Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards 2011
and Best Practices Honors
The last few years have been difficult for employers and the U.S. workforce has borne much of the pain. In a 2011 survey conducted by the American Psychological Association, almost two-thirds of employed Americans reported that their employers had taken steps such as putting a freeze on wages, laying off staff or reducing benefits as a result of the recession.

As we head tentatively into the economic recovery, employer confidence remains shaky. Although the economy has improved and many organizations have returned to profitability, a majority of those surveyed indicated that the cuts made at their place of employment had not yet been reversed. Many organizations continue to squeeze increasing levels of productivity from a smaller workforce that feels disengaged and unappreciated, but sees no alternative but to trudge onward. The recession, combined with the changing nature of work, may have forever altered the employee-employer relationship, but as a nation we can do better.

Some employers have faced these challenging times head on and seized the opportunity to create a healthy culture, where both employees and the organization can thrive. To highlight those organizations committed to promoting employee well-being and organizational performance, I am honored to present the American Psychological Association’s 2011 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award (PHWA) winners and Best Practices honorees.

The eight PHWA winners described in these pages have implemented a comprehensive set of workplace practices designed to optimize employee and organizational outcomes. These employers reported an average turnover rate of just 11 percent in 2010 – significantly less than the national average of 38 percent as estimated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Surveys completed by the winning organizations show that only 18 percent of employees reported experiencing chronic work stress compared to 36 percent nationally, and 87 percent of employees reported being satisfied with their job vs. 69 percent in the general population. Additionally, 86 percent of employees said they would recommend their organization to others as a good place to work compared to 53 percent, and only 6 percent said they intend to seek employment elsewhere within the next year, compared to 32 percent nationally.

We congratulate our winners and hope that their examples demonstrate how a positive organizational culture and a healthy, high-performing workforce can promote business success and a prosperous future.

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American Psychological Association
Data Reveal the Benefits of Psychologically Healthy Workplaces

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards are designed to recognize organizations for their efforts to foster employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance.

**APA’s Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards**

Nominees for APA’s Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards are selected from the pool of previous local winners. Candidates are evaluated on their workplace practices in the following areas:

- Employee Involvement
- Health and Safety
- Employee Growth and Development
- Work-Life Balance
- Employee Recognition

Additional factors that are considered include employee attitudes and opinions, the role of communication in the organization and the benefits realized in terms of both employee health and well-being and organizational performance. Following a competitive evaluation and judging process, the top candidates are selected for recognition by the American Psychological Association.

**APA’s Best Practices Honors**

The Best Practices Honors focus on a single program or policy that stands out for facilitating a psychologically healthy workplace. Special attention is given to workplace practices that are designed and implemented in a way that creatively meets the specific needs of an organization and its employees. As with APA’s Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards, nominees come from the pool of previous local winners and are selected through a competitive evaluation and judging process.

**Local Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards**

Since 1999, our affiliated state, provincial and territorial associations have presented Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards to local organizations. Participation has grown to 56 associations across the U.S. and Canada that, collectively, have recognized more than 450 organizations.
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Employee Involvement

With a core value of teamwork, NEDD empowers employees to actively participate in improving the organization. There are more than 20 cross-functional teams that work on business projects, new initiatives, organizational issues, work environment, social activities, safety and wellness and process improvements. Giving back to the community is also important at NEDD. The company provides up to 7.5 hours of paid time each year to support volunteer efforts with non-profit organizations and offers grants to support employees’ favorite causes.

Managers’ doors are always open at NEDD and employees are encouraged to submit their ideas for continuous improvement. Small, rotating groups of employees participate in quarterly “Coffee with the Coach” sessions to exchange ideas and discuss the company’s philosophy and vision with the CEO. Employees complete an Employee Alignment survey biannually and managers meet with employees to explore the results and make plans for improvement. A “can-do” atmosphere provides the backdrop for highly productive employees who respect one another and work well together.

Health and Safety

NEDD’s Safety and Wellness team educates employees about accident prevention and emergency procedures, completes building safety inspections, investigates incidents and takes corrective action. This team also coordinates wellness programming to help employees maintain a healthy lifestyle. Offerings include lunchtime learning sessions, a health fair, flu shots, health screenings and articles in the employee newsletter.

As a preventive safety measure, NEDD provides onsite first aid, CPR and Automatic Electronic Defibrillator training. Every new employee gets an ergonomic review of his or her workstation, and adjustments are made as necessary. A focus on fitness helps promote camaraderie and teamwork, builds awareness about the importance of healthy behavior and communicates to employees that the organization cares about their well-being. NEDD’s onsite fitness center is staffed with a fitness coach who provides assessments and individualized training. Yoga, aerobics, Zumba® and other fitness programs are available to employees and the company provides financial support for employee ski and softball teams.
**Employee Growth and Development**

New employees benefit from a thorough onboarding process and, succession plans identify and develop employees for future leadership positions. NEDD’s Balanced Scorecard helps employees understand the organizational strategy and how each individual role contributes to the overall success of the organization. Internal training, online seminars and webcasts help keep employees up to date on topics including new technology, communication skills, conflict resolution, industry-related issues and business skills. Managers also attend regular networking lunches combined with training sessions and can take advantage of executive coaching to help hone their leadership skills.

NEDD’s annual performance appraisal process includes three progress reviews that focus on goal achievement, goal setting and development opportunities. Employees complete self appraisals to share with their managers, who use the information to help them develop an individualized development plan. Employees also review their managers and the results are summarized by Human Resources staff for a full 360-degree view of performance.

**Work-Life Balance**

Flexibility to adjust their schedules within core work hours helps employees manage their non-work demands, while still maintaining consistency for customers. Some NEDD employees work a four-day schedule and flexible management makes it possible to take the time for medical appointments, school events or to care for elderly parents. NEDD covers the costs of a financial consultant to help employees with retirement, financial planning and investment decisions and even has reserved spots at a nearby daycare, where employees can get discounted rates and a priority spot on the waiting list.

At NEDD, lunchtime educational sessions help employees learn more about managing non-work demands, with topics that include home buying and elder care. An Employee Assistance Program is also available 24/7 to help employees with stress, family issues, personal challenges and marital or financial problems.

**Employee Recognition**

An annual employee appreciation day, holiday party and the “Team Power” monthly newsletter are just some of the venues where NEDD thanks employees for their contributions to the company’s success. Pay increases based on merit are awarded annually, and every employee earns a bonus each year if Balanced Scorecard goals and objectives are met. Employees can recognize their colleagues with electronic thank-you notes and employees also receive an annual cash award for each month of service. NEDD emphasizes collaboration and recognizes group performance with an annual award for outstanding teamwork.

