behaviors (participation, program completion and/or behavior change) you want to increase or decrease with the incentive(s).
- ❖ **Talk to your target audience:** Understand what values hinder the adoption of the desired behavior, what types and size of rewards are valued and what the ideal length of time is between behavior adoption and the reward.

- ❖ **Select incentive(s):** Make the incentive(s) positive, feasible, and ensure they address major hindrances and will likely produce the largest behavioral effect.
- ❖ **Identify incentive rules:** Rules must be clear to the target audience and easy to manage by the employer. Determine the length of time between behavior and reward, eligibility, how the incentives are awarded, length of time between incentive cycles and how records are kept.
- ❖ **Develop a plan:** for communicating the incentive program to eligible participants.
- ❖ **Evaluate annually:** Were the program goals met? How did the incentive(s) influence participation rates?

Resources that work

- ◆ **Incentive Ideas for Worksite Wellness**
Minnesota Department of Health
[IncentiveList.doc](#) [MSWord/1 page/23Kb]
- ◆ **Absolute Advantage Incentive-based Series**
http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/aa_vol4_no7_jul05.pdf

H. Determine a budget

Ensure that you have adequate resources to roll-out your wellness plan. To set up your budget, consider the following:

1. Staff time

Building a successful worksite wellness program requires staff time as well as financial resources. Some larger organizations may require 20 hours per week for three- to six-months to prepare to launch a worksite wellness program. Staff time also needs to be considered when making changes to worksite policies, developing communication pieces and administering interest surveys. See [samplebudget.xls](#) [MSExcels/1 page/15Kb] for examples.

2. Business cost

The Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA) estimates worksite wellness costs to be \$100-\$150 per year per employee. In addition, WELCOA cites an annual return on investment of \$300-\$450 per employee.

3. Incentives/prizes

Incentives can be used to increase the number of participants engaged in a worksite wellness program. They can be as small as free fruit and pedometers or as large as exercise equipment, paid time off and gift certificates.

4. Tax considerations

Work with benefits managers to consider tax implications of your wellness program. Benefit managers or accountants are the people to contact with questions regarding tax implications of any incentive that they give. Taxes may diminish the value and power of the incentive. Taxes typically apply to cash, gift



certificates, employer subsidies for exercise equipment and health magazines, and reimbursements for the cost of gym memberships, weight-management classes and nutrition classes for general health improvement. Taxes typically do not apply to doctor-prescribed memberships, equipment and classes. Additionally, workers would not be taxed on reductions in premium contributions; employer contributions to a flexible savings account or health reimbursement account; onsite exercise facilities and classes; and reimbursements for the cost of disease-management programs and smoking-cessation programs. It is advised that employers seek legal consultation prior to administering an incentive to their employee population. Refer to Consider Legal Issues for additional information.

Reference: Employers' Wellness Push: New Programs and Incentives; By Leah Carlson Shepherd; From Employee Benefit News. CareerJournal.com

5. Resource needs (printing costs, charts, posters, education materials)

Sample budget items could include: self-help books to enhance an employee's understanding of current health issues, smoking cessation materials, target heart rate charts, sample stretches printed on postcards for employees to keep at their desks, sample 15-minute circuit training routine brochures or posters for a fitness room.

6. Equipment fees

Sample budget items could include: treadmills, stationary bikes, elliptical machines, free-weights, yoga mats, relaxation chairs, resistance bands, video equipment or exercise DVDs.

7. Communication needs

Sample communication budget items could include: web site maintenance, mail inserts, program announcement emails, "do not disturb" signs for relaxation rooms, bi-weekly newsletters, posters/signs for classes offered or brochure printing costs.

8. Space

Space may be needed to be a designated budget item when any of the following are considered: designating a private "Mother's Room" to support employees who are breastfeeding, establishing a fitness room or identifying wall space for posters and promotions.

9. Support

Upper management support is crucial to the success of a worksite wellness program. Companion and social support are also important components of a successful worksite wellness program. While these items may not come with a cost, they are important to highlight.

I. Consider Legal Issues

Wellness programs must be carefully crafted. Employers should have their legal counsel review a wellness program before it's presented to employees.

