

# CENTERSTAGE

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## Staying Healthy in the Workplace

In 2018, employers across the country have continued to go above and beyond to focus on employee wellness. While you likely know that workplace wellness programs offer many benefits to organizations and individuals, such as reduced absenteeism and health insurance costs, the impact of these programs on an employee's productivity may surprise you. Examples include more attention and devotion toward adequate sleep, mental health and concentrating on creating more personalized health experiences. In a work world where studies suggest the average worker is productive for roughly three hours a day, boosting productivity is a key goal for many businesses. Understanding how workplace wellness initiatives help improve productivity can help you to introduce programs or opportunities to improve employee wellness and boost productivity. That's why, in this installment of CenterStage, we interviewed Sandi Brinson, the Account Executive / Director of HR Solutions at JA Benefits, for further insight.



### How Workplace Wellness Boosts Productivity

**“Many organizations are including wellness programs as part of their overall benefits package,”** said Sandi. Although companies are finding it difficult to measure ROI, they are investing in employees' overall wellness just like they do on other employee benefits such as insurance, employee assistance and retirement programs.

Wellness is more than enjoying an ill-free life. Wellness programs support employees' physical, mental, social and financial health. When these needs are met, employees are provided resources for success via a wellness program, and in return employers see boosted morale, higher engagement,

retention and health outcomes. This translates into productivity by reducing absenteeism (doctor visits in cases of low employee health) and obtaining and retaining top talent.

A sound wellness program can help employees get and stay healthier physically and emotionally, equating to fewer sick days, feeling less stressed at work and increased ability to focus on tasks at hand. The bottom line is just as the old saying goes: “Happy and healthy employees are more productive employees.” As generational shifts continue to take place within the workforce, companies are continuing to turn their attention to what is keeping their employees engaged.

## What to Look for in Employee Wellness Programs

Employee wellness programs are not 'one size fits all'. According to Sandi, "a wellness program should be simple and easy to navigate" to encourage participation. She noted that she has seen successful programs offer 'near-site/on-site' healthcare clinics for employees to receive customized and friendly care from a local physician, as well as a wellness component with a coach within the workforce to offer support, encouragement and accountability to succeed in changing behaviors and building better work habits.

The aim for any wellness program should be to increase productivity by offering accessible tools for employees to manage their time more effectively and release negativity and anxiety that often hinders focus. Employers should be looking to offer 'the big picture', as it encourages employees to work smarter not harder in their roles to feel accomplished. Since passion fuels purpose, or in this instance, productivity, employees will obtain more goals if they feel as if they play a role in the success of their business.

## How Should Employers be Keeping Up with Change?

Sandi noted "**the average employee spends just as many waking hours at work than at home**", meaning wellness in the workplace is constantly in demand to break the monotony that often goes on within the four walls of a business. That said, with half of the population citing work as their biggest stressor, employers must do more to keep employees attentive, motivated and happy. Yet, employers must not lose sight on what they must offer to keep up with generational changes in the workforce, too.

Remaining up to date is crucial for the survival of a business. As more and more millennials and generation Z employees begin to occupy positions in the working world, employers must be up to date on what it takes to ensure the well-being of newer employees. Sandi lists the main provision should be personal care; feeling a sense of quality attention. In a work environment that demands increasingly more from employees to keep pace with accelerating technology and higher expectations, stress can have a negative impact on well-being and productivity. Establishing positive and personal relations for employees of coming generations is critical to ensuring talent is both obtained and retained. In this instance, this is where a wellness coach within a company would be a valuable asset. Offering individualized and knowledgeable 'coaching' to employees, (think a personal trainer/guidance counselor) wellness coaches offer the support, encouragement and accountability employees need to remain focused and motivated in a fast-paced environment.

At JA, we understand these generational shifts in the workplace and are here to help you make sense of it all. Offering a hands-on approach to navigating your options, we help craft a wellness plan that is tailor-made to fit your employees' needs. When you contact JA to begin identifying what tools are a best fit for your business, Sandi and the JA team will come prepared to listen and help. Possessing a background in human resources, Sandi is no stranger to what it takes to ensuring employees of older and younger generations are kept happy and healthy. In

addition, Sandi can offer insight on the best ways to construct a wellness plan geared toward attracting top talent becoming prevalent in the market for employment. Assistance in keeping your plan simple and easy to encourage participation across the board, Sandi will give you the knowledge you need to know to promote well-being in your workplace.

For further information or questions, please contact Sandi Brinson at **812.329.6046** or **[sandi.brinson@jabenefits.com](mailto:sandi.brinson@jabenefits.com)**.