Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards 2015

And introducing...
The Organizational Excellence Award
What makes some efforts to create a healthy, high-performing organization successful, while others fail to produce the desired outcomes or, even worse, elicit a negative reaction from employees? It often comes down to psychology. While it’s critical that workplace practices are designed well, based on good scientific evidence and implemented effectively, equally important is how these programs and policies are perceived by employees. Psychological factors such as autonomy, control and feeling valued also come into play, as well as issues of trust, fairness and beliefs about the organization’s underlying motivations.

To recognize employers who pay attention to these issues while taking comprehensive steps to create a positive work environment, I am honored to present the American Psychological Association’s 2015 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards. Emotional well-being plays a central role in these organizations, with more than eight in ten employees reporting that the organization provides adequate resources to address their mental health needs and help them manage stress (85 percent for each), compared to just 45 percent and 36 percent, respectively, in the general U.S. working population.

But psychology isn’t just all in your head. Not only do employees at these award-winning companies feel valued and heard, they also say their input is actually put to work. They’re more likely to participate regularly in health and wellness offerings, share the organization’s values, have higher levels of job satisfaction and say they are more motivated to give it their all. Additionally, only 8 percent of their employees say they intend to seek employment elsewhere within the next year, compared to more than triple that number (27 percent) nationally.

2015 also marks the launch of the American Psychological Association’s Organizational Excellence Award, a national recognition designed to shine a spotlight on the effective application of psychology in the workplace. Our inaugural award winner, American Express, has taken broad steps to integrate behavioral health and emotional well-being into its health and wellness offerings, including expanding its EAP, addressing stigma and providing a wealth of resources for employees — all bolstered by a research-based approach, alignment with behavior change models and effective multi-channel communication.

Congratulations to all of our winners. We hope their examples will inspire others to see that a holistic approach to well-being and performance is good for employees and good for business.

David W. Ballard, PsyD, MBA
Assistant Executive Director for Organizational Excellence
American Psychological Association
Psychologically Healthy Workplaces – A Win-Win for Employers and Employees

Data Reveal the Benefits of Psychologically Healthy Workplaces


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Psychologically Healthy Workplaces Value Employees and Support Their Well-Being

Note: Results reflect the percentage of employees who endorsed the items listed above.

Sources: American Psychological Association (APA), Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program; APA’s 2014 Work & Well-Being Survey

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The American Psychological Association's

Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards

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.

**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 550 organizations.

**APA Organizational Excellence Award**

This national-level recognition, given to a single company each year, is designed to highlight the effective application of psychology in the workplace — whether addressing mental health, applying good behavioral science to safety practices, using learning theory to strengthen training efforts, or a host of other ways that psychology can promote well-being and performance.
Does it matter if employees feel valued?

When workers feel valued by their employer...

92% say they are satisfied with their job.

91% say they are motivated to do their best.

89% are more likely to report being in good psychological health.

Yet, just a little more than half of employees (52%) report feeling valued by their employer.

Showing employees they are valued can boost workplace productivity and performance.

And that can have a big impact on your bottom line.

A psychologically healthy workplace makes sound business sense.

Source: APA's 2014 Work and Well-Being Survey
Employee Involvement
Honest and direct communication rules at Beehive PR. Leadership embraces an open-door policy and proactively seeks input — informally, with regular one-on-one and team conversations, and formally, through two annual employee surveys. Team feedback and participation are a natural part of doing business, from client prospecting to agency marketing, culture development and even recruitment, which offers a $500 bonus to every employee who refers a candidate who is hired. Beehive’s monthly newsletter, SPARK, is a popular forum with content produced for and by agency employees.

Health and Safety
Despite its small size, Beehive offers two health care plans from which employees can choose: a high-deductible and a low-deductible option. Beehive pays 75 percent of employee medical premium costs and offers free, 24/7 access to a fully stocked workout room with cardio and strength training equipment as well as a shower facility. For meditation and relaxation, Beehive’s dedicated “InZone,” a quiet room shielded from wireless signals, provides employees with a refuge for recharging their energy and creativity.

