

Wellness programs + voluntary insurance = A winning combo for business success



Legendary football coach Lou Holtz – who obviously knows a thing or two about stress – once said, “It’s not the load that breaks you, but the way you carry it.” Those are words to remember for the millions of American workers feeling the pressures of family, finances and work responsibilities.

They’re also words to remember for companies that employ those burn-the-candle-at-both-ends workers: By some accounts, **workplace stress is responsible for up to \$190 billion in U.S. health care costs.**¹ But it’s not just about money. Stress has a direct effect on workplace productivity, whether we’re talking absenteeism or simple distraction.

The distraction is so real, in fact, that there’s a name for it: It’s called “Attention Theory.” In simple terms, the theory posits that stress reduces an individual’s ability to concentrate on multiple tasks – and that’s a serious problem at workplaces today, where the ability to multitask is critical to achieving company goals and objectives.

WELLNESS PROGRAMS: THE SOLUTION FOR STRESS?

MediKeeper, a technology company that works to manage corporate health, recently conducted an in-depth study that revealed an interesting dynamic: While stress among Americans overall is increasing, it’s declining among employees whose companies offer wellness programs.² What’s more, workers enrolled in wellness programs report being less stressed about work itself than their counterparts.

Reducing employee stress – and, in turn, increasing worker productivity – is a common goal among today’s businesses. According to the 2017 Aflac WorkForces Report, remaining competitive in the current marketplace is the top business objective among employers, which may explain why so many are increasingly tying their benefits programs to business results. The survey revealed that for 25 percent of employers, the top goal of their benefits program is “increasing productivity by maintaining a healthy workforce.”³



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in US health care costs.¹

Employers who believe their benefits programs meet business objectives are more likely than those who don’t:



» To have wellness programs
(**63 percent** vs. **30 percent**).

» To say they have good participation in their wellness initiatives (**91 percent** vs. **53 percent**).⁴



WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND STRONG BENEFITS: KEYS TO A HEALTHY WORKFORCE

As your company looks for ways to link company health to employee health, it's clear that a well-thought-out wellness plan is a key component. Just as important, though, is a strong health insurance plan that includes voluntary insurance options. According to the WorkForces Report, **voluntary insurance is more likely to be offered at growing companies (29 percent) than at those that have maintained (24 percent) or declined (18 percent) in terms of sales or revenue in the last 12 months.**

With business success tied to both wellness programs and health care benefits, it makes sense for employers to meet with insurance experts to discuss both topics. By developing a solid one-two punch comprised of a strong wellness program and voluntary insurance, employers can set up a knockout business scenario: increased employee attention spans and productivity that help achieve company goals.

This article is for informational purposes and is not intended as a solicitation.

SOURCES

- ¹ Forbes. "Workplace stress responsible for up to \$190B in annual U.S. health care costs." Accessed Sept. 26, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hbsworkingknowledge/2015/01/26/workplace-stress-responsible-for-up-to-190-billion-in-annual-u-s-healthcare-costs/#ad06ae8235a2>
- ² MediKeeper. "Stress levels in the workplace are on the decline." Accessed Sept. 26, 2017. <https://medikeeper.com/blog/stress-workplace/>
- ³ Aflac. "2017 Aflac WorkForces Report." Accessed Sept. 26, 2017. <https://www.aflac.com/business/resources/aflac-workforces-report/default.aspx>
- ⁴ "Meets objectives" means respondents answered "yes" to all statements: Their benefits program attracts top talent, increases worker productivity and reduces turnover. "Does not meet objectives" means respondents answered "no" to all statements: Their benefits program does not attract top talent, does not increase productivity and does not reduce turnover.

Aflac herein means American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus and American Family Life Assurance Company of New York.



Voluntary insurance is more likely to be offered at...

29% growing companies

24% maintaining companies

18% declining companies



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