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sécurité... notre priorité.*

HEALTH WORKS

A “how-to” for health and business success



Canada 

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HEALTH WORKS

A “how-to” for health and business success

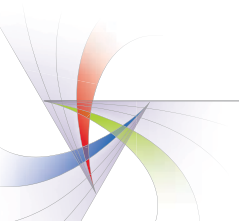
If you are the owner or manager of a small business and you want to improve productivity, morale and safety in your workplace, then this booklet is for you.

It outlines a simple five-step process for improving business and employee health that can help you reap substantial rewards — without spending a lot of time and money.



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PROMOTING A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

It's about the links between employee health and well-being, and the success of your business.

Whether you're just getting started or you're thinking about how you can improve your business, read on and find out how workplace health promotion can help you to:

- meet your business goals
- contribute to employee health and well-being
- improve the overall quality of the work environment

Why do it?

Promoting health in your workplace doesn't have to be complicated, expensive or time consuming. It's a matter of making a commitment to workplace health, finding out what kinds of initiatives your employees want, developing a plan, and putting some activities in place.

It can be as easy as:

- consulting with employees about how to make the work space safer and more efficient
- talking with staff about options for redistributing the workload among employees in order to reduce/eliminate difficult deadlines
- discussing with employees the possibility of inviting someone from the community to provide information on a topic of interest (e.g., *stress management, nutrition, balancing work and family life*)
- asking employees for their input on implementing an employee "well-being" action plan

Costs and benefits:

Replacing skilled workers is costly and time consuming:

- personnel searches, interviewing, recruiting and training costs
- the loss of skills, knowledge and "corporate" memory

Research¹ shows that attention to health, well-being and safety can:

- improve employee morale
- lower short and long term disability costs
- enhance productivity

¹ National Wellness Survey Report 2006. Buffet & Company Worksite Wellness Ltd.

Do it for your business!

As an employer or manager, you know the hassles of dealing with low employee morale, re-assigning workloads because of chronic absenteeism, filling out benefit claim forms and trying to get “the right person for the job” when a valued employee leaves. Not only are they costly, time consuming and aggravating, these tasks prevent you from putting your energies into activities designed to build your business — for example, dealing with clients and planning for the company’s future.

Do it for your employees!

With most people spending almost two thirds of their waking hours on the job, the workplace has a significant impact on health. Research supports the fact that the workplace affects employee health and well-being. For example:

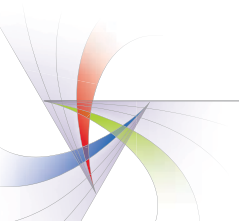
- job stress can make people sick — and factors such as poor communication, job insecurity, and unsafe working conditions contribute to job stress
- employees who are subject to high demands over an extended period of time and have little control over their work can experience depression, heart disease, anxiety and other diseases
- injuries on the job can also have a negative impact on co-workers and families

What employees said ...

In a national survey on wellness², employers identified the following motivating factors for offering wellness initiatives (*top five shown*):

- organizational culture
- benefit cost containment
- employee requests
- employee retention
- management request

² National Wellness Survey Report 2006. Buffet & Company Worksite Wellness Ltd.



Workplace health promotion isn't just about preventing illness, injury and accidents.

To maximize your impact on employee health and the health of your business, your “total” health promotion program should address each of the following:

- **Environment or surroundings:** Factors in the home or work environment that affect employee health, such as air, noise and lighting conditions, the quality of machinery and equipment, the type of work, responsibilities at work, relations with supervisors and co-workers, and relations with family at home.
- **Personal resources:** The sense of influence employees feel they have over their health and work, how much social support they feel they receive from others and the degree to which they actively participate in improving their own health.
- **Health practices:** Practices that affect health, including physical activity, smoking, drinking, sleeping and eating habits, as well as the use of medication and other drugs.

