



HealthyHoward

WORKPLACES

Evaluating Your Workplace Wellness Program

Making the Case for Evaluation

Process, Impact and Outcome

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Purpose

Extensive research is currently underway to evaluate workplace health programs at the national level. Rigorous evaluation often requires collaboration with academic partners skilled in this arena. This document is meant to assist your company's efforts.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Demonstrate the importance of evaluation
- Provide an explanation for the three levels of evaluation
- Provide examples of metrics associated with each level of evaluation
- Provide an example for each level of evaluation
- Share how to best communicate results of your evaluation

The goal of this report is for you, the reader, to learn relevant ways to evaluate your wellness program, share it with your stakeholders as a means to measure your success, secure funding and gain interest from new people interested in joining your efforts.

Why is evaluation important?

Prior to jumping in and explaining what the three levels of evaluation are, a question needs to be answered: *why is evaluation important?* There are three reasons why evaluation is important.

First, it enables you to determine program outcomes and accomplishments, thus justifying the program's existence. Second, it helps you determine how to allocate your budget so you can focus your time and resources on meaningful programming. Last, evaluation is important because it provides you with tangible evidence that you can share with your employees, clients and stakeholders.

The following questions may be asked by staff, clients and stakeholders:

- Have program objectives been achieved?
- Which aspect of the program was most effective?
- How can we improve implementation of the program?
- Is the program worth its cost? What's the return on investment (ROI)?
- Is the work community aware of the program?
- Is the work community in support of the program?
- Can our findings contribute to the development of best practices?
- Is there potential for new policies as a result of what we've learned?

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Process Evaluation

Definition

Process evaluation involves measuring how a program or activity is implemented in order to control, assure or improve the quality of delivery.

The goal is to discover how employees felt about the program, if they attended, why they attended and if they did not attend, then why?

When should it occur? Up to 18 months post-program

Metrics

- Promotion of the program
 - Where did they first hear about the program? (include all channels of promotion: email, colleague, flyer)
 - What first attracted them to the program? (speaker, topic, general interest in health and wellness)
- Program
 - Participation rates?
 - Was the day of the week convenient?
 - Was the time of day convenient?
 - Were they interested in the topic?
 - Was the topic relevant to them?
 - Was the topic relevant to a family member/friend?
 - Will they make personal changes based on what they learned?
- Speaker
 - How would they rate the speaker/program coordinator?
 - Was the speaker/program coordinator knowledgeable/expert on the topic?

Example

Sally is the Coordinator for Special Programs and Events at a mid-size financial services company with 125 employees. While coming back from lunch one day she sees a small group of employees smoking outside. When Sally arrives back at her desk she decides that the company needs a smoking cessation workshop. Sally utilizes the technical assistance service provided with the Healthy Workplaces program and contacted the Healthy Workplaces Coordinator to get contact information for a smoking cessation health educator to provide a workshop. Sally contacted this individual and scheduled a program for a Friday at 9:30am. Only one person showed up to the workshop. The program was deemed a failure.

What can Sally do to make the program a success? Conduct an interest survey that:

- Assesses employee topics of interest
- Determines the days of the week and the times of the day that best fit employee schedules
- Determines the channels that they prefer to receive information.

Impact Evaluation

Definition

Impact evaluation focuses on the immediate observable effects of a program leading to intended outcomes. Variables include employees' behavior and risk factors, as well as tracking incidents and injury trends. Impact evaluations also look at cause-effect. That is, are the changes that occurred attributed to the program that was implemented?

When should it occur? 18 – 36 months post-program

Metrics

Metrics to measure the impact level of evaluation are focusing on the short-term changes that occur as a result of the program. Change is expected to occur based on the content area of the program. For example, if a program is focusing on tobacco cessation, you would expect to see a change in smoking rates, rather than a change in sleep habits.

Metric	Definition	Changeability	Example
Knowledge	Acquired facts and information	Easy	Consuming fruits and vegetables are important for weight management.
Attitudes	How someone feels about a topic	Moderate	I like to exercise.
Skills	Ability to carry out a specific action	Difficult	Time management skills
Behaviors	Actions someone takes part in	Difficult	Practicing breast self-exams

Example

Bill works for a large company that recently started offering onsite health coaching. He saw signs about it in the break room and read about it in the monthly company newsletter. The CEO even sent out an email describing the program and how working with a health coach can be beneficial. Bill knows he works too much and doesn't exercise enough. A health coach may be just what he needs to jump start a healthier lifestyle. Three months after starting with his coach, Bill has started leaving work on time three nights a week and goes for a walk at lunch most days.

Outcome Evaluation

What is it?

Outcome evaluation is focused on an ultimate goal or product of a program, generally measured by financial outcomes and increasingly through biometric (BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol) health outcomes. It includes risk factor-based medical costs, absenteeism-based lost productivity costs, injury-based workers' compensation and disability-driven rehabilitation costs.

