From the Editor: A harmful wellness program?

It's tempting to concede without reservation that everybody knows exercise is good for you and me, and providing opportunities to exercise during the work day would certainly benefit the individual and the enterprise. However, like just about every other assumption, close examination may reveal a downside. In this case, a brief article in a recent Harvard Business Review provided the second look. The contributors argue that—when dedication to a corporate wellness program is perceived as distorting the evaluation of an employee's contribution to the success of the business—the harm done can exceed the beneficial aspects of the program. What do you think?

The Downside of Corporate Wellness Programs

By: Neil Markee
Editor in Chief-Purchasing Link

The desirability of some fringe benefits seems obvious because, other than cost, there seems to be no significant downside. Wellness programs might be seen as one of those. They appear to be as safe to support as the old song's unassailable platform that declares, "I stand for motherhood and brotherhood and a hot lunch for orphans..." What could be the detrimental aspects of corporate wellness programs that seek to improve the health of employees? How might there be a negative aspect associated with policies and programs designed to deliver better health?

I came across a short article in the May 2015 issue of the Harvard Business Review that suggests the negatives can outweigh the positives. The article is based on research by Andre Spicer, a professor at the Cass Business School at City University London, and discussed in The Wellness Syndrome, which he co-authored with Stockholm University's Carl Cederstrom. The interview-format article was put together by Scott Berinato and bore the title Defend Your Research - Corporate Wellness Programs Make Us Unwell. Reprints are available from HBR.

Spicer opens by noting that these programs are not very effective in any case, as involvement and benefits dwindle rapidly and, in the area of weight loss, for example, not much is accomplished long-term.

The key argument is that wellness programs involving physical fitness and weight loss can create anxiety among employees if they foster the perception that an individual's value to the enterprise may be based in part on the appearance of fitness rather than on job performance. As an unintended negative consequence of a corporate wellness program, might people tend to judge others based on what they think is the corporate perception of wellness characteristics? The article mentions that, "In the past two decades the number of CEOs who mention fitness in their bio has spiked. Apparently, they think that if you want to be considered a leader, you have to demonstrate your wellness. "There has been a 100% increase in CEOs running marathons." When that's the case, clearly they believe fitness is an important factor worthy of both space in their resume and consideration when hiring, assignments and promotions within their organization are on the table. Although the article didn't mention age, it isn't hard to imagine this perception might have a more serious negative effect on the morale of senior employees. Others of any age might see their body mass index and ability to run a 5K as private matters and not an appropriate issue for an employer/employee discussion or a performance evaluation pre- or post-hiring.

Are people who overeat likely to be lazy and unproductive? What does smoking tell you about the employability of an individual? According to the article, "Experiments have found that overweight job applicants are less likely to be positively assessed than a candidate of an average weight, even if the two applicants have exactly the same CV." According to Spicer, other than where there are specific job-related physical requirements, there is little evidence to support that notion that wellness, illness and presumably disability have much influence on performance in
such areas as leadership, good management or productivity, when compared to super-fitness. However, I suspect he believes that the super-fit decision-makers are likely to make performance assumptions concerning others based on apparent fitness. Ironically, even the super-fit may eventually become anxious about their own professional performance based on their perception of their fading wellness.

Interviewer Barinato asks, “So is it fair to say wellness programs are not just ineffective, they’re counterproductive?” Spicer agrees that can be the case when the program is viewed as an important corporate goal and induces employees to spend more time focused on wellness and consequently less on core tasks. He also noted that wellness concerns can spill over into private time and affect their personal lives, presumably adversely effecting job performance and turnover.

So why do companies invest in wellness programs? Spicer suggests it might be the marketing ability of those selling wellness programs. I checked online and found there are many enterprises promoting wellness and more than willing to help set up and run corporate wellness programs. A bit more far fetched, he notes that, “Some sociologists believe that in an increasingly secular society, wellness fills a void that religion used to (occupy). I think his conclusion is, "Companies promote fitness/wellness because it supports the common notion that fit people are more productive people."

What's the bottom line? Moderation describes the sort of cost-effective program Spicer would support. He recommends providing time, space and equipment for moderate exercise during the work day. Even that would be a major change for many employers. Personally, I never worked in an environment that provided any of those. When (then) NAEB relocated and furnished the office, a new low bank of lateral files arranged back to back supporting a good sized top provided a stand up work place and, along with other staff members, I found that simple low-cost change provided a very welcome break from working at a desk, even one with a very comfortable chair.

