

ACADEMIQUE

DIPLOMA OF BUSINESS BSB50215

Manage Programs that promote personal effectiveness

BSBLED502



STUDENT HANDOUT

Manage programs that promote personal effectiveness - BSBLED502

Unit descriptor

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to manage programs within a health and wellbeing focus. The unit addresses the management of the range of programs that would typically be associated with health and wellbeing such as stress management, smoking cessation, exercise, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Application of the unit

This unit applies to human resources managers, human resources personnel or other managers who take responsibility for managing staff health and wellbeing program/s or activities.

It has particular relevance for managers of human resources or diversity programs, frontline managers and specialist consultants responsible for promoting a balance between work demands and personal life.

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
<i>Elements describe the essential outcomes.</i>	<i>Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.</i>
1. Develop employee and industrial relations policies and plans	1.1 Analyse strategic plans and operational plans to determine long term employee relations 1.2 Analyse existing employee relations performance in relation to workforce objectives 1.3 Evaluate options in terms of cost-benefit, risk-analysis and current legislative requirements 1.4 Work with the management team to develop industrial relations policies and plans 1.5 Identify the skills and knowledge needed by management and the workforce to effectively implement these strategies and policies
2. Implement employee relations policies and plans	2.1 Develop an implementation plan and a contingency plan for the employee relations policies and strategies 2.2 Make arrangements for training and development for identified needs to support the employee relations plan 2.3 Undertake associated employee relations activities to reach agreement on changes required by the organisational policies or implementation plan 2.4 Ensure procedures for addressing grievances and conflict are properly documented 2.5 Communicate key issues about procedures for addressing grievances and conflict to stakeholders 2.6 Review employee relations policies and plans to establish whether they are meeting their intended outcomes
3. Manage negotiations to resolve conflict	3.1 Train individuals in conflict-management techniques and procedures 3.2 Identify, and where possible alleviate or eliminate, sources of conflict or grievance according to legal requirements 3.3 Check documentation and other information sources to clarify issues in dispute 3.4 Obtain expert or specialist advice and/or refer to precedents, if required 3.5 Determine desired negotiation outcomes, negotiation strategy and negotiation timeframes 3.6 Advocate the organisation's position in negotiation to obtain agreement 3.7 Document, and if necessary certify, the agreed outcomes with the relevant jurisdiction

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
	3.8 Implement agreements 3.9 Take remedial action where groups or individuals fail to abide by agreements

Absenteeism in the Workplace

Controlling absenteeism has become a big concern for companies all over the globe today. Its causes are many but corrective measures can be implemented.

What is absenteeism and can it be measured?

Absenteeism is traditionally defined as a specific employee's unavailability for work, when work is actually available for this specific employee. Absenteeism can fall under 3 broad categories: legal (such as public holidays), authorized (such as approved holidays) and unauthorized (also referred to as casual absence). Unauthorized absence is what most organizations strive to avoid and keep to a minimum.

"Absence measurement" is essential in order for management to compare between individual absences and departmental absences. Measuring absence is critical to identify the different patterns of employee absence and target the variables affecting it.

There are various ways to measure absenteeism, the most commonly used are the "lost time rate" formula and the "individual frequency" formula.

Lost Time Rate= (Number of Working Days Lost /Total Number of Working Days)* 100

Individual Frequency= (Number of Absent Employees/Average Number of Employees)*100

Limitations do exist when trying to measure absenteeism, whether with data collection or data correctness; thus, managers should be alert to stay on top of such limitations and handle them with care and accuracy.

Why Does Absence Occur?

Work absenteeism occurs for many reasons. Its causes are mainly either personal or workplace related. The most common ones are the following:

A) Personal:

- Age: Proven research shows that older employees tend to be absent less frequently than younger ones (as time stabilizes them in their jobs and the thrill of an unauthorized day off no longer tempts them.) However, once an older employee is actually absent - usually for sickness leaves - the period of absenteeism is usually longer than that of a younger employee.
- Gender: Women tend to be absent more frequently than men usually, especially when they are responsible for the welfare of a family and have variables beyond their control to contend with.
- Seniority: If an employee has been with a company for a long time, his/her absence level tends to become relatively lower. Fresh employees by contrast, are usually tempted to benefit from an "unauthorized" day off to relax and unwind.
- Personal Attitude: Employees with solid work ethics value the contribution they make to their companies and rarely allow themselves to take unauthorized time off. On the other hand people with a poor work ethic don't frequently carry the same amount of responsibility and do not feel obliged to show up to work every single day.