**The Bottom Line**

Employees enjoy working for a successful company that truly cares about its customers. NEDD employees report high levels of job satisfaction, trust in the organization and a healthy work-life fit. Productivity at NEDD has shown a marked improvement in recent years, with the number of claims processed per employee increasing approximately 10 percent since 1999. This increase in productivity, combined with careful management of operating expenses, has helped to reduce operating expenses as a percentage of total revenue.

NEDD has seen solid growth in subscribers and revenue and its customer satisfaction scores top 90 percent. The company has been named to several lists of the best places to work in New Hampshire and was also rated as an “Age Friendly Employer” by RetirementJobs.com. In this environment, where employees enjoy their work, are well trained and have the tools they need to succeed, employee well-being translates to customer satisfaction and business success.
Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research Northwest

Healthy Practices

Drive Research

Oregon – Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research (CHR) Northwest is a professionally independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving individual health and informing health policy. CHR-Northwest’s affiliation with Kaiser Permanente and its electronic medical-record system of 8.6 million members presents a wealth of research opportunities. A roster of scientists and strong academic and community partnerships promote diverse research in a setting that fosters collegiality and support for scientific inquiry.

Employee Involvement

Transparency, staff involvement and information sharing are Center-wide priorities. Monthly director-hosted employee forums and bimonthly financial updates presented by the chief financial officer ensure that each staff member knows and understands the organization’s fiscal status and ongoing goals. In addition, employees are kept up to date on the latest research activity through monthly scientific presentations given by a staff investigator.

CHR-Northwest’s monthly all-staff bulletin keeps employees abreast of current developments. Each issue includes human-interest profiles of investigators and leadership members; timely articles about Center activities and committees; and staff awards, milestones and new arrivals. CHR-Northwest’s virtual community, CenterNet, is designed to spark discussion and infuse a sense of fun into the workplace. Social events include a summer picnic and a holiday party and auction. Each year, CHR-Northwest employees raise approximately $15,000 at the holiday auction and donate it to charities selected by staff vote. Employees also hold annual food drives for the Oregon Food Bank and the Western Farm Workers Association.

Health and Safety

CHR-Northwest staff enjoy the same comprehensive benefits as all Kaiser Permanente employees and are able to customize their benefits to fit their personal and family needs. Kaiser Permanente pays the majority of benefit costs, and all full-time staff receive credits to apply toward the purchase of medical, dental and life insurance as well as short-term and long-term disability coverage. Since they work on the Interstate campus, employees have easy access to their primary care physicians and a comprehensive array of specialists and services.

On-the-job safety is a Center-wide effort. CHR-Northwest’s safety committee meets monthly and performs quarterly inspections of all work spaces. The Center’s Green Team focuses on sustainable office practices and encourages employees to reduce, reuse, recycle and commute to work on foot, by bicycle or via public transit.
Employee Growth and Development

In the past two years, CHR-Northwest’s leadership team has devoted significant time and effort to employee growth and development. Nearly eight in ten CHR-Northwest employees believe they have adequate access to necessary training. The Leadership Development Group was recently formed to annually reward six high-performing young staff members who exhibit exceptional talent and potential. The honorees attend the annual CHR-Northwest leadership retreat, learn about the organization’s strategic goals, attend a three-day leadership seminar and meet regularly during the course of the year to work on a project of their choosing. A new mentoring program was also created to match senior investigators with early-career investigators and research associates. Mentors who help younger investigators produce successful grant proposals and publishable articles receive tangible rewards in the form of higher annual incentive pay.

Work-Life Balance

While much of CHR-Northwest’s work is driven by grant proposal deadlines that must be met, employees are given the freedom to design schedules that allow them to work when they feel most productive and also meet home and family demands. This might mean coming in late and leaving late, working from home part of the week, or working four days a week instead of five. Others prefer working on the weekend when the offices are quiet. In CHR-Northwest’s results-oriented culture, as long as the work gets done, there are no scheduling limitations.

Recognizing that a dose of humor relieves stress, staff enjoy something fun at every all-staff meeting, such as a Jeopardy-style quiz show or contest. CHR-Northwest’s intranet features a monthly caption contest as well as the company’s online bulletin board, where employees can share information and advice. Staff can also participate in a lively book club or a parenting network, and all staff are eligible for $600 in work-life reimbursables such as a health club membership, art classes, massages, camping equipment or gardening supplies.

Employee Recognition

Staff are recognized for on-the-job achievements in one of three places: a special location on the office bulletin board, in center-wide news briefs, and at regular all-staff meetings. Managers and supervisors make it a point to acknowledge and thank their staff regularly. After one prolonged period of hard work and short deadlines, the center’s director personally delivered a thank-you note from Kaiser Permanente’s regional president along with a hand-crafted gift for each employee who had done the lion’s share of the work.

The Bottom Line

With control over their daily work schedules, the respect of supervisors and peers, programs that promote health and well-being and ongoing recognition for professional achievement, CHR-Northwest staff report a high level of job satisfaction. CHR-Northwest employees take nearly half as many sick days as their colleagues in the larger Kaiser Permanente Northwest organization. They also enjoy exceptionally long tenures: twelve years compared to the national average of three to five years. This high employee retention rate translates into a workforce with vast collective knowledge, giving the organization a competitive edge when applying for the grants that are critical to its research mission.
Employee Involvement

Minnesota – While nonprofit organizations across the country grappled with salary cuts, furloughs and layoffs to offset fiscal shortfalls, senior managers at the Minnesota Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society chose a different path. They turned to their staff for cost-cutting solutions—and reaped a wealth of dividends.

With time and resources chiefly devoted to fundraising activities and assisting people with MS and their loved ones, the agency has few resources available for formal psychologically healthy workplace practices. So managers look for ways to promote a safe, friendly environment that fosters open communication and creative problem solving.

This was put to the test in late 2008, when the economy took a nosedive and managers at the Minnesota Chapter realized their budget for the coming year needed serious rethinking. The agency was ending its fiscal year with a deficit, and the prospect of achieving the revenue of previous years looked grim. So the management team met in December to brainstorm solutions and just weeks later implemented a contingency plan to weather the economic storm.

Key to the plan’s success was involving staff at every level of the organization and empowering them to play a meaningful role. Employees were encouraged to suggest cost-cutting ideas and were formally celebrated for doing so. Instead of hiring outside assistance for events, staff pitched in with their own special skills. Everyone was trained in fundraising principles and practices and encouraged to apply them in their daily contact with current and prospective donors. Birthdays, anniversaries and other milestones were recognized in new, less expensive ways. And a cross-departmental group was formed to examine the chapter’s most expensive programs and find innovative approaches to hold costs down without compromising quality.

