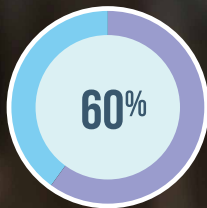




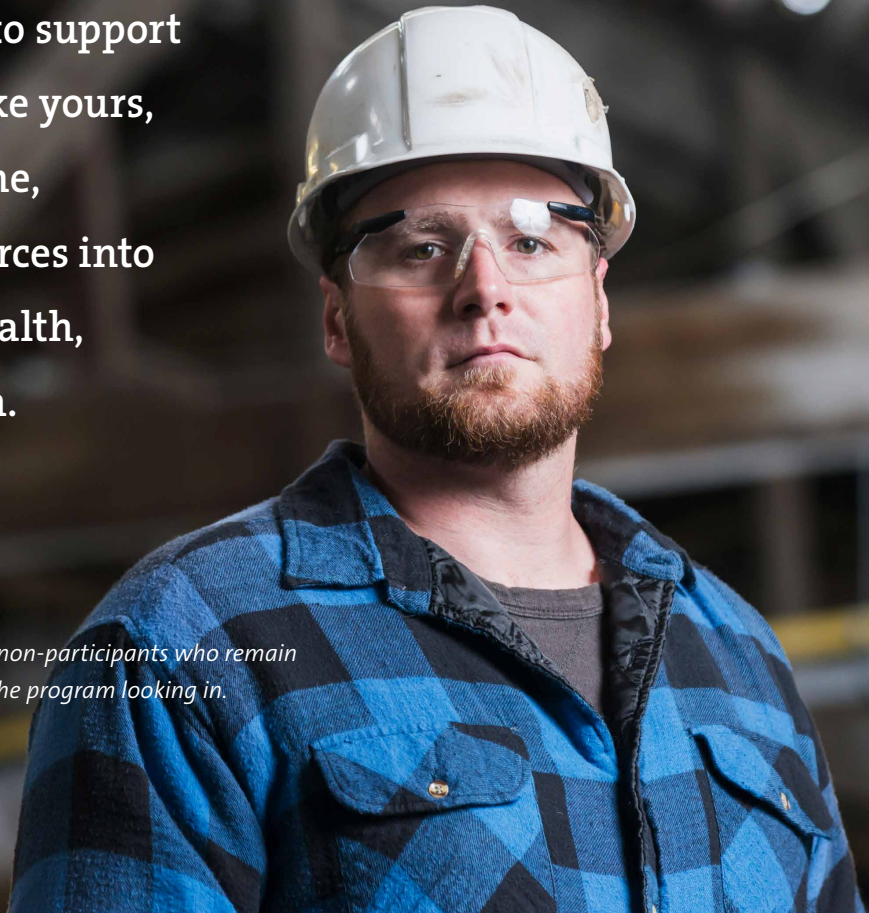
Engage Me

The critical role of culture and personal connections as drivers of employee participation in a health, wellness and fitness program

A competitive business and employee health are inseparable. And to support both, many organizations, like yours, have invested significant time, money and thoughtful resources into building a comprehensive health, wellness and fitness program.



Number of non-participants who remain outside of the program looking in.