There are several federal and state laws that impact the design of a wellness program. They include:

❖ **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The ADA requires employers to offer a reasonable accommodation to an employee with a known disability, and it prohibits employers from making medical inquiries or requiring medical examinations (unless job-related and consistent with business necessity). It's also unlawful under the ADA to take any adverse employment action based on an individual's actual or perceived disability.

❖ **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**

The EEOC has offered employers some guidance with regard to the ADA's restrictions on medical inquiries and examinations. Under the guidelines, an employer may conduct medical examinations and activities that are part of a voluntary wellness and health screening program. Therefore, offering employees the opportunity to voluntarily participate in health screening programs for high blood pressure and cholesterol monitoring are not likely to violate the ADA, as long as there is no penalty (economic or otherwise) for not participating. Employers must treat any information acquired as a confidential medical record.

❖ **The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

The HIPAA makes it illegal for group health plans to base eligibility on the following health-related factors: health status, medical condition (including physical and mental illnesses), claims experience, receipt of healthcare, medical history, genetic information, evidence of insurability (including conditions arising out of domestic violence), or disability. Therefore, under HIPAA's provisions, a group health plan can't require an individual to pay a greater premium on the basis of any "health status-related factor." However, adopting a wellness program that offers incentives for behavior, rather than health status, would likely be in compliance with the law. Group health insurance plans are permitted to provide discounts on premiums, or to adjust co-payments or deductibles for employees who participate in a "bona fide wellness program."

The U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Internal Revenue Service jointly issued a proposed regulation describing four requirements for a "bona fide wellness program" that would comply with HIPAA:

- The rewards that are offered to an individual must be limited (a limit of 10 to 20 percent of the total cost of employee-only coverage is suggested).
- The program must be reasonably designed to promote good health or prevent disease for the individuals in the program, and must give eligible individuals the opportunity to qualify for the reward at least once per year.

- The reward must be available to all similarly situated individuals, and a reasonable alternative standard must be made available for any individual for whom, due to a health factor, it would be unreasonably difficult to meet the initial standard (or for whom it is medically inadvisable to attempt to satisfy that standard).
- All plan materials that describe the terms of the wellness program must disclose the availability of a reasonable alternative standard.

Reference: Business and Legal Reports. Wellness Works, But Beware Legal Landmines

J. Develop Communication Strategies

To meet your health promotion program goals, you'll need an effective communications plan. Employees are bombarded with messages in a variety of contexts (e.g. work, school and home), and through a variety of channels (e.g. internet, standard mail, posters, billboards, interpersonal communication, etc.). In such an environment, people do not pay attention to all communications they receive, but selectively attend to and purposefully seek out information. One of the main challenges in the design of an effective program and initiative is to identify the optimal contexts, channel, content and reasons that will motivate people to pay attention to and use health information.

A successful plan is grounded in understanding what your target audience knows, believes, values and does relating to the health behavior you are trying to influence. In other words, get to know your target audience by listening. You can obtain a wealth of information through formal means (e.g. focus groups, office observation and surveys) or informal channels (e.g. conversation and discussion among friends, coworkers, family members and others in your target audience). Ultimately, the objective is to use the data collected for designing effective messages that reach your target audience in the promotion, implementation and evaluation stages of your program.

Designing an effective communications plan involves some variation on these steps:

1. **Identify the health behavior you are trying to influence.** Consider what month you want to promote the health behavior.
2. **Define your target audience.** Go beyond demographics such as race/ethnicity, age, gender, education level, and income level. Find out what motivates your audience and the best way to reach them. Determine the unique qualities of your target audience such as interests, preferred activities, values, life goals, concerns, work habits and biases. Many organizations can tap into their existing marketing or advertising departments to assist in implementing a formal qualitative research process with focus groups (consisting of individuals from your target audience), which are ideal techniques to learn this information. However, you don't need a lot of resources to accomplish this step. Informal techniques such as one-on-one conversations with coworkers, friends and family can help you better understand your audience.

Talking to the Work Well target audience early on in the planning stages, we learned that it was deemed more desirable to have monthly themes versus programs lasting 2-3 months. This kept things fresh and more people engaged.



