



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Why Some HR Teams Are Bringing In Health Coaches

Despite most companies implementing corporate wellness programs, bringing in the standing desks, and swapping out the coffee and donuts for more nutritional office snacks, the American workplace still isn't the healthiest environment for us. The modern employee still spends most of a stressful eight-hour day sitting in a chair and staring at a screen—not exactly an active lifestyle—and employers are paying for it. In fact, the Center for Disease Control [estimates](#) that companies pay more than \$3 trillion in healthcare costs to combat chronic illnesses and conditions.

That's why more and more companies—over 92% for those with 500 or more employees—are currently offering some form of corporate health coaching or wellness program, and more are expected to follow suit. But is it the right fit for your business?

What Exactly Is a Health Coach?

Health coaches help work environments promote a culture of wellness, arming their employees with tools, techniques, and guidance to foster healthier habits and lifestyles both in and out of the workplace. This can take many forms, from including healthier food options in the office to organizing office workouts during lunch. Health coaches can regularly conduct educational seminars or even one-on-one sessions to help employees reach their individual goals.

Can a Health Coach Really Help My Business?

Besides the obvious benefit of a healthier, happier staff, health coaches can better your business in a number of ways.

Increased productivity: Recent research into employee productivity has uncovered a direct correlation between an employee's health and their performance. In fact, [one study](#) found that companies collectively lost \$227 billion from limited productivity tied to poor health. With a health coach implementing exercise programs or wellness initiatives, employers across the board find an uptick in productivity.

Improved retention: The current American workforce is more health-conscious than ever before. Combined with higher expectations from employees to provide better benefits, a health coach can serve as an extremely appealing perk for attracting and retaining talent. And it's not just about the tangible results prospective or current employees can receive from a health



coach—workers appreciate and value when their employers show they care about their employees' well-being.

Decreased absenteeism and presenteeism: Illness remains one of the top reasons that employees miss work (absenteeism) and one of leading causes of employees not performing to their full potential (presenteeism). Health coaches can help create individualized health plans for employees to decrease their chances of getting sick or injured and prevent missed days at the office.

Like the wellness programs and corporate health initiatives that preceded them, as more and more companies bring on health coaches, the more employees will come to expect it as the norm. Health coaches are a win-win: employees gain an excellent resource in maintaining their health and wellness goals, and employers get a staff that's more active, more engaged, and operating at peak performance.

PRODUCTIVITY

Looking To Improve Your Company's Training Program? Try Gamification

Day one of a brand new job can be an exciting, invigorating experience, one that can rekindle your passion for your career and act as a re-energizing reminder of why you do what you do. At least, until the HR department drops a 50-pound training manual on your desk.

Training isn't fun for either party involved. For new hires, it means a mountain of paperwork, form-filling, and general red tape that's standing in the way of what they were looking forward to doing: their job. For employers, training saps company resources and takes up an exorbitant amount of time. And if training isn't properly conducted, it can seriously harm company performance.

Looking to spruce up their training program and increase engagement from new hires, many HR departments have been turning to gamification, or applying elements of gameplay to different tasks or processes to make them more engaging. Gamification is common in the American workplace, from friendly competitions between departments to the classic "employee of the month" award. But why is it such a popular technique, and how can it be applied to employee onboarding and training?

The Power of Gamification

Gamification is much more than livening up something tedious to make it more interesting or entertaining. It's an incredibly effective learning tool that's been proven to engage trainees and help them better learn and retain information. Trainees that learn through gamification don't just retain more knowledge—they also learn faster and are more likely to apply that knowledge in real-world situations. That's what makes gamification such a perfect fit for employee training. Employers can be assured that their trainees will be actively putting the policies, processes, and techniques they're learning into practice.

While every office is different, try incorporating these gamified onboarding methods that are common to most companies.



Break It Down into Levels

Levels are a staple of video games, dating all the way back to forerunners like Pac-Man and Super Mario. The purpose of levels is to break up the user experience by delivering information in more digestible, easier to understand segments. It also instills a sense of progress, and thus accomplishment, into the game.

To apply this to your training program, consider segmenting the process into smaller modules, potentially spread out over the course of a week. Splitting up a 10-hour training session over five days is much more productive and engaging than having your trainees sit in a conference room all day. And if you can show visuals that track their progress—even a simple “60% of training complete” in a learning management system—you’ll engage trainees even more.

Spread Feedback Throughout

Games are constant engines of feedback: players are assigned scores or rankings, statistics are given to identify where users excel or struggle. Traditionally, HR teams tack on feedback at the end of their onboarding, where new hires and trainers can exchange their thoughts and feelings about the training process after it’s all been said and done. But if feedback and check-ins are integrated throughout onboarding, trainees have more opportunities to demonstrate what they’ve learned, and trainers can make adjustments accordingly.

