



STEP 2:

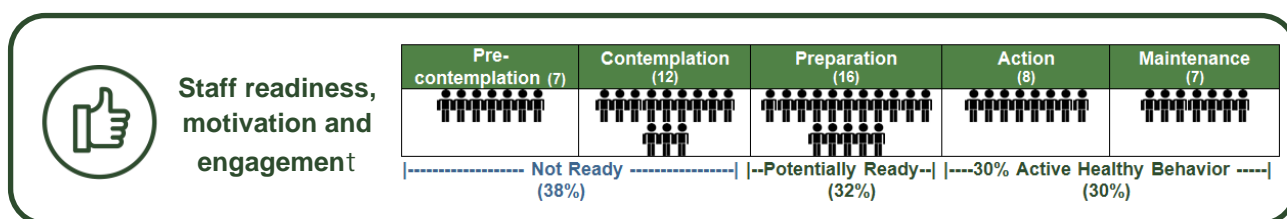
ENGAGING YOUR EMPLOYEES

MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

STEP 2: ENGAGING YOUR EMPLOYEES

One of the top issues in implementing a wellness program is engaging employees. The introduction touched on one key ingredient: focusing the program on the employee's wellbeing. That focus will definitely help participation rates, but there are other key components you should also focus on.

Understanding how and why people become motivated and engaged in activities is a key to program development and success. In this section, we will review a few key concepts about motivation and engagement.



Focus on intrinsic motivation for long-term change	Intrinsic Motivation		Extrinsic Motivation	
	❖ Joy	❖ Identity	❖ Weight	❖ Grades or scores
	❖ Social connection	❖ Importance, value, meaning	❖ Money	❖ Prizes, medals or trophies
	❖ Helping others		❖ Titles, praise or social recognition	

Communication and marketing	❖ Send the right message		❖ Create a culture	
	❖ Give employees what they want	❖ Recognize accomplishments	❖ Make it fun	❖ Make it easy
	❖ Create a social component and commitment		❖ Get the family involved	

EMPLOYEE READINESS

The Stages of Change model is one way to explain that people go through a series of steps in changing behavior. Understanding that these steps exist can help you set up your wellness program to help target people at the various stages. Here is a summary of the five stages:

STAGES OF CHANGE.

Pre-contemplation	Contemplation	Preparation	Action	Maintenance
Not thinking about changing	Considering changing within 6 months, but are still uncertain	Decided to change and are now preparing to change within a month	Actively changing	Successfully changed, and have maintained for 6 months or longer



HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES CHANGE

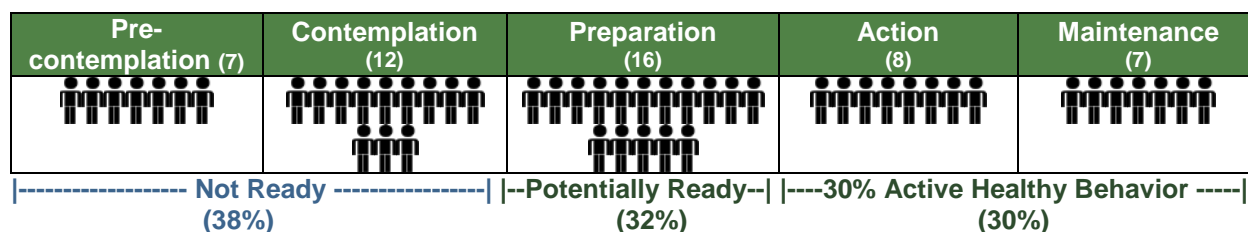
In order for people to progress through the stages, they need:

- ❖ Information on why they should change.
- ❖ Personal reasons why it's important for them to change.
- ❖ More reasons to change than reasons for not changing.
- ❖ A positive mindset about changing.
- ❖ A belief in themselves and confidence in their ability to change.
- ❖ The knowledge and skills to change (or the resources to find these things).
- ❖ The social support and encouragement to change.
- ❖ An environment that supports the change.
- ❖ Practice, practice, practice!

