

# Worksite Wellness: 10 creative ways to incentivize employees without spending a dime!

- ✓ *These incentives will increase participation in your wellness program (make sure you promote them when you roll out any campaign or activity you are implementing).*
- ✓ *Tip: Combine forces with safety, talent/retention and wellness initiatives for programming and incentive design. It's a great way to save money and gain senior leadership buy-in.*

- 1. Flex hours.** Once an employee participates in a program or activity and achieves the overall goal and/or their personal goal, they can earn a certain amount of hours or days to flex their time.

How to incentivize:

- Complete the requirements of the health activity (such as exercising 30 minutes a day 3-4 days a week) and earn up to 8 hours of flex time. (Expires within one year)

- 2. Paid Time Off (PTO) or vacation.** Same as flex time; once an employee participates in a program and achieves the overall goal and/or their personal goal, they can earn a certain amount of vacation hours. Make sure that the hours a person earns expire within one year and they cannot redeem them once they resign.

How to incentivize:

- For every pound you lose and keep off after 6 months, you will be incentivized 1 hour of PTO.
- If you meet all of the requirements of the health challenge you can earn 4 hours of PTO or vacation.
- Print out your gym usage report and if you utilize the gym 13 days in a given month you will earn 2 hours of PTO or vacation each month.

- 3. Wellness star letter or award.** Have your CEO write a personal letter or note to employees who deserve wellness recognition. This is a great tool for employee recognition annually. Make sure it is not super easy to get this special note; employees need to work hard to earn a personal letter.

- 4. Department health challenge (and Wellness Traveling Trophy).** If you are having a departmental or workgroup challenge, this is a great incentive! Departments or workgroups can earn the rights to have casual Wednesdays for a month and earn rights to a Wellness Traveling Trophy.

How to incentivize:

- The department who logs the most minutes walked for one month can earn casual Wednesdays for one month and the rights to the Wellness Traveling Trophy (make it competitive).
- Make the trophy yourself ... have it coincide with the brand of your program.

6. **Free fruit 'n veggie day.** Have your senior leaders or administration handout fresh fruit and veggies around the organization encouraging participation in the wellness program and to show their support for the program.
7. **Incentivize with fresh flowers.** Reward healthy employees by bringing in flowers from your garden and write them a special note.
8. **Pass the bucks.** Employees can earn monopoly money for wellness challenges that can be redeemed for gifts and other goodies.

If you do not have a budget to purchase incentives, here are creative ways you can try to incentivize:

- Call grocery stores and ask if they would be willing to donate fruit and/or veggies for your employee wellness program.
  - Call your local health department to ask if they have any giveaways they can share.
  - Call your health benefit agency and ask if they have any swag to give away.
  - Call a department store (Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart, etc.) and ask if they would be willing to provide any donation toward your wellness program.
  - *Always think outside of the box when it comes to incentivizing for a wellness program.*
9. **Create your own meditation or relaxation room.** Find a quiet area or unused office space in your building where employees can meditate, chill out, nap or otherwise re-center themselves. This incentive shows you care about your employees overall well-being; mind, body and soul!
    - ✓ Once your program has been in place for a while, you can promote this incentive. When you promote this incentive mention that due to interest and good participation in your wellness program you want to give back to your employees by providing them a relaxation room.
  10. **Remember the spouses.** Any wellness program you provide employees should be open to family members; this is a special incentive for employees. Even though dependents cannot earn vacation pay or time off, they can earn the other incentives as described above.