3. **Develop concepts, messages and materials.** The information you learned in Step 2 will help you identify the specific actions and behaviors that you want to encourage and will give you clues on how to approach your audience. Develop positive message concepts to empower employees to make the changes. Determine what your communication channel will be for the messages. Communication pieces are important to promote your program and to motivate participants to involve themselves with current activities. Examples of communication pieces are as follows:

- a. Email
- b. Posters
- c. Newsletters
- d. Handouts
- e. Library resources

4. **Test communication concepts, messages and materials with representatives of the target audience.** Assess message concepts to ensure what you are trying to say is being heard correctly, is motivating to your audience and is seen as empowering to make changes. Ask questions such as:

- What does this message mean to you?
- Does this message motivate you?
- Does this message fit with other things you value or want in life?
- Would you take action as a result of this message?

Again, focus groups are a good method to test your initial message concepts. However, informal conversations with your target audience can be just as effective, less costly and can save time.

A healthy food identification program in restaurants tested the message “Low in Fat. Not low in taste.” Focus group participants found this message bland and uninviting. However, when the messages “Relish being a food critic” and “We’re hungry for your opinion” were tested, consumers found these much more inviting and fun. As a result, they indicated they were much more likely to try the food item. Other focus groups have been done with inactive individuals and found the word “exercise” to be a big turn-off to these individuals. When targeting inactive individuals, “physical activity” has been determined to be a much friendlier message.

5. **Fine-tune messages.** Sometimes messages may miss the mark. Consumers may not interpret the initial message or concept the way it was intended. If so, simply go back to Step 3 with what you have learned and revise the messages and concepts. Often, only fine-tuning is necessary.

6. **Implement the health communications plan.**

Work Well’s most successful communications strategies:

- **Developed a logo to build a program identity**
- **Sent out a weekly email outlining all Work Well activities for the week**
- **Highlighted activities on monthly posters hung in the same 5 places in the work place**
- **Electronically set activities as appointments on staff calendars**

7. **Assess how effectively the messages reached the target audience.** Modify the communication strategy if necessary. You can do this by including questions on your post program surveys. You can also have conversations with employees to determine if a message was successful in reaching the audience. Also, look at your participation data to determine if the program messages encouraged individuals in your target audience to participate in the program or initiative and modify the targeted behavior as desired.

Tips to Use: Communication Methods within a Manufacturing Setting

Many employees working in a manufacturing environment do not have immediate access to email and telephones while they are working. This requires employers to be creative with their communications outreach. Methods of communication that have proven to be successful include cafeteria demonstrations, town hall meeting presentations, passing out information near company entrances and payroll “stuffers.” In addition, running programs near assembly lines is another option. Not only is this approach a great time saver, but it keeps the assembly line running without interruption.

Resources that work

Focus Group Methods

- ♦ University of Minnesota
<http://www.sph.umn.edu/shadac/survey/focusgroups.html>

Sample communication pieces

E-mails

- ♦ **Sample text for weekly e-mail newsletter**
 1. [template1.doc](#) [MSWord/1 page/20Kb]
 2. [STARTAHAEMAIL.DOC](#) [MSWord/2 pages/59Kb]
- ♦ **Sample Worksite Wellness Champion e-mails**
 1. [template2.doc](#) [MSWord/1 page/20Kb]

- ◆ **Sample Manager e-mail**
 1. [template3.doc](#) [MSWord/1 page/20Kb]
 2. [SURVIVOREMAIL.pdf](#) [PDF/1 page/45Kb]

