Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards
and Best Practices Honors
2008

Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program
Creating a psychologically healthy workplace means more than just remediating problems. It’s about promoting good health, enhancing performance and creating a work environment where both employees and the organization can thrive. During this time of economic uncertainty – and always – the success of an organization requires it to focus increasingly on what works.

To recognize employers who understand the link between employee well-being and organizational performance and who engage their workforce in the types of practices necessary for success (see p. 24), I am pleased to present the American Psychological Association’s 2008 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award (PHWA) winners and Best Practices honorees.

The five PHWA winners described in this publication have implemented a comprehensive set of programs and policies designed to optimize outcomes for both employees and the organization. These organizations come from the pool of winners recognized by our affiliated state, provincial and territorial psychological associations and demonstrate that any type of organization, large or small, for-profit or not-for-profit, can create a psychologically healthy workplace.

The nine Best Practices honorees, also described in these pages, highlight a variety of ways that employers can effectively meet the unique needs of their organization and workforce.

We congratulate our winners and hope that their examples encourage others to focus on the positive and keep looking forward.

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The American Psychological Association’s

Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards are designed to recognize organizations for their efforts to foster employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance. The program has both state- and national-level components.

**APA’s National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award**

Nominees for the National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award are selected from the pool of previous state-level winners. Candidates are evaluated on their workplace practices in the following areas:

- Employee Involvement
- Health and Safety
- Employee Growth and Development
- Work-Life Balance
- Employee Recognition

Additional factors that are considered include employee attitudes and opinions, the role of communication in the organization and the benefits realized in terms of both employee health and well-being and organizational performance. Following a competitive evaluation and judging process, the top candidates are selected for national recognition by the American Psychological Association.

**APA’s Best Practices Honors**

The Best Practices Honors is a national recognition that focuses on a single program or policy that stands out for facilitating a psychologically healthy workplace. Special attention is given to workplace practices that are designed and implemented in a way that creatively meets the specific needs of an organization and its employees. As with the National Award, nominees come from the pool of previous state-level winners and are selected through a competitive evaluation and judging process.

**The State-Level Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award**

Since 1999, Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards have been presented to organizations by state, provincial and territorial psychological associations with support from the American Psychological Association. Participation in the state-level award program has grown to 51 associations across the U.S. and Canada that, collectively, have recognized more than 350 organizations.
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Employee Involvement
At Nike Tennessee, a variety of workplace practices keep employees engaged and actively participating. The results of a 2006 cultural assessment led to the development of employee response teams called ACT (Approaching Change Together), in which employees volunteer to evaluate workplace issues and recommend improvements. Among other projects, ACT teams updated an online forum where co-workers exchange compliments, concerns and ideas. Employees are encouraged to provide management with feedback by taking advantage of chat rooms or by attending one of many breakfasts with senior leaders. Additionally, Nike Tennessee’s open-door policy encourages effective communication, and employee networks promote diversity and provide support for underrepresented groups.

Health and Safety
With a cafeteria that features healthful menu options, an onsite fitness center staffed by a wellness coordinator, subsidized gym memberships and an annual health fair that offers free flu shots, Nike Tennessee makes employee health a priority. In addition to ongoing stress management and wellness programs, EAP services are available to employees both on and off site. Nike Tennessee offers dental and vision plans to employees as well as health insurance that includes mental health coverage. In terms of inclusivity, Nike Tennessee’s “Matter of Respect” policy goes above and beyond regulatory requirements to foster an environment that respects diversity and ensures a safe workplace where employees feel comfortable to be themselves.
Employee Growth and Development

There is no finish line when it comes to employee development at Nike Tennessee, where opportunities for personal and professional development abound. The company’s performance improvement team publishes a training and development syllabus to make employees aware of available opportunities. These include Brown Bag sessions on topics from “Spanish 101” to interviewing tips. In June 2007, Nike Tennessee held a training event at which all employees were challenged to practice leadership, mutual respect and communication during day-long experiential sessions with their co-workers. Employees enjoyed the opportunity to work on personal development as well as time to exercise their teamwork skills. The annual education fair is an ideal place for employees to learn about continuing their studies, while Nike Tennessee’s generous tuition reimbursement policy helps those who decide to rise to the challenge. An emphasis on promoting from within, stretch assignments that expand employee skill sets and a formal mentoring program also drive employee growth and development.

Work-Life Balance

With alternative work schedules, adoption assistance, scholarships and child-education saving accounts, Nike Tennessee shows its commitment to helping employees manage their life demands. Employees also have access to a variety of resources to help them with issues such as eldercare and childcare, parenting and personal finances. Nike Tennessee supports volunteerism and joins employees in giving back to the community. A matching gift program encourages employees to volunteer their time or donate money to charitable organizations, with the company matching employee contributions up to $5,000 per year. As members of the Nike Tennessee community, employees and their family members receive discounts on company products at all factory and outlet stores, and at the semiannual product giveaway event, employees even shop for free.

Employee Recognition

Nike Tennessee knows that when it comes to top performance, recognizing employees is key. A ten-week sabbatical awaits employees when they reach the decade employment mark and every five years thereafter. Performance-based bonuses and a formal recognition program reward employees based on their individual contributions, while profit sharing and an employee stock purchase plan promote teamwork and encourage employees to help the organization achieve its goals. During a meeting at the end of each year, Nike Tennessee recognizes achievements and highlights goals for the future. In addition to recognizing top performers, management acknowledges employees who demonstrate company values and go above and beyond expectations. With five-, ten-, twenty- and twenty-five-year service banquets, the company recognizes employees for their time and commitment. Nike Tennessee understands that in order for recognition to be effective, it must match the needs of employees and, as such, has developed a new peer-recognition program. The “WE CARE” program allows employees to express their appreciation for co-workers by sending thank-you notes and trinkets, and even posting pictures on a special recognition wall.

