



## Challenge: Too Many Competing Initiatives

Even in organizations with robust wellness programs, wellness can sometimes get overshadowed by other strategic programs. This is a hard pill to swallow when you've invested so much in developing quality programs, yet it also presents opportunity to elevate your influence to new levels by making wellness less of a "program" and more integral to your organization's culture.

What do we mean by that? Consider first that there are two dimensions to the practice of worksite wellness. The first, the Program Level, is all of the tools, resources, products, and services you offer to employees to help them lead a healthy lifestyle. One quality these elements all have in common is that people need to use them in order for them to generate a positive impact.

The second dimension is the Organizational Level. This is where an organization's culture is defined; it is a reflection of what people value, what they believe, and how they think and behave. The Organizational Level also includes things like policies, procedures, relationships, and the physical workspace, all of which govern behavior in the workplace. We might say that the Organizational Level is everything that exists around the programs.

Success in wellness requires creating influence within both dimensions, but there is generally more opportunity to be found on the Organizational Level. The impact of an unhealthy culture will outweigh any positive impact from programs. Therefore, when conflicting initiatives make it difficult to capture employees' attention, you can take the opportunity to shift your attention away from employees and toward the conditions of the workplace.

# Next Steps:

## Elevate Your Influence

### 1 Establish Health-friendly Policies

There is not a wellness program in the world that can improve the physical activity level of employees who are not given an opportunity to integrate physical activity into their workdays. The same holds true of many other habits – your influence over employees is mostly limited to what happens within your workplace. Therefore, you need to adopt policies that give employees explicit permission to do the key things that foster health and wellbeing while they're at work.

### 2 Integrate Healthy Habits into Process

Anything done on a regular basis at work creates an opportunity to integrate healthy habits into the standard ritual. If your team holds a huddle every Tuesday afternoon, it's a perfect opportunity to include time for light physical activity and a gratitude practice. If the first thing you do when you get to work is open your email, use your first two minutes each day to send a short email recognizing the contribution of a colleague. After all, our people need to feel important and appreciated just as much as they need regular exercise.

### 3 Reshape Physical Spaces

For organizations with a large budget, the opportunities to develop healthier spaces are endless and inspiring. But creating healthier spaces is possible with just a little creativity. For example, if there are places where people spend time congregating or waiting, these are the perfect spots for wellness-related messaging.