

The five keys to building a culture of health



What separates those employers who report that they have established a culture of health from those who haven't?

Optum® and the National Business Group on Health analyzed the results of the Optum “7th Annual Wellness in the Workplace” benchmarking survey to find out. We specifically examined what strategies and actions add up to a culture of health. We ultimately identified five key factors that set companies with a culture of health apart from those still trying to achieve that ideal.

This white paper, which features results from the survey, reveals several insights that will help employers understand the concept of a “culture of health,” why it is important and what actions employers have taken to build it.

Clearly, there's work to be done. While a majority of employers told us that they want to build a culture of health at work, only one in five reports that they have actually reached this goal.



Optum “Wellness in the Workplace Survey” background

- Online survey
- 545 respondents
- All surveyed companies offer at least two types of health management programs
- Individuals responding to the survey were involved in benefits decision-making
- A cross-section of industries was represented, including manufacturing, health care, professional services, finance, retail and transportation

Comparing the extremes

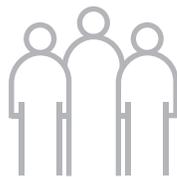
We analyzed answers from the 17 percent of employers who responded that they had firmly established a culture of health (95 respondents).¹

We then compared them with the answers from employers at the opposite end of the spectrum — those who felt that they had no culture of health (128 respondents).²

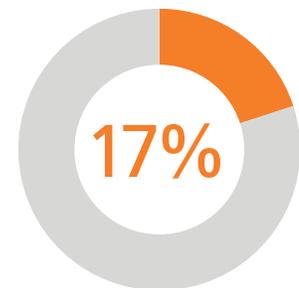
This paper highlights what differentiates the two groups.



Firmly established a culture of health



Have not established a culture of health



17% of employers firmly established a culture of health.

1. 6–7 rating on a 7-point scale.
2. 1–3 rating on a 7-point scale.

Defining culture of health

Our survey defined culture of health as a *work environment where employees have resources, tools and a support system that empowers and motivates them to take responsibility for their own health.*



Research question

“What do employers who have achieved a culture of health do differently?”

Key findings

According to our survey, employers with a culture of health:

1 View health holistically — physical, behavioral, financial and social 	2 Provide a comprehensive suite of health and wellness programs/services 	3 Plan strategically and dedicate staff to wellness programs 	4 Leverage multiple metrics to demonstrate program value 	5 Use a variety of engagement techniques — digital, environmental, incentives 
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Key benefit

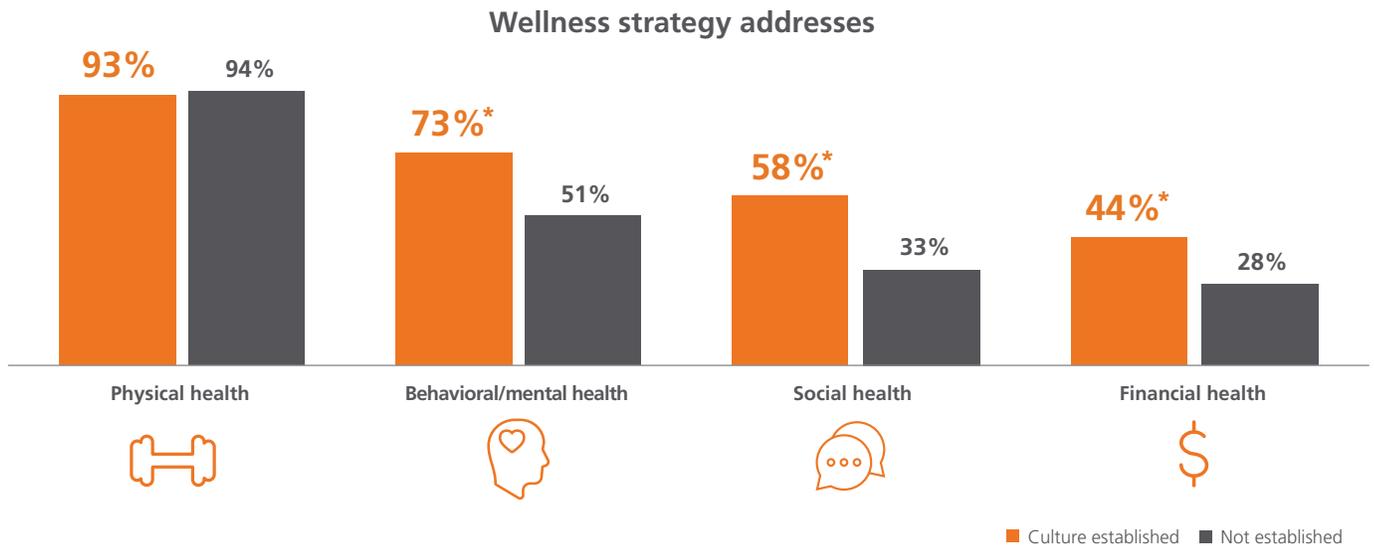
Employers with a culture of health report that they have higher levels of employee satisfaction and their employees take more responsibility for their health.

