



Blue Zones Project®
WORKSITE PLEDGE

Your Journey Begins Here

Create a healthier, happier, more productive workplace

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CONGRATULATIONS ON STARTING YOUR JOURNEY!



You did it! You're on your way to becoming a Blue Zones Project Approved™ Worksite. We're thrilled to have you on board!

Since most of us spend more than 40% of our day at work, employers like you play a critical role in Blue Zones Project's success by shaping the workplace environment to make the healthy choice the easy choice. **You have the power to dramatically improve your employees' well-being** in a number of ways that can be transferred to the home environment as well. Worksites can positively affect the larger community, too, because healthy employees become powerful advocates for change in other organizations, like schools, restaurants, grocery stores, and civic groups.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

- ✓ Employees with higher levels of well-being perform better and cost less
- ✓ Increased employee engagement, resulting in better productivity and reduced absenteeism—giving your company a real competitive advantage
- ✓ Reduced healthcare costs through health-risk reduction
- ✓ Reduced turnover along with an increased ability to attract top talent by becoming an employer recognition for being part of an important community-wide project to improve well-being

What happens when you increase well-being by 1 point?ⁱ

- ↓ 2.2% likelihood of hospital admission
- ↓ 1.7% likelihood of ER visit
- ↓ 1.0% likelihood of incurring healthcare costs

What happens when you increase well-being by 10%?ⁱⁱ

- ↓ 5% fewer unscheduled absences
- ↑ 5% higher reported job performance
- ↑ 6% more days of 'best work' in 28-day period

BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVED WORKSITE SUCCESSES

An Iowa business, Pure Fishing, saw workers compensation reportable incidents drop from **20%** to **15%**.

Great American Popcorn Company, an Iowa manufacturer, improved healthy vending options by **47.7%**. Employee's health screenings showed a **55%** improvement in HDL cholesterol, a **14.5%** decline in LDL cholesterol, and a **9.4%** decline in nicotine usage.

Salo, a Minnesota company, recorded a **19% increase** in revenue, a **38% increase** in clients, and a **9.5% decrease** in attrition one year after adopting Blue Zones Project best practices.



5 EASY STEPS TO BECOMING APPROVED!

- 1 STRATEGIZE**
Discuss the current state and importance of well-being for your organization. Identify which best practices your workplace already has in place and which ones you would like to pursue. Keep in mind how it aligns with your organizational goals.
- 2 IMPLEMENT**
Complete the standard requirements and chosen best practices.
- 3 VALIDATE**
When selected best practices and standard requirements are completed, contact a Blue Zones Project team member to review the work you've done.
- 4 CELEBRATE**
Acknowledge and celebrate your organization's status as Blue Zones Project Approved. Make no mistake... it's a big deal!
- 5 SUSTAIN**
Maintain your Blue Zones Project Approved status by establishing a sustainability plan.

The Blue Zones Project team is here to partner with your organization by offering resources and expertise to help you achieve Blue Zones Project Approved status.

BLUE ZONES PROJECT WORKSITE PLEDGE

REQUIREMENTS:

- Earn at least 78 out of 117 possible points by implementing best practices.
- At least 25 percent of employees participate in a Blue Zones Project activity.
- Complete the RealAge® Test and track at least three metrics and/or outcomes.
- Create a sustainability plan.

BEST PRACTICES:

| PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>1 Complete the Ergonomic Checklist for at least 50 percent of employees.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide a copy of Ergonomic Checklist with proof of completion for 50% of employees.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>2 Ensure that at least 25 percent of meeting rooms, workstations, and/or private office furniture provide flexibility to choose to stand or sit while working.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide examples and photos that demonstrate how you have incorporated the ability for employees to stand in meeting rooms, at their desks, and in other areas in the building.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| <p>3 Implement and support ongoing micro-breaks every hour, prompted either by software or other workplace cues.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide a description and evidence of how you implemented the prompting of micro-breaks.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>4 Designate a space in the office where employees can downshift.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide a description and evidence of how the location(s) where employees can downshift.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>5 Adopt a policy that provides space and time for breastfeeding and/or pumping during work hours.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide a copy of your policy.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| <p>6 Provide secure bicycle storage.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence/pictures of bicycle storage at your facility.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>7 Provide showers and/or changing facilities with lockers to employees.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide pictures of showers and changing facilities, number of showers, and number of employees.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>8 Create an employee garden.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide before and after pictures of the garden. Share ways the employee garden is being used and enjoyed.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>9 Offer community supported agriculture (CSA) or farmers market at the worksite.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide pictures of farmers market and/or CSA. Include communications sent to employees. Track and share participation numbers.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>10 Establish a campus-wide tobacco-free worksite (includes E-cigarettes).</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide a copy of your tobacco-free policy.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <p>11 Create Blue Zones Project parking spaces farthest away from the workplace entrance(s).</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide a picture of the parking space(s) and signage.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| <p>12 Provide walking and/or biking workstations.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide pictures of the walking or biking workstation(s).</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| <p>13 Create a policy that ensures at least 50 percent of food and beverage offered in vending machines meet the Blue Zones Vending Guidelines. You can earn up to three bonus points by reaching 100 percent. <i>Total possible points equals 6.</i></p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide a copy of the policy. Include a picture and list of vending machine(s) items.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>14 Create a policy that ensures at least 50 percent of food and beverage offered in the worksite meet the Blue Zones Food Guidelines (includes cafeteria, catering, etc.). You can earn up to three bonus points by reaching 100 percent. <i>Total possible points equals 6.</i></p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide a copy of the policy. Include a picture and list of food options offered.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>15 Provide opportunities for employees to wear casual or workout wear at work.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide evidence that you have incorporated casual or workout wear as optional for your employees.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

| BENEFITS/WELL-BEING PROGRAMS | | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| 1 | <p>Offer benefits designed to promote prevention (e.g., flu shots, immunizations, and preventive screenings that are 100 percent covered).</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide a description of preventative benefits.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| 2 | <p>Allow flexible work schedules for employees.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide a copy of your policy supporting flexible work schedules.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| 3 | <p>Offer a paid-time-off policy that encourages and supports employees to take time off.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide a copy of your PTO policy.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| 4 | <p>Provide on-site/available biometric screening for employees.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence that you conducted biometric screenings for your employees. Include name of vendor, date(s) of screenings, and participation numbers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| 5 | <p>Offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence that you offer EAP programs to your employees by providing name of vendor and description of each EAP program.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| 6 | <p>Offer a 24/7 nurse line and/or decision-support service.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence that you offer a 24/7 nurse line and decision-support to your employees.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <p>7 Offer weight-management and/or nutrition coaching.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence that you offer weight-management and/or nutrition coaching to your employees. Include vendor name and participation numbers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>8 Offer tobacco-cessation coaching and Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence that you offer tobacco-cessation coaching and NRT to your employees. Include vendor name and participation numbers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>9 Offer chronic-condition management with coaching.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence that you offer chronic-condition management with coaching to your employees. Include vendor name and participation numbers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>10 Offer financial well-being tools.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence of financial well-being tools given to your employees, including the accompanying communications.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>11 Provide self-monitoring equipment (examples include blood pressure, glucose testing, etc.).</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide pictures of the self-monitoring equipment at your worksite(s) including the accompanying communications.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

