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5 BEST INCENTIVES FOR KEEPING YOUR EMPLOYEES HAPPY AND HEALTHY



Cake day. Holiday parties. Morning meeting donuts. While these might seem like nice perks for your employees, are you sabotaging your efforts to keep a productive, high-functioning workforce?

The [CDC](#) reports that heart attacks and stroke lead the way for the most expensive health conditions, and employers foot the bill through health insurance premiums and loss of productivity. The [CDC's Business Pulse](#) also reported that there are 4 million work-related non-fatal accidents per year and 55,000 workplace fatalities – as opposed to only 30,000 annual deaths from car accidents.

Does this mean you should just offer kale smoothies and start a safety committee? While helpful, it might not be the ultimate solution to make your employees happy and healthy.

According to Gretchen Rubin, NYT Bestselling author of the [Happiness Project](#), employees are looking for simple things to stay happy and productive. First and foremost, they need to be engaged.

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Ms. Rubin advocates that happy employees are healthier, more productive and creative, and make better leaders and collaborators. When people are happy, they work well together.

Creating a happy culture takes time and effort. But in the short term, there are ways to make them happy with great employee benefits. According to [Benefit News](#), the top benefits employees seek are health insurance, bonuses, retirement plans, and paid time off.

In short, keeping employees happy and healthy means helping them feel *safe* about their health and happiness.

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5 incentives that will make your employees feel not only happy but healthy:

1. Health Insurance

A cookie cutter, no-frills health insurance plan won't attract – or keep – the employees you need to grow your business. Yet, you might not need the most expensive plan. Offering a customized plan that meets the needs of your employee population balances what they want and what you can spend. Self-insured plans are a great way to keep employees happy and safe while you stay on budget.

2. Encourage Healthy Habits

Heart disease, stroke, and diabetes are the leaders of the pack when it comes to rising healthcare costs. Instead of offering donuts, offer seasonal fruits and proteins. Encourage walking, stretching and moving to avoid the curse of sitting all day. Take advantage of wellness programs offered by healthcare institutions, gyms, and local or online experts.

3. Start at the Top

Encourage your leadership to set a healthy example. When employees see the CEO take a walking break, they'll feel inclined to follow. Watching the executive team eat salads at the lunch meeting and improving their personal health will set the tone for others to follow suit.

4. Freedom From Smoking®

The [American Lung Association](#) (ALA) offers a proven method to help employees stop smoking – with a 57% success rate. ALA reports that smoking kills over 480,000 people per year, costing over \$300 billion in smoking-related illness. Their unique program can be customized to fit your needs with in-person, online, and phone support. Smoking-related illnesses cost employers over \$6,000 per employee annually, potentially saving you thousands in productivity and rising costs.

5. Start (or re-energized) your Safety Committee

Keeping your employees happy is one thing, keeping them safe is critical. If you already have a Safety Committee, support them in making necessary changes in the organization. If you don't have a Safety Committee, consider starting one. They are key to establishing safety protocols and emergency procedures that prevent accidents before they happen.

The best incentives for keeping your employees happy and healthy don't have to break the bank, be boring, or take too much time. Being happy and healthy means being safe and appreciated – something every employee wants.