Employee Growth and Development
Helping the Beehive team generate positive energy enhances the entire company culture by increasing confidence and creativity and focusing on breakthroughs and accomplishments. To this end, Beehive’s SHARP professional development program helps employees grow professionally and personally through individual goal-setting, confidential, one-on-one coaching with an external consultant, regular development sessions and twice-a-year staff retreats. SHARP also incorporates life skills including positivity, accountability and energy management, all of which contribute to the agency’s high morale.
Work-Life Balance

Beehive knows that talent-rich means talent-friendly. Indeed, a healthy work-life balance keeps employees fresh, engaged and at the top of their games for high retention rates, low turnover and best-in-class teams for its clients. The agency offers flexible work schedules with an eye toward respecting both clients’ and employees’ personal needs. This includes a four-day workweek option, summer hours and generous Paid Time Off (PTO) benefits. For mobility support, Beehive PR provides laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi mobile hotspots and monthly reimbursement for smart phone and data plans.

The agency offers flexible work schedules with an eye toward respecting both clients’ and employees’ personal needs.

Employee Recognition

Beehive PR consistently celebrates both individual and collective accomplishments. Peer recognition for those who have gone above and beyond kicks off weekly staff meetings and Friday staff gatherings. Employee anniversaries and birthdays always come with a gift and a card. In terms of compensation, Beehive offers a competitive package that helps to attract and retain top talent. The agency subscribes to annual salary research studies, in addition to aggregating secondary market data, to ensure that employees are fairly rewarded for their contributions. Collectively, Beehive offers a 10 percent bonus to every employee based on the group’s productivity.

The Bottom Line

Beehive culture, dedication to wellness and competitive compensation has paid off — literally. With only three voluntary separations in the past 36 months, the agency performs significantly better than the industry-average 30 percent annual turnover. A recent employee survey boasts a 92 percent satisfaction rate, and the agency’s remarkable client retention rates and ongoing satisfaction are linked to its account teams’ continuity, ongoing professional development and ability to build trusted, enduring relationships. More than 44 percent of Beehive PR’s clients have been with the agency for five years or longer. This stability in Beehive PR’s client roster manifests in the agency’s financial security and steady growth.

TakeAway

• Open-door management policy
• Exercise and meditation rooms
• SHARP professional development program
• Bonuses for productivity
Employee Involvement

LaSalle holds biweekly, company-wide meetings. The first, Open Order Call, is led by CEO Tom Gimbel and serves as a venue for employees to brainstorm solutions to particularly challenging open orders. The second, Weeklies, is an open-communication forum across the company in which each unit shares highlights, best practices and struggles of the past week. In addition, the eight-member Staff Council, whose members rotate every few months, meets with the CEO once a month to discuss best practices and field suggestions that help keep the company growing.

Health and Safety

Healthy living is a priority at LaSalle. In addition to a full benefit plan that ensures employees and their families receive the best possible care, LaSalle’s robust list of health initiatives includes free, healthful snacks daily, multiple exercise balls in the office for staff and fully equipped gyms in each of its office locations. Active, sports-minded employees compete on a variety of intramural teams, including basketball and softball, with the company picking up the tab for all league fees.

Employee Growth and Development

LaSalle’s educational programs keep staff up-to-date on the ever-changing nuances of employment law and government policy. Programs available include webinars, online training, conferences, optional CEO-led one-on-one “Training Saturdays” and professional development coaching for senior leaders and management. Plus, LaSalle picks up 100 percent of the cost of Toastmasters, an international organization that helps professionals develop speaking and leadership skills with learn-by-doing workshops and peer review. Such skills-building helps retain staff while increasing morale and overall company value.
Work-Life Balance
LaSalle believes that for employees to be able to perform effectively at work, their home lives need to be attended to as well. Supervisors monitor assignments so they can be accomplished within work hours. Flexible hours and locations are also available. Plus, there’s fun to be had with company-sponsored parties and Game Nights for staff, family and friends. And LaSalle’s own box at the Allstate Arena, with season tickets to Cubs, Bears and Bulls games, is frequently made available to employees in acknowledgment of their hard work.

If an employee is doing well, the company doesn’t wait to reward him or her — it happens immediately.

Employee Recognition
LaSalle’s award programs include Producer of the Quarter, Making It Happen and Most Valuable Trainee. Bonuses are discretionary and based on quality of work. If an employee is doing well, the company doesn’t wait to reward him or her — it happens immediately. “Rebirthdays” — annual celebrations of each employee’s hire date — are a big deal at LaSalle, complete with speeches, food and gifts. The thinking here is that to have a birthday, all you have to do is breathe, but to have a rebirthday, you have to put in hard work, dedication and commitment.

