

Put Wellness to Work in Kansas

Step-by-Step
Implementation Guide

The roadmap to workplace wellness



1 Get management support

This step is critical to the success of your program. Getting management actively involved at the beginning of the program will help create a supportive environment and model healthy behavior to all employees.

2 Create a team

To create a culture of wellness, you will need to gather a diverse group of employees throughout the organization. These employees will become your wellness "champions." Having a team will show your organization's commitment to wellness and these individuals will help plan and implement new strategies, activities and events.

3 Collect data

Gathering data from start to finish will allow us to evaluate changes in productivity, health status, and essentially, if the program is working. Also, it's crucial to monitor interest, engagement and participation to ensure the sustainability of the wellness program.

4 Develop an operating plan

The operating plan is the foundation of the program. The plan should address timelines, budgets, work assignments, employee communication, evaluation and the overall mission of the program. Clearly stated and measurable goals will keep your program on track.

5 Choose a wellness priority

Building your program involves selecting which wellness priority is the most relevant and obtainable for your company. This is determined by assessing data and evaluating your company's specific circumstances - your employees, type of business, employee demographics and interests.

6 Create a supportive environment

Creating a culture of wellness may involve reviewing policies, employee benefits, food/beverage offerings, communication practices and safety procedures. Finding solutions that help employees be engaged and participating is crucial in developing a program that works.

7 Evaluate the program

After you've implemented your wellness program, it's time to check engagement, participation, satisfaction levels, behavior changes, biometric changes, productivity and return on investment. A well-documented evaluation can help you identify areas for improvement or justify a budget increase.

1 Get top management support

Get your program off to a good start by helping management realize the benefits of worksite wellness and asking them to vocalize their support. An owner or manager should also be appointed to serve on the wellness team alongside other employees so there's ownership at every level of the organization.

Why it's important:

- Helps you obtain resources you need for the worksite wellness program.
- Helps communicate the importance of worksite wellness.
- Sets an example. Your top manager doesn't need to run a marathon, but he or she should embrace a healthful lifestyle by completing an annual health risk assessment, receiving an annual physical, participating in wellness events offered by the company and taking part in community wellness events.

2 Create a team

To promote your program within your organization, you need to have a dedicated team of employees who are enthusiastic, deliver strong communication and are committed to creating a thriving workplace.

- Have worksite wellness written into team members' job descriptions. This will ensure it is a defined duty in their workload.
- Promote the wellness team throughout the organization. Doing so helps employees see worksite wellness is a priority and the team is there to help with their wellness goals. It also inspires participation and team involvement.

- Develop a team with strong leadership. Team members will need vision and energy, and a genuine desire to help others. Your team leader should be someone who can create agendas, handle conflict, set priorities, motivate others, meet goals and deadlines, and communicate throughout the organization.
- Add diversity to your team. Try to include representation from all different functional areas, experience levels, ages and fitness abilities. A larger organization could have a team of 14-20 people. A small organization may do well with four to seven people.
- Meet regularly. Face-to-face meetings once a month are recommended.
- Assign someone to take minutes and distribute them to ensure accountability and assigned tasks.
- Communicate often. Educate the organization on your priorities and let others know how to get involved; this strategy will help employees embrace the wellness program.

Why it's important:

- Helps position your worksite wellness as a priority to the company.
- Utilizes skills from individuals across different divisions of the company.
- Makes team members feel included and a part of a positive change.

3 Collect data

This important step is imperative and helps you assess your program and address specific needs in your organization. Collect information about employees' health status, their perceived needs and the culture of your worksite. Once you have an idea of the current state of your company's health, you'll have an understanding of how to build an impactful, sustainable wellness program.

Gather data about health status

- Workplace environment assessment
- Health risk assessment
- Biometric screening
- Medical claims analysis
- Employee survey data/Culture audit – employee interest survey (vending machines, workstations, walking paths, food during meetings, etc.)

Why it's important:

- Helps you build a program that meets real needs.
- Gives you a starting point from which you can document progress.
- Helps inform management.
- Keeps your team accountable and your program transparent.
- Helps you tailor your program over time.

4 Develop an operating plan

This stage may take the most time, but careful planning is critical to the program's success. Building a program that addresses the interests, needs and barriers of your employees will help create a culture of wellness.

