



## Something For Everyone: Meeting Employees' Diverse Wellness Needs At Hallmark Cards, Inc.

Hallmark Cards, Inc., a private, family-owned greeting card and gift company, began addressing wellness early on. When he founded Hallmark in 1910, Joyce Clyde "J.C." Hall understood that happy and healthy employees are productive employees. More than 100 years later, the company continues to thrive with this same principle through the leadership of J.C.'s grandsons, Donald J. Hall, Jr., and David E. Hall.

As Hallmark's workforce has grown in size and diversity, its wellness program has worked to continually meet the needs and interests of its employees. In 2017, its workforce was 56 percent female. Hallmark's multigenerational workforce includes 38 percent baby boomers, 36 percent generation X, and 26 percent millennials. To successfully address the most relevant health issues for each group, wellness staff develop a range of programming and ensure that offerings stay fresh and dynamic.

### Before Workplace Health Was Cool: Hallmark's Workplace Health History

Hallmark's commitment to employee wellness dates back to the company's founding. Sally Luck, Human Resources Director of Corporate Services and Wellness, said, "Before wellness was cool, Hallmark focused on a well-nourished and healthy workforce." From the company's founding, J.C. Hall valued well-being and work life balance. He encouraged employees to participate in sports and socialize after hours. Hall showed his commitment by establishing the company's first on-site food service in 1923, and its first on-site medical center in 1928. By 2018, the company had three additional

#### Workplace Health Awards

- Leadership Award, 2012 (sponsored by Corporate Wellness Magazine)
- Workplace Wellness Award, 2015 (Silver Level), 2016 (Gold Level), 2017 (Platinum Level) (sponsored by the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce)



#### Hallmark Cards, Inc.: At A Glance

**Locations:** Headquartered in Kansas City, MO, with offices worldwide

**Size:** Approximately 2,700 employees at headquarters and 28,000 employees globally, of which 20,000 are U.S.-based

**Industry:** Greeting cards and gifts

North American Industry  
Classification System (NAICS) Sector:  
Retail Trade; Information

medical clinics and food service operations, set up at two manufacturing plants and one distribution center.

In the 1980s, three employees interested in improving employee health developed Health Works, a partnership between the medical clinic, fitness center, and food service departments. They believed the presence of a medical clinic or a café at one location was not enough to engage employees. Health Works was the start of on-site biometric screenings, health education through health fairs, and lunch-and-learns. This collaboration was the beginning of Hallmark's response to employees' need for a cohesive wellness program.

In 2008, in response to rising medical costs, Hallmark asked Luck to lead Health Works program managers in creating an integrated wellness program. The program would respond to employee health problems that contributed to rising costs. The managers worked with the benefits, public affairs, and communication departments to restructure the program so that all wellness functions fell under one umbrella. In 2009, the company created a wellness oversight team to launch the new program, Hallmark Health.



## Engaging Employees Through Friendly Competition

Luis, a millennial and Sales Manager said the Kansas City Corporate Challenge (KCCC)—intercompany sports games—bring the greatest benefit to him. He noted, “KCCC provides an opportunity for me to meet people in other divisions within the company and outside of work. It allows me to stay active, engaged, and competitive.”

## Programming For Every Segment Of The Population

### Overview HALLMARK HEALTH

Led by Luck, Hallmark Health’s wellness oversight team comprises managers from the food service, fitness and recreation, medical, human resource, and benefits departments. The team reviews aggregate biometric screening data and designs the annual wellness program, which includes selecting online wellness challenges and local partners to give educational sessions. They also collaborate on a program theme and strategy for the coming year. In 2012, the data showed employees were not getting their annual physicals and age-appropriate cancer screenings, such as mammograms and colonoscopies. In response, the theme for 2013 was “Prevention Pays”. The strategy included educational sessions that encouraged employees to have annual physicals and regular age-appropriate screenings, and tied incentives to these activities.



Hallmark employees participating in the KCCC bowling tournament.

