
CREATING A CULTURE OF WELLNESS

THE KEY TO REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS
AND BOOSTING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

CREATING A CULTURE OF WELLNESS

THE KEY TO REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS AND BOOSTING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Gym memberships and fitness programs are wonderful, but they mean nothing if they're only provided to check the box. To improve the overall well-being of employees, employers need to create a culture surrounding the health and wellness of their workplace.

When offered as part of a well-nurtured culture, wellness benefits are undeniably crucial for both employers and employees. **Research shows** that a focus on wellness can encourage employees to eat healthier food, exercise more, smoke less, and manage stress more effectively. For employers, the impact of offering wellness benefits is clear and hugely positive, from increased employee engagement and improved morale to better retention rates and reduced healthcare costs. According to the Harvard Business Review, every dollar invested in health interventions **yields \$6 in healthcare savings.**

However, it's not all smooth sailing for employers who want to offer or are already offering wellness benefits for their workforce. Participation in initiatives may not be strong, employees may resist changes in lifestyle behavior, and leaders may not be engaged in healthy lifestyles. The good news is, a properly-cultivated wellness culture can avert that.

In this whitepaper, FitOn Health takes an incisive look at how creating a culture of wellness can pave the way for improved employee satisfaction and reduced healthcare costs, which, undoubtedly, can pay dividends for you as an employer. Read on to learn more.



ACCORDING TO THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN HEALTH INTERVENTIONS YIELDS \$6 IN HEALTHCARE SAVINGS.










THE CURRENT STATE OF WELLNESS BENEFITS

The gospel of wellness benefits has been preached far and wide, prompting even the most reluctant of employers to take swift and decisive action in that regard. The post-pandemic period, in particular, has changed many things for employers, including workplace trends.

For instance, those who were slow to offer mental health benefits have inevitably had to invest more in this area in the past two years. Even before the pandemic struck, the vast majority of Gen Z and Millennial employees – respectively 91% and 85% – already said that employers should have a mental health policy in place, according to a survey commissioned by Zapier. With the pandemic having a huge impact on people's working conditions by creating a vast amount of additional stress and/or anxiety, employers have had to put this aspect top of mind ever since.

Similarly, trends such as stress management, digital health solutions, family flexibility, and financial health programs continue to take center stage in 2023. The overarching theme across all five trends is quite obvious: employees are craving and championing for wellness benefits that prioritize their overall well-being above all else, and they aren't willing to settle for less.

The most common wellness benefits offered by employers include:

-  Fitness classes
-  Gym memberships
-  Health and lifestyle coaching
-  Online health risk assessments
-  Weight loss programs
-  Flu shots and health clinics
-  Biometric screenings (health screenings that measure blood pressure, height, weight, and body mass index)
-  Tobacco cessation programs
-  Preventative care management

Often, though, these wellness benefits aren't nearly as effective in driving health outcomes and employee engagement as they should be. While that can be attributed to a variety of factors, it's mostly because the benefits aren't tailored to help the employees who need them the most. In other words, they're generic and far from the personalized programs that employees really want. What employers need to do is listen to their employees. They need to talk to workers to understand what their barriers are to start engaging.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WELLNESS BENEFITS

If recent headlines and evidence are anything to go by, employers need to look at the wellness benefits they offer employees from an entirely different perspective. What worked before doesn't cut it anymore. Strategies that were useful during pandemic are no longer practical. As far as adopting innovative wellness programs goes, it's now or never for employers.

New and Innovative Benefits Worth Trying Out

The door to thoughtful wellness benefits is wide open, and it leads employers to a variety of solid options:

1. WELL-THOUGHT-OUT PERKS

While employers mean well when they provide premium out-of-work wellness perks, employees value basic benefits just as much (if not more). Put differently, they want wellness programs that don't place the whole onus on them. According to a **2019 HBR Study**, when it comes to a safe environment, workers value the basics (for instance, noise neutralization, clean air, and natural light) over fancier resources (healthy lunches and tech-based fitness tools).

This, however, doesn't mean that employers abandon out-of-work wellness benefits completely. Rather, it means they should learn to strike a balance between the two realms, ensuring the perks they offer are holistic and inclusive from the get-go.