READINESS TO CHANGE

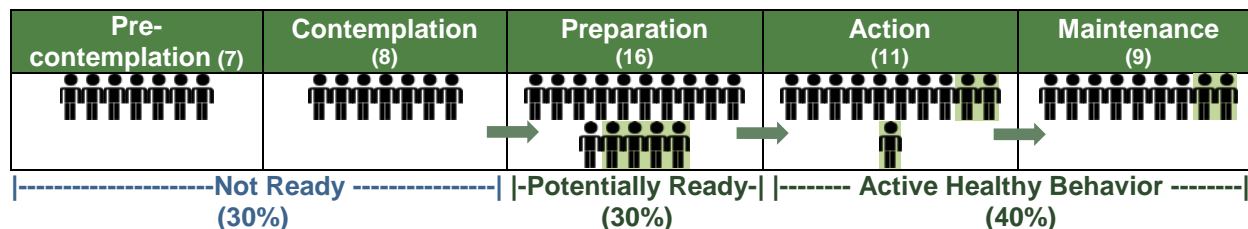
When you are planning your programs, consider how ready your employees are for change, based on the stages of change. To assess and monitor progress, you can do before and after surveys with your employees. See Appendix C for a pre-survey, and notice the readiness-to-change questions. You could do this once a year to assess movement across the stages.

For example, an average workforce for a business of 50 employees might look like this:



The groups on either end of the spectrum likely will not move much because the pre-contemplation group is not ready yet, and the maintenance group will likely continue their positive behavior even without your wellness program. However, you can help employees progress through the middle three stages (contemplation, preparation and action), and possibly from action to maintenance.

Your program is having an impact if you see your employees move along the continuum (progressing one or two stages to the right). For example:



employee who has shifted to a new group

A similar concept came out of a recent survey that grouped employees into three categories:

- ❖ **Resistant**—Do not support the role of employers in employee health and well-being and are very uncomfortable with targeted messages
- ❖ **Persuadable**—Open to some employer involvement but skeptical about its extent
- ❖ **Onboard**—Support the role of the employer in encouraging employee health improvement and are comfortable with targeted messages



Willis Tower Watson: Improving workforce health and productivity - 2015/2016

Why is this important? Every worksite will have employees who are more likely to participate than others are. Moving employees towards a healthier lifestyle is a “win” even if they do not make it to the outcome goal that would best improve their health. In addition, if employees already know why they should change, but are still not changing, they may need help with mindset, skills, or social or environmental support.

One more note: It is important to know that even if a person changes, they can relapse at any time. Often people start and stop behavior changes a number of times before ultimately succeeding and maintaining the new behavior.



INTRINSIC and EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic:

Intrinsic motivation is when a person wants to reach a goal because it is important to them.

Extrinsic motivation is when a person wants to reach a goal because it gets them a material reward like cash or a prize.

Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Meeting goals provides an emotional reward of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Joy ❖ Identity ❖ Social connection ❖ Importance, value, meaning or purpose ❖ Helping others 	Meeting goals provides a type of prize: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Grades or scores ❖ Money ❖ Prizes, medals or trophies ❖ Certificates or degrees ❖ Titles, praise or social recognition
Long-term behavior change and continued engagement are more likely with intrinsic motivation.	Extrinsic motivation works for short-term actions. It does not work for continued engagement and long-term behavior change.
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More likely to lead to lasting changes ❖ Can create intrinsic motivation by having the right company culture and promoting factors such as social connections 	Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increases participation for specific tasks like a health assessment ❖ Random drawings give everyone a chance
Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Need to identify meaningful triggers that would motivate individuals to change ❖ Basic needs must be met for people to be ready and open to intrinsic motivation to change behavior 	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ May be seen as punishment if it has a potential cost to the employee if a goal isn't met ❖ May take a lot of time to track “points” to meet goals

Why is this important for wellness programming? In addition to providing extrinsic rewards for short-term achievements, like money or prizes for participating in wellness activities, employers can also help employees with developing intrinsic motivation, so that their lifestyle behaviors continue long-term.

For a more detailed description of incentives as extrinsic motivation, read this article:
Wall Street Journal - A look at the pros and cons of the most popular wellness programs used by companies. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323393304578360252284151378>

EVENT-BASED PROMOTIONAL INCENTIVES

Incentives are given to employees to attract them to participate in programs. There are many kinds of incentives. The simplest forms of incentives are those that are free give away items and attract people to your event. Some ideas include:

- ❖ **Free food or drink** (preferably healthy)
- ❖ **Free entertainment** (music or performers)
- ❖ **Free gifts:**
 - T-Shirt or clothing
 - Water bottle or stadium cup
 - Key chain or fob or lanyard
 - Chip clip
 - Pen or pencil or stylus
 - Notepad
 - Lunch bag or Tote bag
 - Rubber wristbands
 - Stress squeeze balls
 - Frisbees
 - Lip balm, mints, sunblock, etc.
 - Coupons for local stores or products
 - Gift cards
 - Other merchandise (i.e., “prizes”)

ANNUAL WELLNESS PROGRAM INCENTIVES

If you have a comprehensive wellness program that consists of completing many things during the year, you may want to consider other types of incentives in addition to the free give away ones. Some ideas include:

