



Talent: the rarest resource!

Using a workplace health and wellness program for Talent retention and acquisition!

Talent: where do you find it, and how do you use it?

It seems everyone has their own definitions and answers to the above. But there is one thing that is universally agreed on: talent is a rare resource! And the battle to find and keep this rare resource is becoming more of a burden on organisations than ever before.

Similarly, the health care costs of workplaces are skyrocketing. Obesity, Type II diabetes, and cardiovascular illness in particular affect more and more employees. Finding ways to battle this burgeoning epidemic is also high on the priority list of organisations.

Rather than try to combat these twin issues separately, what if we attempted to tackle both? What if by implementing a workplace health and wellness program, we could also use this as our talent retention and acquisition strategy? And what if there was another way to retain and acquire new talent, whilst simultaneously rewarding and recognising top performers by providing a service to these individuals that improved their physical, mental and emotional well-being, whilst also making them even more productive and feeling valued by your organisation?

The problem with Talent

Retention and acquisition is all about the focus on costs of retaining talented employees, ensuring they are motivated and challenged, versus the cost of losing talent and having to look for new talent in the market. When the latter occurs, the cost involved shifts from retaining to recruitment. This process along with onboarding and training new talent in the first 3 – 6 months is expensive and risky.

A key part of this recruitment process is reward and recognition. People crave both, but usually one more than the other. This is taken into consideration when hiring 'new' talent. However, things like pay reviews, performance reviews and other 'perks' aren't always readily

available for 'existing' Talent. These aspects have to fall into Quarterly, bi-Annual, or Annual budgetary cycles.

But, is it always about the money? Talented employees, either existing or those being sought, have gifts and needs that aren't always intrinsically met with extra dollars.

In fact, if a person is truly considered 'talented', they usually have their choice of employers to choose from. They look at the organization holistically rather than just myopically. How many 'talented people' have you run across that tell you it is 'just about the money'? 'Talent' has this title for a reason:

- They are usually high achievers, given challenges that are critical to key business outcomes.
- They are seen to be being groomed for either more executive or more strategic roles within your organisation. Due to this, they usually have a great senior leadership team support base
- They in turn usually the support and respect of their peers and direct reports where applicable.

These people, this 'retained talent', are the crux of your possible 'super culture'. They also inspire others who wish to emulate their success. But why would you want to use this concept as a base to promote a 'super culture' within your organisation, let alone to promote health and wellness?

Dirty Words – Workplace Productivity

Everyone now has 24/7 availability due to Smartphone's, tablets, and wireless devices. Whether it's called 'Work Life Balance', 'Work / Life Assimilation', or Work / Life Integration', it is very difficult to gain separation between what is considered 'personal time, and what is considered 'professional time'. Switching off is a conscious choice. And most people choose NOT to switch off. Why is this? Deadlines, expectations, and a 'sense of duty', and not wanting to let other people down are some of the leading reasons. This takes a toll at an individual and organizational level. If there is no downtime, anytime or anywhere, something has to give. Individually, this inability to switch off manifests in different ways via poor health practices, and in extreme circumstances, dire physical illness. Heart disease, depression, Type II diabetes, and cardiovascular illness are increasing globally. All are outcomes that will occur due to inability to manage stress, lack of sleep, and poor nutrition. This in turn affects the workplace in terms of loss of productivity, culture and the ability to perform effectively.

Having some form of Health and Wellness program in place, where results before and after the program itself can be tracked and measured by program owners, is almost a mandatory requirement to ensure the success and longevity of any modern day organization!

Talent and Workplace Productivity: Bringing it together.

According to a 2012 US Government survey, those organisations engaged in a Health and Wellness program experience a 61% decrease in medical costs, a 78% decrease in absenteeism, and an incredible 80% increase in productivity![1]

A Health and Wellness program strategy to retain Talent, whilst acquiring Talent, is built on these principles:

1. A positive culture
2. Challenge
3. A winning team.

If these three guidelines are followed, this will create the super culture that other Talent Acquisition targets are looking for. How many talented individuals that you know are looking to join mediocre organisations with mediocre culture? They want a winning culture where they can both thrive and be challenged.

Find your super culture, acquire your talent.

A Forbes study of the 100 Best Companies to work for showed that while to be 'Paid Fairly' was the number one demand from happy employees, Number #2 was 'Deliver Awesome Benefits', and number #5 was 'Make the workplace fun!' [2] Use these aspects to promote your culture externally and internally. For example, you could:

- Share metrics such as the Efficiency of your team with Quote turnaround times being better than Competitors.
- Ensure the Leadership team in your organisation are aware of less sick days being incurred due to a more resilient workplace.
- Measure Productivity via a balance of personal and professional focus.
- Effective and positive departmental interactions through closer team bonding due to 'Boot Camp' style training.

- HR having the opportunity to actively take an interest in the 'Talent' pool by surveying Employees needs and wants.

This can be implemented by having pre and post Health and Wellness program surveys. These could be designed for Employees and sent out to both participants and non-participants in the Health and Wellness program on a weekly, fortnightly, or monthly basis. Employees would answer five to ten simple questions focusing on both personal benefits (overall health, eating, sleep, stress) and organizational benefits (are they feeling more positive about work, more energy whilst at work, culture due to group training etc). Three ways to then measure this data against actual results are:

1. Monitor 'Sick Leave' before and after each program
2. Measure employee turnover from the entire organisation vs. those participating in the Health and Wellness program
3. Other 'productivity' measurements such as customer email and phone call response times, meeting participation etc.

Most organisations have their own set of Metrics, whether this is something formal or informal. Use customized workplace surveys and metrics integrating with your existing HR processes and systems to ensure the quality of the data.

Your HR team can really be creative with this program when recruiting to gain an edge above the usual reward and recognition conversations. Let the culture and organisation sell itself!

Measure, Monitor and ROI.

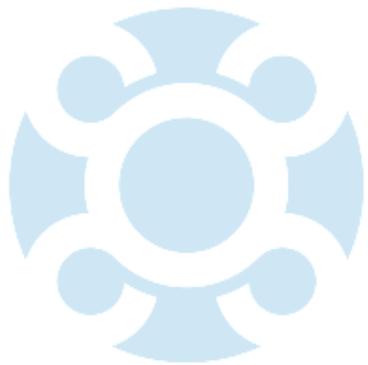
Health and Wellness 'perks' such as company provided or partially subsidised Health Insurance programs are offered in most organisations. With the increasing costs of this almost essential item, this is a very attractive addition to any employment package. However, how much of this Insurance is actively used by Employees? And therefore, how much money is your organisation potentially 'wasting' on services that simply isn't being utilised, or is necessary? By implementing a well-structured Health and Wellness program as per the above section, you can include metrics to monitor health insurance program usage. More complete packages can then be offered to the employees in your Talent pool. This not only enables your HR team achieve better ROI on your Employee Health Insurance spend and to really have a bargaining chip for those workers you need and want to retain, it can also provide tangible Opex benefits to the organisations overall bottom line.

Conclusion.

Innovation and ownership is key here. The services of a Nutritionist, Personal Trainer, Workplace Productivity Consultant or preferably a blend of all three in a Health and Wellness coach, is something that is already being used in highly competitive fields such as IT, Law, and Banking and Finance. It's a tall order to maintain a highly productive workplace. Ask for help, implement a bold, positive program, and watch the individual and organisational benefits flow!

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