What to include:

1. **Vision/mission statement.** It can be as short as one to two sentences. For example, "Establish and maintain a workplace that encourages environmental and social support for a healthy lifestyle." A vision statement is what you want to achieve, while a mission statement is what you will do to get there. Together, vision and mission statements provide direction.
2. **Goals and objectives.** Goal statements describe in broad terms what is to be accomplished. Objectives are precise statements that describe the changes necessary to reach a goal. When writing goals, use measurable language such as "increase" or "decrease." Make your objectives SMART—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-sensitive. For example, by December 2020, all staff meetings will have fruit and yogurt available instead of donuts.

Examples of goals and objectives together:

Goal 1: Our employees will have access to healthful food choices at the workplace.

Objective 1: By December 2020, 75% of all vending machine options will be within guidelines.

Objective 2: By March 2021, 100% of our workplace meetings that offer food will include healthful options.

3. **Timelines.** Outline what needs to be accomplished and when tasks need to be done. Don't make your timeline so aggressive that you feel overwhelmed, but don't make it so easy that people lose interest.
4. **Roles and responsibilities.** Be sure to assign jobs that work with people's natural strengths. Outline roles and responsibilities for team members to ensure everyone is clear on their duties.

5. **Itemized budget.** Include the cost of everything: staff needs, time for employees to be allowed to participate, team strategic planning meeting, biometric screenings, health risk appraisals, incentives, printing materials, etc.
6. **Approval from management.** Helps ensure your goals and objectives align with those of the organization.
7. **Marketing and communications strategies.** Mix of written, oral and electronic messages to inform employees.
8. **Evaluation.** Outline how to measure and evaluate the results from your program. Include participation; participant satisfaction; changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors; and changes in environment and culture. Be sure to link your evaluation methods directly to your program's goals and objectives.

Why it's important:

- Allows you to understand the “what, why and when” of your program.
- Empowers you to move forward and get things done.
- Helps inform management.
- Keeps everyone focused on the goal.

5 Choose a wellness priority

Choosing the right interventions for your workplace is critical to your success. Whether you focus on tobacco cessation, healthy eating or physical activity, you'll want to pick the topics that most affect your employees.

Choose interventions that meet company needs.

Align your choices with data from step 3.

Once you've chosen your wellness priority, make interventions successful:

- Decide how to promote your wellness priority. Communicate early and often and use a variety of tools, such as posters, meetings, emails, bulletin boards, text messages, intranet, etc.
- Be transparent about the necessary commitment. How long will it take and what's involved for the employee?
- Include those working at other locations or on other shifts.
- Keep your focus. It's easy to let your intervention become larger or more extensive than you originally planned. Communicate and stick to your plan.
- Be conscious of your budget.
- Consider legal issues. Have your legal counsel review the plan or prepare waivers to keep you free of legal liability.
- Evaluate your intervention. Will you need to document changes in knowledge, behaviors or biometric measures? Will you need to present a return on investment?

Why it's important:

Allows you to personalize your program to your company's specific health issues and employees' interests.

6 Create a supportive environment

This is when to start working on policies to create a supportive environment. Those policies should focus on data from step 3.

Areas to look at:

- **Physical activity.** Is your work environment conducive to employees getting physical activity throughout the day?
- **Tobacco use.** What can you do to encourage tobacco-free lifestyles?
- **Nutrition.** Are there healthful food options in the vending machines, in the cafeteria or at committee meetings?
- **Workstation/ergonomics.** Whether workers are at computers or in a factory, proper ergonomics are a must. Are standing desks or standing meetings an option?
- **Employee benefits.** Review the employee benefits plan to see if certain benefits could be added to support wellness, such as:
 - Disability protection
 - Life insurance
 - Sick leave/well days off
 - Flex time
 - Employee assistance program (EAP)

Why it's important:

- Reinforces the direction your company is taking toward wellness.
- Helps retain employees.

7 Evaluate the program

Some experts say if you don't evaluate, there is no point in doing a program. In order to do so, you first must have written, measurable objectives.

We recommend measuring these eight elements:

1. Participation
2. Participant satisfaction
3. Improvements in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors
4. Biometric screenings and health risk
5. Risk factors
6. Physical environment and corporate culture
7. Productivity and absenteeism
8. Return on investment

Why it's important:

- Helps you determine if your plans meet the needs of the organization.
- Provides you with data to demonstrate successes and make future changes.

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