Five things that firms with a culture of health do

1 Focus on employees' overall well-being

Embracing a holistic view of employee health is a guiding principle of firms with a culture of health. They understand that total well-being involves not only physical health but behavioral, financial and even social health as well.

They are more likely to offer programs that target a wide array of needs:



QD7a. What aspects of employees' well-being do you feel your company's health and wellness strategy addresses?

*Indicates a statistically significant difference vs. comparative group.



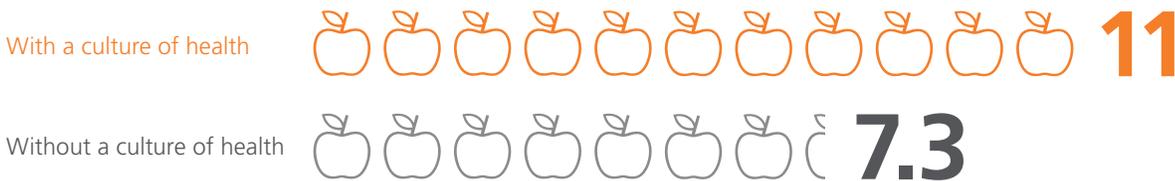
Thought starter

How can you help employees address all dimensions of well-being?

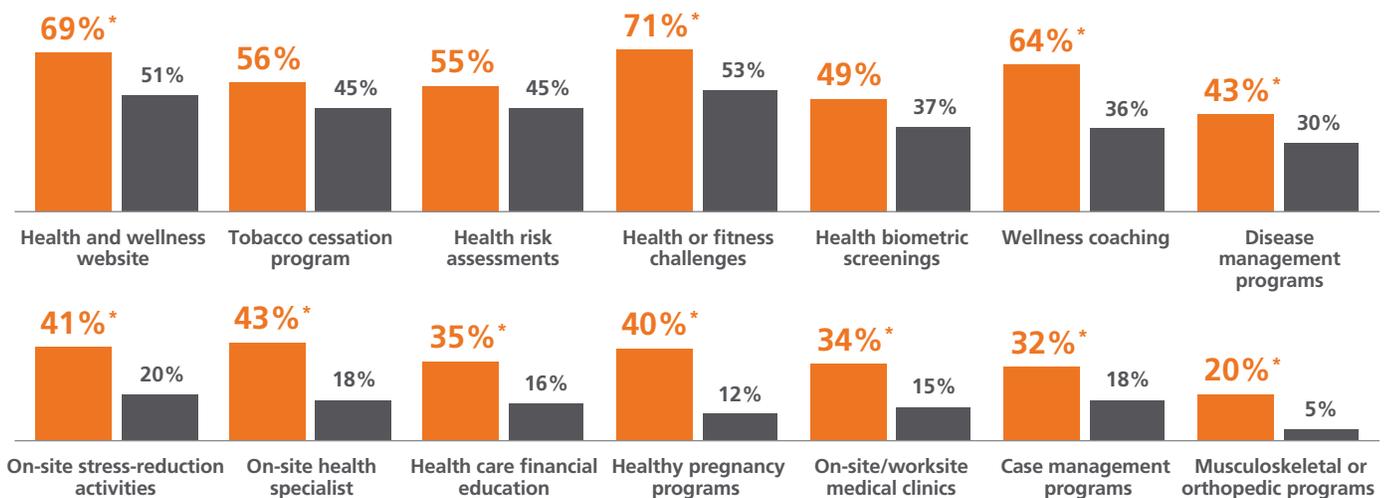
2 Offer a wide array of programs

Offering employees a wide variety of health and wellness programs helps build a culture of health. Companies with a culture of health offer significantly more wellness and health management programs (11 programs on average) than do firms without a culture of health (7.3 programs on average).

