



Plan a Healthy Workplace Day!

What is a Healthy Workplace Day?

- A full day celebrated by your entire company that is dedicated to promoting healthy workplace practices and healthy lifestyles [this can also be spread out over the duration of Canada's Healthy Workplace Week].
- A great way to celebrate Canada's Healthy Workplace Week while increasing awareness about wellness at work!

Ideas for your Healthy Workplace Day:

- * A series of workshops on wellness for employees to attend
- * Staff forums on workplace health issues with your CEO or a senior level executive
- * **A Health Fair** [ideas on planning this activity were featured in CHWW 2003 – refer to the archives section for more information.]

A Working Example - The UBC Health Symposium 2003 for Staff & Faculty

The University of British Columbia kicked off Canada's Healthy Workplace Week 2003 last year by holding a health symposium open to all staff and faculty. The University President opened the day with an address on the importance of work-life balance, followed by a series of keynote presentations and smaller group workshops throughout the day with various speakers. A health fair was open the entire day for employees to drop by. There was no charge to employees for any part of the day and over 700 participated in at least some part of this first-time event!

Based on the success of this first year, UBC is planning a **full week** of activities for Canada's Healthy Workplace Week 2004.

More examples of the processes used by UBC in planning their Healthy Workplace Day are included below.

A STEP-BY-STEP PLAN FOR YOUR HEALTHY WORKPLACE DAY!

PHASE I – Pre-Planning

Pre-planning is critical to the success of a day such as this. If possible, try to start this phase at least four months in advance!

- **Get Management Approval & Support** – Depending on how extensive your event will be a Healthy Workplace Day can be resource intensive in terms of the time and dollars it requires. This fact makes getting senior management commitment upfront critical! Support from middle managers is also essential to secure staff participation for both pre-planning and attending the day.

Bring in a 'champion' for the event – a senior level executive who has a good understanding of and believes in workplace wellness - is a great way to get the management team on-board.



Tip: When seeking support from management, try to outline ways that the Healthy Workplace Day will benefit the organization. For example, you may wish to see an increase in morale or awareness of certain issues (e.g. health screening tests at your health fair may help increase awareness of individuals own particular levels of blood pressure, blood cholesterol, etc.) Find out how your senior management would like to get involved and what specific outcomes they would like to see from the event – this will help you develop your objectives.

Tip: If you work at a large company, you may wish to hold an information meeting for middle managers as well to get them on-side and ask for their input on key success factors.

- **Establish Goals & Objectives** – identifying what you hope to accomplish with a Healthy Workplace Day will help establish guidelines for its planning, promotions, implementation and evaluation. Remember to incorporate suggestions from management and be sure to validate your intended goals and objectives with all stakeholders so that there are no misunderstandings as to what the fair can or cannot accomplish.

Sample Goals:

- ▶ To promote a healthy workplace
- ▶ To increase the visibility of the organization's support for employee well-being
- ▶ To increase awareness about healthy lifestyle practices that can be practiced both within and outside of the workplace

Sample Objectives:

- ▶ 10% (or higher, depending upon the size of your organization) of employees will attend and participate in the Healthy Workplace Day
- ▶ Evaluations will indicate that 75% of participants took away one new idea on dealing better with work-life conflict

- **Assemble a Planning Committee** – if your organization has an established wellness committee, this could be one of the projects for the committee. Alternatively, you will want to recruit some volunteers to assist with this project. Ideally, the team of individuals who help plan the Healthy Workplace Day should include representatives from the various departments, unions, management, and front-line staff so that the goals and needs of all stakeholders and staffing groups are addressed. Ensure all volunteers have support from their managers because planning the event will take some time away from their other responsibilities.

Benefits of a planning committee:

- * brainstorm ideas for content,
- * provide support and assistance in planning and implementing;
- * gather support from all in-house stakeholders,
- * increase participation and promotion across the organization, and
- * provide feedback on successes and challenges of the event



At UBC, an advisory committee was established. It consisted of participation from a wide range of UBC staff and faculty including various departments and members of unions. Through this committee, efforts were made to communicate across campus the purpose of the Health Symposium as well as encourage managers to find ways for their employees to attend at least part of the day.