Try this simple five-step process for making health promotion a part of your workplace:

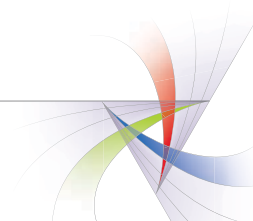
Step 1. Build commitment

Step 2. Find out what employees need and want

Step 3. Put together a plan

Step 4. Put activities in place

Step 5. Follow up and revise your activities

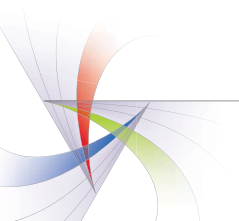


STEP I **Build commitment**

Build employee commitment for workplace health promotion initiatives by keeping these important points in mind:

- As the owner/manager, you are essential to the process. You need to be involved, enthusiastic, modeling the behaviours and attitude you wish to see among employees.
- If you can't stay actively involved, select a champion.
- Follow up on progress, expect results and reward them appropriately.
- Promote the benefits of a healthy workplace by staging an event, posting information around the workplace or talking informally about it with employees.

“ I used to think that employees were expendable, but they’re not. Hiring, training, and bringing people up to peak productivity takes my time — and that’s money.”



STEP 2 Find out what employees need and want

Assessing and understanding employees' needs and preferences is an essential part of the process. If a workplace health promotion program is going to be successful, it has to reflect what employees themselves consider to be important. For example, there is no point in arranging for a speaker on stress management if employees aren't interested and won't attend.

Following is a brief description of four methods of determining employee needs and preferences. Choose the one that is right for your workplace.

Have an informal discussion

Sit down with your employees and discuss their concerns about their own health and the health of the organization. You don't have to schedule a special meeting — just “piggyback” it on to another meeting or ask people informally. Ask for input about how to proceed and take the opportunity to gauge — and promote — enthusiasm for the initiative.

Put up a suggestion box

One of the easiest, most efficient and least intrusive ways to get employee input is to set up a suggestion box. *(If you have the computer capability, you might consider an “electronic suggestion box” to permit employees an even greater degree of confidentiality.)* Make sure to:

- promote it to employees both before and during the period it is set up
- ask for suggestions about: environment and surroundings, personal resources, and health practices
- emphasize that all suggestions will be considered seriously and confidentially
- put it up when most of your staff are likely to be around — i.e., not during a holiday period
- make the suggestion box attractive, visible and easily accessible
- follow up on all the suggestions in some way — even if it's just acknowledging them

Host an employee meeting

Organize a meeting of some or all of your employees to identify needs and how to address them. If only some of your employees are attending, make sure you have a good mix of all the different groups in the workplace. Keep in mind that employees may not be willing to discuss some health issues (e.g., *alcohol and substance abuse issues*), work climate issues (e.g., *conflicts between co-workers/supervisors*), and personal and/or family issues. You may also want to consider getting an outsider or trusted employee to lead the discussion — if you think your presence will inhibit people from speaking frankly.

MYTH

This is going to cost a lot of money.

REALITY

Many things can be done at little cost.

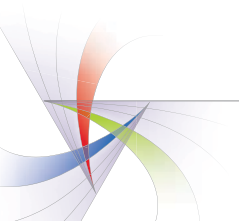
A sample meeting agenda:

- review the purpose of the meeting
- brainstorm a collective vision of a healthy workplace – i.e., “in an ideal world our workplace would look like, feel like...”
- identify key areas for potential improvements – i.e., physical and social environments, personal resources and health practices
- brainstorm activities that address these concerns and identify potential barriers
- organize the activity suggestions in order of importance
- review your findings and agree on next steps

Conduct a mini-survey

A brief questionnaire can tell you a lot about what health and safety issues are important to employees. If you choose this option, you'll need to promote it well in order to maximize employee participation. Bear in mind that you'll also need to tabulate and evaluate the responses, so this process is more labour intensive than the others. On the plus side, employees can reply anonymously and will likely feel more comfortable about disclosing their workplace concerns than they might otherwise. Think about having the results tabulated by a small group of employees, or by someone from outside your organization. See pages 8-10 for suggested survey questions.

