



WELLNESS

Culture

• IDEAS •

FUN, EASY, AND PROVEN IDEAS THAT CAN HELP YOU TRANSFORM
YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE FOR HAPPIER, HEALTHIER EMPLOYEES

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

WebMD
health services

Culture Is Elementary



Spend any time in elementary school and you'll see how big an influence culture has – and how quickly it can change. From trendy clothing styles and logos to the latest crazy expressions and the hottest new games, a culture reflects the shared experiences of any group. But come back next year and things can feel a whole lot different.

Just like in school, your organization's wellness culture transforms when you give people new experiences and expectations – the more interesting and fun they are, the more likely they are to catch on. And just like in school, your culture can change more easily than you might think.

So let's take a few lessons on “elementary” ways to impact the wellness culture in your organization.

Wellness culture perks:

- Positive, social interactions around wellness activities that are an expected part of a well workplace
- Happier, more productive, and less-stressed employees when wellness activities become a regular part of the workday
- Positive peer pressure in the form of group physical activities, healthier eating, and grassroots communication about wellness resources
- Respect for work-life balance that can help your organization attract and retain top talent

From games to music to food choices, kids have a huge influence on popular culture and they make changing it look like, well, child's play. Take a few pages out of their book to make easy, inexpensive changes that can pay off quickly without big, top-down initiatives.



- An upbeat, happy environment encourages learning and activity
- Teachers model good choices and positive behavior
- Learning is fun and active
- Gold stars reinforce positive change



WHAT YOU CAN DO

PERK UP YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Stairwells and elevators get lots of traffic. They're natural places to motivate people to get in a few extra steps each day.

Paint stairwells in bright colors, or hang art by employees, their children, or local artists.

Post motivational pictures and statements next to the elevator to encourage people to take the stairs.

Hang interesting facts in stairwells.

A person burns 5x the number of calories by taking the stairs instead of the elevator.¹



Place inspirational quotes on stair steps.

Encourage people to take that back-40 parking space by posting signs with estimates on the calories burned from that section of the parking lot to the front door.

Create year-round wellness stations with information on gym memberships and lowering stress as well as monthly themed items, such as know your numbers, breast cancer awareness, and prostate cancer awareness.

Maintain bright, eye-catching bulletin boards with updated health and wellness information that people will see as they go about their day.



Who would choose unhealthy sodas if these enticing flavored waters were available? Take a cue from Northwestern Mutual and encourage healthy hydration.



MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOR

WALK WITH LEADERS – invite employees to join a senior leader to walk around campus or the neighborhood with opportunities to network, ask questions, and be active.

Schedule walking meetings or stretch breaks during meetings.

Plan “refreshers” during meetings and conferences where fitness team members do a quick 5-10 minute group exercise.



WEAR IT PINK
day for breast cancer awareness

Celebrate a healthy theme each month.

GIVE GOLD STARS

Northwestern Mutual rewards employees caught in Random Acts of Wellness, and so can you! Consider giving small tokens or gift cards for people “caught” eating a salad for lunch, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or stretching between meetings.



Everyone Wants to Be One of the Cool Kids

Kids aren't the only ones influenced by peer pressure, and that can be a good thing. You can help everyone in your population feel like one of the cool kids by offering a wide range of healthy activities and fostering a little healthy competition.



Peer pressure can...

- ▷ Get more people involved in healthy activities
- ▷ Give people new goals to aspire to
- ▷ Build social networks around wellness
- ▷ Maintain enthusiasm and commitment
- ▷ Provide new challenges and rewards



WHAT YOU CAN DO

PROVIDE LEVERAGE

Start a **SHUN THE SHUTTLE** campaign to encourage people to walk instead of taking the shuttle. No shuttle? Try a Shun the Elevator or Shun the Vending Machines campaign.

Someone who is busier than you is working out right now.

Northwestern Mutual posts standing signs and window clings with motivational messages and pictures of employees in healthy situations.

Promote the 20:20 rule – provide links to free timer apps to remind people to stand, stretch, or walk for 20 seconds every 20 minutes.



At one of Dell's fitness centers, they post the names of “champions” and “all-stars” – the employees who swipe in at the gym the most.

SET GOALS

Launch a **HEALTHIEST YEAR EVER** campaign at the new year. Those who commit will get regular updates about wellness programs, tips for staying healthy, and messages to keep them motivated.

Management competitions can encourage healthy team-based activities. Provide quarterly reports on the leaders whose teams have the best (and worst!) scores.

Jeans days: Sometimes little things can mean a lot. Let participants earn points toward individual rewards in a wellness challenge, but if 50% of the population earns the reward, then they earn a jeans day. If 60% earns, they get two jeans days!

Every goal doesn't have to be a big, serious, life-changing thing. Make competition fun! How about a hula hoop challenge at lunch?



Treadmill desks let WebMD Health Services employees enjoy a change of scenery and work toward their goals together while they work.