LEADERSHIP

| | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>1 Create a pervasive brand for your health-and-well-being program.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide evidence of how you built and utilize your well-being brand.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>2 Organize or promote a workshop that supports leaders in connecting with their personal well-being and influencing a well-being culture in the organization.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide a description of the program or workshop that leaders attended and how many leaders attended.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>3 Communicate updates on Blue Zones Project participation levels, positive experiences and outcomes, testimonials, and aggregate company well-being metrics to all employees on a consistent basis.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide the communication(s) accompanying well-being metrics, participation, and success stories.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |

SOCIAL NETWORKS

| | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>1 Offer workplace mentoring.</p> <p><i>Validation Requirement: Provide description of the mentoring program, including communications and participation numbers.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <p>2 Implement onsite activities and/or social gatherings.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide description of onsite activities or social gatherings offered. Include a calendar of events of activities and pictures of those in attendance. Activities should be offered at least quarterly. Track and share participation numbers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>3 Organize employee social gatherings that encourage families and friends to participate, such as a family fun event.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide description of social gathering(s); include calendar of events and pictures of those in attendance. Track and share participation numbers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>4 Implement and support an employee-led well-being advisory committee (meets regularly, at least four times a year).</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide a copy of agenda and minutes from one or more meetings. Share key outcomes that result from committee.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>5 Develop and implement a Blue Zones Project engagement plan with a marketing/communication strategy.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide copy of engagement plan and marketing/communication strategy. Include pictures of marketing/communication initiatives that have been implemented.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>6 Provide communication opportunities for employees to connect and share information with each other.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: Provide description of internal social networks implemented and communication plan.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |

| PURPOSE | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>1 Offer ongoing opportunities for all employees to complete a personality assessment, such as Myers-Briggs, Ntrinsx Coaching Colors, StrengthsFinder, etc.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide copy of the communication to employees offering the personality assessment and copy of the personality assessment offered. Describe how the assessment is being utilized and indicate the total number of employees in the organization who completed it.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>2 Prominently display the organization’s vision, mission, and values in a public place, include it in the employee handbook, and communicate it to employees at least once a year.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide picture and description.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>3 Provide opportunities for employees to connect and give to charitable institutions.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide description of charities chosen, pictures of annual giving campaign, and how much was donated.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>4 Offer ongoing onsite developmental workshops, seminars, and/or lunch-and-learns to all employees.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide a description of the program or workshop and how many employees attended.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>5 Create a tuition-reimbursement and/or professional-training-and-development policy.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide copy of the tuition-reimbursement and/or professional-training-and-development policy. Include any communications that accompany the policies.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |

WORK COMMUNITY

| | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>1 Create a global-service-day policy.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide copy of policy, date of service event, communications to employees, description of the event, and participation numbers.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>2 Adopt a policy and/or program that supports employee volunteer activities.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide copy of policy and/or program communication to employees.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>3 Provide ongoing corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility programs and opportunities for employees to connect to their community.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide a copy and description of corporate citizen programs and activities or calendar of events and a copy of the communication to employees. Track and share participation numbers.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <p>4 Contact at least 50 percent of independently or locally owned restaurants within three miles of the worksite and encourage them to take the Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide copy of engagement communication to restaurant owners, list of implemented Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants, and communication to employees of Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |

WORK COMMUNITY

| | Currently Doing | Will Do | Points |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <p>5 Offer walking routes with signage and maps to help people find safe places to walk, and provide information on accessibility for those with mobility or other limitations. Include number of steps/distance markers of each route.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide a copy of distributed walking route documents and/or picture of signage. If tracking participation, provide numbers.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <p>6 Create an incentive plan or implement a commuter benefits program that encourages employees to commute to work via walking, biking, carpooling, or public transit.</p> <p>Validation Requirement: <i>Provide copy of commuter benefits program, including measurable goals, strategic plan, and/or incentive plan. Provide a copy of the communication to employees. Track and share participation numbers.</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |

PROPOSE NEW PLEDGE ACTIONS

This section allows you to propose **up to three new pledge actions** that align with the intent of Blue Zones Project. Please review your validation form for detailed instructions on developing and submitting new pledge actions. Up to three pledge actions can be proposed for a maximum of six total bonus points. Pledge actions will be approved and point value assigned by the Blue Zones Project team.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

TOTAL YOUR PLEDGE ACTION POINTS

| | POINTS |
|---------------------|--------|
| Currently Doing | |
| Will Do | |
| TOTAL POINTS | |

REQUIREMENT: Your points must total 78 or greater to achieve Blue Zones Project Approved status.

BLUE ZONES PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Provide employees the opportunity to participate in proven high-impact activities for deeper engagement and well-being improvement. The Blue Zones Project team will support your organization with additional resources and detail to drive participation in the below activities that are available in your area.

- ❑ REQUIREMENT: At least 25 percent of your employees participate in the following Blue Zones Project activities.



Blue Zones Lifestyle

Employees can learn the secrets of the world's longest-lived people and how to incorporate simple changes that can have profound effects on their health and well-being. Employees can attend an event where they will be given the history and background of Blue Zones and Blue Zones Project and have the ability to take personal action by taking the **Personal Pledge**.



Move Naturally

The world's longest-lived people live in environments that nudge them to move naturally. **Walking Moais**® give employees an opportunity to regularly walk together. Significant health benefits can be obtained by doing a moderate amount of physical activity, for example thirty minutes of brisk walking, on a daily basis. Studies have found that when employees join a walking group, they are more likely to stick to a regular walking routine than if they walk alone.



Eat Wisely

In Blue Zones areas, eating wisely is not a diet plan, it's a way of life. **Potluck and Restaurant Moais** bring employees together to share healthy meals. Employees can come together to share plant-based meals and learn how to choose healthier options when dining out.



Right Outlook

Employees can find ways to connect with their reason for being by participating in opportunities to discover their passion and deepen their sense of purpose. **Purpose Workshops** provide employees the opportunity to find and connect with their sense of purpose. Purpose Moais are groups that meet regularly to talk about their purpose. Employees will be able to clarify their strengths and talents and deepen their sense of purpose, which not only helps them contribute more effectively at work, but will also strengthen their personal relationships and connection to community.