The Bottom Line
LaSalle Network values its staff and shows it, as evidenced by robust employee morale, productivity and retention. In an industry that is plagued with high turnover, LaSalle’s turnover rates are exceptionally low. And LaSalle’s absenteeism rate is close to nonexistent. Currently, 80 percent of the management and 50 percent of the leadership teams have been promoted from within, with an average tenure of four to five years. Good policies have netted healthy profits: With a growth rate of 900 percent over the last decade, LaSalle has been ranked on Inc. Magazine’s 500/5000 List of Fastest Growing Private Companies in America for seven years in a row.

TakeAway
- Regular company-wide meetings
- Healthful snacks, office exercise, intramural athletics
- “Training Saturdays” with the CEO
- Flexible hours
- “Rebirthdays”
Employee Involvement
Every other year, the company conducts a 45- to 50-question employee satisfaction survey in which teammates comment freely and anonymously. In the 2013 Satisfaction Survey, 90 percent responded that they welcome the monthly teamwide meetings, held in the Ft. Lauderdale location and the St. Petersburg manufacturing facility, to hear reports from each department. There, teammates are encouraged to speak up and ask questions of the leadership team. No one misses out; those who are not physically present can call in, as each session is also offered by webinar.

Health and Safety
In 2012, Team Horner launched its remarkable “Color Me Healthy” initiative with more than 35 programs offered so far that address emotional health and physical fitness. Color Me Healthy’s genius is that it is bottom-up — teammates themselves brainstorm the types of well-being programs they want. Volunteers come together and form teams in different areas of the company to focus on the kinds of initiatives that are best suited to different populations. For instance, programs appealing to workers at the company’s manufacturing plant are not necessarily the same as those desired by its national sales team.

Employee Growth and Development
Team Horner’s earmarked reimbursement program pays for employees’ higher education. The company also provides a rich selection of industry-specific, in-house training and certification programs including general business and product knowledge. Other programs include book readings and informal, team-wide “Walk-a-Days” that get everyone outside and moving. In addition, the company encourages — and picks up the tab for — managers and other teammates to enroll in outside skills-building programs.
Work-Life Balance
Team Horner grants flex time on an individual basis for family and health issues or emergencies. Mothers-to-be are permitted flexible hours to work from home in the later stages of their pregnancy, then work remotely after the baby is born. If a teammate needs financial help, Team Horner provides short-term loans without interest, with payback later deducted from payroll. Team Horner takes care of its own, implementing flex time for those going through chemotherapy or radiation treatments. Even if the teammate can only work on a limited basis, he or she incurs no penalty.

Each year Team Horner holds awards events to recognize personal growth, synergy and pioneering in every division of the company.

Employee Recognition
Each year in December, Team Horner holds awards events in Ft. Lauderdale and St. Petersburg to recognize personal growth, synergy and pioneering in every division of the company. Employee of the Year winners in each division receive $1,000 as well. And since those who have won are considered consistent performers, they also receive a bonus of $50 each month in perpetuity. Celebrating longevity, Team Horner holds an awards event for teammates who have five or more years of service.

The Bottom Line
Team Horner employees feel valued and engaged. In fact, 94 percent said they feel they can openly communicate with their supervisor, and 73 percent reported participating in a Color Me Healthy event. For more than five years, employee turnover has averaged 20 percent including voluntary and involuntary separation. Team Horner’s programs promoting longevity are working; 25 percent of employees have been with Team Horner for 10 years or longer, while 56 percent have been employed for at least five years. Team Horner’s multiple initiatives are its ongoing commitments to a robust company culture for one and all.
Picture this: A customer care professional at a busy call center handles dozens of customer inquiries a day. After several calls serving customers, she needs a stress-busting time out. Instead of reaching for comfort food or taking a cigarette break, she calls a company-sponsored service that provides a brief, guided meditation exercise over the phone. A few minutes later, she’s relaxed, refreshed and ready to continue providing exemplary customer service.

This is just one of an astonishingly broad range of resources that global financial-services company American Express offers through the Healthy Living employee assistance program (EAP) and its behavioral component, Healthy Minds.

In recognition of the company’s outstanding efforts to promote employee well-being and organizational performance through the application of psychology in the workplace, the American Psychological Association has selected American Express as the inaugural recipient of its Organizational Excellence Award.