Posters

- ◆ **Brown Bag Luncheon Poster**
[BROWNBAGPOSTER.DOC](#) [MSWord/1 page/36Kb]
- ◆ **Farmers' Market Sample Poster**
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/download/FitBusinessKitTools/Farmers%20Market%20Sample%20emails.doc>
- ◆ **Personal Trainer Poster**
[PERSONALTRAINER.PDF](#) [PDF/1 page/103Kb]
- ◆ **Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Posters from Natural Healthcare Canada (FREE)**
<http://workplacewellnessprograms.naturalhealthcare.ca/downloads.phtml>
- ◆ **For Men Only Poster**
[FORMENONLY.PDF](#) [PDF/1 page/101Kb]
- ◆ **Tobacco Free Tompkins Poster**
<http://www.co.tompkins.ny.us/wellness/tobaccofree/zone/dm.htm>
- ◆ **For Women Only Poster**
[FORWOMENONLY.PDF](#) [PDF/1 page/361Kb]
- ◆ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Stairwell Promotion Posters**
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/motivational_signs.htm
- ◆ **Medical Emergency Poster**
[MEDICALEMERGENCY.PDF](#) [PDF/1 page/24Kb]
- ◆ **Wellness Committee Solicitation**
<http://www.tompkins-co.org/wellness/worksite/survey/surveypromo.pdf>
- ◆ **Worksite Challenge Poster**
[WORKSITECHALLENGE.PDF](#) [PDF/1 page/175Kb]

Newsletters

- ◆ **Because We Care Newsletter**
<http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/becausewecare.asp>
- ◆ **Carver County Worksite Wellness Newsletter**
http://www.co.carver.mn.us/departments/PH/docs/March_Worksite_Environment.pdf
- ◆ **Connecticut's Employee Health Newsletter**
http://greenwichct.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/GreenwichCT_HRDocs/newsletter/

- ◆ **Sherburne County Safety Newsletter**
[SHERBURNECOBIKESAFETY.DOC](#) [MSWord/3 pages/119Kb]
- ◆ **University of Texas- Drug Free Workplace Newsletter**
<http://dfwp.utsa.edu/dfwp2003/dfwpNewsletter/dfwpNewsletterFall2004/dfwpNewsletterFall2004.htm>
- ◆ **Live Healthy - Live Strong; St. Paul Public Schools**
http://www.stepstohealthiermn.com/dynamic_documents/0335.pdf
- ◆ **Washington State's Frontline Employee Newsletters**
<http://www.dop.wa.gov/more/EAP/Resources/Pages/FrontlineEmployeeNewsletter.aspx>

Library Resources

- ◆ [RENEWLIB.XLS](#) [Excel/1 pages/26Kb]
- ◆ [WORKWELLRESOURCEVIDEOS.DOC](#) [MSWord/1 page/21Kb]

Sample Handouts

- ◆ **10 Commandments of Weight Loss**
<http://www.foodandhealth.com/10command.pdf>
- ◆ **Blood Sugar Chart**
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/TC061977871033.aspx>
- ◆ **Body Mass Index and Chart**
http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu/Handouts/pdfs/body_mass_index.pdf
- ◆ **Carbohydrate 101**
<http://www.foodandhealth.com/CHO101.pdf>
- ◆ **Daily Log of Calories/Fat Percentage**
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/TC010684541033.aspx>
- ◆ **Fitness Chart for Men and Women**
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/TC010219651033.aspx>
- ◆ **Medicare's Preventive Care Services**
[MEDICAREHANDOUTDOC.PDF](#) [PDF/8 pages/160Kb]
- ◆ **Trans Fat Labeling: Reading Tips**
<http://www.foodandhealth.com/trans.pdf>
- ◆ **USDA Calorie and Fat Gram Chart**
www.findanutritionist.com/resources/tables/calories_fat.html
- ◆ **Vending Machines: Use the Right Sense**
<http://www.foodandhealth.com/vending.pdf>

- 
- ◆ **Weight Loss Management, Roadmaps for Clinical Practice Series: Assessment and Management of Adult Obesity**
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/weight.pdf>
 - ◆ **Physical Activity and Exercise, AMA**
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/phactivity.pdf>



Step 3: Implement Your Program

Now that you've built your case and built your program(s), it's time to implement your initiatives. Even with the most thought-out and well-planned initiative, there will be challenges and unforeseen road blocks during the implementation period. However, because you took the time to plan appropriately, you'll be well-equipped to handle anything that comes your way. During implementation keep your eyes and ears open to employee feedback, concerns and success stories. These will be helpful during the evaluation of your initiative. Also, be flexible with your plan. You may have to make modifications to it as your initiative rolls out.