While in the Navy I was responsible for spaces and electronic equipment scattered around the ship and the only way to track what was going on was to walk around and take a look. Along the way, I took note of what other departments were doing and that often provided early warning of how that might effect what we needed to do. Like purchasing on campus, the communications department serves every other department on board and our reputation depended on their perception of good service. Before I knew there was a name for it, I was learning management by walking around and I took that approach with me when I joined the E&I Co-op staff in 1964. Rather than call or text somebody who worked down the hall, I think about getting up and going to them. I probably did it because I needed a break. But along the way, I established better relationships in the office. Non-treadmill exercise can do you good.

Sometimes there are unforeseen fringe benefits. I had gotten to know one of the women working in the basement file room at the co-op. She’d raised her family and was just entering the work force. She was always there rain or snow or shine, more than willing to cheerfully search for a misfiled folder I needed and clearly able to handle much more responsibility then she had. When my very able assistant left for greener pastures, our peerless file clerk asked if I would consider her for the job—while admitting she had no formal secretarial training, I signed her up, sent her off to secretarial school, half on our time and half on hers, and six months later I had an outstanding assistant. When I was about to leave to become CEO of (then) NAEB a few years later, Tony Piamonte, the Co-op's CFO, asked if he could recruit her as his secretary. He hired her and the next step on her career path was as long-term secretary to Jerry Perrine, the CEO of the Co-op at the time. She went from file clerk in the basement, to the boss's secretary in the corner office in maybe five years. I like to think that management-by-walking-around played a positive role, beyond the needed exercise involved.

A viable standup work station and management by walking around may not provide all the exercise of a formal corporate-wellness program or lead to a long and healthy life, but together they can ease your aching back and deliver other benefits. And in this case, I can see no downside.

What's happening in your world?

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**From the President: Being Thankful in Higher Education**

Lisa Deal, C. P. M.  
University of Florida  
NAEP President 2015-2016

I hear that taking time to think about what we are thankful for is good for our
health and, as Thanksgiving is this month, I am taking time to reflect. I find that hearing what others are thankful for often lifts me up, so I hope my sharing what I am thankful for may put a smile on your face. I am thankful to have great kids and terrific friends to listen and help when the kids aren’t great. I am fortunate to have good health (relatively speaking given my age) and a decent income for a job I enjoy. I have some excellent work colleagues, a boss who appreciates what procurement can do, and I work in a department of folks who really care about what is best for the institution, not about what is in it for them.

I used to work in private-sector purchasing. In talking with other higher education procurement colleagues who have as well, we agree that the norm in private sector is to be concerned with the bottom line—with profit, and for Procurement: delivering savings year over year. In higher education we work for best value. There is nothing I enjoy more than negotiating with a supplier and reminding them that the mission of our organization is teaching, research and service—that tuition isn’t like the cost of a product. Our product is trying to make the world a better place. Any savings we negotiate benefit education and research. In previous jobs, when the pressure was on and stress levels were high, I used to joke that, “This isn’t cancer research.” By contrast, now we really can be supporting cancer research. The folks in my office and I love to learn about the fascinating projects on campus. We find our campus inspiring, and that is what helps us get through those stressful times. Finally, I am thankful to be volunteering with NAEP. The Association has provided me with solid support in my job, stretched my skill sets, given me confidence I didn’t know I deserved—and wonderful new friends who share the passion of supporting higher education in our procurement roles. What a lot to be thankful for. Happy Thanksgiving!

Do You Do What They Think You Do?

What words do you use to describe your procurement department and your team? What words do your internal and external customers use? Are they similar or is there a big disconnect in who you think you are and what others think of you? That is the focus of the 2015 NAEP Innovators Forum paper on The Procurement Brand.

If you want to be an essential strategic partner on your campus, one of the first steps is being perceived as one.

This best practice paper focuses on three key points:

- The understanding of the connection between a “rebranded” procurement vision and delivering on strategic procurement objectives
- Understanding key principles of “brand” and “vision” in strategic procurement
- Understanding and helping develop a revised procurement brand and a “roadmap” of action steps that can be communicated and delivered.

Where does your procurement brand start? If you do not think clearly about your procurement vision, your services, and your ability to deliver quality results, someone else will do that for you. Are you prepared to hear that answer?

Last Chance to Nominate for NAEP Board of Directors

Nominations for the NAEP 2016 Board of Directors will close in November. NAEP is accepting nominations for Board of Director representatives from Districts II and V along with nominations for the 2nd Vice President Board seat. Additionally, NAEP is looking to fill the open District IV board position. Self-nominations are encouraged.