The Bottom Line

Healthy employees are productive employees. With nearly 80 percent of its workforce feeling that what they do is worthwhile, Nike Tennessee has created a work environment in which inspiration and innovation thrive. As a result, the company has a turnover rate of just over 12 percent and 87 percent of employees say that being a team player is important to company performance. In 2007, Nike Tennessee increased productivity by 51 percent while reducing injury rates by almost 30 percent. By taking care of its teammates, Nike Tennessee is setting the pace for the industry and leaving the competition behind.
Health and Safety

Illinois – At Trinity Services, the mission of helping people with disabilities “live full and abundant lives” extends to employees. The “Safety Incentive Frog” program, named after Trinity’s amphibian mascot, exemplifies the organization’s community approach to maintaining a safe and rewarding work environment. The program draws on behavioral theory and industrial-organizational models of safety assurance, providing employees with incentives for every week that their department is accident-free.

The Safety Incentive Frog initiative, a collaboration between employees and management, was developed by the organization’s safety and wellness committees with the goal of reducing accidents and injuries. Each week, the safety committee informs departments of their eligibility, based on accident reports and hospital visits, and the department’s team leader distributes pull-tab lottery cards to each staff member. Each pull-tab contains one of eight different numbers from 10 to 1,000. Employees redeem accumulated points for items in a catalog or from a variety of Trinity-run businesses. Available merchandise includes books and gifts, bath and spa products, custom-designed apparel, gourmet pet food and a special line of non-toxic cleaning products.

The organization-wide safety program has reduced workers’ compensation claims, decreased injuries and increased employee morale. Job satisfaction surveys for front-line workers reveal that employees feel supported, safe and able to meet the demands of their jobs. Another benefit of Trinity’s investment in health and safety is reduced absenteeism and a turnover rate far below industry average. In a human services organization, where quality depends on interpersonal relationships and staffing consistency, the implications are far more than financial.

Trinity emphasizes that every interaction is meaningful and encourages strong relationships between staff, management and clients. The Safety Incentive Frog program furthers the wellness of employees and the entire organization by reducing accidents and injuries while simultaneously increasing the visibility of Trinity’s supporting businesses, raising team spirit among staff, and improving service quality – demonstrating that when it comes to safety, every effort really counts.

Benefits of Trinity’s investment in health and safety include reduced absenteeism and low turnover.

2008 Best Practices Honoree

Trinity Services

Cashing In on Safety
Work-Life Balance

Maryland – While some companies tout their telecommuting benefits, few have half their team members actually take them up on it. At Ascend One, a financial services company, 50 percent of contact center employees work from home, a practice that benefits employees, customers and the organization.

What began as a small pilot program has expanded to include 200 employees. Ascend One’s telecommuting practice has been a major driver in the company’s expansion, giving it the ability to tap into new job markets across the country and build a broad, geographically distributed network of financial fitness coaches operating 24/7.

Telecommuting employees are given the equipment and support they need. A dedicated training team makes sure that they are comfortable operating the equipment and also helps managers overcome the challenges of managing a virtual workforce. A technology team coordinates telecommunications and computer systems. A team from human resources is available to give personal support and help employees learn to keep work from spilling over into their personal lives.

A discussion board on the company intranet, daily email bulletins and two weekly newsletters keep remote employees in touch with what’s going on at the office. Routine feedback surveys, in-person and Web-based meetings and one-on-one sessions between employees and managers facilitate communication and keep the workforce engaged.

Employees provide positive reviews of Ascend One’s telecommuting program, citing greater job satisfaction and improved work-life balance as major pluses. By working from the comfort of home, employees eliminate the stress of rush-hour commutes, the expense of gasoline and the added cost of eating out for lunch. Virtual team members can spend more time with their families, exercise on their own schedule and report feeling healthier. Flexibility also helps Ascend One retain top talent. If an Ascend One employee wants or needs to relocate – for example, if a spouse is transferred – the flexibility of telecommuting minimizes conflict for the employee’s family and saves the company the expense of recruiting and training a replacement.

Since implementing the telecommuting program, Ascend One’s retention rates have dramatically improved, productivity has increased, and the company is able to control expenses by not having to maintain a large facility. The virtual team provides customers with convenient access to quality financial services across time zones, creates work schedules that complement employee lifestyles and produces a loyal, productive workforce. Now, that’s flexibility that works.
Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples de Puerto Rico

Pulling Together to Ensure Success

Puerto Rico – As a non-profit insurance company, Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples de Puerto Rico (CSM) makes every effort to provide an extraordinary work environment that promotes the personal, professional and financial well-being of employees, as well as the social and cultural growth of Puerto Rico. For 45 years, CSM’s focus on human dignity has remained a valued source of direction.

Employee Involvement

CSM values the input of its workforce and welcomes employee-generated ideas for new business practices. Through focus groups, committees, an open-door policy, employee suggestion forums and meetings with top management, CSM listens to employees and acts on what they have to say. Special committees are established to work on project development, while a standing committee analyzes and implements employee ideas for continuous improvement. During monthly meetings with the president or executive vice-president, employees discuss programs and policies, make suggestions and are recognized for their contributions. As part of an annual satisfaction survey, employees have the opportunity to evaluate their manager’s performance in the areas of communication, leadership, conflict management and innovation.

Health and Safety

At CSM, healthcare programs are designed to ensure that the needs of employees and their families are met. The organization’s health and wellness program, “Programa de Eficiencia Física,” has been in place for more than 20 years, promoting employee well-being through exercise, recreational activities, workshops, health fairs and informational resources. While managers and supervisors are trained in health and safety regulations and OSHA requirements, the general services department provides information about safety topics such as handling emergency situations and preventing work-related injuries. Each May, CSM celebrates health awareness and brings in various health professionals to teach employees about the benefits of eating a healthful diet and how to prevent backaches, monitor their blood pressure and glucose levels and avoid workplace accidents. An employee assistance program is also available to help employees address psychological, financial and legal concerns.