Step 4: Evaluate Your Program

When designing a wellness program, be sure to include the following pieces in the overall program plan to ensure you can measure the impact of your wellness program:

- ❖ Measurable goals and objectives
- ❖ Baseline data
- ❖ Staff who are trained to evaluate appropriately
- ❖ Clear rules and fair administration of incentive programs
- ❖ An outlined budget and actual cost data
- ❖ A communications plan

What are the benefits of evaluating outcomes?

- **To see if your intervention worked**
Did you achieve your objective? Did employees learn about their health risks, get stronger or more flexible, or use the stairs more often?
- **To demonstrate the cost benefit of the intervention**
To get the money to repeat a program, you need to be able to show that it was effective enough to justify its expense. That's what cost benefit means — not that the intervention saved money, but that the benefit was worth the cost.
- **To compare different types of interventions**
You may have tried three different approaches to increasing employees' activity levels. With evaluation of your data, you can see which approach was most effective. You can also compare your outcome with industry standards. For instance, workplace smoking cessation programs are considered very successful if 35% to 50% of participants quit. How did your program compare?
- **To provide information about the program**
You will produce valuable information about your program through evaluation that you can use in reports and presentations to management, press releases, stakeholders' meetings, company newsletters and meetings.



➤ **To give feedback to participants (and inspire others)**

We've all learned that the first rule in setting goals is to have measurable objectives. By publicizing results of evaluation, you can boost participation and show your interventions work. Participants can be motivated to continue with positive evaluation results. Non-participants can be inspired to join when they hear that a program works. Managers may encourage their departments to participate if you evaluate participation or health status by department.

Reference: Wellness Councils of America, WELCOA

Evaluation opportunities

- ◆ Knowledge and skills. What did participants learn from the intervention?
- ◆ Risk factors. Can you show risk factors were reduced as a result of the intervention?
- ◆ Satisfaction. Would the participant recommend the program to a friend?
- ◆ Participation rates. Were participation goals met?
- ◆ Costs. Did the program help reduce costs?
- ◆ Healthcare claims. Are there changes in the claim trends?
- ◆ Absenteeism rates. Have they changed?
- ◆ Environment. Is there a perceived change in the workplace environment?

Appendix:

Additional toolkits

Arkansas – The Healthy Arkansas Toolkit discusses elements of a worksite wellness program from start to finish. Here you can find examples of tobacco, nutrition, physical activity and weight control programs.

http://www.arkansas.gov/ha/pdf/worksite_wellness.pdf

California – California’s Worksite Program website shows information regarding the California 5 a day-Be Active! campaign, business tips, recipes, and resources to promote healthy worksites.

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/>

Leading by Example – The Leading by Example Initiative shows examples of wellness programs for businesses of every size. This is a great tool for employers.

http://www.prevent.org/LBE/LBE_USCC_FullBook.pdf

South Dakota – The Strides to a Healthier Worksite Toolkit is an effort to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle in South Dakota through worksite challenges.

<http://www.healthysd.gov/Workplace/PDF/WorksiteStrides.pdf>

Wisconsin – The Worksite Wellness Resource Kit walks you through the development of a worksite wellness program.

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/>

Additional links

Arthritis Foundation – Provides information and resources on how to increase quality of life when living with arthritis as well as advice and program details.

<http://www.arthritis.org/>

American Association of Retired People (AARP) – The AARP website is a resource intended for those 50 years and older. Information about retirement, death and dying, travel, and member discounts are discussed.

<http://www.aarp.org/>

American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) – The ACSM website has information regarding physical activity recommendations and how to incorporate physical activity into your day.

www.acsm.org

American Council on Exercise (ACE) – The ACE website is a great resource for health and fitness-related information. Healthy recipes, fitness facts, and research studies are a few of the information categories.

<http://www.acefitness.org/default.aspx>

American Diabetes Association (ADA) – The ADA website provides interactive resources such as the Diabetes risk test, Diabetes Personal Health Decisions, health risk calculator, as well as information on nutrition and recipes, weight loss, exercise, and more.

www.diabetes.org

American Heart Association (AHA) – The AHA website displays information regarding blood pressure, cholesterol, heart ailments, body mass index (BMI), weight management, and exercise and fitness information.