- **Establish Timelines** – To ensure all objectives are met the planning committee should establish a critical path or timeline that lists each task that needs to be done in order for the Healthy Workplace Day to succeed. The critical path should also identify the person responsible and the target completion date for each task. As new tasks and responsibilities come up, add these to the critical path.

Tip: Always **c**onsider the nature of your organization and complexity of what you want to accomplish. For instance, if your organization requires approval from many different areas or levels to proceed with certain steps, you may require extra time. Similarly, incorporating fitness or sporting activities, hosting a health fair, and bringing in a series of speakers will take much more time and organization than if you were to do just the latter.

- **Develop a budget** – It is important to set a budget from the outset. Use your goals and objectives to help determine where funds should be allocated. For example if one objective is to promote work-life balance, then a portion of the budget should be allocated to activities that appropriately demonstrate the organization's support of a balanced lifestyle. Developing the budget up front will also help you to determine if there is enough funding internally to achieve your goals, or if sponsorship money needs to be sought...or you may need to tone down your goals to fit within the budget you have available!

As specific session topics (or speakers) and/or activities are identified, estimate their costs and revise the budget appropriately.

Tip: A big budget isn't necessary to hold a successful Healthy Workplace Day. For instance, if you are holding a series of sessions, partner organizations (such as your EAP firm), may be able to provide you with speakers at little or no cost. Your organization may also have many of the services you need to plan a successful day in-house. For example, if you have a communications or marketing expert, a designer or a printing shop, these groups or individuals may be able to assist in helping to develop promotional items at lower cost than if you have to out-source for this assistance.



PHASE II – Organizational Scan

Before you begin planning the Healthy Workplace Day, remember to consider those aspects of your organization that may help or hinder the success of the event. This involves understanding the corporate culture and any legal considerations specific to your organization.

- **Corporate Culture** – The political climate within the organization should be a key consideration in deciding how to position the Healthy Workplace Day to meet employee and management needs and deliver an appropriate message about workplace health. For instance, downsizing, layoffs, employer-union disputes and other similar corporate decisions can make an event that is intended to lift employee morale, actually look like a frivolous waste of money in times of budget cuts. On the other hand, the Healthy Workplace Day may be just what's needed to boost employee morale and facilitate a change in employee perceptions about their workplace.
- **Legal Issues** – If you plan on extending the Healthy Workplace Day to include activities and/or provide services and materials, there may be legal issues to consider such as who can provide what services and whether or not participants should sign waivers for participation in certain activities. Check your organization's policies and collective agreements [if applicable] to see if there are any restrictions. In addition, you may want to contact the individual or department that handles legal issues within your organization.

PHASE III – Planning

You are now ready to start scheduling and planning the theme and content of your Healthy Workplace Day.

Mark Your Calendars

- **Set the date** – Check your organization's calendar of events to ensure that the date you choose does not conflict with other events that may draw employees away from attending. Mid-week days are better choices than Mondays or Fridays, especially if your organization has a number of employees that work part-time or have flexible schedules. If your employees are spread over multiple sites, consider having at least some workshops or activities delivered at all sites.

Tip: Schedule your Healthy Workplace Day during Canada's Healthy Workplace Week, October 25-31, 2004!

Timing is everything – the time of day and length of the sessions or activities will impact the number of employees that are able to participate. You are likely to have greater participation when you accommodate employees who work various shifts and if employees are able to use some company time to attend.

Tip: Participation is often higher if you can arrange for the workshops and/or activities to be held over lunch, first thing in the morning, and towards the end of the day.



Tip: There may be some departments where all employees [or at least a significant portion of employees] are unable to leave the work area at the same time to participate because of the type of work they do. Consider scheduling a repeated session at a different time, or a *roving presenter* to deliver mini sessions [i.e. 30 minutes] in these departments during the day. Or...some departments may hold a lottery. All employees who wish to attend the day can put their names in a draw, and the number of people that can actually attend will be drawn.

- **Location, location, location** – Choose an area within the organization that is highly accessible to all and large enough to accommodate the target number of people expected to attend each session.

Healthy Workplace Day Content

- **Choose a theme-** review the goals and objectives of the event and consider the organization's philosophy when brainstorming ideas for the Healthy Workplace Day.

Tip: Select a theme that will grab people's attention and inspire them to attend. Where possible, try to link it to initiatives that your workplace is currently addressing. For instance, a seasonal business may consider *Stress Management* as a theme right before its busy season. Alternatively, an organization that is promoting flexible work arrangements may consider *Work-Life Balance* as their theme.