The Employee Club organizes activities, including Father’s and Mother’s Day events, talent shows, health fairs, community fundraisers and an annual Family Day summer picnic.
Employee Growth and Development

CSM's growth and development team, “Academia Interna,” housed within the human resources department, identifies and coordinates employee seminars, conferences and educational activities that focus on both individual and department needs. CSM helps employees advance their education through a tuition reimbursement program that covers 50 percent of the cost for bachelor’s or master’s degree credits. Committed to the professional growth of its employees, CSM provides specialized training for supervisors, managers and those in technical positions. Additionally, a one-year leadership development course called “Vida Vertical” was designed to teach employees how to apply concepts such as integrity, communication, leadership and ethics to their daily work, and the organization actively engages in succession planning to ensure continued business success.

Work-Life Balance

Throughout the year, the Employee Club organizes activities, including Father’s Day and Mother’s Day events, talent shows, health fairs, community fundraisers and an annual Family Day summer picnic. CSM promotes cultural and athletic activities for employees and their children with access to onsite and nearby fitness facilities. CSM also owns and maintains the most complete collection of Puerto Rican contemporary art on the island, which is on public exhibit in the main office. During the summer months, CSM runs a camp for employees’ children at which they learn about the company culture and values while having fun. Employees’ children also have the opportunity to obtain work experience through summer jobs at CSM, and scholarships are available to help them pursue a college education.

Employee Recognition

Individual and collective recognition occurs regularly at CSM with announcements made through company publications and posted on the intranet. As part of monthly meetings with the organization's leaders, employees are recognized for personal milestones and years of service. The company’s “Calidad Presidencial” award highlights offices and departments that meet annual goals, and employees receive performance-based bonuses and merit raises. CSM encourages innovation by rewarding employees who suggest new ideas or implement projects that help the company reach its goals. In 2007, CSM established a new program that rewards employees for referring new customers.

The Bottom Line

Employees at CSM report high levels of satisfaction with the company’s work-life balance practices, physical work environment, benefits and opportunities for learning and development, all factors that attained favorable scores of 95 percent or higher on employee opinion surveys. With workplace practices tied closely to company values, CSM is the only organization selected as one of the 20 Best Employers in Puerto Rico for six consecutive years. Employee loyalty is high at CSM, where the average length of service is 15 years and the turnover rate is less than two percent per year. A growing customer base and solid financial performance speak to the value of CSM's culture of mutual cooperation and respect.
Health and Safety

Washington – Helping employees and communities thrive is key to the success of Burgerville, a restaurant chain owned by The Holland, Inc. When other companies were cutting back on healthcare for employees, Burgerville recognized the importance of happy, healthy employees and served up a healthcare plan unmatched by food service chains of its size.

After an employee survey revealed affordable healthcare coverage was the number-one concern among workers, Burgerville made a business decision that would have a far-reaching impact on its employees and the communities they serve. In 2006, the company unveiled a healthcare plan for hourly workers. Employees who have been with Burgerville for more than six months and work an average of at least 20 hours per week are eligible for the coverage. What makes the benefit unique is that Burgerville pays 95 percent of the healthcare premiums for employees and 90 percent of the cost for their dependents.

Burgerville’s eco- and family-friendly practices have helped employees manage work-life issues, take on more responsibilities, engage in environmentally sound practices and help the community. With the security of healthcare coverage, Burgerville employees enjoy peace of mind knowing they can take care of themselves and their families, which further strengthens their commitment to the organization and its values.

Grounded in its mission to “serve with love,” Burgerville quickly saw results after implementing its employee healthcare plan. The experience and efficiency of longer-tenured employees has raised standards, including speed of service, quality of food and overall customer satisfaction. Productivity has increased, sales are up and profitability is at an all-time high. A reduction in turnover has saved Burgerville more than $500,000, and the company attributes $2.7 million of its sales increase to its employees healthcare program. Additionally, turnover rates for hourly employees dropped from 130 percent to 54 percent in one year, while management turnover decreased by 18 percent.

In an industry that typically has high turnover rates, Burgerville has figured out that caring for employees’ health more than pays off. The savings in hiring and training costs and improved attendance alone are enough to recoup the costs of the healthcare plan. Even more important, Burgerville has been able to stick to its mission and stand by its employees.
Increased professionalism and improved communication skills help Dayton Marriott employees better meet the needs of guests.

Employee Growth and Development

Ohio – At the Dayton Marriott, employees have the opportunity to learn more than just job skills. In 2002, the hotel established an onsite adult learning program to promote continuing education for the hotel’s hourly workers. The Alliance for Work-Based Education, created in partnership with the Sisters of Notre Dame, is one more way the Dayton Marriott lives by the company ideals of service to employees, customers and community.

When the hotel management team began a series of programs aimed at creating an environment that supports job advancement and personal development, it found that factors such as transportation, multiple jobs and family responsibilities often prevented employees from pursuing additional education. To address these barriers, the Dayton Marriott decided to bring education to the workplace.

The hotel transformed a conference room into a tutoring center where employees can receive two hours of tutoring a week within their regular work schedule at no personal cost. Employees who participate are even paid their wage for one of the two hours. The curriculum features mathematics, adult literacy, GED preparation, English as a Second Language, basic computing and life skills classes. Progress is tracked quarterly, and the hotel recognizes and celebrates employee achievements. Two employees have earned their GED certificates and gone on to enroll in college classes. The education program helps contribute to high morale and job satisfaction at the Dayton Marriott as employees develop skills and earn credentials that increase opportunities for advancement and open new career possibilities.