Creating Enlightened Policy

At American Express, great service begins with the people who deliver it. This means meeting the emotional as well as physical health needs of some 50,000 employees and their families in the U.S. and around the world.

“We recognize the importance of creating a best-place-to-work environment, and we know that
“The mental health counselors in our Wellness Centers provide the next generation of health care for our employees.”

WAYNE N. BURTON, MD
Chief Medical Officer

American Express office in Singapore

doing so leads to successful business outcomes,” says David Kasiarz, PhD, Senior Vice President of Global Compensation and Benefits. Kasiarz began his professional life in the mental health field and changed careers midstream out of a desire to evolve human resource management by working to create what he describes as “enlightened policy.”

The genesis of Healthy Living and Healthy Minds dates back to the economic downturn of late 2008, when companies across the business spectrum were beginning to reevaluate and retool their employee benefits packages. Up to that point, American Express had offered a telephonic-only EAP model, which had a utilization rate of just 4.2 percent. Data from health-appraisal questionnaires suggested that employees and their dependents were looking for additional support for mental health issues and other behavioral disorders. Moreover, mental health was becoming a significant driver of lost work days.

In 2009, mental health issues accounted for ten in every 100 American Express employees who were on short-term disability — second only to pregnancy. That year, stress and related factors accounted for more than 16,000 work days lost. “Many of the trends we saw in our work environment, such as stress, were also occurring nationally,” Kasiarz says. “That’s when we really started to see the value of investing in employee health and well-being.”

Initially, American Express added free, onsite counselors at its regional Wellness Centers across the United States. The umbrella EAP was rebranded as Healthy Living, and Wayne N. Burton, MD, was recruited as Chief Medical Officer. An internist with 35 years of experience in corporate medicine, Burton has authored or co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed articles on corporate wellness, including a pioneering 1992 report on depression in the workplace. Burton brought a deep understanding of the connection between physical and emotional health. Together, he and Kasiarz assembled a case for expanding the company’s EAP.

“It’s important to look at physical and emotional health holistically rather than as a collection of silos,” Burton notes. “The mental health counselors in our Wellness Centers provide the next generation of health care for our employees.”

Healthy Minds

Kasiarz and Burton saw the need for a comprehensive behavioral health component to Healthy Living and launched an intensive search for someone with the knowledge, experience and passion to design and lead it. “It was clear to me that we weren’t going to get ahead of the issue without finding a leader in the health care sector — someone who understood business and had a history of innovation, advocacy and achieving results,” Kasiarz says.

The recruitment process took about a year and, in 2012, they found the ideal candidate — Charles J. Lattarulo, PhD, a psychologist with expertise in behavioral health management for global businesses.
Once on board, Lattarulo reviewed the available data, then immersed himself in the culture to understand employees’ needs and gain a sense of what they might and might not buy into. Working with the company’s Compensation and Benefits communications team, he created Healthy Minds and integrated the program into Healthy Living’s lifestyle, safety and disease management and prevention offerings. With its bright colors and positive imagery, the Healthy Minds brand is well on its way to becoming ubiquitous within American Express.

Healthy Minds incorporates a powerful blend of peer-reviewed science, evidence-based practices, professional partnerships for quality resources and services, pilot testing and rigorous evaluation to deliver the best and broadest range of resources and information to its geographically and culturally diverse workforce. The program supports the physical wellness component of Healthy Living and includes onsite activities and events, issues-based campaigns, a website and blogs, and information online and in print that covers an exhaustive list of work-life topics: financial and legal matters, substance use, relationships, parenting, eldercare, supervisory skills and much more. All offerings are company-sponsored and free of charge to employees and their dependents.

“Find Your Brighter Side”

Destigmatizing mental health is a major goal of Healthy Minds, Lattarulo says. The program’s tagline, “Find Your Brighter Side,” was chosen to appeal to a wide audience. “We put it on email signatures and created a blog with links to an online application, so people can share how they’re doing,” says Lattarulo. “And we've built webinars around it that are time-sensitive, so employees in different time zones can participate.”

In some cultures, behavioral interventions are most effective when delivered indirectly. For example, employees in certain offices overseas tend to be more comfortable with online chats and email than with face-to-face counseling. So Healthy Minds provides those options.

Other effective means are less conventional. To explore the link between workplace productivity and computer applications that are grounded in sound psychological principles, American Express is currently testing one game based on cognitive-behavioral research and practices at its offices in Mexico. Initial research suggests the game may enhance users’ overall outlook as well as their performance.

