

61-6 The Healthy Workplace

A Blueprint for Corporate Action

William M. Kizer

*How health promotion at work
pays off on the bottom line*

Foreword by James E. Burke, Chairman & CEO, Johnson & Johnson

THE HEALTHY WORKPLACE

A BLUEPRINT FOR CORPORATE ACTION

WILLIAM M. KIZER

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Central States Health & Life Co. of Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska
Founder, Wellness Council of the Midlands
Omaha, Nebraska

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CONTRIBUTORS

Harold S. Kahler, Jr.

Executive Director

Wellness Council of the Midlands

Omaha, Nebraska

Fred W. Schott

Vice President, Training and Development

Central States Health & Life Co. of Omaha

Omaha, Nebraska

Past President and Board Member

Wellness Council of the Midlands

Omaha, Nebraska

FOREWORD

Business leaders increasingly are realizing that helping to keep employees healthy is an absolute cornerstone to health care cost containment.

Until recently, some executives were understandably skeptical about the feasibility of cost-effective worksite wellness systems. Such skepticism is fading quickly in light of new scientific data.

At Johnson & Johnson, for example, we developed the LIVE FOR LIFE Program in the late 1970s to serve as a comprehensive management system to improve employee health and contain health care costs. Scientific study results now show definite employee health and cost benefits. Employees offered the LIVE FOR LIFE Program for two and a half years or more incurred 40 percent lower hospitalization costs than employees who were not offered this worksite wellness program. Absenteeism was 18 percent less. Not surprisingly, these financial benefits were preceded by widespread health changes, including a dramatic reduction in smoking and a substantial increase in regular exercise.

It is our belief, therefore, that over time this type of program will be paid for out of reductions in health care costs.

Managers also are becoming more aware of the tremendous impact programs such as LIVE FOR LIFE can have on employee morale and productivity. Having the healthiest work force possible—with people highly committed to our organization—is just one of the many benefits provided by the LIVE FOR LIFE Program. We are convinced that its value to our company and our employees is beyond question.

The Healthy Workplace: A Blueprint for Corporate Action conveys to the reader—whether head of a small company or large corporation—exactly why worksite wellness is vital and how to implement a pro-

gram, no matter how modest. A practical guide, the book clearly communicates specifically how management can benefit both the company and community.

Having initiated the first Wellness Council and served as chairman of the Health Insurance Association of America's Health Education Committee, Bill Kizer, perhaps more than any other individual, is the person to write the book on health programs in business.

Health care most certainly is in the midst of a revolution, and one of the most salutary changes is the increasing concern on the part of the public about staying well. I'm convinced that America's business leaders, once armed with current data, will be ready to help take advantage of these new insights.

James E. Burke

*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Johnson & Johnson
New Brunswick, New Jersey*

IS AMERICAN BUSINESS READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? REMARKS FROM RONALD REAGAN

Disease prevention and health promotion are in all of our interests, not only for people in the insurance business, but for employees and employers throughout the wide spectrum of American enterprise. I don't need to tell you employers that the illness of your employees is a costly proposition. A healthier work force means higher productivity, reduced absenteeism, and less overtime. In the long run, it also means a reduction in the cost for employee health benefits.

Today we've conquered the old killers like smallpox, diphtheria, and polio. We understand that how each of us chooses to live will, more than anything else, determine our health.

Executives are in a position to provide leadership in this area, because working people spend about half their waking hours at work. With little or no financial investment, the employer can influence his or her employees to change some bad habits that heavily affect one's health.

Cigarette smoking is, perhaps, the best example. We all know how harmful it is. Well, the illness resulting from smoking is costly to both the smoker and his or her boss. A helping hand to assist employees to break the habit might be a wise investment.

Good eating and exercise habits are other areas where employers could use their influence. We are all aware of the fitness programs in Japanese companies. It's something you might think about.

The question now is whether you're willing to take the steps necessary to make a difference. Those of you who take this to heart have my sincere thanks.

America can only be as strong and healthy as its people, and, as in all things, the only lasting change that takes place comes when each of us does his part to make our country the good and decent place we want it to be.

