Design for Workplace Wellness

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Purpose

Relevance

Important

Design

YMCA mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.
Seminar Goals

- Define the problem and the opportunities
- Understand wellness in the workplace.
- Link design elements to wellness
- Value to corporate office clients
Defining the Problem
Workforce Demographics

The Workforce in the US is shrinking.

Retiring Baby Boomers

Smaller Generation X
Workforce Demographics

- The Workforce is getting older.
- Employers encourage their older workers to remain in the workforce longer.
- Seniors will stay or return to the workforce to fill the employment gap.
Demographics

An inflow of international skilled workers will enter the US to fill knowledge based positions.
The workforce today is multigenerational and multicultural.
Comfort Needs

- Control over ventilation and temperature
- Need for privacy – voice and visual
- Quiet – Concentrate on work
- Social Interaction spaces
- Aromas/ Odors
Human Capital Management

Employers are realizing that their most important investment is their people.

Goldman Sachs 2003

The workforce drives operating performance and impacts financial results.

SSA Global 2004
Employers Concerns

- Retaining a skilled, trained workforce.
- Building employee loyalty.
- Demand for Productivity
- Costs of healthcare and health insurance.
Why is Workplace Wellness Important?

- Stress has become a world-wide epidemic.  
  
  World Health Organization

- 75 – 90% of visits to Primary Care Physicians are for stress related problems.  
  
  Am Journal Health Promotion
80% of workers feel stress on the job, nearly half say they need help learning to manage stress. *Gallup Poll 2000*

14% had felt like striking a co-worker in the past year, 25% have felt like screaming because of job stress, and 10% are concerned about an individual at work they feel could become violent. *Gallup Poll 2000*
The Cost of Healthcare and Healthcare Insurance

- Cost of healthcare insurance for employers in Colorado went up 14.3% in 2004.
  Annual Employer Health Benefits Survey 2004

- Healthcare coverage totals almost $4,000 pr. person/pr. yr.
  New England Journal of Medicine
National Safety Council estimates that 1 million employees are absent on an average workday because of stress related problems.

Workplace alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use costs US Companies over $1 Billion pr. yr.
And…..

- A healthier employee is happier at work, and happier when he/she goes home.
- Employees value their quality of life.
- Employees want to feel valued.
- Companies will encourage employees to make the choice to work longer.
What’s the bottom line impact?

- Reduce the number and the size of healthcare insurance claims.
- Increase Employee Retention and Loyalty
- Increase Employee job satisfaction
- Reduced Absenteeism
- Increased Productivity
What Does Wellness Mean?
Wellness Is...

- Body
- Mind
- Spirit
Six Dimensional Wellness Model

National Wellness Institute

Six Dimensional Wellness Model©

Developed by Dr. Bill Hettler, Cofounder and President of the Board of Directors of the National Wellness Institute, this interdependent model, commonly referred to as the 6 Dimensions of Wellness, provides the cursory categories from which NWI derives its products and services.
Physical

- Physical Fitness / Regular Exercise
- Healthy Diet and Nutrition
- Weight Control
- Self Care
Social

- Understanding our place in the larger universe of cultures, peoples, nature, and our living earth.
- Positive personal relationships with family and friends
- Effective interaction with co-workers, at social gatherings, and public places
Social

- Bonds with community, church, volunteer activities, service organizations.
Spiritual

- Living beyond ourselves for the good of others
- Seeking a deeper sense of purpose and meaning in life
- Developing personal beliefs, morals and values and using them to live by
Intellectual

- Pursuit and enjoyment in life-long learning
- Interest in self improvement by learning new skills, hobbies, or special interests.
- Enjoy thinking challenges, problem solving
- Flexible and adaptive to change
Emotional

- Feeling positive and enthusiastic about oneself and life
- Ability to cope with stress
- Taking responsibility for one’s own actions
Occupational

- Choosing work that brings personal satisfaction and rewards
- The ability to make a contribution using one’s talents and skills in a work setting
- Personal challenges, achievement, rewards and growth through work
Balance = Wellness

Wellness is really a balance of all six dimensions.
Making the link to Design
Designing For Wellness

