

## Inside This Issue:

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## President's message

Why is health and wellness such a burning issue? With the advent of technology in the work place in the late 1970s and early 1980s, everyone anticipated a four-day work week and much more leisure time. Technology was supposed to improve productivity, help drive the economy and improve work/life balance. So what happened? At the same time, organizations also started putting emphasis on productivity in order to increase shareholder value, the result of which has been longer work days and work weeks and less leisure time, leading to ever increasing incidences of short-term disability due to stress, anxiety and other health-related issues.

Today, progressive organizations realize that productivity is contingent on optimal health and wellness, not on longer work days. To help our executive clients optimize their productivity, we offer a complete complement of health diagnostics through our partnership with Medcan Clinic in Toronto. This program includes assessing the status of an executive's current state of health and providing guidance for improvements in lifestyle that can relieve stress and other related conditions.

Our commitment to health issues extends into the community as we participate in one of our favourite causes; Polo for Heart, a unique and exciting fundraiser benefiting the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Southlake Hospital Regional Cardiac Care Centre. For the 5th year, Felix Global is proud to host a tent at the Toronto Polo Club, June 20 - June 22.

We are leaders in Canada providing fully integrated human capital solutions linked to innovative service options focused on health and wellness. We are now delighted to add our leadership in providing innovative service options focused on health and wellness.

As always, I'd be pleased to hear from you. Should you have any questions or wish to add to this newsletter, I invite you to contact me directly at [jgraham@felixglobal.com](mailto:jgraham@felixglobal.com) or call me at (416) 645-2092.

## Health and Wellness: The Performance Connection



The success of any organization relies in large part on the ability of the executive team to drive the corporate strategy forward. Creating a powerful executive team requires a substantial investment of time and money to develop top performers and equip them with the right tools and skill sets in order to realize the organization's goals. With such a large investment in the executive team, it is important to mitigate risk; yet one of the greatest threats to organizational performance is often one of the least considered: the executive team's health and wellness.

"Corporations send their executives to preventive health care clinics in order to enhance long-term performance," explains Dr. David Caspari, a physician at the Medcan Clinic, a leading preventive health care clinic located in Toronto. "Leaders are not in a position to comment on their executives' health, but they can offer them the opportunity to be proactive with their health and well-being. Executive medicals are designed to give a comprehensive, head-to-toe evaluation as well as a health management plan."

Health and wellness programs are not just a nice-to-have, they should be considered a vital component of any executive development program. Dr. Caspari warns that the traditional reactive approach to healthcare is often a case of too-little-too-late. "Not all diseases show immediate or obvious symptoms," explains Dr. Caspari. "The proactive approach can detect disease at an early stage when it can often be treated effectively. Untreated, diseases such as hypercholesterolemia, or diabetes will progress over years to a point of no return, which costs everyone - the patient and the organization who loses the executive's productivity."

While healthcare costs have been a long-standing

concern for most organizations, a new perspective on health and wellness links these factors to performance levels. A recent study published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine "quantifies the link between employee health and productivity more dramatically than any other study to date and shows that the relationship between the two is much more significant than previously thought."

Ronald Loeppke, M.D., MPH, one of the lead researchers in the study, writes, "The real eye-opener in this study is just how big of an impact employee health has on the bottom line when both direct medical spending and productivity costs are combined."<sup>1</sup> When previously calculating healthcare costs, organizations did not take into account soft costs of reduced productivity as a result of absenteeism, presenteeism (when employees are physically there but mentally elsewhere), depression, anxiety and other symptoms of stress.

Adds Dr. Caspari, "In my experience, the link between wellness and productivity is clear. When people start to control their health (i.e. weight), their level of fatigue drops, their energy increases, their quality of sleep

## What's New:

- Here we GROW again!  
Felix welcomes: Rob Turner, Vice President, Client Services; Bob Boyd, Vice President, Client Services
- Felix sponsors Polo for Heart charity event

improves, and they have more of a sense of being in control in their home and work environments.”

### Executive-Level Health and Wellness Programs

A ground swell of awareness is growing around the impact of health issues on cost and productivity, driving many companies to implement health and wellness programs.

A comprehensive health and wellness program should include the following three components:

#### 1. Wellness promotion

Specialists should measure, and talk to patients about, health risks such as weight, fitness, smoking and alcohol use, suggesting appropriate approaches to moderate risk. “A lot of folks don't eat breakfast usually leading to problems managing weight. A preventive health care clinic should go through systematic assessments of life style, looking for opportunities for health enhancement,” says Dr. Caspari.

“Executives understand that knowledge, process and accountability create success in their work environment. It's exciting when they understand that this model can be utilized to manage their own health,” adds Dr. Caspari.

Wellness promotion should include a fitness appraisal to test strength, flexibility, body fat and overall aerobic fitness. High levels

of fitness can help increase stamina, enhance alertness and improve stress management, often leading to a healthier attitude towards work.

