

## **Boost Your Bottom Line With Your Wellness Program By Sherry Leonard, CEO CaLLogix**

If I hadn't experienced it, I wouldn't have believed our Wellness Program could reduce attrition by 50%, absenteeism by 80%, and our insurance premium increase by 50% while improving our overall company's performance.

These fantastic results are exactly what we experienced over a nine-month period. As the President of a lean call center company, CaLLogix, in New Hampshire (an expensive part of the country for a call center to be located) my focus is on being highly responsive to our clients' changing requirements, delivering exceptional service and managing a profitable company.

Attrition, absenteeism and rising health care costs negatively impact our service and bottom line. Our ability to provide superior service depends upon our staff being ready to take the important calls coming into our center.

When 15 people are absent on a single day in a 200 person call center, we have to scramble to cover the calls those 15 people would have taken. We used to average 15 absences... now we average two--that's much easier to manage.

We initially designed our **Consciousness @ CaLLogix Wellness Program** to address a few big challenges for our employees: smoking cessation, weight loss and stress reduction. **Our goal was to help our employees be healthier and happier** by reducing smoking, eating healthier and helping them better manage the stress they face in their personal and professional lives.

Our employees are better able to serve our customers when they are healthier and their stress is managed. Not only has our wellness program increased the health of our employees, it has solved some of our key management issues.

Here's how we've designed our program:

- **Smoking Cessation Program**--we offer this two times per year. More than half of the program participants stopped smoking initially and over 7% are still smoke free one year later.
- **Conscious Success**--this program teaches employees how to quickly reduce stress through easy to use mindfulness techniques--which can be used at any time to immediately calm the nervous system and increase effectiveness in the present moment.
  - **Monday Minute**--Conscious Success sends a weekly newsletter with stress reduction tips and we post this on our internal site.
  - **Meditations**--we hold brief stress reduction meditations a few times a week using recordings provided by Harvard Pilgrim and Conscious Success.

- **Webcasts**--Conscious Success offers a monthly webcast in which techniques are discussed and taught and questions are answered.
  - **Awaken Your Inner Radiance Book**--we bought this book for our Supervisors and administrative staff to help them learn how to reduce negative thought patterns and live a more healthy life.
- **Conscious Success Program For Leaders**--our supervisors took a variation of the Conscious Success program which focuses on reducing negative thought patterns and stress that effect leadership and management abilities. A 360° assessment of their emotional and social intelligence was conducted at the beginning of the program and will be evaluated again a year later. We are coaching our Supervisors on the results of the assessments to help them further develop their emotional and social intelligence competencies.
- **Healthy Eating Programs**--we organize and run this program internally:
  - **Healthy Recipes**--in celebration of National Nutrition Month we research and posted a week's worth of healthy recipes and healthy dietary guidelines and tips on our internal website.
  - **Healthy Start**--to encourage a healthy start to the day we offer a snack each morning during Customer Service week of apples and peanut butter, granola bars, yogurt or orange juice.
  - **Happy Healthy Day**--on Valentine's Day we wished employees a happy day and introduced them to the delicious health benefits of oranges and dark chocolate.
  - **Summer BBQ**--offering a relaxing, team building lunch outside.
- **Theme Days**--to encourage a relaxed, fun, motivating, and happy atmosphere at work. It gives our Representatives a fun break since their home life is often quite stressful. Some themes are: 50's Day, Patriot's Day, Celtics Day, Red Sox Day, Ugly Sweater Day, Hat Day, Super Hero Day and Halloween (with appropriate) dress up.
- **Customer Service Week**--many of the above-mentioned programs are offered during customer service week. Our most recent theme was Refresh ~ Recharge ~ Reconnect. During this week we offered Healthy Start, 'Souper' Heroes soup and sandwich lunch, puzzle challenges each morning, blood pressure screening, smoking cessation programs, flu shots, mini office yoga classes, and opportunities to reconnect by having supervisors write compliments about their employees on paper leaves that decorate big paper trees on the walls.
- **+500 STEP CHALLENGE**--a few times a year we give pedometers and a log to all employees and encourage them to record the number of steps they take each day. Each time we offer this challenge we get greater participation from our employees. In addition, many employees participate in our walking club, which meets 3 days per week at lunch. Our employees are now aware of the number of steps they take each day and have become more active. During Customer Service Week, we have a 24 hour step challenge which gets the whole office moving.

- **Snowfly Program**--we encourage participation in and reward our employees efforts in these programs with snowfly tokens. With the tokens they get cash and other terrific rewards.

We fully believe in walking our talk. Our management team participates in the Wellness Programs, dresses up for theme days and creates much of the content for our employees. We also celebrate our achievements with our staff. In celebration of our sixth anniversary as a company, we gave each employee a chocolate dipped strawberry, a glass of sparkling cider and a note thanking them for their commitment and outstanding support in fulfilling our promise to our clients and their customers.

We've noticed some interesting results of this initiative:

- Employees are more likely to participate in smoking cessation and eat healthier once they've participated in the Conscious Success program.
- Each time we offer the +500 Step Challenge participation has grown and the group has become very competitive. Now, during 10-minute breaks on rainy days, we see groups of employees walking the halls rather than sitting in the break room. In total, during our step challenge weeks, our employees have walked 2,710 miles and taken over 5,420,000 steps.
- The number of employees asking for meditation breaks has grown and attendance keeps rising in these sessions.

Here's a specific instance in which we've seen the program improve our customer service:

*An irate customer, who tried to place an order on line, called in and was not pleasant to our representative. Our rep., who had been in our Conscious Success training that day, did everything right--she apologized to the customer, did not make excuses that may have frustrated the customer even further or become defensive, had incredible patience with the caller, had a positive attitude through out the call, and turned what could have been a horrible call into a great experience for the customer!*

Our provider for the smoking cessation is [Harvard Pilgrim Health Care](#) and our provider for our stress reduction program is [Conscious Success LLC](#).