Ronald Reagan

President of the United States

Remarks from the White House

Video Teleconference, March 1984

PREFACE

WORKSITE WELLNESS

- The latest management fad or destined to take its place as a pillar of American business practice?
- An expensive bit of unnecessary fluff or a solid investment that delivers two, five, and even seven to one for every dollar spent?
- A cheap public relations gimmick or evidence of genuine corporate concern for the quality of American life?
- Simple-minded slogans pushed on apathetic employees or one of the best vehicles ever designed for boosting morale, improving productivity, and building loyalty among employees?
- A cruel hoax thrown like a bone to organized labor as “real” health benefits or a genuine partnership of labor and management that finally pays attention to the preventive side of health care?
- A small ripple in this country’s \$425 billion annual health care ocean or the one thing that offers the most promise of having a significant long-range impact on the rising cost of health care?

Because it is so new and at the same time literally exploding throughout American business and industry, worksite wellness is a mixed bag of all of the above. But when done right—and that’s what *The Healthy Workplace: A Blueprint for Corporate Action* will tell you—worksite wellness can deliver on the best things that it says about itself.

A healthier, more aware, better-educated American public, without doubt, has the greatest potential for lowering the costs of health care.

The shift from treatment to prevention has already created one shock wave after another in health care and its related industries.

Worksite wellness fits with both traditional and recent American management theories. It builds on the common theme that people have always been and will remain our greatest resource. The evidence that well-planned worksite wellness programs have a positive impact on morale, absenteeism, turnover, and productivity is already accumulating.

Worksite wellness promises to be so much more than good public relations. It is a unifying force. Who can argue with helping millions of Americans make better decisions about their health and take personal responsibility for their own well-being? It is clear that in worksite wellness what is good for the company is good for the worker, the worker's family, the community, and the country.

These themes and their promise are thoroughly developed in this book. This book explores what you can do as a business leader for your company and your community. If you are the chief executive officer (CEO) of IBM, Xerox, Control Data, Tenneco, General Motors, Metropolitan Life, or any of the other large corporations that already have worksite wellness programs underway, this book may not be as directly applicable to you as it is for the other "Fortune 4,500,000" companies. Or if you are one of the 65 million employees who work in firms employing 1,000 or fewer people—and you want to do something about health promotion where you work—this book is for you to read and bring to the attention of the decision maker.

But most Americans work in companies that employ fewer than 10 people. If you run such a company, congratulations! You're American business at its best, and this book has much to offer you. Although health promotion may be big business, it's not intended just for big business anymore.

In addition, the book should be useful to human resource and benefits personnel, fitness directors, insurance companies, health care practitioners, and hospital administrators.

A health magazine editor, T George Harris, bemoaned the fact that the idea of wellness at work is "still so new to American corporations that there is no single corporate executive who knows how to put it all together yet" (*Newsweek*, November 1984).

Here—finally—we have put it all together. This is the guide. This is the how-to for the corporate executive who gets excited about wellness and promoting health for employees but simply doesn't know where to begin or what to do. It's also for the skeptical corporate executive who has heard about worksite wellness but wants to know what it will do for the bottom line.

Health is not something you can buy for yourself or for your employees. Nor can doctors cure everything with a pill or an operation. Rene

Dubos, a distinguished biomedical scientist, stated: "To ward off disease or recover health, men as a rule find it easier to depend on the healers than to attempt the more difficult task of living wisely."

Living wisely, then, leads to wellness, no matter how you define it. One of the best ways to describe wellness is this:

Wellness is a process of being aware of and of altering behavior toward a more successful physical, mental, emotional, psychological, occupational, and spiritual existence.

Wellness, as a process, can coexist with some strange bedfellows. For example, a terminally ill person can exhibit high levels of wellness with positive mental attitudes and a will to be as strong as possible, no matter how poor his or her physical health may be. On the other hand, a fit person who is the picture of health may be a child abuser. That person may be physically healthy, but he or she is certainly not achieving wellness.

Part I of *The Healthy Workplace* answers the tough questions that business leaders ask about worksite wellness. We talk about bottom-line payoffs to wellness in the language of business: how to make a return on an investment in wellness, how to minimize your risks, a look at the legal aspects and the tax implications, and a discussion of how wellness prepares the work force for the ups and downs of doing business in America.

The working section of this book is located in chapter 2, "A Business Plan for Health Promotion at Work." There you'll find the practical guide for business leaders and anyone else who is serving on a wellness committee, who has volunteered or been appointed to "check wellness out," or who wants to start something at work and just doesn't know where to begin or how to expand existing programs. The business plan takes you through the steps every corporate leader goes through when making any other business decision. Some of these suggestions may even revive half-hearted attempts to bring wellness into your workplace.