Nutrition is also key. “Weight seems to be the most prevalent health issue in Canada today,” explains Dr. Caspari. “Even people who are physically fit often have body weights above their target range. That's an issue of nutrition.” At Husky Injection Moulding Systems Ltd., the implementation of a “healthy foods-focused cafeteria,” yielded “clear and measurable benefits with an absenteeism rate less than half the industry average.”<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. Disease screening

A comprehensive medical assessment should include a full complement of tests, such as fasting blood sugar, cholesterol, abdominal ultrasounds, treadmill stress testing, screening for colon, ovarian, uterine and lung cancers, electrocardiograms, tests for respiratory function, chest x-rays, and so on. “These tests will likely reveal underlying diseases that the executives may not be aware of,” explains Dr. Caspari.

#### 3. Disease management

“If a disease is detected, we help our clients navigate the health care system nationally and internationally by tapping into our extensive network of the best specialists,” emphasizes Dr. Caspari.

### Getting Your Executives to the Doctor

Once corporations understand the value of a health and wellness program, they need to think about the best strategies for getting executives to undertake the assessments and consider guidance for improving their health. Some organizations mandate a health assessment every year. Others offer it as an option. Others offer a list of several health management companies from which the executive can choose.

### Far Reaching Benefits of Health and Wellness

The key to improved organizational performance most often lies in targeted assessments that reveal hidden problems. Companies that do not take health and wellness seriously may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage as people constitute one of the last remaining competitive advantages an organization has. Keeping executives healthy and happy, therefore, is vital for ensuring the long-term engagement and retention necessary for healthy bottom lines and increased shareholder value. ■

<sup>1</sup><http://www.globeinvestor.com/servlet/story/PRN-EWS.20070710.DCTU042/GIStory/>

<sup>2</sup>Exec Lifestyles: Nutrition, wellness and productivity closely linked. Ottawa Business Journal, April 9, 2008

## Managing Stress for Healthier Organizations

Stress can come from anywhere. It can develop from variables that emerge from the workplace, or people can bring stress into the workplace from their outside lives. The question for many employers is, who is responsible for addressing stress-related issues? And, more importantly, what do these issues cost an organization in loss of productivity and erosion of the bottom line?

### A few stats

According Kenneth Nowack, Ph.D., President, Co-founder and Chief Research Officer of Envisia Learning, the main causes of work stress break down approximately as follows:

- 46% related to workload
- 28% related interpersonal issues
- 20% related work/family issues
- 6% related job insecurity

Although sleep disorders and depression

are the top two reasons people do not go to work, 64% of all absences are not medically related. When employees call in sick, most often they are away dealing with non-work issues, such as car repairs, child and elder care and personal issues. As a result, companies are increasingly paying directly and indirectly for absenteeism and presenteeism (when the person is present but not really focused on the work), on top of disability and other health-related costs.

For actual health costs, however, companies generally pay 80% more for diagnosis and treatment than they would have for preventative measures, which tend to cost less both at the front and back end.

### Stress and the bottom line

“Ignoring health and wellness is a fiscal challenge,” warns Dr. Nowack. “Because C-level executives are often pressured to show results, some will get results at the

expense of employees, thinking they are expendable. But the high cost of turnover in terms of recruiting and retraining suggests otherwise.”

Companies should note that numerous studies indicate that for every dollar invested in a preventative program, an organization will see \$3-\$5 return on healthcare savings for disability claims and insurance costs (especially for American companies who pay insurance costs), as well as a reduced cost for absenteeism.

### How to gage your employees' health and wellness

A two-tiered approach will yield the most valuable information.

**1. Organizational analysis:** Consider an annual employee satisfaction/engagement survey, including questions about:



# Projecting the Right Image

Staff Writer

An effective image has the ability to enhance one's presence and influence other peoples' perceptions. Image is especially important for creating a positive first impression.

Bringing consciousness to the image we project can make the difference between inspiring confidence in others, building confidence in ourselves, and losing a client's or colleague's trust. A certified image consultant can help an executive in any industry build a positive image, drawing from the executive's natural strengths.

"It's important to understand that improving your image is not the same thing as a make over," explains Anne Sowden, AICI CIP (Certified Image Professional) and President of Here's Looking at You.

"A make over focuses on the appearance only. It does not take into account who the person is, the industry they work in, where they work (e.g. Toronto vs. Calgary), position, personality, lifestyle and so on - all essential considerations for creating the most appropriate and authentic image."

Building a strong image is a complex process and must address three key areas:

## 1. Appearance

From head to toe - clothing (style and fit), shoes, hair, fingernails, and all other aspects of grooming.

## 2. Behaviour

How to act in the workplace - at a job interview, in a meeting, in a videoconference and so on.

## 3. Communication

- a. Verbal - the words we choose, how we say them, tone of voice, etc.
- b. Non-verbal - posture, facial expressions, body language, etc.

Ms. Sowden explains how she addresses each client's unique needs. "I don't have an exclusive with specific shops because each client has very different requirements. For instance, someone who travels for work requires fabrics and colours that mix and match and travel well. Also, what one wears in the US is different from Europe."

