

Healthier Workplace Leads to Healthy Returns

You know that the key to a long and happy life is good health, but it also makes good business sense. Consider this: Physically fit employees not only take fewer sick days, they also are more productive, and that helps to keep your bottom line healthy too. While you can't push your employees to adopt a healthier lifestyle, you can encourage and provide them with opportunities to get and stay fit, such as:

- Take stock of your office vending machine. Replace high-fat and high-calorie items like pop and chips with more healthy and nutritious snacks.
- Do you have an office cafeteria? Look at adding health-smart items to the menu.
- When it comes time for a team-building retreat or exercise, why not choose a program or location with physical activity opportunities?
- Reward employees who make healthy choices. For example, sponsor your company's softball team.
- Office events and parties are great opportunities to promote healthy living while having fun, like a skating party.
- Create a team of executives and employees to look at and promote the benefits of good health in your business.
- Install a water cooler. Drinking more water is essential to losing weight and staying healthy.
- Offer a weekly lunchtime program where employees can learn how to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Make it fun and interactive; have cooking classes with a local chef where employees can learn how to prepare more nutritious meals, and then sample them for lunch.
- Make your office more exercise friendly. Install a shower for employees who bike to work or jog at lunch.
- Because fitness club fees can be expensive, look into corporate rates to give your employees added incentive to get fit.
- Make physical fitness a contest between departments. This is a great way to build team spirit in your company. Start a walking or running club and keep a weekly tally of weight lost or kilometers walked and offer a monthly prize to the team with the best overall performance.

When it comes to changing your employees' lifestyles and habits, think of it as an investment. It takes considerable time, effort and dedication, but it's one that will result in significant returns for your employees (an improved quality of life) and for you (improved profitability and profits).

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