

Health at Work: A Blessing or a Curse?

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Employee well-being is a major topic these days. Question is whether you, as an employer, should interpret the growing demand for Health at Work as a blessing or a curse.

Today, people are more aware of the impact of healthy habits on their lifestyle and well-being. So, what happens?

More and more employees start asking higher efforts from the management to do something about health at work. So, your HR and facility managers are looking into the costs of potential Health & Safety projects.

Next to the calls from your staff, there's also the government policies urging you to take action. You, as a business leader, feel the pressure. So really you are wondering whether you should see this growing demand for Health at Work as a blessing or a curse.

It's all well and good that people are becoming more aware about the importance of employee well-being. But meeting those desires is not something that happens in a single day, is it? It takes time and careful consideration to look into the possibilities and choose the most effective ones.

Health at Work: How Are You Doing?

The average employee spends a significant part of their day in the workplace. They should be able to engage in a healthy lifestyle at work. Logically, employers will play a big part in this. However, it turns out to not be as easy as it looks, doesn't it?

After all, there is a reason why Employee Well-being is a major topic these days. According to CIPD, employee well-being is about quality of life in the workplace on a physical, mental, social and emotional level. It shouldn't surprise you that a lot of employers are under a lot of pressure from different sides to address their Health at Work policies. Really, it's not just you!

The raised health awareness in our modern-day society has sparked an urgent demand from employees from all over the world. More of them want help achieving their individual health goals, also in the workplace. This request from the workforce in combination with the new law and government policies has made you, as a business leader, understand **the impact of an unhealthy employee on company profits.**

A major example of how an unhealthy lifestyle can affect work negatively is the rising number of people suffering from obesity. It's an illness often caused by a lack of maintaining a healthy diet and failure to insert physical activity into the daily schedule. People who are obese encounter conditions such as heart disease, cancer, depression, back pain, diabetes and skin problems. To a certain extent, these conditions also affect their results at work (and that means: company results as well). Burn-out is another example of a major condition that impacts company profitability.

You might know already [what the cost of an absent or unproductive employee is for your organization](#). Studies have shown that by investing in health at work, you will save money in the long run.

Work Shouldn't Be an Excuse to Pick up Unhealthy Habits

Many of us are guilty of snacking around the clock. What do you do when you feel like having a quick bite of something? You'll grab whatever you can get your hands on first. Just like a lot of people. Usually, the solution can be found in the famous cookie drawer. I mean, who doesn't have that desk drawer full of cookies and chocolate?

People who do a lot of hours on the job tend to come up with a variety of excuses to justify their bad habits. "I don't have time to cook a healthy, fresh meal." "I don't have time to eat slow." "I'm too lazy to go shopping, so I'll just order a pizza."

Or maybe you just "don't like vegetables".

The fact that it's a *habit* shows that **there is more to making a change than just willpower**. I know what it's like, you grab that bag of sweets without even thinking twice about it. However, if we would have a bowl of fruit nearby or bring our own **healthy snack** to work, we could make a conscious effort to change our unhealthy reflexes. And think about how we could work together and reduce the number of people that are overweight! But that requires effort. And the employer should set the example. Feel the pressure?

So, What Can You Do as an Employer?

First of all, you shouldn't go about **Health at Work** on your own. Employee well-being is a joint responsibility. Everyone, both manager and employee, should contribute to a common Health goal.

Maintaining a **balanced diet and good eating habits** is the way to go to see an increase in energy, concentration and performance levels. So, health promotion at work should focus on just that! You can encourage a healthy diet by making a range of healthy food options available in staff canteens. [Getting a smoothie station in your office building](#), could also positively impact snacking habits.

In addition, you can promote physical activity (for example in your newsletter). Another option is to inform employees of what a healthy diet entails. Lastly, you should also consider how work pressures can influence the diet of employees negatively and come up with solutions for that.

In short, even though it seems like a hell of a lot of work, **Health at Work** should be a priority for all business leaders. Not just because the law requires it, but because it is also beneficial for company profitability. And your employees are *asking* for it. You don't even have to force a change in mentality. I would say it's a blessing, although maybe in disguise.

Don't forget, though, that even though we focus mainly on food habits in this article, employers should keep all levels of employee well-being in mind. Training all muscles will help you to get you further, right!

At Alberts, we make it our daily goal to help people like you achieve your ambitions in terms of Health at Work. We developed a machine that kills all excuses that prevent people from pursuing a healthy lifestyle.

Wanna know how we pull that off? Take a look at our website www.alberts.be. Let us know when you are ready to take the next step in what we call: Smooth Living! Are you working in Belgium? You're lucky! Surf our #H50 wave and join the healthiest fifty companies of Belgium! [Learn more](#)