The benefits aren’t limited to participants. Improvements in employee retention have led to a 75 percent reduction in voluntary turnover, and a 2006 employee survey found engagement scores for employees in housekeeping and laundry to be a high 84.5 percent. Increased professionalism and improved communication skills help employees better meet the needs of guests and a stable, well-educated workforce has long-lasting benefits for the community. By putting people first and taking care of its employees, the Dayton Marriott is one employer that has earned top marks.
Employee Involvement

When it comes to keeping employees involved, WSCU uses opinion surveys to collect employees’ thoughts and turn information into action (see “A Survey that Gets Results,” p. 14). Employee participation on committees is important at WSCU, with 29 committees and more than 250 participants in 2006. WSCU encourages employees to lead team meetings and to be comfortable discussing key issues. During closed-door luncheons, WSCU’s CEO opens the dialogue and encourages employees to “fire away” with questions. At performance review time, self-reflection is a must, as 40 percent of employees write their own reviews. At WSCU, involvement can also mean that employees are the face of the organization – literally. A number of employees served as ambassadors in a company-wide recruitment effort and had their photographs and personal stories displayed in company ads. They and others also shared their stories at career fairs.

Health and Safety

WSCU makes employee health and safety a priority by specifically citing it in the company’s mission statement and posting a comprehensive healthy workplace policy on the intranet. An employee-led wellness committee plans and budgets a full calendar of health-related events. Employees are reimbursed for gym memberships and weight-loss programs, and they circulate health magazines, cookbooks and wellness tips. WSCU conducts periodic health screening clinics where employees can check their cholesterol, weight and blood pressure and receive individual health consultations. Based on aggregate data collected from the health screenings, WSCU holds workshops and circulates articles on identified health priorities. Safety is of the utmost importance to WSCU with security officers at every branch. In preparation for an emergency, new frontline employees receive a full day of security training, and employees complete an annual security quiz. The company also funds first aid training, providing it to employees during regular work hours.
Employee Growth and Development
WSCU recognizes career progression as a key component of employee retention and offers a variety of training and development programs that are posted on the intranet. Career enrichment classes offered in the evenings give employees the opportunity to explore career options, discover interests and polish their résumé-writing skills. WSCU reimburses employees for external career-related courses and workshops and also offers a series of programs on leadership development. Through shadowing and cross-training experiences, employees are exposed to other departments and roles within the organization. Additionally, managers regularly conduct “stay interviews” to assess the needs of individual employees and learn what keeps them at WSCU.

Work-Life Balance
A growing number of employees at WSCU take advantage of alternative work schedules that fit their personal lives; these include job sharing, shifted schedules and four-day work weeks. Employees can count on WSCU for assistance with finding childcare or eldercare, and for informational materials on stress, nutrition and disease management. WSCU also recognizes that older employees are a valuable source of organizational knowledge and encourages those who are interested to work past the age of 65. Five staff “Community Involvement Teams” plan fundraisers, identify charities to support and donate countless hours to raising money for local causes. In 2006, WSCU gave nearly half a million dollars back to the community.

Employee Recognition
Whether reaching a corporate milestone, opening a new branch or meeting campaign targets, WSCU offers a variety of creative ways to thank employees. Recognition efforts range from posting stories and photos of employees on the intranet to sending fruit and chocolate trays and treating employees to stress-busting massages. Through the company’s leadership development program, managers receive tools to promote individual recognition with non-monetary rewards such as an early end to the work day, trophies or the chance to take on additional responsibilities. Meanwhile, the “Key Player” award, introduced in 2007, provides all employees with the opportunity to spot and recognize exceptional service with cards and tokens of appreciation. WSCU uses the results of its performance management program for employee recognition, advancement, merit increases and corporate bonuses.

The Bottom Line
Employees know that WSCU is attentive to their needs. As a result, they often seek opportunities within the organization rather than elsewhere. WSCU’s low turnover rate, less than nine percent in 2006, led to top ranking in a national credit union benchmark consortium. In 2007, 79 percent of openings at WSCU were filled internally, lowering administrative costs, ensuring seamless service and filling positions in less than half the time typically required for external replacements. Some 34 promotions in the past two and a half years are a direct result of WSCU’s formal employee development programs.

With 73 percent of employees participating in at least one company event or program each year and an 82 percent job satisfaction rating, WSCU has made its mark as an employer of choice. In fact, in 2006 the credit union received an average of more than 40 applications for every external job posting. By developing workers to their fullest potential and treating them with honesty and respect, the credit union demonstrates that being a WSCU employee is not just about working but also about belonging.
Employee Involvement

British Columbia – In 2005, Westminster Savings Credit Union (WSCU) revamped its existing employee opinion survey to include a comprehensive process that engages the entire organization in its commitment to improve. Employees help develop and implement the survey, interpret the results and identify target areas for change.

Each November a survey committee is consulted to ensure employee input and participation. Focus groups enable employees and management to identify key work issues to incorporate into the survey. Peer liaisons from all branches and departments serve as ambassadors who facilitate two-way communication with their respective work groups.

Employees complete the anonymous online survey and can read and discuss the published survey results during work hours. WSCU provides a breakdown of results by department to facilitate the development of targeted action plans, a collaborative effort between employees, management and HR representatives. As these plans come together based on employee input from the survey, WSCU employees see their own priorities shape those of the organization.

For example, when WSCU employees cited communication, compensation and benefits, career development, and feedback and recognition as their top concerns, the organization responded by increasing employee contact with senior management through an executive blog and office visits, updating and publicizing job evaluation processes and developing new career-enrichment and peer-recognition programs. At the department level, individual managers implemented a variety of approaches to coaching, recognition and communication.