“Every region has its own drivers,” Lattarulo explains. “Utilization around the globe varies. You have to be aware of what works and what doesn’t.”

‘Hot Pockets’ and Pilot Testing

In his role as Global Director of Healthy Minds, Lattarulo and his team review and analyze a wealth of employee information to identify “hot pockets,” areas where programs are most needed. Data is collected and stored for analysis at the University of Michigan’s Health Management Research Center.

From serious issues to just wanting to improve their mood, Healthy Minds seeks creative ways to remind employees it’s here for them.

CHARLES J. LATTARULO, PhD
Global Director, Healthy Minds
“Everything we do boils down to research,” Lattarulo explains. “The data tells us what employees are experiencing, where it’s taking place, and how it’s affecting productivity.” Lattarulo, Burton and Kasiarz collectively determine where program improvements should be made.

Many prospective initiatives are pilot tested at the company’s Customer Care Center in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Doria Camaraza, Senior Vice President and General Manager for Customer Care, is responsible for thousands of employees who are on the phone with customers around the clock. She is an enthusiastic proponent of Healthy Minds.

“We want every customer who communicates with us to come away with a lasting favorable impression of the company,” Camaraza says. “Investing in people, giving them the freedom to care for themselves as well as our customers, makes a huge difference. It sets us apart from the competition. And it’s what makes us not just a good employer, but an employer of choice.”

Camaraza points to the value of partnering with providers to secure proven resources and expertise. The Ft. Lauderdale Healthy Living Wellness Center, which has a utilization rate of 83 percent, is staffed by nurses and a nurse practitioner. “Recently the nursing staff recommended that many employees would benefit from being able to consult with a pharmacist,” she says. A licensed pharmacist is now onsite two days a week.

Creative Stress-Busters

The World Health Organization has targeted depression as a worldwide health crisis, citing studies that one person in four will suffer from a diagnosable mental illness at some point in their lives. This past year, Lattarulo and his team launched the “One in Four” campaign. They ordered chair covers with the “One in Four” logo, placing a cover over every fourth chair at a large staff gathering. The logo was printed on coffee cup sleeves and placed on every fourth cup. Award-winning actor Glenn Close was invited to the company’s headquarters in New York City to discuss her family’s experience with mental illness. Her remarks, which were filmed and shared with American Express employees around the world, also included tips, resources and ways to seek confidential help.

“Investing in people, giving them the freedom to care for themselves as well as our customers, makes a huge difference.”

DORIA CAMARAZA
Senior Vice President and General Manager, Customer Care
Since launching “One in Four,” counseling visits to the company’s Wellness Centers have increased. Notes Lattarulo, “The campaign got people thinking differently about mental health and decreased their discomfort over getting help.”

Thousands of American Express employees work from home and have limited access to face-to-face Healthy Minds activities. So the Healthy Living team created Benefits in a Box — what Lattarulo calls “a time capsule of wellness” — that is mailed to their homes. The box contains “mood” cards that help people assess their current stress level, refrigerator magnets, exercise bands, printed materials, referrals to online resources and other information designed to support wellness outside the office.

Benefits in a Box has been well-received by home-based employees and their families. Data on its effectiveness was recently shared with all employees in the company’s For Your Benefit magazine.

A Sound Model

While Healthy Minds is still new, the program is gaining traction company-wide. In its second year, the Healthy Minds website recorded more than 22,000 hits. Participation in onsite health offerings such as flu shots, biometric screenings and local health events has increased. Healthy Minds blogs are well-read, and the number of comments on the blog’s site, from both office- and home-based employees, is growing. In an employee satisfaction survey, 90.6 percent gave the program high marks.

“Our aim is always to be proactive,” says Lattarulo. “Why should we wait until stress becomes full-fledged anxiety, or until sadness turns into depression? Our belief is that we are catching stress before it becomes anxiety, and catching sadness before it becomes depression.”

While Healthy Minds’ offerings and utilization are on the rise, one important statistic is going down.

“Already, we are seeing a leveling-off of both medical and behavioral health claims, and the rates of behavioral health issues are decreasing,” Lattarulo says. In the future, as more data is collected and analyzed,
employee health patterns and their impact in the workplace can be targeted and addressed even more meaningfully.