2. PERSONALIZED INCENTIVES

In this day and age, generic wellness benefits simply don't work. In fact, employees generally dislike them, and would rather avoid them completely than get zero personal value.

With that in mind, instead of offering free yoga classes or access to fitness tools, companies should try to meet the most vulnerable workers where they are offering support tailored to their needs. Providing those employees with transportation to routine appointments or helping them find a primary care doctor, for example, would improve their health outcomes than cash incentives.

3. WHOLE-HEALTH EMPLOYEE BENEFIT SOLUTIONS

There are fitness apps, and then there are whole-health digital wellness platforms. The latter are precisely what employers need to adopt for their employees at this moment in time. Here's why. From meditation to nutritional guidance to wellness tips, these platforms offer top-tier personalized whole-health content that engages members from start to finish. It's like having all wellness benefits imaginable squeezed into one easy-to-use app.

FitOn Health, for instance, is a true whole-health benefit solution, offering access to the largest variety and nationally based in-person experiences. From local small studios to big-box gyms, employers can empower their employees to personalize their fitness journeys wherever they are!



**STRATEGIES THAT WERE USEFUL
DURING PANDEMIC ARE NO
LONGER PRACTICAL. AS FAR AS
ADOPTING INNOVATIVE WELLNESS
PROGRAMS GOES, IT'S NOW OR
NEVER FOR EMPLOYERS.**

DO THESE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES REALLY WORK?

It's easy to dismiss current innovative wellness benefits as just another temporary wave that'll eventually pass and leave no solid mark behind. But the truth is, they truly work, driving better health outcomes and employee engagement in a way no "cookie-cutter" approach can.

Take personalized benefits, for instance. By providing perks such as a wellness stipend, employers can reimburse employees for any expenses they incur during their wellness journey. This is a real morale booster for employees, and it goes a long way in encouraging them to take their physical and mental wellness seriously. At the end of it all, workplace productivity skyrockets, as employees will be much more enthusiastic and dedicated towards their job.

The same goes for whole-health benefit solutions. When employees have easy, on-the-go access to condition-based health education, top-of-the-line fitness, and mindfulness content, they're more likely to take charge of their wellness – which is a big win from both an engagement and health outcomes perspective.



**WHEN EMPLOYEES HAVE EASY,
ON-THE-GO ACCESS TO CONDITION-BASED
HEALTH EDUCATION, TOP-OF-THE-LINE FITNESS,
AND MINDFULNESS CONTENT, THEY'RE MORE
LIKELY TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR WELLNESS.**

COMPANIES THAT ARE DOING IT RIGHT

These companies have implemented the above innovative wellness benefits with astounding success.

Accenture

Multinational professional services company Accenture takes the idea of **offering well-thought-out perks** to a whole new level. Their wellness program is truly all-round and well-balanced. For starters, the company offers flexibility over the way employees can choose to work. Flexible schedules are available and it's not mandatory to work in Accenture office environments.

Beyond that, Accenture places major emphasis on the mental wellbeing of its staff. There's an appreciation at the company that, sometimes, work-related stress can be linked closely to what is going on outside the workplace. There are confidential support services available to help employees struggling with issues like anxiety, depression, and substance abuse.

Johnson & Johnson

Even as far back as the late 1970s Johnson & Johnson had recognized the importance of employee wellbeing. That paved the way for the company, which has more than 130,000 workers in more than 60 countries, to become pioneers in the personalization of wellness benefits.

At the heart of its activity is a course called **Energy for Performance (E4P)**. It's a two-day program that enables participants to complete exercises that can help them identify and prioritize the most meaningful components of their lives. As one beneficiary recalls:

"I thought I was doing well by going on walks every day, but I realized they weren't doing much for me. I learned through E4P that I can work out for less time if I do it in a better manner and get more effect from it..."

In addition, through the company's Healthy & Me app, employees can access a range of personalized health and fitness programs – including exclusive Johnson & Johnson offerings that address key behavioral issues like weight management – and even connect with other health-minded individuals.

Tampa International Airport

Whole-health care might seem like a foreign concept to some companies, but that's definitely not the case with **Tampa International Airport**. Through its partnership with top-rated health and wellness app FitOn Health (formerly Peerfit), TPA is able to provide its employees with access to about four classes every month at any of the 175 different fitness centers in the local area.