The enhanced survey process has ensured that WSCU stays focused on critical areas that can be prioritized and addressed immediately. A survey response rate of more than 85 percent has produced meaningful data for the organization to use. The 2006 employee survey produced favorable scores of 82 percent for job satisfaction, 85 percent for organizational image, 80 percent for work environment and 80 percent for supervision. Fully 91 percent of employees agreed they are proud to work for WSCU, while 82 percent affirmed their commitment to the organization as more than just a place to work. Through ongoing efforts to improve the organization, WSCU has found that listening to, acting on feedback from and maintaining its commitment to employees is well worth the investment.
Employee Recognition

*Minnesota* – As the largest rehabilitation hospital in the region, **Bethesda Hospital** is dedicated to reinventing the lives of the people it serves and recognizes the effect employees have on patient experience. Bethesda’s focus on employee recognition led to an incentive program called “Bethesda Recognizes and Values Our Employees” or “BRAVOe.” The program uses gift cards to recognize accomplishments such as providing exceptional service, supporting hospital programs and fostering teamwork.

Through the BRAVOe program, introduced in 2006, employees receive gift certificates punctuating each year of service for their first nine years. Employees who work at least 104 hours per quarter earn a $25 gift certificate to the onsite Gallery Café. Bethesda staff are encouraged to acknowledge their co-workers’ contributions by sending eye-catching “Thank-You Grams.” The names of both sender and recipient are entered into weekly and monthly raffles for gift cards to retail and grocery store chains.

To promote teamwork, group recognition is integrated into the BRAVOe program. Nominated by peers, customers, supervisors or even themselves, teams are rewarded for partnering with other departments and consistently demonstrating the hospital’s core values. Winners are recognized in the employee newsletter, a team photo is displayed on an award board outside the cafeteria, the team is treated to a catered lunch and each team member is rewarded with a gift card. An average of 140 employees give or receive gift cards each month.

The anticipation and celebration surrounding the announcement of winners promotes camaraderie, and Bethesda notes high morale and motivation among its staff. In 2007, employee engagement levels increased, and turnover rates dropped below nine percent. Beyond the financial incentives they receive, employees feel valued and know their contributions are appreciated.

The BRAVOe program has helped improve hospital outcomes as well, with Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores above 75 percent and net revenues for the hospital increasing 60 percent since 2001. The BRAVOe program has improved the experience for both patients and staff at Bethesda Hospital – and that deserves recognition.
Arkansas Educational Television Network

Sending a Strong Signal to Employees

Arkansas – Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) produces public television programming designed to inform, educate, entertain, enlighten and inspire. Dedicated to promoting life-long learning and improving the lives of all Arkansas citizens, AETN counts its employees and their families among those it serves.

Employee Involvement

AETN encourages its employees to test new ideas, express opinions and participate in advancing the organization’s mission. Nearly every project and endeavor is approached as a team (see “Tuning In to Teamwork,” p. 18). Monthly all-staff meetings serve as a forum in which employees can ask questions and discuss what’s going on within the organization. The network’s “Family Day” is a popular open-house event where the public is invited to join AETN at its studios for a day of games, tours, stories and food. Even when life isn’t all fun and games, AETN is there for the benefit of the public. In December 2005, the network hosted a telethon to support Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, with employees and members of the community rallying together to raise more than $43,000. Employees even threw a “housewarming” party for one Katrina evacuee who was hired as AETN’s full-time receptionist.

Health and Safety

Employees at AETN are given access to free Web-based programs to help them reach their weight, exercise and nutritional goals. As part of AETN’s employee assistance program, employees have 24/7 access to resources for dealing with stress, family and co-worker conflict and anger management, as well as financial issues and other concerns. Smoking-cessation support awaits employees ready to kick the habit and includes three individual sessions or unlimited group sessions with no co-pay, pharmacotherapy, nicotine replacement options and a customized Web site with interactive services and user forums for 24-hour support. A newsletter containing helpful health tips is distributed along with employee paychecks to ensure that better health is always within reach.

AETN’s quality management team created “Kudo Bucks,” which employees can give to co-workers at their discretion to recognize a job well done.
Employee Growth and Development

AETN's environment encourages professional creativity and growth. Orientation sessions provide new employees with training plans and detailed background information about AETN’s mission and values. All new employees are assigned a mentor to help them develop skills and competencies and learn how to successfully navigate the organization’s culture. AETN offers workshops that cover communication, management, government guidelines, computer software and technical skills. Employees have access to a Web portal that provides professional development training to teachers throughout the state on various software, Web and production techniques. AETN also encourages employees to continue their education by reimbursing tuition costs for job-related courses.

Work-Life Balance

Committed to its “Family First” philosophy, AETN offers flex-time, job sharing, compressed work week and telecommuting options that give employees flexibility to balance their work and personal lives. The network allows employees to bring their children to work on school breaks and encourages participation in activities such as video production, “Kids’ Technology Camp” and student art competitions. Other AETN-sponsored events, such as academic competitions, musical performances, on-air pledge campaigns, political debates, informational call-in programs and atrium receptions and exhibits keep employees and their families engaged and entertained.

Employee Recognition

At its annual employee awards banquet, AETN recognizes outstanding group and individual efforts. Employees vote on award recipients, and each division is encouraged to recognize a project, person or team. The peer-selected “Employee of the Year” is nominated for the Arkansas State Employee Association’s “Outstanding State Employee of the Year Award.” The network's quality management team created “Kudo Bucks” to recognize outstanding customer service. Through this program, employees receive a supply of blank Kudo Bucks that they fill in and give to co-workers at their discretion to recognize a job well done. At “KudoMarts” employees redeem their accumulated bucks for items that have been donated to the AETN Foundation.

The Bottom Line

With opportunities for self-expression, involvement and fun, AETN employees share a sense of ownership and take pride in their work. Family-friendly policies encourage employees to stay with the network, with many spending their entire careers at AETN. The average employee tenure exceeds 10 years, and almost half of employees have served between 10 and 35 years. If an employee’s health falters, he or she can feel confident knowing that co-workers have got it covered. In 2006, employees donated 2,038 hours of unused leave time, worth $44,583, to a catastrophic leave program for employees experiencing health crises.