“I’m under such pressure to get my workers to produce more, to produce better, to produce cheaper. But I finally figured out that their health determines how well they perform.”



Choosing the method that's right for you

Since no two businesses are alike, it's impossible to provide a "one-method-fits-all" process for assessing employee needs. Keep in mind the following factors when you're designing a process that's right for your workplace.

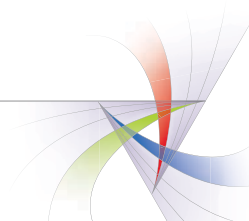
- **Literacy levels:** Do all your employees read the language used in your workplace? At what level? Is print or e-mail the best way to communicate or is an employee meeting a better option?
- **Cultural mix:** Do cultural practices make open communication between the sexes or between different groups of employees difficult, if not impossible? If so, it might make more sense to hold two meetings — one for men and one for women, or one for different ethnic groups.
- **Shiftwork:** Do rotating shifts in the workplace make it difficult to plan meetings? Perhaps you can schedule one shift to stay half an hour later, and have the next shift come in half an hour earlier.
- **Confidentiality:** Is there open communication in your organization or would employees feel more comfortable giving their opinions completely anonymously? Employees may feel constrained if their employer or supervisor is present at the meeting, or if their survey responses could be read by other co-workers.
- **Time available:** Time is money — and both are tight — so you may not be able to afford the time for a full employee meeting. Try sharing the responsibility by asking employees to come in a little early or stay late and have the organization contribute 15 minutes of "work time," as well.
- **Urgency:** Has your staff been expressing health and safety concerns? Is this the talk in the lunch room or around the water cooler? If so, you'll want to get a process in place right away.

MYTH

My employees will think I'm interfering in their personal affairs.

REALITY

Studies show employees welcome workplace initiatives and their employer's interest in their personal well-being.



Sample Questions for an Employee Meeting or Mini-Survey (Step 2)

Environment or surroundings (physical and social)

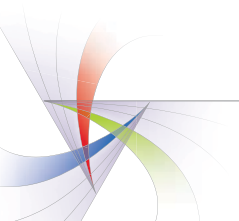
Health and safety hazards and unpleasant working conditions are often a source of concern to employees.

- What health and safety changes could be made to this workplace?

Certain work situations can cause employees excess worry, nerves or stress and can negatively affect their health.

- How could work be better organized to help reduce stress?

- What could your workplace do to help reduce stress at home or outside of work?



Sample Questions for an Employee Meeting or Mini-Survey (Step 2)

Health practices

People's health practices — e.g., their eating, smoking, physical activity habits — can affect their health.

- What, if anything, would you like to do to improve your health? What, if anything, is stopping you from making these changes?

- What kinds of things do you think your employer could do to help you improve or maintain your health?

Personal resources

Having a sense of influence over your work can affect your overall health and well-being.

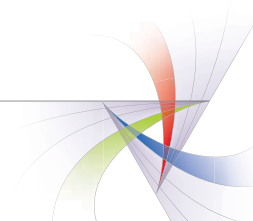
- Do you feel that you have an influence over what happens to you at work?

yes
 no

Having a sense of influence over your health is important for your well-being.

- Do you feel in control of your own health?

yes
 no



Sample Questions for an Employee Meeting or Mini-Survey (Step 2)

- What kinds of things do you think this workplace could do to help employees feel more of a sense of influence over their work and personal health?

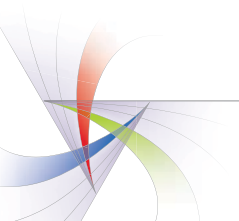
Having someone to turn to in times of distress or unhappiness is also important to wellness.

- Do you feel that you have someone you can count on to understand how you feel?

yes

no

- What can this workplace do to help provide support when needed?



