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How to Avoid the Health Care Crisis and Profit in the Process



There is a direct correlation between the health of a workforce and the bottom line of a company.

- Fact: Depression and anxiety related disorders cost American business over 150 billion dollars a year.
- Fact: 75% of doctor visits are stress related.
- Fact: Most of today's common illnesses are preventable.
- Fact: 40% of the US population over the age of 40 has pre-diabetes.
- Fact: Most people spend the bulk of their savings on health issues.

What most companies don't realize is that they can make physical well-being part of their company culture. Take the example of Dole Food Company, which has a very well established wellness program that includes a healthy cafeteria, fitness classes and a culture of respect for the human body. And it is spearheaded by the CEO.

America is known as a country of very hard workers; truth is we actually work too hard. The problem is that the workaholic attitude keeps us constantly sleep and rest deprived. There's no time to create new ideas because everyone is playing catch up. In fact, only about 20% of workers are performing to their full capacity. When productivity falls, so does the profit.

We scoff at Europeans who take 6 weeks off, but their longevity and overall fulfillment is profoundly higher than in the US and, in many cases, so is their GDP.

Health care costs are going up by 10% a year; if your margins aren't doing that (then whose is right now?) you need to find a way to balance the budget. If you are able to keep costs down

65%

“NUTRITION COUNSELING IS MORE IMPORTANT TODAY THAN EVER BECAUSE 65% OF OUR COUNTRY IS OBESE.”

by having a healthy workforce, it will help ameliorate the current financial crisis and add to your bottom line, plus help you create a stronger business. Giving staff members this kind of support to establish healthy lifestyles will build loyalty in your team and more will get done in your organization.

The leadership of a team has to understand the value of this culture for themselves, personally, as well as for the company. The team will follow by example. The California Health & Longevity Institute in Westlake Village offers a dual-pronged experience, which allows leaders to see the value of this type of paradigm shift through their Leadership Performance program.

It first focuses on the health of the executive leadership of an organization, providing them with education and tools to help them first create healthful change for each individual executive. Through this model of leading by example, these productive leaders inspire change in their companies by getting healthy, and that can't help but trickle down to the entire team. The improved productivity more than pays the cost of these programs. There are dozens of studies that prove this point.

Educate your leaders and middle management and allow them to educate the team. It will create a closer bond between staff and management

and they will inspire the team as well. Using some kind of a computer-based program where team members can log in, track their progress and get points for doing better is also very motivational. The points can be used for healthy getaways, gym memberships, even cash, etc.

According to Michael Brazeal, an exercise physiologist and fitness director of California Health & Longevity Institute, the only two reasons not to exercise are sickness and death. It's a matter of making the time and setting your priorities. Replacing, recruiting and reeducating high-level team members to get up to speed in your organization is much more expensive than keeping your workforce healthy. It's a matter of dollars and sense.

A Harvard study showed that people who burn the most calories on a weekly basis had lower all-cause mortality than their more sedentary counterparts. The jury is in; exercise is your cheapest, easiest and most accessible means of staying healthy; it's also a great anti-depressant.

Research shows that cardio exercise has the same effect as a number of anti-depressants. The key is that this only takes place with 30 minutes of vigorous exercise on a daily basis.

Nutrition counseling is more important today than ever because

65% of our country is obese. There is so much misinformation about health because most of our data comes from TV commercials and the promotion of books and supplements that offer a quick fix. Unfortunately, there is none.

We are also an aging population and if we take action now, most illness is preventable. Even if your numbers are within the range of "normal," you should get a deeper analysis. Blood sugar is a good indicator of how close you are to getting a chronic illness, according to Paulette Lambert, a registered dietitian, certified diabetic educator and nutrition director at the Institute.

Personal transformative moments come when we learn what we don't know about our bodies. Even those who exercise regularly and eat right may not be in the state of health they think they are. The willingness to change is a lot easier once you have the information you need. I have personal experience in this area. Just because the numbers on your lab tests show that you are within the range of normal, doesn't mean that you are immune to hardening of the arteries or even diabetes.

What we know now is that a healthy team at the office will only increase your company's professional and personal wellbeing and bottom line.