



## Leadership for workplace wellness programs

Are you leading or supporting the implementation of a workplace wellness program? When connecting with employees, the direct leader or manager of a wellness program is responsible for many duties, which may include the following:

- developing a vision for the wellness program after receiving input from employees;
- communicating ideas and an overall rationale throughout the organization, to management and to employees;
- generating energy, enthusiasm and commitment for the program;
- serving as a role model and wellness coach; and
- developing and maintaining leadership skills such as giving effective presentations and being well organized.

### Management support

When communicating to management or ownership, you may have to get them to buy in by informing them of the value of the program. Without the clear support of management, a wellness program may not be successful. In contrast, if management or ownership initiated the program or is clearly interested or invested in it, your program will benefit.

### Employee support

In addition to getting management approval and support, wellness program leaders need to involve as many people as possible in the program. As you develop contacts throughout your organization or company, appoint wellness program ambassadors to help you implement the program and generate enthusiasm among your employees.

### Regular communication

Regular internal communications is also essential to supporting any wellness program. A good communications plan will regularly update all employees (and management)

about program highlights and successes, and can foster both excitement and goodwill towards program objectives.

### Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement at meetings and through internal communications is another way to get the organization as a whole to support your program. For example, you can recognize people who have helped set up the program or offer tangible rewards to employees for achieving different types of health and wellness goals. Simply celebrating individual or group achievements can also help build support and contribute to team building.

### Commitment to wellness

Overall, a workplace wellness program should be seen by employees as a key part of their employer's and management's commitment to protecting and respecting the health, wellness and safety of all employees. Leading a workplace wellness program requires dedication and hard work, but the overall benefits for your workplace are well worth it.

### Learn more

[How to build effective wellness programs](#)

An article from *Benefits Canada* about how to launch and measure a wellness program.

[Physical Activity @ Work](#)

A web site from the Alberta Centre for Active Living that offers strategies to promote physical activity before, during and after the workday.

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)

A web site that offers information on promoting healthy workplaces and resources on how to prevent illness and injury in the workplace.

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