Working through the simple business plan outlined here will reveal that wellness programs are not just fitness rooms, exercise bicycles, and showers. Wellness targets many other lifestyle practices such as smoking, alcohol use, and nutrition. When I speak to industry leaders, I tell them that any company can get into wellness using the SANE approach to a healthy company: S for smoking, A for alcohol, N for nutrition, and E for exercise. And these are just the start. Other more complex and costly wellness programs grow out of these four areas. But the best part about the ideas presented in the SANE approach to a healthy company is that they can be done at no cost or low cost. Chapter 3 explains the SANE approach to a healthy company in detail.

Three of my business colleagues and I founded the Wellness Council of the Midlands (WELCOM) in 1982. WELCOM holds the distinction of being the first Wellness Council anywhere and the blueprint for other councils. The Wellness Council acts as a clearinghouse—a support network for large and small companies in all areas of business and industry and in all stages of planning and programming for wellness at work. Member companies send delegates to meetings to share ideas and exchange information. Since WELCOM boasts of having over 112 companies as members in America's heartland of Omaha, Nebraska, we invite you to learn about wellness from WELCOM. We want to show you how we promote wellness in our worksites and in our community.

The chicken-or-the-egg principle applies to worksite wellness programs and Wellness Councils. Which comes first? Does a company start a wellness program at work and then join other businesses in forming a Wellness Council, or does a company join a Wellness Council and draw on the council's resources to help design wellness programs for the company? Many companies have tackled both at the same time, each giving impetus to the other. The best answer to that question is whatever works. If you are fortunate enough to be in a community in which a Wellness Council is in early stages of forming, you're lucky. But for thousands of companies in hundreds of other communities, Wellness Councils do not yet exist.

On the flip side, many companies have been practicing their own brand of wellness for years. Some may have smoking policies in place but nothing else. Others may already have on-site exercise facilities or organized sports teams. These companies are ripe to take the lead in forming and to become charter members of Wellness Councils while they round out their own in-house efforts.

Part II outlines how the Wellness Council of the Midlands started and gives insight into how you can start one in your own community. This approach to worksite wellness has become a model that is working in cities across the United States. Many cities are forming councils as this book goes to press.

Part II also takes you through the day-to-day operations of the successful nonprofit corporation—the Wellness Council. From this blueprint, any business leader can tailor a similar Wellness Council in any city in the United States.

Wherever you begin, if you and your company are involved in worksite wellness, you are on the cutting edge of an exciting movement destined to leave its mark on American society for years to come.

Wellness in the year 2000 is discussed in Part III. The insurance industry, which has taken a leading role in promoting worksite wellness, is planning to take even bigger steps toward creating a smoke-free society, forming a network of Wellness Councils, and rewarding people who are healthy by charging them less for health insurance.

Some observers thought jogging was a passing fancy. It's not. All those sales of athletic shoes and sweatsuits turned out to be a major part of the revolution in health and fitness in the last half of the twentieth century. Even pollster George Gallup observed that no other change in American behavior had been so profound. People are living longer than they did at the turn of the last century, and by the year 2000, Americans will have added more than four years to their life expectancy.

Although the effects of AIDS or other as-yet-unknown maladies on the length and quality of life are unknown, we Americans are entering the Age of Lifestyle. How we live will determine more and more how well and how long we live. Medical science will tame the diseases we used to fear, but only we can take personal responsibility for our own health and well-being. At the same time, however, rising health care costs have triggered massive changes in the way our health care is delivered to us.

In 1984 alone, more Americans lost their lives to cigarettes than died in all of World War II. Isn't it encouraging to know that when historians look back on the decade of the 1980s, they'll respect another kind of war—one whose mission was to enhance humanity's well-being, not to destroy it.

This new kind of war would be fought by volunteers of all races, by men and women, rich and poor, young and old. Collectively, they would grow into the largest army the world had ever known. The enemy would be the killer diseases of the 1980s. The only weapon would be lifestyle, and the victory would be measured one person at a time as millions upon millions of individuals began to take personal responsibility for their own well-being.

The battle would be fought on jogging trails and in swimming pools, in nutrition programs and smoking cessation clinics, in stress management seminars and in Weight Watchers and Alcoholics Anonymous. Victory would eliminate the number one cause of premature sickness and death because the main killers—heart disease, cancer, stroke, and accidents—are diseases of lifestyle.

