

WEIGHING IN ON CORPORATE FITNESS

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How does a small business see big results in the workplace? When the leadership team at Custom Computer Specialists asked themselves that question, they looked to their employees for inspiration. They realized that to ensure the company was performing at its peak, they needed to make sure their people were as well.

According to the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control, companies that support workplace health have a greater percentage of employees at work every day because healthier employees are less likely to call in sick due to illness. Simply put, workplace wellness programs increase productivity! Here are some facts according to the CDC: Obese employees experience higher levels of absenteeism due to illness than normal weight employees. Normal weight men and women miss an average of 3 days each year due to illness or injury. In comparison, their overweight peers, miss approximately 2 more work days per year. And as the weight goes up, so do the days missed. It was these numbers — and the realization that with every excess pound comes increased risk for life-threatening conditions like diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers — that has made many corporate executives and managers sit up and take notice.

Increasingly, companies are instituting health and wellness programs. Led by human resources senior manager, Lucy Maresco, an on-site fitness center was unveiled at Custom in April 2015. Featuring treadmills, stationary bikes, elliptical machines, fitness balls and free

weights, the facility is available to all employees, many of whom come in early, stay late, or sacrifice their lunch hour to make use of the equipment. About 25% of the onsite staff use of the fitness center each month. Off-site employees, are reimbursed for the cost of gym memberships. Many of the junk food items in the vending machines were replaced with healthier alternatives, like pretzels, baked chips and water.

Wellness initiatives in an organization not only create a culture of well-being, but increase productivity and boost acquisition and retention. The FitBit Wellness Program made FitBits available to employees at a 30% discount, then pitted Custom employees against each other in monthly competitions for monetary prizes to see who was the most active. To date, over 70 employees have averaged 6 million steps a month, or a total of approximately 3,000 miles, every month! Many companies looking to cut expenses often do so at the expense of their employees, not realizing that sometimes a long-term investment pays bigger dividends. Creative thinking and commitment to clients and employees is what helps progressive companies keep employees and their bottom line healthy.