STEP 3 Put together a plan

As a blueprint for action, your health promotion plan helps to chart your direction for the future. Set out some goals for the short term (e.g., *six months to one year*) and some longer term objectives (e.g., *one to two years*), then revisit the plan periodically to check on where you are and what you've achieved and to plan some minor or even major modifications. (Refer to the evaluation guide on page 21.)

Your plan should:

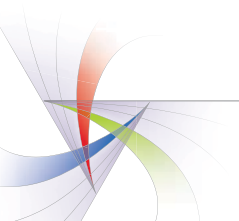
- meet the needs of all employees — regardless of their current level of health, literacy level, cultural group, social and skill background
- strike a balance between what the employee and employer can do
- address employee concerns in all areas — **environment or surroundings** (*physical and social*), **personal resources** and **health practices**
- include the following key elements:
 - an overview of your **findings** about employee needs and preferences (e.g., *half of employees said they were concerned about the lack of employee input into job tasks*)
 - some broad-level **recommendations** (e.g., *hold a weekly meeting to discuss the work flow and how work will be divided up, including plans for a try-out period*)
 - a general idea of the **resources** you'll be using (e.g., *local library, public health department, outside contractors*)
 - a **schedule**, focusing on short- and long-term objectives
 - an **evaluation strategy**

Use the template on pages 12-14 to develop your own plan.

“ Ignoring my employees’ health is like expecting to produce a good product with defective equipment.”

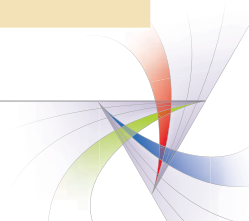
Health Promotion Plan (Step 3)

| Environment or Surroundings <i>(physical and social)</i> | 6 months | 1 year | 2 years |
|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| key findings <i>(what employees said they wanted/needed)</i> | | | |
| recommendations <i>(what kinds of activities would best address employee needs)</i> | | | |
| resources <i>(people/organizations to be contacted for more information/assistance)</i> | | | |



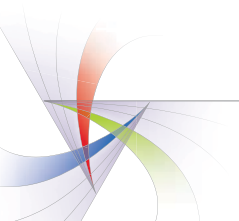
Health Promotion Plan (Step 3)

| Personal resources | 6 months | 1 year | 2 years |
|--|----------|--------|---------|
| <p>key findings <i>(what employees said they wanted/needed)</i></p> | | | |
| <p>recommendations <i>(what kinds of activities would best address employee needs)</i></p> | | | |
| <p>resources <i>(people/organizations to be contacted for more information/assistance)</i></p> | | | |



Health Promotion Plan (Step 3)

| Health practices | 6 months | 1 year | 2 years |
|---|----------|--------|---------|
| key findings <i>(what employees said they wanted/needed)</i> | | | |
| recommendations <i>(what kinds of activities would best address employee needs)</i> | | | |
| resources <i>(people/organizations to be contacted for more information/assistance)</i> | | | |



STEP 4 Put activities in place

Follow your workplace health promotion plan and get things moving. Make sure you promote your initiatives by putting up some posters around the office, advertising them through your office e-mail, or including a note in employees' pay envelopes or just "tacking them up" around the workplace.

You'll get the best results if you use a combination of the three following types of activities:

- **Awareness** activities give employees the information they need to make informed choices. These activities alone won't change people's behaviour, so combine them with skill-building activities and supportive work environments.
- **Skill-building** activities encourage people to get actively involved in changing their behaviour. These activities may require some commitment of time, space, equipment or money.
- **Supportive work environments** send out a strong message about your commitment to health and safety in the workplace (e.g., *supportive policies for managing home/work responsibility*).

Your health promotion activity plan should address the following:

- What do we want to achieve? (*Objectives*)
- What activities can we put in place to help us get there? (*Activities*)
- What resources do we need in order to put these activities in place? (*Resources*)
- When can/should we have this activity up and running? (*Timelines*)
- Who will take responsibility for pushing this initiative forward? (*Person responsible*)

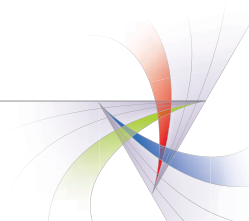
The template on pages 18-19 can help you organize your activity plans.

