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Wellness at Work – Top Seven Trends for 2017

Virtual Corporate Wellness Weighs in on the Top Trends Impacting Both Employers and Employees

January 4, 2017– Rises in healthcare and talent acquisition costs, workplace stress and high turnover rates are all red flags for businesses and employees. [Virtual Corporate Wellness](#) was founded to combat these troubling trends. A key way to do that is to recognize and understand the top trends impacting wellness in the workplace. With over 12 years in corporate marketing, Virtual Corporate Wellness founder Alison Brehme understands both the executive and employee aspect of corporate wellness. Below are the trends she recommends companies pay close attention to in 2017:

1. Wellness Programs as a Legit Business Strategy – The conversation needs to shift from wellness as being a “nice-to-have” program to a business necessity. A comprehensive corporate wellness program is a strategic response that can help lower healthcare and talent acquisition costs, avoid layoffs, improve employee engagement (especially with Millennials), retain top talent and much more. For every dollar spent on wellness the average is a 3-to-1 return on investment (ROI) for companies who implement a top to bottom strategy. When a program can help both the bottom line and the employees it’s a win-win and should be a no brainer.

2. Millennials, Gen Z and Cross-Generational Engagement – Millennials continue to impact the workforce and Generation Z joins the ranks for the first time in 2017. Engagement and inclusiveness continue to be important motivators in creating and maintaining Wellness programs that work. Mentorship programs and managerial styles that focus on coaching and personal growth will go a long way to retaining top talent from these generations. “Remember that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach and that particularly (although not exclusively) with younger generations, employees want to be appreciated, heard, and valued as if they are a part of something bigger. Capitalize on this desire for engagement and connectivity to get buy-in when launching a new wellness program or revamping a current one,” says Alison Brehme, founder of Virtual Corporate Wellness.

3. Remote Management and Outsourcing – Flex schedules, remote workers, and outsourcing will continue to be a driving force in the 2017 workplace. Keeping everyone involved and ensuring there are no communication silos is critical to creating a seamless working environment. Skype, GoToMeeting and other video conferencing services make this easier, as do Slack and messaging services. Staying connected and providing training for managers on how to handle remote employees is critical.

4. Work-Life Balance Myth in the Digital Age – Balance is an overused word and Brehme believes that work-life balance is more of a myth, although it is something we all try to attain. Technology continues to make employees “reachable” at any hour of the day and unplugging may feel almost impossible. Recognizing this and implementing ways to combat it will be an integral part of wellness programs for the workplace. It’s important to look at the unspoken expectations that might be placed within the organization. For example, are the only employees that are getting promoted ones that work at all hours of the day, night and on the weekends? If that’s the case employees may think that is what is expected to get that promotion so properly addressing this and having those in leadership positions create a healthy example is important.

5. Community Involvement and Employee Volunteering – Enhance team dynamics, increase engagement, and improve mental health with “Give Back” days that allow employees to volunteer and support local communities. Many companies already give 1-2 optional volunteer days, but few employees take advantage. Yet studies have shown just how impactful volunteering can be. In fact, a recent United Healthcare study found nearly 80% of people who volunteer say that it has made them feel healthier and lowered their stress levels. In addition, nearly 95% found their mood improved and their sense of purpose enriched. This is a trend that can

benefit both the organization (great PR) and the employees! This trend should continue to gain traction as companies start to realize the benefits and it can be a key way to differentiate your business among top talent.

6. Moving from Traditional Management to Coaching – Many individuals who get promoted to managers never go through training and end up alienating those that report to them. A Gallup poll study revealed that half of employees quit because of bad bosses. Clearly a greater emphasis on training and development is essential. It may seem odd that training and development is part of corporate wellness; however, having a holistic and comprehensive strategy is crucial. I highly recommend all managers (no matter their experience level) read the book, *The One Minute Manager* by Kenneth Blanchard Ph.D. and Spencer Johnson M.D. It's a great read, showing how to move from a delegation or traditional management style to more of a coach or mentor. If we want to engage employees and keep top talent, we need to evaluate how we are training future leaders.

7. Taking Customization to the Next Level by Using Technology – Customizing a strategy for each company is no longer a key differentiator across wellness companies; however, there is a way to take customization to the next level. New technology can help businesses reach their goals while at the same time engaging employees. This can make life easier and minimize a great deal of the guesswork. Virtual Corporate Wellness utilizes a customized HRA platform and recommends additional apps and tools depending on what the organization and its employees require. In addition, they are launching a DIY educational program that teaches businesses how to implement successful wellness programs that deliver employee engagement and a boost in profits.

Virtual Corporate Wellness continues to show its commitment to Wellness Programs that Work by offering a [complimentary strategy session](#) to companies who are ready and willing to take corporate wellness seriously. It's an opportunity for a business to walk away with an evaluation customized wellness strategy and game plan, making corporate stress a thing of the past and that's a 2017 trend every business can get behind.

ABOUT ALISON BREHME AND VIRTUAL CORPORATE WELLNESS

Alison Brehme is the founder and CEO of Virtual Corporate Wellness. Her company is dedicated to helping businesses invest in their team so they can maximize productivity, boost profits, and become known as one of the best places to work! Corporate Wellness is a business necessity that increases employee engagement, lowers healthcare costs, and create a stress-free culture where wellness is the center. With over 12 years in corporate marketing, Alison understands both the executive side and employee aspect of corporate wellness—making her perspective unique. In addition to managing her own company, she's the Program Director at *Well.org's Corporate Wellness Academy*, a certification program for those interested in workplace wellness. She's also a certified nutrition coach, certified corporate wellness consultant and has an advertising degree from the University of Texas.

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