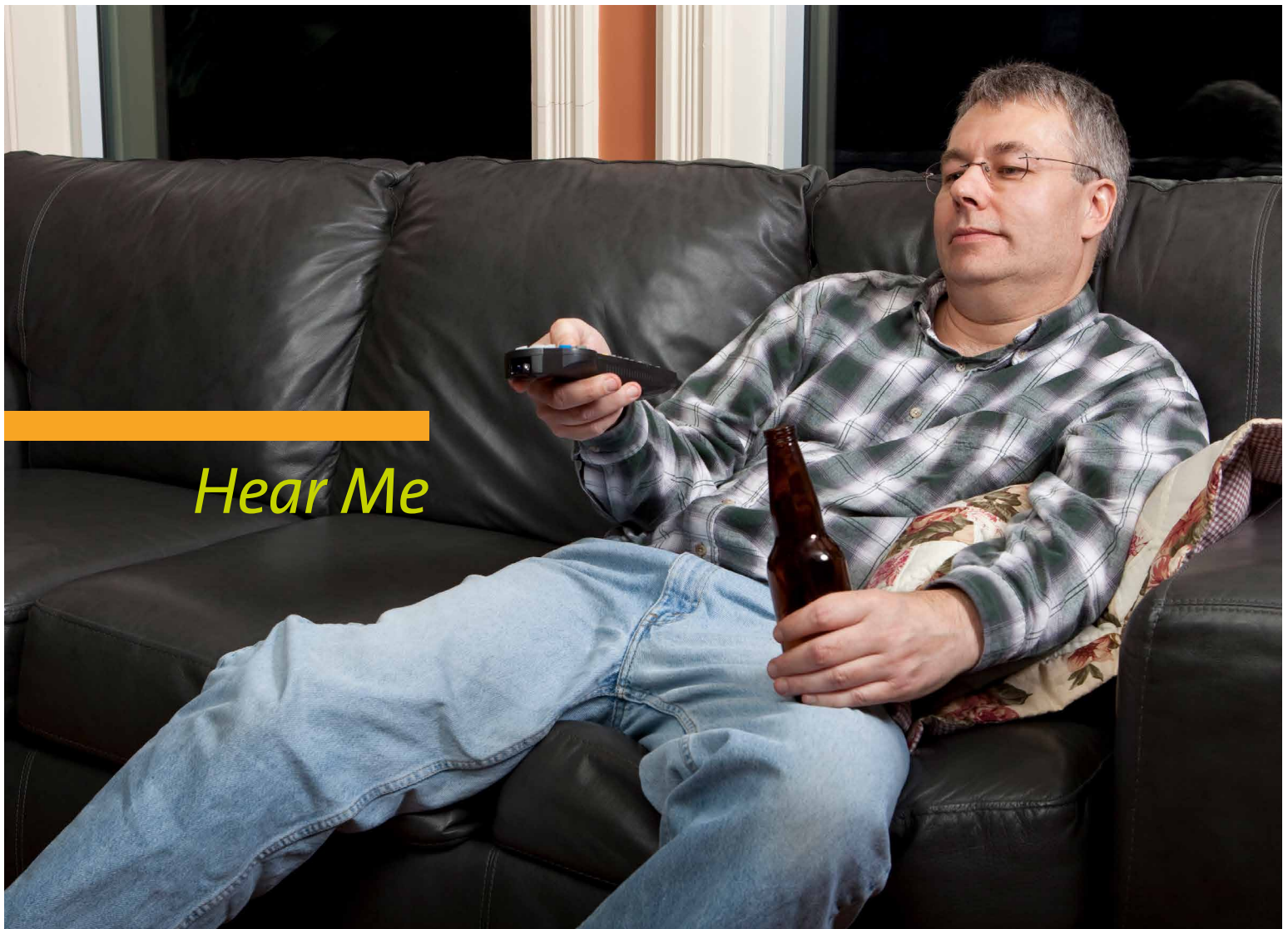
Yet, despite the myriad of available tools, technology and programs that have attracted the number of employee participants you have now, there is still a significant number of non-participants—**nearly 60 percent**—who remain outside of the program looking in. They are those who indicate they are likely to start participating, but for some reason do not.

So, what's holding them back? How do you get non-participating employees in your program? And how do you keep current participants happy and fully engaged?

This *Think* piece provides several important answers from the very employees who are looking for meaningful program engagement that is also multi-dimensional. The findings outlined within

these pages are from extensive research conducted by HealthFitness between 2015 and 2016. They highlight what employees and employers say they value most in a health, wellness and fitness program, compare their different perceptions, and pinpoint the key drivers that influence employees' participation decisions.

Our aim is to use these fresh insights to help employers determine where opportunities exist to engage more employees in compelling ways that increase active participation and sustain higher levels of health and well-being needed to ultimately help move your business forward.



The adage, *“If you build it, they will come,”* doesn’t necessarily apply to the wellness industry. Employers who have chosen to enter the health and wellness space know what that means: simply offering a health, wellness and fitness program doesn’t guarantee that employees will participate in it. Yet, to maximize the program’s potential to meet its objectives requires active engagement from as many employees as possible. This is especially important considering that approximately one-third of employees, whether they participate or not, have a family history of a chronic condition and a similar proportion suffer from a condition themselves.

And because 60 percent of non-participating employees say they’re open to joining their employer’s health, wellness and fitness programs, it reaffirms the potential for a comprehensive program to generate a healthier, happier, efficient workforce, if you know how to engage them.

To continue helping employers achieve this important goal, and to know for sure who is engaged at any level and who can be persuaded to start participating, we began asking questions.