When should it occur? 36 months and later, post-program

Metrics

- Dollars spent on health care annually
 - Health care costs come from preventable chronic diseases, pharmaceuticals, screenings, doctor's visits, morbidity, mortality
- Presenteeism - the amount of time employees are at work but not productive
 - Employees can be at work, but because of wasted time, failure to concentrate, sleep deprivation, distractions, poor health, and/or lack of training, they may not be working at all.
 - Wellness programs can impact poor health and sleep deprivation
- Absenteeism - the amount of time employees are paid but not at work
 - Costs come from stress, personal illness, family needs, entitlement mentality and personal needs.
 - Wellness programs have the ability to improve employee morale which may reduce absenteeism.
- Turnover - the percentage of employees who leave each year
 - Costs come from the time spent interviewing for new candidates and training new employees, both of which cause a decrease in productivity.

Example

Acme Corporation has had an employee wellness program in place for five years. Their Human Resources Department has made medical claims comparisons for each of the five years and they are now able to document the decrease in overall medical claims amongst their employees. They were also able to track most commonly prescribed medications, tailor wellness campaigns specific to those disorders and then document decreases in those most commonly prescribed medications used in the past.

Procedures to Obtain Metrics

Your choice of methods will be based on the specific goals of your company and relates back to the reasons why evaluation is important. The many choices offered below should be reviewed with your company goals in mind. Whether you choose just a few or many, metrics will help you document your wellness efforts.

Procedure	Level of Evaluation	What is it?
Direct Observation	Process	Evaluators immerse themselves in the program as participants and access the interactions between professionals and other participants, the general reactions and behaviors of the participants and any problems or issues associated with program content and delivery.
Expert Panel Reviews	Process	A small group of professionals, not associated with the program, but who have expertise related to the program, volunteer or are contracted to collect data, analyze the program, draw conclusions about strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations.
Quality Circles	Process	A qualitative approach whereby staff from the same program or work area meet regularly to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a product, program, service or activity and make recommendations for improvement. As an alternative to quality circles, evaluators may choose to interview program staff directly.
Protocol Checklist	Process	A linear or sequential list of tasks or procedures that allows evaluators to compare how a program or policy is being implemented. Comparison includes how it was originally intended to be implemented and what has been done elsewhere and reported in published studies or reports.
Gantt Chart	Process	A type of bar chart that displays a program's timeline or project schedule. Whereas protocol checklists or logic models are not usually time phased, Gantt charts display the starts and finish dates of key program elements.
Focus Groups	Process, Impact	Qualitative research wherein a trained moderator uses an interview guide or moderator's guide to ask questions about new programs, products, services, ideas or topics to determine the attitudes, opinions, and preferences of a group of 6 – 12 individuals who are representative of the priority population.

Surveys	Process, Impact	The collection of data, generally through questionnaires, from a representative sample of the priority population that allows evaluators to draw general conclusions about the entire priority population. May involve face-to-face interviews, written questionnaires, mailed or electronic questionnaires or telephone interviews.
In-Depth Interviews	Process, Impact	Formal interviews with program participants generally lasting a half hour or longer with the use of an interview guide and related probes. Allows evaluators to observe body language and facial expressions as prompts for additional questions and information.
Informal Interviews	Process, Impact	Brief interviews with program participants that may take the form of a conversation rather than a formal interview.
Key Informant Interviews	Process, Impact	Qualitative, in-depth interviews with individuals who understand the priority population and can represent their attitudes, values and opinions to evaluators. Key informants are often people of influence within the priority population.
Program & Evaluation Forms	Impact	Forms collected prior to program implementation may provide relevant information to evaluators such as factors motivating participation, identification of goals and previous participation. Evaluation forms collected at the conclusion of a program measure the awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, general levels of satisfaction as well as feedback on specific program components.
Health Risk Assessment (HRA)	Impact, Outcome	A health questionnaire used to provide individuals with an evaluation of their health risks and quality of life. Topics of the questions include demographic characteristics, lifestyle habits, personal and family medical history, physiological data and attitudes and willingness to change behavior.
Cost-Benefit Analysis or Return on Investment	Outcome	Examines how resources can best be utilized. Measures dollars spent on a program versus dollars saved or gained.
Cost-Effective Analysis	Outcome	More appropriate than cost-benefit analysis for health promotion programs because a dollar value does not have to be placed on the outcomes of the program. Rather this type of analysis indicates how much it costs to produce a certain effect and measures dollars spent on a program

		versus the impact achieved.
Cost-Identification Analysis	Outcome	Compares interventions to determine which is least expensive in the context of impact achieved.
Cost-Utility Analysis	Outcome	Value of the outcomes of a program is determined by its subjective value to the stakeholders rather than the monetary cost.
Health Screenings	Process, Outcome	Often occurs in conjunction with a health fair. Screening refers to a test or exam done to find a condition before symptoms occur. Conditions that are screened for include breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, osteoporosis and prostate cancer.
Medical Claims Comparison	Outcome	Compare annual claims from year A to year B to determine chronic disease morbidity rates and occurrence.