<http://americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>



American Medical Association (AMA) –The AMA website discusses medical liabilities, insurance coverage, public health resources and more.

<http://www.ama-assn.org/>

American Public Health Association (APHA) –The APHA website includes an A-Z HealthTopics page displaying informational articles regarding several aspects of health. Some topics of interest include community health, worksite health, and women’s health.

<http://www.apha.org/>

American Red Cross –The Red Cross website lists information about local blood drives, health and safety services, fact sheets, and much more.

<http://www.redcross.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) –The CDC website is a good resource for information concerning healthy living, workplace safety, environmental health, diseases and conditions, data and statistics, and body mass index (BMI) information.

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Fight Cancer.org –The Fight Cancer.org website displays tools to assess one’s health, diet and exercise, smoking cessation, and sun safety. It also includes several workplace programs.

<http://www.fightcancer.org>

Health Finder –The Health Finder website has a breadth of information including calorie counters, consumer guides, prevention and wellness information, health news and more.

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/>

Hennepin County’s Stride-o-meter – Make it easy for employees to know where to walk and how far their route will take them. The Stride-o-meter can be loaned for free to workplaces in Hennepin County. Please visit this site for more information.

<http://wwwa.co.hennepin.mn.us/portal/site/HCIInternet/menuitem.3f94db53874f9b6f68ce1e10b1466498?vgnextoid=2a11c95fa29fc010VgnVCM1000000f094689RCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

Mayo Clinic –This site has a ‘Healthy Living Centers’ section where one can find information on alternative medicine, fitness, food and nutrition, recipes, stress management, and weight loss among others.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/>

Minnesota Department of Agriculture –This site provides information on the benefits of eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/>

Minnesota Department of Public Safety –Visit this site to learn about safe driving, how to use child seat restraints properly and how to keep safe on Minnesota roads.

<http://www.dps.state.mn.us/>

National Cancer Institute – Information describing common types of cancer, as well as treatment and prevention of those cancers; fact sheets; and smoking cessation information can be found here.

<http://www.cancer.gov/>

National Center for Bicycling and Walking –This site discusses how to create bike-friendly and walkable communities. There is also a link to the Active Living Resource Center among other information.

<http://www.bikewalk.org/>



National Institute of Mental Health – This site contains information about mental health topics such as anxiety disorders and eating disorders. Mental health concerns specific to men and to women are listed along with a mental health service locator.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

National Institutes of Health – Information offered on this site includes: healthy lifestyle advice, health by age and gender, health categories by body system, nutrition and occupational health advice, and the latest research on health topics.

<http://www.nih.gov/>

Worksite Health Promotion Group (WHPG) – The WHPG is open to all Northland Regional Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (NACSM) student and professional members who have a professional or personal interest in this area. The WHPG seeks to expand the educational, professional, and networking opportunities for those involved in worksite health promotion.

<http://www.northlandacsm.org>

The Office of the Surgeon General – This site offers information regarding public health priorities and strives to provide scientific information to the public to improve America's health.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/>

Partnership for Prevention – Information on alcohol abuse, immunization, worksite health, tobacco use, and obesity prevention can be found here.

<http://prevent.org/>

Quit Net – All of your smoking cessation questions and needs can be found here.

<http://www.quitnet.com/>

United States Department of Health & Human Services – Information regarding disasters and emergencies, diseases and conditions, safety and wellness, smoking cessation, abuse, and much more can be found at this site.

www.os.dhhs.gov

University of Minnesota Extension – This site is an excellent source of information on topics such as: how disease-carrying insects affect outdoor workers; food safety; consumer information on nutrition; and products for sale related to healthy cooking and eating.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/>

The Wellness Councils of America – This site contains beneficial information to your worksite wellness program. The importance of worksite health promotion, as well as key resources and worksite wellness products are discussed in-depth.

<http://www.welcoa.org>

Winning at Work – Detecting, preventing and managing Diabetes for a healthy workplace.

www.diabetes.org/employeehealth

For comments, questions or concerns, please contact: healthyworkplace@state.mn.us