

Workplace Wellness



Workplace Wellness: Evaluation

It is likely your organization implemented a workplace wellness program to reduce health care costs, increase productivity, decrease absenteeism and improve employee health, morale, recruitment and retention. Evaluating your program will provide the information you need to measure whether your employees' attitudes, behaviors and health indicators have improved as a result of your program. This information will then allow you to make any necessary modifications to the program.

Types of Evaluation

It is important to measure both the process and the outcome of your program. Measuring the satisfaction of the process can be done on a more immediate basis than measuring the outcome of your program. Some examples include:

- Participation levels – The number of staff enrolled and participating will demonstrate employee interest in the program and how well it is supported and promoted.
- Program registration sheets – Similar to analyzing participation levels, these logs capture program information that can be compared from year to year.
- Participant satisfaction – This can be measured by conducting surveys, focus groups and interviews, among other things. Surveys that show how management and employees perceive the wellness programs are a good indicator of the reputation of a program. Also keep track of policy (no smoking, flex time, etc.) and environmental (exercise opportunities, safety hazards, etc.) changes and get employee feedback on each aspect.
- Health risk assessment data
- Productivity questionnaires
- Medical claims comparisons – This information will determine how your organization's health care costs changed over time.

Outcome evaluation is more difficult and takes longer to show up in your data. Identify the markers you are measuring and have a benchmark to compare against. Examples of outcome measures include:



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- Pre- and post-test surveys – These can measure changes in attitude, knowledge, and current eating and physical activity habits from initial assessment to completion of a specified program or campaign. In addition to surveys distributed to employees, you can also ask employees to fill out self-reported behavior-change surveys in which they indicate how they moved from an un-involved employee to a motivated participant of the program.
- Quiz employee knowledge and skill pre- and post-participation.
- Measure the popularity of healthier vending machine options.
- Measure health indicators (blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, weight, etc.) and risk factors (obesity, high blood pressure, tobacco use, etc.) pre- and post-program.
- Measure turnover and recruitment since implementing your wellness program. Employees generally view companies with wellness programs as more desirable places to work.
- Compare health care claims data over time. Look for changes in the number and type of claims (hospitalizations, outpatient visits, etc.). Also track measures such as preventive care utilization and prevalence and cost of chronic diseases.
- Measure your corporate costs and return on investment (ROI). What a program costs to implement and run should be easy to quantify. Compare these costs to your savings from such things as reduced health care claims and absenteeism to measure your ROI.

Evaluation Schedule

Periodically evaluating your wellness program will offer the same benefits of evaluating any other business investment.

- *Frequently*: Evaluate participation using registration records and participant satisfaction surveys on an ongoing basis.
- *Annually*: Conduct personal health assessments, health risk appraisals and health screenings once a year.
- *Biennially*: Conduct a modified claims analysis and health and productivity audit every two years. This information represents large data sets that do not change frequently but are important to your program.