Health promotion, behavior modification, lifestyle change, smoking cessation, personal responsibility, healthy lifestyles—these are today's buzz words. If they become tomorrow's arsenal, we will eliminate our greatest enemy. We will win our greatest victory.

William M. Kizer

*Omaha, Nebraska
September 1986*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My three co-founders of the Wellness Council of the Midlands (WELCOM), Robert Daugherty, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Valmont Industries; John Kenefick, chairman of the board of Union Pacific Railroad; and V. J. Skutt, chairman of the board of Mutual of Omaha, reacted quickly and positively in support of my vision of corporate wellness. But, even more, they gave of themselves during the early organizational stages, which included making public endorsements, hosting our kickoff luncheon for executives, and providing personal guidance. Without them, WELCOM would not have succeeded in Omaha.

Fred Schott, more than any other single person, bought into the concept and gave selflessly of his energy and talent. Fred served as the first president of WELCOM. An accomplished public speaker, Fred has written and published delightful and helpful books on family life. His many skills as a discussion leader, as well as his ability to conduct seminars and meetings, has been a major factor for WELCOM's success. Fred is a contributing author to this book.

WELCOM's first executive director, Karen Murphy, brought qualities of fun and enthusiasm to WELCOM's activities and was the spark plug of our young organization.

When Karen left to head the health promotion efforts for Southwestern Bell in St. Louis, Harold S. Kahler, Jr., became WELCOM's second executive director. Harold is a totally professional health promotion administrator and brought many new talents to WELCOM as it began its third year. The business plan for health promotion introduced in this book is Harold's special contribution.

The insurance industry has become a major source of horsepower

for the creation of community Wellness Councils. Jerry Miller, the former director of public relations for the Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA), has been a prolific writer and strategizer in support of the wellness movement. With Harold Kahler, Jerry was a key player in helping to bring a national conference dealing with corporate wellness to fruition.

The strategy for this landmark conference was orchestrated mainly by Cranston Lawton, former communications vice-president for Aetna. Cran has since retired from Aetna and is now a consultant to the HIAA, helping to form and guide new Wellness Councils. We thank Cran for reading early drafts and keeping our writing on track.

Kenneth Higdon, former president of Business Men's Assurance Co. of Kansas City, took early retirement and became a paid consultant to the HIAA. In this book, Ken tells us how he appeals to other insurance company presidents to become active in the Wellness Council movement.

Stan Karson, executive director of the Center for Corporate Public Involvement, a subsidiary of the health and life insurance industry, provided much assistance to Omaha's first effort, having convinced the White House of the merit of this community initiative and securing a letter of endorsement from President Reagan. No less a believer in the merits of Wellness Councils has been Jim Moorefield, president of the HIAA, who has repeatedly brought recommendations to his board of insurance company presidents and chairmen urging continued and expanded allocation of resources in support of wellness endeavors.

James Brennan, vice-president for Northwestern National Life, and currently serving as chairman of the HIAA's health education committee, has been a prime force for wellness at his own company and in his community, Minneapolis. Thanks also to John Creedon, president of Metropolitan Life, for continuing his company's pioneering efforts in wellness.

Omaha went public with its goal of becoming the wellness capital of the world in January 1982. The out-of-town expert who really sold the idea to the city's business leaders was Charles Berry, M.D., former chief medical director for the NASA space program. In promoting corporate wellness, Chuck drew on his experience of getting man to the moon and back to demonstrate the logic. This book recounts the salient points Chuck cited during Omaha's kickoff and the points he's still making as new Wellness Councils get started.

The most helpful person to me in convincing V. J. Skutt, chairman of Mutual of Omaha, to sponsor WELCOM was the former Surgeon General of the United States Air Force, Gen. Kenneth Pletcher. General Pletcher, a doctor and advocate of health promotion, validated my claims concerning the merits of a community-wide corporate wellness initiative.

Other physicians who sided strongly with me before corporate acceptance was established include Robert Murphy, a pediatrician; Jim Kelsey, medical director for Northwestern Bell; the present and former vice-presidents for the school of health sciences at Creighton University, Richard O'Brien and Robert Heaney; and Alastair Connell, former dean of the University of Nebraska Medical School and now vice-president of health sciences at the University of Virginia; Robert Eliot, author of a best-selling book on stress and director of preventative and rehabilitative cardiology at St. Luke's Hospital in Phoenix; and Calvin Fuhrmann, chief of the respiratory division at South Baltimore General Hospital. Health educators Dick Flynn and Kris Berg of the University of Nebraska's department of health, physical education, and recreation have provided technical advice to WELCOM before and since its inception.

