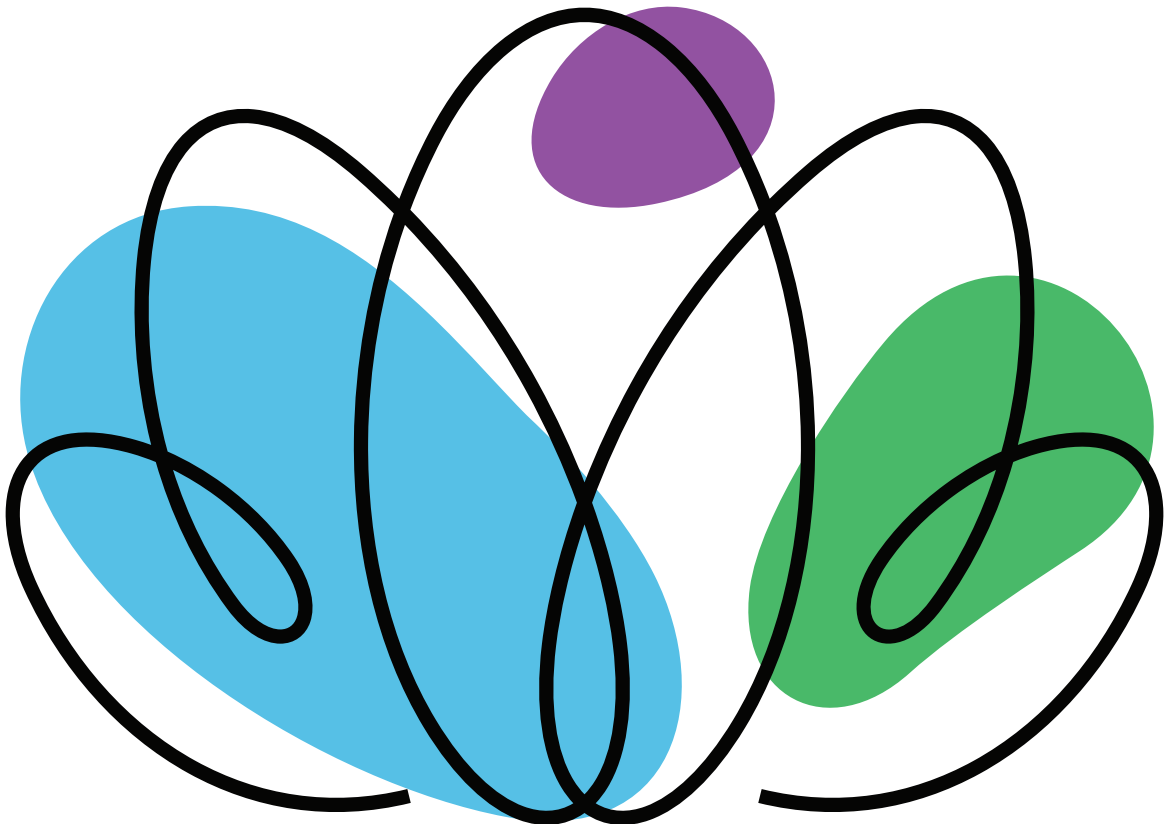




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How to Create (and Run) a Successful Wellness Program





The cost of poor employee wellbeing shows up in employee burnout, employee medical costs (and absenteeism), and employee turnover.

Financial wellness is a serious issue for U.S. workers:

56%

56% of employees say they are drowning financially and can't get ahead.

72%

72% of Americans are not completely financially secure (and 26% of Americans never expect to be).

Prioritizing employee wellness hasn't always been at the forefront of every business's to-do list, but the data we see today shows how critical these programs are for both employees and the success of the company.

While wellness programs might have felt like nice-to-have perks years ago, they're more important than ever today. When employee wellness is overlooked, the challenges stack up quickly. Since the pandemic, [obesity and diabetes are on the rise](#), the Surgeon General has declared that [loneliness is an epidemic](#), and financial pressures have [increased for most Americans](#) (in fact, [more than 50% of Americans](#) report that they live paycheck to paycheck and [57% say](#) they don't have enough money in savings to cover a \$1,000 emergency).

To combat the challenges of employee wellbeing, employee wellness programs have to do more than they've traditionally done in the past—offering reimbursement for a gym membership or upping health benefits. Successful wellness programs have to take a holistic view of employees' needs and support four key areas:

1 Physical Wellness

Employees need programs that can help them improve their overall physical wellness. More than [70% of medical costs](#) accrued by American workers are directly tied to preventable conditions. Excess sick days, absenteeism, showing up late, and low productivity create issues for the business.

2 Mental Wellness

Don't underestimate the impact of overall mental wellness. At least [40% of job turnover](#) is attributed to stress. And the cost to businesses? More than [\\$320 billion](#) in turnover and lost productivity costs. When employees aren't mentally well, they burn out faster and leave jobs sooner.

3 Financial Wellness

Just as mental wellness can domino into employees missing work, financial wellness has the same effect. At least [36% of employees](#) have missed work because of a financial problem and [45% of employees](#) say they are distracted by their financial problems while at work.

