



# New research reveals link between well-being programs and employee experience

New Optum research shows that investing in health and well-being programs can boost employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS).

In a recent webinar, OptumHealth Chief Health Officer Seth Serxner and Senior Vice President Elisa Reliford explored results from Optum research focused on eNPS.

**There are many levers employers can pull to enhance the employee experience**, from increasing the levels of compensation, to improved office space, to offering more paid time off. However, an Optum analysis of employees at a variety of employers across the U.S. revealed a potentially overlooked yet significant contributor to eNPS — employee health and well-being programs.

**DOWNLOADS**

 White paper
  On-demand webinar
  eNPS tool

New research looks at employee experience through the lens of employer health and well-being programs, to understand if — and how — offering health and well-being programs may impact eNPS.

The research revealed a strong correlation — specifically between eNPS and the availability of well-being programs offered to employees, and high participation rates in those programs.

## MEASURING THE IMPACT

For the research, Optum used a proven metric to track employee engagement and loyalty: eNPS. eNPS is a score based on workers' response to a single question:

**On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend your employer as a place to work?**

**9–10** **PROMOTERS** — The most engaged, most satisfied workers

**7–8** **PASSIVES** — Satisfied but not enthusiastic workers

**6 or below** **DETRACTORS** — Typically dissatisfied, disengaged, likely to leave and not likely to be a supporter of the business

Why is this important? Because actively disengaged employees cost companies an estimated \$450 billion–\$550 billion each year in lost productivity.<sup>1</sup>

Research shows that promoters are far less likely to leave the organization. They are also more likely to recommend their employer as a great place to work. And work units that rank in the top quartile in employee engagement see an average of 22 percent more profitability than work units that are in the bottom quartile — the least engaged.<sup>2</sup>

Using eNPS as a measure of engagement and employee loyalty, Optum set out to answer two big questions.

Is there a relationship between employee NPS (likelihood to recommend their employer as a place to work) and:



## THE IMPACT OF PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPATION

The research revealed clear connections.

For example, the more programs an employer offers, the more likely employees are to be promoters based on their eNPS survey response.

It's important to note, however, that this is not the only important insight. Employers need to offer the right programs based on the needs of their employees, ensuring coverage across a continuum of health care needs.

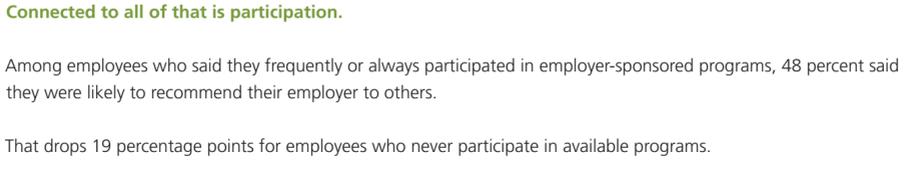
"It's not necessarily the number of programs per se," said Reliford. "Rather, it's the comprehensive nature of solutions that employers put in place, that address the needs of individuals through varying life stages and stages of health."

For example, the research found that programs that help employees manage a chronic condition generally had the biggest impact on eNPS scores. A physical work environment that supports healthy decision-making was also important.

**Connected to all of that is participation.**

Among employees who said they frequently or always participated in employer-sponsored programs, 48 percent said they were likely to recommend their employer to others.

That drops 19 percentage points for employees who never participate in available programs.



Those figures demonstrate the value of consistent and frequent participation.

The difference between never participating and rarely/occasionally participating is only one percentage point; however, getting employees to always or frequently participate results in a significant jump.

**Consistent and frequent participation is linked to higher eNPS scores.**

There's clearly a relationship here. But is it causal? That's not possible to determine solely from these survey results, explained Serxner.

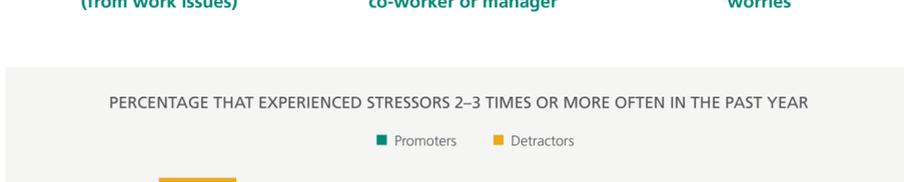
"We can't say that participating makes an employee more likely to recommend an employer, or that people who are more likely to recommend are more likely to participate," Serxner said. "But logically it stands to reason that if my employer offers these programs and I'm taking advantage of them, I feel pretty good about it and I'm likely to tell other people about it.

"That's always been the logic, but this is what we're starting to be able to demonstrate."

## ADDRESSING THE DISSATISFACTION

Optum research also allowed for a comparison between two groups, the promoters and the detractors specifically, with the middle passives segmented out.

Detractors, more frequently than promoters, said their concentration and productivity at work was impacted multiple times in the past year because of specific stressors:



As Serxner explained, these results are logical.

When you're stressed out, it's hard to be a promoter for your company. When there are services to help you cope with that stress — programs designed to defuse such situations — it's easier to be positive.

"If employees feel like, 'These programs are good for me; my health is better,' they may be more likely to be positive and promote the company," he said.

It's a cycle, and understanding the value from a business side means employers can build a more loyal, more engaged workforce by doing everything they can to help ensure employees have relevant health programs available to them, and are frequently participating in them.

 [View the complete webinar.](#)

**Sources:**  
 1. McKinsey & Company. Why Frontline Workers Are Disengaged. March 2016.  
 2. Gallup. How Employee Engagement Drives Growth. June 20, 2013.