Connect

The people we surround ourselves with strongly influence our health. Employees can participate in activities like **volunteering**, that connect them to fellow co-workers and their community so they can easily connect with their right tribe.

Validation Requirement: *Determine which activity/activities will best work with your employee population. Give a description of what activities were offered and communications to employees, and track participation (must total 25 percent of the population) in each activity.*



THE OCEAN WALKERS, a Walking Moai® based in the Beach Cities community of Los Angeles, have been strolling The Strand since 2010 — creating new, lasting friendships while improving their health.

SUCCESS TRACKER

Complete and collect metrics before and after adopting the best practices so you can measure the impact they have had. Share success stories with your Blue Zones Project team member.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Complete and track at least three metrics and/or successes and outcomes.
- Create a sustainability plan.

SELECTED METRICS

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health-risk assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare costs/claims | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to healthy foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biometric screening results | <input type="checkbox"/> Productivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Absenteeism | <input type="checkbox"/> Employee engagement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presenteeism | <input type="checkbox"/> Employee turnover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco utilization | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BMI | _____ |

SUCCESSES AND OUTCOMES

We use the information and data we collect to gather important information and real life experiences about the Blue Zones Project. We use this information to improve our services, develop new ones, and better improve the efficacy of the Blue Zones Project communities and programs. Worksite acknowledges and gives its permission for Blue Zones Project to seek testimonial information from its employees and customers for use directly on behalf of Worksite or indirectly for the benefit of the Worksite through Blue Zones Project program materials and/or education. No testimonials will be used without the individual's express consent. All testimonial information shall be obtained, utilized, and protected.

DESCRIPTIONS OF WORKSITE BEST PRACTICES

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT:

1. Complete the Ergonomic Checklist for at least 50 percent of employees.

WHY: Poor worksite design leads to fatigued, frustrated, and hurting workers, which, in turn, reduces productivity. Improved ergonomics can reduce costs—nearly \$1 out of every \$3 in workers' compensation costs are attributed to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Awareness and education of proper ergonomic practices for you and your employees may improve comfort and productivity and positively impact employee health and well-being.

HOW: Identify an employee who is familiar with what ergonomic hazards are and how to identify them in the workplace. Have this employee complete one of the standardized ergonomic checklists listed in the additional resources section below for each of your employees, as ergonomic adjustments are specific to the individual. Be sure to use a team approach to identify root causes and brainstorm solutions. Test solutions and conduct evaluations to make sure changes are effective.

Additional Resource: ERGO Consulting: <http://www.ergoconsulting.ca/>

2. Ensure that at least 25 percent of meeting rooms, workstations, and/or private office furniture provide flexibility to choose to stand or sit while working.

WHY: Mounting research shows that the hazards of sitting too much (what researchers call sedentary behavior) are associated with increased mortality. In one study, people who reported sitting more than six hours a day during their leisure time had death rates 20–40 percent higher than people who reported sitting less than three hours a day. When sitting, your calorie-burning rate immediately plunges to about one calorie/minute, which is one-third of what it would be if you were walking. A person can burn 30 percent more calories when standing instead sitting, which can contribute to weight control. In addition to these health benefits, standing meetings remind people to keep meetings short and to the point.

HOW: Height-adjustable desks give employees control over their immediate work area and the flexibility to choose when to sit or stand. Other options include work tools like height-adjustable monitor arms and sit-to-stand keyboard trays. You can also create designated stand-and-work areas throughout the office if individual workstations can't be modified. Tall meeting-room tables encourage standing and may shorten the duration of meetings. Add stools so employees have the option to sit or stand for longer meetings. Even better, add treadmill desks to work areas or conference rooms so employees can walk and work.

3. Implement and support ongoing micro-breaks every hour, prompted either by software or other workplace cues.

WHY: Taking a micro-break (less than two minutes) isn't a break from work but a break from using the particular set of muscles that are doing most of the work. Micro-breaks can actually decrease the time it takes to complete a particular task while helping to combat fatigue and discomfort. This should have a positive effect on productivity, problem solving, and creativity. Frequent breaks can decrease the duration of a task and thus help lower exposure to an ergonomic injury risk.

HOW: A micro-break can be any type of movement that changes a repetitive activity, like using a computer. Encourage employees to take a quick walk to make copies or to deliver a message in person instead of sending an e-mail. Even a small change to a task, such as returning a phone call while standing, will help. Use software cues or workplace cues like posted signs to encourage micro-breaks. Avoid extended periods of continuous tasks (e.g., typing) by taking short breaks (< 2 minutes). Take micro-breaks (for approximately 30–60 seconds) every ten minutes to rest the upper and lower extremities, back, neck, and eyes. Have leaders model this behavior.

4. Designate a space in the office where employees can downshift.

WHY: Stress leads to chronic inflammation, which is associated with every major age-related disease. The world's longest-lived people have routines to shed stress. Okinawans take a few moments each day to remember their ancestors, Adventists pray, Ikarians take a nap, and Sardinians do happy hour. Providing a quiet space in your office makes it easier for employees to take a short break from the hectic workday to downshift and de-stress through reflection, meditation, or prayer. Meditation has been shown to produce a wide range of mental benefits when practiced on a daily basis. Studies have shown that it can actually change how the brain processes information and manages the effects of stress, depression, and anxiety. Research shows that those who practice meditation are happier and calmer than those who don't. Prayer has also been shown to have many beneficial effects. Providing a quiet space in your office signals your company's support for mental well-being, which can increase employee satisfaction, attract high-quality employees, and reduce turnover.

HOW: Identify a quiet space in your office that is removed from the main travel pathways and noisy areas, then designate this space for quiet time, meditation, or prayer. The space should be as relaxing as possible to help employees de-stress. Place plants in the room and use aromatherapy or soft music to enhance downshifting. If possible, choose a space with views of the outdoors, as nature has a calming effect. Make employees aware of this space and encourage them to use it.

5. Adopt a policy that provides space and time for breastfeeding and/or pumping during work hours.

WHY: Women who are able to continue to breastfeed after returning to work miss less work time due to baby-related illnesses and have shorter absences when they do miss work.ⁱ According to research published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, universal breastfeeding of every child until the age of one wouldⁱⁱ:

- Prevent the deaths of 823,000 children under five years old and of 20,000 mothers per year
- Save \$300 billion in the U.S.
- For kids: result in fewer infections, increased intelligence, and probable protection against obesity and diabetes
- For moms: offer protection against breast cancer, improved birth spacing, and possible protection against ovarian cancer and Type 2 diabetes. Employees appreciate the ability to balance work responsibilities and family life, so a breastfeeding private room can lead to an increase in employee loyalty and retention.

HOW: Adopt a policy committing your workplace to providing private space and time for breastfeeding. The policy must provide a clean, private room with a lockable door that isn't a restroom, access to a refrigerator and sink for storing breast milk, and clear guidelines around scheduling time to pump or breastfeed.