As a result, the Minnesota Chapter was one of only four nationally that ended the fiscal year in the black, with no furloughs, layoffs or salary cuts. In fact, staff salaries actually increased while health benefits, retirement plans and 401k matching funds remained intact. The agency further benefited from a marked upswing in productivity and performance. As one manager observed, “We believe this year enhanced our positive culture and made the chapter an even better place to work.”
Employee Recognition

*Minnesota* – At Harbinger Partners, an IT consulting firm, employee recognition is a year-round effort. Regular outings include football games, dinners and bowling. Each year, employees and their families spend a long weekend at a resort where they enjoy golfing, boating, horseback riding and spa treatments—completely hosted by the company. But it is Harbinger Partners’ popular anniversary program that recognizes long-term service in a unique way.

Employee milestones are observed by presenting the employee with a gift card worth $100 for every year of service. But it was the president’s idea that five- and ten-year employees should receive a cash gift of $5,000 and $10,000, respectively, to fund a memorable family vacation. As with all suggestions, this one was put to a vote and overwhelmingly adopted. Five- and ten-year employees are now honored at a special celebration during which co-workers read quotes and relate stories about the employee, using costumes and props that reflect his or her vacation destination. So far, honorees have sported a matador’s outfit, Mickey Mouse ears, a sailor suit, an Australian guide’s uniform and various beach attire.

At Harbinger Partners, employees report increased job satisfaction, higher morale and the good feeling that comes from the appreciation of their peers. In turn, the company has a powerful recruitment tool that has been used successfully to attract and retain exceptional IT talent. The program is often cited as one of many reasons why Harbinger Partners has been named one of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal’s “Best Places to Work” nine times.
Virginia – In the technology arena, where intellectual capital is a company’s most important asset, The MITRE Corporation stands out as a leader that successfully recruits, develops and retains a high-quality workforce. MITRE has become a sought-after workplace, with a reputation for celebrating individualism while fostering a collaborative community, bringing together the best minds and skills to produce creative IT solutions.

Employee Involvement
The genuine esteem that MITRE’s senior management holds for its staff is evident in an environment where employees are actively encouraged to ask questions, make recommendations for workplace improvements and openly address any areas of concern. A standard feature of the company intranet is the interactive “Got Questions? Here’s How to Get an Answer” section, which directs employees to the best sources of information on any topic. Bimonthly lunches allow employees to meet face-to-face with company executives, share ideas and engage in candid conversations about how their careers are progressing and how the company is measuring up to their expectations. At MITRE, the employee survey is not just a token exercise; it is used as a critical accountability and information-gathering tool that leads to action planning and positive change throughout the company.

Health and Safety
MITRE backs up its belief that good health is vital to a fulfilling personal and professional life with an onsite health services unit staffed by occupational health professionals. The unit is responsible for conducting health assessments, streamlining the processing of worker compensation claims and maintaining employee fitness centers. Practices such as the award-winning “Embrace Your Health” program promote a healthy lifestyle by making extensive use of the company intranet to share health and travel tips, nutritious recipes and information about ongoing wellness programs.
Employee Growth and Development

A rich learning environment is one of the hallmarks of the company’s culture, with employees averaging 40-60 hours of internal and external training each year. The popular MITRE Institute delivers an extensive array of nearly 800 in-house professional development courses, attracting more than 9,000 participants annually. Classes and workshops cover technical, management, business and consulting skills. A notable feature of the Institute is that half of the technical courses are taught by MITRE employees, which not only enhances knowledge-sharing among colleagues but also provides a platform for gaining wider visibility and earning reputations as experts in their fields.

All employees are encouraged to take advantage of educational opportunities, and systems are in place to ensure that training is accessible company-wide. Along with onsite delivery, employee training is readily available through a variety of options from distance learning and video conferencing to e-learning programs. The company takes its commitment to education even further with tuition reimbursement benefits; an advanced-degree program bonus that incentivizes employees to attain their master’s or doctoral degree; and an accelerated graduate degree program that gives employees who are pursuing advanced degrees one day off a week to devote to their studies while receiving full pay.

Work-Life Balance

An emphasis on helping employees achieve work-life balance is explicitly spelled out in the company’s “People in Partnership” value. This commitment has been put into action with a holistic approach, the centerpiece of which is the Flexible Work Arrangements Program (FWAP), cited by employees as one of the top reasons MITRE is a great place to work. Developed collaboratively among the Human Resources and Payroll departments, FWAP covers options for job sharing, part-time employment, flex time, teleworking, part-time or occasional telecommuting, compressed work weeks and phased retirement. With management approval, employees have flexibility to juggle their time and work location to accommodate personal and family obligations.

Employee Recognition

MITRE recognizes the outstanding work of its staff both formally and informally at all levels of the organization. Awards are tied to corporate values and given to individuals and teams who demonstrate excellence in a variety of categories. Milestones such as advanced degrees, patent awards and service anniversaries are also celebrated. The awards process at MITRE is highly transparent; requirements and instructions are described in detail on the company intranet so managers can select the most appropriate awards for each employee. MITRE employees are also encouraged to recognize their peers and send congratulatory notes to their colleagues using specially designed online cards.

The Bottom Line

MITRE’s healthy workplace has been a significant factor in attracting and keeping a high-quality staff. The company currently enjoys one of the best retention rates in the industry. Since initiating its comprehensive work-life program eight years ago, the company’s employee attrition rate has dropped from 12 percent to less than 5 percent per year. The recruitment cost savings are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars; just as critically, the company’s intellectual capital has been preserved, creating a major competitive advantage.

As further evidence of the impact of these programs, MITRE can be found on a number of influential “employer of choice” lists, including Fortune’s 100 Best Companies to Work For and Computerworld’s 100 Best Places to Work in IT. In 2009, Fortune’s 100 Best listing ranked the company in fourth place overall. And remarkably, while the average age of MITRE employees is 47, the company’s annual health plan rate increases have remained at or below the national benchmark of 7 percent for the past two years. Through its comprehensive efforts, The MITRE Corporation is driving solid business results while at the same time helping employees and their families live healthier lives.
Health and Safety

Pennsylvania – Just as VisitPittsburgh works to show the public that Pittsburgh is a great place to visit, the company also strives to be a healthy place to work. Its Lifestyle Returns program encourages and rewards employees for taking personal responsibility for their well-being.

VisitPittsburgh champions the health of its staff, advocating a wellness-focused workplace. In July 2007, the company partnered with Highmark to offer its employees and their eligible dependents Lifestyle Returns, a comprehensive program that helps people take charge of their health. Rather than provide one approach for all participants, Lifestyle Returns is tailored to individual health needs. It identifies employees’ health and lifestyle areas that need improvement, recommends ways to achieve healthier behaviors and tracks their progress online.

