

WHY?

Wellness Programmes should be a Priority for Employers



There is a lot of debate over wellness programmes and how effective they are. An old school of thought considers them a nice opportunity to socialize and mingle with the team before returning to the same old workplace environment. However, there's new evidence to show that wellness programmes can drive positive change across organizations and help them reap long-term benefits. Here's one: the average return on investment (ROI) for an employee wellness programme in the US is six-to-one. Another study shows that 72% of the companies in the US saw their healthcare costs decline after implementing wellness programmes.

And, it's not just employers who are changing their mindset about these programmes. **Employees are also considering wellness and health offerings while assessing job offers and are more likely to stick to a job that has such programmes.** These programmes are known to improve employee health and lead to higher job satisfaction while demonstrating higher levels of morale.

Sadly, despite the benefits that such initiatives can drive, they still aren't being given their due share of importance. **According to a 2021 report, just 15% of India's workforce was covered by a health and wellness programme.**

In fact, an Assocham report estimated that for every rupee that **an Indian organization spends on their employees' wellness, it saves Rs 132.3 on absenteeism-related costs and Rs 6.6 due to lower healthcare expenses.**



What are Wellness Programmes?

Wellness programmes are an organizational approach to improve individual health outcomes through various medical and nonmedical initiatives. While the medical elements of a wellness programme include health screenings, counselling sessions, episodic care, or having an in-house team of doctors and nurses to ensure medical assistance is readily available to employees, the non-medical initiatives can include team outings, fun activities, retreats, fitness sessions, and sports activities like marathons.

The main aim of these programmes is to help employees stay healthy, productive and achieve a work-life balance. Some companies also like to offer financial rewards or other incentives as part of their wellness-centric initiatives to encourage participation.



How does Wellness Programmes Benefit Organizations over the Long Term?

One of the earliest instances when the world heard about corporate wellness was in 1810 when Welsh social reformer and philosopher Robert Owen advocated eight-hour work shifts. The idea was aimed at balancing the productivity and welfare of workers. Today, companies across the world are offering the service as they benefit both employees as well as employers.

THE ABC OF WELLNESS PROGRAMMES

An organizational approach to improve individual health outcomes through various medical and nonmedical initiatives.

Benefits of Wellness Programmes



Lower Voluntary Attrition



Improve Employee Morale



Reduced Healthcare Costs



Higher Productivity Levels



Drives Employee Engagement



What Numbers Say?

In the US, the average ROI for a wellness programme is

six-to-one

72%

of the US companies with wellness programmes saw their healthcare costs decline



The Key USPs of Wellness Programmes



HEALTHIER WORKFORCE

A wellness plan promotes good health and encourages a company's employees to adopt healthier habits. It can offer facilities like regular health checkups or screenings, healthier food options in office pantries and canteen, and mental health support to ensure that employees are not putting their health on the back burner.



HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS

According to a report, unwell workforces can cost the global economy around 10-15% of its yearly economic output. Similarly, a GSK study stated that over 67% of workers in Indonesia, China, India, and the Philippines felt that their work environment was causing them regular body aches. **As per research, healthier employees are not only happier, but they also show higher rates of job satisfaction.** Hence, a dedicated programme aimed at promoting wellness will enable employees to get rid of their stress and stack up productivity.



DRIVES EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Health promotion initiatives can be a great opportunity for team leaders to build cohesiveness and motivate employees. **A successful wellness programme begins with a commitment from those at the top and its continued success depends on support from all levels of the workforce.** For instance, if a CEO and the top management takes time out for fitness, employees too will feel encouraged to follow suit. **Also, research shows that professionals who feel their voice is heard are 4.6 times more likely to perform their best work.**



IMPROVES EMPLOYEE MORALE

With an initiative that's solely dedicated to their well-being, employees feel heard and taken care of. At a time when employees are expected to work in teams, they expect the same from their bosses. Wellness activities that promote engagement can lift employees' spirits and self-perception. **An ideal wellness programme should enable employees to strengthen their relationship with the firm.**



HELPS MANAGE STRESS BETTER

In the 2021 Work and Wellbeing Survey conducted by the American Psychological Association, 87% of the professionals participants said **that they feel their employers could help in making their workplace less stressful.** Be it the pressure to meet deadlines or achieve a target or the fear of being laid off, there's no lack of factors that trigger stress in workplaces.

Elements like regular health screenings, stress management sessions, fitness classes, counseling sessions, and employee assistance programs (EAP), can be instrumental in helping employees reduce stress and get the required mental health support. **Similarly, interactions that go beyond boardrooms such as those involving sports or hobbies can help with conflict resolution and ease tension in the workplace.**



REDUCED HEALTHCARE COSTS

As wellness programmes push your employees to take better care of their health and lead fitter lives, they are less likely to fall ill and utilize health insurance benefits. In the long run, a full circle wellness initiative can help companies reduce healthcare costs and grow with a more productive workforce.



LOWER VOLUNTARY ATTRITION

Healthy employees are more likely to stay with their employers. A study jointly conducted by the National Business Group on Health and Towers Watson shows **that effective wellness programmes can contribute towards significantly reducing voluntary attrition.** These programmes can drive corporate growth by retaining talent. Satisfied employees are also more likely to refer their workplace to others.

Wellness Programmes: A Priority for Employers

"Wellness programs are the mainstay of the employee benefits offered by the top employers in the industry. Investing in

Employees' health and well-being should be a priority for organizations in the post-pandemic scenario. Focused efforts in driving wellness programs not only increase the employees' stickiness with the organization but also boosts productivity at the workplace due to less absenteeism and improved engagement," says Tarun Thakur, Vice President (Operations & Delivery), HCL Healthcare.

Surviving a raging pandemic has changed the way employees look at their health. As employees struggle to find the perfect work-life balance, they appreciate the support they get from their employers. To that end, wellness programmes can go a long way in keeping employees motivated and productive.

Such initiatives also enable employers to raise the bar for the industry when it comes to holistic practices and create a pro-employee brand.

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