- Opportunities for training and development
- Support for work/life balance challenges
- Company benefits
- Perceptions of work and life stress
- Recognition and rewards

### Typical organization stressors:

- Leadership practices (people typically don't leave companies, they leave bosses)
- Perceived workload
- Interpersonal relationships
- Job security/career opportunities
- Physical environment/safety (e.g. how many hours can someone work on a shift?)

**2. Individual analysis:** Consider implementing individual stress and health-related appraisals. A number of publishers and vendors offer these kinds of assessments. StressScan™, for instance, is an assessment tool that provides individual analysis of health and lifestyle habits.

### Individual factors that affect productivity

- Family history, age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic backgrounds
- Personality
- Eating, exercise, sleep and rest, substance use or abuse
- How people cope, are they optimistic or pessimistic

Although assessing executives is important since executive turnover means high recruiting and retraining costs, the rank and file also require attention. A recent analysis of 42 US-based wellness studies found that such programs could achieve a 25-30% reduction in medical and absenteeism costs within 3.6 years for the entire organization.

## Which approach to stress works best?

Many employers are opening their minds to a variety of stress management techniques, such as yoga and meditation, with the caveat that any wellness intervention is fine as long as it can demonstrate effectiveness.

According to Dr. Nowack, "What has proven most effective are cognitive-behavioural approaches, which help people restructure what they say to themselves in the moment, focusing on creating positive perceptions instead of reinforcing negative ones."

"I see the focus on health and wellness as a new competitive opportunity for engaging and retaining high performance talent and enhancing productivity," argues Dr. Nowack. "If organizations are savvy, they will promote health and yield the benefits that research has supported." Research by Dr. Nowack has also concluded that individual strategies to manage stress are typically much more effective when organizational changes are also made, such as enhancing leadership effectiveness, or using financial rewards to persuade employees to join programs to improve their health. ■

"But it's not just the clothes I consider," explains Ms. Sowden, "I also help traveling clients develop cultural sensitivity."

Lifestyle is also an important factor.

"Someone who has five minutes to get ready because they have children who need to get to school is going to require easy, wash-and-wear clothes and outfits they can put together quickly," says Ms. Sowden

"The most important consideration of all," asserts Ms. Sowden, "is authenticity. An effective image consultant spends time getting to know his or her client. We are not out to make our clients into someone they are not; our job is to enhance who they already are."

Ms. Sowden adds, "It's less about the clothes and more about the gestalt - the overall effect of everything put together: clothes, style, manner, attitude and, above all, reinforcing authenticity."

### Remember the Importance of Etiquette

"Etiquette seems to be something many of us have left behind," laments Ms. Sowden.

Barbara Pachter and Marjorie Brody define etiquette in *The Complete Business Etiquette Handbook* (unfortunately out of print) this way: "Etiquette is a set of traditions based on kindness, efficiency and logic that have evolved overtime. They give you a structure in which to operate. Think of them as rules of the game."

Ms. Sowden cites the hand-written thank-you note as an example. "It's something that takes little time but speaks volumes to the client. It shows you care, that you put in effort. When people are used to getting mostly bills in the mail, a hand-written thank-you note will set you apart."

Ms. Sowden explains that an effective image consultant will observe a client's manner as much as appearance. "When I work with someone, I start with appearance because that's the quickest way to show results. But it is also a quick way to observe how people act. For instance, after shopping with one client, I debriefed him on what I observed in his exchange with the sales clerk and then asked him how he felt at the time, and how he could handle the same situation differently at the next occasion."



"Most clients are not aware of their behaviour, and most are eager to change when they realize there's room for improvement," says Ms. Sowden.

A few of Ms. Sowden's top etiquette tips:

#### 1. Always say thank you

Small gesture, large impact.

#### 2. Make a strong connection

Offer a confident handshake. "No wet fish, no bone crushers, do the web-to-web handshake and squeeze gently, make eye contact and smile," advises Ms. Sowden. Say your name clearly and make sure you get the other person's name right.

#### 3. Listen

Never interrupt people. Give your full attention and open your mind.

#### 4. Write an effective e-mail

Even if you do not know the recipient's name, always start with a greeting. Always include your name and contact info, especially for first-time connections.

#### 5. Leave an informative voicemail

Make sure the messages you leave are clear. What are you calling about? Leave your name and phone number twice.

### The importance of having an image consultant

You do not get a second chance to make a first impression. This expression points to an experience we all understand: when you walk into a room, people see your dress, your body language and your general manner before you speak. And they form

snap judgments on those initial data inputs. So, you need to make sure you are equipped with the tools necessary to portray a confident and capable image. An image consultant can help you leverage your strengths in order to project the most authentic and most able version of yourself.

When looking for an image consultant, it is best to go through the Association of Image Consultants International for properly trained and accredited consultants with specific education and experience. ■

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Felix is an international organization specializing in Employee Lifecycle Management. Established in 1986 as Victor Apa & Associates Inc., Felix helps business leaders assess, understand and shape their corporate cultures to drive exceptional business performance one person at a time.

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