While the network saves money on hiring and training new staff and benefits from the institutional knowledge and continuity of long-timers, employees are motivated to try new ideas and work hard to implement them. In 2006, AETN employees produced more than 500 hours of local programs, broadcast more than 8,700 hours, installed a new digital transmitter in southeast Arkansas and maintained state-wide infrastructures – accomplishments made possible by channeling their efforts and working together as a team.
Employee Involvement

Arkansas – For more than ten years, the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) has used planning and improvement teams to accomplish goals. This team approach has been so successful that it is now ingrained in the organizational culture. Employees at AETN budget together, plan together and even celebrate together.

The network’s team approach began in the early 1990s with then-Governor Bill Clinton’s quality management program; AETN was one of the first state agencies to participate. Over time, natural work groups began to incorporate the quality management approach, building consensus and measuring results. Team-based problem solving soon spread throughout the organization, and now teams composed of employees from various departments and levels work together to solve problems, tackle transitions, build camaraderie and help drive large-scale organizational changes. Once a need is identified, employees volunteer or are appointed to a team. These self-directed groups then begin a process of brainstorming, organizing, researching and testing that produces thoughtful recommendations for workable change.

Some of AETN’s team-based successes include the establishment of a hiring process based on team interviews and recommendations, a long-term strategic plan formulated by teams and a party team that brings an atmosphere of fun and celebration to the organization. Teams are currently addressing issues such as branding, employee surveys, funding requests and coordination of the organization’s fortieth anniversary activities.

Participating in AETN’s mission of continued learning and contributing to important projects with their co-workers leaves employees with a sense of pride and ownership.

AETN’s team-based approach has produced some remarkable results. For example, the digital transition team helped the organization make statewide technology changes while coming in $3.5 million under budget. High levels of satisfaction also demonstrate that employees thrive in a work environment where a team of co-workers is always by their side. By making teamwork a part of the culture, AETN communicates loud and clear that it is one organization where learning never ends.
APU’s wellness program keeps employees active and loving it, which in turn helps the university stay competitive.

Health and Safety

**Alaska** – Every other Friday at 3 p.m., employees at **Alaska Pacific University** (APU) set aside their work and leave the office to participate in a program called “Fridays Out and About.” Activities including yoga, cross-country skiing and volleyball take place outside, getting faculty and staff active, while taking full advantage of APU’s recreational facilities and Alaska’s stunning terrain.

Responding to the extra demands and stressors placed on employees during an accreditation cycle, APU President Dr. Douglas M. North spearheaded “Fridays Out and About” to improve employee morale and health, especially during the cold winter months. Employees benefit from the physical activity and have the added incentive of ending their work day early if they participate.

An Employee Wellness Committee coordinates the program and organizes events and activities to support the physical and emotional well-being of employees. Informal surveys help the wellness committee stay attuned to employee needs and interests, provide feedback about the program and keep employees engaged. The committee sends regular email notifications so employees know whether to plan on meditative yoga or an action packed hour of cross-country skiing with their colleagues.

Employees report a higher awareness of wellness issues, strengthened sense of community, improved morale and increased motivation. Other benefits include weight loss and the satisfaction of reaching personal goals. The program serves as an outreach tool that encourages healthy lifestyles for everyone, even those who are not particularly athletic. The interactions among departments have led to improved communication, a better understanding of colleagues’ roles and more effective collaboration.

Media coverage of the successful program has helped the university stand out, strengthened APU’s reputation and attracted students and job applicants. As a small, nonprofit, private university, APU works creatively within its organizational and financial constraints. To support “Fridays Out and About,” the university builds on its strengths – beautiful surroundings, existing campus sports and recreation facilities and a motivated and talented staff.

Fitting with APU’s laid-back culture and mission of active learning, the wellness program keeps employees active and loving it, which in turn helps the university stay competitive. After all, what could be more invigorating than being nose-to-nose with your colleagues in a downhill sled race and then heading home to start your weekend early?
2008 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Winner
Small For-Profit Category

Porter Keadle Moore, LLP

Taking People into Account

Georgia – Atlanta-based accounting and consulting firm, Porter Keadle Moore, LLP (PKM) prides itself on standard-setting service with a personal touch. Shattering industry stereotypes by building a culture of flexibility and communication, PKM creates an enjoyable work environment that reinvents the accounting firm experience for both clients and employees.

Employee Involvement
PKM keeps employees actively involved in improving the business. Through “INNOFIX,” a program that encourages ideas and innovation to flow in all directions, employees identify and solve business issues using fun, game-like competitions that develop individual problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. PKM trains employees to seek, receive and use formal and informal feedback as part of the daily work environment. Launched in August 2006, the continuous feedback initiative began with training programs that taught staff and management how to give and receive feedback. The initiative was developed in direct response to a 2005 employee survey that revealed employees wanted more timely and relevant feedback on their performance. Employees are also actively involved in job candidate interviews and screening. This practice ensures they are comfortable with hiring decisions, an essential component of PKM’s task-based teamwork approach to client service. Additionally, regular lunches with small groups of employees allow the COO and Managing Partner to share news and solicit feedback, while PKM’s open-door policy keeps leaders easily accessible.