- ❖ **Money as reimbursement**—reimbursing employees for money they spent on wellness related items throughout the year:
 - **Example:** Gym membership, fitness/yoga classes, or personal training sessions
- ❖ **Money as reward** – rewarding employees for doing activities during the year:
 - **Example:** Participating in an annual biometric screening and health assessment
- ❖ **Benefit-based incentives (For example, health insurance premiums)** – instead of cash, another option is to provide a difference in health insurance payments that employees pay out of their paycheck. These are often known as “a carrot” or “a stick” approach.
 - Carrot (reward)**—where the employee receives a reward for participating
 - **Example:** employee gets \$20 per month reimbursement or is provided a \$20 per month discount for health insurance, if they do participate
 - Stick (punishment)**—where the employee receives a penalty for not participating
 - **Example:** employee pays \$20 more for health insurance per month, if they don’t participate
- ❖ **Other Creative Incentives**
 - **Sick, personal, or vacation days**—give employees extra days off as their reward.
 - **Parking spot (or discounts)**—give employees a good parking space for the day, week, month or longer (or provide them with a discount, if they have to pay for parking).
 - **Flex spending accounts**—give money for flex spending
 - **Cafeteria bucks**—give them a gift card to use at the company cafeteria
 - **Volunteer or charity**—give employees a day off to do volunteer/charity service, if they get a monetary reward, to allow them to give it to a charity instead

A Cautionary Note:

Extrinsic rewards can either help or hurt employee morale and motivation

Consider things carefully before you decide what to offer employees. The carrot or reward approach tends to improve employee morale, whereas the stick or punishment type of approach tends to decrease employee morale.

Some may say that the stick or punishment approach tends to get higher participation because people are more afraid to lose money than interested in getting money. That may be true, but if employees feel forced into participating in wellness (especially out of fear of losing money), then their feelings about the company, employee morale, productivity or engagement in their work, and their intrinsic motivation for participating in the wellness program or its recommended healthy behaviors tend to decrease.

LEGAL REGULATIONS AND TAXES FOR INCENTIVES

Depending on what kind of incentives you use, in what way you provide them, and how much you provide, legal regulations and tax laws may apply. For more information about this, (including the difference between participatory programs, and health contingent or outcomes-based programs), see Appendix G on “Wellness Regulations and Rewards” for guidance.

COMMUNICATION and MARKETING

Communication and marketing may be the second most important piece of your wellness program after creating a culture that focuses on the well-being of your employees.

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

Before you select how you will communicate, it is helpful to assess (1) your employee demographics (who your employees are); (2) what media they use; (3) what media your company has and can use; and (4) the time, money, and resources you have to develop communications. Once you figure those things out, you can create your messages and select your media.

You have a number of options to consider for ways to communicate:

- ❖ In-person
- ❖ Meeting announcements
- ❖ Overhead speaker announcement
- ❖ TV and video monitor announcements
- ❖ E-mail
- ❖ Intranet web pages
- ❖ Social media posts
- ❖ Blogs
- ❖ Newsletters
- ❖ Brochures
- ❖ Flyers or posters on bulletin boards
- ❖ Table tents
- ❖ Signage or announcements on sandwich boards or portable easels
- ❖ Phone or text message reminders

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

When developing communication, make sure your employees can easily identify:

- ❖ **Who** the program is for
- ❖ **What** the program is about
- ❖ **Where** the program is
- ❖ **When** the program is
- ❖ **Why** the program is being offered
- ❖ **How** to sign up or participate
- ❖ **Who** to contact for more information—name, title, location, phone number, and email address.

COMMUNICATION and MARKETING PLAN

You will want to plan out how you will communicate and market your overall wellness program and each of your events throughout the year, including who will design materials, who is needed to help with the dissemination, and when and where things will be placed. A description of how to incorporate your communication and marketing plan into your action plan is in Step 5. If you have marketing staff or just creative people, talk with them about your communication and marketing plans. If possible, see if they can create items for you, or with you.

You should also “brand” your initiatives so employees immediately recognize materials that are part of the wellness program. That can be a logo, a color design or just something that sets the materials apart from what they see every day in the organization. Here is one example with key types of messages that should be part of your communication for all of your initiatives.

SAMPLE MARKETING/COMMUNICATION FLYER:

Walk with a “Buddy” program

Be active with a friend!
Walking has never been more fun.



**You will feel and look better and
have more energy!**

All participants will be enrolled in a random
drawing for a gift card.

Join us to “Walk with a buddy”. Sign up at our internal online
registration site www.getthehealthy.org

1

Create compelling
messages

2

Promote something of
value to the employee

3

Create a “call to action”

Other thoughts to keep in mind

As you plan your strategies for the year, plan your marketing and communications as well. You want to engage as many employees as possible, so keep in mind these pieces that should be part of your plan.