Lifestyle Returns has helped to create a culture of wellness at VisitPittsburgh. It involves a multi-step process in which employees take an online pledge, complete a comprehensive health assessment, obtain annual preventive exams based on age and gender, complete two lifestyle improvement programs, and finally access an online self-care tool and complete a survey. Employees are rewarded for completing various steps with time off or cash awards.

The program was a success from year one, with 68 percent employee participation. In year two, 72 percent of staff had completed steps one and two, and 47 percent had completed all five steps. Renewal rates for the nine-month program have been consistently high. Employees have a higher level of job satisfaction and experience decreased stress and improved health and fitness. VisitPittsburgh benefits from fewer workers’ compensation and disability claims, lower absenteeism and increased productivity. With wellness as a way of life, the organization anticipates even more cost savings in the future.
Work-Life Balance

Pennsylvania – As an organization that creates health and wellness programs, eXude Benefits Group knows what it means to care for employees. A limitless vacation policy is one benefit that keeps eXude employees enthused and performing at their best.

Executives wanted to provide a benefit that would maintain a high level of employee satisfaction and also motivate them to provide clients with exceptional service. When employees raved about having alternating Fridays off during the summer, eXude expanded its offerings and rolled out an open vacation policy for all full-time employees who have been with the company for at least a year. This approach encourages employees to take the time off they need, so when they return to work they are giving their very best.

eXude's policy is more than just unlimited vacation—it is a benefit provided as a thank you to employees for their hard work and dedication. Since employees value and understand the importance of having time off, they work even harder to provide excellent service. This mentality has produced high customer satisfaction ratings as well as continued growth and profitability.

The vacation policy is one reason why employee referrals and retention rates at eXude are high. Employees report feeling valued, and 96 percent say they are able to maintain a reasonable balance between work and personal life. eXude has been recognized by the Philadelphia Business Journal as one of the “Best Places to Work in Pennsylvania” for six consecutive years.
Making Flexibility a Strong Suit

Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus

Employee Involvement

An open-door policy, self-managed work groups, continuous improvement teams and multi-rater performance evaluations are just some of the ways CGWG employees stay involved and engaged with the firm. Employees also participate in decision making and goal setting, while an Employee Activities Committee creates opportunities for a little fun. CGWG recently gathered employee input on the company’s benefits package by holding an open-floor discussion at which employees were invited to share their experiences, ask questions and provide comments regarding all aspects of benefits.

Health and Safety

CGWG’s approach to employee well-being reflects the company’s commitment to preventive health care. A comprehensive, flexible benefits program allows employees to choose from a number of options and coverage levels to customize a package that best meets their needs. The health insurance plan includes 100 percent coverage of wellness services and the firm encourages healthy eating at worksite functions and participation in National Start! Walking Day.

Free flu shots, an onsite blood pressure monitor and an Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) that employees are trained to use are additional health measures in place at CGWG. To reduce strain and prevent injuries, lifting belts, phone headsets and ergonomic keyboards are provided to employees who need them. Additionally, once a month, the firm offers free onsite upper body massages to help reduce stress and promote general health.
Employee Growth and Development
CGWG supports employee education by sponsoring learning opportunities. The firm pays for seminars, as well as professional conference registration fees and applicable association memberships. CGWG also encourages attendance at Chamber of Commerce events and has sponsored employees participating in Leadership Greater Little Rock, Leadership Arkansas and the Women’s Foundation Emerging Leaders program.

The firm understands the importance of custom-tailored learning and development benefits and has consistently created individualized plans of action to meet employee needs. Examples include providing an office and computer equipment for a law student studying for the bar exam; helping an office administrator earn a human resources certification by paying for the study materials and test registration; and supporting a business manager’s quest to become the first person in Arkansas to earn a Certified Legal Manager designation by providing paid leave to take the exam.

Work-Life Balance
Alternative work arrangements are not typical of a law firm’s culture, but at CGWG, it’s the norm and goes a step beyond. There are no billable hour requirements at the firm, and hours are monitored for signs of excessive work or inconsistent schedules. CGWG allows employees to work modified schedules and telecommute when needed to accommodate their family life.

Communicating a clear message about their commitment to balance, upper management sets an example by practicing what they preach when it comes to managing work and non-work demands. Employees also receive paid leave days in a lump sum at the beginning of each year, so they have the freedom to take time off as needed.

Employee Recognition
CGWG recognizes employees for their commitment and exceptional achievements. The firm hosts an annual staff appreciation event, sponsors a Little League club and a swim team for employees’ children, and offers monetary encouragement for employees who participate in the company’s weight-loss program. An annual holiday party for employees and their families and a Halloween celebration with prizes for the best-decorated workspace provide opportunities to cut loose, and employees are also encouraged to attend firm-sponsored events at no cost.

The Bottom Line
At CGWG, satisfaction with flexible schedules translates into happier employees, a positive work environment and a competitive advantage when it comes to recruiting. The firm is known in the legal community for its work-life efforts and was recognized as Arkansas Business of the Year in 2007. CGWG has been a recipient of the Arkansas Governor’s Work-Life Balance Award every year since 2006, earning Gold the past three years.

With a healthy set of workplace practices in place, the cost of health benefits at CGWG has remained stable since 2004. Whether it is rallying together to support employees in need, covering for attorneys on medical leave or coming up with individualized solutions to help employees juggle life’s demands, a dedication to teamwork keeps the firm’s future looking bright.
Pennsylvania – eXude Benefits Group creates custom employee health and wellness programs for companies, so needless to say this organization knows a thing or two about building an environment where employees thrive. Employees benefit from eXude’s enthusiasm—whether it’s in the form of Gong Sessions, a retreat to explore and work toward their aspirations, or the company’s open vacation policy.

**Employee Involvement**

Team meetings provide an opportunity for employees to share updates and feedback with leadership and openness is encouraged during biweekly staff meetings. To strengthen the eXude culture and build camaraderie, 15-minute meetings to address employees’ needs are held on a regular basis and marked by the sounding of a gong. The gong is also struck to celebrate winning a new client and to kick off events such as baby showers, birthdays and anniversaries.

The driving force behind eXude’s efforts is the desire to be successful enough to give back to the community. Each year, eXude sets aside a budget for donations. In addition to making charitable contributions throughout the year, eXude makes a donation to the Sunshine Foundation for every new client and places a customized sun on its donation wall.