Incorporate a Reward System

By regularly rewarding trainees throughout the onboarding process, you reinforce the knowledge they’ve learned while engaging them in a tried-and-true method. Rewards don’t have to be physical prizes—virtual points displayed on a scoreboard or some sort of experience-based “level up” system work just as well. Some offices even have their trainees progress through different conference rooms or floors, to give them a sense of completion and accomplishment.

FINANCE

5 Tips For Narrowing Pay Gaps

The history of American labor can be told as a struggle for pay equity, punctuated with landmark legislation like the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The former requires employers to provide equal pay for equal work and prohibits pay discrimination based on gender. Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts extends that anti-discriminatory policy to cover protected groups based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

But despite these major strides towards pay equality, there [still exist](#) persistent wage gaps across gender lines and other protected groups. Identifying and eliminating pay discrepancies ultimately falls on the shoulders of the employer. Here are five key techniques to help you narrow pay gaps and promote a more equitable workplace.



1. Double-Check Your Job Descriptions

If pay gaps are caused when workers aren't being equally compensated for the same work, employers need to firmly define what the "same work" means. That begins with more comprehensive, detailed job descriptions. It seems almost too simple, but thorough job descriptions allow employees to understand exactly what their roles are, how they compare to others, and why others might be compensated more or less.

2. Benchmark Against the Industry

Many industry groups survey companies in their sector about the salary ranges they offer for certain jobs. You can typically get access to these results by participating in the survey yourself, and see how your compensation stacks up against similar companies.

3. Establish Clear Promotion Policies

Companies that are transparent about detailed requirements for a raise or promotion can prevent pay disparities when employees move up the ladder. This practice doesn't just promote fair and consistent upward mobility, but also provides clear goals and more incentive to work toward the specific criteria.

4. Conduct Pay Audits

Companies that regularly perform audits of their entire pay structure can help stamp out pay disparities before they become an issue. If a discrepancy is found, HR departments can identify if the root cause is bias, a difference in work, or another factor, and determine the best course of action.

5. Invest in Hiring Team Training

It's important for those managing payroll to understand statutes and laws that are applicable to states or employee classifications. Training your hiring team on these rules and regulations, as well as educating them on other ways bias enters the hiring and compensation process, can help eliminate pay discrepancies before they arise.

HIRING

How To Recruit Generation Z

Just when the HR industry finally mastered adapting its hiring strategies to accommodate Millennials, Generation Z comes into the picture. Though it may be hard for some of us believe, those born in the late '90s or early '00s are already entering the workforce. In fact, in 2018 Ernst & Young [projected](#) that Gen Z will comprise nearly a quarter of the workforce in 2020. What does that mean for recruiters? New tactics, revised strategies, and a pivot in hiring if they want to capture the massive influx of new talent on the market. But first, a primer on this new social demographic.



The A to Z of Gen Z

Generation Z are the first true digital natives—they don't know a world without the Internet, smartphones, or social media. Making up about a third of the global population, most Gen Zers were raised by Generation X, came of age during a time of economic instability marked by the Great Recession, and are the most diverse generation to date. These factors have shaped their collective worldview and identity, and consequently the way they approach employment and the workplace. If you're looking to attract, hire, and retain Gen Z, consider these techniques.

1. Revise Your Social Media Strategy

Being entirely comprised of digital natives, Gen Z naturally has an extensive online presence and a mastery of all things Internet. While Millennials are digitally fluent as well, Gen Z actually interacts with social media much differently than their predecessors. While other generations overwhelmingly opt for Facebook as their preferred social media platform, Generation Z [favors](#) Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram. If you're looking to get a job posting in front of Gen Z eyes, consider leveraging those channels. As primarily visual mediums, you can even take the opportunity to share photos or videos that showcase the company's location, office space, and culture.

2. Be Open and Transparent

Growing up on the Internet, Generation Z has firsthand experience witnessing the spread of misinformation campaigns and countless corporate social media blunders, ranging from tone-deaf missteps to full-on scandals. That's arguably why Generation Z prizes authenticity in the brands and companies they interact with. As shrewd and careful consumers, they're curious about a company's mission, values, and ethics. For recruitment, this means being as open and transparent as possible during the hiring process—be honest about what your company is offering and contributing to the world and be open about the challenges they're facing. Being authentic doesn't mean co-opting Gen Z slang—it just means clearly communicating who you are to potential hires.

3. Offer Flexible Schedules and Telework

Another consequence of Gen Z's digital upbringing is the demographic's fierce independence. The answer to any question they might have has been essentially at their fingertips for as long they've lived, so they're much more likely to Google how to do something before they seek out external resources. It's this independence that's formed their belief that companies should offer flexible working perks and promote a healthy work-life balance. In fact, [a survey by Ernst & Young](#) found that 50% of Gen Zers prioritized flexibility when choosing a job. So if your HR department offers those benefits, be sure to emphasize them during recruitment. And if not, consider implementing them if Gen Z talent is something sorely needed in the office.