4 Social Wellness

The pandemic didn't just affect physical health; loneliness has continued to rise, even as people have gone back to work and returned to pre-pandemic social activities. [Loneliness has been declared an epidemic](#) in the United States, leaving employees with few resources to help them feel connected and part of a community.

At first glance, a wellness program sounds simple—a program designed to help employees improve their overall wellness. And while most programs focus on physical wellness (health benefits, gym perks, etc.), don't miss out on the four key areas that every wellness program should include:



Employee wellness programs do more than help employees improve overall health and wellness. They directly impact the business's bottom line with higher retention, improved employee productivity, and reduced healthcare costs and absenteeism.

Organizations with highly effective wellness programs report that they have significantly lower turnover than those whose programs have low effectiveness (9% vs. 15%).

Benefits of Employee Wellness Programs

Here are a few benefits employees and businesses can expect to see when they implement wellness programs the right way:

Improved Employee Health and Reduced Healthcare Costs

Employees who get resources on how to manage their weight, improve their nutrition, and take full advantage of health benefits reduce their overall cost to themselves and the company in healthcare costs. (Plus, they take fewer sick days...!)

Increased Engagement and Productivity

Happier employees are more engaged in their work and productive with their to-do lists. Wellness programs that focus on improving employee happiness—through mental health, physical health, financial health, and social health—see a direct correlation in employee engagement and productivity.

Less Absenteeism and Higher Retention

When employees have access to wellness programs that focus on better physical and mental health, they miss less work. And when employees show up for work consistently, they get more fulfillment out of their jobs, deepen their loyalty to the business, and build better connections with their coworkers—and all of this contributes to lower turnover.

Increased Team Bonding/Connection

Programs that focus on social wellness have a greater impact on employee happiness at work because they offer opportunities for team bonding and connection. Wellness programs and team activities don't have to be different; they can work toward the same goals—happier employees that have friends at work and feel like they belong!

6 Steps to Building a Better Wellness Program

1. Brainstorm a list of wellness program ideas.

First things first—to build a better wellness program you need to brainstorm ideas that are possible for your business to offer your employees. Don't forget to include ideas in each of the four areas of a successful wellness program—financial wellness, mental wellness, social wellness, and physical wellness.

For a list of 30 wellness program ideas, [click here](#).

2. Seek out employee feedback.

Second, it's time to whittle down the list of ideas and decide which programs your employees need. A good way to collect this feedback is to ask your employees. Consider sending out a survey to get a pulse on the programs that would make the biggest impact with your workforce. You might be surprised to find out that financial wellness is more important than more mental health resources for your employees or that a higher stipend for wellness dollars means more than flexible mental health days.

Questions to include in your employee survey:

- *What are your wellness goals this year?*
- *What would you like to see change at work to help you manage stress and well-being?*
- *Are there specific wellness benefits you would like to see our company offer?*
- *Rank the following wellness programs by most important to least important (offer 5 - 10 ideas from your brainstormed list)*

3. Get clear on the benefits your program will include.

Next, it's time to get clear on the benefits your program will include. Take the results of your survey and identify the benefits that rank the highest with your employee base. Outline how each wellness program will be offered (who is eligible, how do employees participate, what vendors are needed to implement the idea, etc.). Don't forget to include remote employees in your planning here—for all in-person offerings, consider ways you can offer a similar experience to your work-from-home team!

It might be helpful if you categorize your wellness offerings by type to help you outline a plan for each. Consider the following categories of wellness activities:

Workshops

Whether offered onsite or online, workshops are a great activity for financial/budgeting information, mindfulness education, healthy eating tips and tricks, and more.

Memberships and subscriptions

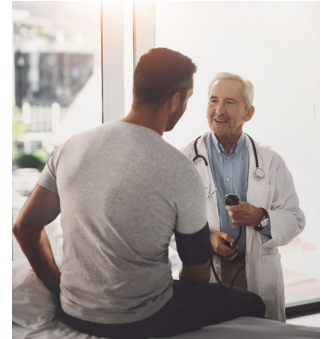
Gym memberships, meditation app subscriptions, and other club dues or association offerings can help employees get access to wellness benefits at work and at home.

Lifestyle/behavioral programs

Both lifestyle and behavioral programs offer a great opportunity for employees to boost their quality of life (while also improving attendance and productivity).

Screenings and onsite clinics

Medical and dental screenings and onsite clinics can help employees save time. By bringing the dentist, dermatologist, or vaccination clinic to the office, employees and their families can get access to the resources they need without the added hassle of travel and time away from work.



Guest speakers

Panels, local experts, university professors, and professional speakers are all great options for any of the four areas of a successful wellness program. A guest speaker series could highlight each of the categories and educate employees.

Technology

App resources—budgeting, fitness trackers, stress management, sleep help, etc.—can offer employees the education and support they need for any of the four areas of wellness that are critical for overall employee health.

4. Define your budget.

Fourth—you need to get crystal clear with your budget. You might be tempted to just assign one number to the entire program, but in order to build a program that can scale and grow as your business's needs do, you'll need to get more granular.

