18 Awesome Wellness Program Ideas for Boosting Employee Participation
For most companies, having an employee wellness program is a no-brainer. Research shows that employee health, well-being, and engagement are increasingly interrelated. In addition to wellness correlating with overall happiness, healthy employees are more productive and take fewer sick days, improving an organization’s bottom line.

So it’s no surprise that a recent Gallup poll revealed that 85% of larger companies have employee wellness programs in place. What may surprise you is how abysmal employee participation is in these programs – just 24% according to the same poll.

Want to buck the trend and boost employee participation in your wellness program? The people at YouEarnedIt and SnackNation teamed up to profile six companies seeing success in their wellness programs. They’re bringing you 18 awesome wellness program ideas for boosting employee participation in yours.

**KARL STRAUSS BREWING COMPANY**

The core tenets of Karl Strauss are “learn, improve, grow.” And while these certainly describe the San Diego-based brewer’s path to success, it’s easy to see they’re also driving the company’s approach to employee wellness.

Though their products fuel countless happy hours, the company understands it takes more than amazing beer to keep employees happy long-term. Beer certainly helps though—Karl Strauss has customized its approach with concepts like “beer it forward,” their spin on the pay-it-forward ideology.

In fact, customization is the key to their entire wellness approach. The company focuses on themes of wellness behaviors—physical, mental, financial—and rewards them in unique ways.
For example, employees who participate in “brewing wellness” can win quarterly raffles for health-related prizes.

Day-to-day, good work and wellness behaviors are incentivized by a custom employee rewards catalogue stocked with beer-related perks, physical wellness rewards, and opportunities to book one-on-one learning sessions with company leadership. New rewards can also be added based on employee ideas.

Custom ideas from Karl Strauss

- Tap into your company’s core values. Like “beer it forward” or “brewing wellness,” name and describe behaviors you want to encourage using vocabulary from your company culture. This helps boost word of mouth and awareness of wellness efforts.

- Focus on more than physical. Mental and financial wellness are also important, which is why Karl Strauss offers ways to earn more time off or learn leadership and financial advice via one-on-one sessions with executives.

- Tailor wellness rewards to you. Generic gift cards may not motivate some, so offer personalized rewards unique to your wellness themes, company culture, or employee interests.

HARMLESS HARVEST

Harmless Harvest, makers of raw and organic coconut water, have health ingrained in their brand. Therefore, it only makes sense that they place a big focus on the wellness of their employees.

Harmless Harvest has combined team-building with workplace wellness by hosting employee field days followed by dinner. Their team heads to a local park in the afternoon for a game of tennis, catch, soccer, Frisbee, or whatever else people feel like doing (even if it’s just getting some sun on a nice day). Afterwards, they have a healthy dinner by grilling at the park or heading to the house of one of their co-founders.

3 steps you can take to boost wellness like Harmless Harvest

- Instead of ordering pizza for your next company get together, order in or cook some healthier options.

- Wellness shouldn’t be a chore—make it fun! Find out what activities your team enjoys in their free time and incorporate that into your next wellness initiative.

- Make wellness part of your brand. Even if you’re in an industry like law, you can do this through the benefits and perks you offer your team.
BAZAARVOICE

Austin-headquartered Bazaarvoice is a network that connects brands and retailers to the authentic voices of people where they shop. You’ll find authenticity and connection at the core of many Bazaarvoice initiatives, and their wellness efforts are no exception.

The company routinely recognizes and rewards group efforts which focus on wellness. For example, group participation in community volunteer initiatives or teams of employees running 5k races together receive unique rewards related to their cause.

This company-wide recognition approach has boosted another commonly overlooked wellness program initiative: health risk assessments. By baking “behavior bonuses” into their recognition and rewards program, employee discovery and usage of this important part of their overall wellness program has skyrocketed.

Want to be like Bazaarvoice? Try these group-oriented ideas!

- Publicly recognize team efforts towards physical activities like 5k races or intramural sports. Choose rewards related to them, like company-branded uniforms or money towards shoes and equipment.
- If employees are making volunteer efforts, give these a signal boost via any internal messaging or company newsfeeds. Tie these into your employee recognition and rewards program to encourage larger groups to participate.
- Find any helpful-but-forgotten wellness benefits your company offers (e.g. gym discounts, health risk assessments). Tie these into your recognition and rewards initiatives, then watch employee awareness and participation take off.