MYTH

I won't have the time to get involved.

REALITY

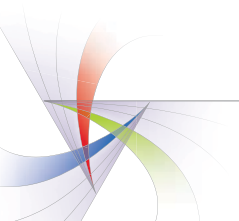
You decide how much time you can spend. Try starting small and building as you go.



Activity Suggestions (Step 4)

| Activities to improve: | Awareness | |
|---|--|--|
| Environment and surroundings (physical and social) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and post safety procedures • invite a speaker in to give a lunch-hour talk about accident prevention in the workplace • post a listing of community resources • invite speakers in to talk about how to manage home/work responsibilities effectively | |
| Personal resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post information dealing with stress and stress management • offer seminars on effective communication | |
| Health practices | <p>Encourage employees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clip out health information and post it on a bulletin board • host a special or theme event: tie in healthy eating and active living activities with special month/campaigns such as Heart Month (February), Nutrition Month (March), Cancer Awareness Month (April), Mental Health Week (May) and Healthy Workplace Month (October) | |

***What is your management style?
Think about how your particular style
might be affecting your own - and your
employees' - health and well-being.***



| Skill-building | Supportive work environments |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train an employee in how to conduct a safety audit • provide training in the safe use/maintenance of machinery • encourage employees' participation in decisions affecting their jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make protective equipment available and provide instructions on how to use it properly • eliminate potentially dangerous situations from the workplace • reorganize the workplace to make maximum use of windows and air flow |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer a seminar on stress relaxation • give workers opportunities to learn new skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formalize an harassment policy for the workplace • give regular feedback on job performance • provide clear job descriptions • encourage employees' participation in decisions affecting their jobs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invite a nutritionist to demonstrate healthy cooking techniques • invite a physiotherapist to talk about how to reduce back and other physical stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sponsor your employees in a softball tournament • offer juice and other nutritious alternatives in vending machines or at staff meetings • actively promote work-life balance |

Ask yourself:

Do you try and keep a “finger in every pie” without sharing responsibility?

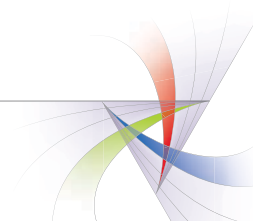
If so, are you getting “stressed out” by trying to do too much?

Do you ask for employee input on how to improve work flow?

If not, is it affecting employee morale?

Do you welcome new ideas from everyone — no matter what their position in the company?

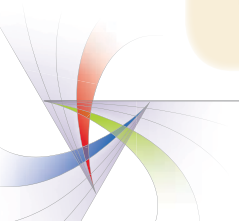
If so, does it encourage employees to think creatively and feel more in control of their work?



Activity Planner (Step 4)

| Objectives | Activities | Timelines | |
|------------|------------|-----------|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

“ I found out the hard way that having employees with low morale creates low productivity. It showed where it counts — on the bottom line!”



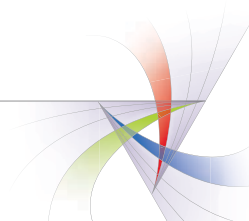
| | Resources required | Person responsible |
|--|--|--------------------|
| | <p>Who:</p> <p>What:</p> <p>Cost:</p> | |
| | <p>Who:</p> <p>What:</p> <p>Cost:</p> | |
| | <p>Who:</p> <p>What:</p> <p>Cost:</p> | |
| | <p>Who:</p> <p>What:</p> <p>Cost:</p> | |

MYTH

I have to be an expert in health.

REALITY

You don't need special skills to get a workplace program up and running, and you can learn as you go.



STEP 5 Follow up and revise your activities

Once your workplace health promotion activities are up and running, you'll want to know what's working and what isn't. Reviewing your activities can help you improve what you're already doing and justify continuing or expanding activities. It doesn't have to be difficult or time consuming — in fact, it may be as simple as keeping records of how many people attended activities and asking for their comments and suggestions for change.