B) Workplace:

- Job Stress: When a job is stressful, employees tend to take unauthorized casual days off in order to reduce their stress levels and get rid of tension.
- Daily Job Routine: People with repetitive and monotonous jobs tend to take advantage of a casual absence to break free from their somewhat boring daily routine and engage in something more interesting for the day.

- Job Satisfaction: This is interrelated to daily job routine. The more an employee is dissatisfied with his overall job functions, the more he absentees himself from work.

What you, as a company/manager, can DO about it:

- Create a concise absence policy in order to bring down the employee absenteeism level. Make sure your statement is simple and straightforward before communicating it clearly across all organizational levels.
- Communicate the costs of absenteeism appropriately to your department heads to make them aware of it being a serious issue that can not be tolerated unless there is a valid reason.
- Measure absenteeism regularly, monitor closely, and treat all employees and management alike vis-à-vis absenteeism.
- Take into consideration that employees could sometimes need to be absent “casually”, but commit yourself to digging deeper into the reasons behind their casual absence.
- Recognize regular and punctual attendance whenever possible and reward it occasionally

Workplace health programs can increase productivity

In general, healthier employees are more productive.

- Healthier employees are less likely to call in sick or use vacation time due to illness
- Companies that support workplace health have a greater percentage of employees at work every day
- Because employee health frequently carries over into better health behavior that impact both the employee and their family (such as nutritious meals cooked at home or increased physical activity with the family), employees may miss less work caring for ill family members as well
- Similarly, workplace health programs can reduce presenteeism — the measurable extent to which health symptoms, conditions, and diseases adversely affect the work productivity of individuals who choose to remain at work

The cost savings of providing a workplace health program can be measured against absenteeism among employees, reduced overtime to cover absent employees, and costs to train replacement employees.

Example - Employee Health Concern: Obesity

- Obese employees experience higher levels of absenteeism due to illness than normal weight employee.
- Normal-weight men miss an average of 3.0 days each year due to illness or injury
- In comparison, overweight and obese men (BMI 25-35), miss approximately 2 more work days per year than normal-weight men, a 56% increase in missed days
- Normal-weight women miss an average of 3.4 days each year due to illness or injury
- In comparison, overweight women miss 3.9 days, a 15% increase in missed days; obese women (BMI greater than 30) miss 5.2 days, a 53% increase in missed days; and women with a BMI of 40 or higher miss 8.2 days, a 141% increase in missed days, almost one week more of missed work each year than normal-weight women.

Healthy workers more productive

AUSTRALIAN WORKERS with poor health take up to nine times more annual sick days than workers with good health, recent research has found.

Furthermore, the healthiest employees are nearly three times more productive while at work than the least healthy – 140 effective working hours per month versus 45 effective hours worked per month.

The research, conducted by Medibank Private, also found that employees with poor health and lifestyles have higher levels of “presenteeism” (being unproductive while at work).

“For HR professionals, health can no longer be thought of as a government and society issue – it’s a critical business issue,” said Clive Pinder, managing director of wellbeing consultancy vieliflife Group Limited.

The research demonstrates the monetary link between employee health issues and critical business drivers like productivity and absence, he said, and reflects US and European research which has found employees in good health are up to 23 per cent more productive than those in poor health.

"This equates to a day a week in increased productivity and means that HR professionals have a real opportunity to impact upon the productivity of its workforce," Pinder said.

The Medibank Private research, which encompassed 3,620 workers, also found 53 per cent feel overwhelmed with pressure and stress a lot of the time, while 28 per cent are clinically obese and a further 34 per cent are overweight.

Pinder also pointed to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures which found that illness costs Australian businesses \$37 billion per year. Furthermore, Health Services Australia research found that in any given week, 4 per cent of the Australian workforce is absent, costing Australian business \$7 billion each year.

Lifestyle factors such as smoking, drinking, lack of physical activity and excess weight contribute to this absenteeism and lost productivity for Australian employers, according to Medibank Private chief operating officer, Simon Blair.

"Employers have got to stop thinking that absenteeism is something they can't control because it's caused by random illnesses such as viruses," he said.

"The survey results suggest that many workplace absences are the result of workplace stress and lifestyle factors – things we can influence through regular physical activity, healthy diets, stress management and adequate sleep."

Nothing stops the great Aussie sickie!!!

NO matter what Australian business tries, the Aussie sickie continues to be part of our culture and public servants are the worst offenders.

The average worker takes 8.62 days off per year in addition to their entitled annual leave, according to a report from Direct Health Solutions (DHS), a company which consults clients on managing absenteeism.