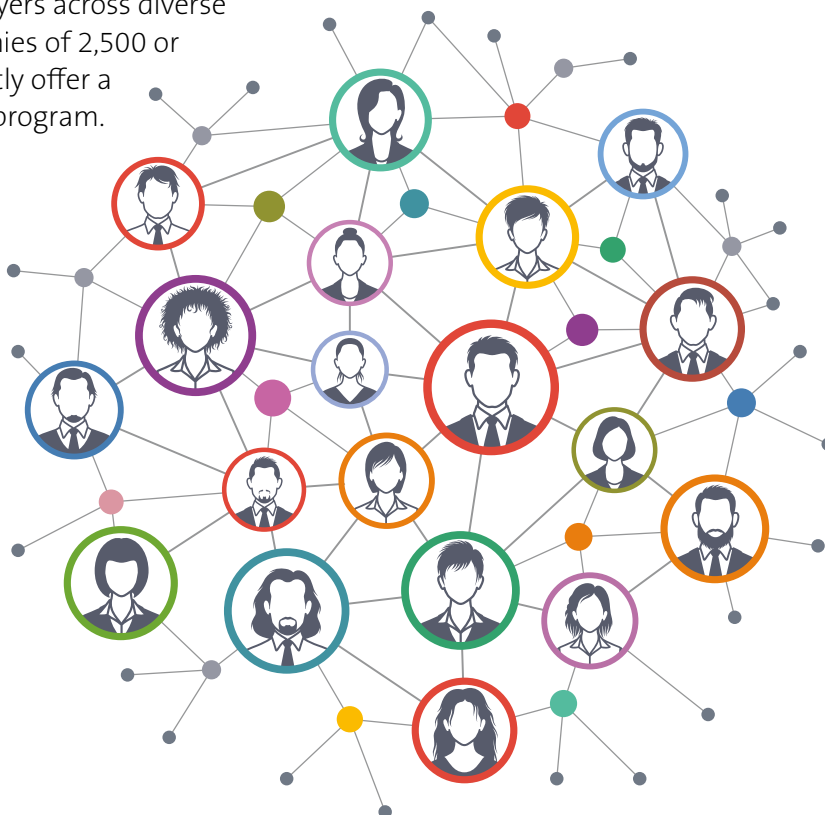
The path to knowledge



HealthFitness first wanted to gain a deeper understanding of what employees value in a health, wellness and fitness program and compare it to what employers value. We wanted to know why some employees are participating while others are not, and, more specifically, what would get non-participants to fully engage. Ultimately, could there be a secret formula to program participation and retention? Is there something—or someone—more motivating and elusive among the useful tools and resources like health assessments, screenings, coaching support and web platforms that get employees to say, “I’m in”?

We began our path to knowledge in 2015 with blinded [research studies](#) conducted among a sizeable group of employees (participants and non-participants) and employers across diverse industries, surveying companies of 2,500 or more employees that currently offer a health, wellness and fitness program.

We collected employees’ input first through discovery sessions with those whose employers offer at least one program such as health screenings, online health assessments, health coaching, and/or coaching support for chronic health conditions. These employees’ responses would establish a basis for further evaluation based on their participation status, age, life stage, personal health views and other demographics. Then, using those results, we performed qualitative and quantitative research to explore needs and hypotheses and to reveal category drivers and barriers respectively. Afterwards, we followed a similar research approach with employers to better understand employers’ perceptions and needs, and the factors that matter most when choosing a specialized wellness provider.



The voice of the people



WHO THEY ARE

To get to the whys and why nots of program engagement, our research uncovered distinct personas among the varying employee profiles that appeared along a *spectrum of participation*. Their position on the spectrum denotes their current engagement level and their likelihood to engage in a program—from the most committed employee participants (EEPs) to the more hesitant non-participants. The goal is to move these personas from right to left along the spectrum. And getting them to actively participate requires a customized engagement approach that considers their different needs and communication preferences.

WHAT'S IN THEIR WAY

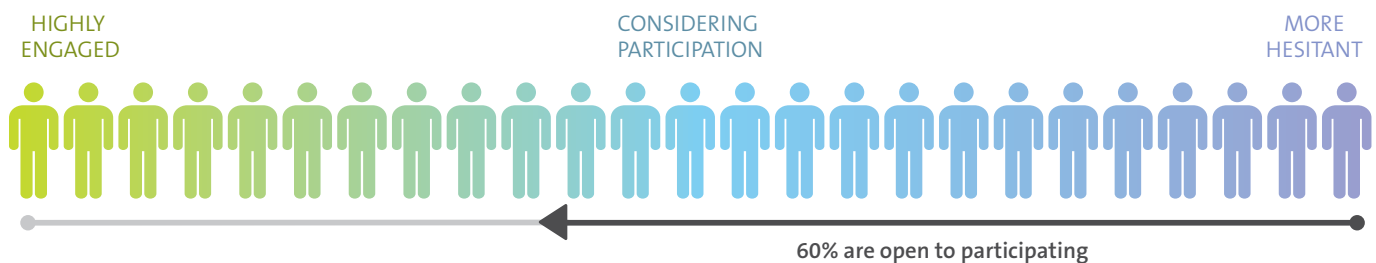
In their responses, employee non-participants (EENPs) named the top barriers keeping them from participating in their employer's health, wellness and fitness program: **Inconvenience/non-supportive company culture; trust/privacy** concerns with their employer; **lack of information/awareness** of available programs and low confidence in professionals' ability to help them; and reluctance stemming from concerns that the program won't help their personal health and wellness or fear of hearing bad health results. Of all the barriers named, **69 percent of EENPs say the biggest is lack of information**. And it's impacting their perception of available programs. These barriers and solutions are addressed in the [Emotional Delivery](#) section of this document.

WHAT WILL BRING THEM IN

Your health, wellness and fitness program is not unlike many modern consumer brands. The same approaches that can get someone to buy a book, a smartphone or stream a movie can also influence employees' decisions to become or stay active in your company's programs. That's what employees told us in our research. **So, what did they specifically say pulls them in?**

The top five participation drivers among all employees include: **Personalization/customization; ease/convenience; motivation/incentive; mental health support; and company culture**. EENPs additionally said that **trust/credibility** and **community/social connection** would persuade them to participate. And while there's no doubt that **technology** has its role as a powerful and convenient influencer over their everyday choices and habits, it's just one piece of the larger, complex, personal decision puzzle. **Authenticity, simplicity, convenience, emotions** and a **personalized experience** play a critical role in attracting employees to your program and keep them coming back. So do **company culture** and **human connection**—two of the most motivating and highly desired program attributes employees say matter to them but are currently under-delivered.

SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION



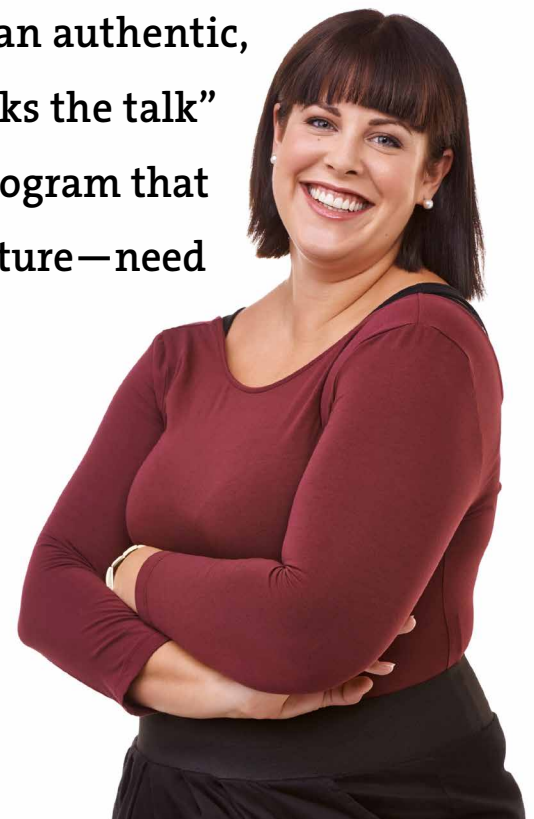
EEPs—Employee participants, EENPs—Employee non-participants



MAPPING A PATH TO HIGHER ENGAGEMENT

This *Think* piece not only provides an overview of our key research findings but also gives those of us in the wellness industry a specific roadmap to higher employee participation rates, if we will follow it. The call is clear: ***“Hear me. This is how to get me.”*** And all of us—health and wellness curators, providers, employers and industry leaders—must listen to what employees are saying.

There is tremendous potential to take our important health, wellness and fitness programs to a new level in the industry; to allow all that we’ve invested in building comprehensive programs to produce something more meaningful and effective—an authentic, supportive culture that “walks the talk” and delivers a humanized program that participants—current and future—need and are asking us for.





Convince Me

Would you think twice about going to a gym that urged you to shape up but where the trainers never exercise? How likely are you to keep visiting a doctor who you trust to keep your personal information private but discusses your weight in front of others? While these examples are exaggerated, they illustrate a cultural disconnect that can create barriers to engagement. A company's culture can be affected similarly when health, wellness and fitness programs are said to be a priority but the reality reflects something different.

Culture isn't something that is talked about much in the wellness industry, but it should be because of its correlation to current and future program participation. Our research affirmed that EEPs' and EENPs' beliefs about their employers' culture and values on health and wellness impact their participation. **A supportive culture lends credibility to and trust in the program by living the value. It leaves no gap between what an organization says and what it does.** It can also empower more employees to do the right thing for their health and inspire others to do the same.

Our research uncovered several important culture-related attitudes among EEPs and EENPs, including significant gaps in desired employer involvement in their health, wellness and fitness programs.

EMPLOYEES ARE PERSUADED BY GENUINENESS

Consistent with their employers' perceptions, EEPs say their employer encourages them to be healthy, provides needed resources to be well and allows time during work to participate in program activities. And while they also agree that their company supports a lifestyle of health, wellness and fitness, EEPs indicate their employer is under-delivering a culture that authentically embraces wellness and is falling short on actively engaging their coworkers (peers and management) who want to be in the program.

However, EENPs view things very differently. Their responses showed significant gaps in perception compared to what their employers believe. EENPs feel less encouraged by their employer to live a healthy lifestyle. They say they do not have the resources they need to be well, that they are not given time from work to participate in program activities and express a desire for their company to take a more active role in helping them. In fact, 53 percent of EENPs indicated at least one culture-related barrier keeping them out of the program, which ranged from lack of time to participate, inconvenience or no employer support for participation. To a greater degree than EEPs, they point to authenticity as a missing element and do not view their employer's intentions as genuine.

CULTURAL SOLUTIONS

The top benefits that can get EENPs to start participating are related to a company culture that fosters a helpful environment supportive of health and wellness. To be culturally led, programs must:

- 1 Be completely embraced by a company's culture
- 2 Make it easy for employees to do the right thing for their health
- 3 Be flexible and allow EENPs to start participating with relative ease at and away from work
- 4 Build community, connecting EENPs with co-workers (peers and management) who share similar interests and want to actively participate
- 5 Relate to EENPs and provide meaningful, realistic advice for their situation
- 6 Be communicated effectively with importance given to privacy concerns, range of program offerings, program efficacy and examples of "people like me"

Expertise from a wellness provider can help organizations "walk the talk" and embrace an authentic culture of health. Their support can also help build trust, assure privacy and foster personal connections with employees in convenient ways—by phone, online, and in-person at or away from the worksite—that motivate them to make healthier lifestyle choices and stay actively engaged.

