



Workplace Health and Wellness Programme

At a time when over 60% of adult New Zealanders are overweight and at high risk of chronic disease, the more enlightened organisations are beginning to appreciate the benefits of getting directly involved in helping employees adopt healthy lifestyles. When employees are fit and healthy they are more energetic, creative, innovative and productive, all qualities that are essential to an organisation's competitive advantage. Preventing chronic disease essentially requires reducing tobacco intake, eating a healthier diet and exercising regularly. There are unfortunately no quick fixes and people must change their behaviour. While individuals have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that they do not suffer from the risk factors of chronic disease, they can be helped if they are given the right environment, tools and incentives.

Enrolment in a wellness programme however doesn't automatically change a person's behaviour. People have to be taught how to lead healthy lives and these lessons must be practiced, reinforced and rewarded. Furthermore the changes brought by wellness programmes will only last if they become part of the culture of the company. This is where the Team Mishfitness philosophy of proactively engaging with management and employees individually is a proven process for motivating people to participate and improve their lifestyle behaviours.

Team Mishfitness 'Health Is Wealth' Programme

In response to the demand for assistance in improving health and wellness in the workplace Mishfitness Limited has developed a workplace programme for corporate clients. Mishfitness personnel work directly with employees at their place of business working one on one and face to face. The benefits of being personally fit and healthy are widely known but there are also benefits to the employer from adopting a health and wellness programme and they include:

- A happier staff
- A more energetic, creative and productive workplace
- More effective recruitment
- Reduced staff turnover
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced employee stress levels (important because of the 2002 amendment to The Health and Safety in Employment Act)
- Fewer work related injuries
- Improved morale
- Improved decision making
- Improved customer care

Motivational Seminar

The 'Health is Wealth' workplace programme commences with a motivational and instructional seminar designed to encourage employees to take steps towards improving their health and wellness.

If requested, the seminar is followed at a later date by one on one meetings with those employees interested in participating in the ongoing programme. The one on one meetings are designed to:

- Determine health and exercise histories
- Agree realistic health and wellness goals
- Provide practical suggestions for increased daily activity levels (often with workmates, family, friends, neighbours etc)
- Provide realistic nutritional guidance based on existing food preferences
- Take basic measurements against which future progress can be determined



Ongoing Programme Features

The ongoing programme can feature any or all of the following:

- Fortnightly educational letters
- Weekly 1 hour group low impact choreographed walking and resistance exercise sessions both indoors and out
- Regular Team Mishfitness body transformation challenges and team events
- Participation in community events (eg Mishfitness 'Putting the Well in Wellington' free summertime waterfront exercise sessions, etc)
- Various Team Mishfitness seminars
- Regular personal motivational contact from Team Mishfitness personnel by email, text and telephone.
- Regular monitoring of personal progress (monthly to begin with but becoming less frequent over time)

It goes without saying that large doses of positive reinforcement and motivation along with heaps and heaps of fun are important features of the programme.



Optional Programme Elements

The following additional individual programme elements are also available as required:

- A company wide Health Risk Assessment (arranged through Life Clinic Limited)
- Monthly special activity sessions (eg boxing, aerobic tennis, kayaking, touch rugby, indoor rock climbing, spinning, pilates, yoga, massages, jogging etc).
- Monthly guest speakers for lunchtime meetings (eg nutritionist, physiotherapist, podiatrist etc)
- Periodic health fairs
- Flu vaccinations (arranged through Life Clinic Ltd)
- Annual health checks including prostate checks and mammograms (arranged through Life Clinic Ltd)
- Participation in fun runs, 5 km, 10 km and half marathon walks etc
- Establishment of workplace based JogMishfitness jogging and walking groups.





Motivation

Motivation has been identified as the component of any health and wellness programme having the most impact on keeping participants involved and on track. The building of trust and rapport with employees together with the motivational techniques used by Team Mishfitness give the 'Health is Wealth' programme a distinct competitive advantage.

Cost

The programme can be adapted to suit all budgets. Final pricing will be determined by the number of participating employees, workplace locations and employee wellness objectives. Once the scope of the project has been determined a price estimate will be provided. Regardless of budget and price, however, the objective of Mishfitness is always to provide its clients with the very best health and wellness outcomes.

Cost-Benefit

While little work on the cost-benefit of workplace health and wellness programmes has been done in New Zealand, anecdotal evidence suggests that successful programmes bring huge rewards in the form of a healthy, productive and vibrant workforce. Not all countries operate health systems totally similar to ours but Canadian and European studies confirm attractive financial returns for workplace programmes typically ranging from US\$2 to US\$4 per US\$1 invested.

Reporting

Written reports detailing the progress being made with the programme are submitted to client management on a quarterly (or as required) basis. The report covers such subjects as;

1. The numbers attending the various elements of the programme (eg seminars, one on one meetings, group exercise sessions etc)
2. The trends in changes to employee's physical measurements that are becoming evident (as a group).
3. Actual monthly and year to date costs compared with budget

Programme Evaluation

Regular evaluations of the programme are undertaken to monitor its success. Evaluations include tracking the level of illness absenteeism, programme participation statistics (number of people who have commenced exercising etc) changes in physical measurements as a group (weight and girth measurements, body composition, blood pressure, Body Mass Index etc) and changes to any other health markers considered appropriate (eg cholesterol and blood sugars etc). The evaluation also includes a survey covering "soft" issues such as improvements in staff morale and stress levels, productivity gains, programme satisfaction etc., elements which are important in determining the success of the programme.

Typical Results

Measurements recently recorded as part of the "Team Mishfitness™" programme adopted by an existing client demonstrate the following physical benefits accruing to participants after twelve weeks;

- 74% lost weight
- 93% reduced their waist circumference
- 53% reduced both their systolic and diastolic blood pressures
- 67% reduced their resting heart rate

Conclusion

The essential difference between the Team Mishfitness programme and others on offer is that Mishfitness visits the workplace on a regular basis to work one on one and face to face with employees to educate them on health and wellness, help them set realistic goals, get them exercising and eating better and to monitor their progress. Mishfitness seeks results for everyone whether they are currently active or inactive.