Get the skinny on SnackNation’s wellness program

How does SnackNation promote an atmosphere of wellness (besides getting all the healthy snacks they could ever want)? Here are some of their favorites:

- Bi-weekly yoga sessions
- Boot camp classes during the summer
- Healthy potlucks a couple of times throughout the year
- Nutrition and health focused presentations during our all-hands meeting on Monday
- Steps challenges using Jawbone Up fitness trackers
- Monthly book club
- Pet-friendly workspace
- Quarterly offsites to places like Big Bear and Malibu
Smith Brothers, an advertising Agency located in Pittsburgh, fully understands how the ad agency environment can be stressful. That’s why they’ve made health and wellness a priority at their office.

“Our wellness team has been a new addition in the last year or so. We’re just trying to get more people involved in their physical wellness, whether that means going out on walks along the Pittsburgh River Trail or hosting a healthy potluck lunch where all the staff brings in healthy food they made at home.”

–Nora DiNuzzo

Their team has really been embracing a healthier lifestyle. Everyone in the agency has been sharing health and wellness success stories, new workout tips, and healthy meal and juice recipes, which they include in their weekly emails to the team.

3 things you can do to boost employee wellness like Smith Brothers

• Organize a wellness team to come up with wellness ideas for the rest of the staff. Having a committee will help you push forward and organize those awesome ideas.
• Keep wellness top of mind by sharing best practices with your team on a weekly basis. Include some health tips in your weekly newsletter to the team or the dashboard in the breakroom.
• Encourage people to share their big wins with the team. Hearing your coworkers’ success stories will encourage more people to hop on the healthy bandwagon.
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A bit about YouEarnedIt’s award-winning employee wellness program

YouEarnedIt’s approach to wellness focuses on employees. Everyone has different needs, so the company uses YouEarnedIt’s “Behavior Bonus” feature to reward wellness efforts in real time.

- Walking to Lunch—YouEarnedIt believes small decisions count towards physical wellness, especially near its office in car-reliant Austin.
- Volunteering on Weekends—Contributing to the community improves many people’s wellness, so YouEarnedIt happily recognizes the staff’s volunteer efforts.

Hack Reactor

Hack Reactor is a software career accelerator—they teach people how to program software and applications in 12 weeks. While they’re serious about producing top-notch software engineers (their average graduate salary is $105K), they also boast an atmosphere of wellness for their students and employees to enjoy.

Hack Reactor takes pride in being a healthy workplace. All staff members have Fitbits. They also host weekly competitions for prizes, which have resulted in lots of walking meetings and spending time away from their desks.

As software building pros, they decided to make their company break room accessible through a smartphone. It includes a series of soft, comfortable couches for relaxation or naps, turf grass (so you can feel the experience of being outside without leaving the building), a cubby for shoes, and a strict rule of no work talk! Employees are free to listen to guided meditations, play board games, or do yoga.

3 action items to improve workplace health like Hack Reactor

- Create designated “areas of health.” This can be as simple as using an empty office for people to relax, take a nap, or even exercise.
- Use gamification to increase participation in your wellness program. Friendly competition makes things more interesting and offering prizes give people an extra incentive to participate.
- Subsidize healthy habits with things like gym memberships and healthy food deliveries.
THE MOTLEY FOOL

The Motley Fool, a multimedia financial-services company that provides financial solutions for investors, knows a thing or two about the importance of financial health. With a mission statement like “Help the World Invest—Better,” The Motley Fool strives to help their Fools’ better manage their financial life.

How? The Foolish Learning and Development Team hosts a “Financial Help Day” where they offer courses to learn more about the employee benefits offered, host educational workshops, and bring in Foolish financial planners. Classes include: “How to Buy a Home,” “Couples & Cash,” “Foolish Family Finances,” and the most popular, “Living Cheap.”

Not only does The Motley Fool want to make sure their Fools are financially fit, but physical fitness is also a major player in their company culture. In fact, their Foolish wellness program has earned them the Washington Post title of “2015 Best Place To Work.” Foolish wellness offers weekly yoga classes, monthly meditation, cycling classes, private massage rooms, and multiple private consults for Fools looking to get in shape.

“In a world where work is nearly 24/7, wellness is even more important to employees’ happiness.”

Three ideas from The Motley Fool to increase wellness program participation

- Host a “Financial Wellness Day.” Arrange for your financial team to meet with your employees to teach them about the importance of financial health.
- Bring in a yoga instructor to lead on-site yoga classes. It’s good for the mind, body and soul. Namaste.
- Incentivize wellness initiatives by offering company-wide health competitions like The Motley Fool’s, “Fool-wide Push-Up Wellness Challenge.” Winners receive big-ticketed items such as Fitbits or a custom pair of Nike running shoes.

Improve workplace wellness with healthy snacks!

Try SnackNation’s deliciously healthy office snack delivery!

GET FREE SAMPLE BOX!

Interested in customizing your current wellness program?

Boost participation in company wellness initiatives—try YouEarnedIt today!

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