Organizations that are beginning to invest in their health, wellness and fitness programs should go all in on culture up front and not after the fact.

It's important to critically assess your company's culture through a wellness lens. Then, do all you can to bolster and enhance it in ways that authentically support your health, wellness and fitness program goals. Companies with established or expanding programs can benefit from wellness provider expertise to help them address and prioritize program needs that support a culture of health.

53 percent of EENPs indicated at least one culture-related barrier keeping them out of the program, which ranged from lack of time to participate, inconvenience or no employer support for participation.



Connect Me

There are plenty of activities that can be enjoyed alone, like walking, reading and even shooting hoops. But what about dining out? Going to a movie? Or to the doctor for a medical procedure? Being alone can be isolating, boring or unsettling. Within an authentic company culture of wellness, there are EENPs who say they need a sense of community to get them active in a health, wellness and fitness program.

EMPLOYEES VALUE CONNECTION

EEPs know their employer's program best. And while they are almost two times more satisfied with their program offering than EENPs, they say that the program falls short on getting their peers to participate with them. **EENPs say specifically that they want to interact with their coworkers who share similar interests and health risks; however, 53 percent of them still feel that there are cultural barriers preventing them from fully engaging, including inconvenience and their employers' lack of support for their participation.**

In our research, employees made clear which program benefit provided the convenience and connectivity they want but isn't widely offered in most health, wellness and fitness programs: on-site fitness facilities. In fact, of all the program types considered, this benefit appeared to have the most positive impact on employee engagement. **Between 40 to 45 percent of employees who are offered on-site fitness facility access choose to participate and report the highest satisfaction with them largely due to their convenience, inviting environment and low or no membership cost.** For employers who offer them, these facilities help deliver support for the mental, physical and emotional needs that employees rated as top participation drivers. They also bring together like-minded employees with similar goals, thereby building a sense of community that EEPs and EENPs alike say is crucial but currently under-delivered in their programs.

Employees' responses tell us that on-site fitness facilities are an important component of health and wellness and lend credibility to an authentic, supportive culture, especially when participants see their managers and company executives working out. Their input also indicates that having access to an on-site fitness facility conveys empathy and makes employees feel like their employer cares about them. Given that less personal information is shared through this type of program, employees are more willing to be contacted by their employer and remain open to contact from a trusted third-party provider.

PEER/COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Those who are passionate about health and well-being and culturally aligned with an organization can bring employees together and make

participating more meaningful and enjoyable. Making an authentic connection with employees can get and keep them in a program and inspire them to become a positive example for others. Employers who make EEPs ambassadors of the company's program can leverage their positive experiences and enthusiasm to "spread the health" to their peers. For employers considering a fitness facility offering as part of their health, wellness and fitness program, the benefits to company culture combined with high employee participation and satisfaction make it a worthwhile investment.



EENPs say specifically that they want to interact with their coworkers who share similar interests and health risks.

Empower Me

Technology continues to change the way we do just about everything, from buying groceries to tracking our physical activity, sleep patterns and diet. There's no question about its strong influence over individual choices and habits.

It allows program engagement to be more flexible and convenient, makes participating easier and exciting and puts the power to manage their health right at employees' fingertips.



Having a provider strong in technology integration with employers' intranet and website functionality can make participating an easier, more flexible and personalized experience. Combined with support from trained professionals, technology can be used to engage employees in all of their employer's programs across all their devices and empower them to take control of their health.

Yet, as powerful as it is, technology is only one piece of the health and wellness puzzle and doesn't solve for EENP engagement. The unique drivers and touchpoints highlighted within this *Think* piece are what employees say it takes to get them active in a health, wellness and fitness program. And what they really seek is a personal connection .

As powerful as it is, technology is only one piece of the health and wellness puzzle...what they (employees) really seek is a personal connection.





Recognize Me

Think back to the last time you actually had to call a company about a product issue. All you wanted was to speak to a real, live person who could help you. But chances are you got an automated attendant on the other end of the phone that guided you through layers of prompts to get to a human voice. Did you feel more like a number? Faceless? Less like an individual with unique needs? In fact, the only way the representative knew anything about you was by pulling your name from a database.

To really understand someone means connecting with him or her on a deeper level. The best brands in the world know exactly who their customers are, how best to connect with them and what drives them to buy their specific products over and over again. Above all, they understand that their customers are human beings. To be successful, those who run health, wellness and fitness programs must do the same.

Almost 75 percent of employees say personal touch is important in their health, wellness and fitness program and can come from knowledgeable “live” experts—coaches and specialists—who are credible, engaging, easy to access and provide one-on-one support for their specific needs. Yet, despite being a driver of continued participation, EEPs report that their programs currently under-deliver on live expert support and aren’t customizable to their specific health needs and goals. EENPs say they would participate if programs instilled confidence that they are receiving advice from trained professionals.