Christina Montgomery of the Health Planning Council of the Midlands was the first person to broach to me the idea of forming a corporate venture to promote healthy lifestyles. She must have been very persuasive since my first reaction was one of skepticism.

It goes without saying that the original members of WELCOM's board have contributed in many ways to this book. Those people include Bob French and Elizabeth Burchard, who were members of WELCOM's original formation committee and even handled such nitty-gritty chores as writing articles and bylaws for WELCOM. Greg Jahn has served continuously and provided sound guidance to WELCOM since its incorporation, in his role as corporate secretary and attorney. Lou Bradley produced 12 public service announcements—which garnered \$237,000 of free air time during the first year they ran in Omaha. Frank McMullen, formerly an admiral in the United States Navy and now Omaha's full-time Chamber of Commerce president, invited WELCOM to set up office in the Chamber's handsome new quarters. Tom Whalen of Valmont Industries helped lead his company to a highly successful level of wellness activities, making Valmont a national model. Treasurer Kathy McCoy kept WELCOM solvent, and nurse Beth Furlong of Creighton University headed WELCOM's original liaison committee. Ed Pugsley headed WELCOM's employer assistance committee. Bob Murphy and Jim Kelsey have each headed WELCOM's medical advisory committee, ensuring that all WELCOM's activities were medically sound.

Michael Morrison, S.J., president of Creighton University, has supported WELCOM since its inception and has encouraged a variety of health promotion activities on Creighton's campus at the medical school and in various undergraduate curricula, not to mention wellness programs emerging for both faculty and students.

Throughout WELCOM's infancy, one man, an Omaha physician and marathoner, Eugene "Speedy" Zweiback, has provided the credibility

and energy a new organization like WELCOM needed. Today Speedy is WELCOM's chairman and spokesman and, in my judgment, Omaha's best example of a really "well" individual.

In the true spirit of coming together for a common goal, the WELCOM member companies supplied information about their programs for this book. With their overwhelming support and encouragement, I am able to share many good ideas for programs any company can do. The WELCOM members represent a cross-section of American business and industry, blue-collar and white-collar workers, men, women, clerical, union, and laborers, in other words, all sectors of the American work force.

Michael Fortune, a senior partner in the firm of Erickson and Sederstrom in Nebraska, provided the information dealing with the legal aspects of corporate wellness found in this book. Len Pacer helped us interpret the tax implications of wellness programs for corporations. Formerly with Touche Ross, Len joined my company as a vice-president. Thanks to them, the legal and tax sections of this book are the most complete and astute discussions of these topics to date.

The recommended reading section was assembled by librarians Karen Hackleman and Kelly Jennings. Karen was formerly librarian for the medical school at the University of Nebraska and is now located at the University of Maryland Health Sciences Library, where she is the consultation coordinator for the Southeastern/Atlantic Regional Medical Library Services. Kelly is the health information librarian for the Tulsa City-County Library System in Oklahoma. Special thanks go to Father Flanagan's Boys' Home for donating library services for the research of this book. Donna Richardson, head of Boys Town's search service, deserves recognition for her ability to find what we needed in the computer data bases.

Four health professionals and business colleagues served as critical readers, and for their expertise in helping us shape a useful tool for business leaders, I thank Richard Bellingham, president of Possibilities, Inc., a consulting firm in Basking Ridge, N.J.; Roger Heitbrink, a market researcher; William Baun, manager, health and fitness, Tenneco, Inc.; and Lynn F. Bardele, manager, personnel relations, Northwestern Mutual Life.

If Charlie had his angels, I certainly had mine—most notable being my secretary, Audrey Owens, who scheduled meetings, served breakfasts and lunches, and stocked the beverage bar for late afternoon meetings, not to mention acting as hostess at meetings, supervising mailings, managing my schedule, and even managing me when things got hectic. The other angels to whom I am indebted included Jean Hempel, Cleo Ellinger, Betsy Murphy, Kristin Edwards, Sally Lorenzen, Kathy Castilow, Lisa Headley, Sue Brookhouser, and my own daughter Lucy Kizer Smith. Within my company, I also want to single out a wise