Want big? How about a **WALK AROUND THE GLOBE** challenge? Get all employees to pull together to meet a set number of cumulative steps in a particular timeframe – perhaps the number of steps to visit all the company’s locations worldwide.

A **LET’S GO** campaign can jumpstart the daily walking habit across your organization. Encourage your employees to walk at least one mile each day, at least five days a week for four weeks.

Weight-loss challenges aren’t for every company, but if it’s right for your culture, they can be effective. Employees can be rewarded for losing weight individually, as a team, or both. Enlist Wellness Coaches to ensure that everyone is staying positive!



Team challenges have a way of drawing people together.

MAKE IT SOCIAL

Enlist employees who want to promote a wellness culture and promote events to join a team of **WELLNESS CHAMPIONS**.

Use Twitter, Instagram, or other social media as a forum for employees to support each other as they work toward a big goal, such as running a marathon.

SHARE YOUR ROUTINE – encourage employees to share how they fit wellness into their busy day, even the small wins.

Baystate Health includes employee success stories on their wellness homepage, with a teaser in the company newsletter. You can make it a contest, like they did, with questions like “what is Sally’s favorite workout song?” or “what secret ingredient does Bill put in his morning smoothies?” The only way to find the answer is if they log onto the portal and read the story.



As part of a healthy lifestyle program, Dell provides band bracelets with healthy sayings to keep employees motivated.

Encourage involvement in charitable organizations designed to support health, such as healthy foods for food banks.

Form and sponsor workplace run/walk teams for 5Ks that support a community cause or a health-focused charity, such as the American Heart Association or Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. In the weeks leading up to the event, schedule run and walk training sessions during lunch or after work.

Run regular joke contests for stress relief, with submissions posted in the office and distributed via email or social media: The joke with the most votes wins a prize!


WELLNESS CHAMPIONS FOR THE WIN IN 2015



Promote a culture of health
and become “champions”

Cultures adapt and change as people learn new things, chart milestones, achieve goals, and share results. Your wellness culture should support a positive learning environment for your employees, but don't stop there. As you gather ideas and feedback, share them. It will keep your population involved in shaping your wellness culture.



- Make it fun to learn new things
 - Give people an outlet for their voice to be heard
 - Be prepared to make changes
 - Earn extra points for creativity
 - There's always room for improvement!
- 



WHAT YOU CAN DO

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Want to find out what people think about your wellness culture?

ASK!

Send out a survey asking how people feel about it and what they'd like to see it become.

Get small groups together to talk about the organization's wellness culture so you can understand the way it's perceived. This will allow you to:

- ☐ Identify better ways to communicate
- ☐ Uncover challenges and barriers to participation
- ☐ Obtain feedback on the types of programs and incentives that would entice your population to better manage their health

Add custom questions to your health assessment around:

- ☐ Stress: is it getting in the way of work and life?
- ☐ Productivity: is the company flexible enough to support work-life balance?
- ☐ Support: has the leadership team bought in to the wellness program?
- ☐ Culture: are healthy lifestyles truly a priority in the work environment?
- ☐ Program: are there ways the program could be refined to better meet employee needs?



TEACH SOMETHING NEW

At the Dell headquarters, they created a **WORKPLACE GARDEN & ECO LEARNING CENTER** with composting classes and 12 adoptable planter gardens where team members can plant their own herbs, veggies, and fruits.

Offer a **WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!** program to teach people how to improve their posture while sitting at computers all day.

Put on a free self-defense seminar at lunch time, or bring in onsite yoga or Pilates classes. Create new and changing classes at the onsite gym, such as Barre classes, hip-hop cardio, Zumba, or step.

Help people get over that first-run hurdle with My First 5K training sessions.

Post fun brain exercises on your EAP website to help draw participation on the site.



Pfizer offers free health screenings and flu shots.



4. Spice of Life – and Culture

Every culture in the world is influenced by its cuisine, and work cafeterias are no exception. Whatever the lunch crew are dishing up, it has an impact on how people feel, and how they feel about your organization.



What's cooking...

- ▷ What you offer matters
- ▷ Comfort food can be healthy food
- ▷ You're never too old to learn what's good for you
- ▷ Make it fun to try new things



WHAT YOU CAN DO

IN THE CAFETERIA

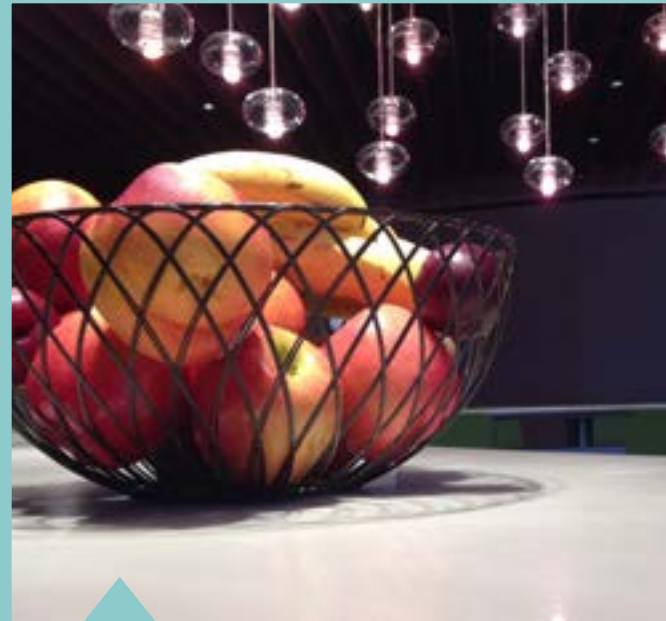
Highlight heart-healthy meals with eye-catching labels and discounted prices.