6. Provide secure bicycle storage.

WHY: Bike storage gives employees who commute to work via bicycle the feeling of security that their bike will be protected while they work. Installing secure on-site bike racks or lockers may motivate employees to start biking to work. It also sends the message that cycling is welcomed in the organization. Secure bicycle storage provides the greatest rate of return for a highly visible commute option, indicating a healthy employee program.

HOW: Install prominent, high-visibility, safe, secure, and accessible bike lockers, racks, or enclosures on company property for 5 percent or more of all employees. Bicycle parking and storage areas shouldⁱⁱⁱ:

- Be locked, located near windows, located inside or within one hundred feet of a building entry, and be easily accessible to employees, residents, and/or visitors
- Provide shelter from rain, sun, and other effects of weather
- Be safe, served with night lighting, and protected from damage by nearby vehicles
- Not block the pedestrian path of travel or inhibit universal accessibility
- Have the following physical construction qualities:
 - Securely anchored to the ground, floor, or wall
 - Have a two-point support system for the bicycle
 - Allow for the bicycle frame and one wheel to be locked with a U-lock
 - Be accessible without moving another bicycle

7. Provide showers and/or changing facilities with lockers for employees.

WHY: Easy access to showers and changing facilities encourages physical activity during the workday. With ever-increasing demands on time, exercise is often the first thing to be scheduled out of the day. Making it convenient for employees to exercise during the workday can lead to overall health improvements that benefit your organization. If your organization is planning for sustainability certification such as LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design), showers/changing rooms will be an important part of supporting work toward the Physical Activity Innovation Credit.

HOW: Provide at least one on-site shower with changing facility for the first one hundred full-time equivalent (FTE) occupants and one additional shower for every two hundred FTE occupants thereafter. Retrofitting restrooms or other areas with plumbing are usually the most cost-effective ways to add showers to the workplace. Providing basic amenities like soap, shampoo, and hair dryers will make it easier for employees to shower at work without having to bring many items from home. At a minimum, provide private, secure changing areas with amenities such as disposable wipes for a quick clean-up. Partner with a nearby fitness facility for your employees to use their shower facilities and cover some or all of the cost. In a multi-tenant building, consider partnering with other tenants to approach the landlord to add showers and changing facilities not only to benefit your employees but to make the building more marketable in the future.

8. Create an employee garden.

WHY: On-site gardens are a great way to incorporate physical activity, relieve stress, increase team building, and stimulate volunteer experience. The gardens can supply fresh herbs and vegetables for healthy cooking demonstrations, support an on-site cafeteria or an on-site farmers market, or even provide fresh produce for food-bank donations. Further, worksite gardens encourage activity and create a sense of community and camaraderie within work teams without the high cost of off-site team-building events or high-paid consultants. Working in the garden can also offer lessons about teamwork and persistence that are highly applicable to the office. Some companies are even using gardens as a business development and recruiting tool (see Haberman, a digital marketing agency in Minneapolis)^{iv}.

HOW: If you are in a small space, consider a container garden or a number of potted trees and plants. Find an employee who has passion and experience gardening to lead the charge and ask for volunteers. Make sure the garden is located near a water supply to help fulfill day-to-day responsibilities, including planning, planting, thinning, weeding, harvesting, delivery, and fall cleanup. Identify budget for needed items (tools, seeds, plants, soil, stakes, fencing) or have departments donate or bring in items.

Additional Resources: “Food at Work: Corporate Garden”: <http://www.eatwellworkwell.org/corporate-garden.htm>; Strategic Alliance: <http://eatbettermovemore.org/SA/enact/workplace/farmersmarkets.php>

9. Offer a community supported agriculture (CSA) or farmers market at the worksite.

WHY: Farmers markets or CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) are becoming popular methods for worksites to increase access to healthy, fresh foods for employees. Offering farmers markets or CSAs makes it convenient for employees to easily buy healthier choices on a break or during their lunch hour. It also gives them the opportunity to purchase healthy foods that they can bring home to their families. Promoting regionally grown fresh products not only supports and boosts local growers and farmers but also allows the broader community to have access to fresh produce and other healthy foods.

HOW: Conduct a survey to identify employee preference between CSAs and farmers markets. For CSAs, find a local distributor that can deliver at the worksite. Determine day, time, and frequency of the deliveries and consider what is included in CSA (meat, dairy, fruits, and vegetables), payment, and subscription length. When implementing a farmers market, determine location (a minimum of three hundred customers are needed to support a small farmers market) and day, time, and frequency; gain approval from legal counsel and/or permit; and talk with other local farmers markets to determine vendors. With both options, create a communication plan to ensure maximum participation.

Additional Resources: Worksite Farmer’s Market How-To Guide: https://www.hap.org/employers/worksite/pdfs/farmers_market.pdf; Creating a Workplace CSA: <http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/files/2013/06/WorkplaceCSA-2idpoa1.jpg>; “Food at Work: Mini Farmers Market”: <http://www.eatwellworkwell.org/mini-farmers-market.htm>

10. Establish a campus-wide tobacco-free worksite (includes e-cigarettes).

WHY: Community smoking bans (including in workplaces) are associated with a 17 percent reduction in heart attacks, with the greatest effect seen in younger individuals and nonsmokers^v. A review of smoking bans at the worksite demonstrated that totally smoke-free workplaces reduced smoking prevalence by 3.8 percent and resulted in 3.1 fewer cigarettes smoked per day per continuing smoker^{vi}.

HOW: Adopt a company policy establishing a campus-wide tobacco-free worksite. Let all employees and visitors know that tobacco use is not permitted anywhere on company property. The ban should include electronic nicotine delivery devices, also known as e-cigarettes. Enforcement of the ban will likely be the biggest challenge at first, but a clear, consistent message, delivered a couple of weeks in advance of the start of enforcement allows time for adoption of new behavior. Encourage all employees (and family members) to use available tobacco-cessation tools and resources like QuitNet[®].

11. Create Blue Zones Project parking spaces farthest away from the workplace entrance(s).

WHY: Even moderate daily physical activity, including walking, can reduce the risk of developing coronary heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. Every little bit of activity adds up. Creating Blue Zones Project parking spaces that are located farthest away from the workplace entrance reminds employees that parking farther away is one way to easily add more physical activity to their day.

HOW: Identify a handful of appropriate parking spaces and label each as a “Blue Zones Project[®] Parking Space.” The Blue Zones Project team can direct you to sample signage.

12. Provide walking and/or biking workstations.

WHY: Many studies have proven the dangers of sitting too much. Sitting for too long negatively impacts our body’s metabolic system and increases the risk of developing chronic diseases—like diabetes or cardiovascular disease—related to sedentary behavior. Evidence shows that walking enhances reasoning and problem-solving ability. Standing burns calories, tones muscles, improves posture, increases blood flow, and speeds up metabolism.