Average number of wellness and health management programs



Current wellness programs offered



QA1. Which of the following types of wellness and health management programs/activities do you currently offer?

■ Culture established ■ Not established

*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.



Thought starter

What program and service gaps do you have in your health and wellness strategy?

3 Address wellness strategically

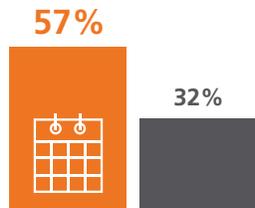
Companies with a culture of health view health and wellness programs more strategically. They take the long view — understanding that achieving a culture of health doesn't happen overnight. They have offered their programs for a longer time and commit more staff and budget than do firms lacking a healthy culture.

Employers with a culture of health:

Longevity

Have a longer history of offering wellness programs:

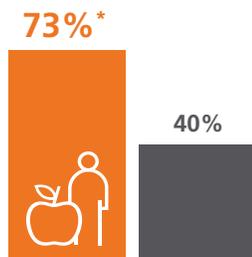
57 percent have been offering wellness programs for at least six years, compared with 32 percent of firms without a culture of health.



Staff

Are more likely to have a dedicated wellness staff member:

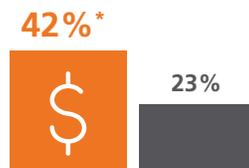
73 percent have a dedicated wellness staff member compared with 40 percent of firms without a culture of health.



Budget

Commit to a year-over-year investment in health and wellness:

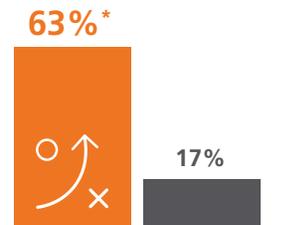
42 percent report a budget increase vs. 23 percent of those without a culture of health.



Business strategy

Believe that wellness solutions are important to their overall business strategy:

63 percent say it is very important, compared with 17 percent of firms without a culture of health.



*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

■ Culture established ■ Not established



Thought starters

- Do you have the staffing necessary to ensure success?
- How can you align your wellness program budget to have the biggest impact on what matters most to the company?
- Are your business leaders supporting the efforts to build a culture of health?
- Is the well-being agenda integrated into your company's business strategy?

4 Build a broader value story

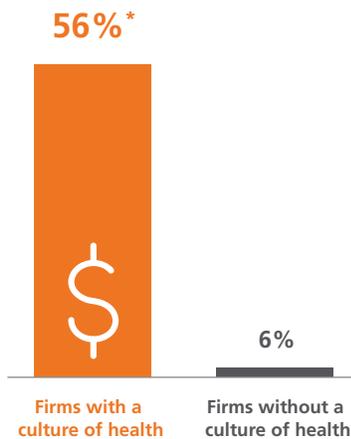
Building a more complete business case for health and wellness is a key priority for employers with a culture of health. Demonstrating return on investment (ROI) through medical cost savings remains important, but they also look at how these programs affect other business objectives, such as improving employee productivity, reducing absenteeism and enhancing morale. This broader focus is known as “value on investment” (VOI).

Employers with a culture of health:

VOI

Are more likely to take a VOI approach to their wellness programs:

56 percent strongly agree that they follow a VOI approach, compared with 6 percent of firms without a culture of health.



*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

Rationale

Rate the following reasons for offering programs as more important than firms without a culture of health:

Reduce employee health risk

90%* vs. **54%**
 With a culture of health vs. Without a culture of health

Improve employee morale

81%* vs. **45%**
 With a culture of health vs. Without a culture of health

Increase productivity

82%* vs. **50%**
 With a culture of health vs. Without a culture of health



Thought starters

- Are you able to track and measure metrics outside of health care cost savings?
- Can your vendor partner provide reporting to incorporate a wide range of VOI metrics?
- How will you bring the focus from ROI to VOI within your organization?

