Moving Worksite Wellness Toward a Sustainable Future

Worksite wellness is under great scrutiny. The RAND Report, healthcare blogs, industry leaders and more have called into question the approach and efficacy of most worksite wellness programs. Up until now, the standard protocol in the field of worksite wellness has been to (i) assess each participating employee and uncover biomedical risk factors, (ii) give feedback to each participant based on that limited scope and (iii) link each participant to the appropriate lifestyle/disease management program – with lots of incentives along the way. Honestly, is this working? It’s time for a reset and to look at what we need to do differently to create a sustainable future for worksites - and for our profession.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify 3 “best practices” that merit further investigation.
2. Reframe the value proposition.
3. Explore emerging models.

PRESENTERS

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What We’re Doing – And Why It’s Not Working

TYPICAL PROTOCOL UP TO NOW

HRA or biometric screening (+ incentive) → Feedback report or meeting with health coach (+ incentive) → Individual employee linked to a lifestyle management program (+ incentive)

“BEST’ PRACTICES

• Health risk reduction, risk reduction
• Incentives
• Individually focused

WHY EACH BEST PRACTICE MERITS FURTHER INVESTIGATION

1. Health Risk Reduction
   • **Focus primarily on physical risk factors and not looking at the fuller picture.**
   • Traditional biomedical risk factors like smoking, cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, etc. account for less than 1/3 of the social gradient in mortality from heart disease.
   • Workplace stress is as bad for the heart as smoking & high cholesterol; it is estimated that 75-90% of all visits to primary care doctors are related to stress.
   • As people become more disengaged at work, their cholesterol, triglycerides and glucose levels increase; disengaged workers have nearly twice the onset of new diagnoses for anxiety and depression and 62% more workplace injuries than their engaged counterparts.

2. Incentives
   • More than 2/3 of employers with 50+ employees (69%) are using incentives to increase participation; 10% are using outcomes-based incentives.
   • According to RAND, the impact of incentives on health outcomes is “unlikely to be clinically meaningful.”
   • Incentives lead to a whole host of unintended consequences.

3. Individually Focused
   • **We keep blaming the individual, without looking enough at the larger factors that are influencing our choices.**
   • Larger scale: urban planning and food subsidies
   • Smaller scale: not looking enough at the “contextual factors” that influence impact, such as workplace culture and leadership support.
Reframing the Value Proposition

FROM WELLNESS TO WELL-BEING

- Career = What you do
- Social = Love and connection
- Financial = Resource management
- Physical = Energy
- Emotional = Resiliency
- Community = Where you live

CAREER: Do you like what you do everyday? Are you eager to begin each day at work? Do you find meaning in your work and does it reflect your deepest values? Do get to use your strengths everyday at work?

- Use your strengths, everyday.
- As best you can, find meaning in your work.

SOCIAL: Do you interact well with others? Are you able to maintain long-term friendships? Do you have a support system that you can rely on when you need it? Are you in a loving relationship with shared values? Do you give your family time and attention? Do you feel loved?

- Spend 6 hours a day socializing.
- Mix socializing with everything – work, play, etc.

FINANCIAL: Are you living within your means? Are you able to save for the future? Are you properly insured? Have you created default systems to help manage your finances? Are you spending money in a way that improves your sense of life satisfaction?

- Create default systems to minimize stress.
- Spend money on experiences over things.

PHYSICAL: What is your physical condition? Are you meeting the basics – eating well, drinking plenty of water, exercising and avoiding smoking? Are you getting enough rest? Overall, would you say that you have plenty of energy?

- Do whatever it takes to make it easy.
- Do whatever it takes to make it fun.

EMOTIONAL: Are you managing your stress well? How resilient are you? Do you regularly put into practices, such as meditation, to respond to life’s daily stressors?

- Harness stress as added energy.
- Take mini-breaks often.

COMMUNITY: Do you feel safe where you live? Are you actively engaged with your neighborhood and community? Are you giving back and “being the change” for your community?

- Reframe errands as opportunities to connect with your community.
- Be the change.

Source: Tom Rath and Jim Harter, Well Being: The Five Essential Elements
SHIFT FROM CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS TO “AUTONOMOUS SUPPORT”

Research consistently shows change efforts fail in the long run when based on carrots and sticks, yet this approach is still predominantly used today. In a 2012 TED Talk, Edward Deci himself put it best when he said:

“There are literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds now of scientific investigations that have shown when you’re autonomously motivated you’re behavior will be more creative, you’ll be a better problem solver, when you encounter obstacles you’ll be able to think outside the box and figure out what to do about them, your performance will be better particularly at heuristic activities, and your emotions will be much more positive. And very importantly, autonomous motivation is associated with both physical and psychological health.”