HOW: Create a policy that supports walking or biking workstations. Work with your Blue Zones Project representative to identify a vendor that offers walking or biking workstations. Incorporate the workstations with a communication plan to your employees and make sure to have senior leadership utilize the workstations to show leadership support. Have a schedule to sign up for hour-long blocks of time on the workstations.

13. Create a policy that ensures at least 50 percent of food and beverage options offered in vending machines meet the Blue Zones Vending Guidelines.

WHY: Providing access to healthy foods at the worksite is an important step toward creating a culture that supports well-being. Many people consume at least one meal, as well as beverages, while at work. Encouraging smart food choices at work creates a bias toward healthy eating and helps build barriers against unhealthy eating practices.

HOW: Work with your vendors to offer healthier items in vending machines. Healthy items should meet the Blue Zones Vending Guidelines and be clearly labeled so that they are easy to identify. There are many companies that specialize in healthy vending that, at no additional cost to your company, offer a variety of healthy options, including organic, low-calorie snacks.

Bonus Option: You can earn up to three bonus points by reaching 100 percent.

14. Create a policy that ensures at least 50 percent of food and beverage options offered in the worksite meet the Blue Zones Food Guidelines (includes cafeteria, catering, etc.).

WHY: Policies promoting access to healthy foods at work are important basic steps to creating a culture that supports well-being. Many people consume food and beverages during catered meetings or special events at work. Only offering healthy options at such worksite events reinforces healthy eating behaviors and eliminates the temptation to consume calorically dense foods and beverages with little nutritional value, such as cookies, pastries, and soda.

HOW: Establish a policy committing your workplace to serving only foods and beverages that meet the Blue Zones Food Guidelines (Individuals) at all meetings and special events. Work with your food vendor or catering company to ensure compliance with the guidelines. Encourage employees to distribute only healthy foods in gathering places like the reception area, kitchen, and break room.

Bonus Option: You can earn up to three bonus points by reaching 100 percent.

15. Provide opportunities for employees to wear casual or workout wear at work.

WHY: Allowing employees to wear casual or workout clothes at work will provide additional incentive to move naturally throughout the day, including taking the stairs, walking during meetings, or hitting the gym before or after work. Employees will be more comfortable, which may lead to higher productivity.

HOW: Create a policy that allows employees to wear casual or workout clothing at work and shows examples of appropriate and inappropriate wear. You may want to create themes for days of the week (e.g., Workout Wednesdays, Fitness Fridays), or go all-in and allow workout wear every day. Ensure your senior leadership dresses in casual clothing from time to time as well.

BENEFITS/WELL-BEING OFFERINGS:

- 1. Offer benefits designed to promote prevention (e.g., flu shots, immunizations, and preventive screenings that are 100 percent covered).**

WHY: Prevention efforts help employees maintain proper health and productivity and ward off illness by encouraging employees to take small, preventive actions to maintain good health.

HOW: Providers can offer flu shots and immunizations on-site at a low cost. If not available on-site, encourage employees to visit local clinics for an annual flu shot. Ensure that your medical plan covers preventive care at no or very low cost to encourage employees to take charge of their health. Preventive care should include annual flu shots, immunizations, and screenings (based on age and gender).

- 2. Allow flexible work schedules for employees.**

WHY: Opportunities to participate in well-being activities during work hours—as appropriate for your worksite—demonstrates a commitment to and support for these activities.

HOW: Review policies to determine the feasibility of this in your work environment and, if possible, encourage flexible time to allow employees to take part in healthy activities (e.g., time with their children for school activities, time to exercise, etc.).

- 3. Offer a paid-time-off policy that encourages and supports employees to take time off.**

WHY: Making paid time off available to employees, regardless of the reason for using it, creates a positive work environment where employees are better positioned to de-stress and get away. Employees who have PTO report feeling empowered because they don't have to justify each day off. Not only can a PTO policy help mitigate employee burnout, it can also be a benefit in recruiting efforts.

HOW: Review your company's policy for vacation and sick days. Consolidate separate sick/vacation/personal time allocations into a paid-time-off bank. Communicate changes to all employees.

- 4. Provide on-site/available biometric screening for employees.**

WHY: Offering biometric screenings (blood pressure, body mass index, glucose, cholesterol, etc.) in a convenient manner tends to increase participation. This is a good way to educate your employees about their health risks and, if needed, how to improve their health.

HOW: Check with your health-plan provider to see if they offer this service at low or no cost annually. If it is not available, you may want to partner with a local provider to offer as part of a health fair.

- 5. Offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).**

WHY: EAP programs can positively impact an employee's health and well-being. EAPs offer resources for childcare and elder care, among other services. Financial planning can help address a primary area of stress and concern for many employees—managing a budget, planning for a child's education, buying a house or making other large purchases, and/or saving for retirement. Stress is a significant barrier to optimal well-being, and access to stress-management resources is vital for employees.

HOW: Check with your health-plan provider to see if they offer an EAP. If not, EAP services can be purchased for a nominal monthly fee based on your company's size. Promote these resources internally through newsletters, emails, or lunch-and-learns. For a bonus point, offer an EAP on financial education/planning assistance. For another bonus point, offer an EAP on stress/depression management. Check with your local health-and-wellness partners to determine what programs are available on-site, online, or by phone to assist employees and family members in managing stress.

6. Offer a 24/7 nurse line and/or decision-support service.

WHY: Medical decision tools are important resources that support medical consumerism and empower employees to make sound health-care decisions.

HOW: Check with your health-plan provider to determine what employee tools are available on their website. Promote these resources to your employees.

7. Offer weight-management and/or nutrition coaching.

WHY: Proper weight management is a concern for a majority of individuals. Program resources to address this area are key to any well-being initiative. Nutrition is a key factor in weight management, as is cholesterol, blood pressure, and some chronic conditions. Given the need for weight-management resources and the difficulty many employees have with reaching and maintaining proper weight, providing multiple resources is important for engagement and sustainable success.

HOW: Check with your local health-and-wellness partners to determine which programs are available on-site, online, or by phone to assist employees and family members in managing their weight. Offer programs that encourage employees to eat wisely in regards to portion sizes, calories, and sodium intake. For a bonus point, offer weight-management programs or subsidies. Research and post local options for weight-management programs (for instance, through the YMCA, local health and fitness centers, or other commercial resources like Weight Watchers).

8. Offer tobacco-cessation coaching and Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

WHY: Evidence suggests that insurance coverage for tobacco-cessation treatments leads to reduced tobacco use. Thus, the Public Health Service recommends all insurers offer comprehensive coverage for effective tobacco-dependence treatments, including medication and counseling.