The team creates activities for each segment of its workforce. For baby boomers, educational sessions and Employee Assistance Programs provide tips and resources on caring for

aging parents. The KCCC encourages millennials (and those of all ages) to be aware of their health status and stay fit.

The wellness program’s offerings, such as on-site amenities and education sessions, are available to both full- and part-time employees. Employees enrolled as the primary insured on their medical plan are eligible to participate in the Health Rewards Incentive Program. Eligible employees can earn up to \$400 a year—up to \$150 for having a healthy blood pressure and body mass index and up to \$250 for participation in preventive and educational programs. This includes health risk assessments, biometric screenings, and



Hallmark’s “micro marts” make healthy food available around the clock for shift workers and non office staff.

health challenges. Incentives are paid either as contributions to employee Health Savings Accounts or gift cards.

Full-time, enrolled employees can use Hallmark’s online, mobile-enabled wellness portal to learn about wellness activities and track their progress in earning Health Rewards Incentives. Wellness programs, including lunch-and-learns, are videotaped and available on demand through the portal. Employees can also sync their wearable devices to the wellness portal to earn incentives for physical activity, even outside of work.

Hallmark Health focuses on five elements of health. The wellness oversight team strategically selects and tailors program offerings to address employees’ needs within each element.

- **Nutrition.** Hallmark operates its own food service department, which allows the company to decide what kind of food it buys and from whom. Because Hallmark subsidizes the cost of food from local vendors, employees receive a 25 percent discount on healthy food options. Shift workers and non-office staff who cannot always step away from their posts enjoy healthy food options from Hallmark’s “micro marts,” unstaffed refrigerated kiosks, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **Physical.** Hallmark opened a new fitness center at headquarters in November 2017. The center offers activities for all segments of the workforce, including group classes. Employees who work at other locations receive membership discounts to gyms near their office. The company also participates in adult league sports (for instance, volleyball).
- **Medical.** On-site clinics offer health coaching, biometric screening, lab draws, goal development, influenza vaccinations, injections (for instance, allergy and B-12), international travel consultation, and a commercial weight loss program. Hallmark employees, regardless of enrollment in company medical plans, can access clinic services. On-site clinic and physical therapy services are cost-effective for the employee and company. Employees save time because they do not have to travel to a provider's office, and these savings increase job productivity.
- **Intellectual.** Hallmark offers several educational sessions each month on topics such as physical health, financial health, emotional and mental health, and family. For instance, Parenting with Love and Logic speaks to challenges that working parents encounter, while Financial Wellness helps employees of all age groups to keep an eye on income and budgets. The team records most in-person sessions, so employees can view them online any time.
- **Social.** In 2018, Hallmark opened a social working space designed to encourage relaxation, fellowship, and collaboration in a fun and creative environment. The company also participates in the annual KCCC. Employees from companies in the surrounding area compete in intramural sports such as races, dodge ball, pickle ball, and disc golf. The KCCC is particularly popular among millennials. Hallmark also takes pride in its volunteer work in the community, such as decorating the local children's hospital, or Wild Saturday at the Zoo, at which Hallmark employees volunteer at the local zoo, cleaning and planting flowers in preparation for its summer season opening. Luck said, "Volunteering helps to instill a sense of pride, especially for millennials. It provides employees

an opportunity to give back without having to give financially." Finally, various staff support groups encourage connections among employees dealing with diabetes, cancer, grief, divorce, or a spouse deployed in the military.

## How Hallmark Tracks Employees' Outcomes Over Time

Hallmark measures its success through employee engagement and participation. Its efforts have paid off—73 percent of eligible employees participated in the wellness rewards program in 2017.

The biometric data also show evidence of success. From 2013–2017, Hallmark tracked the biometric data of 952 employees representing various age ranges, roles, and work settings. These data help the wellness team understand if the program is making a difference in its workers' health. The team also uses these data to justify funding for incentives, wellness offerings, and partnerships with wellness vendors.

With an average age of 52 years in 2017, this group maintained their health status on many major chronic disease risk factors. From 2014 to 2017, 73 percent of the cohort reduced or maintained their number of chronic disease risk factors including obesity, back pain, hypertension, asthma, depression, diabetes, and hyperlipidemia.

