

# The New Perks

Finding a balance between  
a happy employee and a  
resourceful company



## **ADDING VIGOR TO THE VALLEY**

The San Francisco bay area is the cradle for tech companies trying to outdo each other in perks and untapped business ideas. Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Microsoft are some of the recognizable brand names nestled in the heart of Silicon Valley with burgeoning ideas, unbelievable perks, maintaining great talent. Their worker composition is as varied as their product, with employees from all over the world domiciled in the valley where careers are honed and dreams realized. Unfortunately, most companies don't share the deep pockets these incredible companies have and many a job seeker work for companies not offering free electric cars, bicycles, and free food. How do most ordinary companies strike a balance of keeping their costs down and uplift employee morale simultaneously? I believe there are ingenious ways to carve out a stellar company and elevate employee production and talent outside the ostentatious model we are accustomed to. The engaging of employees in consciousness of their overall health and also providing means to monitor and prevent disease is both a cost cutting measure and a perk every employee can enjoy.





# What is the void for companies today?

Underlying risk areas least discussed and simple solutions for both employers and employees

The understanding, according to the CDC website, that the number one disease destroying American lives is heart disease followed by lung cancer requires special attention for both employees and employers (CDC website, 2015). It is a noble act to participate in walk-a-thons and having fundraisers in a bid to fight disease, but how about exploring practical ways to reduce the risk within the workforce? The modern workplace is a major source of stress; with deadlines, punctuated by endless meetings,

long working hours, traffic, and workplace politics as some of the possible cumulative antecedents for illness. The long working hours, even though not acknowledged publicly by workers for fear of silent blacklisting (but will do it on Glassdoor.com anonymously), is not only a stressor for the family but also to an individual's health. Moreover, the long work-week is now challenged by more recent research, proving that quality and productivity levels dip beyond 50 working hours a week, per one

Stanford study (Sullivan, 2015). Heart disease thrives in stress environments and is further worsened by poor nutrition. A good approach is to create assorted solutions for a diverse workforce, such as exercise before and after large projects to alleviate and possibly nullify stress levels: spend some money on some fit-bits as a motivator. Hill Physicians, for example, has a practical, well-rounded wellness program, with a sensible milestone-driven reward system for all workers worth

## The symbiotic relationship is invaluable

emulating. It is interesting to note that employees who are more engaged in challenging, meaningful tasks are more health conscious than their "less salient" counterparts per a gall-up poll taken in 2013, (Yu and Harter, 2013). Chevron's well-orchestrated, elaborate job rotation and enrichment program is laudable in uplifting employee morale as

opposed to the mundane silo-like environment most workers are used to. Work balance, as well as job satisfaction and enrichment, will draw talented employees, reposition and motivate underutilized staff identifying themselves as part of an interwoven company organism. Shareholder value will also increase in tandem with creativity and productivity.



# Fitness with purpose

The reason why most people don't participate in recreational activities or much less exercise-related events is because the events organized are not representative of what they like.



There are numerous reasons why people do not exercise, including the motivation to begin (WebMD, 2015). People will exercise if they are provided with simple motivational solutions to their problems:

1. An education that exercise involving the exertion of the heart muscle beyond its resting state will vastly reduce the risk of heart disease and even keep high blood pressure in check, according to the American Heart Association (heart.org, 2015), makes more sense than simply encouraging aerobic exercise.
2. Taking the stairs or walking off a hearty meal will resonate more with an employee than offering a gym discount.
3. Framing exercise as a happiness booster rather than a daily chore, is more palatable; endorphins are released, serotonin levels increase, per Health Central, helping balance the body, alleviating depression (Kennard, 2010).

4. Finding out employee-specific exercise interests will help companies tailor recreational activities likely to get more participation rather than have Human Resources decide what will work at company events.
5. Inviting preventative health teams to do workshops for twenty minutes right before the All-hands meetings can prove to be a bonus perk.

The marrying of job motivating ideas and wellness programs from existing companies, while introducing new ones will create cost effective ways to mold great companies and employees.

Of course, not all employees will participate in attempts to improve their health and not all ideas can be hashed out in one article, but an ostensible need exists to address preventative health in the workplace as well as improving

overall morale. These two areas greatly reduce the cost spent on healthcare by employers and also promote a happier, motivated, and healthier workforce for the majority of America.



Imagine all the dollars lost in employee sick pay as a result of preventative illnesses.

## References

CDC Website (2015). *Leading causes of death*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>

Kennard, J. (January, 2010). *How fitness lessens Depression and Fatigue (and how not to fail)*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.healthcentral.com/depression/c/4182/100491/depression-fail/>

Heart.org website (September, 2015). *Physical activity and blood pressure*. Retrieved from:

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Physical-Activity-and-Blood-Pressure\\_UCM\\_301882\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Physical-Activity-and-Blood-Pressure_UCM_301882_Article.jsp)

Sullivan, B. (January, 2015). *Memo to work martyrs: Long hours make you less productive*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/01/26/working-more-than-50-hours-makes-you-less-productive.html>

WebMD website (September, 2015). *Why is it hard to exercise?* Retrieved from:

<http://www.webmd.com/parenting/raising-fit-kids/move/motivated-to-exercise>

Yu, D. & Harter, J. (January, 2013). *In US, engaged employees exercise more, eat healthier*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/159845/engaged-employees-exercise-eat-healthier.aspx>