PERSONAL TOUCH SOLUTIONS

The right provider can bring the right blend of expertise, empathy, trust and supportive technology that is likely to drive EENPs to participate and keep current EEPs active in the program. Having “live” expert support also helps employers deliver a more customized program that connects emotionally with employees, making them feel more empowered to take charge of their health.



Make Me Happy

Let's talk about feelings. They drive every consumer decision from buying a car to choosing a brand of cereal. They can also impact the health of your business. When employees feel understood, supported, safe and confident, those positive feelings can translate into higher productivity, satisfaction, retention and other pluses for their company.

Employees' health choices and emotions are closely connected. A program that fosters empathy, understanding and acknowledgement of their emotions can form and strengthen connections and remove a major engagement barrier to win them into the program. Therefore, it's important to support their wellness beyond physical health.

A successful health, wellness and fitness program requires strong emotional delivery and must establish a personal connection to actively engage employees.

The research produced some findings that will make employers very happy. Based on their feedback, EEPs have a highly favorable perception of their employer and program. And to these participants (and their employers) go the spoils.

In fact, 70 percent of EEPs reported that their program offering means their employer cares about them. And EEPs also indicated that they are likelier than EENPs to stay with their employer, refer someone to the company and be more productive.



79%

of EEPs say they are extremely satisfied with their employer's program offering compared to 41 percent of EENPs.



76%

of EEPs perceive themselves as healthy compared to 63 percent of EENPs.



75%

of EEPs say their employer supports a lifestyle of health, wellness and fitness.

Emotional Delivery



FROM FEAR TO EMPOWERMENT

Our research showed that employees value mental health support and say it's crucial to their participation decisions. In fact, they said it can be as important as support for physical health, if not more. We also found that there are three key emotions associated with health, wellness and fitness programs that drive participation decisions: fear, inspiration and empowerment.

FEAR

Trust is critical to active participation and a strong culture of health. And fear is the most top-of-mind concern for all employees, with nearly 80 percent of them expressing **worry** about their personal information being disclosed to their employer. In fact, 53 percent of EENPs indicated that they are very or extremely likely to start participating in a health, wellness and fitness program if they know their personal health information is protected from their employer. Nearly 70 percent of EEPs and EENPs **fear** their employer will obtain their personal information and use it against them. If that barrier were removed, 55 percent of EENPs said they were very or extremely likely to engage in their employer's program. And 34 percent of EENPs said that keeping their use of resources confidential from their employer is most important to their participation decision. Perhaps the most surprising finding is that **more than 50 percent of EENPs reported at least one critical privacy-related concern, saying they are uneasy about participating in an employer-sponsored program, they don't feel like their employer gives them the level of privacy assurance they want, and they would prefer to seek health support on their own.** Because employees perceive confidentiality as performing below average currently, it's important to prioritize it in program communications.

Also feeding employees' fears is **uncertainty** over who is administering their health, wellness and fitness programs. Many employers with a deep, holistic offering use a "white label" program strategy and may also have multiple program components being managed by multiple provider sources. All of this diversification can generate **confusion** and perpetuate privacy fears.

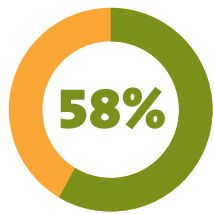
Nearly 80 percent of employees express worry about their personal information being disclosed to their employer.

Additionally, confusion can create awareness gaps. And while lack of awareness doesn't necessarily generate fearfulness, it does affect participation rates. Of all the barriers named, **69 percent of EENPs say the biggest is lack of information.** And it's impacting their perception of available programs. In some cases, the proportion of EENPs who are aware of available programs is 30 percent lower than the proportion of employers who say they offer specific programs, thus indicating a knowledge gap. There also seems to be a disconnect in terminology and definition that is affecting employees' and employers' understanding of program offerings. For instance, **despite offering at least one program type to their employees, nearly one-third of employer respondents claim they do not offer a health, wellness and fitness program.**

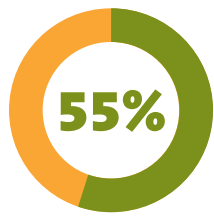
Emotional Delivery



The solution to overcoming almost every barrier is educating EENPs about what is available and how it can benefit them. **Using a reputable third party that is transparent to employees can help remove the barriers of fear, confusion and distrust in a health, wellness and fitness program.**



of employees say they prefer to be contacted by someone outside of their employer.



of employers indicate their openness to third party support to help mitigate employee privacy concerns.

A specialty provider can effectively distance the company/human resources from the program and reassure EENPs that their personal information is protected. The provider can also educate employees about program availability, their employer's role in the program, plainly explain HIPAA rules and relate program value to further support a culture of trust and drive participation. Working directly with employees, providers can help them move past their fear of hearing bad health results by reassuring them that a knowledgeable expert is on their side—one with a history of success in helping others like them meet personal wellness goals. Those with demonstrated expertise in building strong emotional connections with employees will not only influence higher participation, but also help change perceptions of employer intentions and increase program satisfaction.

