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**BENEFITS** May 7, 2018

# Employer Well-Being Programs Offer More Than Just Physical Health Components

As programs expand, companies are exploring new communication channels to connect with employees, as well as finding ways to personalize content to increase engagement, a survey from Fidelity and the NBGH found.

By *Rebecca Moore*



Companies across the country will continue to leverage and expand well-being programs to create healthier and more productive workforces, according to the ninth annual Health and Well-Being Survey from Fidelity Investments and the National Business Group on Health (NBGH).

More than two-thirds (67%) of companies plan to expand their well-being initiatives over the next three to five years to include programs not specifically focused on physical health. In addition to traditional health-focused programs, such as weight management and smoking cessation, 92% of employers are expanding their well-being platforms to include emotional health

programs, and 90% are now including **financial wellness programs**, such as debt management and budgeting. Other examples of increasingly popular non-health well-being activities include stress management training (77%), community involvement/volunteerism activities (72%) and social connectedness opportunities (60%).

Nearly nine out of 10 employers (86%, up from 74% in 2017) offer financial incentives as part of their well-being platform, and the average employee incentive amount increased to \$784 for 2018, up from \$742 in 2017, and a 50% increase from the average of \$521 in 2013. Financial incentives are expected to continue to be a key benefit within well-being platforms in the future, as 29% of employers indicate they plan to continue to increase the amount of financial incentives offered to employees over the next three to five years.

“The fact that companies continue to dedicate an increasing amount of resources to their corporate well-being programs indicates they are having a positive impact on overall workforce performance,” says Robert Kennedy, senior vice president, Fidelity Benefits Consulting. “An employer’s well-being program is now overwhelmingly viewed as a platform to improve employee engagement, increase worker productivity, and reduce absenteeism.”

As corporate well-being programs continue to expand and evolve, companies are exploring new communication channels to connect with employees, as well as finding ways to personalize content to increase engagement, the survey found. Among employers that personalize communication based on specific employee profiles or workforce demographics, 85% indicate that employee engagement has increased. And while companies continue to use traditional communication channels, such as e-mail, internal websites and on-site promotions, nearly half of employers (48%) now use mobile applications to communicate with employees. In addition, 39% are utilizing social media as a

communications platform, while 24% connect with employees via personalized text messages.

## Global workforces

As an increasing percentage of multi-national companies take steps to standardize their company's benefits across different geographies, many companies still need to focus on applying a global strategy to their corporate well-being platform, Fidelity says. While 44% of companies surveyed extend their well-being program to other geographies, there are interesting differences on how these companies deliver the programs: only 10% of these companies offer a well-being program based on their U.S. strategy, while 34% tailor their offerings for each location.

Another 42% don't offer a well-being strategy for employees in other geographies, but they do give local regions the ability to implement a program based on their specific needs. An additional 10% of companies surveyed indicate they have no interest in offering a well-being program to employees outside of the U.S.

In terms of financial incentives, 10% of companies currently offer employee incentives, and another 10% plan to offer incentives in 2019. However, nearly half (48%) of companies surveyed indicate they do not currently offer incentives and have no plans to offer any in the future.

The survey includes responses from 162 jumbo, large and mid-sized organizations and was fielded during November and December 2017 among the NBGH members and clients of Fidelity Investments.

Tagged: employer well-being programs, financial wellness programs, physical wellness programs



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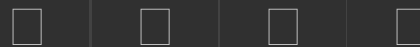
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