DHS chief executive Paul Dundon said the figure was above the average of about five days in the United States but roughly in line with the United Kingdom.

Mr Dundon said firms had tried a range of different measures, such as changing policies, setting targets or introducing return-to-work interviews, but all had proved ineffective.

"There's been no correlation between any particular strategy organisations have implemented and them having a sustained reduction in absenteeism levels," Mr Dundon said.

About 28 per cent of companies surveyed said the levels of absenteeism had increased over the past year, compared with 18 per cent who said it had decreased.

By industry sector, 62.5 per cent of manufacturing and production firms said absenteeism was on the rise and the figure 40.6 per cent among the public service and government.

Those in the public service or government sector took off an average of 10.8 days a year, compared with about four days for those working in information technology.

Mr Dundon said large employers were more likely to have higher levels of absenteeism.

"There are a lot of companies we know, big companies and public sector companies using taxpayer money, that have got people taking 18-20 days sick leave, on average per year," Mr Dundon said.

"Up to eight per cent of their workforce won't show up on any day for sick leave."

Such a large absence comes at a huge financial cost.

The average cost of absence was \$354 per person per day, which equated to \$26.6 billion in lost productivity for the Australian economy each year, the report said.

It also placed a greater burden on staff forced to cover for their missing colleagues, which Mr Dundon said would lead to increased workplace stress and further absenteeism.

He said he expected workplace stress to become an even bigger problem in the year ahead as companies cut staff in response to the global economic slowdown underway.

"Companies really need to think through the implications such measures will have on their existing workforce," Mr Dundon said.

"We're going to expect an increase in absenteeism levels over the next 12 months as a result of all of the change."

Direct Health Solutions research found about 80 per cent of all people who say they can't come to work are legitimately sick, with the remainder using their sick leave for other purposes. Mr Dundon said the use of the "sickie" - faking an illness to have a day off - was exaggerated. The survey of 183 workplaces covering about 1.2 million workers across 13 industry groups, which Mr Dundon said was the first of its type in Australia, was conducted between March and August this year.

The Role of the Supervisor in Managing Absenteeism

Recommended Disciplinary Procedures

According to the most recent [CCH Unscheduled Absence Survey](#), employers are losing ground when it comes to keeping workers on the job. Unscheduled absenteeism rates have risen to their highest level since 1999. What continues to be of most concern is that almost two out of three employees who don't show up for work aren't physically ill.

For most companies, the responsibility for managing absenteeism has fallen primarily on immediate supervisors. These supervisors are often the only people who are aware that a certain employee is absent. They are in the best position to understand the circumstances surrounding an individual's absence and to notice a problem at an early stage. Therefore, their active involvement in the company's absence procedures is pivotal to the overall effectiveness and future success of an absence policy or program.

Sadly, however, most supervisors have not received any guidance or training in managing absenteeism. They have been left on their own to carry out the often unpopular task of identifying, confronting and resolving absence abuse.

To ensure that supervisors are comfortable and competent in their role of managing absenteeism, they need to have the full support of senior management. All parties must be aware of the aim of absence policies and procedures. Should there be discrepancies between departments; a policy can lose its effectiveness.

To provide more consistency, supervisors should be trained in their responsibilities about managing absenteeism, advised how to conduct effective return-to-work interviews, and educated in the use of disciplinary procedures when necessary.

The Responsibilities of the Supervisor

In addition to ensuring that work is appropriately covered during the employee's absence, there are a number of other critical actions that supervisors need to take to manage absenteeism. They should:

- ensure that all employees are fully aware of the organization's policies and procedures for dealing with absence,
- be the first point of contact when an employee phones in sick,
- maintain appropriately detailed, accurate, and up-to-date absence records for their staff, (e.g., date, nature of illness/reason for absence, expected return to work date, doctor's certification if necessary),
- identify any patterns or trends of absence which cause concern,
- conduct return-to-work interviews, and
- Implement disciplinary procedures where necessary.

The Return-to-Work Interview

The training of supervisors in how to best manage absenteeism should include instruction on how to conduct effective and fair return-to-work interviews. Recent national surveys indicate that these interviews are regarded as one of the most effective tools for managing short-term absenteeism.

The return-to-work discussion will enable the supervisor to welcome the employee back to work, in addition to demonstrating management's strong commitment to controlling and managing absenteeism in the workplace. The interview will enable a check to be made that the employee is well enough to return to work.