INSPIRATION

Inspiration can be found just about anywhere, including a health, wellness and fitness program. Nothing says, "I'm in there with you," like seeing a manager or the company CEO regularly participating in program activities. It's one of many ways that culture can inspire EENPs who say they need it and are more likely to begin participating when they find it. Confidence in trained professionals' support, meaningful advice that suits real life and community with others who have benefited from program support can also motivate them to act.

To reach amenable and more hesitant employees requires education on program effectiveness and it's particularly beneficial when using examples of participants who are "people like me." Provider experts who understand what motivates individuals to change can offer EENPs insightful coaching suggestions and help them make the connection between their everyday choices and health results—two of the largest areas of opportunity in the market.

EMPOWERMENT

Who doesn't want to feel powerful? When employees have a sense of control over their well-being, it's great for them and great for business. So it's no surprise that empowerment is a benefit topping the list of EEPs who say that feeling equipped with the ability to take charge of their health is crucially important to them. It's also strongly correlated to their continued program participation. Specialty providers who offer hands-on, personalized support and integrate positive reinforcement can keep EEPs active in the program.



Understand Me

The best experiences are often the most personal ones. Buying a pair of new running shoes online, for example, is an easy, convenient transaction. But getting help from a “live” salesperson who is a seasoned marathoner, who listened to you describe your run habits and past injuries, and recommended a heel lift to protect your damaged Achilles, and suggested you try it out on a short running trail near your home—that’s a deeper, personal, impactful interaction.

Successful health, wellness and fitness programs are developed to meet the unique needs of human beings where they are. And there is a layer of complexity in individual needs that requires a customized approach to drive employee participation and motivate them to make healthier

decisions. A participant benefits more from her health coach who listens and goes deeper to understand her personal values, interests and emotional drivers instead of simply asking questions and dispensing advice. Through active listening, the coach can learn that the participant who enjoys being outdoors and walking her dog every day is also frequently bothered by asthma symptoms. The coach can help the participant follow her care plan for asthma, email her some tips to help her through allergy season and remind her to set up her exercise tracker that’s available on her program’s web platform either online or via mobile app.



Our research revealed that employers appear to be less motivated by employee-level personalization. The lack of employer focus on customization may be why employees also report that their programs fall short on delivering a personalized experience. EENPs and EEPs rate a customized program as crucial and say that the ability to meet their specific needs will influence their decisions to start and continue participating respectively. EEPs specifically pointed to flexible engagement methods (online, phone, mobile app, in-person) as an important benefit and want the ability to choose their preferred participation method. They value a program that helps them connect their health results to their everyday choices and want information on new programs, tips, deadlines and customized topics that

meet their needs. Having the ability to also choose the type and frequency of communication methods helps employees feel like the programs were meant for them rather than the masses.

Offering a health, wellness and fitness program that customizes experiences for every employee and gives them choices can enhance their perceptions of an authentic company culture, address emotional needs, remove barriers to participation and improve program satisfaction. It's important to also consider a provider with demonstrated ability to deliver the right blend of high personal touch and technology that reaches employees where they are and humanizes the program experience.

Based on the research, offering a customized experience for every employee:

- **Enhances their perceptions of company culture**
- **Addresses emotional needs**
- **Removes participation barriers**
- **Improves program satisfaction**



Using this insight...we can provide the right blend of high personal touch and technology for a more humanized experience.



CONCLUSION

Investing in a health, wellness and fitness program is a smart business strategy that helps employees and companies stay healthier, efficient and competitive. But having a comprehensive program doesn't mean employees will gravitate to it. Maximizing on that investment requires a higher degree of employee participation, and meaningful program engagement must go beyond sophisticated tools and technology. To be successful, it requires a multi-faceted approach instead. Employers must focus on the elusive drivers—**culture, trust, authenticity, convenience, emotions and strong personal connections**—that will keep active employees active and influence non-participating employees to join in.

Our research process started with questions about perceived program value and needs related to participation. And employees answered clearly:

- They are **persuaded by genuineness** in a workplace culture that fully embraces wellness, safeguards their privacy and makes it easier to do the right thing for their health at and away from work.

- They **seek a highly personalized experience and meaningful interaction** with “live” experts who understand their lifestyle, habits and goals, and who have a history of helping others like them achieve success. Employees say it's crucial that these professionals help them link their health results to their everyday choices and provide the emotional support that empowers them to take control of their health.
- They also **value connection**. Employees say that having a sense of community with others who share their common interests and health goals influences their participation decisions and program satisfaction.

Using this insight, all of us in the industry can evaluate health, wellness and fitness programs through a new lens. We can enhance program delivery to address employees' complex, individual needs. And we can provide the right blend of high personal touch and technology for a more humanized program experience. All of these actions, employees tell us, are what it takes to get and keep them actively engaged in your program—actions that can also translate to higher productivity, satisfaction, retention and other pluses for your organization.