**Health and Safety**

Employees are encouraged to take advantage of eXude’s health and wellness benefits—including financial assistance that can be used to offset the cost of fitness classes, gym membership fees, weight management programs, smoking cessation and other wellness courses. Through educational lunchtime sessions that focus on topics such as nutrition, stress relief, CPR and self defense training, employees are provided with tools to improve their health and safety. eXude’s onsite fitness facility gives employees easy access to exercise equipment and notices are sent out to keep employees up to date about health-related benefits and initiatives.
Employee Growth and Development

The Dream Initiative was created to help employees realize their full potential by encouraging personal growth. Throughout a 90-day process that includes an offsite half-day retreat, eXude employees open up to their colleagues and help each other move toward accomplishing their life goals. Offsite corporate retreats allow employees to reflect on their personal and professional development and quarterly and annual assessments of goals help employees monitor their progress. eXude also offers employees tuition assistance and an incentive bonus program for professional training.

Work-Life Balance

Flexible schedules and short office hours on Fridays as well as every other Friday off during the summer helps keep employees motivated. After one year of employment with eXude, employees are eligible for an open vacation policy that allows them to take off as much time as they need to manage their lives (see “Endless Vacation,” p. 13).

Flexible spending accounts, commuter benefits and an employee-funded prepaid legal plan are just some of the available resources that help employees balance their work and personal lives. A child- and elder-care policy, adoption assistance and a welcoming atmosphere for employees’ children and dogs help busy employees keep their personal lives running smoothly so they can concentrate on work.

Employee Recognition

Discretionary bonuses, gift certificates for client testimonials and an annual chair massage event help employees at eXude feel appreciated. The company finds other fun ways to reward its employees as well, including tea tastings, healthy cooking seminars and outdoor retreats. “Make Their Day” awards are presented to employees who have gone out of their way to exceed the expectations of a client or colleague, and the company has even funded trips to the Caribbean, Ireland and Greece.

The Bottom Line

eXude has been a proud recipient of the Philadelphia Business Journal’s “Best Places to Work Award” since 2005, and was recently recognized as the number-one medium-size company to work for in Pennsylvania. Benefits Selling Magazine chose eXude as one of their Brokers of the Year in 2008 for being one of the most influential, innovative and successful benefits brokers in the business.

According to a recent survey, eXude employees are overwhelmingly satisfied with their workplace, giving high marks for work environment, supervisory relationships, pay and benefits and overall engagement. In terms of revenue, eXude has seen a steady increase in new premiums—from $4.2 million to $9.4 million in 2009—and thanks to this continued growth, has been able to increase its charitable donations. The eXude enthusiasm keeps employees healthy and productive, and that’s a gift that keeps on giving.
Health and Safety

California – As a primary prevention agency dedicated to supporting healthy behaviors in the communities it serves, Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) can do nothing less for its employees. Its employee wellness program, Live Well: Healthy Working Families, strives to promote the pursuit of optimal health by employees and their families.

Live Well: Healthy Working Families began in 2007 as a pilot program called Wellness Wednesdays, established in response to employee survey results. The six-week program consisted of a series of nutrition education workshops and fitness activities. About half of BCHD’s workers participated in the nutrition workshops and little more than a third in the fitness portion, but nearly 70 percent expressed a desire for a comprehensive health risk assessment. This feedback served as the genesis for consolidating all employee-related programs and activities under the fully integrated Live Well program, which BCHD launched in the fall of 2008.

By doing so, BCHD underscored its message to employees that it “walks its talk,” offering them internally the same health and wellness mandate that it promotes to residents in the Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach and Hermosa Beach communities. In turn, BCHD employees serve as wellness ambassadors, paying forward the support of optimal health practices throughout the community.

BCHD also supports local health promotion and disease prevention actions through its partnerships with city government, school districts, local businesses, nonprofit organizations and community groups.

Employee participation rates in the Live Well: Healthy Working Families program have continued to grow, and workers show interest in topics related to nutrition and stress management, two areas identified as health risks. By assessing employee needs and applying custom-tailored, evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs, Beach Cities Health District takes workplace wellness out of the office and into the community.
Ohio – At The University of Akron, officials practice what they teach in their classrooms. Fostering mutual respect is part of the agenda when educating and training students in any discipline, and the university’s Conflict Resolution Services program requires that employees work together to find equitable agreements that foster understanding of diverse perspectives.

When the university recognized the need for an effective dispute resolution process, the Human Resources staff was charged with finding ways to involve the university community in the program’s design. Professional experts from within and outside the campus were consulted, and all of the university’s constituent groups, including a cross-functional group of employees, participated in discussions. The result is a mediation-based Conflict Resolution Services program that works to repair relationships while avoiding acrimony and de-escalating conflicts.

Quarterly training sessions are a staple of the program, in which several outside guest speakers are brought to campus each year to discuss dispute resolution, and senior administrators publicly support the program on a regular basis. Information is included in new employee orientation, and the service has been endorsed by the two major campus unions, who include the mediation process in their grievance procedures.

The presence of trained mediators on campus has provided employees with a resource for guidance on dealing with interpersonal work situations. In the year prior to the program’s inception, the university received 46 grievances related to disputes, which took an average of six to nine months to be resolved. Last year, 24 individual faculty and staff issues were resolved by mediation and coaching without having to resort to formal grievance and, for the first time, multi-party conflict resolution processes were used in three academic and administrative areas. Voluntary turnover at the university has decreased dramatically, positive relationships have replaced previous disputes, substantial savings in legal costs have been realized, and the university attributes its increased productivity over the last two years to improved working conditions and a climate of mutual respect.
San Jorge Children’s Hospital

A Culture of Collaboration and Care

_Puerto Rico_ – As a full-service hospital located in the capital city of San Juan, **San Jorge Children’s Hospital** is as committed to the health and well-being of its employees and their families as it is to the young patients it serves. Programs and initiatives set in motion over the past several years have resulted in a workplace that fosters health and safety while placing a premium on professional growth.

**Employee Involvement**

San Jorge's open-door communications policy encourages and facilitates staff interaction and involvement. Ideas, improvements and needs are solicited through email, one-on-one meetings with staff and supervisors, the hospital's intranet and other channels. Once a month, the executive director holds Dialogue Day, during which any employee can make an appointment to meet with him privately on any issue.

San Jorge employees are regularly called on to identify areas of opportunity and improvement. Committees composed of management and staff from all levels are formed to implement the best ideas. The hospital holds an annual fundraising activity called The Coronation, with staff casting ballots for a king or queen among nominated employees. Proceeds pay for the event and support an emergency fund to help an employee or family member in need. In December, supervisors receive a stipend they can use to organize activities in their own departments, and staff are given free rein to decorate their work areas for the holidays.