The necessary paperwork can be completed, so that the absence and its conclusion are properly recorded. The fact that an established procedure is in place to investigate and discuss absence with an employee may, on its own, act as a deterrent for non-attendance for disingenuous reasons.

Interviews need to be carried out as promptly as possible following the absentee's return to work (no later than one day after his or her return). The employee should be given ample opportunity to outline the reasons for his or her absence. The supervisor should use the interview as a time to explore any issues that the employee may have which are leading to absence.

The goal is to foster an open and supportive [culture](#). The procedures are in place to make sure that help and advice is offered when needed and to ensure that the employee is fit to return to work. Employees will usually appreciate the opportunity to explain genuine reasons for absence within a formalized structure. Should the supervisor doubt the authenticity of the reasons given for absence, he/she should use this opportunity to express any doubts or concerns.

At all times, the employee must be aware that the interview is not merely part of company procedures, but a significant meeting during which the absence has been noted and may have implications for future employment. The company's disciplinary procedure, in the event of unacceptable levels of absence, should be explained to the employee.

The manager may choose to outline how the absence affected the department. The message should be that the employee was missed and that productivity suffered. The manner in which the department was required to reorganize staffing arrangements might also be explained. This would demonstrate that the efficiency of the work unit was adversely affected by the absence.

The supervisor should then brief the returning employee about the current situation (i.e., what tasks are now priorities, what work has already been carried out and where the employee should now focus his/her efforts).

At no point during the meeting should the interview become a form of "punishment," but should be seen as an occasion to highlight and explain the repercussions of absence within the department. The vast majority of employees derive a sense of pride and achievement from their work and management should be encouraged to treat these individuals as responsible adults.

Most employees understand reasonable rules and do not want to be threatened into compliance. The small percentage of employees who indeed have an absence problem will require close supervision and possibly even punitive measures for excessive absenteeism. These few employees who are irresponsible should be handled individually and firmly.

The following guidelines outline the recommended steps to be taken in cases where short-term absence is considered to be above an acceptable level in a particular period of time

Stage 1: Counseling Interview

- The immediate supervisor should advise the employee of his concern over the absences, try to establish the reasons for the sickness and determine what needs to be done to improve attendance.
- If any medical condition is identified at this stage, and is likely to have an effect on job suitability, the supervisor should arrange an appointment with a company-approved doctor. This should be confirmed to the employee in writing within five working days.
- If, from the discussion, the problem does not appear to be due to an underlying unfitness for work, the supervisor should advise the employee that, while the recorded ailments may be genuine, a sustained improvement in attendance is expected or the next stage in the procedure will be taken.
- A review of the attendance will automatically be made each month for the next six months.

Stage 2: First Formal Review (Verbal Warning Stage)

- If the employee's absences continue to worsen following analysis and regular monitoring, he should be invited to attend a formal review meeting with the supervisor.
- The absence record should be detailed in a letter inviting the employee for this interview. The employee should be advised that she is entitled to be represented by a union representative or a colleague as appropriate.

- The purpose of this meeting will be to:
 - continue to discuss the underlying reasons for the absences,
 - advise the employee of the service and cost implications of her absence, and
 - warn the employee (except when deciding to seek medical advice) that if there is not a substantial and sustained improvement, her employment may be terminated because of her inability to maintain an acceptable attendance level. This constitutes the verbal warning.
- Where medical attention is warranted, action must be taken immediately. The meeting is therefore only adjourned to allow this part of the process to be completed. Within five working days, the employee must receive medical advice. The meeting is then reconvened with HR and the doctor's opinion is discussed.
- If the doctor confirms fitness for work, the employee should be warned about the consequences of continued absence.

Stage 3: Second Formal Review (Written Warning Stage)

- Where regular monitoring indicates that no improvement in the absence pattern has occurred, a second formal meeting will be arranged with HR.
- The letter inviting the employee to the meeting will include the absence record and, again, advice on representation.
- Any new information given at the meeting regarding ill health or a change in the nature of sickness may need to be assessed by a company-approved doctor.
- The employee should be given the opportunity to explain his or her absence record. If appropriate, the supervisor should inform the employee that a formal written warning is being issued and that this warning will remain in the employee's file for a specified period. A copy of the warning should be issued to the employee and to his/her representative.
- The employee should be informed that failure to comply with the company's attendance expectations, and to improve on the present unacceptable record of absence, will result in the termination of the employee's employment.
- Where fitness for work is in doubt, proceed with redeployment options according to the guidance received by the doctor. Consult with the employee's union representative (if applicable) on the redeployment process and options.