Components	What does it look like or why does it work?
Send the Right Message	Appeal to participants' core values of what really matters in their life: better health, lower weight, fewer medications, less stress, happiness and hope.
Give Employees What They Want	Invite employee input regarding wellness program offerings through surveys, interviews, or working groups. Be realistic and do not over promise things you cannot deliver.
Make it Fun	Infuse wellness programming with intrigue, fun, and excitement — so workers will not want to miss out. Can you create a “buzz”? Can you create curiosity?
Create a Social Component and Commitment	Include a team or partner element in your program design, where the objective is to help colleagues succeed.
Recognize Accomplishments	Ask employees to submit their wellness success stories for publication on your internal website. Have visible recognition of participants.
Make it Easy	Provide easy access and opportunities for healthy behavior throughout the year so people can rotate into new offerings as they become available. Make the goals attainable for everyone, not just the healthiest staff. Make it easy for participants to track and view their wellness progress.
Get the Family Involved	Reach out to spouses and children in addition to employees. Get the whole family involved.
Create a Culture	There is a clear link between employee engagement and well-being. Managers are a conduit between those components and can make or break a wellness program.

FACTORS OUTSIDE THE WORKSITE

Worksite information and programming is what many people associate with worksite wellness programs. It is certainly a major part of a program and many of the ideas for engaging employees will revolve around this aspect. Nevertheless, your program should use several methods to get your employees involved and not just focus on the information and programming piece at your worksite.

SELF-CARE, FAMILY AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDER INVOLVEMENT

Self-care, family involvement and healthcare provider involvement can improve a person's success in adopting and maintaining good health habits. Anything you can do to encourage employees, their families and their healthcare provider to be actively involved in the employee's personal health will complement your efforts at the worksite. Although the work environment is a key site for wellness, extending your efforts beyond that setting will increase success and make it easier to maintain a high percentage of healthy, low risk employees that will add productivity and decrease healthcare costs. Here are a few suggestions for those three areas:

Self-Care or personal interest in one's health is very important because you want employees to be proactive in taking care of their personal health. Examples of self-care would include seeking more healthcare information, exercising, and diet monitoring or following medical instructions to best deal with a health condition. Through self-care, you are empowering employees to take charge of their own health and to make better decisions, which in turn will make it easier to get them involved in your wellness program activities. To encourage self-care, make sure that you provide good information and resources to employees who are looking for additional resources. Some examples are:

- ❖ **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** has a list of key screening exams and information about interacting with healthcare providers. Key resources include:
 - Men: Stay Healthy at Any Age <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/patients-consumers/patient-involvement/healthy-men/healthy-men.pdf>
 - Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/publications/files/healthy-women.pdf>
 - "Questions are the Answer" for ideas on talking with health care providers. <http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer/index.html>
- ❖ **HealthFinder.gov** is an excellent source of health information for employees. Resources include:
 - General resources: www.healthfinder.gov
 - Calculators for individual health topics <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/calculator>
- ❖ **WebMD** is a good source for individuals to find general medical information www.webmd.com

Family Involvement can often make a difference because of the social support and encouragement it provides. Parent ↔ Child and Parent ↔ Parent behavior can be influenced or reinforced by good family member health habits and that reinforcement and encouragement works both ways. The healthier all family members are the more likely your employee will be healthy.

It is also a smart business decision because:

- ❖ Healthcare costs/insurance often includes spouse and kids.
- ❖ Sick children can result in increased work tardiness, early departures from work and absenteeism among parents who must provide transportation or care for their child.
- ❖ Today's kids are tomorrow's workforce
 - They can walk in the door with healthy habits that may last a lifetime or
 - They can walk in the door with bad habits that start costing the employer immediately and continue for the length of their employment (up to 40 years!)

Connecting With a Healthcare Provider

Coordination with the healthcare provider should be a major part of your wellness program. There are many aspects of "wellness" that need to be addressed in the healthcare setting, so working closely with the healthcare provider is essential. Encouraging participants to establish a solid relationship with their healthcare provider will enhance the results of your wellness program.

Keep in mind that your wellness program is only one part of what contributes to healthy employees. The healthcare provider is another part, and you want the treatment piece of wellness to be well coordinated with your program. In addition, the healthcare provider can help reinforce your wellness program's focus on preventive steps. As a starting point, a follow-up plan for health assessments (HA) and biometric screenings should actively involve the employee's healthcare provider. A systematic referral plan for screening results that require medical follow-up is key to addressing high-risk health factors.

