



Being Healthy is Good Business! **Workplace Wellness That Works**

M. Nicole Nazzaro
Principal, *The Wellness Playbook*

E-Book for Human Resource Leaders

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Hello!

This e-book was written especially for attendees at Seattle SHRM's September 2012 monthly breakfast meeting. Thank you for hosting me as your speaker this month.

What I hope you brought away from our discussion, more than anything else, was a sense of hope. You have the resources to be able to positively affect the lives of everyone who works for your company or organization – including, of course, yourself.

Our workplaces can be a source of great inspiration, creativity, and productiveness, but the society we live in too often makes it easy for us to make choices for our health that do not support us. A workplace that creates a culture of health through a strong health benefits package that includes wellness **education**, an **environment** that supports

healthy choices by making them the default choice (think fruit bowls instead of candy bowls, and walking breaks and healthy lunches during stressful all-day meetings), and ongoing **encouragement** modeled by your organization's leadership will positively affect the lives of everyone who works with you.

Wellness leads to so many benefits that it's difficult to describe them all. There are the reduced costs associated with employee absenteeism, illness, and turnover; the increased camaraderie among a staff of workers who make time to exercise together during work breaks; and the overall sense that your business isn't just about making money – it's about positively affecting the lives of everyone who comes into contact with your brand and your vision. And the best news of all is that you can approach wellness by looking to your company's strengths – by creating your own playbook to use the talents, skills, and abilities already present among your staff

to create a culture that supports health, longevity, and well-being.

This e-book includes additional resources that you can use to learn more about workplace wellness programs, what types of approaches have been proven to work over time, and where you can start if you're at "square one." I wish you all the best and welcome your comments, questions and inquiries at any time.



Warmest regards,

M. Nicole Nazzaro
The Wellness Playbook
Bellevue, WA

Resources for Developing Workplace Wellness Programs

WELCOA (Wellness Council of America): WELCOA has developed seven key benchmarks of success for wellness programs. “Capturing CEO support” is number one on the list. Information on these seven benchmarks can be found at www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace/index.

AHIP (American Health Insurance Programs): Offers the free Wellness SmartBrief newsletter. Sign up at <https://www.smartbrief.com/ahipwellness/index.jsp>.

IAWHP (International Association for Workplace Health Promotion) – An affiliate of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). Offers free information and a workplace wellness certification program. Information available at <http://www.acsm-iawhp.org/>

The article “Applying Econometric Evaluations in Health and Fitness Settings,” from the **ACSM Health & Fitness Journal**, Vol. 16/No. 2, March-April 2012, provides information on three basic types of econometric evaluation frameworks suitable for health and fitness

settings. The article can be purchased via the following link: http://journals.lww.com/acsm-healthfitness/Abstract/2012/02000/Applying_Econometric_Evaluations_in_Health_and.8.aspx

LinkedIn has many wellness-oriented discussion groups. The one I most highly recommend is “Wellness is a Business Strategy” (WIABS).

The book *Healthy Employees, Healthy Business: Easy, Affordable Ways to Promote Workplace Wellness* can be purchased at www.nolo.com.

Information on HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) and legal requirements for wellness programs can be found at the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor websites:

- <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/> (the home page for information on HIPAA)
- http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq_hipaa_ND.html (FAQs about the HIPAA nondiscrimination requirements and specific information on wellness programs)

Return on Investment: The Wellness Index™

The Wellness Index is a tool that you can personalize to use in your own organization to create a baseline understanding of your organization's wellness profile to track positive changes over time.

What makes it a powerful tool is its simplicity and its ability to be customized to your own organization. Return on investment means different things to different companies: you may be looking for a dollar-for-dollar return on what you invest in wellness education (in which case you'll likely need to make at least a three-year commitment to your program), but you can start to measure other factors such as employee engagement, reduction in absenteeism, and morale much earlier by creating your Wellness Index.

The premise is simple: choose 10 markers that define success for your wellness program. Ask yourself "What would success in this program look like, on a grand scale?" Consider what your organization will look like five years from now if this initiative is wildly successful.

Then, choose 10 categories to rank based on that vision of grand success. Have a group of colleagues (at least 3) rank then ten categories on a scale of 1-10, with 1 denoting an area that needs a large amount of improvement and 10 denoting an area where you're doing really well as an organization. Average the scores to find your baseline Wellness Index. Create your wellness program to map to the goals you set out when you chose your 10 categories. Every six months, have the same group do another ranking, and see where you've improved as an organization, and what areas still need your attention.

Ideas for the categories:

1. Proximity of the office to healthy lunch options
2. Ability for employees to take a one-hour exercise break during the day
3. Employee turnover rates
4. Perceptions of employee engagement
5. Commitment the CEO/President has visibly demonstrated to creating a wellness culture
6. Ability for employees to travel to/from work using public transportation

7. Quality of health education offerings at work
8. Positive signage around the office that encourages healthy habits
9. Candy bowls removed, fruit bowls introduced
10. Holiday parties feature healthy foods
11. Managers are trained in stress reduction techniques for their teams
12. Employees have a way to measure progress in their health (such as biometric screenings)
13. Employees are encouraged to form informal exercise groups
14. Breaks are encouraged to reduce sitting time

As you start to figure out what's important for your organization, you'll find other potential markers for progress. The important thing about the Wellness Index is to measure the right things for your organization. Embrace the playbook mentality – play to your strengths and recognize that progress comes in many ways.

Want to learn more?

We offer lunch and learn programs, workshops, and other educational offerings for employees and organization leaders. We create educational products that help support your wellness message. And we walk the talk – everyone who works with us has a wellness success story themselves, so we haven't just “been there” – we *are* there, living a healthy life every day in the midst of life's inevitable challenges.

Sign up for our monthly newsletter at our website (www.wellnessplaybook.net) to stay in touch and get involved with us. Together, we can help save lives.



THE WELLNESS PLAYBOOK
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