- **Determine** if you met your activity objectives.
- **Get ongoing feedback** from employees, including suggestions for improving initiatives.
- **Keep a tally** of how many people participate.
- **Re-evaluate your plans**, taking into account any changes in timing or available resources.
- **Adjust your plan**, as required.
- **Demonstrate your own commitment** and enthusiasm by taking part in activities.
- **Update the resource section** on page 23 as your community contacts grow!
- **Monitor absenteeism** and other cost drivers.

MYTH

This won't benefit me or my business.

REALITY

You can increase productivity and improve employee health and safety.

An evaluation guide

Effective evaluation is more about understanding how we learn and change than it is about judgment and measurement.

Evaluation does not have to be a daunting task, but it is vitally important to the success of your workplace health initiative. **Evaluation is about gathering information** to find out:

- if the initiative is meeting objectives
- what is working and what is not
- what improvements are needed to make it work

One example of an evaluation tool is the logic model. The logic model consists of common elements, showing **what** the program is supposed to do, for **whom** and **why**.

What?

- components — what it is about (e.g., *stress reduction initiative*)
- activities — what you are doing or what services you are providing (e.g., *ask employees for input into decision making at monthly staff meetings, arrange for stress management information session at lunch hour*)

Who?

- target groups — who you are doing it to or for (e.g., *all employees or certain priority groups*)

Why?

- short-term outcomes — the direct results of the program on its participants (e.g., *reduced stress, more satisfied employees*)
- long-term outcomes — changes your program are intended to achieve “down the road” (e.g., *a 10% reduction in absenteeism in two years; a 5% reduction on health care costs in two years; a 2% increase in productivity; improved employee morale; an enhanced corporate image; reduced turnover and lower health care costs;*)

“The work plan should outline the program objectives, activities and evaluation methods that will be undertaken in each year or phase of the plan.” *

* An Introduction to Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion – Info Pack. The Health Communication Unit, Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 2004.

There is no “right” way to create a logic model — in fact, you may find it easier to start in the middle. Every program should be able to undertake some type of evaluation activity.

Advantages of creating a logic model:

- summarizes the key elements of the program
- explains the rationale behind activities
- clarifies the difference between the activities and the intended outcomes of the program
- shows the cause-and-effect relationships between the activities and the outcomes, (*i.e., which activities will lead to which outcomes.*)

Logic model tips:

- Practice makes perfect! The first time is always the hardest... it will get easier.
- Strive for simplicity. Follow the KISS principle: Keep It Short and Simple. Don't try to include all the details of your plan. Try to fit the whole logic model on one page.
- Discuss the logic model with staff involved at all levels.
- Evaluation should be based on a common understanding of activities and their connection to expected outcomes.

Management guru Dr. W.E. Deming once said that “every organization is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets.” Remind the committee of this as they establish their working arrangements and begin to work with the target group(s).*

* Adapted from A Program Evaluation Tool Kit: The Blue Print for Public Health Management. Ontario Ministry of Health & PHRED Ottawa Carleton Health Department.



WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

Contact information

For more information about workplace health promotion programs and services, contact:

Health Canada at:

Website: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/workplacehealth

Email: info@hc-sc.gc.ca

There are also many municipal/regional/provincial organizations that can be of help and many of them offer services and products free of charge. Try contacting one of the following organizations in your area:

- local public health department
 - local parks and recreation centres
 - family counselling centre
 - private counselling groups for employee assistance
 - Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety:
 - Tel: 1-800-263-8466
 - E-mail: inquiries@ccohs.ca
 - Web: <http://www.ccohs.com>
 - alcohol and drug programs
 - hospitals and medical centres
 - municipal governments
 - mental health services
 - provincial health ministries
 - community information centres
 - voluntary, non-profit organizations (e.g., lung association, cancer association)
-