**Health and Safety**

Ensuring the health and safety of patients and staff is a top priority at San Jorge. Individual committees address issues such as patient safety, quality improvement, infection control and ethics, and develop workshops that bring staff up to speed in these areas. A safety officer organizes a variety of drills to ensure that each employee knows his or her role in virtually any type of emergency.

The hospital’s employee health plan includes mental health services, free vaccinations for employees and their families, and no deductible for health exams performed onsite. Low-cost, healthful lunches are available to staff, including custom meals for those with dietary restrictions. Workstations are ergonomic and therapeutic massages are offered to employees on Fridays.
Employee Growth and Development

San Jorge staff can take advantage of a wide variety of on- and offsite training, including courses in CPR, oncology, phlebotomy, customer service, ergonomics and safety. Lectures and workshops cover technical as well as non-technical training. Staff are encouraged to join professional associations in their field and to attend conferences and conventions. Merit raises are given to employees who complete their baccalaureate or master’s degrees. Professional staff who need to keep up to date on licensing can take paid time off for training to fulfill their continuing education requirements.

In 2007, in response to a high staff turnover rate, San Jorge managers and staff worked together to develop an employee mentoring program. Staff selected as mentors are given eight hours of training and a pay incentive, while each new employee receives personalized, ongoing orientation in hospital policies, procedures and equipment use from his or her mentor.

Work-Life Balance

San Jorge offers a number of programs that enable employees to manage both professional and personal responsibilities. Its Ten Month Work Program allows participating employees to take the summer months off to care for their children, and year-round flex scheduling gives all employees time off to take care of non-work demands. The hospital’s commitment to employees’ families includes an onsite art summer camp and other family activities during school breaks.

Employee Recognition

A quarterly newsletter mailed to employees’ homes reports on past and future activities and celebrates milestones such as promotions and years of service. The hospital selects employees of the month and an employee of the year through nominations from each department. The employee of the year is awarded a cruise trip for two, while second- and third-place nominees receive cash awards of $500 and $300, respectively. The hospital regularly distributes vouchers for discounts at local restaurants, theaters and sporting events. When the hospital receives a letter praising an employee, copies of the letter are distributed to all staff.

The Bottom Line

Since implementing many of its training and recognition programs, San Jorge has seen a significant rise in overall employee satisfaction. Employees report improved morale, greater productivity and a higher level of job performance. In a recent employee survey, 84 percent of the staff said they felt valued by the organization, and 94 percent said they felt their employer’s values matched their own. In just three years, initiatives such as the mentoring program and Ten Month Work Program have markedly reduced staff turnover from a high of 28 percent to just 7 percent—a full nine percentage points below the national hospital average.

Due in large part to its collaborative, inclusive culture, the hospital has gained a reputation for excellence in the community, with an increase in the number of students seeking professional internships and former employees returning to work there. In addition, the hospital was recently honored with a Doctor’s Choice Award, a Revista Buena Vida Award, and was selected one of Hewitt Associates’ “Twenty Best Employers in Puerto Rico” for the third year in a row.
First Horizon

**Employee Involvement**

First Horizon embraces employee involvement through employee-led councils and committees. The company-wide Firstpower Council makes recommendations and provides feedback on key initiatives, thereby helping management foster an environment of candor, inclusion and teamwork. The Diversity Council works to ensure an inclusive environment through a series of Employee Resource Groups that help engage and attract a diverse workforce. Groups have been developed around themes such as women’s initiatives, administrative assistants and African-American mentoring. Executives at First Horizon value employee feedback at all levels. Programs such as My Idea encourage employees to submit thoughts on ways the company can reduce expenses, increase revenue or improve customer service quality.

**Health and Safety**

In July 2009, First Horizon launched its Wellness Committee, an employee-led effort to provide educational programming in fitness, nutrition and general health. Employees benefit from mobile mammography, Weight Watchers® at Work, and lunchtime learning sessions focusing on health and fitness. The company’s buildings are completely tobacco-free, and both counseling and pharmacological interventions to help kick the habit are offered without charge. Employees can have their weight and blood pressure measured at an onsite kiosk, and 40 percent of the staff has enrolled in a HealthMiles program, which helps reduce health care costs and absenteeism by rewarding those who join fitness activities. Employee Assistance Professionals are also available to all employees 24/7.
Employee Growth and Development

In keeping with its emphasis on employee support, First Horizon offers several career development options. The Center for Learning and Performance promotes excellence in individual and team efforts through both classroom and computer-based learning. In 2009, the company developed myPLAN, a performance management and career development tool to ensure that employees know what is expected, receive regular feedback and are recognized for their performance (see “Planning for Performance,” p. 25). Staff members are encouraged to set goals and are supported by online resources and informational interviews. In addition, both full- and part-time employees are eligible for tuition reimbursement up to $3,000 per year after just three months of service.

High-potential employees at the company can accelerate their careers through the Emerging Leader Program, launched in early 2010. This ten-month education initiative develops a variety of leadership skills through an intensive series of lectures, individual and group exercises, case studies, on-the-job training, computer-based learning and mentoring/coaching.

Work-Life Balance

First Horizon employees are encouraged to embrace both work and personal responsibilities. In 2009, 56 percent of the company’s staff took advantage of workplace flexibility options including compressed work weeks, telecommuting, flex time and job sharing. A prime-time schedule allows employees to work as few as 20 hours per week while retaining full benefits. A relief fund and vacation donation program are also available to assist employees in times of crisis.

The company lets parents stay involved in their children’s education by providing paid leave for a classroom visit or related activity, and employees’ children can compete for scholarships of up to $5,000 per year at several universities. First Horizon’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides concierge services for those who need them, and an adoption reimbursement program pays up to $7,500 per child.

Employee Recognition

Employee acknowledgment is a key part of First Horizon’s culture. In addition to enjoying department-specific celebrations, employees throughout the company are acknowledged for milestone service anniversaries, customer service excellence and sales performance. Employees congratulate their colleagues on a job well done through the company’s Firstpower Lines peer recognition program.

The company’s highest honor is the Firstpower Award, which rewards exceptional performance. Quarterly and annual winners receive a crystal memento and a celebration in their honor. In a recent survey, 90 percent of First Horizon employees said they have recently received recognition for a job well done, and 83 percent reported that their supervisor is effective in acknowledging and rewarding outstanding performance.

The Bottom Line

The introduction of First Horizon’s HealthMiles program has begun to generate positive results in employee health, with the total percentage of the company’s “active” and “very active” members increasing from 32 to 48 percent. In a random survey of the company’s EAP services, 81 percent of employees using them reported they are less stressed, and a strong majority said they missed less work and were more productive as a result. And because of First Horizon’s long-standing commitment to supporting work-life balance, the company was invited to participate in the 2010 White House Forum on Workplace Flexibility.