That was back in 2019. Fast forward to 2023, and the perks that the platform brings have increased several-fold. With the recent additions to FitOn Health's array of offerings, including nutritional guidance and condition-based health education, there's no doubt that TPA will continue to drive better health outcomes for its employees for years to come and attain higher engagement while it.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

To successfully design effective wellness programs, employers need to first ditch bolt-on programs and ad-hoc perks. In other words, they need a total mindset shift. This can be achieved through a mix of best practices and tips.

Best Practices for Designing Effective Wellness Programs

MEANINGFUL IS THE NAME OF THE GAME:

Employers should spend time and money fashioning benefits that will be truly useful to their employees. For inspiration, take a look at GlassDoor's list of **Top 20 Employee Benefits & Perks**, compiled by employees.

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY: Often, these programs aren't communicated effectively; most nonparticipating employees would consider joining their company's wellness program if they knew more about it, according to research. It's time employers communicated clearly and on time.

A PROACTIVE APPROACH GOES A LONG WAY: A preventative approach to wellbeing focuses on preventing problems from arising. For example, employers can take a closer look at job design and workload to help prevent stress or offer developmental coaching. Platforms like FitOn Health already have preventative health experiences built into them, providing a simple yet effective solution in that regard.

BALANCE, BALANCE, BALANCE: The truth is, quick fixes to workplace wellness can create additional stress for workers. When initiatives like gym memberships are launched on a stand-alone basis, there's a danger of creating fit workaholics – people who are physically in shape and focused on getting things done but in danger of burnout and resulting in frequent absenteeism and high turnover. A wellness program is only good if it balances productivity-based incentives with genuine care for employees' emotional needs. Simply put, it should be holistic from end to end.



A WELLNESS PROGRAM IS ONLY GOOD IF IT BALANCES PRODUCTIVITY-BASED INCENTIVES WITH GENUINE CARE FOR EMPLOYEES' EMOTIONAL NEEDS.

Tips for Engaging Employees in Wellness Programs

ASK, DON'T GUESS: If employers ask questions before they start rolling out wellness programs, they will make employees feel fully involved from the very onset. Further, it will help them identify the right mix of activities and benefits for their workplace. A win-win for everyone involved.

WALK THE TALK: Owners or senior managers who participate in wellness programs encourage others and lead by example. They let employees know that workplace wellness is a priority – not a mere nice-to-have.

TAKE MARKETING SERIOUSLY: It's not enough to simply communicate about the existence of a wellness program. Marketing matters, too, and greatly so. Employers that use compelling copy, offer something of value, and include a call to action in their marketing message stand to see much higher engagement than those that don't.

CREATE A WORKING FEEDBACK LOOP: Not only does integrating employees' perspectives into the program enhance engagement levels, but it will also likely improve overall outcomes. Savvy employers make their surveying practices consistent and ongoing so they can easily modify their plans as they receive feedback.



A New Dawn for Workplace Wellness Is Upon Us

When enforced and delivered as part of a true culture, workplace wellness stands to deliver incredible gains for employers and employees alike. Far too often, employers have invested thousands of dollars in “shiny” wellness programs, only to experience low employee engagement and undesirable or inconclusive health outcomes soon after. Not anymore. As depicted above, wellness can and should be wholly beneficial, be that from a health outcomes or economic perspective.

The best wellness programs are those that are innovative, utilizing best-in-class technologies and genuinely prioritizing employees’ emotional, physical, and psychological needs through and through. It might sound like an untenable task on paper, but with a complete mindset and culture change, it is very much achievable. Done right, workplace wellness is the secret to increasing employee satisfaction and reducing healthcare costs. The best time to give your current wellness benefits a reshuffle was yesterday; the second best time is today. Consider implementing innovative wellness benefits right now to drive better health outcomes and employee engagement, both prerequisites of a healthy, cost-efficient, truly productive workplace. For more information, **contact us today** and our team will be more than willing to help.



**THE BEST WELLNESS
PROGRAMS ARE THOSE
THAT ARE INNOVATIVE,
UTILIZING BEST-IN-CLASS
TECHNOLOGIES AND
GENUINELY PRIORITIZING
EMPLOYEES’ EMOTIONAL,
PHYSICAL, AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS
THROUGH AND THROUGH.**