



Canadian HR Reporter

Employers lack formal wellness strategies

By: HRReporter.com (September 1st, 2009)

Source: <http://www.hrreporter.com/articleview?articleid=10145&headline=employers-lack-formal-wellness-strategies>

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While 96 per cent of Canadian employers have wellness initiatives or plan to introduce them, only 24 per cent have fully implemented wellness strategies with multi-year goals and a documented approach to evaluate results, according to a global survey.

Stress continues to be the top health driver of Canadian wellness programs, found Working Well: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness released by Buck Consultants, a Xerox company. The survey analyzed responses from 1,248 organizations in 47 countries representing more than 13 million employees.

Improving productivity, reducing absence, and improving workforce morale and engagement are the most important objectives for these programs.

“With stress as the top health risk being addressed by wellness programs, employers should be focusing on improving their work environment,” said Michele Bossi, Buck’s health and productivity leader in Canada. “Workplace stress is a growing issue and employers that focus their wellness efforts on creating a healthier work environment will be more successful at improving workforce morale and engagement.”

Among Canadian respondents, only 30 per cent indicated they have measured any specific outcomes from their wellness programs. This compares to 37 per cent of global respondents that have measured outcomes.

“Organizations that measure the impact of their wellness programs are more successful at improving their employees’ health and overall wellness,” said Barry Hall, a Buck principal who directed the survey. “However, many simply don’t know how to measure their results or they don’t have the resources to do so.”

One of the fastest-growing components of wellness plans in Canada is the health portal or website. Employers are increasingly using technology to provide health-related information to employees, found Buck’s survey. Also growing are health-risk appraisals, personal health coaching or lifestyle management coaching as well as programs that support work-life balance and address the psychosocial work environment.