Stage 4: Temporary Suspension from Work

- If, following the implementation of the previous stages of the disciplinary process, no improvement in attendance occurs, management may proceed with a temporary suspension without pay. The intention to suspend should be confirmed in writing with details of start and end dates. A copy of the letter of suspension should be sent to the employee's representative (if applicable).

Stage 5: Termination of Employment

- This is the final stage in the disciplinary process whereby the employee is dismissed for inability to comply with the company's requirements for attendance at work. Dismissal can only take place with the written authorization of a senior manager and HR.
- The letter calling the employee in will, again, include advice on representation and will outline the absence record. The employee should be advised that, as a result of the interview, he or she may be dismissed for incapability to perform work duties.
- Again, the company doctor may have to be consulted if any new information is forthcoming in regard to the employee's health or capacity for work.
- Where redeployment is not possible, or appropriate, consider proceeding with dismissal for reasons of capability. Eligibility for disability benefit will depend on the circumstances of each case.
- If a decision is made to dismiss on the basis of capability, a copy of the letter of dismissal should be sent to the employee's representative (if appropriate).
- The employee may have the right to appeal against dismissal. The appeal should be in line with the company's disciplinary procedures.

Challenges in Managing Absenteeism

Be aware that supervisors are often uncomfortable or unwilling to report on those who have exceeded acceptable levels of absenteeism. Because of the many pressures already on supervisors, the consistent implementation of absenteeism policies is not always their top priority.

It is important to try to take the subjectivity out of managing absenteeism and to ensure that all employees are treated the same. It is essential to be consistent, persistent, and fair to all. When absence is not addressed or addressed in an inconsistent manner, lower morale can result. Employees can feel they have been treated unfairly when they perceive other absent employees are "getting away with it."

The majority of employees will appreciate policies and programs that are facilitative, rather than punitive. Stringent or punitive measures that force employees to come to work can result in employees that then become, "absent while at work."

They do as little as possible and resist any effort to get them to do more. Other programs should be implemented that help employees be present at work, such as flexible work scheduling, job sharing, attendance awards and wellness programs.

IDENTIFY THE COMPONENTS OF AN EAP

The Employee Assistance Professional Association of Australia states that:

"An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a work-based intervention program designed to enhance the emotional, mental and general psychological wellbeing of all employees and includes services for immediate family members.

The aim is to provide preventive and proactive interventions for the early detection, identification and/or resolution of both work and personal problems that may adversely affect performance and wellbeing.

These problems and issues may include, but are not limited to, relationships, health, trauma, substance abuse, gambling and other addictions, financial problems, depression, anxiety disorders, and psychiatric disorders, communication problems, legal and coping with change."

As a result of the loss in productivity caused by the associated health and personal issues of their employees, many organisations have commenced Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). At times they are referred to as corporate wellness or health programs, workplace wellness programs and most commonly are known as health and wellbeing programs. These programs generally focus on the physical health issues of their employees only, although some organisations are also attempting to address other areas as well.

Wellness Programs



What Are Wellness Programs?

Wellness Programs are excellent for waistlines and your organization's bottom line

In today's hectic world, most of us are spending more time at work, and have increasingly less time to look after our health. For a long time, businesses have understood the benefits associated with keeping workers well – increased productivity from reduced absenteeism and reduced disability claims.

For these reasons, coupled with the fact that many businesses realized double-digit health care costs last year, businesses should consider wellness programs as a way to keep workers healthful.

But just how important are wellness programs to employees? How often are they willing to participate in wellness programs designed to positively impact their health? Who do staff members trust to provide them with important information about their health?

Answers to these questions and more were lately garnered from a research study commissioned by the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses Inc. (AAOHN).

The AAOHN survey questioned 500 workers nationwide about their perceptions of wellness programs. More than three-quarters of all participants indicated wellness programs are a good way to improve their overall health, and nearly 60% consider these offerings an incentive to remain with their current business.

Worker retention and turnover impact the bottom line, so building wellness programs into the work site culture is a valuable way to help retain talented staff members and to enhancing personal health and workplace productivity.

Wellness Programs Most Wanted

Employees appear to have their own agenda when it comes to their health. With new pressures resulting from an unstable economy, national security threats and work/balance issues, it's not surprising that 85 percent of survey respondents cited stress management as a priority topic for corporate wellness programs.

In addition to stress, other preferred topic areas for wellness programs include health screening programs (84 percent), exercise/physical fitness programs (84 percent), health insurance education (81 percent) and disease management (DM) workshops (80 percent).