HOW: Refer your employees and their families to use QuitNet®—a free and confidential tool offered as part of Blue Zones Project. You can also cover effective tobacco treatments as part of the basic medical/Rx plan. This includes coverage of nicotine replacement therapy (gum, inhaler, lozenge, nasal spray, and patch); bupropion SR (brand name Zyban®); Varenicline (brand name Chantix®); and counseling. You can also remove barriers to tobacco-cessation treatment (co-pays, utilization restrictions).

9. Offer chronic-condition management with coaching.

WHY: These conditions can have a significant impact on well-being. Resources that aid in their management are important for employees.

HOW: Chronic conditions (long-term health conditions) need to be managed appropriately. Ensure that employees who have chronic conditions have the resources and tools available to self-manage their conditions in order to maximize their health and productivity.

10. Offer financial well-being tools.

WHY: Financial worries are a concern many people share—nearly a quarter of the American workforce report high levels of stress in this area. Consider these statistics^{vii}

- 32 percent of American families have a household budget
- 30 percent have a long-term plan for savings and investments
- 70 percent of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck
- 24 percent of take-home pay is spent on non-mortgage debt, such as credit cards
- 64 percent of Americans don't have enough cash on hand to cover one mortgage payment or to purchase one month of groceries for their families
- 55 percent of Americans have less than \$25,000 in retirement savings, and 45 percent of these people are over the age of fifty-five.

Ignoring the importance of financial well-being can have a serious negative impact, as it's one of the five key elements of well-being and of one the most important—and often overlooked—determinants of overall health and productivity. However, only 15 percent of large U.S. companies offer any education about debt management and budgeting to their employees^{vii}.

HOW: Identify a vendor that has financial well-being tools you can adopt for your employees. A financial vendor will be able to support education, seminars, and guest speakers. Other ways to support financial well-being include having a default 401k entry, 401 matching (average is 6 percent), and employee discounts, etc.

Additional Resource: Creating a Financial Wellness Program: <http://www.corporatewellnessmagazine.com/selling-marketing/creating-a-financial-wellness-program/>

11. Provide self-monitoring equipment (examples include blood pressure, glucose testing, etc.).

WHY: Chronic conditions like high blood pressure can cause heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and blindness. The purpose of the self-monitoring equipment is to identify people with high blood pressure and refer them for clinical evaluation and treatment to avoid significant health-care costs and absenteeism. Studies suggest that weekly blood pressure self-monitoring at work is associated with improvements in lifestyle behaviors related to smoking, exercise, sodium restriction, and dieting.

HOW: Identify a budget to support the purchase of self-monitoring equipment and identify a key location to house the new self-monitoring equipment. The location should be a welcoming, low stress, quiet room or area that allows the employee to use the equipment privately.

Additional Resource: Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring: http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/docs/mh_smbp.pdf

LEADERSHIP:

1. Create a pervasive brand for your health-and-well-being program.

WHY: Consumers like to buy brands in their everyday life, and the branding of a program often leads to greater recognition of its inherent value and specific benefits. By creating and promoting an internal health-and-well-being brand, there is an opportunity to build brand loyalty with your employees (the consumer of your well-being programs).

HOW: Create an internal logo or tagline that is used continually with all well-being programs at your company. The goal is for all of your employees to connect this brand with improved well-being.

2. Organize or promote a workshop that supports leaders in connecting with their personal well-being and influencing a well-being culture in the organization.

WHY: Leadership is a core component in the framework of creating an environment and culture of well-being. The connection between leadership, well-being, and engagement is strong, and our own personal well-being impacts our ability to lead effectively every day. It is becoming increasingly clear that we, as leaders, have a profound influence on the well-being and engagement of those around us.

HOW: There are many workshops, programs, or seminars leaders can attend to understand the relevance and importance of creating an environment and culture of well-being. Leaders of all levels should have the opportunity, but the recommendation is that at least 10 percent of leaders complete a program.

3. Communicate updates on Blue Zones Project participation levels, positive experiences and outcomes, testimonials, and aggregate company well-being metrics to all employees on a consistent basis.

WHY: Everyone loves a success story. Sharing these stories motivates employees to take action to begin and/or continue healthy behaviors.

HOW: Share your company scorecard (for those important metrics you want to track) or employee success stories in company newsletters or during company meetings.

SOCIAL NETWORK

1. Offer workplace mentoring.

WHY: It's important for employers to engage employees intellectually and emotionally. Mentoring helps employees identify as a vital part of the organization while creating a heightened level of ownership. Not only does mentoring improve employee engagement and retention, it also helps the company's bottom line. Opportunities for learning and development are a top driver of engagement. The collaborative nature of mentoring develops individuals and interpersonal links between them. Corporate mentoring also enables career development and leadership development.

HOW: When developing a mentoring program, consider: employee eligibility, program-coordinator role and responsibilities, marketing/communication, mentor criteria, how mentor/mentees are matched, the training involved, program evaluation, and recognition opportunities.

Additional Resource: Mentoring Program Toolkit: https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/Documents/324va_nova_dulles_mentoring_program_toolkit_april2012.pdf

2. Implement onsite activities and/or social gatherings.

WHY: Having a work environment that builds teamwork and collaboration starts with having healthy relationships among co-workers. Friendly relationships among co-workers create a sense of belonging and improve morale, which leads to higher employee retention and job satisfaction. It also encourages sharing of knowledge and innovation, and enhances individual and organizational productivity. These factors make your organization a desirable place to work. Arranging formal or informal social activities is undoubtedly the most effective way to bring employees from various departments together to interact, have fun, and connect. Gallup found that close work friendships boost employee satisfaction by 50 percent, and people with a best friend at work are seven times more likely to engage fully in their work^{viii}.

HOW: Survey employees to see which type of onsite activities or social gatherings they would be most interested in and at what frequency. Once there is an understanding of what employees want to participate in, set up a calendar of events. Communicate and promote these activities to maximize participation. Onsite activity examples include hosting intramural sports, gardening, and book clubs. Social gathering examples include dinners, retreats, and Wine @ Five.

3. Organize employee social gatherings that encourage families and friends to participate, such as a family fun event.

WHY: Planning social gatherings for your employees and their families outside of work is one of the best ways to encourage a healthy work environment where teamwork thrives and employees feel valued and connected. These events bring family and friends together to build more meaningful relationships. The better your employees know one another, the more productive they will be in the workplace. Social events convey a sense of family, a connectedness that can cement the bond your employees have with the organization. A few successful social events can make a big difference in your ability to retain quality employees for years to come.

HOW: Choose what type(s) of events work best for your work culture. Ideas include bowling, picnics, outdoor movies and bonfires, game centers, ice skating, sporting events, hay rides, or charitable work, etc. Set up a calendar of events, and make at least one an annual event. Communicate and promote these activities to maximize participation.