POOR

AVERAGE

GOOD

VERY GOOD

EXCELLENT



Methodology



What do employees and employers value most in their health, wellness and fitness program? How are their perceptions alike or different? And what does it take to get and keep employees engaged? These key questions prompted HealthFitness to launch an in-depth series of qualitative and quantitative research between 2015 and 2016 to search for answers. Our path to knowledge began with online, blinded surveys among employees (participants and non-participants) and employers currently offering a health, wellness and fitness program.

This section highlights the methods used by The Connell Group to determine and prioritize the needs of both employees and employers within the category to drive higher engagement.

Our path to knowledge began with online, blinded surveys among employees (participants and non-participants) and employers currently offering a health, wellness and fitness program



STEP 1: EMPLOYEE SURVEYS

STUDY CONFIGURATION

We began with discovery sessions to identify needs and knowledge gaps related to employee program participation. Then, we followed with qualitative research to further explore those needs and test assumptions. Qualitative learning indicated that there are functional and emotional needs that influence employees' participation in a health, wellness and fitness program, and this insight informed a set of attributes tested for category

drivers and category delivery. Our research team generated a full set of corridors, representing key theme areas related to employee participants (EEPs) and employee non-participants (EENPs). For each corridor, the team created a set of different testable attributes—27 for health and wellness and 19 for on-site fitness—to include in a follow-up, quantitative study that helped us identify and understand engagement drivers and barriers.



EMPLOYEE SAMPLE

The research included a sizeable base of employees with access to health, wellness and fitness programs through their employer who were segmented into sub-groups of participants and non-participants. To qualify for this study, employees were required to have at least one of the following programs available to them:

- Health screenings for cholesterol, body mass index, hypertension, blood glucose and other biometrics
- Online health assessments covering family medical history, lifestyle habits and other personal information
- Coaching support for a chronic condition such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, hypertension, and other issues
- Programs, coaching or other resources offering support for weight management, physical activity, smoking cessation, stress management, work/life balance and/or nutrition

Some employees surveyed also had access to other programs, including: an on-site fitness center;** free or discounted access to a local gym/fitness center;** access to professionals who can help them navigate the healthcare system and provide support for healthcare claims resolution; and/or access to a nurse hotline offering support for common health issues. Access to these programs alone did not qualify respondents for the study.

Respondents were full-time employees (n=465) of companies with at least 2,500 employees. Ninety-three percent of those surveyed worked for organizations with 5,000+ employees and represented a diverse industry mix, including healthcare, professional and financial services, industrial/manufacturing, government, higher education and retail industries, among others.

SURVEY CONTENT

The 25-minute, online questionnaire qualified each employee respondent up front, then, proceeded to ask questions about:

- Perceptions of health
- Program satisfaction (overall and individual)
- Continued participation (for current EEPs) or desire to start participating (EENPs)
- Perceptions of employer involvement
- Main attributes (importance, delivery, likeliness to influence participation)
- Actions they would take if the program were discontinued
- On-site fitness center access
- Preventive health and wellness programs and support
- Coaching support for chronic conditions
- Health and wellness resources
- Barriers to program participation
- Employee engagement
- Life stages, company culture and incentives
- On-site medical clinics
- Demographics

*** Because health management programs and fitness are too different to analyze, we performed our analyses separately.*



STEP 2: EMPLOYER SURVEYS

Following the employee qualitative and quantitative research, HealthFitness conducted similar blinded research studies, surveying mid-sized and large employers offering a health, wellness and fitness program.

STUDY CONFIGURATION


Similar to our employee studies, the initial qualitative research allowed us to explore employers' needs within the health, wellness and fitness category and test assumptions. This research indicated that there are functional and emotional needs within employers' programs that influence participation decisions. From this learning, our team generated a full set of corridors, representing key theme areas related to on-site and off-site/virtual programs. For each corridor, the team created a set of 26 different testable attributes to include in the quantitative study.

Employers' responses within the qualitative analyses provided key input into the quantitative research design and questionnaire that followed it. This additional study revealed more about employers' attitudes and the individual benefit attributes that are most top-of-mind. It also offered deeper insight into category drivers, category delivery and employee engagement. The quantitative research further enabled us to identify and define market differences between mid-sized and large employers, including how they define on-site and off-site program offerings, their level of involvement in the program and other perceptions.

EMPLOYER SAMPLE

The blinded research included a sizeable base of employers (n=247) offering health, wellness and fitness programs with sub-groups of interest. Like the employee research, respondents represented a diverse mix of employers in the healthcare, professional and financial services, industrial/manufacturing, government, higher education, retail and other industries. All groups were recruited via a mix of an online panel and a targeted phone list, then, directed to the online survey.

Using a 25-minute online questionnaire, we surveyed company professionals within mid-sized markets (companies with 500-4,999 employees) and large markets (companies with 5,000-25,000 employees) who influence health and wellness program decisions.

A man in athletic wear is shown from the waist up, holding a running shoe. He is wearing a grey, short-sleeved, perforated t-shirt and dark shorts. He has white earbuds around his neck. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

For more information,
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