Consider budgeting for specific areas of your wellness program:

Funding for tools/providers

Will you need to implement a new solution that will help you facilitate any part of your wellness program? Will your social wellness efforts be carried out on the same platform as your physical wellness offerings? Review your needs for any tools or providers that you may need for your new program.

Funding for marketing materials

Calculate how much funding you will need to spread the word about your new wellness program offerings. Do you need budget for printed flyers or posters? Will you send information only through electronic channels? Will you sponsor lunch and learns to educate employees on the new offerings? Consider all of the ways you'll market the program and budget accordingly.

Funding for awards and incentives for participation

Some of your wellness programs may very likely require additional funding for awards or incentives for participation. Employees may be rewarded with a printed certificate, gift cards, swag, or a stipend as part of their experience with the wellness program. Look at each area of your wellness program and assign a dollar amount for any awards or incentives.

Funding for office snacks/meals

Outside of specific food needs for marketing your wellness programs, consider the funding you'll need for office snacks/meals. If your wellness programs focus on providing healthy food options in the office for in-person staff members, you'll need to budget for that cost.

Funding for specific vendors/extraneous costs

Perhaps your wellness program offers an opportunity for employees to get a health checkup with an onsite doctor once a year or you decide to offer a vaccination clinic for flu shots in the fall—budget for the vendors you'll need to engage to provide these benefits to your employees.

5. Make a plan for engagement.

Launching a new wellness program without any participation doesn't help anyone—and it especially doesn't offer any benefits to employees. To avoid this issue, make a plan for engagement before you launch your new program(s).

Consider the following ideas:

➔ Create a challenge or contest for participation

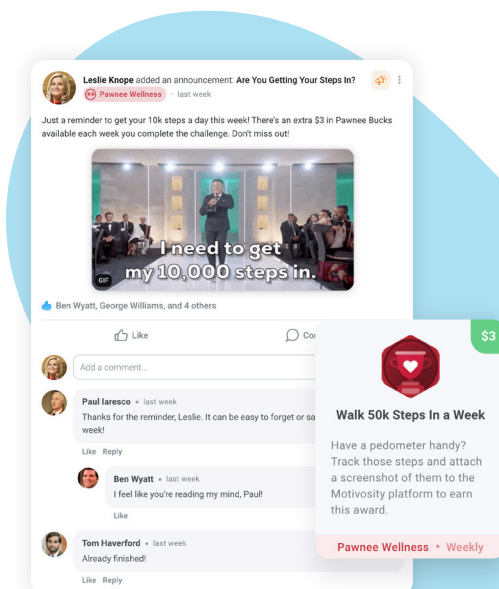
Challenge employees to reach a specific number of steps, lose the highest percentage of BMI, eat healthy for 30 days, get 8 hours of sleep every night for 30 nights, etc.

➔ Reimburse employees for participation

Compensate employees for their engagement with your wellness programs. This could be in the form of a gym membership stipend, healthy food services available to onsite employees, workshops that are available during work hours, etc.

➔ Award employees for participation

Recognize employee engagement by directly awarding them with gifts. Give away swag, workout equipment, money, gift cards, a free membership for a budgeting or meditation app, etc.



6. Publicize and launch your program.

To successfully launch your wellness programs, you must first create all of the collateral that you'll need to market your new offerings.

You may need some or all of the items on this list:

- *Information about the programs in a concise, easy-to-read messaging document*
- *Handouts for employees about each program*
- *Emails that detail the new programs*
- *Employee communications for other channels (Slack, your intranet, bulletin board, etc.)*
- *Updated messaging for the employee handbook and onboarding program*

Next, you need to make sure that the new programs are announced in any public forums at your business. This could look like updating the company intranet/communication tool with your announcements, offering details about the programs in your next all-hands meeting, and training managers on the new programs so they can share details with their direct reports.

And finally, depending on the maturity or size of your organization, you may want to consider a phased approach to your launch. Start with one initiative or focus and then roll out a new program or initiative each quarter. If you're starting from scratch, launching four new wellness programs at once might be too much. By launching one program at a time you can increase your chances of success (and improve your chances of employee participation by marketing only one program at a time).

Bonus: Ask employees if they want to contribute.

While you may not be able to hire a specific HR person to run your wellness programs, you can tap into the resource you have right at your fingertips—your employees. Give your greatest asset an opportunity to show up and help others at the business with some of the wellness programs that may require more oversight.

Ask employees if they want to volunteer to help:

- *Employees may volunteer to be wellness ambassadors for specific locations, topics, or programs.*
- *Employees may be willing to spearhead a specific group or activity.*



Build a Better Employee Wellness Experience with Motivosity.

Create a better employee wellness program and experience with Motivosity. With all the right tools to communicate, coordinate, and execute any wellness program, your business can build a better employee experience and boost employee wellness at the same time.

Plus, with Motivosity, you can make your employees' experience at work more meaningful, get real-time insights into employee engagement, help managers create the right habits focused on employees, and build a community of connection and gratitude with peer-to-peer recognition.

Motivosity is the people-first Recognition and Rewards solution for today's workforce.

Find out more about Motivosity

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