



Best Practice: Workplace Wellness That Works, Transamerica Center for Health Studies® (TCHS)



Many employers are implementing workplace wellness programs to help employees stay healthy and productive, while simultaneously reducing health care costs associated with preventable chronic diseases and otherwise lowering health care costs. To gain insight into the best practices driving the most successful workplace wellness programs, the national nonprofit Transamerica Center for Health Studies® (TCHS) partnered with the Institute for Health and Productivity Studies (IHPS) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to publish [From Evidence to Practice: Workplace Wellness that Works](#). The report provides a series of evidence-based actionable steps to help employers design and implement a new workplace wellness program or evaluate an existing program. Below are nine key steps for a successful program:

Plan and analyze

- Conduct a survey of employees to assess perceptions about leadership support. Employees who feel leadership supports them are more likely to participate in the program.

- Create a council of employees and managers to advise, consult, and make wellness program decisions, facilitate discussion among groups, and represent the needs and interests of employees to make the program as relevant as possible.

Implement the program

- Communicate the company's commitment to employee health to all employees by delineating goals, objectives, and activities.
- Lead by example. Encourage senior management to participate. Employees are more likely to participate in wellness activities if senior staff participates.
- Educate employees on the importance of wellness using e-mails, newsletters, signage, and any other means. Focus this messaging on the importance of health and healthy behaviors.
- Provide adequate resources for program success, including funding, staff, space and time.
- Update written business objectives to include a commitment to employee health, and show the connection between employee health and business goals.
- Hold leadership staff accountable for program success including giving their direct reports the time to undertake some healthy activities.

Evaluate success

- Survey employees about the program, including areas for improvement. Ask whether the work environment has improved since the program was implemented.

By following these evidence-based recommendations, employers can show commitment and support to their employees' health, which will help create, maintain, and sustain a workplace wellness program and strengthen morale and connectedness to the company and co-workers.

Example

The wellness program is a robust part of the company culture at Honest Tea, one of the case studies in TCHS' research. Honest Tea helps its employees get active and stay healthy through a variety of the individual and organizational initiatives that TCHS' research finds effective. Examples include: situating its headquarters next to a biking and walking trail; hiring of a full-time wellness coach; establishing a "culture committee" of employees who help organize fun events, fitness competitions, walks, and happy hours; and offering wellness workshops and on-site boot camp workouts. Honest Tea's leadership considers employee health integral to the company's mission, not just a perk for employees, and the results of their wellness program reflect this commitment.

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