

BE WELL, BE WHOLE

The wellbeing model addresses five elements of wellness, and we've got ideas to help you tone up your personal and business wellness today.

by Kristen Hampshire



Wellness doesn't live in a vacuum. It's not just eating right and working out. These initiatives are all "well" and good, but a whole wellness approach encompasses factors that we might not think about. Financial stability. Social wellbeing. Community involvement. Career fulfillment. These pieces of the "wellbeing" puzzle complete a holistic approach to wellness.

Together, it's called the wellbeing

model, a concept developed by Gallup's Jim Harter and published in his book, *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements*. "The philosophy looks at the whole person's life and how each element impacts their wellbeing," says David Phillips, president of Energetic Awakenings, a social wellbeing firm. Phillips worked with COSE for eight years and began his private practice focused on transformational coaching and counseling last year.

If small business owners dig deeper and look at the whole wellness picture, they can truly transform individuals and the organization, Phillips says. After all, the reality is that employees' work and personal lives co-exist and one influences the other. "If I'm happy with myself and my relationships that I have in my life, then I will be more productive at work," Phillips says.

"If employees are having a difficult time, such as going through a divorce or experiencing financial troubles, that will impact the business owner, especially in a company with a small workforce," Phillips adds.

The wellbeing model addresses these five elements:

- **Career wellbeing:** Occupy your time so you do something you love every day.
- **Social wellbeing:** Develop strong personal relationships.
- **Financial wellbeing:** Effectively manage your economic life.
- **Physical wellbeing:** Exercise and eat well to gain energy for improved productivity and happiness.
- **Community wellbeing:** Engage in your community; get involved.

You can jumpstart a complete wellbeing initiative at your business for little to no cost by thinking outside of the box and doing little things at your business that can make a big, healthy impact. Here are three ways that COSE members are modeling this wellbeing approach. (Steal these ideas!)

Social: Group walk. When weather allows, employees at Outreach Promotional Solutions will take an afternoon break for a short walk to get some fresh air, socialize and recharge. It's only a 15 to 20 minute "intermission," but it goes a



long way toward building camaraderie and providing some healthy time away from the office — just enough to spark productivity afterward. “It’s social, and the walk becomes a mix of casual talk and business talk — whatever is on our minds,” says Nevin Bansal, president. “Everyone is happier after a walk.”

Financial: Talk money. Host a lunch and learn or seminar focused on financial wellness and gaining economic stability. These are issues that employees won’t openly discuss with employers — but festering financial problems can cause sleep loss, lower self-esteem and decreased productivity. Small business owners shouldering significant financial

burdens also can be weighed down by money matters that can hinder success.

Start by giving employees an introduction and an “in” to be coached by an advisor (privately), suggests Jan Litterest, a transformational money coach and owner of Empower Excellence. Litterest holds financial fairs, facilitates employee assistance programs and delivers talks at businesses of all sizes.

“Money affects every part of our lives,” Litterest says, adding that managing money issues “frees up people’s spirits and gives them more energy.” So consider hosting a money seminar or brownbag lunch session. Give employees information and a resource so they can seek help if they need it.

Physical: Build accountability. Business owners working “25 hours a day” struggle to squeeze in time for personal wellness, says Jonathan Slain of Fitness Together, a COSE board member. But if you treat the gym like an appointment with a client, you’ll show up. Investing in a personal trainer is helpful for many entrepreneurs, who will not ignore fitness if they’re penciling in the time and paying a professional to assist them. Can’t afford a fitness coach? Enlist in a friend or colleague who can hold you to your gym appointments. ●

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