

Learning from the Best: Innovative and Emerging Practices from the 2014 *Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles*[®] Winners



National
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Over the last 10 years, *Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles*[®] award winners have consistently tried to improve employee engagement and program results. Their innovations may be helpful to other companies seeking to effect positive behavior change and improve health outcomes. Award winners often push the envelope, adopting new programs and offerings that eventually become the industry standard. This compilation of initiatives from the 2014 *Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles*[®] winners highlights some of these emerging practices.

1. From the Ground Up...Promoting Healthy Eating

Making healthy options the default and readily accessible for employees is certainly a top priority for winners. **BD** has designated a portion of its campus for a community garden. Associates are the caretakers of the garden, harvesting fruits, vegetables and herbs during lunch breaks and after work. The garden was designed to inspire employees to eat healthier and at the same time encourage physical activity. Similarly, **SABIC** employees cultivate on-site raised gardens and are encouraged to take fresh produce home for their families. **Union Pacific** implemented farmers markets at Headquarters to make local discounted produce more readily available to employees. **SABIC** delivers fresh fruit to all buildings on designated workdays and **Union Pacific's** on-site dining center delivers fresh fruits and healthy snacks weekly to employees' desks.

2. Extinguishing the Flame with Stricter Tobacco Policies

For many years, employers have enforced campus-wide no smoking policies to positively impact behavior change. Companies are now taking those policies to new levels. **Cigna's** tobacco-free environment is supported by a smoke-free hiring policy in states where it is legally permitted. **CVS Health** stopped selling cigarettes and other tobacco products in over 7,700 CVS/pharmacy stores across the U.S. on September 3, 2014; making it the first and only national pharmacy chain to take this step in support of the health and well-being of its patients and customers.

3. Short Bouts of Activity Equal Long-Term Benefits

There are several ways employers can structure the physical environment to promote physical activity and reduce sitting—from on-site fitness centers to walking trails. These two companies have found fun and creative ways to incorporate additional physical activity breaks for employees without leaving their workstation. **Health Care Service Corporation** launched a corporate-wide program called *Sit for 60, Move for Two*. This program challenges employees to take a two-minute stretch break every hour. “Big Stretch” software has been installed on computers and pops up every hour to remind employees to stand and stretch. In partnership with **Fidelity Investment's** vendor partner, Fidelity Investments created short videos to motivate and encourage its employees to do simple workday stretches and strength exercises right at their desks. Videos include easy techniques to alleviate stress.

4. Offering Spot Rewards for Healthy Behavior

As the knowledge of behavioral economics has grown over the years, we have learned that periodic or “spot rewards” provide quick and effective reinforcement for positive behaviors. **Erie Insurance** has a *Caught in Action* program that encourages and rewards employees to get up and move. When employees are caught walking, running or participating in an exercise class, they receive a sticker. Once they collect five stickers, they are entered into a prize drawing. This program rewards the desired behavior and shows that Erie cares about its employees' health.

5. Relax, Relate, and Release the Stress

Focusing on stress reduction is one of the top behaviors employers will be focusing on, according to the [2015 Health Plan Design Survey](#). Best Employers winners Cardinal Health and Pitney Bowes are currently working to reduce stress for their employees. To complement more traditional stress reduction offerings like EAP-accessible counseling sessions and back-up child and elder care programming, **Cardinal Health** offers an original twist by offering stress awareness events with fruit-infused water and chair massages. One location held an afternoon tea time stress management event, where employees sip tea while learning about available stress management resources. **Pitney Bowes** offers *Dial Ohm: Relaxation by Phone*, simple non-labor intensive meditation by phone. *Dial Ohm* is a live call, offered weekly through Pitney Bowes' EAP vendor that helps employees relax and re-energize right at their workstation. Calls are archived so employees and family members can listen at their leisure. Pitney Bowes also provides online courses on managing stress and practicing wellness techniques.

