

Healthy workers = happy (and productive) workers

We all know that regular exercise, foods of various colours and goodness, and limiting alcohol and other activities that could pose health risks, makes us feel better, live longer, and just generally happier. However it's not always easy to stay motivated to lead a healthy lifestyle, and it often takes a backseat when our work life juggle, isn't balanced.

But if workplaces supported and facilitated their employees leading a healthier lifestyle they would find the benefits make good business sense.

According to the Department of Health, businesses that encourage a healthy lifestyle in their employees are also more productive and have employees who are more engaged.

Estimates show that healthy employees are three times more productive than their colleagues; take less sick leave; and are less likely to injure themselves at work. In fact, loss in productivity due to obesity through absenteeism, attending work when sick and premature death is estimated to cost \$6.4 billion a year.

So how does a business go about creating a healthy workplace? The Department of Health recommends beginning with a workplace health program; an activity or a range of activities that aim to support and promote the health of employees.

It doesn't need to be expensive; it can be as simple as providing fruit at work or opportunities for exercise during meal breaks. They provide further information and straight forward advice about creating a workplace health program on their website www.healthyworkers.gov.au that both

employees and employers will find useful.

There's also a Workplace Health Savings calculator that can be used to measure potential savings associated with implementing a successful workplace health program by measuring absenteeism and staff turnover in the workplace. If anything's going to get a company interested and motivated to invest in the health of their employees, that will!

It's a win win situation. Just as we're more likely to continue with an exercise commitment if we join up with a friend, if businesses consider themselves their employees' health buddy, they'll soon reap the benefits of our increased productivity, enthusiasm, and general pleasantness around the office.