Set up an **ounce-for-ounce challenge** that spurs employees to drink equal amounts of water for every ounce of another beverage they consume.

Stock vending machines with healthy choices – even Kombucha!

Provide entrees that are low in calories and sodium, and put full nutritional information where it's easy to see and understand.

Publicize your healthy catering policy and guidelines for meetings, but don't stop there. Promote healthy potlucks – and encourage people to share delicious, good-for-you recipes!



Make fresh fruit available in break rooms instead of candy jars or vending machines full of junk food.



HOME EC – UPDATED

Help people better understand what they're really eating with **portion distortion** seminars.

As part of a healthy lifestyle program, Dell takes employees on local grocery store tours to introduce them to new, healthier shopping techniques and ingredients.

Provide on-site weight management programs for peer support and education.

Publish a healthy cookbook with recipes from employees.

Stage live cooking classes during lunchtime with executives and your on-site cooking staff or local chefs to demonstrate healthy meals.



As part of a healthy lifestyle program, Dell offers onsite healthy-cooking demos that are fun, informative, and delicious.

Recess Is Every Kid's Favorite Class

Physical activity should be the best part of everyone's day – not a chore they have to force themselves do. Offer a variety of wellness options to meet everyone's needs. And while an onsite fitness center is great, there's a lot you can offer even if you don't have a gym.



Playground rules...

- ▷ Make exercise fun
- ▷ Provide attractive, safe places to play
- ▷ Support team-based and individual activities
- ▷ Take turns – offer activities at different times of the day, including before and after work and at lunch time
- ▷ Working out isn't just for jocks



WHAT YOU CAN DO

MAKE P.E. FUN

Coordinate employee walking groups before or after work or at lunch time.

Organize activity lunches to throw a football, practice hula hoop, jump rope, or play Frisbee.

Use a punch card to keep track of wellness activities and offer a reward upon completion.

Take the intimidation factor out of running. A Gobbler Wobbler Turkey Trot fun run or walk can take place throughout the work day so employees can come when they're available.

Let company leaders take the lead in walking and biking outings for employees.

Support employees in fundraiser 5K walk/run challenges. This can be a great team-building activity.

Organize employee sports teams, or encourage grass-roots efforts to set these up.

Offer a Field Day for employees (and their families) one Saturday a year, with fun outdoor activities, teambuilding, competitions, and healthy snacks.



Graduation: When You're Ready to Take On Bigger Challenges

There are so many fun, easy ways to influence the wellness culture in your organization, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't think big as well. Facility updates, policy changes, and leadership involvement all take more work but can pay off in big ways.



Think big...

- ▷ Find an executive who is a champion for wellness
- ▷ Be creative in working with what you have
- ▷ Develop a strong HR-benefits partnership
- ▷ Don't get too bogged down in direct, dollar-for-dollar ROI analysis – encourage big-picture decision-making, including productivity, morale, hiring and retention, and stress reduction



WHAT YOU CAN DO

FACILITY WISHLIST

<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite workout facility or gym	<input type="checkbox"/> Car wash/detail service or dry cleaning onsite
<input type="checkbox"/> Lighted walking paths around the site	to cut down on after-work errands, reduce
<input type="checkbox"/> One-mile marked walking trail	stress, and give employees more time for
<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite chair massages at a discounted	healthy activities
cost to employees (think about partnering	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking workstations with tread desks
with a local massage school)	<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite sand volleyball court: consider themed
<input type="checkbox"/> “FitZones” with treadmills and TVs	volleyball tournaments several times a year, such
(separate from or instead of a gym)	as a superhero theme complete with costumes
<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite showers to encourage people	
to bike or run to work or during their	
work day	

POLICY

<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible work schedules to allow for wellness-related activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incentives for people to bike or take public transportation to work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Directors/managers certified on the job as fitness instructors who lead onsite classes for employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gym membership reimbursement for maintaining a certain number of visits per month
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower insurance premiums for those who exercise regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Discounts on heart rate monitors or fitness trackers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paid time off for wellness appointments		

Best practices on wellness culture ideas and our creative clients.

Still have questions?

Contact us at whsinfo@webmd.net or visit webmdhealthservices.com

Endnotes

- ¹ University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System, “Take the Stairs,”
<http://hospital.uillinois.edu/Documents/NewsEvents/TakeTheStairs-UIHealth-8x11.pdf>