Health and Safety
Healthcare benefits at PKM take effect on an employee’s first day of work and include mental health coverage, EAP services and wellness programs. The firm even takes a healthy approach to its annual group insurance renewal process. In 2007, employees served on a task force where they learned about vendor and benefits selection as well as how appropriate use of benefits can positively affect the organization. PKM offers educational seminars on a variety of health issues and helps create a healthy work environment with weekly delivery of organic fruit to the office. PKM promotes healthy lifestyles by encouraging physical activity through sponsored corporate running and tennis teams, flag football and basketball.
Employee Growth and Development

Continuing education is a fact of life for employees who must maintain professional certifications. PKM goes beyond requirements by hosting internal classes that focus on unique client issues and challenges. Employees also attend external courses at which they can interact with staff from other accounting firms. Viewing learning as an ongoing process that continues through formal and on-the-job training, PKM developed a career track planning guide that outlines the technical and personal leadership expectations of all employees. From intern to partner, employees know what skills are needed to progress to the next level. While small groups of individuals at different career stages, called “Accountability Teams,” serve as a mechanism for personal and professional support, PKM’s “Book and Breakfast” program addresses topics such as teamwork, leadership and time management. Leadership training and meetings with a corporate psychologist are available, and high-potential employees participate in professional development courses offered through the national CPA firm association. Educational incentives also support employees seeking certifications and other professional designations, with paid time to study, reimbursement of approved review materials, exam fee reimbursement and monetary bonuses for passing exams.

Work-Life Balance

PKM encourages work-life balance by recognizing an employee’s productivity rather than hours worked. The firm also strives to maintain and improve the well-being of associates and their families by promoting autonomy and flexibility. Employees’ scheduling needs are met with uniquely tailored solutions such as flexible scheduling, part-time employment and work-from-home options for parents of school-aged children, employees caring for aging parents and those with other special circumstances. To support employees who work remotely, PKM provides home-office technology solutions. The firm helps employees prepare for the stress of the busy season by closing its office during the last week of December. During the summer, PKM also closes two hours early on Fridays so employees can jump-start their weekends. The firm supports a variety of charitable organizations and promotes a culture of good citizenship by encouraging volunteer activities, even matching employee contributions to university accounting programs.

Employee Recognition

Employee anniversaries of 10, 15 and 20 years of service are rewarded with firm-wide recognition and individualized gifts. PKM also organizes social activities that strengthen bonds among co-workers, including after-work social gatherings, sporting events and spa retreats. Adding levity to the busy season, competitions and games provide weekly rewards and recognition, while exceptional achievements are highlighted in an employee newsletter.

The Bottom Line

PKM’s unique culture produces high levels of employee and client satisfaction. Relying on employee-driven feedback, the firm focuses on performance improvement, and employees are seen as valued team members. Employees at PKM are aligned with the firm’s mission, with 100 percent agreeing that client satisfaction is the top priority and 97 percent reporting that they are proud to work for the firm. Additionally, 94 percent say they would recommend the firm to a friend as a good place to work.

With a 2007 turnover rate of just 11 percent, PKM boosts efficiency and productivity by maintaining staff continuity and helping its workforce meet client needs. PKM’s client satisfaction surveys consistently return positive feedback and identify the people, service quality and technical expertise as the things clients like most about the firm. Ninety-eight percent of clients say they would recommend PKM services to others and 100 percent say that PKM understands their business and industry. By supporting and listening to their employees and clients, PKM’s numbers show that it’s the people who really make the difference.
Hope Community Resources

Caring for Caregivers

Health and Safety

Alaska — Hope Community Resources is the largest statewide provider of services to individuals with disabilities. Each month for the past five years, Hope has offered employees free, half-day emotional wellness seminars conducted by a staff psychologist. Employees are invited to participate in the classes on the clock, and it’s not unusual to spot caregivers from other local agencies in attendance. They all show up to learn new skills and strategies for staying psychologically fit in an emotionally demanding job environment.

When Hope executives realized that a significant percentage of their workforce was experiencing burnout, they asked staff psychologists to take a closer look at employee stress levels and emotional well-being. The agency shared the resulting information with employees and made a firm commitment to care for its own caregivers. Hope adopted an emotional health model, drawing parallels between the occupational risks of other industries and those faced by caregivers. By educating employees about potential causes of harm, including unhealthy conflict and unmanaged stress, and helping them protect themselves, Hope has shown a sustained commitment to the health and well-being of its workforce.

Monthly newsletters, posted schedules and email announcements inform employees of seminar offerings that focus on prevention, social support and the development of specific skills like managing stress, leading a balanced life and dealing with conflict. At each seminar, attendees receive comprehensive handouts and those who attend the “Coping with Stress” workshop not only practice stress-reduction techniques in class but also take home a relaxation tape.

Since the program’s inception, more than 500 staff members have participated. Staff surveys and seminar evaluations show that employees are learning useful skills and about 85 percent rate the classes a nine or ten on a ten-point scale. On a recent survey, two-thirds of employees reported that emotional wellness at Hope is improving and 80 percent cited personal gains.

The wellness seminars also generate significant interest from caregivers at other agencies, attracting new employees and instilling pride in current Hope members. As a result, Hope’s turnover rate is below 30 percent in an industry that averages significantly higher. The number of complaints filed by employees has declined, and the use of workers’ compensation days has fallen 75 percent over the past two years. By supporting wellness in its own workforce, Hope Community Resources continues to deliver high-quality services while staying true to its values as a leader in caregiving.
2008 National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Winners

Arkansas Educational Television Network

Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples de Puerto Rico

Nike Tennessee

Porter Keadle Moore, LLP

Westminster Savings Credit Union

2008 Best Practices Honorees

Alaska Pacific University

Arkansas Educational Television Network

Ascend One

Bethesda Hospital

Dayton Marriott

The Holland/Burgerville

Hope Community Resources

Trinity Services

Westminster Savings Credit Union
The Psychologically Healthy Workplace

A psychologically healthy workplace fosters employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance.

Although there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to creating a psychologically healthy workplace, the practices that help create a healthy and productive work environment can be grouped into five categories:

- Employee Involvement
- Health and Safety
- Employee Growth and Development
- Work-Life Balance
- Employee Recognition

Employee Involvement
Efforts to increase employee involvement empower workers, involve them in decision making and give them increased job autonomy. Employee involvement programs can increase job satisfaction, employee morale and commitment to the organization as well as increase productivity, reduce turnover and absenteeism, and enhance the quality of products and services.