The company continues to generate local and national recognition for its employee-focused culture. It has been named to Working Mother magazine’s list of the 100 Best Companies since 1995, the AARP Best Employers for Workers Over 50 list since 2003, and the Best Employers in Tennessee list for 2010, among many other acknowledgments.
City of Grand Prairie

An Impressive Set of Wellness Practices

Health and Safety

*Texas* – When health care spending escalated, the City of Grand Prairie shifted its focus from cost containment to behavior change, with the idea that helping employees make healthier lifestyle choices would lower costs over time. To this end, the city launched a comprehensive set of offerings called Working on Wellness! (WOW!).

In 2007, after an in-depth review of health claims and an employee survey, the city rolled out a robust program to promote employee well-being. A designated HR employee oversees the effort and employees from across the organization serve as liaisons to the entire workforce. WOW! campaigns include an onsite fitness center, lunchtime learning sessions, co-ed sports leagues, discounted gym memberships, Weight Watchers® at Work, health screenings and even a designated “better sleep month.”

A monthly newsletter, published online and printed for field workers, focuses on health, safety, benefits and employee recognition. Additionally, a “WOW! Update” at bi-monthly management meetings provides an opportunity for supervisors to review upcoming wellness activities, so they can share the information with their employees.

Employees embrace the city’s wellness culture and give WOW! high ratings. Since 2007, when the wellness program was launched, claims paid on a per-employee per-month basis dropped 15 percent and high-cost claims are down 30 percent. The use of preventive screenings has increased, the number of employees with high health risks has declined and stress levels are falling. Employees who participate in the organization’s weight management programs have collectively lost more than 1,500 pounds.

By continuing to wow employees with creative wellness offerings that are designed to meet their needs, the City of Grand Prairie will continue to reap benefits in the form of reduced health care costs and healthier, happier, more productive employees.

The use of preventive screenings has increased, the number of employees with high health risks has declined and stress levels are falling.
First Horizon

Planning for Performance

Employee Growth and Development

*Tennessee – First Horizon* prides itself on putting its employees first, so establishing an effective performance management program was an essential step for this financial services company. With myPLAN, all employees have a clear path to their individual career goals.

When employees expressed a desire for a clear understanding of how their work supports company objectives and for increased feedback and recognition, First Horizon launched its comprehensive myPLAN program. Extensive internal and external research was conducted on performance management programs and teams were formed to design a new process and build an effective communications plan.

In a two-step rollout, myPLAN was first introduced to company leaders so they could study it and properly educate and inform their staffs. In January 2009, the new process was officially rolled out to employees through the company intranet, newsletters and e-mail. This personalized career development tool allows both leaders and employees to manage and track learning and performance. Employees are able to enter goals and development plans, view the organization’s goal-alignment structure, update goal progress and even receive feedback and performance reviews online. They are also encouraged to enter personal development plans into the system.

Feedback and coaching follow, and the plan is supported by a strong program of rewards and recognition. Since its introduction, myPLAN has become part of each employee’s daily work life. Every First Horizon employee has visited the myPLAN website, and 99 percent have entered their personal goals into the system to jumpstart the process.

First Horizon has realized cost savings through more efficient staffing and by eliminating software programs that were previously used to support manual processes. MyPLAN has also increased the company’s tracking and reporting of learning activities by approximately 50 percent, resulting in better cost accounting for training programs plus faster, more effective business intelligence for leaders and management.
City of Grand Prairie

Enthusiasm for Customer Service

Texas – The City of Grand Prairie is dedicated to making a difference in the community and ensuring that employees thrive. The city’s mission is to “create raving fans by delivering world-class service.” Employees embrace and exhibit this philosophy organization- and city-wide because they know that their work improves quality of life, builds pride and makes Grand Prairie a healthy place to live, work, play and visit.

Employee Involvement

The city focuses on involvement through employee committees, city-wide events and participation in activities such as Habitat for Humanity builds, Arbor Day celebrations and even helping to construct a new community playground. The city actively reaches out to employees to make sure they are aware of key programs and benefits. In a recent survey, employees rated several communication vehicles, including the employee wellness newsletter, as being some of the most valuable resources.

New employee orientation is an all-day event at which departments demonstrate how their jobs contribute to the city’s business and service philosophy. This is a popular activity—even longtime employees ask to participate. At the City Manager’s Roundtable, a small, diverse group of employees can ask questions about development, growth and budget of the City Manager and his staff.

Health and Safety

The City of Grand Prairie is dedicated to health and safety. An innovative wellness program, Working on Wellness! (WOW!) focuses on employee education and activities to encourage healthy behaviors (see “An Impressive Set of Wellness Practices,” p. 24). The city has a dedicated Human Resources Advisor overseeing wellness activities and program development, an Employee Relations Advisor assisting employees and management with concerns and promoting use of the EAP, and an Insurance Committee communicating benefits information and helping employees with enrollment. An annual health fair provides an opportunity for employees to obtain information from more than 40 health and benefits vendors.

The City of Grand Prairie maintains its excellent safety record through employee education as well as the development and implementation of action plans. Custom training on safety topics such as heat stress and lifting are available to employees and a general course on risk management is offered through the city’s management academy. A Risk Management Committee meets quarterly to review and track all city-related risk items, fostering a sense of teamwork, rather than a punitive approach to safety.
Employee Growth and Development

The city continues to find new ways to foster employee growth and development. Job sharing, diversity training, internships and training on conducting performance reviews are some of the basics available to employees. Grand Prairie Management Academy is a leadership series of 11 courses that employees throughout the organization develop and then teach to their peers. The courses arm participants with knowledge and skills that can be immediately applied on the job. Each course has a theme and topics include performance management, employment law, budgeting and finance, employee recognition and ethics.

The investing in Leadership Enhancement and Development (iLEAD) program was developed to provide employees with opportunities to improve their competitiveness for public sector management positions. Mentors work with employees one-on-one through the year-long program that includes a weekend retreat, ongoing education sessions, projects and a formal dinner with City Council and community leaders to learn networking skills.

Work-Life Balance

The City of Grand Prairie strives to help employees manage their work and non-work demands, which can be challenging in the public sector. Generous leave policies allow employees to use sick days for themselves as well as their dependents and flexible scheduling includes the option of a four-day work week in some departments. Discounts to local events, restaurants and entertainment venues are available and a dependent care account allows employees to set aside pre-tax dollars for daycare or elder care expenses.

The city also manages an Employee Welfare Fund to which employees can make nominal contributions, such as $1 per pay period. Should employees face difficult financial times, they can apply for assistance from this fund to help pay utility bills or buy groceries.