In addition to lifestyle and personal health issues, those asked expressed concern about work-related health issues, including strains and injuries resulting from lifting or task-oriented muscle repetition, exposure to harmful substances, personal injury, vision changes due to computer work and workplace violence.

Starting a Wellness Program



With such a broad range of health concerns, a key goal for employers is locating a way to proactively address the health needs of the biggest number of staff members, and effectively change unhealthful behaviors, promote wellness and ward off illness and injury.

Printed health and wellness materials such as wellness posters, wellness newsletters or wellness handouts present an easy solution. But it's important to remember that different people require different formats for learning.

A good rule of thumb – provide information in a selection of learning formats like wellness videos, pamphlets, health-related quizzes or assessments, bulletin / display boards, brown bag lunch presentations and reimbursement or wellness incentive programs.

This assumes you have overcome the first hurdle – getting individuals to participate in wellness programs. While survey respondents indicated wellness programs are important, just six out of 10 (60 percent) reported that they participated in the wellness programs at their businesses. The other 40% cited lack of interest and lack of time as deterrents.

This points to the need for an extensive, structured wellness program using a creative approach, with an incentive for participation and effective wellness program marketing and advertising.

By investing in organized wellness programs – headed by a wellness consultant or on-site nurse – companies can give employees the access to the health information they want, and increase participation and generate interest at the same time.

The result of effective wellness programs? Workers become smarter consumers of healthcare who feel empowered to take charge of their personal health. And healthier workers make for a healthier bottom line.

Free Wellness Program Resources

Wellness Proposals offers more than 15,000 free health and wellness handouts, wellness posters, employee wellness newsletters, wellness presentations and more. These resources are from a wide variety of organizations and will make it much easier and less costly to operate wellness programs of all types. The free wellness library can be found by clicking here: <http://wellnessproposals.com/wellness-library/>

The best companies put an emphasis on wellness programs.



70 Of the Top 100 Companies in the U.S. Offer Offsite Gym Memberships

97 percent offer on-site flu shots regularly. 87 percent offer on-site blood pressure screenings. What is your corporate wellness program doing to help your employees with their health?

Lack of employee engagement is costing you money.

Low employee engagement is the biggest obstacle to behavior change, and unhealthy behaviors cost companies billions. It's time to break the cycle with employee wellness

Read more: <http://keas.com/#ixzz2VlkqQDiN>



Workplace Health and Wellness

Generate more productive energy at your workplace

Wesley Health Promotion's targeted employee health interventions are designed to provide a positive investment.

We have been delivering cost effective onsite employee health programs for 16 years with services including:

- Onsite Health Assessments
- Fatigue Management
- Flu Vaccinations
- Skin checks
- Workplace Weight Loss
- Health Education Seminars & Workshops
- Ergonomic assessments
- Manual handling Training



return on your

intervention

The imperative for workplace wellness in Australia

The cost to society of chronic disease and the ageing population is creating an imperative for action. In order to change the trajectory of chronic disease, health risk factors must be addressed as a matter of priority; the current imbalance in resources for the treatment of chronic diseases versus their prevention is no longer sustainable.

The ageing of the baby boomer generation and the rising prevalence of chronic disease are putting great pressure on both the health system and employers in Australia.

While long life may be a sign of good health, the growth in Australia's ageing population over the next 30 years and the ageing workforce will affect the country's ability to be economically sustainable as health costs soar — in 2007–08, health expenditure represented 9.1 per cent of GDP — and the dependency ratio increases

At the same time, there is a growing prevalence of chronic disease in Australia as a consequence of both ageing and lifestyle changes, with increased risk behaviours such as poor diet, alcohol consumption and physical inactivity. According to the 2008 National Health Survey, chronic disease represents more than 80 per cent of the burden of disease and injury in Australia which is a major human cost. For example, chronic disease is the leading cause of disability in the community

Chronic disease is a substantial burden for Australian employers

Based on results from the 2004–05 National Health Survey, approximately 33 per cent of working-age Australians between 25 and 64 years old (approximately 3.4 million people) reported having at least one of eight selected chronic diseases – arthritis, asthma, coronary heart disease (CHD), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), depression, diabetes, osteoporosis or cerebrovascular disease.

The AIHW 2010 Risk Factors and Participation in Work report found that 96 per cent of working-age Australians had at least one chronic disease risk factor and 72 per cent of working-age Australians had multiple risk factors.

Corporate wellness programs

In June 2011, Nicola Roxon MP — Minister for Health and Ageing, launched a Joint Statement of Commitment (PDF) promoting good health at work, demonstrating the commitment of businesses and unions alike.