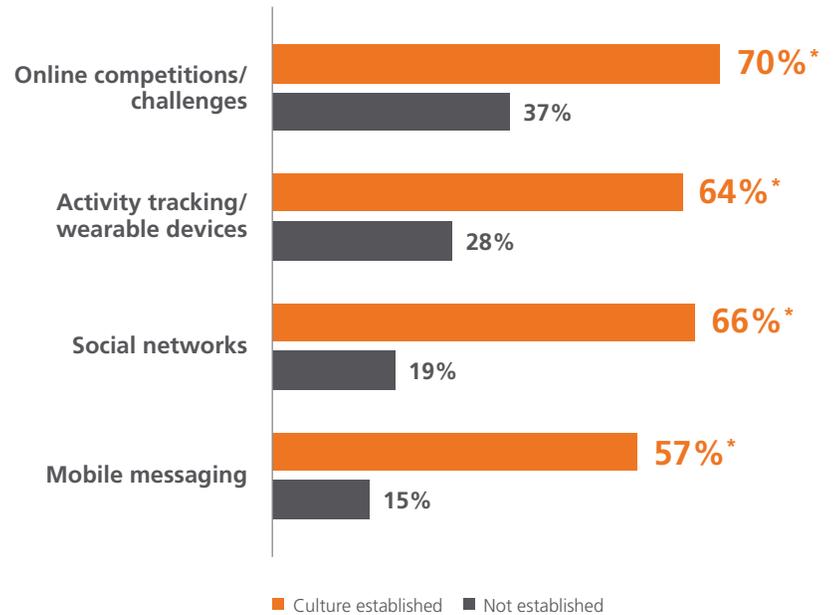
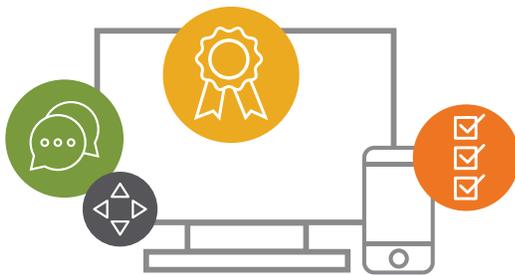
5 Leverage multiple engagement strategies

Employers with a culture of health use a broad array of strategies to engage their employees in health and wellness programs. They offer programs that include engaging strategies such as online competitions/challenges, wearable devices, social networks and mobile messaging more often than those without a culture of health. They also offer more — and more valuable — incentives to drive participation. These employers also understand that they cannot just rely on programs to drive a culture of health; rather, they are making changes to the workplace environment to support well-being and remove barriers to making good health decisions.

Employers with a culture of health:

Engagement strategies

Implement more engagement strategies than those without a culture of health:



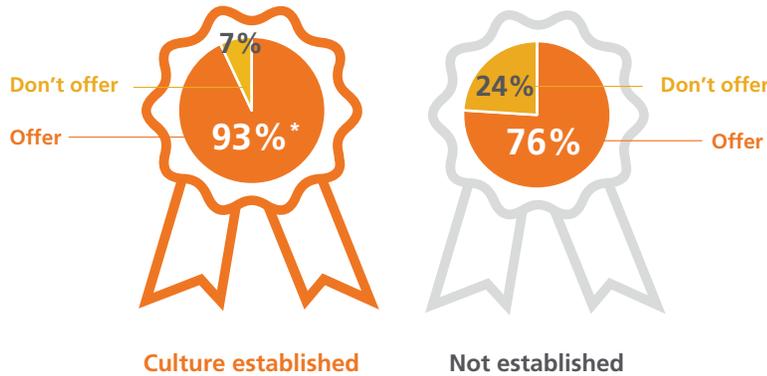
Percentages represent “Currently use/plan to use.”

*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

Incentives

Offer more health and wellness incentives:

93 percent offer incentives, compared with 76 percent of firms without a culture of health.