4. Implement and support an employee-led well-being advisory committee (meets regularly at least four times a year).

WHY: Involving employees and leaders in developing and implementing well-being initiatives is a good way to ensure high levels of participation and engagement across the organization. With representation from all departments, a wellness advisory committee acts as a sounding board for the wellness program coordinator and provides diverse feedback on wellness objectives and initiatives. This feedback could include the ways employees prefer to receive information, what types of incentives will be successful, and wellness topics of interest. Having the right

representation means that the program will stay fresh and always reflective of employees' wants and needs.

HOW: Identify key influencers and volunteers who are passionate about well-being, and ask them to join a committee to create a plan to build a culture of well-being at your organization. Set expectations around the time commitment, and ensure that the ambassadors have their manager's approval to spend time on this activity. Recommend that committees meet at least quarterly to ensure wellness initiatives are met.

Additional Resource: Well-Being Ambassador Toolkit

5. Develop and implement a Blue Zones Project engagement plan with a marketing/communication strategy.

WHY: Engagement represents the degree to which individuals actively participate in relevant learning, attitude shift, and behavior change, which ultimately results in improved health and well-being. Engagement happens when an individual becomes aware of the need to do something different and then makes a commitment to take action that results in a new habit or activity. Creating an engagement plan is essential to supporting employees as they become committed to making well-being improvements. By being clear and consistent in your engagement objectives, the strategy can be properly formulated and metrics can be defined to measure progress. Research shows wellness programs are often poorly understood: 57 percent of employers believe their employees have a good understanding of wellness programs offered, but only 41 percent of employees agree they have a strong grasp of programs^x. Ensuring that employees understand the organization's commitment to well-being will increase participation in programs, reduce medical costs, and increase productivity.

HOW: Work with various stakeholders at your company (internal communications, benefits, and wellness) to establish a thorough engagement plan that moves your company toward your engagement goals (participation or outcomes). Your engagement plan should include the following: 1. Communication strategy for how you will promote Blue Zones Project work, well-being ideas, and information in multiple venues (company meetings, team meetings, etc.). Utilize print, web, company meetings, and leadership messages to promote the value of well-being concepts and provide program information. 2. Defined objectives, and metrics for measuring progress toward these objectives.

6. Provide communication opportunities for employees to connect and share information with each other.

WHY: Worksites have started creating internal social networks that allow employees to connect to ask work-related questions, help each other, or just talk about their life and interests. These channels are vital to the employees because they boost morale and the feeling of connectedness with co-workers and leaders. Worksites that offer internal social networks have almost 5 percent more employees who feel connected than worksites that don't offer such networks^x.

HOW: Work with your communication or marketing team to strategize and implement various internal social networks that employees can use to connect and share ideas. Examples include Yammer, company blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Set guidelines on how these channels are to be used and train all employees on them. Communicate and promote these channels to all employees.

PURPOSE

1. **Offer ongoing opportunities for all employees to complete a personality assessment, such as Myers-Briggs, Ntrinsx Coaching Colors, StrengthsFinder, etc.**

WHY: A personality assessment can provide an employee insight into his or her work preferences and issues that may be interfering with his or her productivity and enjoyment of work^{xi}. Armed with this information, employees can approach their work in a manner that best suits them, improving their time-management, problem-solving, decision-making, and stress-management skills. Knowledge of personality type can also help employees align with the workplace culture, collaborate more effectively on teams, and better cope with change in the workplace. Sharing aggregate results within teams and even company-wide can improve communication between management and employees.

HOW: Access to personality assessments can be found in books and on the internet. Worksites can provide personality assessments during the hiring process to determine the right fit. These assessments should be completed at least annually for ongoing individual and team-building growth. Share results within teams as well as aggregated company-wide.

Additional Resources: StrengthsFinder: www.gallupstrengthscenter.com; Ntrinsx Coaching Colors: <http://ntrinsx.com>; Myers-Briggs: <http://www.myersbriggs.org/>

2. **Prominently display the organization’s vision, mission, and values in a public place, include it in the employee handbook, and communicate it to employees at least once a year.**

WHY: Having employees aligned to the organization’s mission can be a strong driver of organizational performance. Aligning the mission, vision, and values helps drive a sense of belonging, engagement, and commitment, and brings clarity for the employees. In one study, 53 percent of employees responded that they were motivated to stay in their current jobs primarily because of their organization’s mission^{xii}.

HOW: Use multiple mediums including, but not limited to, print (signs throughout building), web, team, company-wide, and department meetings, and company handbooks to communicate the company’s vision, mission, and values, and how they impact all employees at the company. Worksites can implement this into their ongoing communication plans.

3. **Provide opportunities for employees to connect and give to charitable institutions.**

WHY: Workplace giving activities help employees make sense of their place within the organization in a positive manner and reinforces the idea that they are part of a larger, altruistic movement based on values, social justice, and giving. These feelings help employees see their company in a positive light, and it strengthens their commitment to the organization and increases feelings of company pride and loyalty. This can help build employee engagement, which can lead to increased productivity.

HOW: Determine which charity (charities) the worksite aligns with well. Review finances to determine how much you want to give and if you want to match employee giving. From there, develop an annual giving campaign where you will communicate and market to employees which charities your worksite is supporting and why.

Additional Resource: “Guide to Giving in the Workplace”: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=159#.VztplLgrJpg>

4. Offer ongoing onsite developmental workshops, seminars and/or lunch-and-learns to all employees.

WHY: Offering ongoing development workshops, seminars, or lunch-and-learns builds the worksite community, fosters learning and growth, and make social connections. Activities such as these show employees the investment a worksite has in their growth and development. It not only helps make the worksite more attractive to new hires, but also increase retention.

HOW: Determine the level of interest for specific topics and best days and times for attendance. Topics can include stress management, healthy eating, financial management, professional development, and intellectual topics of interest. Utilize existing resources like your health plan, Employee Assistance Plan, or other vendor partners to host these events. These events should be held at least quarterly.

5. Create a tuition-reimbursement and/or professional-training-and-development policy.

WHY: Providing employees the opportunity to update their knowledge, skills, and abilities should be a top priority for any worksite. Worksites can make a big difference in employees' lives and the bottom line by investing in the education of the workforce. Not only does ongoing education promote higher retention rates and an edified workforce, it also can be used as a recruiting tool.

HOW: Tuition reimbursement includes any degree-related programs that are job-applicable, while professional training and development programs encompass certifications, seminars, and conferences. Determine criteria for employees to use each benefit. Things to consider when creating these policies include employee eligibility, length of service, degree sought, minimum employment before and after work, grade minimum, etc. Determine the amount for the tuition and/or professional training allowances given. Average tuition reimbursement allowances are \$3,000 per employee per calendar year. Average professional development allowances are \$1,000 per employee per calendar year. Communicate this policy during new-hire training and ongoing (at least once a year).