Corporate wellness programs, also known variously as health and wellbeing programs, prevention and wellness programs, and employee wellness programs, are recognised as having financial and significant business performance benefits as well as personal and people-based benefits at work and at home. These personal benefits include physical, social and psychological considerations. Research shows that good employee health and wellbeing boosts organisational health.

Components of an effective program

For a corporate wellness program to be effective, it needs to understand the demographics of the employees, the key risks to the business, and be designed so as to target the needs of the organisation and its people, have a demonstrated commitment from all levels of management, be effectively communicated, and well implemented. Monitoring and evaluation are also important in determining potential improvements and losses, successes and sustainability.

Researchers have estimated that approximately 1500 businesses and government bodies have a wellness program in Australia, a minority by anyone's standards. Yet there are significant benefits to be gained by having an appropriate wellness program, including:

- a potential return on investment of 5 to 1
- greater productivity based on less absence, better performance, improved physical and psychological/mental health
- higher morale, employee pride, trust, commitment
- Gaining and retaining good employees.

Information from a survey of 600 businesses show the international experience of benefits from having corporate wellness programs are:

- risk reduction
- behavioural change
- health costs
- health insurance claims
- productivity
- absenteeism
- workcover claims

The Australian experience supports this assertion of real benefits from corporate wellness programs.

Evidence suggests that health and wellbeing programs do not need to be expensive to be effective. Many workplaces have implemented holistic low-cost programs that result in significant benefits, such as improved staff retention and engagement, and lower absenteeism.

Successful corporate wellness programs need to be targeted to the organisation and the identified risks which may be based on lifestyle, behavioural, and preventable factors.

Three tier approach

Australian researcher Dr John Lang for the Australian Government suggests a three tier approach to the content of a wellness program: 'The Core Components are available to all employees; with Discretionary Elements where participants have to meet certain eligibility requirements; and Local Programs which cater for the special needs and/or interests of smaller groups, usually in relation to their site or job function.'

Action Plans

An action plan integrates all of the strategies you have developed throughout your [business plan](#) into a highly

organized and prioritised plan of action designed to achieve your stated business mission and goals. This is achieved by breaking down the strategies you developed into small, achievable steps and then identifying the actions you need to take for each step. It can be used as a short term (6-12 months) action plan to achieve short term business goals, a medium term action plan (2-3 years) or a long term action plan (3-5 years).

An action plan identifies the business goal (what you would like to achieve) and the strategies that can be implemented to reach that goal.

It also explains the specific actions that need to take place in order to achieve the business strategy. This will include the timeframe, roles and responsibilities, performance indicators and alternative methods that can be implemented to reach the business objectives.

Program options

There are many similarities and options available to be included in these programs. Some of these are presented below, as identified by Dr Lang and others:

- face to face health and lifestyle assessment (health check) is useful to gain additional data, particularly biometric data (SBP/DBP, cholesterol, blood glucose, BMI/WHR)
- annual health checks
- referral (general practitioner, psychologist/employee assistance program, nutritionist etc)
- self-managed programs (online/workbook based)
- facilitated programs
- health coaching
- activities (exercise classes, relaxation classes, walking challenges etc)
- membership fees (eg gym, pool, squash etc)
- seminars and workshops
- quit smoking programs
- on-site skin checks
- health resource centre
- online health support health portal (information based)
- dynamic health support program
- newsletter(s)
- fact sheets
- influenza vaccinations
- work/life balance programs
- provision of fruit

In Australia, the Federal Government has developed a Healthy Workers Initiative which is specifically targeted at the working population. The initiative is being run in each state and territory, and incorporates a range of incentives for employers to encourage participation in the free programs. Contact the Department of Health in your state or territory for further details

Workplace Wellness

Over ten million Australians spend an average of eight hours per day in the workplace. Effective workplace health programs have been shown to improve the health and wellbeing of employees and facilitate organisational changes, such as reduced absenteeism and increased productivity.

Workplace health programs can cover a broad range of health areas including nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation and/or stress management to improve the health and well being of all staff.

The Heart Foundation have a range of resources to assist any sized workplace develop a workplace wellness program.

Healthier Workplaces WA

The Healthier Workplace WA program offers free services to all workplaces across Western Australia to help them support and encourage workers to make positive lifestyle changes that benefit everyone. [Find out more](#)

Healthy Workplace Guide - Ten steps to implementing a workplace health program

To assist businesses to improve the health of their employees, the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council NSW and the Physical Activity, Nutrition & Obesity Research Group (PANORG) from the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney, have collaborated to develop a practical, evidence based ten step guide. This guide provides easy to follow steps on creating a workplace that supports employees in leading healthy lifestyles, including how to get started, construct and implement a workplace health program.