Employee Recognition

The city uses a variety of employee recognition methods including a formal program dubbed “Raving Fans.” The Raving Fans philosophy focuses on delivering service beyond customers’ expectations. Since employees are considered internal customers, this approach is also emphasized in everyday interactions at work.

Employees who go above and beyond are rewarded with gift cards or gift baskets. In addition to a variety of awards for individual and group achievements, the city hosts an annual banquet, and managers recognize their own employees at the department level. Even in City Hall, a Raving Fan wall displays photographs of city employees serving the public.

The Bottom Line

By partnering with employees, providing education and focusing on healthy behaviors, the city’s insurance claims projections have decreased by $1.5 million and are 15 percent lower on a per-employee, per-month basis than they were three years ago. Employee health risks have declined, the use of preventive health screenings are up and employees report a reduction in their overall stress levels. Additionally, employees are taking fewer sick days and participants in the city’s weight management programs have shed a combined 1,500 pounds. Now those are numbers that employees and the city can rave about.
Health and Safety

Hawaii – Psychologically healthy workplace strategies are standard procedure at the Honolulu-based Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC) Department of Psychology. Here, open communication, flexible work arrangements, innovative career-development programs and a demonstrated commitment to health and fitness are paramount. One of the department's most popular wellness endeavors is the Provider Resilience Program, more commonly known as “the yoga class.”

Initially, a group of department psychologists, one of whom is a yoga instructor, began meeting informally for mutual support. They started out sharing strategies for self-care and then began sitting together in meditation, practicing yoga stretches and breathing techniques. The yoga exercises became a regular weekly activity. And word spread, first around the department, then throughout the hospital. Before long, the roster of regular attendees included the department's chief and deputy chief, military and civilian providers from other departments and the TAMC chief executive. The informal sessions have since evolved into a formal program for provider resiliency and self-care, with additional sessions facilitated by psychologist volunteers.

Classes are offered through a hospital-wide employee training system using existing resources and space in the psychology department. Fliers, brochures, email and word-of-mouth ensure a steady turnout that includes psychologists, leadership, administrators, executive assistants and reception staff. Participants in the Provider Resilience Program have noted such health benefits as improved posture, joint relief and increased muscle tone. They also say they feel less stressed and more focused, better able to handle interpersonal conflicts and more readily adaptable to changes in the workplace. Participating employees also report providing a better quality of service to their clients, reduced incidence of illness and more laughter in the workplace.

Taking care of oneself while caring for others may not be a new concept, but combining today's best practices with time-tested techniques can achieve cutting-edge results. It's certainly working at Tripler Army Medical Center, where “the yoga class” is yielding direct benefits for staff psychologists, their colleagues and the patients they serve.
2011 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Winners

City of Grand Prairie
Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus
eXude Benefits Group
First Horizon
Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research Northwest
The MITRE Corporation
Northeast Delta Dental
San Jorge Children’s Hospital

2011 Best Practices Honorees

Beach Cities Health District
City of Grand Prairie
eXude Benefits Group
First Horizon
Harbinger Partners
National MS Society, Minnesota Chapter
The University of Akron
Tripler Army Medical Center Department of Psychology
VisitPittsburgh
The Psychologically Healthy Workplace

A psychologically healthy workplace fosters employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance.

Although there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to creating a psychologically healthy workplace, the practices that help create a healthy and productive work environment can be grouped into five categories:

- Employee Involvement
- Health and Safety
- Employee Growth and Development
- Work-Life Balance
- Employee Recognition

**Employee Involvement**

Efforts to increase employee involvement empower workers, involve them in decision making and give them increased job autonomy. Employee involvement programs can increase job satisfaction, employee morale and commitment to the organization as well as increase productivity, reduce turnover and absenteeism and enhance the quality of products and services.

**Health and Safety**

Health and safety initiatives improve the physical and mental health of employees through the prevention, assessment and treatment of potential health risks and problems and by encouraging and supporting healthy lifestyle and behavior choices. Health and safety efforts include a wide variety of workplace practices that can help employees improve their physical and mental health, reduce health risks and manage stress effectively. By investing in the health and safety of their employees, organizations may benefit from greater productivity and reductions in health care costs, absenteeism and accident/injury rates.

**Employee Growth and Development**

Opportunities for growth and development help employees expand their knowledge, skills and abilities and apply the competencies they have gained to new situations. The opportunity to gain new skills and experiences can increase employee motivation and job satisfaction and help workers more effectively manage job stress. This can translate into positive gains for the organization by enhancing organizational effectiveness and improving work quality, as well as by helping the organization attract and retain outstanding employees. By providing opportunities for growth and development, organizations can improve the quality of their employees’ work experience and realize the benefits of developing workers to their full potential.

**Work-Life Balance**

Programs and policies that facilitate work-life balance generally fall into two categories: flexible work arrangements and resources to help employees manage their non-work demands. Conflict between work and other life responsibilities can diminish the quality of both work and home life for employees, which in turn can affect organizational outcomes such as productivity, absenteeism and turnover. Efforts to help employees improve work-life balance can improve morale, increase job satisfaction and strengthen employees’ commitment to the organization. Additionally, the organization may reap benefits in terms of increased productivity and reduction in absenteeism and employee turnover.
Employee Recognition
Employee recognition efforts reward employees both individually and collectively for their contributions to the organization. Recognition can take various forms: formal and informal, monetary and non-monetary. By acknowledging employees for their efforts and making them feel valued and appreciated, organizations can increase employee satisfaction, morale and self-esteem. Additionally, the organization itself may benefit from greater employee engagement and productivity, lower turnover and the ability to attract and retain top-quality employees.

The Role of Communication
Communication plays a key role in the success of any workplace program or policy and serves as the foundation for all five types of psychologically healthy workplace practices. Communication about workplace practices helps achieve the desired outcomes for the employee and the organization in a variety of ways:

- Bottom-up communication (from employees to management) provides information about employee needs, values, perceptions and opinions. This helps organizations select and tailor their programs and policies to meet the specific needs of their employees.

Top-down communication (from management to employees) can increase utilization of specific workplace programs by making employees aware of their availability, clearly explaining how to access and use the services and demonstrating that management supports and values the programs.

The Importance of Context
It is important to note that the success of any workplace effort is based in part on addressing the challenges unique to the particular organization and tailoring programs and policies to meet its specific needs. Workplace practices do not exist in isolation. Each functions in relation to other programs and policies the organization has in place as well as internal and external environmental factors. The complex nature of these relationships highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to creating a workplace in which both employees and the organization can thrive.

For more information about the psychologically healthy workplace practices described above and examples from award-winning organizations, visit phwa.org.
About the American Psychological Association

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world’s largest association of psychologists. APA’s membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare. Find out more at apa.org.
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