



Small Biz Strategies

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47, 48, 49 and...50. Whew, those sit-ups are killers! I hate doing them, along with running, jumping jacks, push-ups, pull-ups, skipping rope and stretches. But what I've come to realize is that working towards keeping oneself healthy not only benefits my personal life but my business productivity as well.

The success level achieved by many businesses depends profoundly on the efficiency and performance of its employees. There is strong documentation to suggest that surplus body weight, high levels of nervous tension, and other multi-tasking factors are associated with increased healthcare cost and illness-related absenteeism. Providing education and inspiration to improve individual health can produce valuable rewards for both staff and management members. Because a good majority of people spend a great many of their waking hours at work, that can be an excellent environment for influencing healthy habits. And what could be more convenient than roller skating at the rink where you work?

As a side note, in an article written on absenteeism in October of last year by authors Dan Witters and Sangeeta Agrawal, the following insight from their research is shared: "Full-time workers in the U.S. who are overweight or obese and have other chronic health conditions miss an estimated 450 million additional days of work each year compared with healthy workers resulting in an estimated cost of more than \$153 billion in lost productivity annually." How much of this loss comes from your business location?

Not only will a structured daily exercise routine profit an individual physically and mentally, but it possibly will ease some pain in the area of their wallets in the long run. Did you know that Medicare's Office of the Actuary published an online report in the Health Affairs journal, stating that health care spending in the U.S. will make up nearly 20 percent of the economy by the year 2019? According to the actuaries, Americans will spend an average of \$13,652 per person a year on health

Healthy employees equals a healthy roller skating business

care in 2019. By 2020, according to the National Health Expenditure Projection Forecast Summary (2010-2020), national health spending is expected to reach \$4.6 trillion and comprise 19.8 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

If you've ever considered putting into place a company wellness program, now is the time to step forward (and you already have the equipment and facility to do this). The return on the investment can be bountiful. It can reduce staff absenteeism, lower stress levels and up morale, increase staff efficiency and production, trim down healthcare expenses, reduce chronic disease risk, and improve retention of healthy employees. Not a bad tradeoff.

What affects staff productivity? One of the most serious health-related problems in the workplace impacting on-the-job disasters, absenteeism and lowered productivity is fatigue. Nearly 40 percent of U.S. workers experience fatigue, according to a study in the journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. (Estimated cost: \$135 plus billion per year in health-related lost productivity and 84 percent of the costs were related to reduced performance while at work, rather than absences.) Poor sleep habits leading to fatigue that can zap one's energy is compounded by not having a regular exercise routine, high stress and anxiety levels, dehydration, and the foods chosen to eat.

Why should you encourage employee to embrace "being healthy" as a life style choice?

A healthy employee is a productive employee, but more important they are the greatest asset that the business possesses. They are the heartbeat of the organization, its character, depth, energy, driving force and vigor.

Healthy employees possess more "oomph". This get-up-and-go allows the employee to stay focused on the task at hand, bringing the best of themselves to the forefront.

Healthy employees tend to step up to leadership roles. When one feels good they believe they can conquer the world.

Healthy employees have more self-assurance. This declaration strengthens the employee to test themselves and to make every effort to reach higher levels of personal achievement.

Healthy employees have a propensity to reach objectives. An employee with the demonstrated ability to set challenging objectives, and then REALIZE those objectives, is a valuable asset

to any business.

Healthy employees can make excellent team-players. No matter what transitional level a team is functioning in (Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, or Transforming), this employee is likely to participate and make a positive contribution.

Healthy employees are more inclined to possess and project better attitudes. When one feels good about themselves physically, mentally, and spiritually, one becomes more balanced with the things around them.

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ONLINE ACCESS TO HEALTH STATISTICS

At the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website FastStats A to Z (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/>), you will find quick access to statistics on topics of public health importance, which is organized alphabetically. Studies show that if individuals adhere to healthy lifestyle practices, maintaining a healthy weight, eating well, getting regular exercise, not smoking or drinking, chronic disease could be reduced by as much as 80%.



History, Superstars and Roller Skating!

This classic photo shows silver screen icon Betty Grabel trying her hand at roller skating. Pretty good balance! Publicity photo courtesy Paramount Pictures. Find more roller skating history at the National Museum of Roller Skating in Lincoln, Neb.