Healthy Workplace Activities: At a glance

This information resource provides practical suggestions for activities that can be easily implemented within your workplace.



A Staff Wellness Program Case Study – the NSW Heart Foundation

In 2009 the NSW office of the Heart Foundation implemented a Wellness Program. Activities were developed around a theme of 'Mind, Body, Spirit' and included meditation classes, lunch time seminars, volunteering opportunities and team building activity sessions.

Healthy Catering Guidelines for Staff

Serving healthier food in the workplace is an important part of promoting health and wellbeing among your staff.

Heart Foundation's Stand @ Work Study

The Heart Foundation's study commenced in October 2011 at the Sydney and Newcastle offices. It is anticipated that results will be available late 2012/early 2013. The study is a collaboration between the Heart Foundation NSW and the Prevention Research Collaboration, University of Sydney. The aim of the study is to determine whether using sit-stand workstations changes sitting times in office workers.

Get your staff moving

It only takes small changes to reduce the amount of time we sit each day. Moving more is also a great way to improve heart health. [See our ideas](#) on how you can encourage your staff to reduce their time sitting.

Heart Foundation Walking



This is Australia's largest network of free community-based [walking programs](#). Your staff can join an existing Walking group or start their own.

Heartmoves

If some of your staff prefer a gentle physical activity program, Heartmoves is the answer. It has been designed for people with lifestyle risk factors or with stable, long term health conditions. A gentle introduction to exercise may be just the ticket to get your staff moving. Find your nearest [Heartmoves](#) program.

An example of a Wellness Program

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA – WELLNESS PROGRAM

"UCR is committed to a campus culture that promotes wellness through healthy lifestyles that enhance the quality of life for our faculty, staff, and students".

Jane Close Conoley, Interim Chancellor

What is "Wellness?" It is a lifestyle. A way of living that encourages good physical and mental health. It is a balanced lifestyle that includes an emphasis on the body, mind and spirit.

UCR cares about your health. The UCR Faculty and Staff Wellness Program was created to encourage all faculty, staff, and retirees to live healthier lifestyles and create a culture of health throughout the campus.

UCR prioritizes the health and quality of life of the campus community and offers resources and expertise to support a healthy and high performing workforce.

The UCR Wellness Initiative is a collaborative partnership of campus resources with the goal of helping the campus community along the path to a vibrant, healthy and balanced lifestyle. This will be attained through:

- Integrated wellness programs
- Resources that promote the importance of maintaining an optimal quality of life
- Fostering a culture of health and wellness

View a 90 second video about the UCR Faculty and Staff Wellness Program!

UCR offers numerous health improvement and wellness programs including: educational seminars & wellness workshops, behavior change programs, the Walking Fit program, wellness-related tips and resources, and the Wellness Ambassador program. Highlighted programs include Mobile Fit and Wellness Works (for Dining Services).

Numerous studies have shown that worksite wellness programs have a positive impact on employees, as well as on the organization's bottom line. These programs and strategies all contribute to a health campus culture. View our wellness program video here

Helpful websites:

http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/123855/Ministerial_Direction_23_Guidelines.pdf

<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/active-living/get-active/Pages/Workplace-wellness.aspx>

<http://www.workplaceohs.com.au/workplace-culture/corporate-wellness-programs/>

<http://www.workplaceohs.com.au/workplace-culture/corporate-wellness-programs/>

<http://www.pwc.com.au/industry/healthcare/assets/Workplace-Wellness-Sep10.pdf>

http://wesweight.rtrk.com.au/?scid=89871&kw=1749644&pub_cr_id=31783303173

<http://www.eapaa.org.au/>

<http://www.au.ppcworldwide.com/wellbeing/eap.aspx>

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/eap/>

http://humanresources.about.com/od/laborrelations/a/manage_absences_2.htm

<http://www.news.com.au/business/worklife/who-takes-the-most-sickies/story-e6frfma9-1111118055982>

http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/123855/Ministerial_Direction_23_Guidelines.pdf

<http://www.hcamag.com/news/domestic/healthy-workers-more-productive/111741/>

<http://www.bayt.com/en/career-article-2821/>

<http://latrobe.libguides.com/content.php?pid=15299&sid=366660>

<http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/businesscase/benefits/productivity.html>