Additional Resources: Sample Reimbursement Policy: <http://www.workforce.com/articles/sample-tuition-reimbursement-policy>; "Professional Development vs. Tuition Reimbursement: What is the Difference?": <http://www.helioshr.com/2014/03/professional-development-vs-tuition-reimbursement-what-is-the-difference/>

WORK COMMUNITY

1. Create a global-service-day policy.

WHY: A global service day is a set day and time when employees are encouraged to participate as volunteers for a non-profit organization, community program, or company event. Many organizations offer high-profile, time-limited, and usually company-wide events where large groups of employees volunteer together. Organizations that offer and promote global service days provide opportunities for employees to build new partnerships and engage in the community.

HOW: Depending on company size, culture, and program goals, there are a number of ways to structure a global service day. Provide a survey to gauge employee interest and give options for service organizations that work best with your site. Things to consider are: date of service, time, length, attendees, if it's organized locally, nationally, or globally, and if it's coordinated with national holidays or other recognized events. Track participation by having participants sign up and sign in for the event.

Additional Resource: Day of Service Planning: <https://www.helplinecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/HLCVOL-Day-of-Service-Planning-Guide.pdf>

2. Adopt a policy and/or program that supports employee volunteer activities.

WHY: Creating the sense that your organization and community are working together for a common goal is good for your employees' well-being and, therefore, your business. People who volunteer have lower mortality rates, are less likely to be depressed, have increased life satisfaction and psychological well-being, and report a higher sense of purpose. They also report being happier, perhaps because they focus on helping others. Companies that support volunteering experience lower turnover and strengthened company and employee relationships, and help employees develop new skill sets.

HOW: Determine what type of policy works best for your organization to promote volunteerism. Identify opportunities where your organization can support a local charity and promote these in a manner that makes sense for your worksite. Things to consider when developing a volunteer policy include employee eligibility, volunteer time, and schedule. Communicate this policy at least annually.

Additional Resource: Volunteer Time Off Program and Policy: <https://www.siliconvalleycf.org/sites/default/files/documents/csr/sample-VTO-policy.pdf>

3. Provide ongoing corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility programs and opportunities for employees to connect to their community.

WHY: Corporate citizenship is about how an organization interacts in society. It encompasses activities related to community involvement, philanthropy, environment, and governance issues. Companies that embrace it seek to strengthen their relationship with the community and build sustainable strategies for addressing issues and supporting worthy causes. Research shows that the extent to which organizations are helping and supporting their communities and the world does matter to employees. Worksites that offer corporate citizenship programs do benefit from significantly more engaged employees. Also, the more committed an organization is to the scope of its corporate-citizenship programming and the more employees can participate, the higher their engagement scores.

HOW: The approach to corporate citizenship varies from company to company. Deciding which activities and programs your organization wants to support is the first step. You can include employees by offering a survey. You'll need to determine budget, time dedicated, and when to implement the identified activities. Examples of activities include hosting an onsite blood donation or participating in charitable races. Lastly, make sure to communicate with stakeholders and employees.

4. Contact at least 50 percent of independently or locally owned restaurants within three miles of the worksite and encourage them to take the Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge.

WHY: The typical adult eats restaurant food an average of 5.8 times per week. Eating out regularly increases health risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Employers have the opportunity to encourage their employees to access healthier options once they leave the worksite and to also influence and support the community's access as a whole. Restaurants that to implement the Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge will create ways for customers to eat fewer and healthier calories, which will have a positive impact on employees who eat at these locations. This pledge was designed in collaboration with Dr. Brian Wansink, Director of the Cornell University Food and Brand Lab.

HOW: Identify all independently or locally owned restaurants within a three-mile radius of the worksite where employees like to go to for lunch or dinner. Working with your Blue Zones Project contact, reach out to the owners of those restaurants and encourage them to achieve status as a Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurant. As these restaurants become Blue Zones Project Approved, promote them to employees through multiple communication channels (such as email, flyers, etc.). In the communications, share the healthy, Blue Zones-inspired menu options and which of these restaurants can cater worksite events. To earn points, at least one contacted restaurant must become Blue Zones Project Approved.

Additional Resource: Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge

5. Offer walking routes with signage and maps to help people find safe places to walk, and provide information on accessibility for those with mobility or other limitations. Include number of steps/distance markers of each route.

WHY: Walking is an inexpensive and effective way to promote better well-being within the worksite. Studies show that employees who are physically active take 27 percent fewer sick days and that work performance can be improved by between 4–15 percent and turnover reduced by 8–13 percent^{xiii}. By making walking routes readily available and encouraging employees to be active throughout the workday, worksites can expect to have a more productive and engaged workforce.

HOW: Identify indoor and outdoor spaces that can be designated as walking paths, and use a pedometer to calculate the average number of steps it takes to complete each route. For indoors, be creative and include stairwells and other "off-the-beaten-path" areas within a building. For outdoors, find areas around the worksite that are safe, have sidewalks, and are away from major traffic. Promote these walking routes in employee communications and around the worksite to maximize participation. Also, encourage managers to lead by example, taking brief walking breaks and conducting meetings while walking. Provide pedometers to your employees along with contests and incentives to encourage walking.

6. Create an incentive plan or implement a commuter benefits program that encourages employees to commute to work via walking, carpooling, biking, or public transit.

WHY: Transportation costs, traffic congestion, and other aspects of commuting impact the well-being of your workforce and affect your business in ways you may not realize. Some of these translate into direct, hard costs while others are less tangible. Offering commuter programs and incentive plans has proven to be valuable not only for the employer, but also for employees. Benefits range from recruitment and retention, decreased absenteeism, increased productivity,

and overall morale. Not only can employers benefit from tax incentives, but they can also receive recognition as a community leader. Employees who participate are more productive, have less stress, and have reduced commuter costs. Often, free parking induces drive-alone trips, reduces available land for expansion, and rewards unhealthy lifestyles.

HOW:

- The first step in implementing a commuter benefit program or incentive plan is determining if the program will be managed internally or externally with a vendor partner. Provide a commuter survey to gauge employee interest and learn commuter patterns to find which options will work best with your site. Establish a base rate to learn your current drive-alone percentages, and an auto trip rate, which is the number of commute vehicles arriving at a worksite divided by the number of employees that report to the worksite.
- Develop ideas, set goals, and create a strategic plan to incent and encourage employees who drive alone to choose another commute method.
- Provide an annual follow-up survey that will measure progress toward meeting the commute trip-reduction target.
- Develop an incentive plan that will yield the highest return on investment.
- Determine which benefits to offer, such as switching from free parking to subsidized, transit, bike-commuting support, car pool, etc.
- Decide which employees are eligible for the benefit (full/part time, length of employment, etc).
- Update employee handbooks, and communicate and market this benefit to employees to maximize participation.
- Monitor results and modify strategies and incentives to achieve goals.

Additional Resource: 2013 Commuter Benefits: <http://www.bestworkplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2013-BWC-Commuter-Benefits.pdf>

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