Click here to see what it takes to be a board member.

Throughout the years, NAEP has observed that there are several defining characteristics of a successful board member:

- The time necessary to effectively and enthusiastically discharge your duties
• Commitment to NAEP
• Passion, vision, and a high-level strategic view of procurement’s role in the higher education world.
• Demonstrated leadership qualities
• Relevant experience in organizational management

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Cory Harms, Iowa State University, will select two candidates for each open position to run for election. The NAEP national election runs from February 2, 2016 through March 1, 2016. Each Member Institution has one vote and its official Member of Record is eligible to cast the ballot.

Click here to nominate a candidate.

Nominations Open for 2015 Recognition Awards

The NAEP Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the 2015 Recognition Awards. Winners will be announced at NAEP’s 94th Annual Meeting, May 22-25 in San Antonio, Texas. For award descriptions and nomination form, visit our website.

The following awards are available for 2016:

• Award of Excellence in Procurement
• Bert C. Ahrens Achievement Award
• Bob Ashby Mentor of the Year
• Distinguished Service Award
• Neil D. Markee Communicator of the Year
• Volunteer of the Year Award
• Young Professional in Procurement Award
• Achievement of Excellence in Procurement
• David H. Lord E&I Cooperative Purchasing Award

Visit the Awards Description and Application Page

Can You Craft Clear Concise Contracts

Clear contract drafting is a skill that must be learned. The ability to draft procurement-related documents (contracts, policy, procedures, etc.) clearly is essential to lowering risks and increasing compliance. Whether you are an attorney, a contract officer, a purchasing officer, or a business officer, this class will introduce you to the skills needed to draft clear documents, policies, and procedures.

Watch this 30-minute video to catch a sneak preview of this intensive event.

This in-person institute is filling quickly but there are still plenty of seats available for you. Join us in Las Vegas, NV on December 6-8. The Luxor Hotel has a room rate of $35 (plus $15 resort fee).

In-Person Learning Opportunities

December & January

Say What You Mean: 2015 Contract Management Institute

Writing specific language in a contract that lowers your risk and increase compliance is a skill that can be learned. Whether you are a contract officer, a purchasing officer, a business officer, or an attorney, this institute will introduce you to the skills needed to draft clear documents, policies, and procedures.

The focus of contract writing is not on what you say in a contract, but rather how to say clearly
and concisely what you want to say. The course is structured to encourage discussion as you analyze and redraft examples of contract language.

For a sneak preview of this course, click here for this short video. Review the program agenda here.

Register now to be at the Luxor Las Vegas from December 6-8, 2016. Hotel room reservations must be made by November 13th to receive the discounted rate of $35 a night plus tax and $15 daily resort fee (includes in-room wireless, fitness center access and more). Call 1-800-926-4737 and mention you are attending the NAEP Contract Management Institute.

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**Women's Leadership Institute**

**When:** December 6–9, 2015

**Where:** Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, Florida

Designed for women of all ages who aspire to new leadership positions on campus, the Women's Leadership Institute features a curriculum with an overall focus on building the next generation of leaders in higher education administration. The Institute is co-produced by members of the Council for Higher Education Management Associations.

**Core Competencies:** Communications, Fiscal Management, Human Resource Development, Intercultural Proficiency, Leadership, Management, Planning

**Learning Outcomes**

- A stronger community of practice among women in the college and university environment
- Personal and professional growth through reflection and both general and concurrent sessions
- Team-building and leadership development
- Empowerment for women to pursue higher-level positions in their respective fields

For more information and registration contact the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) at www.acui.org/wli.

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**Discount for Back-to-Back Courses in Phoenix**

**Note:** A discount is offered for attending both the Procurement Academy and either the RFP Process Institute or the Federal Procurement Institute, both of which immediately follow the Procurement Academy in Phoenix.

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**2016 Procurement Academy - Foundation, Professional, Professional Plus**

**When:** January 31 - February 2, 2016

**Where:** Phoenix, Arizona

Do you know where your career is going? Is anybody following you? Are they supposed to be? Career development does not happen by chance. It takes thoughtful planning and active management to understand and learn the right skill sets, job knowledge, and abilities to succeed at your current position and advance into your next role. The NAEP Procurement Academy offers three Tiers, each tailored to the specific needs of the your current career position and experience.