Average yearly dollar value of incentives per participant

\$517*

Firms with a culture of health

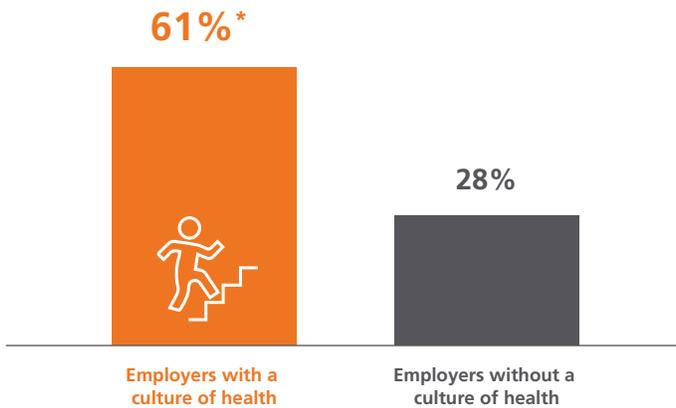
VS.

\$312

Firms without a culture of health

*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

Sixty-one percent of employers with a culture of health have made physical changes to the work environment to help employees make healthy decisions at work, compared with 28 percent of employers without a culture of health.

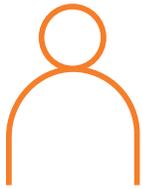


*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.



Thought starters

- Is your vendor partner integrating new technologies with traditional engagement programs?
- Does your workplace environment make healthy choices the path of least resistance?
- Is your incentive strategy improving your participation numbers?
- Are you rewarding programs that actually change health behavior?



Impact of culture of health

Having looked at the characteristics of employers with a culture of health, we now turn to results. The survey findings indicate that employers with a culture of health have better outcomes than firms without a healthy culture.

Employers with a culture of health report:

Employees are satisfied with their job experience

64%* vs. **17%**

With a culture of health

Without a culture of health

Employees take responsibility for their health

53%* vs. **10%**

With a culture of health

Without a culture of health

Employees know how to navigate the health care system

39%* vs. **9%**

With a culture of health

Without a culture of health

*Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.



The opportunity ahead — key takeaways

A culture of health is more than just offering wellness programs. It is about creating an enterprise-wide commitment to healthy behaviors.

Our research highlights some key differences between employers who report that they have built a culture of health and those who have not. As an employer, you can work with your vendor partner to:

- Make greater use of digital technologies to engage employees
- Build a workplace environment that makes good health decisions the path of least resistance
- Offer services that support employees' behavioral, social and financial needs
- Gain support from business leaders outside of the HR organization to drive results
- Tie program outcomes not only to medical cost savings, but also to other business metrics such as productivity and presenteeism
- Align your incentive strategy with your health and wellness program objectives

Contributors

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Serxner brings the breadth of his experience in academia, industry and consulting to his role as chief health officer for Optum.

Serxner earned a master of public health from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a doctorate from the University of California, Irvine, where his research focused on health promotion and disease prevention in social ecology. He is a board member, executive committee member and vice president of the C. Everett Koop Health Project. He sits on the editorial review board of the *American Journal of Health Promotion* and also edits and is a reviewer for peer review journals such as the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* and *Health Affairs*.

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Sherrets is the Director of Workforce Well-being and Health Innovations for the National Business Group on Health. She has responsibility for translating evidence into practical, employer-based strategies in the areas of employee well-being, specifically as it relates to program design and employee engagement strategies.

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Kichlu has more than 20 years of marketing experience. He has led marketing for iconic U.S. brands, including Lipton® Tea, Lipton Iced Tea Mix, Promise® margarine and I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!®. He has also served as the director of marketing for Gerber® baby food and Gerber's portfolio of health and wellness products. He has three U.S. Consumer Product patents to his name. At Optum, Kichlu oversees the Optum Resource Center for Health and Well-Being. Kichlu has an MBA in marketing and strategy from the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University.

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Ratelis has worked in the health and wellness industry for over 15 years. As a health cost management consultant at a regional benefit consulting practice, she built custom wellness strategies for hundreds of employers. Ratelis also held a product development role at a national health plan, where she developed and marketed health assessments and wellness coaching programs. At Optum, she leads the content development strategy for the Optum Resource Center for Health and Well-Being. Ratelis holds a BA in community health education from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, and a master of business communication from the University of St. Thomas.

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