“Healthy Minds is first and foremost a business initiative that is scaled globally, customized locally, and supported through investment.”

DAVID KASIARZ, PhD

Kasiarz, Burton and Lattarulo regard Healthy Minds, with its solid research and evaluation components, as a sound behavioral health model for any company or organization. Kasiarz cautions, however, that workplace wellness programs are most successful when they are supported at the highest levels of an organization.

“Healthy Minds is first and foremost a business initiative that is scaled globally, customized locally and supported through investment,” he explains. “No company of any size should write off mental health as a societal responsibility alone. If business leaders have the courage to raise the issue of health and well-being and understand the long-term benefits of investing in employee health, good things can happen.”

Lattarulo adds, “Business leaders need to understand that behavioral health issues can have a significant impact on their bottom line. American Express was extremely savvy to envision a global wellness EAP component and to hire someone to manage it. Doing the research, identifying evidence-based interventions and tailoring them to a company’s culture can result in a huge win.”

90.6% of American Express employees give the Healthy Minds program high marks.
Employee Involvement

BCHD encourages employee involvement from the top down. Frequent staff meetings foster a safe work environment in which staff openly share their ideas, frustrations and recommendations. Employees also participate in six-month strategic planning sessions, and all have an equal voice. Monthly Board of Directors meetings are open to everyone, allowing transparency of any decisions or conversations that may affect programs or services. Plus, CEO Susan Burden maintains a popular open-door policy; any employee who ventures in deserves, and gets, attention, acknowledgment and respect.

Health and Safety

Recently, BCHD’s innovative Life Planning programming was integrated into the organization’s benefits open-enrollment period, and it has been met with great enthusiasm. In one program, a BCHD employee and a licensed clinician shared experiences working with clients on preparing in advance for a life-threatening illness or injury to oneself or family members. Staff learned in a powerful way about the potentially dire consequences of failing to prepare for such a situation. Life Planning programs also underscore the importance of sound financial planning and taking advantage of BCHD’s pension and 457(b) plans.

Employee Growth and Development

BCHD underwrites educational assistance, professional association memberships, certifications, conferences and more at no charge to the employee. Professional development flourishes outside as well as within the organization. For example, supervisors nominate employees to participate in city-sponsored leadership programs to network and receive skills training. Fully supported by BCHD, 50 percent of full-time employees volunteer at local nonprofits, on boards or on committees. Additionally, over the past two years, 21 percent of full-time employees have received a promotion. As employees participate in these various activities, BCHD benefits from their newfound knowledge and experience.
Work-Life Balance

BCHD models the healthy behaviors the organization wants to see throughout its community. Employees can exercise any time at the onsite fitness centers at no cost and with partial reimbursement for personal training, nutrition consultations and massages. BCHD’s yearly time-off benefits include three to five weeks of vacation, two weeks of sick days and eight holidays. BCHD operates on a 9/80 flexible work schedule in which employees enjoy a three-day weekend every other week, with additional flexible scheduling for school, childcare and other family matters. And BCHD is pet-friendly and has an employee garden onsite. On the staff and management’s weekly walk around the neighborhood, there’s just one non-negotiable rule: no talking about work!

BCHD underwrites educational assistance, professional association memberships, certifications, conferences and more at no charge to the employee.

Employee Recognition

BCHD automatically builds incentives into budget projections to drive high performance and teamwork. Supervisors also bring informal recognition into department meetings by simply stating why they are thankful for the teammate sitting next to them. At the board level, BCHD recognizes employee anniversaries, degrees and certifications. Recently, the CEO instituted a quarterly employee-nominated Core Value Award program. The first Core Value Award for Compassion recognized the BCHD’s Facility Operations Engineer for always displaying a positive, friendly nature, especially during incidences of burst water pipes and fire alarms.

The Bottom Line

BCHD takes great pride in its ability to provide 70+ preventive health programs and services to more than 120,000 community residents, doing so with a highly productive and motivated group of 58 full-time employees. In a recent employee survey, 76 percent of employees felt their supervisor treated them as a partner, compared to the national average of 57 percent. And 80 percent felt their supervisor created an open and trusting environment. Most recently, BCHD CEO Susan Burden was named Health/Wellness Person of the Year by The Daily Breeze newspaper for leading employees in their efforts to create a healthy beach community.

