



# CLC & Capstone

If you can, think back to Module 2, when you solved a community need by using entrepreneurial skills. In your assignment, you designed a company to solve a pain or create a gain in your community, requiring both creativity and analytical skills to make it successful!

Think now to if you really were running that company, with employees you have hired coming in each day to make your business successful. You have noticed lately that absenteeism for sicknesses has increased, and productivity seems to be at an all time low. Perhaps you offer your employees health insurance and there seems to have been a surge in claims. Either way, you have decided that your company is overdue for a **wellness program**.

## ***What is an employee wellness program?***

A wellness program is any program implemented by a company to improve the health and wellness of their employees. A good wellness program would also help individual employees overcome specific health-related issues. With wellness programs, employers (your company) would normally pay for costs, knowing that healthy employees directly affect the morale and productivity of the employees, and therefore will increase profits in the long run.

## ***What are some benefits of having an employee wellness program?***

There are so many benefits for a company to have an employee wellness plan! Taking care of your employees is an important aspect of having an engaged, productive team. Here are some of the many benefits:

- reduced health care costs for the company in terms of fewer insurance claims and lower absenteeism
- lowers health care risk factors for employees, such as back pain, diabetes and high blood pressure
- employees can experience improved eating and sleeping habits, leading to better functioning (as well as productivity and morale) throughout the day
- lowered stress and improved moods for staff
- general higher engagement of employees and motivation towards achieving company goals

Think about if a wellness program was instituted as part of your school program...by taking care of yourself in terms of proper sleep and nutrition, you would have lower stress levels and your productivity would increase! Just think about the impact that would have on your CLC grade!

## ***What is the best way to implement an employee wellness program?***

Like any program, there are certain steps that should be taken to ensure that the program is engaging and meaningful to your employees to ensure there is **participation!** Taking the time (and spending the money) to design a program with no participation would definitely not give you the return on the investment you were looking for!

Follow these steps to implement a wellness program that works for everyone:

1. **Plan and set goals:** what are the goals of your employee wellness program? What would you like it to accomplish? If your plan were successful, what would success look like?
2. **Get management and company leaders on board:** change is hard for some people, and without the support of your company management and leaders, employees won't buy into the plan either! Gone are the days of "do as I say, not as I do" - employees look to others for motivation and to set examples.
3. **Ask for input:** design an anonymous survey to give to everyone in the company, including management, leaders and employees. Gauge interest in employee needs and interest in different programs to get a sense of what would create engagement.
4. **Evaluate the survey data:** look through the wellness and lifestyle issues that were brought up in your surveys. What are the concerns and goals of your employees? Do you need to go back and adjust your program goals in step #1?
5. **Create and implement the program:** based on the needs of your employees, what preventative health issues will your program address? Will it be based on healthy eating, mental health, weight loss, disease management? How will you encourage your employees to participate?
6. **Decide on incentives:** leave out the candy, food and treats - what incentives will you use to encourage employees to participate (and maintain participating) in your wellness program? Who will get the incentives and for what reasons?
7. **Communicate:** how will you communicate the plan with your employees? Remember that not everybody will have access to, or perhaps read their email. Remember to promote your plan in a fun way; host events, have theme weeks. Make your communication effort continuous, not once per year!
8. **Gather feedback:** gather feedback along the way with your program, and adapt as necessary based on employee needs. Look at participation rates - what can you do to encourage more people to participate, and keep participating in your program?

Now that you are aware of how important employee wellness programs are and the steps required to design an awesome program for your employees, it's your turn to make one of your own!