Evaluation Tools

Health Risk Assessments

The following companies offer Health Risk Assessment (HRA) tools:

Wellsource: www.wellsource.com

Wellstream : www.welcoa.org

Stay Well: www.staywellhealthmanagement.com

Summit Health: www.summithealth.com

Well Call: www.wellcall.com

Trale Inc.: www.trale.com

PreceptGroup: www.preceptgroup.com

Do you need guidance for HRA Implementation?

Please refer to Appendix 2: Tools for Workplace Assessment in the “Building Healthy Workplaces” Toolkit available on www.hchealth.org

Return on Investment Calculators

The following companies provide ROI calculators:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks/costcalculator/index.html>

Well Steps

<http://new.wellsteps.com/resources/tools>

Sample Employee Interests Survey

The following companies offer sample surveys:

Wellness Proposals

http://www.wellnessproposals.com/pdfs/employee_interest_survey.pdf

WELCOA

http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/ni_survey.pdf

Infinite Health Coaching

<http://www.infinitehealthcoach.com/pdfs/worksite-health-interest-survey.pdf>

<http://www.infinitehealthcoach.com/pdfs/survey-employee-wellness-interest-survey-2.pdf>

<http://www.infinitehealthcoach.com/pdfs/survey-employee-wellness-interest-survey.pdf>

<http://www.infinitehealthcoach.com/pdfs/worksite-health-interest-survey-and-culture-audit.pdf>

Sample Wellness Program Evaluation

*Please take a moment to complete this evaluation.
It will help us to plan future wellness programs. Thank you!*

1. Was the time of this program convenient for you?

Yes No

2. Was the topic of interest?

Yes No

3. How often would you attend programs?

Monthly? More often?

4. Based on today's experience, will you encourage your colleagues to attend?

Yes No

5. Will you make changes in your life based on what you learned today?

Yes No

6. What program topics would you like to see in the future?

7. We are developing a wellness room. What kind of equipment/materials would you like to see there?

How to communicate your evaluation

As you are preparing your evaluation report, consider these three questions:

- What level of detail do your stakeholders expect to see?
- What is the organization's standard norm for reporting?
- Who will receive the evaluation? Will there be a formal presentation or document distribution and will they have the opportunity to ask questions?

It is important to follow formal reporting requirements. Find out ahead of time what your company expects from you, so you are able to meet those goals. Certain stakeholders will prefer a high level approach while others may prefer to see the “nitty gritty” details, such as completed evaluation forms distributed following the program or the transcript for the focus groups you completed.

Tailor your report based on who will receive the evaluation. High level executives most likely do not have the time available to read through extensive documents with text and graphs showing exactly what you did for each level of your evaluation. They would probably prefer blocking off an hour of their time, allowing half an hour for the evaluation report to be presented and then allowing half an hour for their questions to be answered. The important thing to remember is that it's different for each company or within different departments in the same company. The bottom line is to find out ahead of time and don't be afraid to ask questions!

Final Notes

Keep these four tips in mind for capturing useful evaluation data:

Listen, learn, communicate. Program participants, experts and stakeholders have a lot to offer. Be sure to take time to listen to what they have to say. Learn from what these individuals tell you. Don't survey or interview them just for the sake of doing it. Take everything they say into consideration and improve your program accordingly. Don't forget to tell others about what you learned by listening! Now is not the time to keep this information to yourself. Try making a list prior to the start of the evaluation process to ensure that you don't leave anyone out when the evaluation has come to an end.

Preparation. Gather as much information as possible before starting the evaluation. In addition to making a list of all the people with whom you would like to share results of your evaluation, also make a list of the people involved in the program from whom you should gather information. Additionally, find out as much as possible about the program that you are evaluating: how long has it been in existence, who has been the administrator, what are the components of the program, has it been evaluated before?

Transparency. You should be very familiar with all aspects of the evaluation you just completed. Be able to explain the scope of the evaluation, how you selected the variables (also referred to as metrics), as well as how and where you gathered information.

Maintain high ethics. This is important whether the evaluator is an internal member of the team or an external contractor. Let the data drive the outcomes and rid yourself of bias. A program may have been in place for a number of years and it used to be successful; however, it may now be outdated. Don't be afraid of poor evaluation remarks. They are a reflection of the program, rather than an attack on the program administrator, and can help you design a more meaningful experience.

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