



CDC Workplace Health
Resource Center
Make Wellness Your Business

Engaging a Multigenerational Workforce in Workplace Wellness Programs

Workplace health and wellness programs are designed to improve the health and well-being of employees while promoting healthy lifestyle and behavior choices. A one-size-fits-all approach to engagement, however, does not attend to the needs and interests of diverse age groups. Research highlights the need for employers to consider the differences in health and health-seeking behaviors across generations.¹ More than 60% of US adults obtain their health insurance benefits through an employment-based plan. Employee wellness programs are uniquely positioned to respond to the varied health needs of a multigenerational workforce.²

Strategies and Considerations

Offering the right wellness programs aligned with your employee's values and interests and through the correct methods (technology, in person, individual, and in groups) is essential for engagement. As summarized below, all generations are interested in health and well-being. Individual health priorities varied by generation.

Table 1. Health Goals and Priorities by Generation

	Millennials	Gen Xers	Baby Boomers
Year born	1980–1999	1965–1979	1946–1964
Top health goals ³	Get more sleep, reduce stress	Lose weight	Lose weight
Average working hours per week (all jobs) ⁴	45.3	41.7	39.9
Main job involves sitting (all or most of the time) ⁴	45.4%	48.7%	39.2%
Job interferes with health (always/very often) ³	53%	37%	32%
Communication preferences ⁵	Apps, social media, instant messaging, texting	Links to websites and videos, e-mail, phone calls, in-person meetings	Personal communication, direct mail, presentations



- **Address Top Health Issues.** Employers should offer programs and services to meet the health needs and interests of every generation.
 - For millennials, financial health, stress, and lack of sleep can affect their overall health and performance. Employers can offer more work-life flexibility, including modified work hours.
 - For Gen Xers and baby boomers, addressing weight gain due to inactivity is often a priority.³ Employers can coordinate or offer reimbursement for a range of activities and events, including fun runs, walkathons, and yoga classes.
 - For all generations, employers can offer on-site training sessions that promote resilience, including physical activity and mindfulness.
- **Encourage Participation.** Employers should ask their employees what motivates them to care for their health and well-being and tailor communications and encouragement to those preferences. Financial incentives drive all generations.
 - Millennials place a higher value on free access to fitness centers, along with time to participate, while older workers value the overall benefits of a wellness program.³
 - Younger employees are twice as likely to engage in technology-based health programs through social media or webinar communication platforms compared with their older counterparts, who may prefer e-mail or newsletters.
- **Personalize the Program.** Millennials expect personalized apps tailored to their specific needs. Wellness programs should have resources and services available to provide this level of personalization through technology. Many millennials also are familiar with and expect gaming—interactive video or other technology to promote engagement and learning—through health challenges. Through gaming, individuals and groups benefit from both social network interactions, as well as and the potential to improve health in a variety of areas.



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 the [CDC Workplace Health Resource Center](#) to learn more about and strategies for employee engagement.

References

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