Efforts to involve employees in meaningful ways include:

- Self-managed work teams
- Employee committees or task forces
- Continuous improvement teams
- Participative decision making
- Employee suggestion forums such as a suggestion box or town hall meetings

Health and Safety
Health and safety initiatives maximize the physical and mental health of employees through the prevention, assessment and treatment of potential health risks and problems and by encouraging and supporting healthy lifestyle and behavior choices. Health and safety efforts include a wide variety of workplace practices that can help employees improve their physical and mental health, reduce health risks and manage stress effectively. By investing in the health and safety of their employees, organizations may benefit from greater productivity and reductions in healthcare costs, absenteeism and accident/injury rates.

Efforts to address health and safety issues in the workplace include:

- Training and safeguards that address workplace safety and security issues
- Efforts to help employees develop a healthy lifestyle, such as stress-management, weight-loss and smoking-cessation programs
- Adequate health insurance, including mental health coverage
- Health screenings
- Access to health/fitness/recreation facilities
- Resources to help employees address life problems such as grief counseling, alcohol abuse programs, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and referrals for mental health services

Essential components of a psychologically healthy workplace
Employee Growth and Development
Opportunities for growth and development help employees expand their knowledge, skills and abilities and apply the competencies they have gained to new situations. The opportunity to gain new skills and experiences can increase employee motivation and job satisfaction and help workers more effectively manage job stress. This can translate into positive gains for the organization by enhancing organizational effectiveness and improving work quality, as well as by helping the organization attract and retain outstanding employees. By providing opportunities for growth and development, organizations can improve the quality of their employees’ work experience and realize the benefits of developing workers to their full potential.

Opportunities for employee growth and development include:
- Continuing education courses
- Tuition reimbursement
- Career development or counseling services
- Skills training provided in-house or through outside training centers
- Opportunities for promotion and internal career advancement
- Coaching, mentoring and leadership development programs

Work-Life Balance
Programs and policies that facilitate work-life balance acknowledge that employees have responsibilities and lives outside of work and help individuals better manage these multiple demands. Conflict between work and other life responsibilities can diminish the quality of both work and home life for employees, which in turn can affect organizational outcomes such as productivity, absenteeism and turnover. Efforts to help employees improve work-life balance can improve morale, increase job satisfaction and strengthen employees’ commitment to the organization. Additionally, the organization may reap benefits in terms of increased productivity and reduction in absenteeism and employee turnover.

Programs and policies that can promote work-life balance include:
- Flexible work arrangements, such as flex-time and telecommuting
- Assistance with childcare
- Eldercare benefits
- Resources to help employees manage personal financial issues
- Flexible leave options beyond those required by the Family and Medical Leave Act

Employee Recognition
Employee recognition efforts reward employees both individually and collectively for their contributions to the organization. Recognition can take various forms: formal and informal, monetary and non-monetary. By acknowledging employee efforts and making them feel valued and appreciated, organizations can increase employee satisfaction, morale and self-esteem. Additionally, the organization itself may benefit from greater employee engagement and productivity, lower turnover and the ability to attract and retain top-quality employees.

Ways of recognizing employee contributions include:
- Fair monetary compensation
- Competitive benefits packages
- Acknowledgment of contributions and milestones
- Performance-based bonuses and pay increases
- Employee awards
- Recognition ceremonies
The Role of Communication

Communication plays a key role in the success of any workplace program or policy and serves as the foundation for all five types of psychologically healthy workplace practices. Communication about workplace practices helps achieve the desired outcomes for the employee and the organization in a variety of ways:

- **Bottom-up communication** (from employees to management) provides information about employee needs, values, perceptions and opinions. This helps organizations select and tailor their programs and policies to meet the specific needs of their employees.
- **Top-down communication** (from management to employees) can increase utilization of specific workplace programs by making employees aware of their availability, clearly explaining how to access and use the services, and demonstrating that management supports and values the programs.

Examples of communication strategies that can help make workplace programs successful include:

- Providing regular, ongoing opportunities for employees to provide feedback to management. Communication vehicles may include employee surveys, suggestion boxes, town hall meetings, individual or small group meetings with managers, and an organizational culture that supports open, two-way communication.
- Making the goals and actions of the organization and senior leadership clear to workers by communicating key activities, issues and developments to employees and developing policies that facilitate transparency and openness.
- Assessing the needs of employees and involving them in the development and implementation of psychologically healthy workplace practices.
- Using multiple channels (for example, print and electronic communications, orientations and trainings, staff meetings and public addresses) to communicate the importance of a psychologically healthy workplace to employees.
- Leading by example by encouraging organizational leaders to participate in psychologically healthy workplace activities in ways that are visible to employees.
- Communicating information about the outcomes and success of specific psychologically healthy workplace practices to all members of the organization.

The Importance of Context

It is important to note that the success of any workplace effort is based in part on addressing the challenges unique to the particular organization and tailoring programs and policies to meet its specific needs. Workplace practices do not exist in isolation. Each function in relation to other programs and policies the organization has in place as well as to internal and external environmental factors. The complex nature of these relationships highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to creating a workplace in which both employees and the organization can thrive.
PHWA.org – Your Best Source for Creating a Psychologically Healthy Workplace

What makes a workplace psychologically healthy? How can you reduce absenteeism and turnover, increase employee satisfaction, even improve your bottom line? The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program Web site places timely, practical information at your fingertips. Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, Good Company. Join the conversation on our blog. View helpful videos and download our monthly podcast. You’ll find all this and more at PHWA.org.
About the American Psychological Association

The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world’s largest association of psychologists. APA’s membership includes more than 148,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

Cooperating Organizations

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards and Best Practices Honors are presented by the American Psychological Association with cooperation from other not-for-profit organizations that share an interest in creating healthy work environments. For our current list of cooperating organizations and more information about how your organization can support the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program, visit phwa.org.
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