- We can’t “get” people to change, but we can create conditions that support people being empowered.
- Incentives can lead to compliance, but they don’t lead to commitment.
- Intrinsic motivators: competency + autonomy + relatedness + purpose
- Behavior change is not as simple as finding a magic trick to motivate someone or telling them what to do in a different way. It requires a fundamental shift in how people think about their lives and their choices. It requires a shift to foster constructive THINKING, not controlling behaviors

SHIFT FROM FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL TO ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING

- Focus more on creating a thriving workplace culture and thriving organizational well-being.
- Thriving organizational well-being is NOT the same as a “healthy culture” that worksite wellness professionals describe; it encompasses everything that makes up the employee experience at a company – with the quality of leadership and whether or not employees feel valued topping the list.
- The Towers Watson 2012 Global Workforce Study found that whether or not people feel energized by work (i.e., supported in their physical, emotional and social well-being) and are enabled to be effective in their role plays a huge role on their level of engagement.
- A toxic workplace culture will trump any individual employee well-being initiative every time!
Exploring Emerging Models & Putting into Action

INDUSTRY TRENDS

• Industry leaders are finally acknowledging the importance of intrinsic motivation (yet still have a long way to go to reconcile this realization with the continued over-reliance on incentives).

• Several organizations and respected leaders are now focusing more on culture:
  o HERO has created a culture sub-committee to look at the research, define a healthy workplace culture, and move this discussion forward.
  o The CDC has a Total Worker Health™ initiative recognizing the importance of fusing employee health and safety with career well-being.
  o The Gallup Organization’s research on well-being is profoundly shaping the expanded view of well-being.
  o The Blue Zones work is also expanding the view of well-being.
  o Tony Schwartz (leadership expert) focuses on well-being and energy as a cornerstone for organizational effectiveness. (www.theenergyproject.com).
  o Dr. Dee Edington advocates for culture change first before any behavior change and says paying people to be healthy is not the answer and not sustainable.
  o Dr. David Hunnicutt also started advocating for culture change first before any behavior change efforts.
  o Dr. Judd Allen has been focusing on wellness cultures for more than 30 years.

BUILDING A THRIVING CULTURE

• Career well-being is the trump card and has the largest impact of all other areas of well-being. Start with organizational well-being and culture FIRST.

• Partner with others responsible for leadership development, training & development, employee engagement.

“GOING STEALTH”

• Be a change agent more than an expert.

• Don’t call it “Wellness.” Embed well-being into other culture and training & development initiatives.
About Us

ABOUT LAURA
Laura Putnam, MA, is CEO and founder of Motion Infusion, Inc. She works with Fortune 500 companies, nonprofit organizations and academic institutions. An expert in motivation, behavior change, human performance improvement and building a healthier, happier and more innovative organization, Laura is a frequent presenter and keynote at national and international conferences and events. She is also an active member of the American Heart Association’s Greater Bay Area 2020 Task Force.

Laura draws from a background in education, public policy, competitive athletics, professional dance, and wellness. Her work experiences have ranged from teaching in urban public high schools to leading a nationally recognized youth leadership organization to working on the US Senate Antitrust Subcommittee. In addition, Laura was a nationally competitive collegiate gymnast, a professional dancer, and is a certified Pilates and fitness instructor. Laura holds a Bachelor’s degree from Stanford University in International Relations and a Masters degree in Education from Brown University.

ABOUT MOTION INFUSION
Motion Infusion, Inc., is a wellness and human performance improvement provider that is helping organizations to “get in motion.” By merging evidence-based methods from the field of wellness with best practices from the field of learning and development, Motion Infusion is providing innovative solutions to improve employee well-being and innovation.

ABOUT ROSIE
Rosie Ward - PhD, MPH, MCHES, BCC, Certified Intrinsic Coach® Rosie is a consultant, professional coach and author known as a thought leader who challenges the status quo, pushes boundaries, and engages people and organizations to find success through shifting old, ineffective thinking habits. She works with organizations to develop and implement strategies to create thriving workplace cultures that free, fuel and inspire people to bring their best selves to work. With more than 20 years of experience, Rosie is a sought-after speaker for industry conferences, leadership groups, professional organizations, and more.

Rosie serves as the Director of Health Coaching Education for Fairview Physician Associates in Minneapolis where she oversees bringing a people-centric approach to supporting individual well-being and develops physicians to think differently and provide better care. She also independently consults with organizations, blending the worlds of Organizational Development and employee well-being to provide a unique approach to create thriving workplace cultures.

Rosie has degrees in kinesiology, public health and a Ph.D. in Organization and Management where her research focused on organizational culture, intrinsic motivation and coaching. She is regularly interviewed for business publications, is a contributing author to the book Organization Development in Healthcare: High Impact Practices for a Complex and Changing Environment. She is also co-author of the book How to Build a Thriving Culture at Work: Featuring the 7 Points of Transformation with business partner Dr. Jon Robison; the book is a fusion of organizational and employee well-being and will be available in early October, 2014.