



News Release

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Willis Health and Productivity Survey Finds Senior Leadership Committed to Workplace Wellness Programs

Employers Still Struggle to Successfully Engage Workforce

NEW YORK, March 17, 2011 – Senior leadership commitment to improving employee health is rising, according to the Willis Health and Productivity Survey by Willis North America’s Human Capital Practice, a unit of Willis Group Holdings, (NYSE:WSH) the global insurance broker.

According to the survey, senior leadership commitment to improving employee health significantly increased to 42% in 2010, compared with 6% in 2009. In addition, respondents said the two most important factors in the success of a workplace wellness program were management support and strong cultural support for wellness within the organization. However, employers still struggle to successfully engage the workforce in their health & productivity initiatives. In addition, organizations face barriers in measuring the success of their health and productivity initiatives.

The Willis Health and Productivity Survey, [available here](#), tracks employers across stages of wellness program implementation. Employers offering wellness programs were asked to detail program components, incentives used, participation rates, vendor satisfaction and how program results are measured. Meanwhile, employers not currently offering wellness programs were asked about perceived barriers to offering wellness programs and what type of support or information was needed to implement a wellness program.

The survey represents the findings received from 1,949 participants. 71% of respondents had 500 or fewer employees.

Key findings from the survey include:

- 53% of employers indicated they had some type of wellness program. Of those with a wellness program, 57% describe their program as “basic.”
- Health care costs remain the driving force motivating organizations to implement worksite wellness programs. 78% of employers reviewed their health care cost trends prior to implementing a wellness program.
- About one-third of survey respondents *did not agree* that financial rewards should be used to encourage healthy lifestyles, a 15% increase over the 2009 survey results.

- 44% of participants reported insufficient time or not enough staff as the most significant barrier to offering a wellness program, followed by budget constraints at 43%.
- Only 28% of responding employers have a specific and defined strategy in place to improve employee engagement in the workplace. Of the organizations that have a formal strategy, 64% considered their worksite wellness program to be an important part of their overall employee engagement strategy.
- 38% of survey respondents indicated they did not have sufficient data to calculate ROI.
- Management support and having a strong internal leader championing wellness within the organization were rated the two most important factors in the success of the wellness program.
- The top factors cited as necessary to improve employee engagement in worksite wellness were increasing marketing and communication with potential program participants, setting more specific goals for achievement and more coordinated efforts.

“While it is encouraging to see organizational support at the senior level significantly increasing, the survey indicates a need to focus programs on increased employee engagement,” said Cheryl Mealey, National Practice Leader, Wellness Consulting, Willis Human Capital Practice. “Senior management is really starting to embrace the idea that our health impacts how we work, and how we work impacts our health,” she said.

According to Mealey, employers are also missing an important engagement opportunity by not investing in training designed to assist mid-level managers in managing relationships along with the health and productivity of the workforce. “Our survey findings show that only 5% of respondents offer such training. The relationship an employee has with his or her direct supervisor is of paramount importance, not only in relation to engagement and job satisfaction, but also to overall health and well-being,” she said.

“Organizations need to rethink their incentive and communication strategies and determine whether their approach is resulting in *compliance* with a series of defined tasks, or true engagement in health improvement and ultimately in the success of the business. Increasingly we are seeing that the two go hand-in-hand,” Mealey said.

The survey represents Willis’ commitment to workplace wellness and helping clients to build a culture of health. Willis’ Human Capital Practice includes industry leading Wellness Consulting that assists organizations in developing and implementing targeted wellness strategies and programs. In February 2010, the practice re-launched "Winning With Willis," its innovative consumer health and wellness portal designed to help companies lower health care costs by encouraging employees to lead healthier lifestyles.

About Willis

Willis Group Holdings plc is a leading global insurance broker. Through its subsidiaries, Willis develops and delivers professional insurance, reinsurance, risk management, financial and human resource consulting and actuarial services to corporations, public entities and institutions

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