6. Offering Exceptional Benefit Rewards

Employees often place higher value on luxury items or goods rather than necessities or cash, as we have gleaned from incentive research. **The Kroger Co.** emphasizes the importance of emotional health along with physical health. The grand prize for Kroger's health improvement challenge is a trip for the employee and a loved one to a wellness resort. Applicants submit a personal essay about their lifestyle and the emotional changes they went through to improve their health and how they provided inspiration to others. **PepsiCo's** benefit, centered around retention, is an Innovation Leave Program that provides up to 30 days of paid time off for employees to explore an innovative idea that is outside their current role.

7. It's a Family Affair. Actively Engaging Children and Spouses

Engaging the family is important because the family often has the greatest influence on a person's behavior. A recent survey from AON's [Consumer Health Mindset report](#) notes that participating in a particular health improvement program helps individuals improve their own health or their family's health. **Baylor Health Care System** gets families involved with *Thrive Outdoor Adventure*, an off-site event for the entire family that includes activities such as hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, volleyball and horseback riding. At **McKesson**, spouses and domestic partners participate and earn the same incentives as employees. Children are especially encouraged to actively engage in the wellness program and contribute to their parents' points. Parents receive points through their kids' health assessments, sports/athletic events, immunizations and flu shots, and dental and vision care.

8. Spark the Interest, Get the Engagement

Targeted marketing is essential to reach particular groups of employees. These creative communication strategies resonate with specific groups, ultimately leading to increased engagement. **Cerner Corporation's** new parent/expectant parent educational socials called *Beer & Babies*, and *Mocktails & Moms* (targeting dads, moms and/or support people) not only create initial engagement about the maternity program, they also result in sustained engagement and participation in Cerner's maternity program for employees and dependents.

9. From the Top Down, Leaders Walking the Talk

Highly engaged leaders are essential to the success of a company's culture of health. Communication and participation are key for top leaders, but formal management training further solidifies the importance of health and well-being for managers and their teams. At **Healthways**, internal managers are held accountable for the well-being of their teams. Healthways created a Leading Well-Being program that requires managers to complete a 360° review—which includes a self well-being assessment, manager and direct report assessment and family member assessment. Leaders receive the feedback during a 2.5-day training, where they learn the definition of well-being, how to manage their own well-being, how to support direct reports and peers, and their impact on the business. Each fall, during annual enrollment, **PepsiCo** provides "train the trainer" sessions on the Healthy Living wellness program to managers and supervisors. Additional and detailed training is conducted with the HR community and Wellness Champions on program changes and enhancements, including the Healthy Living reward program, website resources, and specific program logistics. PepsiCo also encourages senior level representation within the wellness champion network.

10. Excellence in Wellness, Creating Site Level Consistency

Healthy competition is a common tactic used to engage employees. Taking the next step to encourage participation is implementing wellness site-level certifications. **Aetna** started its Healthy Worksite Initiative four years ago with the purpose of the accreditation process serving as a “cultural catalyst” in developing and sustaining a culture of health, especially at the local level. The wellness committees complete site level scorecards around culture, site support, physical environment, employee health conditions, employee engagement, and wellness programs and activities. If sites meet the certification criteria in the scorecard and pass the corporate wellness audit, they are designated as an Aetna Healthy Worksite. Sites are reassessed every other year in order to maintain the designation. **Marriott International, Inc.** recently launched its TakeCare Healthy Hotel Certification to create an environment that enables and promotes healthy behavior in the workplace. Managers receive a toolkit that explains how to implement the healthy workplace criteria, why each assessment item is important, and best practices from select Marriott hotels. Hotels meeting the criteria will be certified as a TakeCare Healthy Hotel at the platinum, silver or gold level. The award recognizes properties for excellence in wellness and the goal is to inspire others to strive for certification.

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About the Institute on Innovation in Workforce Well-being

The Institute on Innovation in Workforce Well-being is part of the National Business Group on Health. The Institute works with large employers on health improvement programs and develops practical and cost-effective solutions to reduce health risks and their cost impact for employees and their families.

About the National Business Group on HealthSM

The Business Group is the only non-profit organization devoted exclusively to representing large employers' perspectives on national health issues and providing solutions to its members' most important health care and health benefits challenges. The Business Group fosters the development of a safe health care delivery system and treatments based on scientific evidence. Members share strategies for controlling costs, improving patient safety and quality of care, increasing productivity and supporting healthy lifestyles.

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