- **Choose and Develop Content** – When organizing workshops, the critical step is to identify session topics and speakers. Consider asking your organization's service providers [i.e. EAP Firm, Benefits firm] if they are able to provide speakers to present on the topics you have identified. Remember to review the specific goals and objectives as originally set out and consider the budget.

Tip: Depending on the needs of your organization, you may want to consider holding different sessions for different target audiences. For instance, you may want to hold a separate workshop for management that focuses on their role in promoting workplace wellness.

Tip: Sessions that engage employees are more successful. Select presenters that have a dynamic presentation style. Some can be very interactive, while others add humor to get the message across. Follow-up on speaker references when choosing your presenters and topics.

Real-Life Example – check out the schedule that was used at the UBC Health Symposium 2003 (located at the end of this document)

- **Confirm content** – Once you have chosen session topics and contacted speakers, follow-up with them to confirm the date, time and location of their



session[s]; and decide upon the specific content they will be providing. Consider drafting contracts for each of the presenters you select.

- **Logistics** – now that the content is decided, you are ready to plan for the logistics.
 - **Volunteers** – round-up volunteers to help set rooms that sessions are held in [at the beginning of each day & before each presentation], as well as with crowd control.
 - * **Marketing** – Devise a marketing plan that outlines how the Healthy Workplace Day will be promoted throughout the organization. Include all avenues for marketing, such as flyers, newsletters, and e-mail. Plan when and where they will be posted and who on the planning committee will be responsible. Also consider how marketing efforts should be tailored to each of the stakeholders. For instance, materials that are designed to get the attention of employees may be different than those geared toward management or union representatives.

Tip: Word of mouth is your best advertisement. Get people excited and talking about it early!
 - **Floor plan** – Allocate each session to a room and ensure you have all the equipment required [E.g. LCD projector, audio-visual requirements, etc...] and have identified where the presenter will be located and where the audience will be seated. The layout will depend upon the space available and shape of the room, the expected audience, and speaker preferences.
 - **Equipment** – Prepare a list of equipment required for each session and allocate the equipment accordingly. For example, make notes on the number of tables, chairs, flipcharts, projectors and other audio-visual equipment that is required. Reserve all the equipment you require for the Healthy Workplace Day well in advance from the appropriate department in your organization. This list will also be essential on your set-up day.

PHASE IV – Evaluation

We recommend that you use formal evaluation processes to measure the success of your Healthy Workplace Day. This entails asking your planning committee for feedback on the planning process, surveying the presenters, attendees, management and volunteers on what their experience of the day was like. The evaluations will help you identify the strengths and opportunities for improvement. It will also help identify what sessions or activities were of most interest and what information employees would like to receive at future Healthy Workplace Days.

Congratulations! You are now ready to hold your Healthy Workplace Day! Be sure to [contact us](#) to let us know what you have planned, and how it went!

**UBC Health Symposium – October, 2003
Schedule at a Glance**

TIME	Event	Presenter
8:00–4:30	Health Fair Open – all day	
8:00–8:45	Registration; refreshments	
8:45–9:00	Symposium Opening	Dr. Martha Piper, President & Vice Chancellor, UBC
9:00–10:00	Keynote #1 HEALING, HUMOUR, AND HIGH LEVEL WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE – THE M.E.L.L.O.W APPROACH	Martin Collis
10:00–10:30	Wellness Break	
10:30–12:00	Breakouts –Set 1: Depression at work: More than Just a Bad Hair Day The Business of Kindness... Creating Safe, Healthy & Vibrant Workplaces An Ounce of Prevention: Simple Ways to Create Health and Well-Being	Larry Myette Paula Cayley Olivia McIvor Deborah Kern
12:00–1:00	Lunch – on own	
1:00–2:30	Breakouts – Set 2: Toxic Emotions at Work Living on Purpose: In and Out of the Workplace How to be Your Own Global Medicine Hunter: Deciphering the World of Alternative Therapies	Peter Frost Trudy Boyle & Gottfried Mitteregger Meg Jordan
2:30–3:00	Wellness Break	
3:00–4:00	Keynote #2 Finding Calm Amidst Chaos: Creating a Sustainable Life	Deborah Kern
4:30	Symposium closes	