Design components that affect Wellness

- Ventilation / Indoor Air Quality
- Lighting
- Acoustics
- Color
- Texture
Indoor Air Quality

- The amount of fresh air mix in the HVAC system.
- Increased ventilation rates and the mix of outdoor air have been attributed to a reduction in short term sick leave. Milton, Glencross 2000
- Increased ventilation rate has a positive effect on worker health and productivity. Wargocki, Wyon, Sundell 2000
Ventilation Solutions

- Fresh air ventilation
- Reduce humidity levels
- Monitor CO2 levels
- Increase the rate of ventilation
Lighting

- Well planned lighting increases visibility, visual comfort, improved morale and health, improved learning / productivity rates.

- The use of Daylighting enlivens spaces and has been shown to increase user satisfaction and visual comfort leading to improved performance.  
  
  Whole Building Design Guide  2003
New Lighting Research

Energy Savings vs. Human Needs
Lighting Research

Circadian Rhythm
UV Lighting

Benefits of Sun-Light
Lighting Solutions

- Maximize daylighting
- Reduce glare
- Provide variety, emphasis and contrast
- Provide for personal controls
Acoustics

- **Sound vs. Noise**
- More than 70% of workers believe noise is the most significant workplace distraction.
- Workers believe reducing distracting noise increases their productivity. *American Society of Interior Designers 1996*
The Way We Work

- Workstation Density
- Open Work Plan Areas
- Work Teams
- Technology and Equipment
Design considerations

- Ceilings
- Furniture
- Carpeted floors
- Sound Masking Systems
Design Elements

Ceilings - Acoustical

Armstrong Ceilings
Design Elements

Systems Furniture

- Panel height and covering
- Acoustical panels
- Tackboards
- Upholstery
Furniture

- Consider layout of workstations

Steelcase - Elective Elements
Carpeted Floors

- Carpet
- Wall Surfaces
- Window coverings
Adjust Workplace Protocols

- Limit tackable materials
- Speak into panels
- Equipment locations
- Locate traffic areas away
- Encourage work place etiquette
Sound Masking Systems

Background Sound that covers unwanted noise.
Color

- Aesthetic response to color
- Physiological response to color
Color

Human Perceptions

- Color can appear to change size of a space
- Can feel warm or cold
- Can stimulate or relax
- Clashing colors can irritate
Color

- Security
- Harmony/Soothing
- Peace
- Refresh
Color

Fashion or Sensitive
Texture

- Diverse textures applied in a space generates interest, touchability, warmth, and contrast.

- Textures found in nature or made from natural materials are beneficial.

  Examples: wood, stone, grasses, plant materials, leaves, bark, etc.
Texture

Nature as the example
Texture in Nature
Design Knowledge – Supporting Wellness

- Ergonomics
- Incorporation of Nature
- Universal Design Principles
- Green Design Principles
Ergonomics
And what about ....?

- Aroma
- Music
- Humor
- Art
- Pet Therapy
Music in the Workplace

Positive Music - stress reliever
Negative - Head phones
As a key aspect of human capital issues, design of the work environment can create a positive, supportive employer/employee culture.

Employees well-being affects their productivity, loyalty, attitudes, creativity and health.

Employees satisfaction with their work place contributes to retention and recruiting.
Selling to CEO

- Set Project Goals
- Establish a wellness team
  - Human Resources
  - CEO, or CFO
  - Marketing
  - Employee Representatives
Benchmarks

- Absenteeism
- Employee Satisfaction Survey
- Health Care Claims
- Employee Turnover Rate
Services

- Benchmarking Studies
- Establish and Facilitate Wellness Team
- Establish Project Wellness Goals
- Establish a Culture of Wellness
Services

- Train and Educate
- Conduct Focus Groups
- Conduct Measurement Process
- Prepare Measurement Comparisons
What’s missing

- Evidence based research studies linking design, and specific design elements to wellness and health.

- Quantitative research that measures improvement in areas such as absenteeism, employee turnover, employee satisfaction, and reduced health costs.
Questions?

- How will you apply today’s information to current and future projects?
- How has today’s information expanded your thinking when working with corporate clients?
- How are you going to apply today’s information to change your market?
Thank you!

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