TakeAway

- Biannual strategic planning sessions
- Life Planning programming
- Onsite fitness centers
- Flexible work schedules
- Core Value Award program
Employee Involvement

Because of the type of work it does in serving vulnerable individuals and populations, Hilltop’s employees often report that working there is more than just a job; it’s a way of life. One way Hilltop encourages team spirit is through company committees. The Fun Squad plans special company-wide events. The SWAT Team (Safety Works at All Times) addresses safety issues and education. The Wellness Committee designs and promotes company wellness initiatives. And the GREEN Team promotes environmental sustainability to lessen Hilltop’s impact on the environment.

Health and Safety

The organization’s wellness program, branded as “Health Top,” exemplifies Hilltop’s commitment to its employees. A full-time Employee Health Nurse, Wellness Coordinator and Worker’s Compensation and Safety Coordinator all sit on employee-run committees designed to promote a broad range of goals. Plus, Hilltop continually revamps its benefits package, recently reducing co-pays for such activities as mental health visits and nutrition counseling to just $10 per visit. Ever vigilant, Hilltop has recently organized a Pandemic Team to address large-scale safety and health issues and prepare detailed contingency plans in the event of a disaster or other emergency.

Employee Growth and Development

Educational opportunity is practically written into the DNA of each Hilltop employee’s work experience. Supervisors meet regularly with staff to identify areas for growth and development. To that end, the organization created an employee program called PEAK (Pursuit of Excellence and Knowledge) to help identify and achieve career goals, with tools for exploring career desires, meaningful conversations with supervisors and training to develop skills. Hilltop has also been developing a mentoring program to help new supervisors learn the necessary skills to become successful leaders.
Work-Life Balance

Hilltop promotes work-life balance with generous paid time off, an extended illness bank, flexible scheduling and a variety of employment options: limited, regular part-time and full-time. Many Hilltop staff are able to work remotely, when needed, through Hilltop’s Remote Connection. The organization also awards a 30-day paid sabbatical to employees with ten years of service. And because financial instability can prevent employees from achieving a healthy work-life balance, Hilltop partners with financial consultants who offer free, one-on-one coaching and onsite seminars that provide practical skills for budgeting, saving and using credit wisely.

Employee Recognition

Hilltop recognizes employees for their excellent work by paying them fairly and offering comprehensive benefits, even when this means across-the-board raises and larger adjustments based on market review. In addition, supervisors award employees throughout the year with bonuses, gift cards and other items, specific recognition in staff meetings and newsletter acknowledgments. Peer-to-peer recognition is the first order of business at the organization’s monthly Hilltop Appreciation Luncheon, in which employees acknowledge anyone they want to honor, whether a co-worker, supervisor, peer or partner.

The Bottom Line

Every day, Hilltop staff serve a population facing poverty, violence, mental or physical limitations, aging and other life circumstances that place individuals and families in situations of risk. According to a recent employee satisfaction survey, 100 percent of respondents believe that the work of Hilltop is important and makes a difference. Nearly all respondents agree that being acknowledged and valued is key. Ninety percent of employees consider Hilltop’s reward and recognition programs meaningful, and fully 97 percent report that they feel proud to work at Hilltop, suggesting high morale and a gratifying sense of ownership.

A full-time Employee Health Nurse, Wellness Coordinator and Worker’s Compensation and Safety Coordinator all sit on employee-run committees designed to promote a broad range of goals.

TakeAway

• Employee-run health and safety committees
• PEAK professional development program
• Sabbaticals for long-term employees
• Peer-to-peer recognition
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 acquire 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. 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 apaexcellence.org.
2015 Organizational Excellence Award Winner

- American Express

2015 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Winners

- Beach Cities Health District
- Beehive PR
- Hilltop Community Resources
- LaSalle Network
- Team Horner
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. APA's membership includes nearly 130,000 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 the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives. Find out more at apa.org.

About the Center for Organizational Excellence

The American Psychological Association’s Center for Organizational Excellence works to enhance the functioning of individuals, groups, organizations and communities through the application of psychology to a broad range of workplace issues. The Center houses APA’s Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program, a public education initiative designed to engage the employer community, raise public awareness about the value psychology brings to the workplace and promote programs and policies that enhance employee well-being and organizational performance. Find out more about the Center’s resources for employers and the psychologists who work with them at apaexcellence.org.
Would you like to join the winning organizations featured here? Visit apaexcellence.org to learn how to apply for a Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award and to access timely information and resources that will help your organization and employees thrive.