

Improving staff morale through corporate wellness programmes!

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Most companies usually focus on the bottom-line and forget to focus and show appreciation to the people that make it all happen: their employees! To build morale within a workforce you need to instill pride and a feeling of team spirit. It is a difficult task making everyone work with a smile on their faces everyday but its definitely not impossible. One key to staff retention is creating a positive work environment. Making employees feel valued, respected, acknowledged and appreciated fosters loyalty to them and has a positive effect on their morale. Showing appreciation and acknowledging the efforts of staff need not always be expensive or elaborate, but it does need to be consistent and sincere to be effective. One of the many methods of improving your staff morale and teamwork is to incorporate a staff wellness programme into the Company's schedule.

Have an excellent staff wellness programme

The general idea of a corporate wellness program is that since as many as 85% of illnesses can be avoided with some preventative care, more attention to corporate fitness can improve productivity, reduce company costs, and can result in happier employees. Staff wellness programme need not be expensive in order for it to be effective. You don't have to spend thousands of dollars for programmes that you might have second thoughts that might deliver the results that you aim for. Some staff wellness programmes do not really fulfill its objectives. Here are two main reasons why some staff wellness programmes do not work out:

Not getting the right employees involved in organizing:

Some companies usually get its HR department to organize its activities year after year and while there might be employees who relish and enjoy doing so,

there might be a few who take it as 'another job to do' and hence view it as a chore, sad to say.

Solution

A good method to solve this problem would be to appoint someone from the Human Resource department to head the committee and appoint the other committee members on a voluntary basis. And allow the committee to stand for at least 6 months before changing committee. In this way, you'll get the experience of a HR staff experience (to get vendors, fitness equipment, budgeting etc) plus the enthusiasm and drive from employees who are interested in organizing activities and we all know that when one is interested in something, its easier and more enjoyable to get the job done well!

Another solution to small companies who are interested but without much manpower is to outsource the programme to experienced vendors to organize the activities for you on a regular basis. By doing so on a regular basis, you will most likely be able to get a good deal and thus you save cost, time in organizing as well as have a great programme to follow.

Investing only in physical fitness activities or exercise equipment



Many companies mistakenly assume that a corporate wellness program means just organizing fitness related activities or just setting up a gym or dance studio where they can gather after work for a fun workout. This is not the case. In doing so you narrow down the wellness programme to ONLY include physical wellness, which is not the only thing you should focus on. There are other aspects that might keep employees happy. Think about the employees who do not fancy too much of the outdoors or who don't really fancy the movement of yoga or line dancing. Then it'll be 'just another forced project' for them and your wellness programme goes down the drain.

Solution

The key to corporate wellness programs is to have a whole-health approach that makes it easy for employees to get fit and stay healthy in many ways. Your corporate wellness program should appeal to all workers, not just to the athletic. This means setting up programs that are attractive to employees and it means doing research ahead of time to find out which corporate wellness programs may appeal to the company's employees.

Examples could be to introduce a 'Stress out week' like one done by The Nanyang Technological University Staff Recreation Club the past few years. A good mix of activities that cater to all age and personalities should be planned for the entire week. An example of such a programme could be:

Day 1- Lunchtime talk on stress management

Day 2- Evening yoga session

Day 3- Chess competition

Day 4- Staff teambuilding games

Day 5- Finale staff gathering and tea time

Have a mini teambuilding session!

Team building activities are excellent and essential if you want employees who know how to effectively and efficiently work together towards a common goal. At first, these activities may seem silly or you might wonder how they can contribute anything to your company. But the fact is that team building activities are set up to challenge a team and to sharpen communication and group skills. Team building events can be organized to span a few days or can take place on one scheduled date. Even at serious project meetings certain types of team building activities can be used to help the team begin the problem-solving process and incorporate new thinking styles into the meeting. Team building activities can be simple 'sit down' games and quizzes, a treasure/scavenger hunt, unique relay races and many others.

They are fabulous for incorporating into your wellness programme because it allows all your staff to communicate and work together, including those who are more on the quiet side and those who do not particularly work well together. Through many of the fun activities and games/telematches, they will 'warm up' to one another and you'll soon find out that even the quietest employees will tell you that they had an enjoyable event at the end of the day.

These small steps to increase your staff morale through incorporating staff wellness programmes will inevitable result in warm and friendly co-workers, ideas and information are shared among everyone and colleagues care for one another and maintain a positive attitude through tough times. That would mean a much happier and healthier place to work in everyday!