- The percentage of screened employees with no chronic disease risk factors has remained steady with 41 percent in 2014, 43 percent in 2015, 39 percent in 2016, and 40 percent in 2017.

*We take great pains to bring employees along as the company changes. This is true of the wellness program. We rarely make out-of-the-blue changes. We do a lot of preplanning, thinking about what employees' reactions might be.*

~ Bob Bloss, Senior Vice President of Human Resources

- The percentages of diabetes (3 percent), depression (1 percent), and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (1 percent) remained steady from 2013 to 2017.

### User-Friendly For All!

*Our main goal is to understand our population and their needs, and set up our program to impact employee health. We want to be very user-friendly to all groups of employees.*

~ Christine, baby boomer, Food and Fitness Manager, and wellness oversight team member

## Challenges And Future Plans

Engaging a diverse employee population (e.g., manufacturing, distribution, office-based, age) in a program updated annually can be tricky. Luck acknowledged, "I think companies have made a mistake in trying to go too far, too quickly. There's been a backlash created when people feel like they are being forced to participate...[t]hat the company is doing this for [its] own best interest."

Hallmark uses a few strategies to ease these concerns:

- Pace. The annual program begins with benefit selection at the end of one year, but the launch and kickoff begin the next. Activities occur throughout the year.
- Communication. Employees stay informed through regular communications about the program throughout the year, so that nothing is a surprise.
- Positive reinforcement. All covered employees have multiple opportunities to earn Health Reward Incentives.

Luck and her team are learning from Hallmark Health's past and using that information to plan its future. For example, employees such as manufacturing and distribution workers do not have access to a computer during the workday and are often unable to leave their posts to attend wellness events. They may also miss electronic messages about wellness notifications or events. To increase access to wellness programming, Hallmark launched a new employee wellness portal in February 2018. The wellness team will monitor the use of the portal to understand current users' demographics and tailor content for new users.

The company's diverse employee base pushes the wellness oversight team to think critically and creatively as they develop wellness activities. In the future, Hallmark Health aims to build the program along a continuum of education, awareness, and participation, and seeks continued engagement in every section of its employee population.

### Employee Testimonial: Ambassadors Spread The Word

Anita, of generation X, is a Supply Chain Engineer and wellness ambassador. She became interested in health and fitness and lost 100 pounds in 1½ years. Her transformation led to a passion for helping colleagues be mindful of their health.

*I can't go be a trainer, a nutritionist, or a doctor, but I can be an ambassador. I can help spread the word and promote Hallmark Health to others!*

## Advice For Other Employers

- Luck and Bloss encourage other companies to understand employees' health and wellness needs and interests. These may be influenced by age, gender, and role/job within the company, among other factors. Employers should take different strategies to encourage engagement among line workers, call center staff, or those who work at a computer most of the day.



Hallmark employee participating in a bike race at a Kansas City track.

- Bloss advised others to start small and ease employees into changes little by little. Begin with promoting awareness and understanding, and meet employees at their own level instead of requiring participation.
- Explain why and how wellness programs address company-specific problem areas like workplace accidents, unhealthy habits, or rising health risk factors.
- Educate employees and create buy-in, as opposed to making sudden changes.

## Recommendations For Action

- Meet employees where they are. Employees have varied health needs or priorities based on age, gender, and tenure at the company.
  - The [CDC Employee Health Assessment](#) can help your organization assess employees' health status, readiness to participate, and wants and needs from the workplace health program.
  - Periodically assess your workplace health program to ensure its relevance to employees' changing health and wellness needs.
- Foster [employee engagement](#) with the program by designing activities, services, and offerings to meet the health needs and interests of all employees, including the different sectors and demographics of the workforce.

The [CDC Workplace Health Resource Center \(WHRC\)](#) is a one-stop shop for organizations to find credible tools, guides, case studies, and other resources to design, develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain workplace health promotion programs. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/WHRC> to find more case studies of workplace health programs in the field.