**Tier I: FOUNDATION** [course schedule]

If you are newer to higher education procurement, this tier is for you. Join others in your cohort group as you discover best practices across a broad range of procurement topics including the legal aspects of procurement.

**Tier II: PROFESSIONAL** [course schedule]

Ideal for the more seasoned veteran, learn from subject matter experts who will share best practices on leadership development, ethics and diversity, contract development, management and administration, as well as special legal issues in procurement.

**Tier III: PROFESSIONAL PLUS** [course schedule]

Are you ready to manage people? Do you understand Emotional Intelligence and conflict resolution? This tier will teach the specific skill sets needed to become an effective leader on your procurement team and at your institution.

Don't leave your career to chance. Take the active step to register to be in Arizona this winter.

While in sunny Phoenix, take advantage of our discounted pricing to attend either the RFP Process Institute or the Federal Procurement Institute.

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**RFP Process Institute**

**When:** February 2-4, 2016

**Where:** Phoenix, Arizona
Discount for Back-to-Back Courses in Phoenix

The RFP Process Institute is designed to help procurement professionals determine when it is most effective to utilize an RFP process; how to develop an RFP; conduct evaluations; monitor vendor performance; handle disputes; and close out projects.

**Learning Objectives**

- Determine when an RFP should be used
- Define roles
- Structure the RFP document
- Identify elements of an effective Statement of Work
- Describe the benefits of performance-based contracting
- Conduct a pre-proposal conference
- Develop evaluation criteria and matrix analysis
- Apply scoring methodologies
- Conduct vendor debriefings
- Recognize the importance of properly handling bid protests
- Monitor vendor performance
- Demonstrate Contract Administration from post-award through contract close-out

- [Download agenda](#)
- [Register Online](#)

**Federal Procurement Institute**

**When:** February 2-4, 2016  
**Where:** Phoenix, Arizona

The Federal Procurement Institute provides specific information concerning Federal Government policies related to procurements for grants, contracts and cooperative agreements. It is designed to be a resource for those who purchase goods and services in support of federally sponsored programs or research. The Institute will focus on the recently enacted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, which introduces new requirements in the procurement process for grants and cooperative agreements. The new policies were originally scheduled for implementation on December 26, 2014. Universities now have an additional year to comply.

**Learning Objectives**

- Know the difference between Federal grants, contracts and cooperative agreements
- Understand and apply the Federal requirements for competition which include Micro-Purchase, Small Purchase, Sealed Bidding and Competitive Proposals
- Develop bid documents which promote competition and include required Federal terms and conditions
- Understand the basic structure of the Federal Acquisition Regulations
- Identify and mitigate conflicts of interests as defined by the Federal Government
- Recognize items that are unallowable for purchase with Federal funds
- Understand the Federal concept of reasonableness when conducting transactions
- Gain an understanding of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards which are the applicable policies that provide guidance to Colleges and Universities receiving federal funds.
- Understand how Federal Government views “compliance”, through review of procurement related audit findings
- Apply the correct federal procurement process to any order

- [Download agenda](#)
- [Register Online](#)

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**How to Write for the Educational Procurement Journal**

The NAEP Editorial Board is seeking informative and original articles pertinent to the purchasing industry in higher education for publication in the *Educational Procurement Journal*. Send an outline or a draft to Editorial Board Co-chair Mike Chmielewski.

You can find Author Guidelines and back issues of the *Journal* on our website.

Questions? Contact Shane Boyle, NAEP Membership and Marketing Manager, sboyle@naepnet.org, or 443.543.5540.
Now is the Time: Renew Your NAEP Membership Online

Your institution will be asked to renew its NAEP Membership for the 2016 calendar year. You will be able to renew securely online. NAEP Membership is institutional, not individual. If an institution is a Member, any employee with purchasing responsibility may create their own personal profile and take full advantage of NAEP’s services, including full access to the wide array of data and content on this website. Membership dues are based on your student FTE population. Be sure to renew by January 31, 2016 to provide your procurement team with access to:

- Best practices across a range of topics including talent management, technology and branding.
- Our Competency Model to manage your career (and your staff team!)
- A search capability to review hundreds of RFPs and job descriptions
- Naeprocure, our contract library tool that lets you search, compare, and contrast vendor contracts
- Scholarships for continuing education
- Professional training & career development
- Thousands of procurement professionals across the county, via online forums and face-to-face meetings

NAEP Membership is invaluable. Click here to see why.

Quote of the Month

“If you really look closely, most overnight successes took a long time.”

— Steve Jobs